

# Liberty

November 2004

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### The Politics of Spending

If You Think Republicans Support  
Smaller Government, Think Again

by R. W. Bradford

### The New Anti-Semitism

by Merrel Clubb

### The Intelligent Person's Guide to Presidential Politics

by Sally McCarthy, Doug Casey, Steve Cox & Bill Bradford

### Hail Mary, Full of Smack

by Jo Ann Skousen

### Equality, Stinginess, and Empire

by John Hospers

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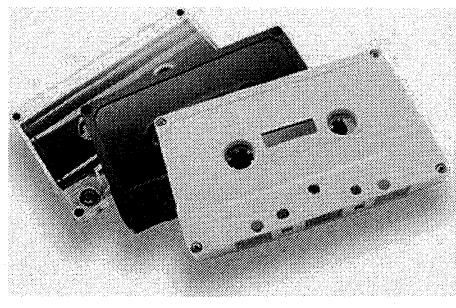
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## Letters

### Blacklist McCarthy

After giving a scathing and well-deserved critique of "Bowling for Columbine" and acknowledging that "Fahrenheit 9/11" is "an op-ed intended to remove George W. Bush from the presidency," Sarah McCarthy goes on to accept Moore's facts and theories without question. This is no different than the anti-gun crowd accepting "Bowling for Columbine" and overlooking its flaws because they agree with Moore's conclusions. Given Moore's history, the honest thing to do would be to justify any of Moore's arguments you agree with, instead of assuming they are true because you want them to be.

For instance, McCarthy asks if Congressmen would allow a ground war if they or their children were fighting in it. A simple Internet search (<http://www.davekopel.org/terror/59Deceits.pdf>) shows that members of Congress have a higher percentage of children serving in Iraq than the general population and that almost a fourth of the representatives and over a third of the senators served in the military themselves.

McCarthy ends her article by criticizing military recruitment in poor neighborhoods — while most libertarians complain about the amount of money spent on the military. Direct marketing to those most likely to join is a better use of tax dollars than marketing equally to each person regardless of his probability of joining. Should the military recruit in nursing homes, at gay-pride rallies, and in maternity wards to keep from discriminating?

Besides, recruiters recruit; that's what they do. The idea that poor, unemployed young people are being

taken advantage of is the same kind of logic that leads to drug laws, gun laws, Social Security, national health care, government schools, and the welfare state. McCarthy ignores the fact that joining the military is a voluntary action, even if recruiting is involved. Likewise, she fails to mention that parents signing their children up for the military, or forcing them to do anything else, is far from the libertarian ideal. Instead she fawns over Moore's showmanship.

There are questions that need to be asked about Moore's theories before reporting them as facts. Let the mainstream media be Michael Moore's mouthpiece, and use the pages of Liberty to offer me something I can't find elsewhere.

Robert Bandy  
Indianapolis, Ind.

### A Modest Solution

Patrick Quealy's response to the gay marriage debate should be examined. In the October issue, he says that "sex licenses would solve most problems that marriage licenses are meant to solve." Unfortunately, most participants in this debate think the purpose of marriage is sex. No wonder there's so much passion.

Quealy should offer a more serious solution: "No one may have children with more than one other person." This frames the issue in terms of human rights. Mothers and fathers must be held accountable for the life they create. No one has the right to be a single parent. Nor do they have the right to abandon their child.

Libertarians should keep in mind the strong correlation between the increasing number of broken families and the demand for more government

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spending.

What goes on in the bedroom does not concern the state — but having children does.

Trevor Poulsen  
Portland, Ore.

## Adieu, Monde Cruel

I have been a *Liberty* subscriber for three years, but this year, I'm not going to renew my subscription. As it has nothing to do with the quality of your magazine, I think I owe you an explanation.

I discovered libertarian ideas through the French Anarchist Federation years ago; but something in what they professed made me uneasy. When a liberty advocate is on state welfare, it somewhat lacks congruence.

By chance — I happened to be on one of their direct mail lists, I don't know how — I bought the French edition of "Neo-Tech Discovery." I very much liked their conservative, politicians-are-liars stance, so I bought the "Neo-Tech Reference Encyclopedia." That was a bit of a challenge, as English is not my mother tongue; but I knew it was worth it, and I had the impression of learning the truth page after page. Thanks to this book, I discovered great authors like Harry Browne, Ayn Rand, and Nathaniel Branden.

In Harry Browne's "How I Found Freedom in an Unfree World," there happened to be a reference to a brilliant libertarian magazine: *Liberty*. So I became a subscriber. The first issues were almost painful to read; I had my dictionary beside me all the time. But there was so much truth and wit in what I read that I carried on, and on, and on. At this time, Harry Browne was a candidate for the U.S. presidency, and I admired him a lot, so I followed each article about the LP with passion. I was disappointed by what I later learned: Harry had lost his sense and become a crook. I haven't forgiven him yet — and probably never will.

Politics in France looks very much the same as politics in the USA. The controversial issues are things like gay marriage, prostitution, and reforming the public sector. How boring. Never

one word about the widespread dishonesty of politicians. Never one word about overpaid teachers, overpaid train drivers, or overpaid bureaucrats. Never one word about

taxes, loss of civil liberties, state monopolies, or unfairness of the customs administration. It was refreshing to read good articles in *Liberty* about important issues — articles which

## From the Editor . . .

It's autumn, the days grow short, the leaves change color, and America's quadrennial elections draw near. *Liberty* offers some perspectives on politics that you won't find elsewhere.

Everyone believes that Republicans practice fiscal restraint and Democrats are big spenders. It turns out that this hasn't been true for more than 30 years, as I learned when researching data to support my claim that government spending "increased rapidly" during the Reagan presidency, which drew a challenge from Milton Friedman.

It turns out that so far as I can tell no one had ever compiled the data needed to answer this question. But it wasn't much of a chore to do, and last month I wrote a short article showing that the data supported my claim about Reagan. I've had another month to analyze the data, and it has revealed information that is very surprising to me. (Isn't it always wonderful to discover something both surprising and disquieting?) For example, during the past 35 years, spending has grown more slowly when Democrats sit in the White House than when Republicans do, and when Republicans control Congress than when Democrats do — and most slowly when the president is Democratic and Congress is Republican. I suspect this will come as a surprise to those libertarians and conservatives who support George Bush's reelection.

We also have something that supporters of Libertarian Michael Badnarik may find disquieting. Ari Armstrong spent three days with Badnarik on a campaign swing through Colorado, and learned that Badnarik argues that one needn't pay federal income tax because Congress forgot to mention in the tax bill that payment is compulsory, and that Badnarik still supports a right-wing activist who has been convicted of threatening a judge and who harbors anti-Semitic beliefs.

By "anti-Semitic," I mean a pathological hatred of Jews, not mere disagreement with the policies of Israel's government, which brings us to Merrel Clubb's "The New Anti-Semitism," an exposé of the ploy used by supporters of Israel to stifle debate by portraying all of Israel's critics as bigots — and a similar ploy of conservatives to stifle any criticism of George W. Bush.

We are especially proud to publish, for the first time anywhere, libertarian pioneer Rose Wilder Lane's autobiography, from a WPA project in 1939. Only an incomplete transcription of this oral history has been published in a few other places, thanks to the difficulty in reading part of the 65-year-old typescript. *Liberty*'s crack staff got a copy of the original document and, using computer enhancement, prepared the first and only complete and accurate transcription.

As the election approaches, we follow our tradition of offering our editors' endorsements of as many candidates as they are willing to support. Three candidates found support among our eclectic editors: Messrs Bush, Kerry, and Badnarik. And we give the last word to Doug Casey, on behalf of None of the Above.

Our reviews begin with a look inside the IRS by Mike Holmes, who returns to our pages after a hiatus of more than a decade. It concludes with Jo Ann Skousen's exploration of the life of a drug mule. In between, Timothy Sandefur offers new insight into the life of America's quintessential novelist, Leland Yeager looks at the nature and nurturing of the mind, Bruce Ramsey discovers how Pullman car service helped emancipate southern Negroes, and Bettina Bien Greaves relives an escape from Stalin's Gulag.

And as always, we begin with our editors saying a few things about current ephemera — and significa — in the form of *Reflections*. Enjoy!

R. W. Bradford

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made sense and did not forget morality and justice.

But no longer is it so. I'm getting fed up with politics.

It's been two years since I dumped my television. Recently, I changed my radio habits and no longer listen to the news. You may know the French satirical paper *Le Canard Enchainé* — I have dumped it too. Now, I live in total political ignorance. I know that when a politician talks about a great idea to improve the lives of everyone, sooner or later it will be implemented with my tax money, to the detriment of my life. That's all I have to know. I no longer need to read it each month; I am already convinced.

There is so much more to life than politics. The free market provides cheap access to art and to books and music, cheap access to everything one needs to be educated and happy. The few hours I spent reading about politics I will now spend learning Dutch — an eccentricity of mine.

I enjoyed reading your magazine a lot. It taught me loads of things and was a milestone in my political education. But I don't think learning more in this field will make me any happier.

This is why I will not renew my subscription this year. It is time for me and politics to part.

Nicolas Roussel  
St. Josse, France

## Ditch the System

Let me get this straight: the LP nominates someone who loves liberty so much he's willing to publicly confront the feds about the lawless IRS, and who won't get a driver's license if it requires his social security slave number, and that's a bad thing? When I heard the LP had nominated someone who had not filed with the IRS because he knows the law, and knows he *does not* owe the tax, I said to myself: *finally!*

I'm convinced the reason the Libertarian Party has not prospered is because it operates on a fundamentally flawed premise: that working within the system the party can convince enough people to change government policy by voting. Let's just show them how liberty would work,

that's so right, so reasonable, we all just have to be for it. Get Libertarians elected to office, and liberty will flow like manna from heaven. Wrong! It will never happen. First off, it's patently obvious that our mammoth "democratic" system serves as window dressing for a fascistic governing elite that doesn't care one whit about the "people." One-third of the population either works for the government or lives off its handouts, and this among many other things makes the system hopelessly rigged. Even if by some miracle the Libertarian Party were to get some kind of traction with the public, it would easily be co-opted (as your articles about Reagan so aptly illustrated).

Jim Parrish  
College Park, Md.

## Yankees Go Home

Yes, Kerry has said he will not abandon Iraq. Too bad. What is needed is an urgent de-assing of that part of the world.

At least Kerry will not invade Iran or Syria, unlike W, who is just itching to.

The favoritism of the United States toward Israel and certain un-elected rulers of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Jordan, are what to a certain extent brought on 9/11.

In 2000 I voted for Harry Browne. This time I will vote for Kerry.

Hopefully, a year from now W will be a painful memory and Cheney will be under indictment.

Tim Foster  
Stuart, Fla.

We invite readers to comment on articles that have appeared in the pages of *Liberty*. 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.

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# Reflections

**The decline and fall of everything** — It is said that every generation, upon reaching middle age, begins to think the world is going to hell and society is falling apart.

Who would have thought that we'd be the generation that was correct?

— Ross Levatter

**Your campaign contributions at work (really)** — By mid-September, the Badnarik campaign had invested \$116,406 to purchase advertising. Compare this to the 1996 Harry Browne campaign, which invested only \$8,840.50 in advertising in its entire campaign.

This is all the more impressive when one realizes that the Badnarik campaign, with its late start, has raised only \$575,000 to date, compared to the Browne campaign's \$1.4 million. Badnarik may not be the ideal presidential candidate for the LP, but at least his campaign has its priorities a lot straighter than the Browne campaign did — and keeps its word better.

— R.W. Bradford

**Europa über alles** — A British newspaper reports that European Commission President Romano Prodi claimed an Olympic victory for the European Union, adding that EU athletes might all perform under the EU flag at Beijing in 2008. By piling up all the gold medals won by European nations, the EU came out as the big winner with 82 gold medals, absolutely trouncing the United States, which won only 35.

I'm watching for Mr. Prodi to merge all their separate European seats at the United Nations into one. Or perhaps the United States should be allowed 50 seats, one for each sovereign state.

— Tim Slagle

**Vote Duck!** — Both major party presidential candidates are certifiable liars, lifelong ne'er-do-wells, and borderline sociopaths. There are romantics who, despite their better

judgment, will go out and vote anyway. For them, the only vote that makes sense is a protest vote for a third party, in which case the Libertarian candidate makes sense — at least if you believe in both economic and social freedom. Of course, if you really want to treat the elections with the respect they deserve, you might consider a write-in for, say, Donald Duck.

— Wendy McElroy

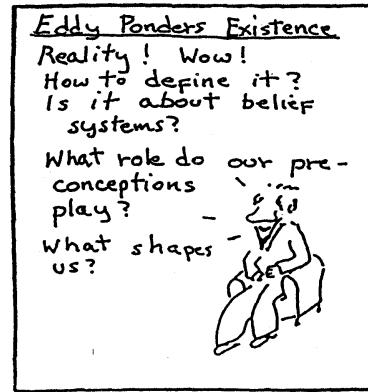
**Dan Rather = George Bush?** — On Sept. 8, CBS News made public various letters it claimed were written by Lt. Col. Jerry B. Killian, George W. Bush's commanding officer in the National Guard, that proved that Bush had shirked his duties in the Guard.

The authenticity of the documents was challenged within a few hours, and during the next few days, evidence mounted that more or less proved that the documents were faked: the documents themselves seem to have been produced using Microsoft Word, which hadn't been invented yet; the documents appeared to have been produced by a typewriter or printer that hadn't been invented yet; Col. Killian's wife (he died in 1984) claimed that her husband didn't type and didn't produce them, a fact later verified by his secretary; the officer

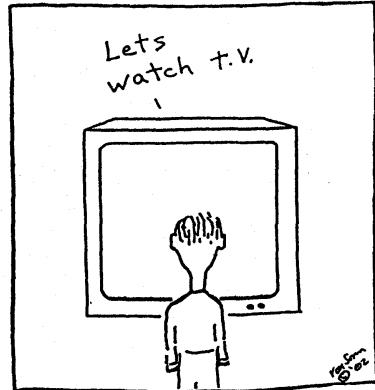
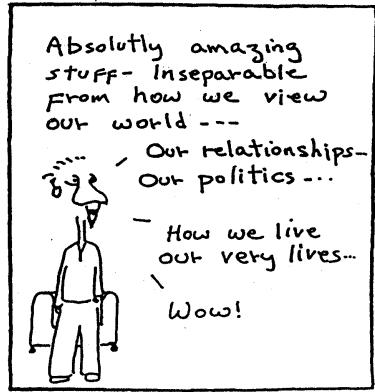
who Col. Killian's letter claims had pressured him to "sugar coat" Bush's record had died a year and a half before the letters were allegedly written; and the experts who CBS claim authenticated the documents deny having done so. None of this stopped CBS (mostly in the person of Dan Rather, who had broken the story) from standing by its story as the evidence undermining it piled up.

In sum, CBS published a story of extremely questionable accuracy after making little effort to verify it and enthusiastically defended its authenticity even after the documents had been mostly discredited. CBS News in general and Dan

## EDDY IN AMERICA



## by Andy von Sonn



Rather in particular have harbored a long-time antipathy toward George Bush, and it seems overwhelmingly likely that this provided them the motivation to run with the story, not only without their customary due diligence, but even after their own experts questioned the authenticity of the evidence.

This is a familiar story. It is an all-too-common human weakness to subject evidence that supports one's beliefs to less scrutiny than evidence that runs contrary to one's beliefs, or even to accept very shaky evidence in support of one's beliefs. News organizations are supposed to know better. They are supposed to check everything thoroughly. As Rather himself once said, "You trust your mother, but you cut the cards." Rather and his producer, Mary Mapes, deserve to be fired in disgrace. And if CBS News wants to regain its credibility, they will be.

Most Americans are familiar with another such case, one that has far more expensive consequences than CBS' extreme negligence regarding the authenticity of these documents. It is a case that has cost billions of dollars and thousands of lives.

I refer, of course, to the "evidence" that the Bush administration put together to support its contention that Saddam Hussein was a terrorist threat to America and had been involved in the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

The evidence that Saddam was a terrorist who posed a credible threat to America was, of course, Bush's charge that he possessed Weapons of Mass Destruction and the means of deploying them. This was questioned at the time, but it was impossible for critics to challenge the evidence successfully because Bush kept it secret on national security grounds. The U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq without any deployment of WMDs by Iraq all but proved that Iraq had no deployable WMDs, and the fact that the subsequent 18

*I have a friend who has had contact with Donald Rumsfeld, whose underlings tortured prisoners in Iraq. Does that implicate me in that torture?*

months of searching for WMDs produced no more evidence than O.J. Simpson's search for the "real killers" of his ex-wife left the Bush administration in a situation where it had little choice but to admit that it was wrong.

The evidence for Saddam's involvement with the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks was even less credible. All the intelligence proved was that some low-level people associated with Saddam had had some contact with some low-level people associated with al Qaeda. Hell, I have a friend who has had contact with Donald Rumsfeld, whose underlings tortured prisoners in Iraq. Does that implicate me in that torture?

Why did Bush believe, as he claims he did, in the authenticity of the evidence against Saddam? As I argued in these pages, Bush's prejudice against Saddam, which amounted to outright hatred, not only motivated him to believe any evidence against Saddam that he was offered, it also motivated

his minions in the intelligence community to do the same in order to advance their careers. Knowing this, he ought to have been especially critical of such evidence. But of course, he really wanted to invade Iraq, and he was in no mood to question any rationale anyone offered for doing so.

What's interesting is that Bush and CBS have responded in the same way. They defended the authenticity of their evidence even as evidence undermining it accumulated. When the evidence against them became so massive that further defense was laughable, both abandoned their claim that their evidence was authentic, but stuck by their conclusion. Bush admitted that he had been "fooled" by bad intelligence, but maintained that the conclusion the phony evidence supported — that Saddam was a bad guy whom we ought to take out — was nevertheless true. Likewise, Dan Rather all but admitted that the evidence was fake, but held that the underlying story — that Bush had not served nobly in the National Guard — was nevertheless true.

In a rational world, George Bush would be fired from his job, just as Dan Rather should be fired from his. Unfortunately, the situation is not so simple. The only way to fire George Bush is to elect John Kerry in his place — and not only did Kerry support Bush in his war, but Kerry continues to insist that even if he had known at the time that the evidence was faked, he'd still have supported the invasion.

Such is how democracy works in the world's greatest country.

— R.W. Bradford

***The Constitution says the darnedest things*** — Three or four generations ago a story was published called, I believe, "The Archbishop's Test." It was written to oppose attempts at revision of the Book of Common Prayer, which is the handbook of beliefs and rituals used in the Anglican church. In the story, the presiding archbishop insists that before any revision takes place, the priests of the church actually read the Book of Common Prayer and try to practice what it says. Then, if they want to revise it, fine. But first they have to read it.

Someone should write a story like that about the U.S. Constitution.

In late August, I tuned in to Bill O'Reilly's radio show, which I often enjoy. I don't mind O'Reilly's arrogance, I can put up with some big differences of opinion, and I love the way he pictures media authorities and government bureaucrats "hiding under their desks," refusing to comment on what he says. Which is what they do. Anyway, on the day I tuned in I enjoyed a full-throated O'Reilly attack on the New York Times, which had just issued a demand for the abolition of the Electoral College. As he suggested, the Times hopes that a straight popular vote for president would confine campaigning to large-population states, most of which are Democratic — thereby giving Democratic opinion the political edge.

O'Reilly gratified me by insisting that the Electoral College be maintained as it is. It's always been interesting to me that according to "The Federalist Papers," the Electoral College was the one thing for which everyone applauded the nascent Constitution. It's an important barrier between America as we know it and the plebiscitarian, mass-media-dominated, elite-encrusted Euramerica that the Times and

the Democratic Party managers would dearly love to see.

It wasn't until O'Reilly took a friendly phone call that I began to suspect how constitutionally illiterate he himself was. The caller said that he agreed with him about the wrongness of abolishing the Electoral College, but he felt confident that the abolition would never occur. After all, it would require a constitutional amendment, wouldn't it? Well, no, O'Reilly said; I don't think so. I think they can just do it with an act of Congress.

But thanks for your call — I'll send you a T-shirt.

Then he added, obviously not suspecting where this would lead: we'll "research" the issue for you.

Research it? It wouldn't take much research to discover that the Electoral College is mandated by the Constitution and would require a constitutional amendment to be removed.

The Constitution is not a lengthy document. It can easily be printed in its entirety on one page of a daily newspaper. Perhaps, for the benefit of Bill O'Reilly and other profound political thinkers, left, right, and center, people who appear to derive their knowledge solely from the pages of daily newspapers, that is how the Constitution should be made available. Then maybe they'd sit down and read it, for once. I think they'd be surprised by what it says.

— Stephen Cox

**Defining deviousness down** — In last month's "Word Watch," Stephen Cox discussed the slippery slope of meaning, noting how easily a subtle shift in terminology can prove an assertion that logic can't.

In most schools, public and private, grammar and syntax have been optional subjects for more than a generation. Even the highly educated are no longer expected or particularly encouraged to display any command of the language — only pompous elitists and pedants show off like that. But those who know how to wield words and are clever enough to cloak their meanings in jargon and business-speak have an almost incantatory power over the heart and mind of the average man, simply because he is never taught how to resist their spell. With every pretzel-word he swallows, it becomes that much easier to get him to suck down the next, and the next, until every news report contains propaganda that would make even Citizen Kane's cronies blush.

Confucius said, "When words lose their meaning, people lose their liberty." We must educate ourselves and act as guardians of words and their meanings, or we are complicit in that loss.

— A.J. Ferguson

**The lesson of 2004** — It has seemed to me from the get-go that Bush II will win reelection. Very early on, the Democrats convinced themselves that the American people prefer "Anybody But Bush." They thought that the only way

they could lose the election was to waste so much money in the nomination fight that they wouldn't have enough left to run a general election campaign. So they decided that they would unite behind whomever emerged from Iowa as the frontrunner.

The problem is that the Iowa caucuses are structured in such a way that a relatively tiny and unrepresentative group of self-selected and self-important people choose delegates to political conventions, and they are liable to choose a candidate who is, well, not very appealing to most voters — which is exactly what they did when they anointed John Kerry.

It's not merely that Kerry had just about the least coherent set of policies of any Democratic candidate. It's more that he had no coherent program at all. Like Bill Clinton, he has no political principles, aside from a burning conviction that the world would be a better place if he were in charge of things. Unfortunately, Kerry lacks the small-town used car salesmanship and I-feel-your-pain empathy that exuded from

Clinton. He is Bill Clinton, without the charm.

Naturally, Kerry gravitated toward his opponent's platform, hoping to capture middle-of-the-road voters by offering watered down versions of Bush II's views. By the time of the Democratic convention, Kerry actually supported the Iraq War more strongly than Bush and was so close to Bush's domestic policies that his staffers no longer objected when journalists called Kerry's program "Bush Lite."

For nearly four decades, Republican congressional candidates pursued a similar policy: they favored increasing government spending a little less than the Democrats did, expanding government programs a little bit slower than the Democrats, and increasing government intervention a bit less aggressively than the Democrats. And what they got was four decades of minority status, usually such a small

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### #6: CHAPEAU DE POMMES FRITES

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minority that they couldn't even influence legislation. It was only when the old GOP congressional leadership was replaced by aggressive, younger, and more radical people like Newt Gingrich and Dick Armey and the not-going-to-take-it-anymore Contract with America agenda that the GOP had any success at the national level.

Americans simply don't seem to go for moderate copycatism. I didn't expect Kerry to have any more success with this strategy than those Republicans did. George W. Bush may have his flaws — lots of them — but at least he has an actual agenda.

The lesson of this election, I suspect, will be that it's more important to choose a reasonably plausible candidate than to jump on the bandwagon of the candidate chosen by the farmers, college students, and union members of Iowa. Whether the Democrats will learn that lesson remains to be seen. — R.W. Bradford

### *Square government in a round world*

**— It is no secret that Christopher Columbus' discovery of America required a government grant.** Washington Irving wrote a great folktale about Columbus standing in front of Queen Isabella with a globe, trying to convince her the world was round. This

fictional story is so compelling that it is now taught as history, even though the round earth had been an accepted truth centuries before Columbus. Today, there are thousands of scientists approaching the governments of the world, looking for grants to provide capital for their adventures into the frontiers of knowledge. Petitioning governments is an antiquated process that has no place in the modern world.

The trouble with government funding of science is that it gets too political. Popular whims decide what is important, what is dangerous, what gets studied, and what doesn't. The masses are never very good at deciding the direction of science, as new intellectual territory always frightens the ignorant. Many primitive cultures remained primitive for millennia because their elders held veto power over new endeavors, and anything they didn't understand they thought was witchcraft. The reward for discovering new technology was execution. I wonder how many Stone Age scientists were killed for the common crime of static electricity. One minute you're making your hair stand straight out for the kiddies, the next you're being tied to the stake.

In today's political culture, popular fear is given far more credibility than actual science. The debate over genetic engi-

neering is a great example of how limited science is today. There is absolutely no evidence of any danger linked to genetic engineering, yet it is being banned in country after country. I would bet there are very few grants given out to study genetic manipulation as well, especially in more primitive countries like those in Western Europe. Recently, a relief load of corn from the United States that may have contained some genetically engineered seeds was allowed to rot in a warehouse, instead of being given to hungry people. As a result, people starved to death.

Right now all the survivors of Ronald Reagan are traipsing around the country demanding that stem-cell research be

started up again. In reality, the research has never stopped, President Bush just banned federal funding for it. I think a more noble way to honor Reagan would be to build an Alzheimer's research institute, independent of government, in his memory and name. It would certainly be more in line with his philosophies — a shining research facility on the hill. In fact, all the people who are now complaining about the lack of government funding towards stem-cell research could focus their energy better by calling for a separation of science and state; especially the rich and famous people, who

have the resources to build a facility on their own.

The Howard Hughes Medical Institute is a good example of privatized science. Sustained by the financial resources derived from the sale of Hughes Aircraft in 1984, it has become the nation's largest private source of support for biomedical research and science education. Because they do not rely on grants, scientists are liberated from the tedious applications process and can concentrate all their energies solely on science. Because they do not take federal money, they are free to work on things banned by the federal government — like stem-cell research. They are on the cutting edge of that field. It is a great model of how science *should* be done.

Man's curiosity will always drive science. Some of the greatest discoveries occurred long before the days of government grants. Look how much the world changed between 1875 and 1945; in those 70 years, man went from being a ground-bound creature to one who could soar in the skies, or swim down to the depths of the oceans. We went from being animals who had to go to bed when the sun went down, to staying open 24 hours. In 1875, most people spent their whole lives in one little town. By 1940, you could drive coast to coast in just a couple weeks for the cost of pocket change.

The human voice, which could only travel a few feet in 1875, could now be heard clear across the country. Almost every pleasant diversion, like recorded music, movies, and television, was created in that short time span. The cause of infectious diseases was discovered, and many of them could be cured with a simple pill by 1943. Compare what we have now to what was available in 1945. Not much different, is it? Almost everything "modern" was invented before 1945 (including computers). I believe that much of that slowing of progress is because of government regulation and oppressive taxation. I can't prove it, but I can't find another explanation.

— Tim Slagle

### ***It could have been worse***

— When terrorists struck in the United States, the president called for greater government surveillance, higher taxes, the erosion of individual rights, and a foreign war against a petty dictator who was no threat to Americans. When terrorists struck Russia, a country that already has much more extensive government surveillance, horrible taxes, and hardly any legal recognition of individual rights, Russia's president called for more personal power for him — including the power to name governors, taking away a hard-earned democratic right. He also declared that Russia has the right to strike terrorists anywhere and anyway it wants. Come to think of it, hasn't Bush pretty much claimed that same right?

— R.W. Bradford

***Finding Bobby Fischer*** — Former world chess champion Bobby Fischer shocked the world in 1972 by beating the apparently unbeatable Russian Boris Spassky, inspiring all kinds of commentary about the triumph of eccentric individualism over collectivist communism. Now he may be deported from Japan and face up to ten years in prison if the United States government has its way. In 1992, you see, he traveled to the former Yugoslavia for another match with Spassky, which he won. But the U.S. had imposed an economic embargo on then-Yugoslavia, and now wants to prosecute Fischer.

The government should lighten up. Like many people with genius capacities in a narrow field of endeavor, Bobby Fischer is, as former foe Spassky put it in a letter pleading for clemency, "absolutely not social" and something of a loon. But he's no

danger to the United States. Yugoslavia doesn't exist any more. The U.S. should let bygones be bygones.

Spassky defied a Russian embargo against former Yugoslavia in 1992. The Russian government slapped him on the wrist by forbidding him to travel abroad for a month. By insisting pettily on deportation and prosecution, the U.S. may raise questions about which regime is the spiritual and bureaucratic heir of the former Soviet Union. — Alan W. Bock

### ***Suits of armor, medieval and modern***

During the late Middle Ages knights and dukes and other members of the feudal aristocracy had suits of armor. They didn't wear them into battle, because they were so heavy

*News You May Have Missed*

## **News Media: No Iraq News Is Good Iraq News**

NEW YORK — Top U.S. media executives, in a rare joint statement, declared yesterday that since both major-party presidential candidates favor continuing the occupation of Iraq indefinitely, and since insurgents in Iraq favor continuing the insurgency against the indefinitely continuing occupation indefinitely, there is no longer any news from that country, and their coverage from now on will scrupulously attempt to reflect that situation accurately "by like totally not covering it." The statement went on to say that, in view of recent developments and the ongoing intractable problems there, "Iraq is like so totally over and so, you know, 2003."

"Hey, no capital city to be marched on, no statues to be toppled, no evil satanic dictator to be captured, an interim Iraqi government with no real power and no real popular support and no real prospects, no evidence to justify starting the war in the first place, a majority of Americans saying the war was a mistake but no politician or party with any traction to represent them, where's the story?" asked one network executive. "Listen, maybe if we could get Donald Trump in there somehow to fire all the show-offs and losers who dropped the ball on this in the Defense Department and the CIA and the White House, we could sell it as a ruthless, elimination-style reality show, with the survivor being allowed to run the federal gov-

ernment as a subsidiary of Trump's casino operations, but right now it's like there's no reality there, dude."

Other ideas being batted around by network executives include sending a cross-section of young American women and men to Abu Ghraib prison near Baghdad to re-enact, as both "guards" and "prisoners," the scenes of sexual humiliation and enforced nudity that briefly made the news last spring when they involved Iraqis, with the winning "Iraq Idol" being the one who photographs best as voted on by the viewing audience, or having George W. Bush and Ayad Allawi wackily "trade" countries for a season, with Bush cluelessly in charge there and Allawi cluelessly in charge here and everyone in his new "family" gradually losing patience with him from episode to episode, but so far these are considered just vague ideas by network insiders, though they are admittedly more precise, in many ways, than either the Bush administration's or the Kerry campaign's own ideas for Iraq. But for now, as one high-level media-industry source put it, Iraq is "off the table as far as its entertainment value to the American public is concerned, and it never had any significant news value, compared to important ongoing stories like, say, Scott Peterson, let alone Michael Jackson or Martha Stewart."

— Eric Kenning

# Word Watch

by Stephen Cox

Anyone who worries about words is bound to suffer both chronic and acute anxiety over the fate of the language. He or she is also likely to enjoy both brief and lasting ("short-term" and "long-term") pleasures. Among the momentary joys of word watching are the little thrills of glee occasionally inspired by political campaigns. Most political locutions, especially in years divisible by four, are intolerably dull. But once in a while, something interesting gets said.

My favorite moments in this year's campaign have been given me by Sen. Kerry's wife. No, it's not what you think. I relish only her choice of words. On July 25, for example, she gave a speech to the Pennsylvania delegation of the Democratic national convention, a speech in which she deplored political hate speech — in a few well-chosen, hate-filled words. In what appears to have been her peroration, she intoned: "We need to turn back some of the creeping, un-Pennsylvanian and sometimes un-American traits that are coming into some of our politics."

Un-Pennsylvanian! I've never heard that one before. And who but a genius, or a total fool, would combine such a word with "creeping," then use it to modify "traits"? "Keep outta that ol' Bush house — it's got the creeping traits!" Only by abandoning yourself to the most peculiar impulses of the imagination can you turn the idea of un-Pennsylvanian activities into a source of gothic horror.

Reporters pestered Mrs. Kerry to explain her comments, whereupon she denied making them. Of course, that's what politicians always say, especially when, as in this case, they don't know that their comments have been videotaped.

*It's not just political hacks and untutored illiterates who dangle modifiers and create ridiculous pictures.*

Pestered again, Mrs. Kerry reverted to a more individual type, inviting the press to "shove it." That was another burst of inspiration: imagine Martha Washington saying that. Imagine even Hillary Clinton saying it, at least to a reporter.

When Mr. Kerry responded to Mrs. Kerry's outburst, he said, "I think my wife speaks her mind appropriately." "Appropriately" is a delightful weasel-word, but "my wife" goes further. It daringly returns us to the dark, old, patriarchal days when wives were owned by husbands — another gothic

effect. (Strange how often modern liberals say things like that, when they're under pressure.) But "mind" is going too far.

Other pleasures, strange and strong, were contributed by the Democratic convention itself (sorry, none from the Republican convention — far too dull). My favorite was a gift of the twelve-year-old girl who, according to the Associated Press, "Wow[ed] Convention Delegates" by critiquing the filthy language of Vice President Cheney. "When our vice president," she lisped, "had a disagreement with a Democratic senator, he used a really bad word. If I said that word, I would be put in a timeout. I think he should be put in a timeout."

The dear child! Unfortunately, mature reflection soon returned, at least to me. Was there anything really new, or even naive, about such comments? This column has noticed them more than once. They're one more instance of a century-long phenomenon, the reversion of political speech and "thought" to what used to be called "the child mind." "For the Children." "Children First." Are you tired of those slogans? I am. It isn't all that healthy to take your politics from the mouths of babes.

But now that I've reached the field of chronic problems, I want to bring up something that has no intrinsic connection with politics — a problem that, despite my best efforts here, shows no sign of going away. It's the problem of the dangling modifier.

The Godzilla-like form of this grammatical blunder made another landfall on Sept. 3, when former President Clinton's office released a statement on his medical condition that contained this sentence: "After undergoing additional testing this morning at Westchester Medical Center, doctors advised he should undergo bypass surgery."

Never mind the repetition of "undergo"; just look at what the sentence literally says about Clinton's medics. It says that they, not he, underwent "additional testing." You don't believe that's what the sentence says? Well, what does that big hunk of verbiage starting with "After" and ending with "Center" hang off of? Who underwent additional testing? It wasn't "Clinton," who isn't even in the sentence, or "he," standing proudly aloof from "Center." No, the big modifier dangles from the next noun after "Center," which is "doctors." It therefore pictures Clinton's "doctors" being tested and retested, no doubt to make sure that their advice was good before they were permitted to shove the former president — who, strangely, needed no such elaborate examination — into quadruple bypass surgery. Good luck, Mr. President.

OK, so you knew what the sentence actually meant. But grammatical rules exist so that sentences can say what they're

supposed to mean, without projecting any unintendedly ludicrous images. And it's not just political hacks and untutored illiterates who dangle modifiers and create ridiculous pictures. Here's an American historian, talking about an historical figure whom he's trying to glamorize: "A penniless surgeon, his charming manners and romantic marriage with Lady Caroline Keppel, daughter of the 2nd Earl of Albemarle, granddaughter of the Duke of Richmond and sister of Admiral Keppel, brought him notoriety and the king's patronage." No doubt they did; but if you aren't completely mesmerized by this digest of aristocratic connections, you will notice that the gentleman's "manners" and "marriage" — not the gentleman himself — emerged from med school as "a penniless surgeon." It's strange, I know, this possibility that a doctor could ever be penniless, but I suppose it's hard to make money when you spend all your time being charming and romantic, especially when you don't even have the advantage of being human.

I wonder whether historians have some special attraction to dangling modifiers. Here's the otherwise sleep-inspiring author of a recent biography of John Adams (how can anyone be dull about Adams? I don't know, but this author is): "After landing on the Kent country coast, about sixty miles from London, three days were consumed in a carriage ride to the capital." Unhappy "days"! They "landed" but to be "consumed." Adams himself apparently had adventures that were just as odd: "Once crystallized, Adams found himself in the Federalist party." Well, maybe that's what happens to statesmen. Once they're crystallized, they're just thrown into the same test-tube as all those other Federalists.

Whatever scientific evidence may eventually accumulate about the verbal fixations of historians, it's clear that British authors, for some reason, are much more addicted to dangling modifiers than American authors are. Even the world-famous Virginia Woolf, notorious for the preciousness of her writing, shows an illiterate's delight in danglers of every shape and size. Her novel "Mrs. Dalloway" is full of them. "Lying awake," she says, "the floor creaked." Well, you'd creak too, if you had to lie there day and night, staring at the ceiling, while people walked up and down on you. And it's not surprising that one of Woolf's characters feels that something is "very queer" on her first visit to London: "Now walking through Regent's Park in the morning, this couple on the chairs gave her quite a turn." She should have told that couple to get down off their chairs and walk in their shoes like normal folk. But those high-toned Londoners would probably not have listened.

There used to be an expression for pretentious writing: it was said to be "on stilts." Perhaps, in honor of Virginia Woolf, we can say that pretentious writing is also "on chairs." When you think about it . . . how many of the errors that I've mentioned in this column did not originate from someone's trying to write or talk with both nostrils in the air?

and cumbersome that the warrior who wore one wouldn't have been able to move. They were reserved for display, for ceremonial occasions and ancestral halls. Even in tournaments a jousting had to be lifted up onto his horse with pulleys or lowered from a platform because his armor was so ponderous and immobilizing. It didn't matter. Suits of armor conferred prestige. They were symbols of invulnerability. During troubled and dangerous times, well-off people go in for useless but ostentatious, overawing elaborations of defensive prowess and impenetrability.

Today, for instance, we have SUVs. They're huge, heavy, and cumbersome, and they don't make their owners safer because they overturn easily and are harder than ordinary cars to maneuver and stop. It doesn't matter. They're suits of armor, symbols of invulnerability.

So is the Bush administration. Its cumbersome, heavy-handed, lead-footed foreign policy hasn't made the country any safer. It's made it less safe, because the immobilizing obsession with Iraq meant that Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda escaped being encircled and finished off in Afghanistan, as American troops and resources and intelligence units were reserved for or transferred to Iraq, where the occupation has created new Islamic fundamentalist enemies and recruited new members for the old ones. It doesn't matter. Bush's unwieldy, rigid, ironclad, crusading apparatus, his boasting and "Mission Accomplished" posturing, are for display only. The point is to look invulnerable, not to be able to maneuver and change direction. It's impressive and useless, just as suits of armor were impressive and useless.

That's why Bush seems (in mid-September, when this is being written) likely to defeat Kerry, who offers roughly the same dead-weight, dead-ahead, dead-end strategy in Iraq, but in a muffled, muddled version that's like the suit without the armor, an immobilizing straitjacket of cautious hesitation and clumsy self-contradiction. Bush's invincible and inflexible obliviousness seems better suited to our armor-suited national mood. — Eric Kenning

**Joint efforts** — Seattle voters last September approved Initiative 75, making adult possession and use of small amounts of marijuana the "lowest law enforcement priority" for the city. I have anecdotal evidence that the police are taking that to heart — a little good news to make campaign season almost bearable.

A friend of mine attended the Seattle Hempfest on Aug. 21-22. The organizers of such events must formally prohibit smoking marijuana there, but, of course, many attendees smoke anyway. My friend emailed me about the experience a couple of weeks later:

"The police had a great relationship with the attendees. Just about everyone was smoking — pipes, bongs, joints, etc. — the police ignored it. It was the first time I actually felt like the police were there to protect and to serve. They were there to make sure nobody took advantage of us in our stoned state, and they also made sure no other drugs except pot were used." — Patrick Quealy

**The need for Houghnhnm News** — I've talked before about the peril of Yahoo News, about the politically distorted picture of the world that the dominant source of computer news passes along to its millions of clients. If you doubt what I've said about Yahoo's distortions, try its report on the climactic act of the Republican national convention, the president's speech. Its lead story (Sept. 3) appeared with this headline: "Bush Glosses Over Complex Facts in Speech."

I'd be curious to see that approach to a modern-liberal speech, but on Yahoo it's strictly reserved for the Right (or phenomena such

as George Bush, whom the Far Left regards as Right).

Incidents like this illustrate, in a particularly gross way, the gulf between the democratic (small "d") media and the would-be media managers. The real news of the mid-campaign season was the swift-boat veterans' successful use of the Internet to knock Sen. Kerry off-message. To make their charges against Kerry known, and to turn their book about them into the nation's No. 1 bestseller, they used a network of conservative and libertarian websites that neither the New York Times nor the on-air networks nor Yahoo News seemed ever to have heard of. They succeeded so well that Kerry's minions in the media reacted violently against him, charging him with failure to respond to the massive attack until it was too late.

This is, of course, absurd. Not a single one of Kerry's disgruntled media advocates addressed the issue of the swift-boat vets until after the damage had been done. They had no intention of responding — they were either ignorant, as usual, about the interests of the 80% of the populace that does not trust the establishment media, or they were following their normal game plan: silence the real opposition by ignoring it.

I can't recall a single Yahoo News headline about the swift-boat vets, or Kerry's early attempts to avoid their charges. What we get from the Internet news managers is the digital equivalent of attack ads against Bush. These must have an effect on someone. But I wonder: What kind of world do these people think they're living in? Do they imagine that a computer that is capable of accessing their nonsense isn't capable of reaching every other source of news as well?

— Stephen Cox

**Elephants ascendant** — As the November election approaches, the question is not if America is going to move in a conservative direction, the question is when and how much. For the first time since the New Deal, conservatives may end up controlling every branch of the federal government. It is easy to imagine President Bush being reelected in a landslide, and the Republicans picking up seats in the House and Senate. By combining their strength, they could then remake the judicial branch.

Even if all this doesn't happen in this election, it will eventually. It is almost inevitable that there will be another

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major terrorist attack sometime in the United States during the next few years. Whenever it happens, Americans will be eager to make the Republican government stronger to prevent further terrorist attacks. How will the conservatives use their newfound power?

— Alan Ebenstein

### **Mandatory maximum compliance** —

Anyone who cares a whit for privacy had to be very upset by the 2000 census. As I reported in an article four years ago, "an estimated one in six households will receive a 'long' Census 2000 form with dozens of questions and subquestions. For example, 'Last week did this person do *any* work for either pay or profit?' (Emphasis in original.) 'At what location...?' All 'wages, salary, commissions, bonuses or tips' must be accounted for. Indeed, all income, including interest, dividends, rental income, and welfare must be listed. The form demands to know the value of your house and estate. Further, the long form inquires into the citizenship status of each person enumerated. Compliance is mandatory." In reality, however, prosecution for non-compliance was rare and (as I recall) the penalties were fairly light.

John W. Whitehead, in an article entitled "The Thought Police and the American Community Survey," warns of a new threat to privacy from the Census Bureau: the American Community Survey. "Unlike the traditional census, which collects data every ten years, the American Community Survey is taken every year at a cost of hundreds of millions of dollars. And at 24 pages, it contains some of the most detailed and intrusive questions ever put forth in a census questionnaire. These concern matters that the government simply has no business knowing, including a person's job, income, physical and emotional health, family status, place of residence and intimate personal and private habits. . . ."

As with the regular census, compliance is mandatory, but this time the authorities are baring real teeth. Whitehead notes, "For every question not answered, there is a \$100 fine. And for every intentionally false response to a question, the fine is \$500. Therefore, if a person representing a two-person household refused to fill out any questions or simply answered nonsensically, the total fines could range from upwards of \$10,000 and \$50,000 for noncompliance."

Will a cash-strapped government pursue this easy source of revenue? I wouldn't bet against it. — Wendy McElroy

**Red carpet welcome** — Since I've enlisted, I've had a lot of nights when I've wondered if joining the Air Force was the right decision to make. Worry, paranoia, and the usual fretfulness, I suppose.

Not tonight.

Tonight, I was granted the honor of serving a group of men and women returning — safely, thank God — from Iraq. Over two hundred enlisted, officer, and civilian personnel.

These folks have been away from their families for over 100 days each, and there are others who will stay even longer — which has to be hell for their families. I was an augmentee to the crew that handled the grunt work for their return. We swept the runway, set up cordons to prevent little kids from running onto the flight line, and did "crowd control" in case the cordons didn't work.

One other airman and I got the coolest job of the night: we rolled out the red carpet to the returning crew. Literally. Before the colonel hopped aboard and gave them their "wel-

come home" speech, before the Air Force Band of the Pacific played the Air Force song, before their names were announced as they climbed down the stairs to exit the aircraft that brought them back from the desert — we rolled out the red carpet.

A lot of dads hugged their kids on that carpet. A lot of husbands kissed their wives. A lot of friends slapped each other on the back and smiled.

This is what it's all about for me. I don't give a shit about the politics. These guys could be coming back from anywhere in the world, doing any sort of work — and that red strip of cloth would still tell the same stories. Families back together. Friends reunited. Love and relief and elation and exhaustion and jetlag and excitement — the gamut of emotions, all on that one short walkway.

It's given me perspective, too. I don't give a damn if we're in Iraq for the oil, or the nukes that we admit they didn't have, or for freedom, or whatever. My job is to support deployed troops — providing the ground teams with communications, providing their commanders with good information. Giving them the tools that help them stay alive in an environment where, like it or not, we're at war.

And if doing my job well means that there's one more story for that red carpet to tell about a dad seeing his newborn daughter for the first time — then I'm going to do the best goddamned job I can, whatever my politics may be.

These families, these lives, these people — they transcend any political beliefs I may have. Whether I'm pro-war or anti-war, I want everybody to come home safely. And I'll do my damnedest to make that happen.

Maybe some will think I'm evil, to do my best to protect troops that many say shouldn't be there. Maybe somebody who believes that the war is wrong will also believe that I am wrong for working as hard as I can to ensure our success. And maybe they think that I'm a bad person for not actively opposing something that they see as evil.

Well, that's fine. Those people are entitled to their opinions. I'm not here to win hearts and minds in Iraq or America. I'm not doing my job for oil or nukes or freedom. I'm here because I want to see soldiers and sailors and marines and airmen make it home safely. I want as many boots on that red carpet as will fit. I want kids to grow up with their mommies or their daddies alive and well.

And if that's evil — then I guess I'll take the label.

— Paul Wright

**May the nobler Yalie win** — Burke's Peerage, the British keeper of all things aristocratic and royal, has predicted that John Kerry will win the election in November because he has more royal connections than Dubya. The Bushes are no slouches when it comes to royal connections, having more than Al Gore and claiming kinship with

#### News You May Have Missed

## IOC Vows Drastic Changes in Next Olympics

GENEVA, Switzerland — After a careful review of television ratings and a survey of viewers' preferences during the recent 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, International Olympic Committee officials have promised that all events and competitions will be eliminated for the 2008 Games in Beijing, with the exception of women's beach volleyball. The survey found that 97% of male viewers discovered, during the extensive network and cable Olympics coverage in August, that women's beach volleyball was their favorite sport, and that they didn't really care to watch anything else, or for that matter do anything else, including mow the lawn, go to work, or listen to their wives or girlfriends. Most women viewers were similarly transfixed by the two-woman-team event, with 83% saying that they wished they had a name like Misty May and 98% saying that they wished they had a butt like Kerri Walsh.

Women's beach volleyball was

added to the Olympics in 1996 as a tribute to the original spirit and traditions of the games after a team of archaeologists, conducting a dig not far from Corinth, Greece, unearthed an ancient polychrome vase, dated circa 650 B.C., depicting four young women leaping and sprawling on opposites sides of a fishing net strung between two poles placed in what appears to be a sandy area, with a large ball suspended in the air between them. All four women are "completely naked and completely hot," as one archaeologist put it, and it is now believed that they were performing at the original games at Olympia, where all athletes competed in the nude. "It's really quite an amazing and historically significant find," the director of the dig, Professor Fulton R. Frisby of Harvard, said at the site of the discovery back in 1996, cradling the vase in his arms while other exultant archaeologists crowded around him, "because up till now we believed that

only males were allowed to compete in the earliest ancient Olympics, but if you examine the vase closely, it's clear that women were not only in the games, they were very young and very lithe and very well-formed and, hey, let go of that, it's mine."

In an official statement, the IOC said that gold-medal Olympic competitions in Beijing in 2008 would include the 200-meter women's beach volleyball, the 400-meter women's beach volleyball, the women's beach volleyball marathon, synchronized women's beach volleyball, underwater women's beach volleyball, and women's beach volleyball on stilts. Many of the events, in a further attempt to recapture the pure original spirit of the ancient games, will prohibit players from appearing in distracting bikini-like outfits and instead require that they wear absolutely nothing at all, "like maybe the events with those Brazilian babes in them," one committee member said. — Eric Kenning

Britain's Queen Elizabeth, as well as Henry III and Charles II. Through his mother, Rosemary Forbes, however, Kerry is supposedly related to all the royal houses of Europe, as well as Ivan the Terrible of Russia, the Shahs of Persia — and Henry II, Henry III, and Richard the Lionhearted of England.

Harold Brooks-Baker, director of Burke's, claims that in the last 42 elections the "candidate with the most royal genes and chromosomes has always won the November presidential elections." And you thought we threw out the kings in 1776.

— Alan W. Bock

**Two ways to socialize risk** — We all face risks every day. When risks get big enough, we try to find a way to protect ourselves from them. In the free market, the chosen method of protecting oneself from risk is insurance: a group of people who face similar risks pay modest amounts into a kitty to compensate those in the group who actually suffer damage. Insurance first developed as a means of socializing the cost of maritime risk: every merchant knew that a small portion of the ships that went to sea for trade would not come back, thanks to bad weather, bad seamanship, or piracy, so they paid into a fund that would cover the losses suffered by owners of the few ships that didn't come back. The same notion quickly was adapted for fire and other risks.

The second way of socializing risk is newer, and it is simpler: simply force everyone into the pool of premium payers, whether they face the risk or not, through the action of government. A good example of the idea here is that the government should pay for virtually all medical care. This idea has obvious appeal to egalitarians, to people who want to allay their feelings of guilt for not being generous to those in genuine need, and to those not wanting to be responsible for their own or their loved ones' medical expenses. Of course, it has problems in practice: if all medical care is free, no one has any reason to keep expenses under control, and not surprisingly, the costs escalate to the point where countries with socialized medicine have to ration medical care.

But socialization of risk by force is far more pervasive than this. Consider the risk of living in areas where hurricanes are fairly regular occurrences. Whenever the people who live there are afflicted, the federal government steps in with billions of dollars. This has two effects: not only does it drive up the cost of cleanup and repair, it also encourages people to engage in dangerous activities — like building houses in hurricane areas.

Curiously, not all weather risks are socialized. I grew up in northern Michigan where Mother Nature dumps huge amounts of snow. It costs lots of money to remove the snow, and this cost is borne by the people who live there, unlike the residents of Florida who get federal "emergency" money to remove the debris left by hurricanes.

Socialization by force has other costs as well: it provides a rationale for government to regulate the most private actions. The argument for the legal harassment of cigarette smokers is that smokers get sick and raise medical costs. The argument for mandatory seat-belt laws is that those who don't wear seat belts are more likely to be injured and have higher medical expenses. And so on.

The growing government socialization of all risk means a lot more than the inefficiency and waste that is inherent to all government programs. It both encourages people to take risks that they would otherwise avoid and encourages people to support greater and greater incursions into their own private lives, though of course, they generally perceive these incursions as affecting primarily the lives of other, less-enlightened people than themselves.

In a society where government doesn't socialize risk, people will still live in hurricane belts or forests with high fire danger. But they will realize that they have to pay for the risks they face and behave accordingly. Fewer will engage in risky behavior, despite the fact that they do not face government intervention in their own individual lifestyle choices. Not a bad deal, in my mind.

— R.W. Bradford

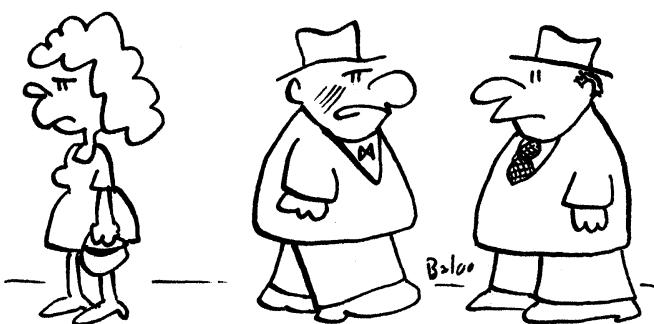
**The Fugitive** — CBS News demonstrated its bias by devoting an entire "60 Minutes" segment to George Bush's National Guard record. Before the segment even aired on the West Coast, bloggers had recognized that the documents proving their allegations were made with a word processor. While a more impartial journalist would have admitted the mistake and issued a retraction, Dan Rather continued to defend the story even as evidence mounted of the documents' recent fabrication.

It's like the final chase scene of an action movie, in which the criminal dashes into a building and starts running up the stairs, only to find himself cornered in a room many stories up, with no choice but to be caught by his pursuer or jump out a window to his death. Dan Rather is on the metaphorical window ledge.

— Tim Slagle

**A momentary shift in strategy** — Silly me! When President Bush told Matt Lauer that we can't "win" the vaunted war on terror in the way traditional, state-on-state wars are won, I thought that might have been the opening gambit in a shift to more candor about the problems that confront the United States around the world.

You can never eliminate terrorism, because terrorism is a tactic, not a concrete enemy. Terrorism is used by those too weak to prevail in a conventional military confrontation. Terrorists are fanatical enough about their cause, and contemptuous enough of human life, to pull off something so shocking as to cause a less ruthless foe to yield something of value or falter in resolve. As long as there are political conflicts there is likely to be terrorism. You can undermine groups that practice terrorism, and you can diminish whatever credibility they may be granted by eliminating some of



"What good is the right to the pursuit of happiness if they keep slapping your face?"

their grievances. But eliminating terrorism from the world is most unlikely. Simple honesty would seem to require acknowledging this.

Politicians, however, seldom see simple honesty as a winning strategy. So my hope that this was an opening for candor lasted mere hours. Soon Dubya was assuring Rush that winning was a sure thing, and Rush was assuring his listeners that resolve and will were enough.

Bush's flirtation with telling the truth about the war was a classic Washington gaffe: departing from the scripted party line into an inadvertent utterance of truth. Naturally, the Democrats, seeing an opening, rushed in to say that they had no doubt about our ability to win this thing, and they would do it for sure — although they have yet to explain just how they plan to do it.

The political establishment breathed a sigh of relief that its false pieties — mainly the pretension that announcing a government plan or program is all that's necessary to address a problem — were once again secure. I'm reminded of H.L. Mencken's remark that the American people prefer lies to truth, and that anybody who bludgeons them too often with uncomfortable or even unconventional truths will be duly punished.

— Alan W. Bock

**If not I, who?** — One characteristic of my more polemical criticism that editors sometimes find objectionable is frequent references to my own experience. Some editors try hard, perhaps too hard, to erase it, often to deleterious effect. This is unfortunate, because the principle behind my strategy is simply this: unless something said is true for me it might not be true at all.

Coming of age in the 1960s, I remember reading statements that were patently untrue, considering the writer's experience. I remember social situations like schools or even Western countries described as "jails," though the writer could have easily walked out of them. Glib ideologues often thought they could illustrate a stereotype with patently dubious anecdotes. Do you remember James Baldwin indicting America for killing Martin Luther King, when it was an individual named James Earl Ray who did it?

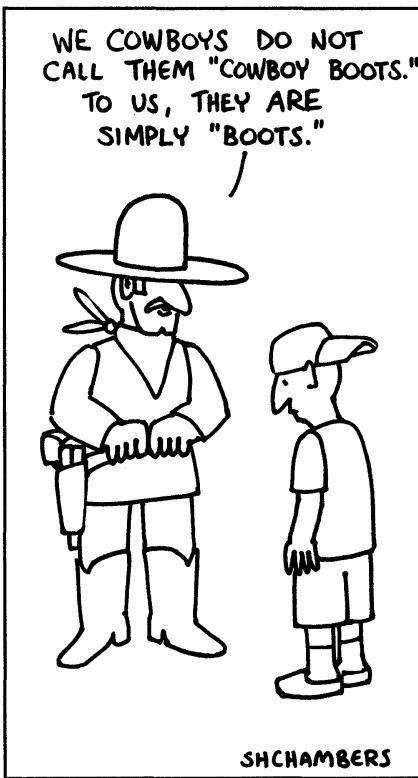
A prominent African-American professor known for decrying pervasive American racism once provided from his own experience the example of people moving away from him in a crowded elevator. However, one need not be too skeptical to recognize that perhaps something else could make them move away — body odor, physically imposing size, a walking stick in his hand, or simply nothing at all. Likewise false was much of the writing about the experience of poverty, which I've known as an independent writer who began his career residing in a low-rent Harlem housing project. I recall statements about project life that clearly contradicted my experiences there, usually made by people who had only imagined a life in the projects.

Respecting my own experience, I know certain things because I've seen them, I've done them, and I've researched them, often discovering truths contrary to common opinion. It would be false for me not to incorporate my own experience. What A.D. Coleman said about himself is likewise applicable to me: "I don't represent some unidentified but implicitly larger group of people from whom I'm the elected or self-appointed spokesperson." Schooled not in journalism but in the great tradition of essaying, I never pretended to a false "objectivity" in trying to aim at the truth.

— Richard Kostelanetz

**Process, not product** — Margaret Thatcher's son Mark, variously described as a race-car driver or a businessman, has been arrested in South Africa for allegedly giving financial support to a coup attempt in Equatorial Guinea that failed in March. He might not have done it, of course, but if he did, you would think that with his hereditary background he would know how these things are done. You get into a duly recognized government before you organize such a plot. Then it is called "regime change," and is applauded by right-thinkers as a giant step toward democracy.

— Alan W. Bock



Many people were touched by Director's words. Melvin Reder, writer of several articles on the history of Chicago-school economics, notes that when he was researching his articles, he was impressed by the number of people who mentioned Director, including Edward Levi and Robert Bork.

Director graduated from Yale in 1924 before coming to the University of Chicago as a graduate student, eventually becoming a junior faculty member in the late '20s and early '30s. He was originally a follower of Paul Douglas at Chicago, but shifted his allegiance to Frank Knight, a switch which played a major role in his departure from Chicago in the mid '30s.

He played a major role in the publication of Friedrich Hayek's "Road to Serfdom" in the United States, passing page proofs from the British edition to Frank Knight, who in turn forwarded them to the University of Chicago Press, which published the American edition.

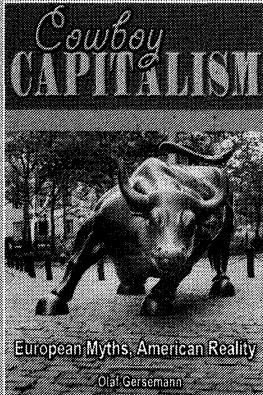
When he returned to Chicago in 1946, he went into the law school instead of the department of economics. He

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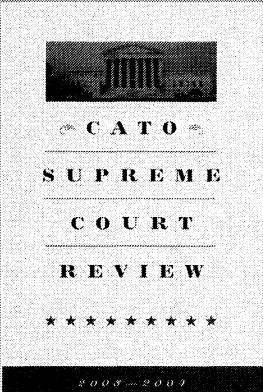
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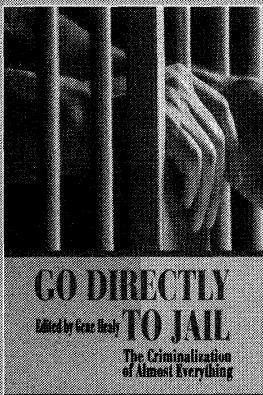
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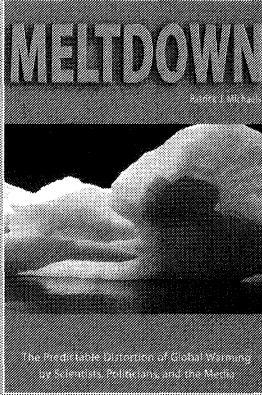
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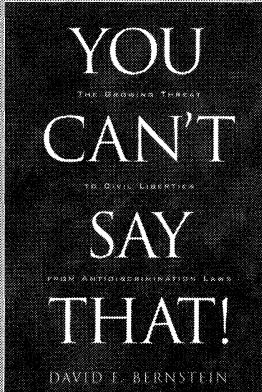
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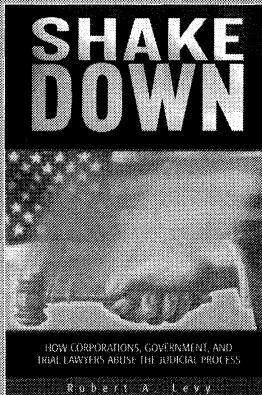
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# The Politics of Government Spending

*by R. W. Bradford*

Most people believe that Democrats are big spenders and that Republicans are tight-fisted. The evidence leads to a very different conclusion.

How do various political regimes affect government spending and, hence, the size of government's intrusion into our lives? This is a fundamental issue in political and economic theory.

Dr. Milton Friedman, Nobel laureate in economics and one of our era's greatest advocates of liberty, recently entered the debate on the historical background of the question. Dr. Friedman wrote to *Liberty* challenging my claim that "government spending grew rapidly" during the Reagan presidency. Friedman offered as evidence a graph showing "Federal non-defense spending as a percentage of National Income" from 1960 to 2003. This graph showed a leveling off of such spending in 1983. Friedman stated that "the record speaks for itself" and offered no further argument or data.

I couldn't see why "government spending" should be limited to "federal non-defense spending." Nor could I see why spending should be normalized by national income, unless one believes that the government is somehow entitled to a certain portion. It made more sense to me to consider "government spending" to refer to all the money government spends, to adjust the actual spending figures for inflation, and to normalize spending for changes in population.

I searched in vain for figures on government spending per capita, corrected for inflation. But I found on the Census Bureau's website annual government spending for each fiscal year from 1947 to 2003 as well as annual population figures, and, of course, the Consumer Price Index is available from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. So it was just a matter of putting the numbers into a spreadsheet and

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doing relatively simple calculations to determine annual government spending per capita, and to see whether it grew more slowly during the Reagan years than before or since. The data verified my earlier claim: spending grew a little faster during the Reagan years than during the Carter and Ford years that preceded his terms in office, and at a much faster rate than during the Bush I and Clinton years that followed. I wrote a brief response to Friedman, which was published in the October *Liberty*.

It quickly occurred to me that the data I had developed might help answer questions like these:

Does spending grow more slowly during Republican presidencies than during Democratic presidencies?

Does spending grow more slowly when Republicans control the House? the Senate?

Does divided government (in which one party controls Congress and the other party controls the White House) result in lower spending growth? If so, does spending grow faster under Republican presidents with Democratic congresses than under Democratic presidents with Republican congresses?

So I added fields to my database for the political affiliation of the president and the party which controlled each

house of Congress during each fiscal year, and began to look for correlations. A summary of the data can be found in the chart on the facing page.

It quickly became evident that the more recent data are quite different from the earlier data in two significant ways:

1) During the earlier years, annual changes in government spending were much greater than in later years. During the first six years of available data, during which

*Since 1970, spending has grown 64% faster when a Republican sits in the White House than when a Democrat does.*

Harry Truman was president, the average annual variation in per capita spending was 14.6%. The highest average annual change in any six-year period since Truman was president was 5.6%. As you can see from the graph below, which shows the year-to-year absolute change in spending, spending has become much less volatile over the years, and especially after 1970.

2) During the years before the presidency of Republican Richard Nixon (i.e., before fiscal year 1970), there was a strong correlation between the Republicans and lower growth in government spending, and between the Democrats and higher growth. Since 1970, this correlation has hardly existed.

Prior to 1970, the correlation was strong:

- When a Republican held the White House, spending fell by an average of 0.70% per year; with a Democrat in the White House, it grew by an average of 5.98%.
- With Republican control of Congress, spending fell by an average of 2.12% per year; with Democrats in control, spending rose by an average of 4.82% annually.
- With the GOP in control of both the White House and

Congress, spending fell by an average of 6.85% per year. It is worth noting that this is a very small sample — just two years (fiscal years 1954–55). During the twelve years that the Democrats controlled Congress and the White House, spending rose by an average of 6.55% per year.

During the six years of split government with a Republican White House, spending grew at an average rate of 4.92%. During the two years (fiscal years 1948–49) of split government with a Democrat in the White House, spending grew by 1.46%.

This strong correlation between spending growth and the party affiliation of the president disappeared with the election of Richard Nixon in 1968.

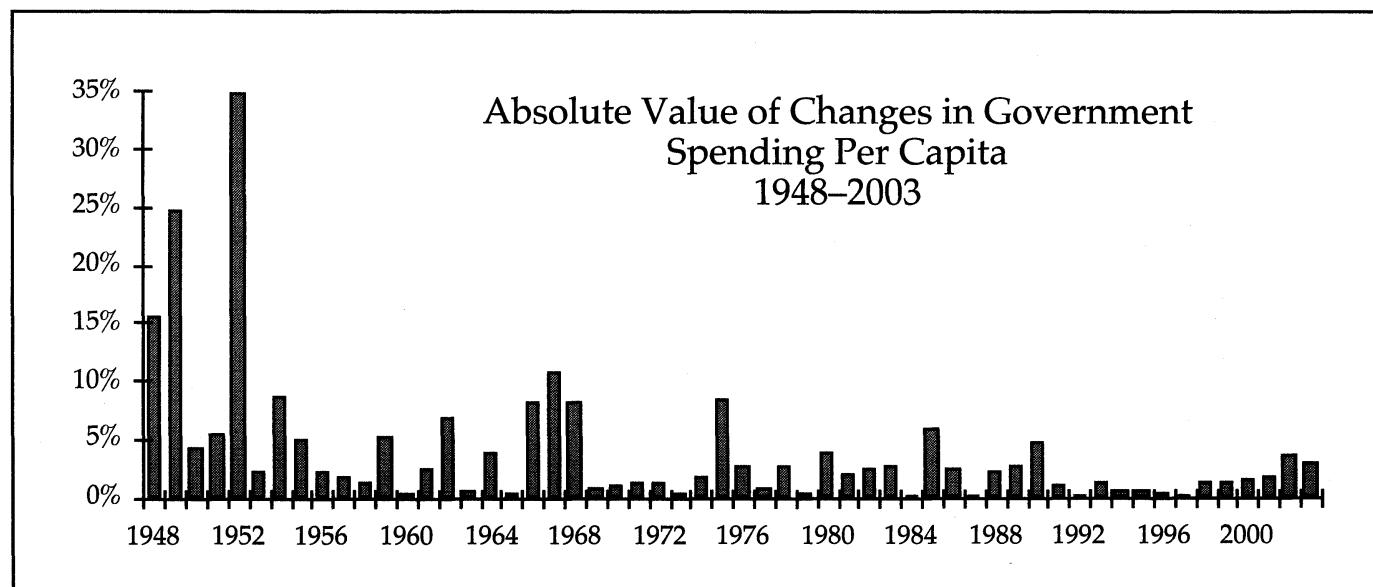
### A New Era Now Begins

Starting in 1968, a very different pattern emerges. Government continued to grow, but year-to-year spending changes became much less volatile. Part of the reason is that during the 1947 to 1969 period, government spending more than doubled, so that absolute changes resulted in much smaller changes expressed as percentages. We can hypothesize about other factors causing this drop in volatility; for example, the abandonment among Republicans of opposition to the welfare state.

But much more importantly, the correlations between spending and political parties changed radically. Prior to fiscal year 1970, there were very strong correlations between fiscal restraint and Republican control of the White House and Congress, and between spending increases and Democratic control of those institutions. Since then, there has been hardly any correlation, despite the fact that Republican candidates for office generally claim to favor fiscal restraint and Democratic candidates for office generally claim to favor the expansion of government.

Consider the following:

- In the twelve years that a Democrat has sat in the White House, spending has increased at an average rate of 1.29% per year; during the 22 years of Republican presiden-



cies, government spending has risen at an average rate of 2.12%. In other words, spending has grown 64% faster when a Republican sits in the White House than when a Democrat does.

- During the 20 years Democrats have controlled both houses of Congress, spending has grown at an average rate of 1.84% per year, more than double the average rate of 0.89% per year during the six years the GOP ran Congress. (During the other eight years, when control of Congress was split between the two parties, spending grew at an average rate of 2.52%. The split-control years all occurred during Republican presidencies.)

- When Democrats controlled the White House plus both houses of Congress, spending grew at 1.70% per year, slightly below the average growth rate of 1.83% for the entire period.

- The slowest spending growth occurred when a Democrat sat in the White House and Republicans controlled both houses of Congress. Spending rose by an average of just 0.89% during the six years of this situation, which all occurred with Bill Clinton as president and Newt Gingrich as Speaker of the House.

- During the 14 years Republicans controlled the White House and Democrats controlled both houses of Congress, spending grew at an average annual rate of 1.92%. During the eight years with a Republican president and a split Congress, spending grew at 2.54% per year.

All this must come as a shock to the overwhelming majority of Americans who believe that Democrats are spenders and Republicans want to cut government spending. The simple fact is that during the past 34 years, government spending has grown significantly faster when a Republican has sat in the White House.

But the old prejudice still seems to have some validity regarding Congress: Democratic-controlled congresses have increased spending at a rate more than twice the rate that Republican congresses have.

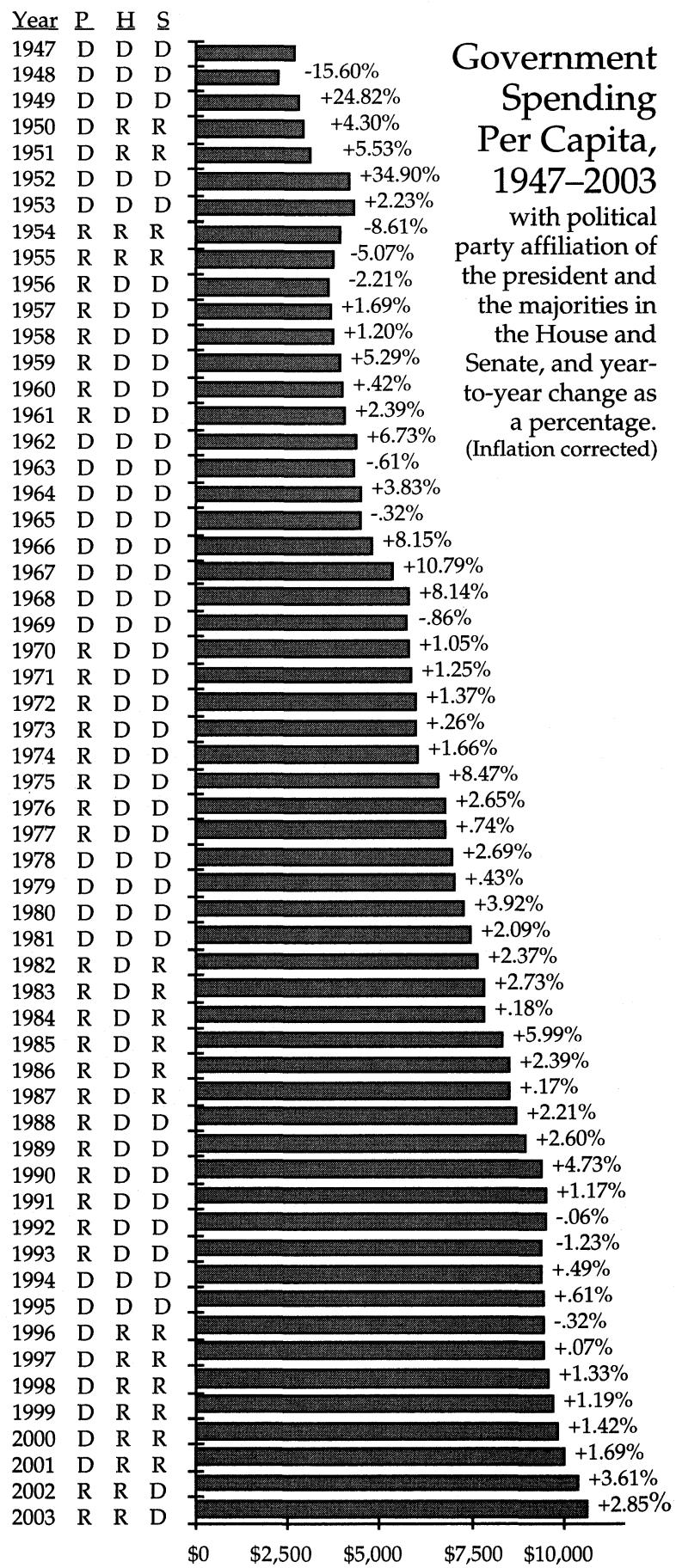
Government spending has grown fastest when a Republican was in the White House and Democrats controlled Congress. It has grown most slowly when a Democrat was president and Republicans controlled Congress.

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To this point, everything I've written is strictly factual, derived from figures published by the Bureau of the Census and the Department of Labor. So far as I am able to

## Government Spending Per Capita, 1947–2003

with political party affiliation of the president and the majorities in the House and Senate, and year-to-year change as a percentage. (Inflation corrected)



determine, these facts cannot be unchallenged.

But they are open to interpretation, and what follows is an attempt to provide background and explanation for why the growth in government spending in relation to political control of Congress and the presidency has taken the course I've described above.

### The Early Post-War Years (1947–1969)

The strong correlations between Democrats and spending and between Republicans and restraint during the early postwar period make perfect sense. The Democratic administrations of Truman, Kennedy, and Johnson were characterized by war and the expansion of the welfare state, both of which are expensive projects, while the single GOP presidency was a time of peace and restraint.

The domestic policy of President Harry Truman (fiscal years 1947–53) called for federal subsidies for (and control) of medical care, housing, and education, as well as other expansions of government programs, under the slogan of "The Fair Deal." Not all of Truman's ambitious program was enacted, but enough of it was implemented that in combination with the Korean War (which began in fiscal year 1950) government spending increased at an average rate of 6.77% during Truman's second administration.

John F. Kennedy (fiscal years 1962–65) was elected on a platform calling for increased government spending domestically and an aggressive anti-communist foreign policy. But a coalition of conservative southern Democrats and old-line Republicans made it difficult to enact his domestic program and, with the exception of his abortive invasion of Cuba in 1962, his war against communism didn't really come to fruition until after his untimely death. Spending grew at an average of 3.27% per year during his brief administration.

Lyndon B. Johnson (1965–69) called for a massive increase in the welfare state, under the slogan of the "Great Society," and greatly escalated the war in Vietnam, which Eisenhower had almost entirely avoided and for which

*When Democrats controlled the White House plus both houses of Congress, spending grew at 1.70% per year, slightly below the average growth rate of 1.83% for the entire period.*

Kennedy had laid the groundwork. Unsurprisingly, government spending increased rapidly during his presidency. During his only full term, spending rose at an average rate of 6.46% per year.

The only Republican to capture the White House during this period was World War II hero Dwight D. Eisenhower. Although he was criticized by many conservatives for not rolling back government as much as they wanted, his is the only administration since World War II in which government spending per capita actually fell. He combined fiscal

restraint on domestic programs with an inclination to disentangle America from wars abroad: he presided over the end of the Korean War, refused to get involved in the wars in the Middle East, and did what he could to keep America from greater involvement in Vietnam. During the first two years of his administration, when he had the support of a GOP Congress, spending fell by more than 13%, but during

*Although Ike was criticized by many conservatives for not slashing government enough, government spending per capita actually fell during his presidency.*

the final two years, with the Democrats firmly in control of both houses of Congress, spending rose at an annual rate of 1.46%. Even with these increases, spending fell at an average annual rate of 0.70% during his administration.

### The New Era (1970 to 2003)

The fact that Republican presidents have been bigger spenders than Democratic presidents during the past 34 years startles many people. This is probably a product of people's greater inclination to listen to the rhetoric of the candidates than to pay attention to what winning candidates actually do once they are in office.

Consider the case of Ronald Reagan. He called for cutting back government, but presided over a massive increase in the size and power of government, at least as measured by government spending per capita. Government spending during his administration grew at an average rate of 2.28%, nearly three times as fast as during the administration of Democrat Bill Clinton.

Similarly, Richard Nixon was elected based on his promises to cut back government, but spending increased during his administration at a faster rate than during any subsequent administration except that of George W. Bush. Nixon pursued policies that he thought would maximize his chances for reelection and his historic reputation. He had no interest in repealing any of the Great Society measures. His "de-escalation" of the Vietnam War proceeded very slowly, and involved sending more troops and dropping more bombs. His legacy includes such expansions of government power as the War on Drugs and the Environmental Protection Agency. The result? During his years in the White House, government spending grew at an average rate of 2.31%, virtually identical to the rate during the Reagan years.

George W. Bush was elected on the strongest and most explicit conservative platform ever, yet he supported massive increases in military spending, created a whole new bureaucracy to fight the War on Terror, invaded two countries, and pushed through the largest single increase in welfare spending in decades. Not surprisingly, spending has grown the fastest during his years of any presidency since Lyndon Johnson's.

The other two Republican presidencies were different cases. Gerald Ford, who assumed the powers of the presidency when Nixon resigned in disgrace, was an old-line, fiscally conservative Republican who faced a very hostile and overwhelmingly Democratic Congress. Ford responded by using his veto power more frequently than any president before or since. The result was the lowest average annual spending increases of any presidency since Eisenhower.

George H. W. Bush was also a special case. He presided over a country that favored fiscal restraint and was elected largely because of his promise not to raise taxes. When he broke that promise, many Congressional Republicans treated him as if he were their enemy. Meanwhile, the Democratic majority in Congress, smelling blood, focused on making him look bad, sensing a victory of the White House for them. They succeeded. The result: spending grew at 1.15% per year during his presidency, the lowest rate of increase of any post-war president except Eisenhower.

The two Democratic presidents of this era faced radically different situations. Jimmy Carter was elected during post-Vietnam public cynicism about the military, and his years saw actual cuts in military spending. He eschewed most of the traditional Democratic calls for increases in welfare programs. Not surprisingly, spending grew at a relatively low 1.70% annual rate during his administration.

Bill Clinton is perhaps the most interesting case. He was elected very narrowly, on a platform that included a government takeover of the entire health-care system, the largest expansion of government power any president had

*George W. Bush is establishing himself as the biggest spender since Lyndon Johnson.*

proposed in decades. But he got only 43% of the vote, with the remaining 57% going to candidates who plainly opposed the measure and portrayed themselves as fiscal conservatives. Upon his wife's advice, he pursued the takeover of medicine in a manner so high-handed that, in combination with strong opposition from conservatives and libertarians, the entire package was abandoned.

After Republicans won both houses of Congress in 1994, Clinton, having no real political convictions, proclaimed that the "era of big

government is over," and embraced other elements of the GOP agenda, such as welfare reform. The result was that spending grew at a rate of just 0.81% during his administration, the lowest growth rate since Eisenhower.

What can we learn about the future from this study? Past experience is not a perfect predictor of the future, but it seems far more likely that America's government will become larger, more powerful, and more expensive if George W. Bush is reelected than if he is defeated. A Democratic victory in either (or both) houses of Congress would likely accelerate this trend. Republican congresses combined with Republican presidencies during the past 34 years have consistently resulted in faster spending growth than Democratic presidencies. Democratic congresses have tended to increase spending faster than Republican congresses. And spending has grown faster with a Republican president and Democratic control of one or both houses of Congress than in any other situation. In addition, Bush is establishing himself as the biggest spender since Lyndon Johnson.

The election of John Kerry as president would likely result in slower spending growth, especially if Congress remains in control of the GOP, which seems overwhelmingly likely. Government spending grows most slowly with a Democrat in the White House and the Republicans in control of Congress. While John Kerry's positions have been all over the place during the campaign, ranging from pro-war to anti-war, from support for the traditional Democratic tax-and-spend policies to "Bush lite" reforms, his record in the Senate is generally one of fiscal responsibility. And the Republicans, particularly those in the House of Representatives, have shown a strong inclination against all sorts of spending.

But you never know. □

### Notes

Alert readers may notice that these figures for average annual per capita spending change for each presidential regime are very slightly different from those in my previous article, "Freedom and Spending Under Reagan" (October). This variance is the product of my using geometric means in this analysis rather than arithmetic means, which I initially eschewed because of the complexity of calculating geometric means from discontinuous data sequences.

For the sake of simplicity, I have ignored the peculiar "transition quarter" that occurred between fiscal years 1976 and 1977. □

**Total Government Spending**  
per capita  
in constant dollars,  
basis year 2000

1947	\$ 2,717
1948	2,293
1949	2,862
1950	2,985
1951	3,150
1952	4,250
1953	4,344
1954	3,970
1955	3,769
1956	3,686
1957	3,748
1958	3,793
1959	3,994
1960	4,010
1961	4,106
1962	4,383
1963	4,356
1964	4,523
1965	4,509
1966	4,876
1967	5,403
1968	5,842
1969	5,792
1970	5,853
1971	5,926
1972	6,008
1973	6,023
1974	6,123
1975	6,642
1976	6,818
1977	6,868
1978	7,053
1979	7,084
1980	7,361
1981	7,516
1982	7,694
1983	7,903
1984	7,917
1985	8,392
1986	8,592
1987	8,607
1988	8,797
1989	9,025
1990	9,452
1991	9,563
1992	9,557
1993	9,439
1994	9,485
1995	9,543
1996	9,513
1997	9,519
1998	9,646
1999	9,761
2000	9,900
2001	10,067
2002	10,430
2003	10,728

# The New Anti-Semitism

by Merrel Clubb

Contrary to what the media suggest, disagreement with Israel's policies does not constitute pathological hatred of Jews. Nor does disagreement with George W. Bush's policies constitute pathological hatred of Americans.

Far too many people seem not to recognize the full complexity of the meanings of the two expressions *anti-Semitism* and *anti-Americanism*. They continue to use them as though each has only a single, simple meaning. Both expressions belong to a small group of words with dual meanings in political discourse: a literal or dictionary meaning and a political or propagandistic meaning. But unlike such words as *terrorism*, both *anti-Semitism* and *anti-Americanism* also belong to another class of words similar to one an early semanticist referred to as "snarl-words" (in contrast to "purr-words"). In some contexts *anti-Semitism* and *anti-Americanism*, especially in their adjectival forms, mean little more than "I don't like."

Although from time to time someone will note that one must take care to distinguish clearly between criticism of Israel and anti-Semitism, as well as between criticism of America's policies and what might be called "true" anti-Americanism, many who use the expressions simply do not make the distinction.

Charges of anti-Semitism are so common today in newspapers and elsewhere that many critics of Israel's policies are afraid to voice their objections for fear they will be labeled anti-Semitic, or if Jewish, self-hating Jews.

Those who do have the courage to speak out are often quickly marginalized. In September 2002, Harvard's president, Lawrence Summers, gave an address, which later appeared in the *Providence Journal* and was widely reprinted in other newspapers. He said, "Where anti-Semitism and views that are profoundly anti-Israel have traditionally been the primary preserve of poorly educated right-wing populists, profoundly anti-Israel views are increasingly finding support in progressive intellectual

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communities. Serious and thoughtful people are advocating and taking actions that are anti-Semitic in their effect, if not their intent." He went on to declare, "Some here at Harvard and some at universities across the country have called for the university to single out Israel among all nations as the lone country where it is inappropriate for any part of the university's endowment to be invested."

What Summers glossed over too easily was a country-wide student protest movement on more than 50 campuses calling upon universities to divest their stock holdings in American companies which do significant business with Israel, as a protest against such Israeli actions as expropriating more and more Palestinian land for Jewish settlements and connecting roads, killing Palestinian civilians (including women and children), uprooting their orchards, and destroying their houses in both the West Bank and Gaza. The students were not singling out Israel as the "lone country" for protest. They were calling for a boycott as an objection to the actions of a government against another people, hoping to force a change, as did happen eventually in apartheid South Africa when democratic policies were established. All too often, criticism of Israeli policies in the West Bank and Gaza has been equated with anti-Semitism to cut off any debate by smearing the critic with the brush

of racism. Such usage can only be termed political propaganda.

On Jan. 20, 2003, Warren Kinsella published an article in the Canadian magazine Maclean's entitled "The New Anti-Semitism," in which he defined "new" anti-Semitism as criticism of Israel's Zionist policies. However, equating criticism of Zionist policies to anti-Semitism is nothing new. Even before Israel became a state in 1948, David Ben Gurion declared, "henceforth to be anti-Zionist was to be anti-Semitic." And in 1973, Israel's foreign minister Abba Eban said, "One of the chief tasks of any dialogue with the Gentile world is to prove that the distinction between anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism is no distinction at all. Anti-Zionism is merely the new anti-Semitism." And such an illustrious thinker as Elie Wiesel, in effect, cut off all alien criticism of Israel's policies when he said: "A person who does not live Israel's ordeals and challenges has no right to criticize its decisions." In other words, only those Jews who live in Israel have a right to criticize Israel's policies in the West Bank and Gaza.

In 1984, Robert Westrich, who lived most of his life in Great Britain, delivered a lecture in the home of Israel's president, Chaim Herzog, on what he called "the new anti-Semitic anti-Zionism in the 1980s." Placing his topic in the larger context of what he referred to as a globally "orchestrated campaign against the Jewish state, Zionism, and the Jewish people as a whole," he first asked, "How can we be sure that anti-Zionism . . . is not primarily motivated by sympathy with the Palestinian cause or by opposition to specific Israeli policies?" But quickly answering his own question, he said, "Anti-Zionism has undoubtedly provided a wonderful alibi for anti-Semitism . . . a vehicle for the re-emergence of anti-Jewish attitudes."

Later in his talk he went further: "[W]e witness a conscious effort to delegitimize Jewish self-definition. . . . Delegitimization is no longer racial or religious but ideological and political." He explained: "Delegitimization of Israel and its ideological basis — Zionism — is the most direct way in our time to damage Jewish interest and prepare the way for the destruction of Jewish identity."

A 1988 editorial in The New Republic sounded a similar theme: "Salient anti-Semitism is anti-Semitism with a program . . . the delegitimization of the Jewish national movement." And shortly after Summers' Sept. 2002 address, Harvard's Alan Dershowitz chimed in, "There's nothing wrong with criticizing Israel. But to compare Israel's policies to the worst human rights abuses, that's an attempt to delegitimize Israel."

And there are those who have claimed that when criticism of Israel becomes excessive, it is anti-Semitism or "Israel bashing." But the obvious question becomes, "Who is to say when criticism of the killing of women and children and young boys, along with the destruction of houses and entire sections of towns, becomes excessive?" The argument that other countries have committed far worse crimes than Israel's against the indigenous Palestinians, as for example, the Hutus' murder of over 800,000 Tutsis in 1994, is irrelevant to any judgment of Israel's atrocities in the West Bank and Gaza. One crime does not justify another one.

The phenomenon often long precedes the word that comes to represent it, and the English expression *anti-Semitism* first appeared in English at the end of the 19th century to refer to the vicious hatred of Jews simply for being Jews — a hatred that was rampant in France and eastern Europe at that time and a form of racism on a par with color-based racism in the earlier part of the 20th-century American South. And, of course, such racist anti-Semitism continues to plague Jews in many parts of the world today. Zionism, in its first manifestation, also arose in the late 19th century, as a reaction to anti-Semitic persecutions in Europe, and a small number of "Lovers of Zion" emigrated to Palestine to find freedom. But soon after, another wave of "Political Zionists" began to arrive, ultimately with the expressed goal of establishing a Jewish state in Palestine — which was not "a land without a people for a people without a land," but a territory already inhabited for centuries by a large number of Arabs and a small minority of Jews, who did not welcome the Political Zionists and had no desire to live in a Jewish state in their own land. Initially, most Jews in Europe were highly critical of Zionism and were among its leading opponents, but it is hard to imagine that those Jewish critics were "anti-Semites" or "self-hating Jews." Eventually, however, any opposition to political Zionism was thought of by Zionists as anti-Semitism, and after Israel became a state, *any* criticism of Israel's Zionist policies came to be called anti-Semitism, often as a form of political propaganda intended to belittle such criticism.

Racist bigotry and anti-Semitism, of course, still exist in places all over the world, as illustrated by recent anti-Arab and anti-Semitic assaults in France. And while it is certainly true that criticism of Israel's policies can be motivated by anti-Semitism, and equally true that sympathy for the Palestinian cause can be a cover for resurgent anti-Semitism, in the sense of "anti-Jewish attitudes," most of the time now they are not. Criticism of Israel's policies in the West Bank and Gaza, at least in the Western world, is more often motivated by a sense of justice, *not* by racism or by a desire to delegitimize Israel or to destroy Jewish identity; sympathy for the Palestinians is a *result* of Israel's policies as they have been carried out in Palestine, not an alibi

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*Criticism of Israeli policies in the West Bank and Gaza has often been equated with anti-Semitism to cut off debate by smearing the critic with the brush of racism.*

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for racism. Sympathy for the suffering of Palestinians does not entail ignoring or condoning Palestinian terrorism in Israel and the suffering of Israelis, as is sometimes suggested.

To say that criticism of Israel's treatment of Palestinians in the West Bank is the same as anti-Semitism is not only ridiculous but much the same as saying that criticism of the white regime's treatment of blacks and coloreds in apartheid South Africa was anti-white, or that criticism of 16th-century Spanish and British attacks on indigenous Indians

in the Americas was anti-Spanish and anti-British, or that criticism of American destruction of Indian villages and killing of women and children as pioneers moved westward and settled Indian land was anti-American.

The expressions *anti-American* and *anti-Americanism*, like *anti-Semitic* and *anti-Semitism*, are often tossed about to denigrate critics of a government's policies and actions. Both terms, of course, do have literal meanings that represent realities; however, unlike *anti-Semitism*, *anti-Americanism* does not refer to a form of racism; it refers to a hatred or

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*Sympathy for the Palestinians is a result of Israel's policies as they have been carried out in Palestine, not an alibi for racism.*

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dislike of America for what it is. But *anti-Americanism*, like *anti-Semitism*, also has a political meaning and is often used as a propaganda weapon against criticisms of various policies of the American government. Certainly, what can be called "literal" anti-Americanism is prevalent in many parts of the world, as illustrated by the appellation "The Great Satan" and by the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, but the so-called anti-Americanism that exists in European countries today is really widespread objection to the Bush administration's arrogant, unilateral foreign policies. Eric Alterman (The Nation, Feb. 10, 2003) wrote that he had recently visited Germany, France, Italy, and Britain looking for anti-Americanism, in the sense of dislike of Americans or America as such, and found little that could properly be thought of as genuine anti-Americanism; but he did find what New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman has called the "new anti-Americanism," that is, strong criticism of Bush's obvious intention at the time to plunge headlong into a preemptive war in Iraq. Anti-Bushism, yes; anti-Americanism, no.

Before the invasion of Iraq, the Bush administration and sympathizers in the media labeled European objections to Bush's policies as anti-Americanism to discredit opposition in much the same way as the Israeli government and its sympathizers have leveled charges of anti-Semitism in order to smear critics of Israel's policies in Palestine. When the United Nations' Human Rights Commission in Geneva voted the United States off the Commission, the Washington Post announced a "new period of anti-Americanism." Even as Israel continues its terrorist tactics in the West Bank and Gaza, critics of America's large military and financial support of Israel are sometimes charged with anti-Semitism or anti-Americanism.

Individuals both abroad and at home use the term "anti-Americanism" to disparage what they do not like to hear or read. On a visit to the United States before the Iraq war, Prime Minister Tony Blair was quoted as saying in reference to extensive criticism in England of President Bush's plans to invade Iraq: "Some of what I read . . . is just straight forward anti-Americanism." As though there had been no such criticism in America!

The term is often used by Americans to attack other

Americans when they voice unpopular views, as for example when anyone publicly attempted to understand the reasons for the hatred which led to the 9/11 attacks on New York City and Washington. There is almost a knee-jerk reaction at times by some conservatives to call liberals anti-American, as when David Frum in National Review (April 7, 2003) referred to Robert Fisk, Noam Chomsky, Gore Vidal, Alexander Cockburn, and "other anti-Americans of the far left." And the editor of The Progressive (Feb. 2003) related how a professor of economics at the University of Massachusetts, an American citizen who happened to have been born in Iraq, was visited by a campus police officer and an FBI agent. When the professor asked the reason for the visit, they responded it had been reported that he was anti-American, because he opposed the president's war on Iraq. Charges of anti-Americanism, of course, were commonplace before and during the Iraq war when many Americans, who most certainly did support our troops, spoke out in opposition to a foolish war in which many of those troops, as well as many Iraqis, would needlessly lose their lives, as for example when Rush Limbaugh said, "these anti-war demonstrators . . . let's call them what they are: anti-American demonstrators," and when William Kristol in The Weekly Standard (April 7, 2003) referred to the "Teddy Kennedy wing of the Senate Democrats" and the "Nancy Pelosi faction of the House Democrats" as anti-American. Or when an airline security agent opened a passenger's bag and found two signs saying "No War With Iraq," and left a note criticizing the passenger's "anti-American attitude."

The assumption that America can do no wrong, and even that history — or rather, historical descriptions — must always be true is common. When historians maintain, as most (not all) who have focussed on the topic do, that atomic bombs were not necessary to defeat Japan and end World War II, they are often characterized as "anti-American" or "un-American." In the course of the 1995 Enola Gay controversy, when the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum proposed to mount a serious educational exhibit which would, for the first time by a public institution, raise questions many historians had been asking since the 1950s about the use of the atomic bombs at the end of WWII, that famous professor of American history Newt Gingrich was quoted in The New Republic (March

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*Individuals both abroad and at home use the term "anti-Americanism" to disparage what they do not like to hear or read.*

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13, 1995) as saying that the exhibit was "anti-American, and distorted history" (the words many veterans also used during the controversy) simply because he did not like the implications of the questions raised. Similarly, on Oct. 25, 1994, Charles Sweeney, the pilot of the B-29 that dropped the plutonium bomb on Nagasaki, characterized the exhibit

*continued on page 42*

# The Intelligent Person's Guide to Presidential Politics

*Choosing among those who seek the presidency is not necessarily an easy task for the intelligent libertarian. Liberty's editors do their best to help.*

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## I Like Mike!

*by R. W. Bradford*

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I shall vote for Michael Badnarik, the Libertarian Party's candidate for president, and I shall vote for him with more enthusiasm than I have felt for any Libertarian presidential candidate since 1988. Yes, I know that Badnarik has some negatives: he harbors a number of beliefs — the Federal Reserve System is privately owned, the federal income tax is not compulsory — that are not merely mistaken, but goofy, right-wing, and cranky. But Badnarik is a good and honest man, and an articulate spokesman for libertarian ideas.

I am sure this surprises no one. I have endorsed in these pages every LP nominee for president since 1988, and supported, voted for, and publicly endorsed every LP nominee since the party was founded.

Part of my reason is that I think that voting is, more than anything else, a form of public speech, and I want to make a statement that is as unequivocally libertarian as I can. But there is more to my support of Badnarik than that. While it may be argued that delegates at the LP convention made an uninformed and less than optimal decision when they gave the nomination to Badnarik, his personal virtues make him a better candidate than the party has nominated in the recent past. He is an energetic campaigner, a hard worker, and a straight-up guy. There's not a hint of self-aggrandizement in his campaign, and hardly any egotripping. His passion and sincerity and honesty are manifest.

If I believed that my vote and support actually might have some real effect on the outcome of the election, I would vote for John Kerry — not because I think he is a good man or would be a good president, but because I think governmental power and spending would grow more slowly if he were elected. Democratic presidencies in the last 35 years

have been characterized by far less activist government than Republican presidencies. A Kerry presidency would likely provide even slower growth of government than the usual Democratic occupation of the Oval Office. The element of our national government least inclined to expand government spending is the GOP-controlled House of Representatives, and thanks to Republican gerrymandering in the states, the chance of a Democratic takeover of the House is virtually zero. Kerry has shown more fiscal restraint than most Democrats; with a Republican-controlled Congress, history suggests voting for Kerry would be the best bet for restraining the growth of government in the next four years.

I realize that Kerry is a power-lusting politician who changes his public positions with every hiccup in public opinion. But so was Bill Clinton, under whose regime government spending grew at the slowest rate since Eisenhower. And George W. Bush has a proven record of increasing government spending and power. Unlike Kerry, he has convictions, but so many of his convictions are manifestly wrong that it is difficult to make any sort of plausible case for his reelection. And there is also the issue of the war in Iraq. While both candidates support it, Kerry obviously

*I shall vote for the only candidate who actually wants to increase liberty and reduce state power. And I think all Americans who value human liberty should do the same.*

has more wiggle-room than Bush, so he could extricate the United States from this quagmire more easily.

One final thing: I am squeamish about casting my vote for a scoundrel like Kerry or Bush. In 1968, I cast my first vote for president for Richard Nixon, who promised smaller government and had two hardcore libertarians, Alan Greenspan and Martin Anderson, on his staff. Subsequent events proved that if ever there was a wasted vote, that was it.

I was much happier to be among the 3,676 Americans who voted for John Hospers in 1972 than I was to be among the 31,785,480 Americans who voted for Nixon in 1968. There is something repugnant about voting for a scoundrel, even if he is the lesser of two evils. I could hold my nose and do it if I thought it would make a difference. But any delusions of self-importance that I harbor lie in areas other than thinking that my vote or my support could affect the outcome of the election. The simple fact is that the likelihood that my support will affect the outcome of the election is nil.

So I shall make the most positive statement that I can: I shall vote for the only candidate who actually wants to increase liberty and reduce state power. I shall proudly cast my ballot for Michael Badnarik. And I think all Americans who value human liberty should do the same. □

## Two Cheers for George Bush

by Stephen Cox

Before we start arguing about the presidential election, we should all admit that this is a year of remarkably weak candidates. The weaknesses of Sen. Kerry and President Bush are obvious to everyone but their most fanatical supporters. (But no, that's wrong. Neither one of them has fanatical supporters. Each has fanatical allies, motivated by fanatical opposition to the other party.) The weaknesses of the Libertarian candidate and the various Green candidates would also be evident to all, if anyone but fanatical supporters paid any attention to them. I am a registered Libertarian. When the Libertarian Party finds a candidate who has the stature of such previous candidates as John Hospers, Ed Clark, and Ron Paul, I will joyously vote Libertarian. In the meantime, I don't plan to waste my vote. I will cheerfully, if not joyously, cast it for President Bush.

At this point, some of my libertarian friends are shouting, "Wait! What do you mean by 'waste'? You don't even understand what it means to vote!" Their argument is this. The chances are minuscule that any individual vote will actually affect the outcome of the election. Under these circumstances, voting is simply an expression of one's political ideology, and it would be sheer waste for any libertarian to vote for a major-party candidate.

It's an interesting argument, although I'm not sure I grasp its metaphysics, especially the implication that *nobody's* vote matters in practical terms. I don't know how close the election will be, but I don't intend to surrender my chance of affecting it; and I know that if more people felt as I do, there would be a much greater chance that the result would be affected. I intend to vote for the least imperfect candidate who is actually able to win. In other words, I am going to cast my ballot for the scorned and derided Lesser of the Two Evils.

Scorn and deride all you want; "able to win" is still an important criterion. If it weren't, I'd vote for Milton Friedman, and a hundred million other voters would go out and vote for their own private idea of the perfect candidate. But that's not what elections have ever been like. They are contests between two or three people, not a hundred million; and since 1796, none of the live options has ever been ideal. Even Thomas Jefferson was far from a perfect libertarian candidate, but if I had to choose between Jefferson and his opponent Aaron Burr, I'd vote for Jefferson, every time. In 1940, the two meaningful candidates were Franklin Roosevelt and Wendell Willkie, two very bad candidates, from a libertarian point of view. But the country would have been a lot better off if Willkie had won and Roosevelt had been denied a third term. You may think it's morally wrong to give your sanction to the Lesser of the Two Evils, but are you willing to accept the responsibility of helping the Greater of the Two Evils to win?

George Bush is a big-spending modern liberal. So is John Kerry. Yet there are two vital differences between them.

One is character. In the early seventies, Kerry functioned as a Communist stooge. He enjoyed the experience, and he has never gotten over it. He is a meddler and a blowhard, a self-anointed apostle of uplift for the unwashed masses. Like all such people, he is ambitious and grasping, with a mile-wide mean streak. Bush, by contrast, is simply a small-town Rotarian, a man of completely conventional ideas and

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*You may think it's morally wrong to give your sanction to the Lesser of the Two Evils, but are you willing to accept the responsibility of helping the Greater of the Two Evils to win?*

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motives, pleasant and friendly in a canine way. The most interesting thing about him is the fact that he is a reformed alcoholic who has managed not to become self-righteous about reform. Case closed on the question of character.

The other difference is party affiliation, and it is much more important. When you elect a president, especially a personally weak president, such as Bush is and Kerry would undoubtedly be, you are electing not just him but his party, with its million heads and tens of million claws.

Now, I would prefer to vote for a party that endorses and practices an isolationist foreign policy and a domestic policy devoted to shrinking the government's economic, social, moral, medical, and educational involvements. The Republican Party endorses smaller government but has recently done little, or worse than little, to transform its faith into works. The Democratic Party has, for the past three generations, struggled to attain precisely the opposite aims. This is the party that wants to nationalize health care. This is the party that vows to roll back Bush's tax cuts. This is the party that is so devoted to racial quotas that it rigorously imposes them even in the supposedly democratic selection of delegates to its own conventions. This is the party that uses Al Sharpton as one of its public faces. Even its antiwar positions amount to mere timeserving. It applauded President Clinton's multitude of wars, it insisted that President Bush (re)invade Haiti and called him a racist when he resisted doing so, and it has now selected a presidential candidate who is proud to say he voted for (as well as against) the war in Iraq and would be better than Bush at winning it.

No thanks. Of the two real alternatives, I prefer the party that isn't pledged to every crackpot political idea that is current in America today and hasn't compiled an excellent record of turning crackpot ideas into laws. It's not for nothing that the Republicans are called the stupid party and the Democrats are called the evil one. Satan knows how to get things done.

Therefore, I and my household, as the Bible says, are voting for the stupid party. And I will vote for it with a

measure of pride, knowing that votes for Bush will be interpreted as rebukes to the vileness of the Democrats' four-year campaign to paint him as a fascist drug addict energized solely by a desire to rape the environment, enrich the Halliburton Corporation, and return African-Americans to slavery. Within living memory, there has never been a national political campaign so frothing with hate. Lyndon Johnson's henchmen, as politically debauched as they were, never led public chants of "Don't drink the Goldwater!"; yet we have seen the unreproved indecency of the Rev. Mr. Jackson's "Keep out the Bushes!" Even Joe McCarthy never pulled the stunt that Dan Rather tried to pull on Bush, waving palpably forged documents accusing a man of 30-year-old misdemeanors, then responding to criticism by saying that the story was true, whether the evidence was forged or not.

Or don't you believe that CBS News is part of the Democratic campaign? The very basis of the Democratic Party, and of the institutional opposition to libertarian ideas in America, is the alliance of a partisan political elite with its front groups and minions in the media, the arts, the clergy, the foundations, the schools, the "civil rights" aristocracy, and the other parts of civil society that it has corrupted with its venom, obscurantism, and outright lies. If decency and candor are ever to be restored to our national political life, this unholy alliance, currently led by John Kerry, must be decisively rebuked. To give it an electoral victory, with the intention of expressing libertarian views, would be a tragically ironic mistake. □

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## In Defense of Flip-Flopping

by Sarah J. McCarthy

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In mid-August of 2004, the presidential election was John Kerry's to lose, and by mid-September it looks like he had done just that. In the end, Kerry's flaw was the same as Michael Dukakis' in the 1988 presidential campaign — he wound up looking effete. Dukakis couldn't get up the gumption to say he'd defend his wife Kitty from a hypothetical rapist, and Kerry went limp under the Swift Boat onslaught, a skirmish that should have been won simply by forcefully stating the truth. Appearing impotent is a fatal flaw in a presidential candidate, even more so when the country is at war.

Somewhere between 1974 and 2004 John Kerry lost his will to fight. Kerry should have claimed his status as a genuine war hero, and strongly defended his flip-flop to anti-war hero, an insightful stance taken some 30 years ahead of that war's architect and manager, Defense Secretary Robert McNamara, who finally, thoroughly denounced the Vietnam War in his book "Fog of War" and the documentary film that followed. A man who cannot forcefully argue that he was honorable to go to war, and honorable to question the necessity of war, and reject the horror of it and the atrocities that happen in all wars by every side including our own, is a man too cautious to stand for much of any-

thing.

The media and the country were determined to revisit the Vietnam War, and John Kerry was in a perfect position to bring the issue to some degree of resolution. He could have reviewed what Robert McNamara said in "Fog of War" — that if we are to learn from our experience in Vietnam, we must first pinpoint our failures. As McNamara sees it, there were eleven major causes of our disaster in Vietnam:

1. We misjudged the geopolitical intentions of our adversaries and exaggerated the dangers to the United States of their actions.

2. We totally misjudged the political forces within the country.

3. We underestimated the power of nationalism to motivate a people.

4. We misjudged friend and foe alike, reflecting our profound ignorance of their culture, history, and politics.

5. We failed to recognize the limits of modern high-technology military equipment in confronting unconventional and highly-motivated people's movements. We failed

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*A president who leads his country into war on bad information does not deserve reelection. Because John Kerry did not take us into the Iraq war and probably wouldn't have, I will vote for him.*

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as well to adapt our military tactics to winning hearts and minds.

6. We failed to draw Congress and the American people into a full and frank discussion of the pros and cons of military involvement in Southeast Asia before we initiated the action.

7. A nation's deepest strength lies not in its military prowess, but in the unity of its people. Once unplanned events took us off course, we failed to explain what we were doing and why.

8. We do not have the God-given right to shape every nation in our own image or as we choose. Our judgment of what is in other people's interests should be put to the test of open discussion in international forums.

9. Other than threats to our own security, we should have international support for going to war.

10. We failed to recognize that there may be problems for which there are no immediate solutions.

11. We failed to analyze and debate our actions, our objectives, risks and costs of alternative ways of dealing with them, and the necessity of changing course when failure was clear.

In conclusion, McNamara says that American leadership both overestimated the effect of South Vietnam's loss on the security of the West, and failed to adhere to the fundamental principle that if the South Vietnamese were to be saved, they had to win the war themselves.

The lessons of Vietnam should have been applied to the war in Iraq. Inexcusably, the Bush administration manipu-

lated Americans into fearing that Iraq was on its way to developing nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, giving us little choice but to support a pre-emptive attack. Though it is unclear whether Bush deceived the American people, or if he himself was misinformed, neither explanation is acceptable.

There is a case for suspecting that the administration deceived us into war. Paul O'Neill, in "The Price of Loyalty," states that from the first cabinet meeting there were those in the administration advocating the invasion of Iraq. "Fahrenheit 9/11" includes footage of Condoleezza Rice and Colin Powell saying in early 2001 that Saddam Hussein and his weapons were contained. Wesley Clark has said that high Pentagon officials were already advocating war with Iraq on 9/11.

And finally, there is the stupidity of the strategy. The Bush administration seems to have dotted every *i* and crossed every *t* in its plans to win the presidential election. Not so for Iraq. Administration officials recklessly ignored the Powell Doctrine about sending in ground troops only in overwhelming numbers, and conveniently forgot that a guerrilla war with American soldiers on the ground is a high-risk, low-return strategy. General Eisenhower warned never to get into a land war in Asia, a principle applicable to the Middle East. No strategy has become clear, either to win the war or get out of it. So far, there are 8,000 dead and wounded with no end in sight. More terrorists may have been created than killed.

A president who leads his country into war on bad information does not deserve reelection. Because John Kerry did not take us into the Iraq war and probably wouldn't have, I will vote for him. By appointing strong advisors and an able cabinet, he can provide sorely needed checks and balances on a government that in every area has marched too far to the right.

A commander in chief has as much duty to avoid war as a ship's captain does to avoid a shipwreck. Now, with a war on terrorism that requires strategic thinking and the wisdom of Solomon, we have a government that is squandering blood and treasure on an ill-planned and unnecessary venture in Iraq. The ship of state sails through choppy waters; it needs a captain and crew able to navigate through the difficult obstacles ahead. Hopefully, John Kerry has the wisdom to choose intelligent and nuanced advisors who know there is a time for war and a time for peace. □

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## The Case Against Voting

by Douglas Casey

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Once again we find ourselves in the midst of the quadrennial American circus, when shameless power-mongers come out to blather moronic and vacuous platitudes in hopes of getting *Boobus americanus* to "get out and vote," granting politicians life-and-death power over the citizenry for the next

*continued on page 42*

# Mr. Badnarik Goes to Colorado

*by Ari Armstrong*

On a three-day swing through the Centennial State, Libertarian candidate Michael Badnarik takes his case to the people — and gets asked some rough questions about his refusal to pay taxes and his association with a convict.

**Michael Badnarik, the Libertarian Party's presidential candidate, traveled through Colorado Sept. 7-9, and I saw him at his campaign stops at the Auraria campus in Denver and the University of Colorado at Boulder.**

Badnarik earned an impressive amount of media coverage in Colorado — thanks largely to the efforts of a handful of Colorado activists — even though he spoke in person to no more than 200 people during all of his campaign stops combined. Badnarik seems to be running the most inspired third-party campaign and is on more ballots than even Ralph Nader, which undoubtedly helps him get press attention. While at the CU event, I learned that USA Today had run a story on Badnarik that morning, and a number of publications have discussed the possible effect of Badnarik in swing states. Badnarik has wisely concentrated his efforts in these states, although Republican-leaning Colorado is an exception.

In Colorado Springs, Badnarik met with the editorial board of the major daily paper, appeared on local television news broadcasts, spoke on an AM radio show, recorded remarks for a television station on the western slope, and was interviewed on the local public station. He joined two Denver radio programs, including a popular rock-station morning talk show. The Denver Post, Rocky Mountain News, Boulder's Daily Camera, and Longmont's Times-Call all covered him. On the whole, the media were quite receptive.

Badnarik demonstrated good political instincts on several occasions. He didn't stray far from his message, and the few

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outrageous comments he made were well calculated. When Badnarik was asked whether he thought the U.S. government was involved in the Sept. 11 attacks, he ignored the question and said only that more "investigation" of the attacks is warranted. Similarly, when a radio host awkwardly portrayed the victim mentality by saying, "I'm black, whitey is keeping me down," Badnarik responded by explaining the concept of individual rights and the meaning of a republic.

His natural bravado made him a hit with the state LP, helping him overcome his outsider status: one well-organized fundraising dinner brought in close to \$12,000 for the campaign. When Jack Woehr, a drug-policy reformer running for Congress on the LP ticket, suggested that the party is "probably not going to gain power within the next two years," Badnarik adjusted his tie in a manner reminiscent of Rodney Dangerfield and said, "Hey, you haven't met me yet."

Badnarik's most interesting media appearance in Colorado was on "Colorado Inside Out," a political TV broadcast based in Denver. The show is usually hosted by Peter Boyles, a tough interviewer who leans to the left, but he was unavailable. Badnarik was disappointed that the liberal host was absent, as he was looking forward to "chewing him up and spitting him out." Fortunately, a substitute was

found who likely knew much more about the campaign: Dave Kopel, research director of the Independent Institute and a contributing editor of *Liberty*. Kopel grilled the candidate on several thorny issues, especially on foreign policy and his history with the tax protest movement.

As R.W. Bradford reported in the August *Liberty*, "Badnarik believes that the federal income tax has no legal authority and that people are justified in refusing to file a tax return until such time as the IRS provides them with an explanation of its authority to collect the tax." Badnarik has taught others this theory in his one-day class on the U.S. Constitution.

Dave Kopel took the chance to ask Badnarik to clarify his views on tax liability and fraud:

*Kopel:* Let's talk a little bit about the IRS. You've run seminars that people pay to come to attend, which tell people about the Internal Revenue Service and express the view that they're not legally required to pay income taxes?

*Badnarik:* That's not the outline of the class at all. The class is a class on constitutional fundamentals. Basically, the idea is that "we the people" ordain and establish the Constitution. "We the people" invented our form of government in 1789, therefore our government works for us, not the other way around. "We the people" give government privileges, and those are listed in Article I, Section 8.

*Kopel:* Right, but let's get to the IRS part.

*Badnarik:* The IRS can collect taxes that you're liable for. Neither you nor I are required to pay more taxes than we're liable for. You don't have to pay \$1,000 more than you owe.

*Kopel:* Right.

*Badnarik:* The question is, how much do I owe? How am I liable? Show me the law that says I am liable for these taxes. All I've done is ask the IRS to answer certain questions.

*Kopel:* "Show me the law that says you're liable." So, when somebody gets the federal 1040 form that says, fill in how much money you made, fill out your deductions, the IRS is just sending that out frivolously, it doesn't have a law that creates the authority to say people have to pay taxes.

*Badnarik:* That is the question, isn't it? The question is, if there is a law that supports them sending out that 1040 form, they should be able to show it to us. There have been sev-

beginning: "Everybody should pay taxes according to the following?"

*Badnarik:* Wouldn't it be interesting if that were true.

*Kopel:* Is that true?

*Badnarik:* I would like to know if it's true.

*Kopel:* Well, you can read the statutes as well as everyone else. Is it true?

*Badnarik:* I think that it is true. I think that since 1913, our Congress has created the presumption that Americans are required to fill out this 1040 form and mail in half of everything they owe. I would like to see the law. I am under the impression that there has been a lot of fraud involved.

*Kopel:* So you've studied the Internal Revenue Code, and you believe there's nothing in the Internal Revenue Code that says that people are actually required to pay taxes.

*Badnarik:* I believe that much of what the IRS does is done under fraud. That's correct.

*Kopel:* So you believe there's nothing in the United States statutes, in the Internal Revenue Code, that says you have to pay income taxes.

*Badnarik:* I believe that is true.

*Kopel:* When's the last time you paid income taxes?

*Badnarik:* I pay all the income taxes I'm liable for. I have sent letters to the IRS requesting information, and I am waiting for the IRS to respond.

*Kopel:* Requesting information about the questions we discussed, which is show me where it says "Mother May I" in the Internal Revenue Code.

*Badnarik:* That's correct.

*Kopel:* When's the last time you've filed an income tax return?

*Badnarik:* It's been several years.

*Kopel:* When?

*Badnarik:* I don't remember. It was back in 1997, I believe.

*Kopel:* 1997.

*Badnarik:* Right.

*Kopel:* According to the theory of people who believe that federal taxes are mandatory, if you make more than a certain amount per year, you're required to file an income tax return.

*Badnarik:* No, you're required to file an income tax form, or a statement. And I have filed a statement and have complied with my understanding of the IRS code. I have asked the IRS for information, and they have neglected to respond to my requests. I've never been indicted for anything. I'm trying to resolve this question with the IRS, and they have never answered my questions.

*Kopel:* So since 1997 you've paid no federal income taxes.

*Badnarik:* Well, most of that time, much of that time, I've been unemployed.

*Kopel:* In some years, have you earned more than the federal taxable threshold?

*Badnarik:* Yes.

*Kopel:* Okay.

Not all of Badnarik's fellow resisters have been as successful. Rick Stanley, a former Libertarian Senate nominee who has spoken at Badnarik's 2nd Amendment rallies in Texas, was sentenced on Sept. 10 to six years in prison for threatening two judges who had convicted him on firearm violations.

On Dec. 15, 2001, Bill of Rights Day, Stanley wore a handgun on his hip at a Denver rally, a legal no-no at the time. The

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*"So you think Congress just created this tax code of gargantuan proportions, but forgot to put a line at the very beginning: 'Everybody should pay taxes according to the following?'"*

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eral groups, one of which is [wethepeople.org](http://wethepeople.org), I believe, which have filed 570 questions to the IRS. And the IRS and the Justice Department refuse to answer. If they work for us, they don't have the authority to not answer our questions.

*Kopel:* So you think Congress just created this tax code of gargantuan proportions, but forgot to put a line at the very

police took him away in handcuffs, and he was convicted of a misdemeanor. On Sept. 7, 2002, Stanley was arrested for the same offense in the city of Thornton, and convicted again. The judges who convicted him were Thornton Municipal Judge Charles J. Rose and 17th Judicial District Judge Donald W. Marshall, Jr.

To this point, Stanley had only received misdemeanor convictions and was acting within the tradition of civil disobedience. Then he sent letters to the two judges who had con-

*Badnarik wrote that Rick Stanley is, literally, a modern American hero. He was visibly shocked to see on Stanley's webpage an article that contemplates murdering Jews in an American Holocaust.*

victed him. Here's one of those letters, released on Stanley's webpage: "Rick Stanley demands that Judge Donald W. Marshall, Jr., overturn this conviction of Stanley on constitutional grounds. Failure to do so will result in a treason charge against Donald W. Marshall, Jr. for failure to uphold the oath of office to defend the Constitution, which this court has on record, and Donald W. Marshall, Jr., swore to, as a 'condition' of his office. This treason charge, will result in a Mutual Defense Pact Militia warrant for Donald W. Marshall, Jr.'s arrest if the following conditions are not met: 1. Overturn the unconstitutional conviction of Rick Stanley for violation of TRMC 38-237 because TRMC 38-237 violates the constitutional rights of Rick Stanley, under the guise of 'color of law.' 2. Return the \$1,500.00 bond to Rick Stanley. 3. Return Rick Stanley's property which consists of 1 each Smith and Wesson 6 shot .357 pistol and 6 each .357 bullets." Unsurprisingly, Stanley was charged with threatening a judge and sentenced to six years in prison.

Badnarik has defended Stanley in the past. In 2002, the Colorado LP censured Stanley and considered withdrawing his nomination. In an email on Aug. 21, 2002, Badnarik wrote: "Rick Stanley is one of the few people who is . . . willing to risk everything he has to defend [his] rights. He is literally a modern American hero. I am not intimately familiar with all of the personal interactions taking place within the Libertarian Party of Colorado, however I find their plans to remove Rick Stanley from the November ballot completely incomprehensible. Mr. Stanley, by his own actions and financial backing, has put that state party squarely in the middle of media attention. Instead of taking advantage of his courage and initiative, they have chosen to ostracize him because he doesn't play the game like other political parties. . . . The only conceivable reason for the Executive Board of the Colorado LP to distance themselves from Rick Stanley is because they are afraid he may actually WIN the election! . . . I urge everyone with a conscience to vote for Rick Stanley, and to send their written comments to those who are trying to slander his name."

Rick Stanley has become more and more unbalanced since then, but Badnarik has continued his support. In an inter-

view, Badnarik confirmed that he had signed on to Stanley's Mutual Defense Pact Militia (mentioned in the letter above), and the Million Gun March, in which Stanley planned for a million armed citizens to converge on the District of Columbia and, if need be, trigger a "Second American Revolution."

Badnarik seemed unaware of Stanley's recent statement that Colorado Sen. Wayne Allard should be "indicted [for treason], tried, and hung when found guilty." He also had not seen some of the emails Stanley had been forwarding, one of which referred to Mexican immigrants as "trash" whose hobby was breeding, and another which called for "Summary Street Trials" and executions of all public officials, from judges to meter maids, found guilty of treason. Badnarik was visibly shocked to see on Stanley's webpage an article (written by someone else) that contemplates murdering Jews in an American Holocaust.

Badnarik said of Stanley, "He does things in a way I wouldn't do them." Thank God for small mercies. Still, Badnarik's long-standing friendship with Stanley, his participation in some of Stanley's schemes, and his supportive (though qualified) comments about him, cause me to question Badnarik's judgment.

Dave Kopel questioned Badnarik extensively on his connections to the convicted felon:

*Kopel: Rick Stanley — what's your view on that?*

*Badnarik: Rick Stanley is a friend of mine. And I believe that he is morally correct. We do not get our rights from the Bill of Rights. Nobody in the United States fills out a government form that allows you to go to church on Sunday.*

*Kopel: Right. Rights are natural, and inherent.*

*Badnarik: That's right. And Rick Stanley does have a right to keep and bear arms to protect himself and his family and his property.*

*Kopel: Does he have a right to threaten a judge who he thinks is violating that right?*

*Badnarik: Philosophically, we all have that right. We have the right — the Declaration of Independence says that when*

*Badnarik signed on to Stanley's Million Gun March, in which a million armed citizens would converge on the District of Columbia and trigger a "Second American Revolution."*

any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it.

*Kopel: Does Rick Stanley have the right to alter or abolish a judge?*

*Badnarik: No, he doesn't have the right to abolish the judge. But the question is, can we change and alter the government? And if the government has become unreasonable, if the government has come to take your property, are you just going to unroll your sleeping bag on the curb and say, "You know, I'm really going to miss cable?"*

*Kopel: So you think it's all right that Rick Stanley has, at least as the prosecutors allege and have proved in their case, threatened violence against judges.*

**Badnarik:** Rick Stanley is very, very direct, and he is fighting for a reasonable cause. If the government had come to his house, and tried to physically deprive him of his weapons, he would have had a moral and justifiable right to

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*"If the government has come to take your property, are you just going to unroll your sleeping bag on the curb and say, 'You know, I'm really going to miss cable?'"*

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defend himself and to shoot back. The United States of America started when King George came to Lexington and Concord —

**Kopel:** Did he have a right to threaten the judge? That's what's he's being sentenced for.

**Badnarik:** I don't know exactly what the interaction was between them. If the judge is actually threatening Rick Stanley's life, then, yes, Rick Stanley does have a right to retaliate.

**Kopel:** Of course, the judge was not threatening Rick Stanley's life. The judge was enforcing a Denver ordinance [actually a Thornton ordinance], which said you cannot carry an unconcealed gun. That law was later wiped out by the legislature.

**Badnarik:** That's right.

**Kopel:** However, the law was on the books at the time, and the judge was enforcing it. Does Rick Stanley have a right to threaten the judge with violence for enforcing that law?

**Badnarik:** If a law is unconstitutional, you have a right to not follow it.

**Kopel:** Do you have a right to —

**Badnarik:** I really wish that Rick Stanley had been a little bit more diplomatic in his fight. I read the article. I read the letter that he sent to the judge. And it was an aggressive letter. Is it a threat? No, I don't necessarily think that it was a threat. So this is an interpretation thing. And the judge clearly chose to decide that this was a threat. And I think that the government's reaction to Rick Stanley was also over the top, and totally unnecessary. So I would say that Rick Stanley does hold some culpability for letting his mouth say things that may have exceeded decorum. But I don't think — and I know Rick Stanley personally — I know that Rick Stanley was not actively threatening anybody's life. Rick Stanley was being dramatic. He's trying to outline, and emphasize, the fact that our government is out of control. Most of what our government does in Washington is unconstitutional.

Though he was, for the most part, solid when answering questions on domestic affairs, Badnarik wasn't persuasive on foreign policy matters. Bush's post-convention success shows that most Americans aren't buying pacifism or anti-Americanism, and for good reason. Badnarik is trying to tap into widespread skepticism about the Iraq war (a skepticism I share), but most people are even more skeptical of reactionary non-interventionism. Mouthing slogans and rhetoric rather than expressing a well-formulated foreign policy is

not the way to win them over.

Badnarik tried to draw a sharp line between "national defense," which is okay, and "international offense," which is not. But the difficulty of drawing that line became apparent in another context. When asked whether the 2nd Amendment allows people to own nuclear bombs, Badnarik argued no, because a nuclear weapon is a "clear and present danger" to others, like pointing a gun at an innocent party or firing randomly into the air while walking down a busy street. When Badnarik was asked about less clear cases, he finally punted, saying it would require a careful weighing of the evidence. It's obvious that Iraq posed a threat to innocent Americans, but how great was that threat, and how direct? How should that threat be dealt with? These questions were not addressed.

I asked Badnarik if he would support going to war to defend Israel or Taiwan against outright invasion. He said "the American people might consider it appropriate" to go to war in such an event. However, he would at least require a congressional declaration of war.

Badnarik would not have sent troops to Afghanistan or Iraq. But, he said, the United States is perfectly justified in sending troops into other nations for the purpose of capturing suspected terrorists and bringing them to justice. But what if the host nation isn't keen on letting in our troops? Do we just drop the attempt? How closely must the terrorists be tied to the host nation before we seek regime change? These are complex questions to which few libertarians — Badnarik included — offer good answers.

Early in his interview with Badnarik, Kopel asked him about foreign policy:

**Kopel:** Your press secretary also encouraged people to come to a Badnarik meetup scheduled on Sept. 11, and here's how they were asked to dress: wearing some clothing article colored black to mourn the deaths of the thousands of people who have died as the result of U.S. government policies. Why Sept. 11 for that kind of thing?

**Badnarik:** It is a tragic situation that we had so many people who were killed in the Sept. 11 bombing. However, as libertarians, we suspect and believe that it has been our foreign policy, over at least the last 50 years, which has generated a dislike for Americans. We've been involved

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*Mouthing slogans and rhetoric rather than expressing a well-formulated foreign policy is not the way to win Americans over.*

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in the Middle East, we have military in 135 countries around the world, we are using our military to influence other governments, influence other economies, and, politically, we are poking other countries in the eye with a sharp stick. And it's little wonder that at some point in time, somebody decided they were going to retaliate.

**Kopel:** So, you view Sept. 11 as retaliation for American aggression.

**Badnarik:** And that's the way that it was advertised by the

people who did that —

*Kopel:* Al Qaeda, according to its statement made after Sept. 11 . . . is upset that Spain is no longer a Muslim country . . . If Spain is attacked by al Qaeda . . . should the United States defend Spain, according to its NATO treaty obligations?

*Badnarik:* I don't know about NATO. I genuinely do not. However, the United Nations is trying to influence our government here in the United States, and I'm completely opposed to having the United Nations, or any other outside force, telling us what we can't —

*Kopel:* Me too, but that's got nothing to do with our treaty obligations under NATO. Libertarians are generally thought of as being very isolationist and pacifist in foreign policy. If you're president, will you support our NATO treaty obligations and defend fellow NATO members who are attacked?

*Badnarik:* Libertarians are not isolationists, we are non-interventionists. We are also not pacifists. We're the ones who support the 2nd Amendment and think that you should be able to carry a gun wherever you want to go. So we are not going to be pacifists internationally. If another country attacks us, we will use our military, and we will retaliate. And in the case of Sept. 11, we would be happy to bring Osama bin Laden, and any of his people that we can show evidence for, to justice.

*Kopel:* So therefore we should not follow the NATO treaty. And if Germany or England or Italy or Spain is attacked, we should not help defend those countries.

*Badnarik:* If the NATO treaty is in fact constitutional, and I don't know that, then we must agree to that thing. Given a question of whether I would have voted for NATO at the time that it was being adopted, the answer is no.

*Kopel:* The invasion of Afghanistan. Were you for or against that?

*Badnarik:* I'm in favor of retaliating against the people who attacked us. Afghanistan the country was not responsible. It was a small subset of the people from Afghanistan.

*Kopel:* Who were there with the blessing of the government, and helping to run the government.

*Badnarik:* It's my understanding that the country of Afghanistan was willing to turn over Osama bin Laden to us, if we were willing to show them the evidence that said that they were the ones that did it. I would like to see that evidence myself. In the United States, you are innocent until proven guilty. That means you have to have some evidence to show the crimes —

*Kopel:* And so, therefore, what the United States should have done with Osama bin Laden is try to capture him alive and put him on trial. You wouldn't have favored sending in commandos to kill him, for instance.

*Badnarik:* No. The Sept. 11 tragedy is an international crime. It's a mass murder, and has to be dealt with as an international crime. It is not automatically a war, and I wouldn't have gone to war with Afghanistan. And, to the best of my knowledge, Iraq has never attacked us — well, maybe not never — but didn't attack us there, and is not directly related to the Sept. 11 tragedy, and I think it's totally inappropriate for us to have 150,000 troops there. Over 50% of the people in the United States think that going to Iraq

was a mistake. It is clearly a mistake to stay, it's a political tar-baby, and we cannot get out of it with any type of satisfactory victory. We need to acknowledge that it was a mistake, and we need to bring our troops home as safely and quickly as possible.

There were other peculiarities in Badnarik's views. He repeatedly characterized taxation — at least the taxation of income — as theft. Yet he said government should run on excise taxes. He said we can't abandon the elderly who now depend on Social Security, but if taxation is theft, how can continued support be warranted? Furthermore, like Harry Browne, he suggested paying off Social Security dues by selling federal lands, but also said he wants to replace Social Security with a Cato-style "privatized" system of accounts.

When a CU student asked about stem cell research, Badnarik vacillated. He described the problem of defining the start of human life and said, "I'm not smart enough to know when that is," but that "for the time being," it's an "individual rights issue," not a government issue. Then he said, "I really can't give you a legitimate answer on the stem-cell issue," because it might be that taking undifferentiated cells from a tiny glob of tissue is stealing from an individual.

Though he describes himself as an expert on the Constitution, Badnarik invoked the 1st Amendment to support his view that he should participate in the presidential debates — as if the Commission on Presidential Debates were constitutionally obligated to invite his participation.

Badnarik continues to employ the bizarre metaphor he used at the LP convention to argue against the "wasted vote" line of thinking. Voting, he said, is like being in prison and having to decide between three options: a 50% chance of dying by lethal injection, a 45% chance of dying by the electric chair, or a 5% chance of escaping. Well, of course, we have to go with escaping. But that doesn't have anything to do with voting Libertarian. Badnarik tried to make the point that voting Republican or Democrat is the equivalent of committing political suicide, but I doubt many who heard him say it believe it to be true.

Badnarik's visit to Colorado illustrates his strengths and weaknesses as the Libertarian presidential candidate. He is brash, self-consciously arrogant, and often charming, taking full advantage of the media opportunities that come with the nomination. He is articulate on domestic issues, but his views on taxation and his incoherence on foreign policy may limit the appeal and effectiveness of his campaign. □



"Oh, right — and I suppose you've never obstructed justice?"

# Equality, Stinginess, and Empire

*by John Hospers*

It might sound nice to live in a world of Exemplary Altruists, but does anyone really want to?

Peter Singer's early book "Animal Liberation" (1975) won him instant fame as a champion of the humane treatment of animals — not so much animals in the wild, over which we have little control, but domestic animals such as cows and pigs, who are raised for slaughter. The book dramatically exposes the mistreatment of animals on factory farms, in which animals are raised in conditions of extreme overcrowding and lack of sanitation extending even to the moment of cruel death in slaughterhouses. The book did not make much of a dent nationwide in factory farm practices, but it did alert thousands of readers to the existence of the conditions Singer describes.

The book is a plea for "equal treatment" of animals and persons, with implications that shocked some readers, such as that there are some situations in which the survival of a dog or a deer should be preferred to that of a human being.

Now Singer has produced two new books that raise essential questions about our political and economic life — indeed, about our survival. Both are works on applied ethics, and the ethics he defends is that of classical utilitarianism, as presented originally by its founders, Jeremy Bentham in the 18th century and John Stuart Mill in the 19th. The phrase often used to describe this view is "the greatest happiness of the greatest number," but this phrase works against itself; sometimes the greatest total amount of happiness is not shared by the greatest possible number of persons.

There are numerous forms of utilitarianism, such as act-utilitarianism, rule-utilitarianism, and attitude-utilitar-

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ianism, which Singer does not distinguish in these pages. Nor does he explain the differences between pleasure, satisfaction, happiness, and contentment versus pain, misery, and unhappiness, each of which is important when discussing specific examples. These distinctions, which abound in the literature, are not requisite for Singer's purposes here.

The feature of happiness and unhappiness with which he is almost exclusively concerned is their *distribution*. What he wants the world to contain is as much happiness as possible, experienced by as many people as possible. A world in which some persons spend more money on theater tickets in a year than others do on food is for Singer a world of injustice. Everyone should have an opportunity to enjoy the world's resources.

Should everyone then have an equal share? Here Singer's view diverges sharply from that of most others who call themselves utilitarians. An equal share of what — money? Happiness? Houses? Family members? The usual utilitarian answer is "happiness," but there is no way to provide people with equal shares of that: some people will be unhappy no matter what is done for them. Happiness is not distributable by others. The nearest approach to this is distribution of money, with the hope that more money will lead to more happiness. And it is money that the welfare

state distributes to its citizens.

Should all share equally? Not quite: one's first response is to say that some don't deserve it. But Singer does not pursue this avenue. What he believes every person on the planet is entitled to is "a decent living" — enough nutritious food to keep healthy, a reasonably comfortable place in which to live, and sufficient amenities to enable one to enjoy what is called "a decent living." What this will be differs from person to person, but "a decent living" must be available to all, even the most depraved.

Who shall supply all these benefits? Society: specifically, those who can afford it most. Those who have provide for those who have not. It is the moral duty of the rich to provide for the poor. A hundred dollars is worth much more to a poor person than to a rich one. The rich person can easily spare it, but for the poor person it is a matter of survival. So if you are well off, or better off than the poor, you give to them to improve their lives.

The duties are endless. How many people are there in want? Millions — some in your hometown, some elsewhere in your country, and most of all in overseas countries where extreme poverty is the norm. And of course, if you give them enough for today's needs, there is still tomorrow with its millions of further needs to be supplied. And for how long? Besides tomorrow there will be a long chain of tomorrows, each filled with needs for you and other donors to satisfy. Won't the supply run out before we run out of poor people to help? And how long will you and the other givers survive all this?

These are obvious questions of the most elementary kind, and Singer does little to address them. "You keep giving, and they keep taking" seems to be his answer; at least he nowhere rejects it. His emphasis is entirely on the duty of the haves to give to the have-nots. The pages are filled with examples.

You have been saving up for years in order to buy an elegant expensive car; you know that there are starving people in the world, but your life's dreams are embodied in that car. Is it immoral for you to buy it nonetheless? Yes, says Singer: think of all the poor people you could feed with that money. Hundreds of them could survive for some time on it. And you could get along just as well with a cheaper car; you could save still more by taking the bus to work. It wouldn't be so bad once you got used to it, and many people would be enabled to escape penury, at least for a time.

What would happen if Atlas shrugged, and you refused to support them any more, is nowhere described. Nor is it described what would happen if you stopped working: since everyone has a right to a decent standard of living, presumably the gifts would somehow have to keep coming.

Most Americans, Singer believes, should give about 70% of their annual income for the support of the poor, particularly those overseas who are entirely without the means to sustain themselves. The average American could live on that 30%, after some temporary discomfort, with inexpensive food and housing and becoming accustomed to living without luxuries.

There is of course an obvious rejoinder: "Go get a job, or if there isn't one, mow some people's lawns or do what

even children do when they open up a lemonade stand. Do something and you won't be so needy tomorrow!" Though an obvious response, this is not one of which Singer avails himself. It is as if in his universe the whole world were a soup kitchen, with the vast majority constantly in need of more soup. (Or one could say that he knows well enough that people can improve themselves, but that people who have done this are not his concern: he is only concerned to remedy nature's errors by making sure that the most basic needs of everyone are supplied.)

Singer does not consider what would be the psychological effects of such a donor vs. recipient arrangement: what it would do to the motivation of the giver, who would soon lose his appetite for charity, and the receiver, who would soon become accustomed to the habit of dependency.

In fact, it seems almost too obvious to mention that no economic progress is possible without extensive *capital accumulation*. Manufacturing cars is not possible without thousands of parts, each of which requires its own maker or manufacturer, and many thousands of dollars of accumulated capital. People who live hand-to-mouth couldn't generate enough money to make these enterprises possible. But the very poor already live hand-to-mouth, and it is hard to escape the conclusion that the donors would soon arrive in that position if they had to keep on giving. (One could say of course that the government could collect the money from taxation, and distribute it among its subjects; but of course this money would be extracted from the people. The government would have to originate all enterprises requiring large investment, just as in the Soviet Union, and they would be operated with the same degree of corruption and waste of resources as they were there.)

Capitalism, as we do not need Singer to teach us, is a wealth-producing machine because it pays people to work and improve themselves, each year enjoying the fruits of the accumulated labor of previous years. In hand-to-mouth existence there is no such built-in progress. Moreover, human nature is such that most people will work hard to

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*In Singer's universe the whole world is a soup kitchen, with the vast majority constantly in need of more soup.*

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sustain themselves but will not continue to do so when they are forced to work for the benefit of others. Universal poverty is the result of such Exemplary Altruism.

### **The Law of the World**

What is urgently needed, says Singer, is a system of law applicable not only to nations but to the entire world — a world law, with full powers of enforcement, as well as a world court. There are partial approaches to this in the World Trade Organization and GATT, but nothing with real teeth in it that is also sufficiently inclusive. The United States, he says, is the principal obstacle here:

"It has to be said, in cool plain language, that in recent years the international effort to build a global community

has been hampered by the repeated failure of the United States to play its part. Despite being the single largest polluter of the world's atmosphere, and on a per capita basis the most profligate of the major nations, the United States has refused to join the 178 states that have accepted the Kyoto Protocol. . . . Though it is one of the world's wealthiest nations, with the world's strongest economy, the United States gives significantly less foreign aid, as a proportion of the Gross National Product, than any other developed nation. When the world's most powerful state wraps itself in what — until Sept. 11, 2001 — it took to be the security of

lives as well as money, it would seem well worth the price. Millions of Iraqi citizens would be rescued from torture and death, at the cost of a few thousand allied casualties (a tiny fraction of the casualties in World War II). And neighboring nations would be put on notice to cease and desist from their totalitarian ways, especially the practice by fundamentalist Muslims of killing non-Muslims everywhere they can find them. While the enemy is busily killing his antagonists (or those he has been conditioned to believe are his antagonists) and torturing dissidents by putting them into shredders, should we simply ignore the situation, or should we find a way to deter him? The question looks like a utilitarian slam-dunk.

Singer, however, does not view it in that way. Rather than compare the utilities on both sides, he uses the principle (or rule) that no nation should attack another unless it has first been attacked by that nation. This is a time-honored libertarian maxim, but I would not have thought that national boundaries were all that important for Singer, since so much of his energy is expended on getting us to transcend these boundaries by giving billions of dollars in humanitarian aid to people on the other side of them.

It is true that Iraq did not attack the United States. But it had attacked other nations, such as Kuwait, on whose behalf the U.S. had gone to war against Iraq in 1991. Iraq's predatory habits had already been established, leaving little doubt that it was indeed "armed and dangerous." Even more important, this was a different kind of warfare, initiated not by governments through a declaration of war but by huge collections of terrorists attacking others according to their whim, without bothering about such niceties as existing governments. They were collections of thugs who wished the rest of us dead and were promised eternal rewards for dispatching us as quickly as possible.

There is, I fear, in our present world, rapidly decreasing utility in holding to the principle "Never use force against another person (or nation) unless they have used it against you first." When Egyptian forces were massed at Israel's borders in 1967, and Israel responded to the threat with a preemptive strike, should Israel have waited until it was destroyed by the combined Arab armies? And if an enemy with nuclear forces is poised and ready to strike us (a highly probable situation a few years, or months, from now), should we then wait until they have struck, perhaps

*In an era of instant attacks and instant responses, isn't it suicidal to keep repeating, "We must always wait until they hit us first"?*

so powerfully that no retaliation is possible or feasible? In an era of instant attacks and instant responses, would it not be suicidal to keep repeating, "We must always wait until they have hit us first"? If once struck, should we just let it go, as Singer says we should do with 9/11?

Bush did not let it go, and for this Singer castigates him

*continued on page 41*

*Is it immoral for you to buy an expensive car? Yes, says Singer: think of all the poor people you could feed with that money.*

its military might, and arrogantly refuses to give up any of its rights and privileges for the sake of the common good — even when other nations are giving up their rights and privileges — the prospects of finding solutions to global problems are dimmed" (One World, p. 198).

He cites many examples. He wants to prohibit, on a worldwide basis, the sale of furs that come from animals caught in steel-jaw leg-hold traps — which crush and hold the animal's leg, sometimes for days, until the trapper returns. Only the U.S., Canada, and Russia were holdouts preventing the WTO from carrying out this proposal. The same applies for the use of animals in cosmetics testing, and the importation of tuna caught by methods that drown dolphins (57–60).

There is ever so much more, and it is sometimes far from clear whether, even if the situation is as bad as he presents it, it can be corrected by collective action. (If furs are prohibited in some nations but not in others, surely this can help correct the situation in those nations — is it really "all or nothing"?) He cites many examples of situations that call for worldwide observance of a law — where only an enforceable worldwide rule will suffice. Laws about the mistreatment of ocean creatures are of no avail if some nations can escape them. The capstone of his examples is this: "It is sometimes justifiable to intervene militarily to prevent flagrant human rights abuses in other countries" (64). But here we embark on a sensitive and highly controversial topic.

Singer devotes much of his new book "President of Good and Evil" to denouncing the United States for being stingy and uncooperative, and most of all for interfering in the affairs of other nations, such as Afghanistan and Iraq. One would have thought that he would favor the invasion of Iraq on humanitarian grounds alone, and that as an Exemplary Altruist he would have left no stone unturned in defending this enterprise. Here after all were millions of people living at the mercy of a sadistic dictator, Saddam Hussein, condemned to imprisonment, torture, and death, year after year without any apparent way to unseat their Stalinesque tyrant.

Although rescuing Iraqis from this situation would cost

# An American Life

*by Rose Wilder Lane*

*A self-described  
"plump, Middle-  
Western, Middle-  
class, middle-aged  
woman, with white  
hair and simple  
tastes" tells her  
life story.*

I was born in Dakota Territory, in a claim shanty, forty-nine years ago come next December. It doesn't seem possible. My father's people were English country family; his ancestors came to America in 1630 and, farming progressively westward, reached Minnesota during my father's boyhood. Naturally, he took a homestead farther west. My mother's ancestors were Scotch and French; her father's cousin was John J. Ingalls, who, "like a lonely crane, swore and swore and stalked the Kansas plain." She is Laura Ingalls Wilder, writer of books for children.

Conditions had changed when I was born; there was no more free land. Of course, there never had been free land. It was a saying in the Dakotas that the Government bet a quarter section against fifteen dollars and five years' hard work that the land would starve a man out in less than five years. My father won the bet. It took seven successive years of complete crop failure, with work, weather and sickness that wrecked his health permanently, and interest rates of 36 per cent on money borrowed to buy food, to dislodge us from that land. I was then seven years old.

We reached the Missouri at Yankton, in a string of other covered wagons. The ferryman took them one by one across the wide yellow river. I sat between my parents in the wagon on the river bank, anxiously hoping to get across before dark. Suddenly the rear end of the wagon jumped into the air and came down with a terrific crash. My mother seized the lines; my father leaped over the wheel and in desperate haste tied the wagon to the ground, with ropes to picket pins deeply driven in. The loaded wagon kept lifting off the ground, straining at the ropes; they creaked and stretched, but held. They kept wagon and horses from being blown into the river.

Looking around the edge of the wagon covers I saw the whole earth behind us billowing to the sky. There was something savage and terrifying in the howling yellow swallowing the sky. The color came, I now suppose, from the sunset.

"Well, that's our last sight of Dakota," my mother said. "We're getting out with a team and wagon; that's more than a lot can say," my father answered cheerfully.

This was during the panic of '93. The whole Middle West was shaken loose

and moving. We joined long wagon trains moving south; we met hundreds of wagons going north; the roads east and west were crawling lines of families traveling under canvas, looking for work, for another foothold somewhere on the land. By the fires in the camps I heard talk about Coxey's army, 60,000 men, marching on Washington; Federal troops had been called out. The country was ruined, the whole

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*Looking around the edge of the wagon covers I saw the whole earth behind us billowing to the sky.*

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world was ruined; nothing like this had ever happened before. There was no hope, but everyone felt the courage of despair. Next morning wagons went on to the north, from which we had been driven, and we went on toward the south, where those families had not been able to live.

We were not starving. My mother had baked quantities of hardtack for the journey; we had salt meat and beans. My father tried to sell the new — and incredible — asbestos mats that would keep food from burning; no one had ten cents to pay for one, but often he traded for eggs or milk. In Nebraska we found an astoundingly prosperous colony of Russians; we could not talk to them. The Russian women gave us — outright gave us — milk and cream and butter from the abundance of their dairies, and a pan of biscuits. My mouth watered at the sight. And because my mother could not talk to them, and so could not politely refuse these gifts, we had to take them and she to give in exchange some cherished trinket of hers. She had to, because it would have been like taking charity not to make some return. That night we had buttered biscuits.

These Russians had brought from Russia a new kind of wheat — winter wheat, the foundation of future prosperity from the Dakotas to Texas.

Three months after we had ferried across the Missouri, we reached the Ozark hills. It was strange not to hear the wind any more. My parents had great good fortune; with their last hoarded dollar, they were able to buy a piece of poor ridge land, uncleared, with a log cabin and a heavy mortgage on it. My father was an invalid, my mother was a girl in her twenties, I was seven years old.

Good fortune continued. We had hardly moved in to the cabin, when a stranger came pleading for work. His wife and children camped by the road, were starving. We still had a piece of salt pork. The terrible question was, "Dare we risk any of it?" My father did; he offered half of it for a day's work. The stranger was overjoyed. Together they worked from dawn to sunset, putting down trees, sawing and splitting the wood, piling into the wagon all it would hold. Next day my father drove to town with the wood.

It was dark before we heard the wagon coming back. I ran to meet it. It was empty. My father had sold that wood for fifty cents in cash. Delirious, I rushed into the house shouting the news. Fifty cents! My mother cried for joy.

That was the turning point. We lived all winter and kept the camper's family alive till he got a job; he was a hard

worker. He and my father cleared land, sold wood, built a log barn. When he moved on, my mother took his place at the cross-cut saw. Next spring a crop was planted; I helped put in the corn, and on the hills I picked green huckleberries to make a pie.

I picked ripe huckleberries, walked a mile and a half to town, and sold them for ten cents a gallon. Blackberries too. Once I chased a rabbit into a hollow log and barricaded it there with rocks; we had rabbit stew. We were prospering and cheerful. The second summer, my father bought a cow. Then we had milk, and I helped churn; my mother's good butter sold for ten cents a pound. We were paying 8 per cent interest on the mortgage and a yearly bonus for renewal.

That was forty years ago. Rocky Ridge Farm is now 200 acres, in meadow, pasture and field; there are wood lots, but otherwise the land is cleared, and it is clear. The three houses on it have central heating, modern plumbing, electric ranges and refrigerators, garages for three cars. This submarginal farm, in a largely submarginal but comfortably prosperous county, helps support some seven hundred families on relief. They live in miserably small houses and many lack bedsteads on which to put the mattresses, sheets and bedding issued to them. The men on work relief get only twenty cents an hour, only sixteen hours a week. No one bothers now to pick wild berries; it horrifies anybody to think of a child's working three or four hours for ten cents. No farmer's wife sells butter; trucks call for the cream cans, and butterfat brings twenty-six cents. Forty years ago I lived through a world-wide depression; once more I am living through a depression popularly believed to be the worst in history because it is world-wide; this is the ultimate disaster, the depression to end all depressions. On every side I hear that conditions have changed, and that is true. They have.

Meanwhile I have done several things. I have been office clerk, telegrapher, newspaper reporter, feature writer, advertising writer, farmland salesman. I have seen all the United States and something of Canada and the Caribbean; all of Europe except Spain; Turkey, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Iraq as far east as Baghdad, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan.

California, the Ozarks and the Balkans are my home towns.

Politically, I cast my first vote — on a sample ballot — for Cleveland, at the age of three. I was an ardent if uncomprehending Populist; I saw America ruined forever when the soulless corporations, in 1896, defeated Bryan and Free Silver. I was a Christian Socialist with Debs, and distributed

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*My father had sold that wood for fifty cents in cash. Fifty cents! My mother cried for joy.*

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untold numbers of the Appeal to Reason. From 1914 to 1920 — when I first went to Europe — I was a pacifist; innocently, if criminally, I thought war stupid, cruel, wasteful and unnecessary. I voted for Wilson because he kept us out of it.

In 1917 I became a convinced, though not practicing, communist. In Russia, for some reason, I wasn't and I said so, but my understanding of Bolshevism made everything

pleasant when the Cheka arrested me a few times.

I am now a fundamentalist American; give me time and I will tell you why individualism, laissez faire and the slightly restrained anarchy of capitalism offer the best opportunities for the development of the human spirit. Also I will tell you why the relative freedom of human spirit is better — and more productive, even in material ways — than the communist, Fascist, or any other rigidity organized for material ends.

Personally, I'm a plump, Middle-Western, Middle-class, middle-aged woman, with white hair and simple tastes. I like buttered popcorn, salted peanuts, bread-and-milk. I am, however, a marvelous cook of foods for others to eat. I like to see people eat my cooking. I love mountains, the sea — all of the seas except the Atlantic, a rather dull ocean — and Tchaikovsky and Epstein and the Italian primitives. I like Arabic architecture and the Muslim way of life. I am mad about Kansas skies, Cedar Rapids by night, Iowa City any time, Miami Beach, San Francisco, and all American boys about fifteen years old playing basketball. At the moment I don't think of anything I heartily dislike, but I can't under-

stand sport pages, nor what makes radio work, nor why people like to look at people who write fiction.

"But aren't you frightfully disappointed?" I asked a stranger who was recently looking at me.

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*I was a pacifist; innocently, if criminally, I thought war stupid, cruel, wasteful and unnecessary. I voted for Wilson because he kept us out of it.*

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"Oh, no," she said. "No, indeed. We value people for what they do, not for what they look like." □

*In the late 1930s, libertarian essayist Rose Wilder Lane recounted her life story to a functionary of the Federal Writers Project, a make-work project of the New Deal. From a typewritten transcript in federal archives.*

## Equality, Stinginess, and Empire, from page 38

in a number of ways: Bush is a religious bigot, he is a man driven by an overriding passion, he is not amenable to reason, his mind is an example of arrested development. True, Bush is not a towering intellect, but the fact that he is a professed Christian should surely not be held against him. Almost all presidents have held Christian belief in some form, though Bush wears it on his sleeve more than most of the others, and for mentioning this fact to his audiences he is ridiculed by the media, most of whose members consider all such beliefs stupid. He even talks about evil; but so did Reagan when he referred to the USSR as an evil empire, and the media hated him for that as well, though most of the American public did not. As for me, not sharing his religious convictions, I simply say, "Let him express whatever religious belief he wishes, as long as such beliefs don't compromise the separation of church and state."

Bush is, after all, commander in chief of the U.S. armed forces, and sworn to protect Americans to the best of his ability. Under his command American forces conquered the Iraqi army in record time with minimal casualties, freed Iraq of its tyranny, then replaced this tyranny with a near approach to American-style democracy — a government that will, it is to be hoped, deter its neighbors from any precipitate action against us. Not too bad for a man of such limited intellect.

### Empire?

Singer is extremely suspicious of American strength, and he never treats military preparedness as a virtue. The ultimate appeal, he believes, must lie in the United Nations, at least a revised United Nations. I fear, however, that the United Nations is as impotent today as the League of Nations was in 1938. If there is any protection for Americans today it lies with the American military that saved France in 1918 and again in 1944.

A collection of nations, yes; but empire, no. Most Americans have no desire for an American empire; but the distinguished British historian Niall Ferguson, among others,

doesn't think it would be such a bad idea for the British Empire, now defunct, to be replaced by a new American empire. He writes in his book "Colossus" (2004), p. 156, "I am fundamentally in favor of empire. Indeed, I believe that empire is more necessary in the 21st century than ever before. The threats we face are not in themselves new ones. But advances in technology make them more dangerous than ever before. What is required is an agency capable of interfering in the affairs of such states to control epidemics, depose tyrants, and local wars to eradicate terrorist organizations."

Whether such an organization will emerge from the present UN is not an easy question. When the League of Nations failed to prevent war in Ethiopia, I could not help asking in retrospect, "Could we really have expected the other members of the League to arm themselves, combine forces, and attack Ethiopia?" Perhaps not. In 2004, can we expect other nations to free Iraq, Iran, and Syria from tyranny? In the case of Iraq, perhaps the answer is again no; still, a group of other nations, especially ours, has already gone quite a distance trying to do so; and we are still far from knowing the outcome.

Would other nations, having agreed in the UN to resist the tyrannies near their borders, actually do as they promised, or would they leave it all to the United States, whether as one independent nation among many or as the leader of an American empire? Americans generally prefer to throw their weight around when they have to and then retreat between the oceans. Whether we can be safe in such isolation is a troublesome question. Will we be able to ward off nuclear attacks and at the same time protect other nations whose survival is essential to ours? An answer to this would involve many complexities of detail. Careful weighing of alternatives, not emotional rhetoric, will be required if we are to emerge from this thicket unscathed. Whether such care will be exercised in high places is yet another question, whose answer will not yet be evident in any nearby tomorrows. □

## The New Anti-Semitism, *from page 26*

as "un-American" and "close to treason." He made it clear in his memoir that in his opinion the exhibit did not represent "the facts" of the war, facts that only a veteran who was an "eyewitness" to the war could know — not a historian, of course, who was "not there." This is similar to Elie Wiesel's claim that only Jews in Israel have the knowledge and understanding to criticize Israel.

Although there is much to admire in both the Israeli and

the American people, as well as in Israel and America, there appear to be all too many who accept the simplistic and puerile notion that "you are either with us or against us": you are either uncritically with Israel or against Israel; you are either uncritically with America or against America. When faced with facts or questions they dislike to hear about the actions or proposals of the governments of Israel or of the United States, many people cry "anti-Semitism" or "anti-Americanism" — words which, in such circumstances, have become little more than expressions of emotions. □

## The Intelligent Libertarian's Guide to Voting, *from page 30*

four years. Regrettably, they won't be disappointed.

But one can hope they will be. I think back to the '60s, when the wistful saying "Suppose they gave a war, and nobody came" was popular. It was a noble sentiment. In that vein, I also like "Suppose they gave a tax, and nobody paid" around April 15. And "Suppose they gave an election, and nobody voted" now.

You've heard all the reasons why you should vote. Most of them are humbug at best, and some — like "It doesn't matter how you vote. Just vote!" — are simply idiotic. Voting today has nothing to do with the "civic duties" you learned about in grade school. Your fellow citizens aren't Jimmy Stewart and Gary Cooper lookalikes earnestly trying to do the right thing. Well over 50% of U.S. citizens are now net tax recipients, and they've trundled down to the polls in their tank tops and shower slippers only to help ensure they stay on the gravy train.

It's sickening to hear thoughtful non-voters, who can sense in their gut something is terminally wrong with the process, make lame excuses because they feel guilty for not participating. I would, therefore, like to give you five reasons why you shouldn't vote.

1. Voting in a political election is unethical. The political process is one of institutionalized coercion and force; if you disapprove of these things, then you shouldn't participate in them, even indirectly. As Mao, a leading expert on the subject, famously said: "The power of government grows out of the barrel of a gun."

Sure, if government limited itself only to defending its subjects from domestic and foreign aggression, and adjudicating disputes, you could argue there is nothing unethical in voting for who plays the night watchman. But the fact is that elections have long been, as Mencken observed, nothing but advance auctions on stolen goods.

If you want something, vote in the marketplace with the dollars you've earned.

2. Voting compromises your privacy. It just gets your name in another government computer bank — one that they can use to call you up for jury duty and other forms of involuntary servitude. The less the government knows about you,

even in small ways, the better off you are.

3. Voting is a degrading experience. Voting (and even registering to vote) often involves spending considerable time standing in line, hanging around government offices, filling out forms, and dealing with petty bureaucrats. Most people can find more enjoyable and productive things to do with their time.

4. Voting just encourages the kind of person that runs for office. People don't actually vote for a candidate; they vote against the other candidate. But that's not how the guy who gets the vote sees it; he thinks it's another mandate for him to rule. It's ridiculous to justify voting as an endorsement of the lesser of two evils.

In 1980, as luck would have it, I did an hour alone on "The Phil Donahue Show" on the very day before the elections. The audience had been very much on my side up until the point where Phil accused me of voting for Mr. Reagan, and I had to explain why I wasn't. Unfortunately, telling them they shouldn't vote was just more than they could handle, so they didn't let me get past this fourth point. The prospect of their stoning me precluded my explaining the fifth, and possibly most practical, reason not to vote.

5. Your vote doesn't count. Politicians and political hacks like to say every vote counts, but statistically, one vote in scores of millions makes no more difference than a single grain of sand on the beach. That's completely apart from the

*Political hacks like to say every vote counts, but statistically, one vote in scores of millions makes no more difference than a single grain of sand on the beach.*

fact that, as voters in Chicago in 1960 and Florida in 2000 can tell you, when it actually is close, things can be rigged. And, anyway, officials manifestly do what they want — not what you want — once they're in office. □

and Economics. According to Milton Friedman, Director founded this hybrid field of study. Director was succeeded at Chicago by Ronald Coase.

Director was personally known for his truthfulness. He was sometimes referred to at Chicago as "honest Aaron." His work is carried on by his nephew, David Director Friedman, and many others.

— Alan Ebenstein

## Reflections, *from page 17*

fought the view that the American economy is best characterized by monopolistic competition. This was a major contribution, for it helped to pave the way for the libertarian revival in mainstream academic economics.

For its first five years, Director edited the *Journal of Law*

# Reviews

"Confessions of a Tax Collector: One Man's Tour of Duty Inside the IRS," by Richard Yancey. HarperCollins, 2004, 695 pages.

## *The Taxman Cometh Clean*

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Mike Holmes

The "Confessions of a . . ." literary genre has long been a popular format that entices readers by promising an inside look at some mysterious and usually disreputable profession, like Mafia hit man, or prostitute, or soldier of fortune or other career choice which average people rarely have firsthand knowledge about. Richard Yancey's "Confessions of a Tax Collector" is no exception. Tax collection, like butchering animals or gathering foreign intelligence on WMDs, has remained shrouded in mystery, and for good reason. Sausage makers and government spooks do not want you to share their secrets.

Yancey's book does a credible job of giving us a look inside the IRS Beast (Yancey's term). It is both less and more than the typical insider account of an unsavory profession. There is plenty of salacious action: mild-mannered, middle-class tax collectors come across as pretty sexed up, and Yancey claims pressured taxpayers regularly offer sexual favors as bribes. But what makes this book distinctive is that it manages to achieve a degree of literary merit.

Yancey came to the IRS as a scrawny, 135 lb. weakling with an

English degree and a string of failed careers. His real ambitions were literary, and his literary talent is evident as he paints a vivid picture of the first three years of his often terrifying twelve-year descent into the bizarre world of tax collection. He tells how he (and other) IRS agents intimidate taxpayers into filing and paying taxes, and when they cannot collect, how they barge into their homes and businesses, hauling away cars and trucks, emptying bank accounts, and stickerizing everything in sight with bright notices warning citizens that their property now belongs to the federal government.

In 1991, Yancey answered a blind newspaper ad in central Florida. It promised college graduates with at least a 3.5 grade point average "interesting and rewarding careers." The ad led to a well-paying but despised IRS job as a point man for the "voluntary" tax system. His job consisted of showing taxpayers who were reluctant or unable to pay just how "voluntary" the system really is. His skeptical fiancee wasn't supportive, and his friends from community theatre were horrified. He quickly was alienated from the civilian world, much like a newly recruited Marine or policeman. The IRS veterans derided him as a "pansy

poet" (though he isn't gay) and predicted he'd soon be gone.

Yancey manages to present himself as a sympathetic protagonist despite his working for the most despised agency of the government. This is a genuine literary accomplishment, achieved by detailing the progress of his career while presenting himself as different than the insider career-climbing clerks or ex-military types typically hired as R.O.'s (Revenue Officers). Yancey is one of the first of a crop of "Distinguished Scholars," who are hired solely on their demonstrated academic success rather than any knowledge about taxes or ability to bully others successfully. Most of this book centers on the severe and weird year-long training internship designed to turn him into a loyal IRS functionary.

Readers looking for revelations of IRS tradecraft won't be disappointed. Yancey skillfully weaves into the tale many interesting tidbits about, and insights into, the IRS's collection process and the paramilitary mindset of its collections officers. His accounts of paranoia and bureaucratic infighting within the collections offices are even scarier than the things they do to taxpayers. Readers come away with even less confidence in their privacy and in

the security of their assets. But they get some small solace in the emotional and psychological price the tax collectors themselves pay for their pitiless intrusions.

The book is full of anecdotes, among them his encounters with tax protesters. He develops a specific hatred for them, especially the promot-

*The paranoia and bureaucratic infighting within IRS collections offices are even scarier than the things they do to taxpayers.*

ers of the "untax" movement; and his account of how the IRS squashes their misguided efforts is must reading for libertarians.

What makes this book extremely readable is that it consists almost entirely of reconstructed dialogues between Yancey and co-workers, friends, or taxpayers, and interior monologues which reveal Yancey's often panicked state of mind. While the author mentions several times his 4 a.m. writing sessions before work at the local Denny's, I have to wonder just how accurately these 8-to-12-year-old conversations are rendered, especially with Yancey's claim that all names and identifying details have been changed. The book jacket tells us that his interactions with taxpayers were all conducted under a self-selected IRS pseudonym, as is common practice, yet nowhere in the actual book is this mentioned. In his reconstructed dialogues, everyone refers to him as "Mr. Yancey." He reports considerable career success, and yet we learn nothing about the final eight years of his service in the Treasury Department.

At one point, he shares a detailed account of how he picked up a wounded dog that had been struck by

a hit-and-run driver and left for dead, and heroically rescues the animal despite the owner's indifference. This story, I suppose, serves to demonstrate his charitable moral fiber, but seems so self-serving and irrelevant as to be merely annoying.

Aside from a brief mention in the afterword, where Yancey claims the mid-90s Republican Revolution put severe restraints on R.O.'s with the list of "Ten things that can get you fired" (this was originally, by the way, 30 things), he doesn't deal with many of the changes in the IRS since the early 1990s. The number of field-collection R.O.'s has been cut by over two-thirds, and recent massive IRS reorganizations have doubtlessly made much of his description of the bureaucracy obsolete.

There are plenty of former IRS employees now in civilian life, many of them now representing taxpayers. Some have written similar insider accounts. The IRS functions in three large segments: tax return processing (mostly clerical and data processing), tax return examination (the dreaded audit process, partly by automated

methods, partly by trained accountants and attorneys), and the collection process, which, according to Yancey, requires virtually no knowledge of business, tax law, or anything else we usually associate with the IRS. All it takes is a strong stomach and a thick skin, plus a willingness to become part of a dysfunctional bureaucracy full of backstabbing coworkers and managers who spy on their employees.

"Confessions of a Tax Collector" was much more enjoyable than one would expect, given its subject. And if you can justify its purchase as an

*Readers get some small solace in the psychological price the tax collectors themselves pay for their pitiless intrusions.*

"ordinary, necessary and reasonable" expenditure for your business, you may even be able to write off the purchase price. But you didn't hear that from me. □

**"The Singular Mark Twain,"** by Fred Kaplan. Doubleday, 2003, 736 pages.

# Pained Twain

Timothy Sandefur

Mark Twain is the only writer who deserves the mountains of superlatives your high school English teacher heaped upon him. His writing is fresh, vivid, subtle, and sharp after more than a century, and his insight into human nature remains profound and often moving.

Fred Kaplan's biography is the first

full-length life of the great writer in recent memory. Justin Kaplan (no relation, apparently) won the Pulitzer Prize for his 1966 "Mr. Clemens And Mark Twain," but that book intentionally skipped over much of Twain's early life, since Twain "was always his own biographer, and the books he wrote about these years are incomparably the best possible accounts, even if they may not always be the truest."

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Ron Powers' 1999 "Dangerous Water," by contrast, focused primarily on Twain's early years, and produced a fascinating short book with intriguing insights into the writer's motivations. Unfortunately, despite its comprehensiveness, "The Singular Mark Twain" lacks the liveliness and insight of these earlier works.

Twain was haunted by many ghosts — the Paige Typesetter which twisted him through bankruptcy over the course of 15 years; the guilt he felt for the deaths of his young son, his daughter Susy, and his wife Livy; the nightmares of violent destruction on the river, or of the incineration of the town drunk when the jail burned down (Twain had given him the matches). These ghosts manifested themselves in various ways — particularly in his obsession with images of lost innocence, like the Adam and Eve story, which he told and retold countless times. His idealistic representation of childhood in "Tom Sawyer" essentially created the popular image of American boyhood. But like the steamboat wrecking Huck's raft, there was a darker element touching all of Twain's work, and which would eventually produce such heart-wrenching works as "The Death of Jean," an essay he wrote within hours of discovering his daughter drowned in the bathtub on Christmas Eve.

His melancholy over the loss of innocence is reflected in his repeated invocation of the idea that ignorance is bliss. In "A Tramp Abroad," he complained that "We have not the reverent feeling for the rainbow that a savage has, because we know how it is made. We have lost as much as we gained by prying into the matter." Again, in "Life on The Mississippi," he grumbled that learning to read the Mississippi River's features destroyed its beauty: "Since those days, I have pitied doctors from my heart. What does the lovely flush in a beauty's cheek mean to a doctor but a 'break' that ripples above some deadly disease . . . ? Does he ever see her beauty at all, or doesn't he simply view her professionally, and comment upon her unwholesome condition all to himself? And doesn't he sometimes wonder whether he has gained most or lost most by learning his trade?" Twain, who was always fascinated by

technology, nevertheless saw it as tremendously destructive, and some of his ruminations on the subject are as pessimistic as "The Education of Henry Adams." As Fred Kaplan writes, Twain "was to maintain his popular image, the humorously satiric

*Fred Kaplan's biography manages to capture some of Twain's personal force — particularly his capacity to demonize perfectly innocent people.*

and genially avuncular embodiment of America's nostalgia for small-town life, the Norman Rockwell of American prose. Later, [William Dean] Howells was to call him, memorably, 'The Lincoln of our Literature,' which he is, suggesting that he also embodies the darker, tragic strains of American experience, though it also implies that, like Lincoln, he provided in his prose a redemptive vision, an optimism earned through painful experience. But, in fact, he is also the anti-Lincoln of our literature, who looked unflinchingly, for himself though not for his public, mostly in unpublished works, at the nasty underside of American and of human life in general: its brevity, selfishness and meaninglessness, its hypocritical religiosity, and its devotion to mammon. All human life, Twain concluded, begins with false hope and inevitably imposes loss and pain. No redemption of any kind inheres in its random nature."

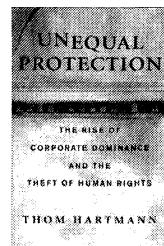
What could make such a writer worth reading? Twain's magnificent skill in capturing the essence of the bright as well as the dark sides of life. When roused on a subject, as in his killer book review "In Defense of Harriet Shelley," Twain is a master warrior, starting slowly and steadily boiling to explosive pressure. When recalling the sweetness of life, as in his autobiography (his unfinished masterpiece), he bests any poet for soothing expression. And when telling an anecdote, like "Jim Wolfe And The Cats" or "Jim Blaine's Old Ram," his comic timing and subtlety are perfect. Twain

was a high idealist, often a crusader, as in his real masterpiece on race relations, "Pudd'nhead Wilson." But as an idealist, he was also often disappointed that mere human beings — including often himself — failed to live up to his hopes. And when that happened, his disappointment was bitter, even shattering; it hit him with the force of eating the apple in Eden. As Powers notes, Twain was always just what his wife called him as her term of endearment: "Youth." He could lie without guile and carry a grudge like a war-wound; he could make mere fools into fantastic monsters, and good men into gods, in his mind.

Fred Kaplan's biography manages to capture some of Twain's personal force — particularly his capacity to demonize perfectly innocent people. One of these may have been Isabel Lyon, a longtime friend and companion whom a paranoiac aged Twain later called "a liar, a forger, a thief, a hypocrite, a drunkard, a sneak, a humbug, a traitor, a conspirator, a filthy-minded and salacious slut pining for seduction & always getting disappointed." Scholars, however, still debate to what degree Lyon deserved

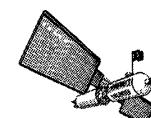
## CORPORATIONS ARE NOT PEOPLE

- Why should the government give more rights to corporations than individuals have?
- The Boston Tea Party was *not* a protest against "taxes." It was a WTO-style protest against transnational corporations.
- The 14th Amendment (granting basic rights to freed *individual* slaves) has been misused by lawyers representing corporate interests to sell out individual rights.
- Corporate managers, as a class, have more in common with government bureaucrats than they do with private individuals.
- The largest transnational corporations resemble kings more than they do us.



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these epithets, although Kaplan fails to note the fact. There are other discrepancies between Kaplan's version of events and those of other biographers. He repeats, for instance, Twain's claim that he once turned down the opportu-

*While Twain was surprisingly well-read, he shared in the Victorian moral philosophy of his era, and his fear of technology compromised some of his convictions.*

nity to buy stock in the Bell telephone, even though Justin Kaplan dismisses the story as apocryphal.

Unfortunately, Fred Kaplan is not as adept as Justin Kaplan in evoking the hysteria and eventual gloom that surrounded much of the writer's life. Twain's existence — even in his own eyes — can be described at least as much by reference to sentiment and image as it is to the facts. As the Paige Typesetter came to overshadow the great writer (reducing his output to a single novel in the course of five years, the fascinating "Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court") his humor was drawn farther and farther from him as he watched himself descend into Investment Madness. The machine never worked; disappointment fell upon disappointment; only his association with oil magnate Henry Rogers finally rescued his finances. But his addiction to the Typesetter simply

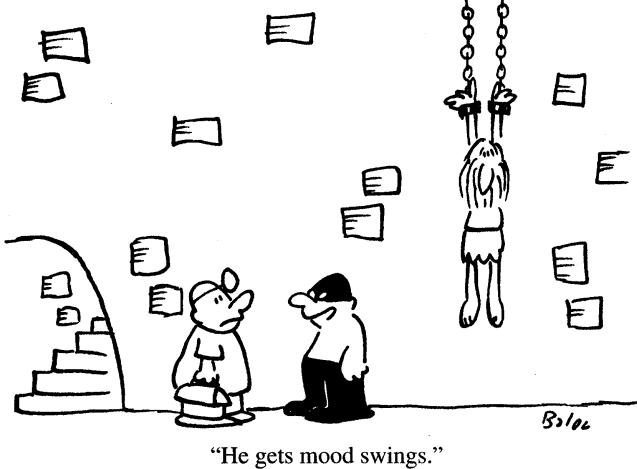
would not relent. It is as if the fever of contemplating fantastic riches caused the cold facts to evaporate into steam. Twain later recalled his family's constant faith that their worthless 75,000 acres of Tennessee would one day make them all rich: "It kept us hoping and hoping, during forty years, and forsook us at last. It put our energies to sleep and made visionaries of us — dreamers and indolent. We were always going to be rich next year — no occasion to work. It is good to begin life poor; it is good to begin life rich — these are wholesome; but to begin it *prospectively* rich! The man who has not experienced it cannot imagine the curse of it."

Many biographers have detected Twain's regret at the Typesetter fiasco in the pages of "Connecticut Yankee," but their interpretations are rather strained. In fact, Twain was remarkably productive in spite of the strains in his personal life. After Susy's death, Twain completed "Following the Equator," and as Fred Kaplan notes, "that he had been able to write a travel book in which grief played no role was testimony to his professionalism and his use of his pen as catharsis." The "Connecticut Yankee" makes only the most distant glances at his Typesetter stress, and Kaplan is to be commended for not following Twain's other biographers in saying otherwise. "Connecticut Yankee" is actually quite interesting from a libertarian perspective, since it is Twain's most sustained commentary on politics. His intense denunciation of theocracy and defense of the right of revolution in particular

show his sincere individualism. The apocalyptic conclusion of the book bears a remarkable resemblance to "Atlas Shrugged," with its theme of politically motivated ignorance destroying the technology it could not possibly create. But while Twain was surprisingly well-read, he shared in the Victorian moral phi-

losophy of his era, and his fear of technology compromised some of his convictions. Some passages in "Yankee" and other writings are even tinged with socialist sympathy. When Howells sought Twain's support for labor unions in opposing labor-saving technology, Twain told him that every invention "takes a livelihood away from 50,000 men — & within ten years creates a livelihood for *half a million*." But at the same time he denounced factory labor, saying that man "is always some man's slave for wages, and does that man's work; and this slave has other slaves under him for minor wages, and they do his work." Howells later recalled that "he never went so far in socialism as I have gone, if he went that way at all, but he was fascinated with 'Looking Backward' and had [Edward] Bellamy to visit him; and from the first he had a luminous vision of organized labor as the only present help for working-men."

This fascination can be understood only by Twain's extreme capacity for sympathy. Indeed, his contradictions flow from a deeper source than political. His rapturous individualism — symbolized most beautifully in the figure of Huckleberry Finn choosing to defy the moral teachings of his whole society — runs counter to his Victorian social mores on several occasions. His idealization of peasant life and his realism with regard to the Dark Ages; his worship of technology and his fear of its moral and psychological influences; his skepticism toward quacks and his willingness to indulge Christian Science, dream imagery, and other quackery — all clashed severely. But they clashed in a manner characteristic of his country as well as his era. It is often said that Twain's writing is characteristically American in its style and imagery, but it is also characteristically American in its contradictions. Twain's innocence and his skepticism, his idealism and cynicism, his hero-worship and his crusading, reflect a contradictory and vital culture. As Fred Kaplan writes, Twain "had his fingers to the pulsebeat of who we were and are and made that available to us in ways that make it possible to say, as a metaphor, that Mark Twain wrote aspects of America into existence."



That word "pulsebeat" is unfortunate; "The Singular Mark Twain" bears other similar marks of clumsiness. It contains numerous spelling and grammar errors ("made him more about in the future in his confidences" p. 373) and awkward phrases ("It kept, though, dragging on" 392); ("Twain had many unfilled holes, he was very short of acorns, and the house was huge." 348). More disappointing is that Kaplan fails to put that pulse into his story. For a 736 page book, "The Singular Mark Twain" seems surprisingly empty. The main reason is that Kaplan fails to take up the tool that Twain used so well: emotion. For Twain was a romantic, and for him, memory was at least as much about sentiment as about dates and places. In his "Autobiography" he wrote of his boyhood, "The life which I led there with my cousins was full of charm, and so is the memory of it yet. I can call back the solemn twilight and mystery of the deep woods, the earthy smells, the faint odors of the wild flowers, the sheen of rain-washed foliage, the rattling clatter of drops when the wind shook the trees, the far-off hammering of woodpeckers and the muffled drumming of wood-

*Twain's writing is characteristically American in its style and imagery. It is also characteristically American in its contradictions.*

pheasants in the remoteness of the forest, the snap-shot glimpses of disturbed wild creatures skurrying [sic] through the grass — I can call it all back and make it as real as it ever was, and as blessed. I can call back the prairie, and its loneliness and peace, and a vast hawk hanging motionless in the sky, with his wings spread wide and the blue of the vault showing through the fringe of their end-feathers. I can see the woods in their autumn dress, the oaks purple, the hickories washed with gold, the maples and the sumacs luminous with crimson fires, and I can hear the rustle made by the fallen leaves...."

That is Mark Twain, and his story needs to be told in similar terms. Justin Kaplan and Ron Powers succeed in evoking the deep gloom and

the white sunshine of Mark Twain's life and times, and readers interested in finding the elemental Twain should start there. □

**"The Blank Slate: The Modern Denial of Human Nature," by Steven Pinker. Viking Penguin, 2002, 528 pages.**

# Challenging the Blank Slate

Leland B. Yeager

Steven Pinker is a psychologist and cognitive scientist who recently moved to Harvard from MIT. His broad field includes investigating what universals of language structure may be innate and how children learn language. Two of his earlier books that I have read, "The Language Instinct" and "Words and Rules," delighted me.

His latest book has wider scope. It challenges three fashionable dogmas that now figure in postmodernist (relativist, deconstructionist) attacks on the sciences of heredity and human nature. Philosophers have sometimes called those dogmas empiricism, romanticism, and dualism. The first, the Blank Slate, denies any permanent human nature and attributes differences among persons and groups (including the sexes) almost entirely to environment and experience rather than to heredity. Pinker does not argue — no one does — that "genes are everything and culture is nothing"; instead he explores "why the extreme position (that culture is everything) is so often seen as moderate, and the moderate position is seen as extreme" (p. ix). The second dogma is the Noble Savage: precivilized man is a peaceful, happy creature; and, as environmentalists want to believe, nature in general is a fount of virtue. Third is the

Ghost in the Machine: mind or soul is an entity distinct from the body (including the brain) and its functioning.

Unlike, for example, J. Philippe Rushton (who does appear in the References), Pinker spends little time on issues of race. Genetic differences among individuals are unlikely to "affect every part of the body except the brain." Differences between races or ethnic groups, though "much smaller than those among individuals, . . . are not nonexistent" (143). On the black-white IQ gap in the United States, Pinker agrees with Thomas Sowell that current evidence does not require a genetic explanation. He regrets racial profiling but recognizes that limited time and resources may make it necessary when wrong decisions would be very costly (he mentions suicide hijacking, 148).

Pinker invokes Sowell's "A Conflict of Visions: Ideological Origins of Political Struggles." He gives Sowell's Constrained Vision a more intuitively meaningful name: the Tragic Vision. Its adherents include

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Thomas Hobbes, Adam Smith, Edmund Burke, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., F.A. Hayek, Karl Popper, Isaiah Berlin, Milton Friedman, and Richard Posner (287). Standing in contrast with their realism is Sowell's Unconstrained vision. Renamed Utopian by Pinker, it rests on the three targeted dogmas: "the Blank Slate (no permanent human nature), the Noble Savage (no selfish or evil instincts), and the Ghost in the Machine (an unfettered 'we' that can choose better social arrangements)" (293).

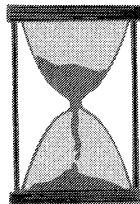
"The blank slate was an attractive vision. It promised to make racism, sexism, and class prejudice factually untenable." But "[t]he modern sciences of mind, brain, genes, and evolution are increasingly showing that it is not true. The result is a rearguard effort to salvage the Blank Slate by disfiguring science and intellectual life: denying the possibility of objectivity and truth, dumbing down issues into dichotomies, replacing facts and logic with political posturing" (421–422). The philosophy of Big Brother's

regime in George Orwell's "1984" is "thoroughly postmodernist" (avant la lettre) in its relativism and its denial of objective benchmarks for evaluating the deceptions of the powerful (426).

Especially in chapter 6, "Political Scientists," Pinker recounts attacks on researchers whose work on human nature and heredity was deemed politically incorrect. Even some justly eminent scientists (like Stephen Jay Gould and Richard Lewontin) have taken part in the radical science movement. Tactics include deliberate misquotation, baseless charges of racism, invasions of the classroom, and demonstrations and seizure of the microphone to prevent or disrupt invited lectures. E.O. Wilson, entomologist and father of sociobiology, was doused with water as he tried to deliver a scheduled talk at a convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Anthropologist Napoleon Chagnon, long-time student of the Yanomamö people of the Amazon rainforest, suffered a dishonest campaign of defamation. Exploring some area or stumbling

upon some unwelcome fact may thus turn an honest researcher into a despised public figure. Are the vilification, harassment, political interventions, and physical assault inflicted on behavioral scientists just another example of people reacting to findings that make them uncomfortable? Or, as Pinker suggests, "are they part of a systematic intellectual current: the attempt to safeguard the Blank Slate, the Noble Savage, and the Ghost in the Machine as a source of meaning and morality?" Anyway, "Behavioral science is not for sissies" (121).

Pinker exposes ignorance or abuse of science not just from the radical Left but by people of other political persuasions. Some leading conservative and neoconservative intellectuals (named on pages 130–131) have embraced the Intelligent Design hypothesis of biochemist Michael Behe, even though biologists have rejected it. In "Darwin's Black Box," Behe tried to modernize William Paley's Argument from Design for the existence of God, emphasizing the (so far) inexplicable elegance and complexity of biological



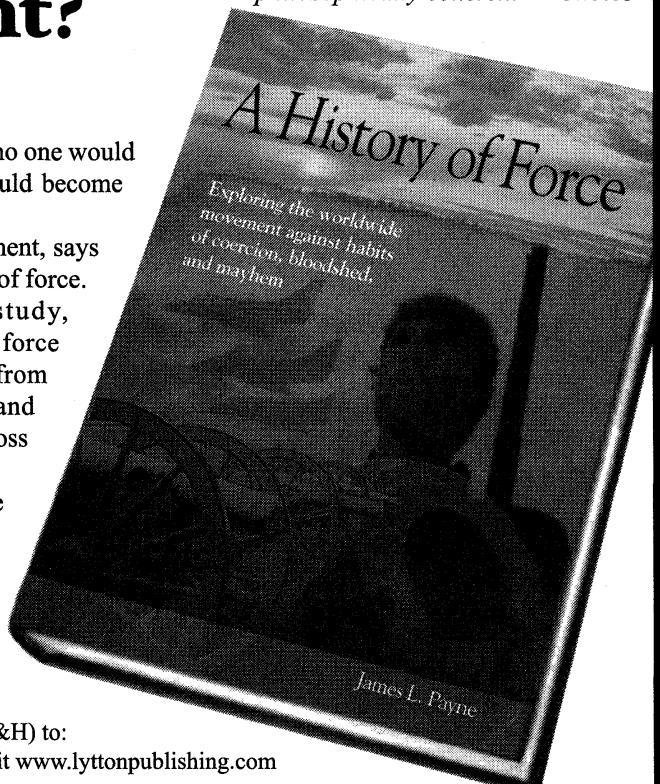
## Is Time Running Out for Government?

**Force** is the basis of government. Take away the guns, and no one would care what senators say, and their bustling marble chambers would become echoing mausoleums.

Therefore, if we want to know about the future of government, says political scientist James Payne, we need to track trends in the use of force. This is what Payne has done in his provocative new study, *A History of Force*. His readable account of dozens of uses of force reveals a long-term tendency for the human race to turn away from violence and coercion. This trend affects government. Large and intrusive as it is today, government is quietly being eroded by the loss of moral, cultural, and intellectual support.

For centuries, reformers have looked to the state and its use of force to improve the world. Payne shows that this perspective is historically misguided. Coercive approaches are in decline. The future belongs to voluntary arrangements that emphasize individual creativity, persuasion, and generosity.

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systems at the molecular or subcellular level. (God so postulated is sometimes called "God of the gaps," the gaps being not-yet-solved scientific puzzles.

*Pinker's main purpose is not politics but the defense of science against political and ideological attacks.*

The third dogma — of a soul separable from the body — also appeals to the Religious Right.)

Pinker maintains the fact-value distinction as essential to clear thinking. The "naturalistic fallacy" — trying to get "ought" from "is," even supposing that something is good if it is natural — is a familiar attempt to erase the distinction in one direction. Pinker identifies an attempt in the opposite direction. "The moralistic fallacy," as he calls it, tries to get "is" from "ought": "if a trait is moral, it must be found in nature" (162). "Nature, including human nature, is stipulated to have only virtuous traits . . . or no traits at all, because the alternative is too horrible to accept" (162). Ramsey Clark, President Johnson's attorney general, illustrated the fallacy in arguing that the criminal justice system should replace punishment with rehabilitation: "it would be so nice *if* the idea were true that we should all believe *that* it is true. The problem is that it is not true" (313). The moralistic fallacy is at the heart of political correctness (although Pinker does not much use the term): a proper political position can shortcut research and dictate answers even to questions of fact.

With the fact-value distinction reaffirmed, Pinker can show how the sciences of human nature, far from undermining humane values, help rescue them from a shaky foundation. It is a mistake "to say that discrimination is wrong only because the traits of all people are indistinguishable," that violence and exploitation are wrong only because people are not naturally inclined toward them, "that people are responsible for their actions only because the causes of those actions are mysterious," and "that our motives

are meaningful in a personal sense only because they are inexplicable in a biological sense" (193). "Pure environmental theories of violence remain an article of faith. . . . Condemning violence is all to the good . . . but not if it is disguised as an empirical claim about our psychological 'makeup'" (312–313).

Linking values to politically asserted factual claims can boomerang. Such ideas imply that future factual discoveries could make our values obsolete. They conceal the sordid sides of denying human nature: "persecution of the successful, intrusive social engineering, writing off suffering in other cultures, an incomprehension of the logic of justice, and the devaluing of human life on earth" (194).

Delinking our widely shared values from moribund factual dogmas makes their rationale clearer. "We understand *why* we condemn prejudice, cruelty to children, and violence against women, and can focus our efforts on how to implement the goals we value most. We thereby protect those goals against the upheavals of factual understanding that science perennially delivers" (422).

Pinker offers insightful remarks on miscellaneous topics, like scientific method. "The way of science is to lay out every hypothesis that could account for a phenomenon and to eliminate all but the correct one" (352). (Karl Popper spoke of "conjectures and refutations.") Should or can the social sciences and psychology be "reduced" to biology and ultimately to chemistry and physics? Pinker distinguishes two varieties of reductionism. The bad, greedy, destructive variety tries to explain a phenomenon in terms of its smallest or simplest constituents. Yet as the philosopher Hilary Putnam pointed out, even the fact that a square peg won't fit into a round hole cannot be explained in terms of molecules and atoms. Good — hierarchical — reductionism consists not of *replacing* one field of knowledge with another but of *connecting* or *unifying* them (69–70).

Pinker diagnoses "the euphemism treadmill" (212–213). People invent new words for emotionally charged things or conditions; but a euphemism comes to take on the emotional charge

of what it refers to, requiring its replacement in turn, and so on. Thus *water closet* became *toilet* (originally a term for any kind of body care), then *bathroom*, then *restroom*, then *lavatory*. *Garbage collection* turned into *sanitation*, then *environmental services*. *Crippled* people became *handicapped*, then *disabled*, then *challenged*. In 2001 the San Diego City Council even banned the word *minority* as disparaging. The long history of changing terms for the people whom it now seems most politically correct to call *African-American* is a prime example of the treadmill.

Pinker relevantly cites authors on an impressively wide range of topics, including Thucydides, William Shakespeare, Mark Twain, Emily Dickinson, George Bernard Shaw, Bertolt Brecht, Isaac Bashevis Singer, Kurt Vonnegut, Dave Barry, Woody Allen, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibnitz, David Hume, Immanuel Kant, J.-J. Rousseau, Karl Marx, Isaiah Berlin, Franz Boas, Noam Chomsky, Richard Dawkins, Betty Friedan, Galileo Galilei, Sigmund Freud, Richard Herrnstein, Charles Murray, Eric Hoffer, Margaret Mead, Robert Nozick, John Rawls, Earl Warren, Alan Sokal, Dr. Laura Schlesinger, Christina Hoff Sommers, the cartoonist Charles Addams, Ann Landers and her identi-

*Good — hierarchical — reductionism consists not of replacing one field of knowledge with another but of connecting or unifying them.*

cal twin Abigail van Buren, and Hillary Clinton, who "may have advanced the dumbest explanation [of her husband's escapades] in the history of psychobabble" (179). In a lapse from care about accuracy, Pinker obliquely refers to Ayn Rand and

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characterizes her individualism as holding that "every man is an island" (255).

References not only to Thomas Sowell but to other economists, including Milton Friedman, Gary Becker, George Akerlof, Amartya Sen,

Richard Thaler, Robert Frank, and Jennifer Roback reflect Pinker's good grasp of the fundamentals of economics. He identifies the "conceit" of social planners (170). He cites F.A. Hayek sympathetically on issues of equality and of justice in income dis-

tribution and recognizes him as "the foremost advocate of distributed intelligence in societies" and "an early neural network modeler" (151, 291–292).

Pinker applies the concept of opportunity cost to the question of school and college curricula. The pervasive fallacies that he examines warrant high priority for economics, evolutionary biology, and probability and statistics. No one wants to be a philistine, seeming to say that foreign languages or English literature or the classics are unimportant. But time is limited, and spending it on one subject means denying it to another. In a world of challenging complexities, "these tradeoffs cannot responsibly be avoided" (235–236).

Pinker provides ammunition that libertarians can well use in controversy with utopians and statists. Whether he so intended, I do not know; neither his book nor his web site clearly reveals his political orientation. (Pages 331–332 do briefly mention costs of the war on drugs.) The dogmas that he refutes are more often found, true enough, on the Left than on the Right. Still, not only libertarians but also intellectually honest left-liberals could share Pinker's humane values. (These include the bourgeois virtues, named on page 416.) Anyway, his main purpose is not politics but the defense of science against political and ideological attacks.

A prize-winning parody of sociological gibberish quoted near the end of the book and, more generally, Pinker's putdowns of "ugly, baffling, and insulting art" and "pretentious and unintelligible scholarship" alerted me to the question of writing style. Not until then did I consciously notice Pinker's style. Its very unobtrusiveness is its hallmark and virtue. It is almost entirely free from such distractions as grammar and punctuation errors, awkward or unduly long and complicated sentences, ill-chosen words, pretentiousness, and mannerisms. Even on fairly technical matters, Pinker writes straightforwardly and smoothly. Appropriately, he is a member of the "American Heritage Dictionary's" usage panel. He sets an example that other academic writers should emulate. □

## Notes on Contributors

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**"Rising From the Rails: Pullman Porters and the Making of the Black Middle Class,"** by Larry Tye. Henry Holt, 2004, 314 pages.

# Upwardly Mobile

Bruce Ramsey

From the 1870s through World War II, the American middle and upper class traveled by Pullman car. The porters were black. By today's standards they were servile, low paid and stuck in dead-end jobs. But today's standards were not theirs. Larry Tye's "Rising from the Rails"

*Given the alternatives, it was a glamour job. Porters got to see America, and how the upper half lived.*

recounts the history of these porters and how that history is closely tied to the birth of a black middle class.

George Pullman did not make the first railroad sleeping car, but he made luxurious ones that in the 1870s swept the market. Because of the close quarters between the men who let down and prepared the beds and the passengers who slept in them, Pullman wanted a porter who would be, as Tye says, "the invisible man." And that was a black man, preferably a dark black man from the Deep South.

Tye calls them Negroes, a stylistic device that works well. Pullman, he writes, "hired more Negroes than any businessman in America, giving them a monopoly of the profession of Pullman porter and a chance to enter

the cherished middle class. He did it not out of sentimentality, of which he had none, but because it made business sense." Lincoln freed the slaves, the saying went, and Pullman hired them. And by 1890 the Pullman Palace Car Co. employed more Negroes than any company in America.

Given the alternatives, it was a glamour job. Porters got to see America, and how the upper half lived. They got to read the Saturday Evening Post or The Wall Street Journal or one of the big-city black papers like the Chicago Defender.

Their pay was low, but over the decades it went up. The average monthly wage in 1879, at the beginning of the gold era, was \$10 plus tips. By 1897 it was \$30, by 1916, \$40; by 1924, \$81.75, always plus tips. Adjusting for inflation, the pre-tip wage had increased by four and a half times in half a century.

"They had one of the best jobs in the Negro community, putting them on a social par with teachers, funeral directors, and even doctors and lawyers, many of whom worked their way through school as porters," the author writes. "Porters owned their own homes and were thought to be good catches as husbands. . . . They were the aristocrats of

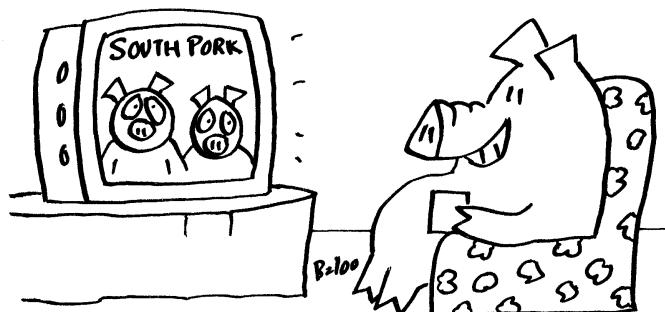
Negro labor."

Tye, a former newspaper writer, wants to show the porters in a good light, but he also wants to show A. Philip Randolph's union, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, in a good light, and that requires stressing how bad off the porters were. They worked long hours. Sleeping three hours a night in some awkward place was considered adequate. They had a long rulebook to memorize and follow. Passengers called them "George," even after the company provided name cards in 1926. They could not be promoted to white jobs like conductor, and they were paid considerably less than the conductors. White labor unions regarded blacks as low-wage competitors and strikebreakers.

The book tells the story of Randolph, a socialist labor entrepreneur, attempting to organize the porters in the 1920s under the pre-New Deal rules of individual sign-up. It was tough, the company was unhelpful and the union failed. It succeeded only when the New Deal was behind it, and in 1937 it negotiated its first contract. Wages went up and hours went down.

Unfortunately for the porters, the sleeping-car business had peaked in the 1920s. The Pullman company stopped hiring porters in 1939, and the workforce shrank. Just as the personal automobile was hammering its business, the government went after Pullman for monopoly. The company shrank and shrank, and ended its sleeping-car service Jan. 1, 1969.

People forget the Pullman porters now and maybe are happy to forget them. But it was a rung up, right from the beginning. This book tells the story well. □



**"As Far as My Feet Will Carry Me," by Josef M. Bauer. Carroll & Graf, 2003, 576 pages.**

# Escape From the Gulag

Bettina Bien Greaves

Josef M. Bauer's "As Far As My Feet Will Carry Me" is a gripping tale of grit, survival, and the determination to be free. Clemens Forrell was a German paratrooper who was captured after parachuting behind the Russian Urals during the Second World War. He was sentenced to 25 years of servitude in eastern Siberia's lead mines. Forrell was determined to

escape — better to die seeking freedom than slowly of lead poisoning in the mines. The Communist slave camp where Forrell was imprisoned was only a few miles from the Bering Strait and Alaska. Forrell tried once to escape to the east, but was soon captured and savagely beaten. Tramping westward across thousands of miles of Siberian wasteland, though risky, seemed more feasible.

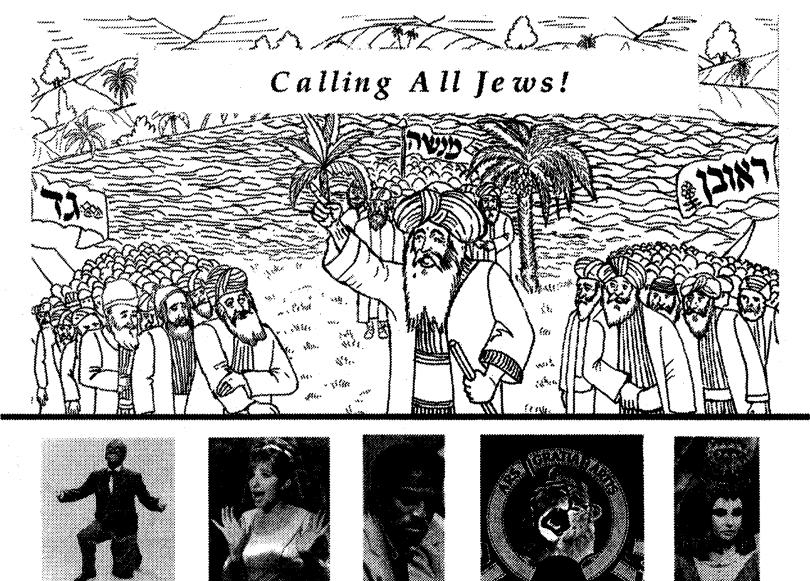
When the camp physician learned

of Forrell's determination, he decided to help. Dr. Stauffer, also a German POW facing a long prison term, had given up his dream of escape after diagnosing himself with cancer. He provided Forrell with a makeshift compass, a crude map of Siberia made from memory by another German POW, some food, clothing, skis, a tinder box, knife, pistol, and advice. In exchange, the doctor asked Forrell to deliver a message to his wife in Germany — if he made it.

It was snowing when Forrell set out in October 1949; his tracks were soon covered over. After struggling for 24 hours in the bitter cold, sweating and experimenting with his skis, he heard and saw what he most dreaded — a two-man, 15-dog search party. They passed within 70 yards but failed to spot him. Confident then that he had survived the final attempt of the camp authorities to capture him, he felt almost free, as if setting out on a tour.

Forrell struggled on, trying to steer clear of human encounters, not knowing who was a Communist. However, he met a friendly tribe of reindeer herders and wintered with them. They taught him many tricks of survival — how to find moss for bedding under the snow, how to bivouac when the mercury fell to 40 below, how to fish through the ice and snare small animals. In spring, they sent him on his way westward. He spent the summer with three Russians who, like him, had escaped from decades-long sentences in labor camps. They had built a dam sluice to regulate water flow, creating a primitive washing plant to pan for gold. One of the men had with him a sizable gold nugget he had smuggled from the mine where they had been slave laborers. "Lust" for that gold nugget, when the other men discovered it, led to two murders and Forrell's being pushed off a cliff. Forrell survived, but barely, with broken bones, no knapsack, no supplies, and no food.

By happenstance, he was rescued from a pack of hungry wolves by a party of Yakuts, who reported that the third gold miner had been captured and, after having his gold nugget confiscated, executed. However, he had



*Jolie, Barbra, even Sammy, Leo, and Liz*

"Almost every Jew in America owes his life to laissez faire capitalism. It was relatively laissez faire America that welcomed Jews in unlimited numbers, and *progressive*, New Deal America that turned them away by the boatload, and back to Auschwitz... For Jews especially: God Bless America should be God bless laissez faire capitalism."

For *The Jewish Debt to the Right*,  
see [Intellectually Incorrect](http://intinc.org) at intinc.org

given his captors a pretty good description of Forrell — his height (six feet, three inches), ragged appearance, and whereabouts. His new friends outfitted him and told him that people mostly sympathized with convicts. They suggested that if he met anyone he should say he was a convict on his way to join a work crew.

By this time, out of desperation, Forrell's ingenuity, courage, stamina, determination, watchfulness, and ability to improvise were pretty well developed. He was sometimes able to hitch rides in trucks, or even trains. He had become clever at stealing food from farmhouses and barns without being detected.

Finally, as he approached the western reaches of the USSR, he met some members of an anti-Communist underground who referred him to a couple of safe houses and a guide who smuggled him out of the USSR and into Iran. There he asked refuge at a police station, only to be arrested as a Communist spy and threatened with repatriation to the USSR. He remembered that his mother had a brother who, before the war, had been a civil engineer in Turkey, and asked the authorities to contact him. The uncle arrived with his mother's photo

*After struggling for 24 hours in the bitter cold, sweating and experimenting with his skis, he heard and saw what he most dreaded — a two-man, 15-dog search party.*

album. Forrell identified all the people in the photographs and then recalled that he had personally signed and dated one photo, before giving it to his mother on her birthday. The uncle then realized that the shaggy-haired disreputable-looking man facing him must really be his nephew. The police apologized.

Forrell was outside Communist jurisdiction and free at last! He flew with his uncle to Ankara and then

back to Germany, where he delivered Dr. Stauffer's message to his wife. It had taken Forrell's feet three years to

carry him from the Communist lead mine in far eastern Siberia to Germany and freedom. □

**"Maria Full of Grace," directed by Joshua Marston. Fine Line Features, 2004, 101 minutes.**

# Hail Mary, Full of Smack

Jo Ann Skousen

"Maria Full of Grace" (in Spanish with English subtitles) is not your typical drug-trafficking movie. No sadistic drug lords battle over turf; no surly DEA agents flex their muscles; no informants or debtors are beaten to a pulp. In fact, there isn't any overt violence, or even a single scene of drug use. The power of this film is in its calm, straightforward storytelling. Maria (Catalina Sandino Moreno) is an intelligent, gutsy, beautiful young girl trying to find a way out of her dead-end life in rural Colombia. Just 17, she is expected to be the breadwinner for her mother, sister, and infant nephew, working as a stripper (no, not that kind — she strips thorns and leaves from long-stemmed roses) at a florist's plantation. She is pregnant by a young man who does not love her and whom she does not love. When her insensitive boss fires her for asking to go to the bathroom too often, she heads to the big city to look for another job.

As often happens in cautionary tales, Maria is intercepted on her way to grandma's house by a young wolf who offers to find her an easy job earning big money. Like many young women in

her predicament, out of work and out of hope, she agrees to become a "drug mule," carrying heroin to the United States in pellets inside her stomach. Despite the life-threatening risks involved, Maria acquiesces to her circumstances with the same grace and acceptance as her namesake did when she said, "So be it unto me." Maria never rails against her life; she simply moves forward calmly and gracefully, with a luminescent beauty befitting the title of the film.

This is a film as much about poverty, immigration, and the saving grace of community as it is about drugs. The first feature length film of writer-director-photographer Joshua Marston, it won the Audience Award at Sundance and the Alfred Bauer award at the Berlin International Film Festival.

I recommend it highly. □



"My figures show that we're overstaffed, dear — one of the kids will have to go."

## Seattle

Sad note on labor conditions in the Bush era, from a dispatch in the Seattle Times:

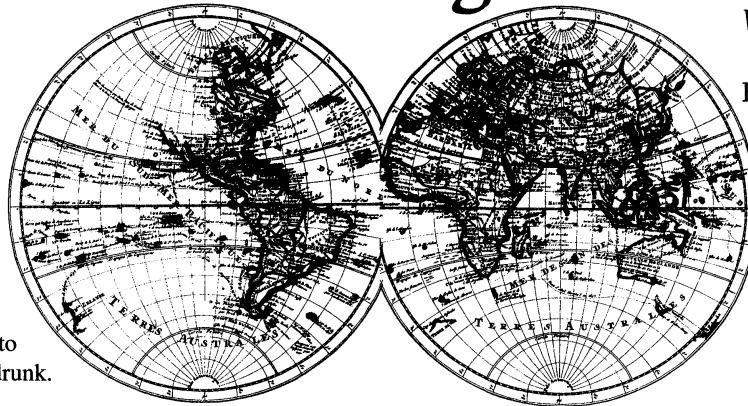
Diane London says she was a "sweatshop psychic" for the National Psychic Network until it fired her for not giving "happy readings."

"They started hiring these people with names like Elvira and Moonshadow," London complained. Her attorney, a former Zamboni driver who did not attend law school, says the employer violated minimum-wage laws.

## Vernon, Vt.

A citizen takes the initiative in assisting law enforcement, as reported in the Rochester Insider:

Police Chief Ian McCollin said he was pulled over by a driver looking for a police officer to arrest him because he was drunk.



## Columbia, Mo.

Equal treatment for the homeless in the Show-Me State, from a dispatch in the Columbia Daily Tribune:

When a homeless man urinated on the floor of his coffee shop, owner Chip DuCharme called the police. After the officers arrived, the vagrant returned, still soaked in urine. When the owner attempted to prevent him from sitting down, the officers smashed DuCharme against a counter, handcuffed him, and led him out to the police cruiser.

## U.S.A.

Interesting interpretation of "impunity," from the lead sentence of an article entitled "Militant Attacks Kill 59 in Iraq" on the front page of USA Today, the nation's second highest circulation newspaper:

Baghdad—"Striking with seeming impunity, insurgents carried out a suicide car bombing . . ."

## Orlando, Fla.

Advance in jurisprudence in the home of Disney World, from a report in the Miami Herald:

After discovering in January that Orange County Deputy Sheriff Mindy Hood was an unwed mother, Judge Alan C. Todd told her that she was a "disgrace to society," and her child was "a bastard," explaining that "it is acceptable for a male to have sex before marriage, but if a female does so, she is not respected and considered a tramp" and that her family "obviously had no morals."

## Atlantic Ocean

An explanation for a stormy summer, from the plywood-covered offices of the Palm Beach Post:

"Most scientists agree that global warming plays little or no role in the number of storms in the current hurricane cycle."

"Global climate models show that air pollution from industry and traffic will drive up average world temperatures by a degree or two this century. All that extra heat could fuel more stormy weather."

## West Des Moines, Iowa

Culinary note from the Hawkeye State, from an article about Iowa steakhouses, published in the authoritative *The Iowan*:

"Hawaii native Cy Gushiken offers acrobatics and stand-up comedy as steaks grill on hibachis at Ohana Steakhouse in West Des Moines."

## Gwinnett County, Ga.

Evidence of the vigilance of the frontline soldiers in the War on Drugs, from an article in the Atlanta Journal-Constitution:

Terrell Jones, a student in Gwinnett County's Grayson High School, was pulled from class by a school administrator because he wore a shirt that read: "Hempstead, NY 516." School authorities thought the shirt advocated the use of marijuana, a plant that is widely harvested and smoked by Americans, but whose use is nonetheless illegal. The shirt referred to Hempstead, New York, a Long Island town of 752,000 people, and its telephone area code, where the student had formerly lived.

"It's important to remember that the vigilance of our administrators is important. The administrator saw a phrase on the T-shirt that raised a red flag," said Sloan Roach, spokeswoman for Gwinnett County schools.

## Olympic Peninsula, Wash.

Curious epistemological note from the concluding paragraph of an essay on the literary merits of 1945 best-seller "The Egg and I," from the estimable north Olympic Peninsula Vigilance:

"At a recent Quaker meeting in Port Townsend, a woman was compelled to rise to her feet and share the following insight with her fellow worshippers. 'Every person has a different view about the past, so if you want to arrive at the truth, listen to everyone's memories, to what occurred from many points of view. The truth only comes when you approach it as a community.' May this story be a small offering towards that truth."

Special thanks to Russell Garrard, Starchild, Ross Levatter, Doug Allison, Dave Roberts, 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](mailto:terraincognita@libertyunbound.com).)

# Can anyone be happier than a Catholic libertarian?

Libertarians and Roman Catholics share one basic teaching, the Doctrine of Subsidiarity. It teaches that all problems should be solved at the lowest possible level.

Moses got Aaron to do his talking for him. Christ appointed apostles. Bishops ordain priests. The people of God have practiced subsidiarity in theological and operational matters. God loves Libertarians because they believe in subsidiarity when it comes to politics, and that's a bigger step toward truth than many on the other side can take.

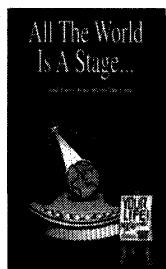
On the other side, control freaks want to do our thinking for us.

Should all libertarians be Catholics? Many already are, in that they feel God has given them the dignity and ability to think for themselves. It's a little harder to take the leap into full obedience, but a lot of smart people have.

You ought to explore this, especially if you're starting to be bitter and angry about how freedom is being destroyed a step at a time. Three books will cheer you up.



**Crats!** is a novel, halfway between Rand and Aquinas. It shows the relationship between reducing the size of government and God's great love for us. It shows that we can't fix government, even with armed rebellion, but we can fix ourselves.



**All the World is a Stage** is an easy read. It simplifies the world so we can see where we sit in our enemies' sights.



**New Road to Rome** explores a new theory of matter and human history. It helps us see that we live in God's world, which He programmed in place several thousand years ago. All human history (are you a child of Shem, Japheth, or Ham?) is boiled down to what our great-great grandparents believed. (They were largely right.). Learn about Catholic Fundamentalism and Radical Catholics, the theological soul-mates of libertarians.

Each book is \$6.95, plus \$2.00 s&h. The author has over a hundred patents, a sense of humor, and understands that, politically, libertarians are the salt that gives the world an important flavor. Order all three books for 19.95, plus \$3.00 s&h. If you don't like them, give them to your angriest friend, or send them back. We'll refund the purchase price.



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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 fighting for my First Amendment rights.*



Dennis Ballen,  
Redmond, WA

WWW. .org

Institute for Justice  
First Amendment litigation