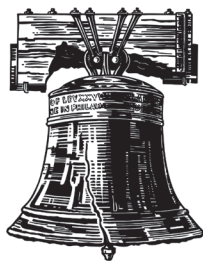


AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR ECONOMIC RESEARCH

SPEECHES FROM THE  
PHILADELPHIA SOCIETY



*Conversations*  
—— *on* ——  
Conservatism

Marcus Witcher,  
Blake Ball & Kevin Hughes

**CONVERSATIONS ON CONSERVATISM:  
THE PHILADELPHIA SOCIETY TALKS, 1965-1982**

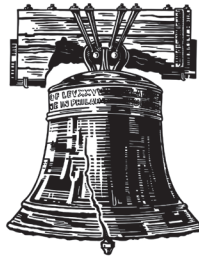
Edited by Marcus Witcher, Blake Ball and Kevin Hughes

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**AIER**

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

The idea for this collection of talks came from a conversation I had with Lenore Ealy at around 1:00 am at a meeting of the Philadelphia Society a few years back. Over a couple glasses of good bourbon, we discussed the unfortunate reality that many of the younger members of our society had not heard of some of the Society's most influential and insightful members and speakers. Lenore also commented that so much of what we were discussing at the time were themes that had been covered in previous meetings. The great thinkers of the conservative movement were not all that different from us and they grappled with some of the same vexing questions plaguing conservatives today. Lenore and I agreed that a new generation of conservatives would benefit from their wisdom—but how to deliver it? It is my hope that this volume will provide young conservatives some insights into the truths that were gleaned in previous meetings.

As I write this in 2020, the conservative movement seems to stand at a crossroads. The movement has been here many times before: after Senator Barry Goldwater's defeat in 1964, during the height of the Vietnam War, at the end of the Cold War, in the 1994 Congressional Elections, in opposition to "compassionate conservatism" and big government in 2010, and now in the wake of President Donald Trump's electoral defeat in 2020. What should the conservative movement look like moving forward?

It is the challenge of each generation to determine what should be retained, what should be reformed, and what should be jettisoned. This was true in the eighteenth century and it is true now. Of course

libertarians, classical liberals, traditional conservatives, neoconservatives, paleoconservatives, and vitalist conservatives disagree on specifics, but in the past the members of our society who represent each of those groups have always gathered twice a year to engage in “the interchange of ideas through discussion and writing, in the interest of deepening the intellectual foundation of a free and ordered society.” In this endeavor, the Philadelphia Society has always sought “understanding, not conformity.”

In that spirit, this book does not seek to convert or espouse any particular position. Instead, it simply hopes to present the great conservative thinkers of the past to a new audience. The panels that appear were selected because the speakers were focused on the nature of conservatism and the conservative movement. As such, this is a volume of conservatives discussing conservatism. It demonstrates the great variety of thought on the right and truly demonstrates that the conservative movement has a great intellectual tradition. The talks begin in 1965, conclude in 1982, and are arranged chronologically.

My co-editors, Blake Ball and Kevin Hughes, and I have taken great pains to present the talks in the manner in which they were delivered. We have chosen not to heavily revise them and have offered minimal footnotes and commentary. Each of the talks contained in this volume had to be transcribed, painstakingly in some cases, from the original tapes on which they were recorded. Some edits have been made for readability, but for the most part the text matches the original recordings.

As with every book, I owe many people a debt of gratitude. First, I must thank Lee Edwards for writing an excellent introduction to this volume. Lee has worked tirelessly his entire life to promote the ideals of our society and we all owe him a debt of gratitude. I also want to thank Lenore Ealy and Allen Mendenhall for reading the manuscript and providing feedback. Kennedy Neely, a major in political science at the University of Central Arkansas, did the majority of the initial transcriptions. We all owe her a big thank you for the many hours she spent trying to capture every word that Frank Meyer quickly and



decisively uttered. Kennedy's position as my work study was funded by the Arkansas Center for Research in Economics (ACRE). As such, I would like to thank the director of ACRE, David "Mitch" Mitchell, and the assistant director, Christy Horpedahl, for their support of the project. I also want to thank my co-editors, Dr. Kevin Hughes and Dr. Blake Ball, who listened to the original recordings and helped me make sure we were getting every last word correct. Their assistance and dedication to the project were essential to completing the book in a timely manner. Without their help, I would still be editing talks. Finally, I would like to thank the executive board of the Philadelphia Society for endorsing the project and making the recordings available to me. As always, any errors are my fault alone.

**MARCUS WITCHER**  
Huntington College, 2020



# INTRODUCTION

## IN PURSUIT OF ORDERED LIBERTY

By Lee Edwards

**T**he waning days of 1964 seemed to be the worst of times for conservatives. Presidential candidate Barry Goldwater offered a conservative choice, not a liberal echo, and was buried deep in an electoral landslide engineered by President Lyndon B. Johnson. Goldwater received just 38.5 percent of the popular vote—the worst showing since Republican Alf Landon lost to President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1936—and won only six states including his home state of Arizona. James Reston, the Washington, D.C., bureau chief of the *New York Times*, wrote that “Barry Goldwater not only lost the presidential election...but the conservative cause as well.”

Things seemed no better in the nonpolitical world. Much of the American campus leaned left. A poll of Harvard undergraduates found that one-seventh supported “full socialization of all industries,” more than one-fifth favored socialized medicine, nearly a third believed that the federal government should “own and operate all basic industries,” and two-thirds supported wage and price controls to check inflation. Liberals dominated the professoriate, the journals of opinion, the mass media, and the *New York Times* best-seller lists. Brookings was Washington’s go-to think tank.

And yet conservatives were more resilient than liberals and perhaps

conservatives themselves realized. They insisted that while a conservative candidate had been decisively rejected, conservative ideas persisted. Ronald Reagan, a rising star in the West, wrote in *National Review* that “the landslide majority did not vote against the conservative philosophy, they voted against a false image our liberal opponents successively mounted.” *National Review* senior editor Frank Meyer, an organizer for the Communist party in his youth, pointed out that despite the Johnson campaign’s attempt to brand conservatism as “extremist, radical, nihilist, anarchic,” two-fifths of the voters—twenty-seven million—still voted for the conservative alternative. “In fact,” Meyer insisted, “conservatives stand today nearer to victory than they ever have since Franklin Roosevelt.” Conservatives welcomed Meyer’s optimistic rhetoric while wondering how long a march would be necessary to gain even a limited victory.

One long-sighted conservative warned against measuring success or failure only at the voting booth. The critical thing, wrote Intercollegiate Society for Individualists (ISI) president E. Victor Milione to Notre Dame professor Gerhart Niemeyer, was to assert the importance of education, not politics, “in shaping the course of future events.” And so when Donald Lipsett, ISI’s Midwest director, proposed in early 1964 the formation of an organization that would keep ISI “graduates” involved in the battle of ideas, Milione quickly gave his approval.

Lipsett quickly organized regional meetings of the new organization (already named the Philadelphia Society) in Indianapolis, Philadelphia, and San Francisco. Ninety conservatives attended the three sessions attended by such luminaries of the Right as Milton Friedman, Russell Kirk, Willmoore Kendall, Stephen Tonsor, Hoover Institution director Glenn Campbell (who would become the Society’s first president), Thomas Molnar, and Fr. Stanley Parry of the University of Notre Dame.

M. Stanton Evans (who else?) was invited to draft a statement of purpose that began: “Its purpose will be to sponsor the exchange of ideas through discussion and writing in the interest of a deeper comprehension of the American Experience.” Two guidelines emerged

from the organizational meetings: (1) “A fundamental purpose of the Society should be a continuing dialogue between the ‘traditionalist’ and ‘libertarian’ emphases” of conservatism. (2) “The Society should sponsor no resolutions, political statements or corporate programs of action.” As for the name, the organizers explained that the Philadelphia Society was selected because it was in Philadelphia that the Founding Fathers created the essential documents of the American Republic—the Declaration of Independence and the US Constitution.

Eager to strengthen the Society, Lipsett proposed a New York City meeting of editor-author William F. Buckley, Jr., representing the traditionalist wing of the conservative movement, and economist Milton Friedman, representing the libertarian wing, in December 1964. Also present at the New York meeting were Frank Meyer, Edwin J. Feulner, then a graduate student at the University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School of Business and destined to be the long-running president of the Heritage Foundation, and Lipsett. Remarkably, recalled Feulner, “this was the first time that Buckley and Friedman ever met each other.”

The two conservative leaders agreed to lend their names to “an American multi-discipline organization patterned after the Mont Pelerin Society,” which had been started in 1947 by F. A. Hayek, Friedman, and other free-market advocates when socialism seemed to be sweeping across Western Europe and much of the free world. Buckley contributed \$100, Feulner explained, “so we could open a bank account.” Lipsett became secretary and immediately set about organizing the Society’s first national meeting to be held in February 1965 in Chicago. The theme was “The Future of Freedom: Problems and Prospects.”

One hundred and twenty-five conservatives—writers, teachers, economists, historians, philosophers—met, as Guy Davenport wrote in *National Review*, to discuss “the fate of the West, its decline, survival, or metamorphosis.” Following remarks at the Friday night dinner by the British businessman Antony Fisher (who would spawn a global network of free market think tanks) the first panel met that same evening after dinner and took up the “problem” of philosophy.

Calling himself a classical liberal, Milton Friedman discussed freedom in terms of the free market economy based on “cooperation.” He said that classical liberalism represented a “healthy” breaking away from the authoritarianism and traditionalism of the past. Individual freedom, he asserted, was the central problem in social organization. Fr. Stanley Parry quietly disagreed, saying that man must perceive the metaphysical rather than the economic basis for freedom. For this reason, Parry said, conservatives “are the heirs of Western civilization.” Fusionist Frank Meyer suggested that American conservatism was a “blending” of traditional values and individual freedom. The *raison d’être* of the Philadelphia Society, he emphasized, should be to abandon “partisan concepts of truth” and exchange ideas frankly.

The following day, three panels explored the problems of foreign policy, “persuasion,” and the intellectual task ahead. Robert Strausz-Hupe, director of the University of Pennsylvania’s Foreign Policy Research Institute, argued that the Kennedy and Johnson administrations’ hope of stopping the proliferation of nuclear power and of cooperation with communism was hollow and unrealistic. Anticipating Ronald Reagan’s forthright foreign policy, Strausz-Hupe said that “this side of surrender, cooperation with communism is impossible.” L. Brent Bozell, former senior editor of *National Review* and founding editor of the traditionalist Catholic journal, *Triumph*, expressed the fear that the West, as a self-conscious embodiment of Christian truth, had forgotten its identity.

LeBaron R. Forster of the Opinion Research Corporation quoted from polls to show that the American people, Democrats as well as Republicans, were basically conservative. Therefore, the conservatives’ task was clarification and persuasion. The University of Virginia professor Warren Nutter argued that persuasion must happen between and not just during campaigns. He called for “a new Federalist Papers” and for greater courage in speaking out.

The concluding panel consisted of three intellectual heavyweights of the conservative movement—philosopher Eliseo Vivas, historian

Russell Kirk, and economist George Stigler, with Wabash College's Benjamin Rogge as chairman. All panelists asked for an end to rallying around the flag as "the primal conservative gesture" and a commitment to the hard work of defining and defending conservative ideas. Stigler noted that conservatives were no longer "an entertaining minority" and were heard when they questioned the Establishment. The closing talks as well as the comments from the floor centered on two themes: (1) ideology and fanaticism are always to be rejected, and (2) conservatives must rely on reason in responding to liberal ideology, a reflection of socialist totalitarianism.

At the meeting's end, there was a standing ovation for Don Lipsett's organizational and programmatic skill and a conviction among the attendees that something important for the conservative movement had been started. For the next three decades, Lipsett and his devoted wife Norma, who kept the books, grew the membership, developed the programs, and found the young scholars who attended the national and regional meetings. Those who drank from the waters of the Philadelphia Society meetings during the Lipsett years knew how fortunate they were.

Don Lipsett never gave a talk or chaired a panel, preferring to sit at the back of the room puffing on his pipe and taking notes that he incorporated in what he called, with tongue in cheek, "A Listing of Important Laws." Here are a couple:

**JOHN RYAN'S LAW OF PUBLIC ORATORY:** "Everybody except me talks too long."

**WILLIAM RUSHER'S OTHER LAW:** "When you find a good thing, run it into the ground."

**MIKE MOONEY'S LAW:** "You can't always count on your friends, but you can always count on your enemies."

Lipsett served the conservative cause night and day and on weekends. As Midwestern Director and then National Field Director of the Intercollegiate Society of Individualists (subsequently renamed the Intercollegiate Studies Institute), he nurtured dozens of campus clubs, student leaders, and faculty members on liberal campuses. The crowning achievement of his career was the founding of the Philadelphia Society, for which he served as secretary from 1964 until his death in 1995. As his worthy successor William F. Campbell wrote, Lipsett was a night person, addicted to late night telephone conversations with those such as Frank Meyer.

Lipsett was known for his love of the naval hero, Commodore Stephen Decatur, commemorated for his defeat of the Barbary Pirates on the “shores of Tripoli.” To honor Decatur, Lipsett started the Stephen Decatur Society and the celebrated Decatur Shop of North Adams, Michigan, whose best-known item is the Adam Smith Necktie, designed by Norma Lipsett.

As Bill Campbell points out, Lipsett knew that Stephen Decatur’s famous toast was more complicated than “Our Country, right or wrong!” What he actually said was, “Our country! In her intercourse with foreign nations, may she always be in the right, and always successful, right or wrong.” Words worth pondering, in these chaotic times.

Don Lipsett was no Bill Buckley or Milton Friedman or Russell Kirk. He was a Hoosier conservative who loved this country and its heroes and who recognized the importance, when few did, of bringing conservatives together on a regular basis to discuss and debate “the foundations of a free and ordered society,” to quote the constitution of the Philadelphia Society.

For two decades following Don Lipsett’s passing, Dr. William Campbell, a respected professor of economics at Louisiana State University, and his wife Helen helped the Society attain new levels of membership and financial stability, assisted by the omniscient Julie Flick. Especially encouraging has been the outreach to members of the rising generation eager to spend a weekend with the best minds



of the West.

From the stinging Goldwater defeat through the dispiriting Watergate scandal and the dreary Carter malaise to the golden years of Ronald Reagan and the mixed results of George H. W. Bush and the sybaritic embarrassments of Bill Clinton and ending with the roller-coaster presidency of George W. Bush and the transformative attempts of Barack Obama, conservatives have been able to draw lessons in ordered liberty and a lifting of the spirit from the more than 100 meetings, national and regional, of the Philadelphia Society. The lifting up and the sharing of ideas carried special weight during the presidency of the unpredictable populist billionaire, Donald J. Trump.

Writing about one national meeting, columnist James J. Kilpatrick argued that in addition to the formal presentations great value lay in the informal encounters, “the gossip of old combats, the family jokes.” Within the conventional framework of the American convention, conservatives “met, and touched hands, and broke lances, and tested improbable schemes.” So it has been for five-and-a-half decades.

In the early ‘70s, when the American campus was riddled with protests, demonstrations and even the bombing of buildings, the Philadelphia Society took the long view as when professor Walter F. Berns scolded his former colleagues at Cornell for wavering in the face of threatened student violence. Young scholars David Friedman, John Marlin, Gary North, and Danny Boggs handled with impressive aplomb at a national meeting such weighty issues as the transfer of government functions into private hands and the theoretical tensions between the traditionalists and the libertarians. Although it did not then have the funds to print the papers read at the meetings, today the internet is ready and able to disseminate anything, including the best thinking of the Society.

At its 10<sup>th</sup> national meeting, Wabash’s Ben Rogge revealed several important “firsts” that could be laid at the door of the Philadelphia Society. It was at a Society meeting that the former Trotskyite Irving Kristol first gave public notice that “he was no longer one of *them*, but

one of *us*.” Long may the Society and its operations endure, Rogge proclaimed, reassuring its members at least once a year that “there are a number of people of first quality who do indeed stand for the open society and are capable of defending it with vigor, warmth, and eloquence.”

One of those defenders was the Nobel laureate F. A. Hayek, who said at the 1975 national meeting that interventionism was so built into government that it would be difficult for even a majority of freedom-minded citizens to make the state resist the temptation to meddle. Statism had become so pervasive, he said, that we now spoke “not preserving but of *returning* to the free society.” Another speaker was publisher Henry Regnery (one of a long line of distinguished Society presidents), who quoted an Ezra Pound translation of Confucius: “The men of old ... wanting good government in their states ... first established order in their own families.”

A long-standing topic of modern conservatism—the similarities and differences of traditional conservatives and libertarians—was the theme of the 1979 annual meeting, led by sociologist Robert Nisbet, who said the two groups shared several views: resentment of government intrusions, fondness for economic freedom, and distaste for mass democracy. But they did not share a common intellectual framework.

Nisbet traced modern conservatism to Edmund Burke’s stand against the French Revolution and its crusade against traditional institutions while libertarians appealed instead to John Stuart Mill and the sanctity of the individual. Conservatives such as Walter Berns and libertarians such as Murray Rothbard warmly debated which strain should prevail. They failed to sway each other but demonstrated the Society’s willingness to discuss publicly the permanent things, or at least its members did in times past.

When the Philadelphia Society turned twenty in 1984, it had a membership of 321 and a deficit of about the same dollar size. Whereas the first meetings were often devoted to knitting together the disparate strands of the movement—traditionalist, libertarian, anti-communist—more recent meetings discussed such broader matters

as “Do Conservative Ideas Necessarily Have Conservative Consequences?” and “Intellectual Resistance to the Wave of the Future.” But at its core, said *National Review*’s Timothy J. Wheeler, the Society was little changed, remaining “a *society* of the like-minded, who convene to cross-pollinate each other’s efforts to restore the moral foundations of liberty.” A formal luncheon address was delivered by Russell Kirk, who argued that because men are moved by visions and not sterile self-interest, the true battle of the age was not for any particular political or economic system but for the imagination. Only “the changing of our visions,” Kirk said, “can achieve large political changes.”

A smoldering dispute between conservatives and neoconservatives burst into open flames at the 1986 national meeting. Capital “C” conservatives provided a preview of their case against Irving Kristol, Norman Podhoretz and other neocons in the spring issue of ISI’s “Intercollegiate Review.” Traditionalists charged that neoconservatives were not religious enough, were thinly disguised “welfare state Democrats,” did not share formative experiences with real conservatives such as the Goldwater campaign, and had been “alarmingly” successful in getting jobs and establishing priorities within the Reagan administration to the exclusion of conservatives.

Explaining why he was not a neoconservative, the historian Stephen Tonsor, a former Society president, used some of the more memorable language in Society history:

It has always struck me as odd, even perverse, that former Marxists have been permitted, yes invited, to play such a leading role in the Conservative movement of the twentieth century. It is splendid when the town whore gets religion and joins the church. Now and then she makes a good choir director, but when she begins to tell the minister what he ought to say in his Sunday sermons, matters have been carried too far.

While traditionalists loudly applauded, neoconservatives protested as loudly, unappeased by Tonsor's qualification that he and other conservatives welcomed the "the assistance of neoconservatives . . . in the work of dismantling the failed political structures erected by modernity." During the question period, Arnold Beichman of the Hoover Institution inquired whether Tonsor was rejecting James Burnham, Whittaker Chambers, Frank Meyer, George Orwell, Arthur Koestler, and Paul Johnson, all of whom had begun their political life on the Left. Tonsor riposted, "Would you accept an ex-Nazi?" Beichman later wrote, "Are the early sins of Burnham-Herberg-et al generation no more to be forgiven than the sins of the younger Kristol-Podhoretz generation?"

Les Lenkowsky of the Institute for Educational Affairs pointed out that neoconservatives such as Charles Murray and James Q. Wilson had done serious analysis of welfare and crime. Stan Evans suggested that conservatives should welcome the help of neoconservatives on the "proper affirmative uses of the state" in the areas of internal order, criminal justice, and foreign policy. Society president M. E. Bradford, as staunch a traditionalist as could be found, called for a rhetoric of the Common Good that asserted the larger over lesser goods. Dartmouth professor Jeffrey Hart said he thought most neocons would accept Mel Bradford's plea for a politics of the common good.

It was one of the most disputatious meetings in the Society's history, caused in large part by the fact that just twenty years after the trouncing of Goldwater, conservatism was no longer on the periphery but at the center of national politics because of the Reagan administration. Eugene Meyer, executive director of the newly launched Federalist Society and the younger son of Frank Meyer, suggested that conservatives, while reserving the right to take issue in specific cases, should "welcome the contribution, both prudential and intellectual, of neoconservatives to the defense of Western civilization." Not coincidentally, the next annual meeting of the Society was held for the first time in Philadelphia, the City of Brotherly Love.

Philosophical disputes were set aside for a sober discussion of

Constitutional government on the occasion of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the US Constitution. Federal judge Robert Bork (before his fated nomination to the Supreme Court) led off with a brilliant analysis that explained the present lamentable state of constitutional law. After World War II, said Bork, “the courts addressed what they regarded as social problems ... and often did so without regard to any recognizable theory of constitutional interpretation.” A tradition of looking to original intention was shattered.

Academics began constructing theories to justify what was happening—and “so was non-originalism born.” The legal wave became a tsunami, Judge Bork said, but a second wave composed of those who believe in first principles began to rise. Bork predicted, correctly, that it might take ten or twenty years “for the second wave to crest, but crest it will” and sweep the “toxic detritus of non-originalism out to sea.” The Supreme Court nominations of George W. Bush and Donald J. Trump have proven Bork’s prescience.

By the time of the 30<sup>th</sup> national meeting in April 1994, the Society had witnessed the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of Soviet communism as well as the general acceptance that capitalism rather than socialism was “the way to go,” as Milton Friedman put it in his telephoned remarks to the meeting. Friedman quoted from his talk at a 1964 founding meeting: “There is a tendency to underestimate the power of ideas because of the length of time it takes for them to work.”

In the realm of ideas, insisted the Nobel laureate, “we have won the battle, but in the realm of practice, we have lost.” America has gone from a society approximately one-third socialist to one that is more than one-half socialist. And yet Friedman remained optimistic because “we just simply haven’t waited long enough.” He still believed that the “American people are not going to stand for a conversion of our society into a wholly centralized, socialized, collectivist society.”

A quarter of a century later, Friedman’s optimism can be challenged, given millennials’ reported fascination with socialism—half say they would be more comfortable under socialism than capitalism—and the

general public's passive acceptance of a federal government bearing entitlements intruding in all corners of our society.

Which makes Friedman's analysis all the more important. Critical to the dissemination of the right ideas, he argued, was "some organization of principle that can serve the function that the Socialist Party served in the 1920s." The Philadelphia Society "has done a great deal in playing that role and as a result has had a great deal of influence on the climate of ideas. But we have to keep pecking away to make sure that that change in the intellectual climate is converted into a change in practice." Since then the Society has continued to peck away at the twin pillars of collectivism and cultural nihilism that bestride much of American society.

At national and regional meetings, it has probed the impact of the welfare state, the religious roots of liberty, the survival of Western civilization, and American foreign policy. It has provided a platform for such distinguished conservatives as Michael Novak, Alan Charles Kors, Robert Conquest, and Harry Jaffa. It has mourned the loss of such colleagues, friends, and mentors as Russell Kirk, Mel Bradford, Gerhart Niemeyer, Henry Regnery, John Howard, and Leonard Liggio.

Sensitive to the prevalence of gray beards at general meetings, a small group of members agreed in 2011 to be interviewed by President Peter Schramm about ways of reinvigorating the Society. Close attention was given to the society's greatest vice—"splintering or factionalism." It was agreed that its bad effects could be ameliorated by reestablishing "trust" among factions and encouraging open but civil discussion. The latter would require not only civility but charity "to those interlocutors with whom we may disagree." There was a clear consensus: We need "to talk *with* one another and not *past* one another." Specific recommendations included a "massive" effort to recruit new younger members, a resolution to refrain from drifting too far into public policy issues, and a setting aside for more conversation between panelists as well as between panelists and the members. Schramm concluded his report with the reminder that the Philadelphia

Society is a society of friends, not a professional organization, who come together once a year or so for “stimulating and enlightening conversation among friends,” a welcome goal in the age of the Internet.

In 2014, Dr. Lenore Ealy, who took her Ph.D. in the history of moral and political thought from Johns Hopkins University and studied under Forrest McDonald at the University of Alabama, succeeded the courtly William Campbell as secretary and executive director. Under Dr. Ealy, the Society has pursued an aggressive recruiting program to bring members of the Fourth Generation of conservatives to its meetings and into membership. As of Spring 2020, the Society had 436 members, an all-time high, including nine Distinguished Members (including George Gilder and Edwin Meese III). To the amazement of older members accustomed to near empty coffers, the Society has achieved a state of modest financial security.

The President’s Club came into being at the 2009 spring meeting when President Steve Hayward responded to the society’s deficit by writing a check for \$500. Other board members followed suit. The Commodore’s Circle honoring donors of \$1,000 or more per year was created in 2014. Some forty Society members belong to either the President’s Club or the Commodore’s Circle.

Among the salient talks and papers in recent years one in particular caught the attention of Society members—the historian George Nash’s 2009 address on the future of conservatism. No one knows the history of modern American conservatism better and no one has described it better than Dr. Nash, author of the definitive work *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945*.

Noting that liberal critics and even a few conservatives had concluded that American conservatism had no future—Buckley biographer Sam Tanenhaus wrote in the *New Republic* that “conservatism is dead”—Nash conceded there were signs of disarray and decline. “A once relatively disciplined band of brothers and sisters,” he said, “has seemingly devolved into a rancorous jumble of factions.” In addition, there were the deaths of iconic leaders like Milton Friedman

and William F. Buckley Jr. Born in 1945, Nash said, American conservatism had become middle-aged, provoking the question, Is old age just around the corner?

Not yet, responded Nash, who pointed out that American conservatism has never been “univocal,” but rather “a coalition with many points of origin and diverse tendencies.” He offered a metaphor: modern American conservatism has been “a river of thought and activism fed by many tributaries ... a wide and sometimes muddy river, but one with great power, so long as the tributaries flowed into the common stream.”

Indeed, Nash said, the foundations of American conservatism are sturdier than the critics realize. They include the creation of “a veritable conservative counterculture” composed of alternative media, foundations, research centers, law firms, homeschooling networks and more. There is the cohesion provided by a culture war pitting an alliance of conservative Roman Catholics, evangelical Protestants, and Orthodox Jews against an anti-Christian secular elite. The threat of communism may have disappeared, Nash said, but external authoritarian challenges “abound on many fronts.”

Looking to the future, Nash quoted the political scientist James Ceaser that for thirty years the conservative movement had been defending ideas that almost all other nations in the West are abandoning: “the concept of the nation itself ... the importance of Biblical religion ... and the truth of natural right philosophy.” What new arguments and vocabulary, asked Nash, can we use to convince those for whom the traditional arguments “are either unfamiliar or seem hopelessly passé?”

Summing up, Nash addressed what conservatives want: “We want to be free, we want to live virtuous and productive lives, and we want to be secure from threats beyond and within our borders.” These are the goals, he said, that are reflected in “the libertarian, traditionalist, and national security dimensions of the conservative movement and the Philadelphia Society.”

In pursuit of these goals, the Society has looked to many for guidance, including the late Forrest McDonald, former Society president and



Distinguished Member, award-winning scholar and teacher at the University of Alabama. In his last lecture to his students, McDonald suggested the following survival kit in a deeply troubled world.

One, open your mind and keep it open. We need to distinguish, he said, between what is “absolute”—God alone—and what is “relative.”

Two, strive to resurrect the English language, “now virtually defunct.”

Three, learn anew to think non-scientifically when dealing with non-scientific things. “We must abandon,” he said, “our fragmented problem-solving approach to knowledge and take up a holistic view of human affairs.”

Four, be grateful and take joy in the “very fact of one’s existence” and in “the existence of one’s fellow human beings.”

When Russell Kirk was asked how he had survived in an age so hostile to conservatism, he quoted T. S. Eliot, the great poet and conservative, who wrote in 1929 when the world seemed to be turning left:

If we take the widest and wisest view of a Cause, there is no such thing as a Lost Cause because there is no such thing as a Gained Cause. We fight for lost causes because we know that our defeat and dismay may be the preface to our successors’ victory, though that victory itself will be temporary; we fight rather to keep something alive than in the expectation that anything will triumph.

To which American conservatives would add that we fight not only to keep ordered liberty alive but because we believe that in the end it will triumph.





## CHAPTER 1

# **THE FUTURE OF FREEDOM: THE PROBLEMS AND THE PROSPECTS, PART I**

**FEBRUARY 26-27, 1965**  
**CHICAGO, ILLINOIS**

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26**  
**8:00-10:00PM**

***The Problem of Philosophy***

M. Stanton Evans, Chairman

Milton Friedman, "Liberalism"

Rev. Stanley Parry,  
"The Real Problem of the Conservative Theory"

Frank S. Meyer, "A New Stage in Conservative Thought"

## LIBERALISM

By Milton Friedman

This is a truly interdisciplinary gathering. As evidence of which I, who am a mere working economist, am listed as talking to you on the program about philosophy—about which I know nothing. But I hasten to add that if you look on the program, you will see that not only is “liberalism” in quotes, but so also is “the real problem of the conservative theory” and “a new stage in conservative thought”—so we are all in quotes. I point this out because I do want to speak as a liberal and from the point of view of the philosophy, which I understand to be the true philosophy, of liberalism. Just because some other people have come along and misappropriated an ancient and honorable word and have taken it to mean the opposite of what it always and historically has meant, there is no reason why those of us who believe in that philosophy and that view should let the theft go without comment and accede to it.

I have tried in deciding what to say in these few minutes to choose a few points to emphasize which seem to me rather relevant to the purpose of our discourse. That is, to see wherein we really do have differences of view about the philosophy, which in large measure we all have in common, and to what extent these differences arise merely from the mode of expression or the particular features that each one of us emphasizes.

Speaking as a liberal (by which I mean a person who believes in individual freedom as a central problem in social organization), I thought I might start by commenting briefly on what I think in many

ways is a fundamental problem of our philosophy: What is the source of our belief in freedom? Why do we give such primacy to freedom? Why do we believe in freedom?<sup>1</sup>

As I see it, our belief in freedom rests fundamentally on two pillars. One is the belief that the individual is the ultimate entity in the world and society. And the second, which I think is very much more relevant to our dialogue or discourse, is humility. I think you can bring out the role of humility by asking yourself the rhetorical question: Can anybody believe that another man should be free to sin? Do you believe in freedom to sin?

One of the common answers to this is that obviously you have got to be in favor of letting men be free to sin because there is no merit in people's not sinning unless they are free to sin. In a way you would say you have got to let men be free to sin, provided they do not, because that is the only way in which there is merit in their not sinning. And it is that 'provided they do not' that leads you to the second, and I think more basic, reason why you have to say you must let men be free to sin: If you really knew what sinning was, of course, you could not. But are you sure you really know? This is why it is a question of humility. Fundamentally, I think if you were absolutely confident, perfectly certain, had no doubts about what was sinning and what was not, then I think you would be driven to say, "I cannot let men be free to sin." And if those of us, like myself, who would say, "Of course, we must let men be free to sin," we say so because, after all, there is a little margin of doubt in our mind. Maybe we are wrong. Who am I to say? Who am I to insist to the other man that what he is doing is a sin?

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1 Here Friedman offered an aside to his listening audience: "Let me say that I am going to abbreviate very much and this is I think perfectly all right in this gathering because everybody here has really thought all about all of these issues and if I say a few words that will bring to all of your minds ideas which you have thought about before and it would be impossible for me to cover in full the points I am going to make in any other way except by reminding you of things you already know if I am going to keep it down to fifteen or twenty minutes."

I am always reminded in this context of that wonderful quotation from one of the least humble men in history, Oliver Cromwell, who said on one occasion this wonderful comment to those whom he was insisting should be of like mind with him: “By the bowels of Christ, I beseech you. Bethink you, you may be mistaken.” That is really the point. It is because we must “bethink us” that we may be mistaken and we must always say, if another man differs fundamentally from us, if I think what he is doing is sinning and he thinks it is not, well then maybe I am wrong. Maybe he is right. Of course, I really believe I am right. But nonetheless, the basic reason, I believe, for our belief in individual freedom, for our belief that we must have unanimity among people and avoid coercion, and that I must not force another man to follow my dictates, is that there is always that little bit of doubt in our mind: Maybe we are wrong. Humility.

Now, I think it is very important to distinguish between two different kinds of interpretations that can be placed on this. One tendency is to go quickly from this notion of humility to a different notion, which is to say, there are no such things as absolute standards of value. All ethics are irrelevant. That is not the same view at all. That is a wholly different view. That is a view that there is no such thing as sinning. The proposition that there are absolute moral standards, absolute values, but I am not quite sure what they are is a wholly different proposition from the proposition that there are no absolute standards. So, when I emphasize humility as a basis for freedom, I am not in any way at all meaning to give aid and comfort to the notion that there are no such things as absolute standards. I believe there are absolute standards.

I think another contrast which needs to be pointed out is that humility is not the same thing as pleading ignorance. I may say, “Of course, I have a margin of doubt and it is possible I can be wrong.” That does not leave me from feeling very strongly that I am right and urging very strongly on you the view. More particularly, one of the arguments that is sometimes made by the traditionalists, as they are called (or the people who emphasize the great virtue of tradition), is that we are

ignorant about what the consequences of changes are. We cannot predict what will happen. We know that what exists works and therefore you ought to be very hesitant of tinkering with it because you might get something worse.

Well, of course, there is a good deal of merit in that general position. Of course, it is true that things often happen very differently from the way you expect them to. And of course, there is a great argument in favor of making changes in such a way that you can try them out on a small scale, if possible. But I think it is not a valid inference from that view, not a valid exercise of the relevant humility, to carry this all the way. And those of us who are liberals in the traditional sense, I think, do not do so. There are many things we know. We know very, very well what the consequences of price support in agriculture are, and we propose, if we can, to get rid of them and to change things. We do not want to keep them there just because they happen to develop.

This is a general problem in science. In science, we must always keep in mind the possibility that we are never absolutely certain, that there is a margin of doubt. But yet, there are some things we know a lot better than other things. There are some things we have a good deal of confidence in. So my emphasis on humility is not an argument that we are ignorant or that we cannot predict the consequences of change, but only an argument that we must keep in mind the possibility that we may be mistaken. And hence, we ought to be very, very careful in trying to impose our views on somebody who is of a different mind.

Now, the essence of freedom in a free society is that you do not coerce others. And yet, the essence of a complicated mass society of the kind we deal with is that millions of men must cooperate with one another. And as you all know, all of us recognize that the major device that we have for reconciling this kind of cooperation, with individual freedom, is the free market in one or another of its forms.

And the second main point I wanted to touch on briefly is to call attention to the fact that the free market as a device for reconciling cooperation with freedom is far broader in scope than we ordinarily



think. There is a strong tendency to think that there is somehow an economic sphere of life in which the free market is an appropriate means of organizing activity and getting people to cooperate together with one another, and there is another sphere of life where some other technique has to be adopted. And all I want to emphasize is that what we mean by the free market is simply a system of voluntary cooperation which applies in a very broad area. In particular, it has always seemed to me impressive that the academic community, which is so much opposed often to the use of the free market in economic affairs, is so much in favor of it in the area in which it itself operates, namely in the field of thought and speech and ideas. Because truth to tell, the progress in science and literature and art, which arises out of letting individuals decide freely what they shall do with their own resources (what kind of pictures they shall paint, what kind of books they shall write, what kind of research they shall do), allowing for free competition in the world of ideas in the hope that the better idea will down the poorer idea, allowing the consumer to be free to choose what ideas he wants to accept, is essentially the free market principle of reconciling diversity with cooperation, avoiding conformity.

In fact, I have often been impressed by the interesting comparison of the two groups of people who seem to me, in general, the greatest enemy of a free society. On the one hand there are the businessmen. They are the great enemies of free society because almost every businessman is in favor of free enterprise for everybody else, but against it for himself. On the other hand, the intellectuals, strange to say, are often against the free enterprise society, because they are in favor of it for themselves and against it for everybody else. Just the other way around. So, the second main point I wanted to emphasize was the importance in thinking of a free society of recognizing the wide scope for free market arrangements for reconciling cooperation with freedom.

Now the third thing I wanted to say is that in order for a free society to exist, it is unquestionably true that there must exist a basic set of common values which are accepted unthinkingly on the basis

of which people operate and which are not in dispute. Unless there is a large common base, a society will be torn apart. If men really differ about basic things in which they believe very, very strongly, they are going to be led to settle them by bullets and not by balance. Civil wars throughout history have demonstrated this. This is a common core of agreement with the traditionalist, with the traditional conservative, and the liberal. All really agree that a free society must have a body of values which is commonly accepted and provides this cohesive base. This is, of course, the role of tradition, it is the role of religion, it is a valid element in those that emphasize these things.

But I want to make two points about it from the point of view of the liberal who approaches the problem. The first is that while a society needs a common set of values, it is not true that any set will do. There are common sets of values which people can hold which will provide for order, but not for freedom. And indeed, this is one of the areas where I think we know least about the requisites of a free society. What are the ranges, the kinds of common values, which have the property that they can serve as a basis for a free society?

And the second point I want to make, which ties this one up with what I have just been saying, is that just as a free market (voluntary cooperation) is a means of organizing economic activity, (just as it is a means of organizing thought, research, discussion) so also it is a means for building up these basic sets of values. We must not suppose that such basic sets of values necessarily come from outside, or are revealed by religion, or are imposed by somebody. They too can be the product of a free society and of the search by individuals in trying to organize their ideas and live with one another.

The most obvious example is human language. A common language has frequently been observed to be an essential element in order and disorder. You need only look at what is happening in India and the extent to which it is being torn apart by a linguistic state to see that this is a very important element of that common culture which holds a people together. Yet, that language was never revealed, was never

constructed deliberately. It was a free market development. It was produced in the same way in which our system of interconnected markets of agriculture and retail stores was produced, by people cooperating with one another and gradually a language grew. And in the same way, those commonly accepted values, beliefs, and attitudes are something which the free market itself, that is to say, voluntary cooperation, is capable of producing. My point being that the acceptance of the view that a stable and free society must have a common set of values does not require accepting the views that those common set of values need to come from someplace other than the free operation of a free society.

## THE REAL PROBLEM OF CONSERVATIVE THEORY

By Rev. Stanley Parry

Well, I have a very simple answer to the question: “What is the real problem with the conservative theory?” And the answer is simply that the real problem is that there is no such thing as a conservative theory, or a conservative philosophy, and that as long as we keep looking for it we are going to be looking in the wrong direction.

A philosophy cannot be either liberal or conservative. It has to be either true or false. And what we have to look for is the philosophic truth about matters. As long as we think in terms of a conservative philosophy, then we are thinking in terms of rationalizing “us” against “them.” And we will never have any real philosophical or intellectual validity in our thought. We keep our mind simply as an instrument to serve whatever political position we happen to hold. What we have to find is the truth and seek for it, not in defense of a position, but in order to discover a position.

Now, that is the first point. We have to open our minds up and follow them wherever they lead. We cannot worry about whether or not here and there, we might incorporate into a system something which “they” also hold. “They” cannot be all wrong. Something in their thought might be valid.

Now, the second point is that in constructing a philosophical system, or philosophizing (in the sense I mean it), we do not sit in an ivory tower in the Aristotelian sense and have a vague disengaged wonder about what the truth is. I have always thought that the Platonic approach to philosophy was the only valid one. Namely that the truth is terribly

important and in the philosophic search for it we are constantly hounded by the threat of, what Plato would call, death. Namely, the philosophic quest is the quest for the meaningful in life. And if we do not find it then our lives are meaningless, which is another way of saying that we are dead. So that the philosophic quest is an anxious search for the truth, not a disengaged one. We are now in the same position as Plato was in Athens. We have to face up to the possibility that our society, like the Athenian society, is upside down and we have to discover which is right side up in a society that is upside down.

So then, we cannot make the distinction between idea and action that was implied in some of the discussions late this afternoon. All of our ideas will be pregnant with action implications. But nevertheless, we must pursue them in disregard of the action implications. Pursue them as true, not as modes of activity.

Now, in this context, therefore, let me make some observations that might seem a little hostile. As against Milton Friedman, whom I dearly love, I think economic thought, in terms of the free market and so on, is largely irrelevant to our problem. With regard to our economic life I think the kind of work Hannah Arendt is doing is more relevant. Why is it that the West is the only civilization that industrialized? There is a certain peculiarity and uniqueness in the fact of industrialization. And I think you find it in the book of Genesis, namely where it is said that God placed Adam (meaning “man”) to rule over nature. No other civilization has ever considered that it had the right to rule over nature and industrialization is simply another form of rule over nature.

Now, we have to examine industrialization. Is it rightly organized? Have we begun to rule with, what Augustine would call, “the lust for power?” Or do we rule nature under God as a surrogate rather than in our own name? I think you could make a great argument that the Industrial Revolution was an act of pride on the part of man. I, yet, hesitate to launch this sort of critique of the Industrial Revolution publicly, especially with students, because it is very difficult to criticize your own society on this level when the enemy is knocking at the gate

with its peculiar criticisms of capitalism.

But it might be that in the ruthless pursuit of truth this might have to be done someday. What kind of an economy do we really have? Books are emerging that question whether or not anybody really owns anything anymore. Are we in the para-proprietor society or have we moved from capitalism to laborism, as Hannah Arendt would argue? In other words, an analysis of our economy from the point of view of what we have actually done with it and what it has become, instead of analyzing it as though it were still the simplistic thing that Adam Smith saw. It has become something very different; I think.

Secondly, on the more philosophical levels, I think much of the reflection on natural law is largely irrelevant. Not only that, but it gives the game away because then we get involved in natural rights, and as soon as we get involved in that we have lost the position. The natural rights position is the one that is dominant, and I think it is the one that needs criticism. Not to say that there are no such thing as natural rights, but to question whether or not natural right theory, as it now exists, is in fact a true theory of man.

We talk a lot about freedom, and yet I would hazard to guess—it is a rather arrogant hazard on my part, but I think my function tonight is to be arrogant—that there is not a person in this room who could offer me any metaphysical basis as a reason why man ought to be free. You cannot prove it empirically. The normal condition of man, historically, has been to be not free. So why do we not conclude that there is something unusual in a society that thinks man ought to be free? Maybe we are being unnatural. We cannot allow it to be a prejudice anymore, in the Burkean sense, precisely because those of us here think that man is becoming less free every year. And if we think he ought to be free, we ought to have more than simply a quote from the Declaration of Independence, or something like that, to establish the fact that he ought to be free.

Now thirdly, moving from philosophy to civilization, a civilization organizes a philosophic answer to two great questions. They are the

questions that Plato begins the *Phaedrus* with: “Where are you going? And where did you come from?” This is the fundamental philosophical question that has to be answered and on it alone can a philosophy be built.

Our civilization has answered that question once and now it has gotten confused about the answer. We no longer know where we came from and we no longer know where we are going. And these questions have to be re-answered, and this is a fundamental philosophical quest in our day. They must be re-answered in the light of the fact that we knew the answer once and have now lost it. And it does not do any good simply to repeat the old answer because this answer has been lost and it is no longer persuasive in our day.

Finally, a basic problem of political philosophy in our day (and this is where the conservative element enters): those of us who think of ourselves as conservative have hitherto been engaged in a largely negative venture. This is not a bad thing. It has been a venture of criticism, that “this is wrong, and that is wrong, and the other thing is wrong.” And now we have the problem of moving from critique to constructive thought and this is a very difficult transition to make. I rather suspect that the Philadelphia Society, when it discovers its own identity, will discover that its function is to be the midwife in this birth from a negative to a positive approach. I do not think in my day the positive position will be found. In my teaching, I hope that maybe three or four of my students in the next generation of scholars will be able to begin constructing a positive position. I do not know what it is, but I know there is one. Not only that, although the positive position will necessarily be stated in terms of the eternal truths, the particular form these truths will take will have to be a form which meets the problems of our day and not a repetition of Plato, or Augustine, or Aquinas, or any other great thinker.

We have, for instance, in Plato and Augustine (two thinkers who I find I appeal to more and more in my courses) two men who leveled total critiques of their society. By that I mean, both of these men said the society they faced—Plato the society of Athens, Augustine the

society based on the pagan religious worldview—both of them said this society is wrong in its principle of organization. And I think this is the kind of critique we have to get down to today. The matter with our society is not that it is controlling the economy, or that it is doing this or that or the other thing. The matter with our society is that it has become wrong in its principle of organization. And we must hit on this and, through a critique of this, rediscover in a new existential situation the classic principle of organization of the West. Not as it has been stated in the past, but as it must be stated in order to be a mode for living in our day, this generation or the next.

Both Plato and Augustine lost the struggle in their day. Athens was already lost when Plato wrote, and as Augustine died the barbarians were already tearing the gates from his city wall. But, nevertheless, both these men won the West. That is, their writings did form the spirit of Western civilization. And now that spirit has to be re-won in a new way.

Is there a Plato or an Augustine around today? I do not think so. We are not ready for it yet. Things have not gotten bad enough for that. But if there is a Plato or a Augustine in the future, he is going to be born out of societies like this, who will suddenly abandon a partisan pursuit of truth in order to defend a position and begin asking frankly what is the truth in our day among men who live in the same reality and experience the same sense of threat to meaning as we do here. There is always basis for discourse. I know this. I have argued with Frank Meyer for eight years and he never seems to see the truth.

But, nevertheless, we have a basis for discourse, and we can talk to one another in a meaningful way and I think this is the kind of discourse that we need here. We can achieve it best by dropping clichés, by dropping terms that have been sanctified by use, and reverting to the basic experiences upon which life is based. The experiences upon which philosophy feeds: What are things about? Do they have a meaning? Where are you going? Where did you come from? What place does economics have in life?



I think, for instance, there is need for men in our society to perform the Socratic function, the function Socrates said that he performed in Athens, to go around telling men that virtue is more important than money. Are we investing too much energy in economic life? Energy that should be siphoned off into some more constructive and significant levels of life than simply getting more automobiles and television sets? All I am saying is a philosophy is yet to be born, and if it is to be born it must ask questions that will sound very upsetting. Especially upsetting in a day when the society itself is upside down. Thank you.

## A NEW STAGE IN CONSERVATIVE THOUGHT

By Frank S. Meyer

Milton Friedman wants me to call myself a liberal and Father Parry wants me to call myself a thought, but I will stick to the word conservative for the time being. As a matter of fact, in a very peculiarly parallel manner, Father Parry has already stolen part of what I want to say, but said it differently, so I hope you will not be bothered by the repetition. I want to talk about two things fundamentally, because the first is necessary in order to say what I mean when I speak of a new stage of conservative thought. We have seen tonight Milton Friedman calling himself a liberal and Father Parry, who was thinking in, shall we say, more traditionalist terms (those who call on traditional backgrounds to face the present), nevertheless saying things which paralleled each other in a much closer way than could have been the case a few years ago.

Most of you are familiar with the position on these matters that I have been propounding concerning contemporary American conservatism and its mode of thought—perhaps that would be better than conservative thought. A position which Brent Bozell has given the inelegant and hideous name of “fusionism” in the pages of *National Review*. To summarize that position only briefly (I must summarize it to come to what I want to say), it has been my contention in the first place that contemporary American conservatism represents the heir of Western tradition in the American scene and that, as such, it has been a blending of two lines of thought. Now this is a blending that in practice is observable. It is empirically there. One that emphasizes at

one and the same time tradition on the one hand and virtue as the end of man's existence on the other, and another stream that emphasizes the use of reason and the primacy of freedom as a necessary precondition of virtue. I have called the latter a libertarian trend and the former a traditionalist one. Milton Friedman has called it tonight a liberal one in the true sense of the word. That second stream stresses that since freedom is a necessary precondition of man being what he can be, of the search for virtue, it is a primary end in the political process.

The second point in this position I have been putting forward is that this blending is not only empirically observable as the main aspect of the thought of contemporary American conservatives, but it is theoretically defensible as the highest expression of Western capitalism. And thirdly that therefore, it must be emphasized that the mode of thought of contemporary American conservatism is not derived from nineteenth century European conservatism any more than it is from nineteenth century European liberalism, though it includes elements similar to both and rejects aspects of each. It takes its emphasis on tradition and man's end from the stream of conservatism. It takes its emphasis on the use of reason and freedom from liberalism. But it rejects, on the one hand, the utilitarian philosophical foundation of nineteenth century liberalism and, on the other hand, the authoritarianism of nineteenth century conservatism.

Fourthly and finally in my sketch of my position, I have maintained that contemporary American conservatism is not in its essence simply a blend of nineteenth century conservatism and nineteenth century liberalism, but fundamentally goes around behind that whole nineteenth century discussion and takes its foundation on the American constitutional consensus of the late eighteenth century, which avoided the European split. It then took what had always been the case of Western Civilization at its best: a tension, a balance between tradition and freedom, and raised it to the highest political forms in the history of this civilization, the first form fully reflecting the essentially Christian tension of the West on the political arena (this is only a sketch of the position).

What I want primarily to discuss today is something of where we stand at this moment. I believe, not that what I have been pressing has been accepted, that both Milton Friedman's remarks and Father Parry's here have shown that there has been an understanding on the libertarian and traditionalist sides that was not the case eight or nine years ago. There has been a certain working out of these points, but they have not been deeply developed.

There has been some excellent discussion of these issues over these years, many of them by people here: by Russell Kirk, by Brent Bozell, by Father Parry, by Milton Friedman, by others. But, and this is my central point (where I seem to be stealing from Father Parry who obviously stole from me, but by telepathy), all of us have failed to develop this discussion further in the past couple of years. It has kind of gotten stuck. Stuck at a stage of a series of positions which were promising, but which have not brought forth the depth of discussion which one hoped for a couple of years ago. And this is, I think, symptomatic of a general problem of the entire American conservative movement and most particularly of conservative intellectuals, of us gathered here.

The problem is simply this: considering the growth of conservatism these last few years, I would maintain that we exhibit and have been exhibiting a lamentable intellectual thinness. We have not deepened our understanding. We have not deepened it in the only way men living in a given age can do: by developing our philosophical position and the terms that the life of that age presents us with.

Eliseo Vivas has been the first to signalize this in his article in *Modern Age* last spring called "On The Conservative Demonology."<sup>2</sup> His central point seems to me to be exactly the one that I am trying to make here. Though I disagree with him on some of the examples he gives as to what kind of thinking is necessary, I am in the most profound agreement (and have become so more and more in the past

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2 Eliseo Vivas, "On the Conservative Demonology." *Modern Age*, Spring 1964.

few months) with what he is saying as essentially true and of the most vital importance to us.

We content ourselves with belaboring the liberal establishment from fixed positions, but we have not by and large sufficiently moved out of our snug fortifications with our neat slogans and theoretical formulations and grappled with theory and reality. There are exceptions, of course. Fine ones, such as my collaborators on this program. Father Parry's discussion of the need of prophecy in *Modern Age*, Milton Friedman's discussions of the relationship of the free market to the questions of freedom in general, and many others, but they are exceptions.

We do not need parodies of scholarship like the Veritas Fabianism theory that takes the complex development of American liberalism and reduces it to a series of simple slogans. Not that kind of pseudo-scholarship. I mean really digging in and seeing the world in light, not trying to explain it away with a series of attitudes which will enable you to ride glibly over the surfaces of it. I can give dozens of examples of the kind of problem we need to deal with intellectually. They swarm around us, and I may say in passing (and this is relevant to what Father Parry said about truth as distinguished from party labels), that I see more and more signs in the scholarly establishment generally, and outside of our ranks, of a willingness to begin seriously grappling with problems on a non-ritualistic basis. A number of books have come my way, a number of articles in the journals that show that there is a breaking of the ice of the establishment in terms of ritualistic liberalism. A breaking of the ice that has not sufficiently been reflected in our own ranks in the very terms of which Father Parry was speaking.

I say that there are dozens of examples of the kind of problem we need to deal with intellectually, but I will give you only a few to provide an idea of what I am talking about. Two new ones have been proposed here tonight. Most important problems that require the most thorough thought and curiously enough proposed by Milton Friedman and Father Parry in totally different words, but they are the

same problem. If my notes are correct, Milton Friedman said we must seriously consider the conditions of the kinds of order which make freedom possible and Father Parry said we must seriously reconsider the principle of organization of our society. I believe that, looked at from different points of view, this is the same problem and not one we have given attention to.

Or just taking problems at random. There is the whole problem of the relation of the conscious to the unconscious, which is available as a philosophical and psychological and even sociological problem as a result of the work of the last seventy years or so. This cannot be handled by simply dismissing or sneering at Freud in the one-dimensional manner of a book like LaPiere's book on Freudianism, which is a disgrace theoretically to the conservative movement.<sup>3</sup> We cannot tackle things that way and let things like that become popular among us and among our intellectuals. I happen to be in strong disagreement with Freud's philosophical view and, therefore, with much of the body of his work, but it needs to be grappled with. If he is wrong, it needs to be shown why and where. And the empirical evidence and the theoretical developments and the approach made to it need to be handled on their own merits and in their own terms and not by a simple glib dismissal.

Or take the philosophical problems involved in the population growth of the world at this point. It needs handling, discussion, consideration, not with shearing away cares. We must consider from the point of view of a conservative what a world heavily populated will mean, not in terms of whether you can feed it or not, but in terms of the very privacy that makes individual life worth living. These are problems we have to consider and not say, "Oh, that is the kind of thing the liberals are raising. We should not think about them."

Or, the whole problem of the American Negro. Facing that problem neither with the sentimentality which is current today, nor with the

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3 Richard LaPiere, *The Freudian Ethic* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1959). LaPiere was a longtime sociologist at Stanford University.

evasion of the basic problems involved in a people who have never produced a civilization existing as one-tenth of the population of a country, which is one of the highest products of one of the highest civilizations in the world. Really get down to it and stop being afraid to consider reality. Run both its sides, on the sides of the dignity of all individual human beings and on the side of the necessity of maintaining a civilization and grapple with it.

Or the problems raised in terms of our view of man (which I would maintain we hold pretty jointly in this room but hold it in general) in connection with the cybernetic revolution and the genetic revolution of the last twenty years or so.

There is more good conservative thought (by conservative thought I mean the thought of people who in this day are concerned with the heritage of Western civilization) among half a dozen science fiction writers I know than there is in the whole conservative movement. And I am not laughing at these science fiction writers. They are trying to deal with real problems and in a deep sense.

Or in the problems of peace and war. I am not talking about what do we do tomorrow in Vietnam. There are two major problems of peace and war. One is the problem of the morality of war in a nuclear age. There have been—I can count—two pieces which I think have dug into that question. One is Willmoore Kendall's piece, which was part of a debate he delivered some years ago in Stanford. The other was a recent piece by Fritz Williamson in the *National Review*. I do not feel that either of them have solved the problem, but I feel they have at least taken it seriously and worked upon it seriously. The whole problem of the morality of war in an age such as this needs discussion to justify the position which we have been taking as a practical matter.

Or another problem of peace and war: how, in an age of a continuing state of war against a barbarism determined against civilization, can we at one and the same time carry out our responsibilities to the defense of our country and of Western civilization, and at the same time preserve freedom at home. There are plenty of people who can write about

the details of strategy: nuclear strategy, alliance strategy, and the rest of it. And plenty of people are writing about free enterprise and the conditions of preserving it, but I have yet to see (with the single exception of Stefan Possony's piece in my book *What is Conservatism?*) an effort to grapple with the question of how you defend a free society at the same time as you maintain a free society.<sup>4</sup> And what is to be done concretely in such circumstances and what the principles are.

Or the very basic problem arising out of the libertarian traditionalist question, which I raised earlier and we have discussed to some degree, but that aspect of it which is more profound and deeper and is relevant to the whole history of our civilization this past four or five hundred years. That aspect of it which is perhaps, if my judgment here is correct, the one that most needs solving if Western civilization is to stop its headlong flight to suicide. And that is the question that arose when what I might call the adventurous side or the striving side of the West, the side of reason and freedom, broke loose from the guide of tradition and of the need of the search for virtue and went further and further apart from it through the successive stages of Renaissance, Enlightenment, the French Revolution, the liberal and communist revolutions, and so forth. While on the other side of Western civilization, which stood for tradition and for the pursuit of virtue, hardened and fossilized itself so that it was contributing no more to the preservation of a living civilization than was the wild, adventurous, governor-less side.

You do not solve those problems by writing simplistic books. You solve it by getting down to studying the problems and conditions that have created this and what it means in our time and what we can do to reunite and reheal Western civilization on a historical and philosophical basis.

There are dozens of problems. I fear we have not been meeting them. That may also be one of the reasons why this afternoon I felt

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4 Frank S. Meyer, ed., *What is Conservatism?* (New York: Rinehart and Winston, 1964).



so very strongly that while on the one hand it is true that, as someone said, that a weakness of the recent presidential election was that we did not have the programmatic material on questions such as the foreign policy or unemployment or what have you. I think this is correct. They have not been worked out properly. But that, nevertheless, is not the primary function facing American intellectuals who call themselves conservatives today, though it has to be done. It is vitally important, but I do not think it is going to be done on that level properly unless we are moving on the higher level as well. Moving to try to take the basic conservative philosophical position to a new stage.<sup>5</sup> It has to move forward. It has to deepen itself or our pretensions become a lot of nonsense and rubbish.

The conservative movement, perhaps, had an excuse once upon a time. A dozen years or so ago it lived in a ghetto when a tiny minority stood against the entire liberal establishment and against the established intellectual attitudes of decades stood looming over it. It, perhaps, was for a period of years necessary to harden and to assert first principles again and again and again, to sharpen out some of them. To make clear what some of our differences among ourselves were and how they could be reconciled.

But there have been years of development since. Last year we were strong enough to strike for power in this country. However fundamentally right we are in broad terms, the fact of the matter is we do not deserve to achieve power as a movement if the only moral basis we have for achieving it is for any other reason than power for power's sake. The reason is that we are the heirs of Western civilization. And

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<sup>5</sup> Here Meyer took an aside to discuss his insistence on the use of the term "conservative:" "I still prefer to call it that with all due courtesy to Milton Friedman and Father Parry. I think it neither is liberal—the word liberal has unfortunately been stolen from us and we cannot get it back. And I think it is correct to speak of conservatism as standing for something today, if for nothing else than—and here I do not disagree at all with the content of what Father Parry said—the struggle to recover the foundations of Western civilization."

until we prove that we are the heirs of Western civilization, we do not deserve to win power. And we will not prove it all down the line until we prove it in our deeds all down the line. And not least of all—perhaps first of all—in our intellectual deeds. That is what I hope this society will help to perform.

## COMMENTS

By Milton Friedman

I hardly know much of what to say because we have been talking so much at cross purposes and it is, therefore, a little hard to bring it down. I was stirred by the final peroration of Frank Myer's stirring speech—"until we prove that we are the heirs of Western civilization, we do not deserve to inherit power"—to want to express a violent dissent to that point of view.

I do not believe the problem at issue in our political or social life is a question of deciding who shall inherit power or who shall not. The problem at issue in our political life is how you, me, and the rest of our fellow citizens have a government which comes as close to providing us with what we would like to see and have as is possible. And it seemed to me, if those of us who differ with the present course of opinion are going to say we are going to retire into the back room until we solve all our philosophical problems, then that back room is pretty soon going to become a prison.

And so, I would suggest to Frank that I agree with him thoroughly that he should write some more books. I agree with him thoroughly that there are many important and deep issues that need to be investigated and on which we need to have more understanding. That this is a task for us for the rest of our lives, and our children's lives, and our children's children's lives. But at the same time, people are many sided and can do many things at once and one of the things we have to do in respect to those areas where we think we know what is wrong, and we think we know what should be done better, is try to see if we

can influence our fellow citizens to follow a course of action that we think is better advised.

Now, I want to make only one other point, to be even-handed, that was suggested by Stan Parry's comments. This is partly a parochial reaction on my part, I admit. He said that the economic theory of the free market is largely irrelevant to the basic issues of the society. That there is a danger, he thinks, that we may be getting into the position of devoting too much attention to economic problems.

Now the main point I was trying to get out of my own brief remarks was that the tendency to regard the free market arrangement as exclusively economics is, I think, a very unfortunate and misleading one. And nothing could have illustrated it more than his remarks, because it is a very interesting phenomenon. If you ask yourself the question, "What societies put the greatest emphasis on economic life in a narrow sense?", there is no doubt about it. It is the non-free market societies. It is the socialist societies, the planned societies, the collectivist societies that devote almost all their energy and aims and strength to the problem of material well-being in a very narrow sense. And on the other hand, it is the societies which emphasize the free market that have been the societies that have produced the greatest cultural achievements, the greatest developments in philosophy and thought and art and architecture.

And the reason why? Because what is called the free market approach is misleadingly thought to apply only to economics but is really a way of life that applies to the whole of man's living and not solely to his economic area. And, therefore, I would suggest to Stan Parry that perhaps what is one of the things that is relevant to our present problem is broadening our conception of what we mean by the free market. Making people understand that what is involved is more than a question of bread—though bread, as God knows, is not unimportant. But that it is really an interesting thing that when we talk about people pursuing their own interests, it is the pursuit of their own interests that has produced the libraries and the art institutes and the

symphony halls and the churches and the other great achievements of the human spirit, and not “merely” (and I say merely with quotes) the daily bread and the yearly automobile.

## COMMENTS

By Frank S. Meyer

I can only say that I think Milton Friedman and I must have a very, very different view of the kind of problem our society faces at this point in history. I think, to use of one of Toynbee's good phrases: We are in the midst of a ghastly state of schism in the soul and schism in the body politic, which will—if I may mix the metaphor badly—come home to roost in the not too distant future. That we are facing one of the great civilizational crises of all time. I mean, you can look around you. The very standards of life by which people have lived for hundreds of years, certain basic ones, are breaking down all around. The very Western family is breaking down. Western civilization, which from 1000 A.D. until fifteen years ago was physically expanding over the universe, is now in the most rapid retreat conceivable. And if it continues at this rate, there will be no Western civilization in twenty-five more years. Just look at the map and consider what has happened to it since 1940 and just measure the things and repeat them. But I mention one internal problem and one external problem. Wherever you look there is a tremendous, massive, searing, deep problem of the collapse of our civilization in every conceivable way.

And I do not think that this is a problem, therefore, when we as conservatives speak of being anything or standing for anything, we are thinking of something we can slowly influence, or here and there make it effective, or say we would like things this way or the other way. Nor incidentally, I want to make one thing clear: I am not proposing that we retire to our studies and forget about the fight, the struggle that

must go on in school boards, in elections, in political institutions, in propaganda, in discussion, all through the political thing. I am only saying, and I will repeat one sense of my peroration to make myself very clear: I am saying that deeds are demanded of us and perhaps first of all intellectual deeds. I am only saying this is a sector we have most neglected. Not that it is the only sector to be carried out, and God forbid that any of us should read books and write books and do nothing else.

The problem exists all along the line. I am saying, however, that the standard, the banner behind which we exist is badly tarnished and covered with fog and needs a lot of cleaning up and needs an awful lot of bringing up to date and this is something that simply has to be done. When I say we do not deserve to win without doing it, I mean, we do not deserve to win without doing it, because we will not be doing the only thing that is worth doing or necessary to do at this time. We will simply be joining in with the others and letting our civilization go down the drain.







## CHAPTER 2

# **THE FUTURE OF FREEDOM: THE PROBLEMS AND THE PROSPECTS, PART II**

**FEBRUARY 26-27, 1965**  
**CHICAGO, ILLINOIS**

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26**  
**3:45-6:00PM**

***The Intellectual Task Ahead***

Russell Kirk, "Right Reason versus Ideology"

George J. Stigler,  
"Is America Big Enough for Conservatives, Too"

Frank S. Meyer, "Concluding Remarks"

## RIGHT REASON VS. IDEOLOGY

By Russell Kirk

As a person melancholy on principle, but totally sanguine, I propose to let some cheerfulness break in. I think that the prospects before us are by no means wholly discouraging. We have gained some ground and will gain a good deal more in part because we are aided by circumstance.

Now, I am trusting here the position of the conservatively-inclined scholar as contrasted with the ideologue, the political fanatic. Of course, I do not mean by “ideology” political philosophy or theory or principle. I mean political fanaticism. That is, the ideologue is a man who has an inverted religion, who, in Voegelin’s phrase, makes man the symbol of transcendence and who promises the earthly paradise, ordinarily through the operation, at the very least, of radical change in positive law, and commonly through revolution.

Ideology has, of course, been the great curse of our age, which has been called indeed the age of ideology. I think, nevertheless, that we are escaping from that clutch and that right reason, or perhaps as our ancestors said, practical reason will once more have a hearing. In short, I am associating here generally conservative principles with practical reason. Mr. Kimpton when he was Chancellor of the University of Chicago once remarked, “I don’t call it conservatism. I call it common sense.” And there is a good deal in that. In short, the conservative is a person ordinarily who precedes according to the dictates of practical reason, who is not a fanatic, who is guided in large part by the historical experience and species, and who looks forward

to the practical consequences of every proposal. I think that kind of mentality is going to have more and more of a hearing in this country. I am contrasting, in short, conservative ideas with what Burke called metaphysical madness.

Now, we have one natural advantage in this country: that the American people—in that matter they are very like the British people—have always been non-ideological. This has been in some ways for us a kind of handicap in recent years because it means that the American people, like the British, are suspicious of theory. They go almost totally for practice, constitution, institution, and they dislike any kind of abstract discussion. Nevertheless, this is also, for the most part, an advantage for us since the American people always tend to recoil from fanatic proposals, radical change, and the doctrinaire. Thus, no real ideologue has ever been able to gain power nationally in America. And although they may do mischief from time to time, the public in the long run—and ordinarily in the short run—will reject the really radical reformer.

So, ideology never had a real clutch here, and what clutch as it had is diminishing. That is, communism, which after all never attracted more than say about five percent of the college faculties, for instance, is now the god that failed. You will not find in it a serious intellectual power. The communist movement can still do mischief in various ways, but one does not have to contest with it in the intellectual realm in America as one would still have to contest with it in so much of even Western Europe or Latin America or modern Asia and Africa. It is not a question of refuting communist doctrine. The public is in no danger of consciously embracing communist doctrines. In that sense, we are not contending against a formidable, rigorous ideology.

We contend against something rather different and rather easier to overcome, and that is the vague liberal mentality or attitude. Which, however, itself is ceasing to have any ideological roots and has become more nearly a kind of nihilism. Not like the old Russian nihilism, which was in itself an ideological and fanatic movement, but simply

a rejection of all those things which they call value judgments. And a man who, after all, rejects all value judgments is insecure, he is nervous, and he is not going to put up much of a fight intellectually, or in any way, if he is confronted with any very serious and coherent opposition.

Let me give you an example of the attitude which may suggest the general drift of modern liberalism, I think, in this country. I am fond of going around the country talking about the recovery of norms and I often tell this story, which some of you here may have heard before—a true anecdote of my own college days. There used to come around to Michigan State College when I was an undergraduate, a gentleman who we will call Mr. Stewart who used to sell textbooks, but spent most of his time arguing with relativists on the campus about the need for some first principles—and he had his work cut out for him then as he would now. I was once present for the discourse he had with a professor of English, I believe, in a coffeehouse. And we can call the professor Dr. Nemo, who is a well-meaning man, who however saw no enemies to the left, and believed that progress was naturally leading us toward a kind of earthly paradise, and progress could be interrupted only by the folly of a few reactionaries, but they, too, would be swept away soon by the wave of the future.

Well, Mr. Stewart began as follows: “Now after all, Dr. Nemo, I’m sure there are some first principles upon which well-inclined persons such as yourself and myself can agree. For instance, would you agree that two and two are four?”

“Let me see,” said Dr. Nemo, “can two and two make four?”

“I didn’t say make four,” Mr. Stewart said, “I said ‘are four.’”

“Well,” said Dr. Nemo, “you know mathematics is not my field and I don’t feel that we really ought to examine topics of which aren’t in our own disciplines, but after all I understand that there are now Non-Euclidean systems coming into vogue and all these things are being reevaluated and discussed, and I don’t see how you and I have a right to make a personal value judgment that two and two are four.”

“Well then,” said Mr. Stewart, “let’s transfer this to the humane

scale. Would you say for instance Dr. Nemo, that Jesus was a better person than Nero?"

"Now after all," said Dr. Nemo, "let's not be intolerant. These two people lived in different social milieu and after all there is a great deal we don't know about Nero's childhood. I don't see how you and I have a right to make a value judgment on a question like that."

"Well then," said Mr. Stewart, "let's bring this down to modern times, Dr. Nemo. For instance, which would you say was a better man?" This was a little before the second world war. "Which would you say was a better man: Hitler or Stalin?"

"Well, after all," said Dr. Nemo, "let's not reduce this to absurdity. Of course, Stalin's a better man."

So, after all, Dr. Nemo did have some value judgments and some preferences even though they're formed wholly upon prejudice and misinformation. My point, of course, is not to discuss the relative degrees of iniquity of Stalin and Hitler. But to suggest that a man can be very gravely mistaken if he tries to operate without value judgments and, nevertheless, is necessarily forced in this life to make them. And very bad consequences can come to the person, and the republic, if one operates, in short, without any first principles.

Now, as I say, I go around telling this story and I remark here and there: "Well things are somewhat better now. Dr. Nemo probably has changed his opinion and as a result of the terrible troubles of our time surely most people realize there is some need, especially in politics, for having some sort of first principles."

I told the story fairly recently in a discussion before the Ethical Culture Society of New York with a sociologist from New York University. And after I told it, he said quite humorlessly and gravely: "Well, I can't agree with Mr. Kirk there. After all, take Jesus and Nero. Now, one had one social station and one had another, and they had different personal experiences, and I don't see how we can say that one was better than the other. They had different value preference systems, that's all."

Which I replied, “Yes, they did indeed have different value preferences. Jesus—if you call it a preference—preferred to die on the cross for the salvation of mankind, while Nero preferred to commit incest with his mother and then murder her. They are indeed different value systems, but is not one preferable to the other?”

Well, that is the kind of nihilism I am speaking of. And, of course, it is obviously intellectually absurd and obviously the man who holds it is in a very confused state. Our friend, Dr. Eric McKenna, the dean, says the typical modern American liberal is nervous, strumming at every shadow, insecure because he no longer has any body of belief, and his virulence is in proportion to his nervousness, and starts frightened at any threat to his precarious domination of the intellectual world. In that sense, obviously, there is considerable hope for the spread of conservative ideas since the opposition, despite its seeming dominance, is a very weak regime and has no confidence really in its own survival. As I say, its virulence is proportionate to its feebleness—virulence is not ordinarily a sign of strength. A very strong regime will not be virulent, but quite tolerant ordinarily because it has no fear of being overthrown.

This is on our side, and I think the considerable restoration of the respectability of conservative ideas in recent years, after all there is some reason to allow cheerfulness to break in. I add here that recent events suggest to us that, after all, the practical person’s claims must necessarily be considered once more even by those who call themselves liberals. I find that a great many liberals now feel a certain unease at the condition of the world and at its general drift. I find that particularly if one takes up with them the discussion of the decay of diversity and variety, the prospect of universal mediocrity as a result of certain modern tendencies, one can find some fellow feeling and is able to carry on a rational discussion. And aside from that, obviously, the terrible events of recent years must have their effect in a practical, as well as an intellectual, way.

Thus, on a practical level, conservative principles and policies in the

conduct of foreign relations necessarily once more have a hearing, even if confusedly at first, because obviously the liberal illusions—the kind of mentality fifty years old, which was alluded to earlier in connection with Mr. Adlai Stevenson and others more and more conspicuous still, let us say Mr. Chester Bowles—that is now so thoroughly discredited that one necessarily turns, however confusedly and reluctantly, to some of the conservative maxims for the conduct of foreign policy. And thus we, rather confusedly and imperfectly, reverse our policy in the Congo. Not that we have formed a good policy, but at least we have abandoned the liberal ideologues' policy there, in large part. Or, similarly, we are forced to become trigger-happy in Vietnam because there is no alternative. Not again that a coherent policy has been formed there, but at least the former policy, the policy of slogan and drift, has necessarily, in part, been abandoned.

Similarly, in domestic circumstances, one is forced once more to consider the possibility of conservative economic policy, for instance. The precarious state of the dollar necessarily will impel any administration to begin to think about alternatives to its previous policy and what those alternatives are, necessarily, as compared to the conservative measures. Again, this is only prospering perhaps by adversity and great disasters may ensue in various realms of action before the public, and indeed the intellectual leaders, begin to really take thought. Nevertheless, there is this grim possibility that one will recover right reason or practical reason as a result of adversity. And, let us hope, before those disasters are catastrophic.

There is also reason for hope in this that as Disraeli said, "Predominant opinions generally are the opinions of the generation that is passing." It has been remarked earlier that the opinions of which we are governed in the liberal realm of thought and propaganda today are the opinions really of half a century ago. They are already beginning to seem archaic. The people who enunciate those ideas, particularly on the moralist popular level, are men of the generation that is passing. I reflect sometimes that the influential, comparatively serious, newspaper



columnists, as well as some who are simply scandalmongers all the way, let us say, from Mr. Walter Lippman to Mr. Drew Pearson, are people that I was reading when I was in the seventh grade. These are indeed the minds of yesterday. They are now in the sere and yellow leaf and things are changing here.

Similarly in the university, although we obviously have enormous ground to make up, one does see the beginnings of a serious revolt among the younger scholars despite the continued domination, of course, of the graduate schools by the kind of relativism or nihilism, which is not quite ideology but has a certain hankering after ideology. I think here, incidentally, most of the harm occurs in the graduate schools rather than at the undergraduate level. And, in a sense, it makes our work somewhat easier since if we will concentrate primarily, with our limited resources, upon the graduate school level. I say that not so much harm is done in the undergraduate level because most American undergraduates do not think at all while they are in college and are therefore immune to ideology, to nihilism, or anything else.

I am reminded of a test we used to give at Michigan State College when I was on the faculty there. It was to determine the work of the college in eradicating prejudice. The test was given to all entering freshmen and given to all graduating seniors—hundreds of questions. The assumption of the authors of the test was that the whole function of the college was to get rid of these ancient prejudices, which one got in one's family and church and so on, and provide the student with an open—or vacuumed—mind, which any wind of doctrine might enter. It was a very interesting test, and I will just name two questions. One was: "Do you believe that if you want a thing done well, you must do it yourself?" If you answered "Yes," of course you were wrong, it obviously should be done by committee. A faculty committee is an efficient way to do things. Another question was: "Do you believe it is wrong for a brother and sister to have sexual relations?" Now if you answered "No" you might be positively wrong, this is the thing you ought to keep open minded about to discuss, willing to consider,

should not be dogmatic about matters like this. Well, they gave this test to all entering freshman and all graduating seniors at the end of four years and to the hideous chagrin of my colleagues in the faculty it was found the students had not changed their opinions at all. The college's work had totally failed. In that sense, the low level, perhaps, of intellectuality in the American college has been a safeguard. I am very cheerful about that. At any rate, it gives us reason for concentrating perhaps more on the graduate school than the undergraduate school.

In short, I do not think that we need to despair or that our defeat of conservatives in the recent election has anything to do with the popularity or unpopularity of conservative ideas or power of the public to grasp them as of yet. In fact, I suppose the primary reason for Senator Goldwater's defeat—and I ratify this in my observation my own county and my own township, which we succeeded in losing for the first time in the history of the Republican Party—was that the very conservative population among whom I live thought of Senator Goldwater as a radical. They saw him as an irresponsible radical who was going to change things terribly and might cause all kinds of trouble for everybody. That was a complete misunderstanding as a result of the liberal propaganda, but that is what occurred.

This result was forecast to me, speaking of polls, by Chicago pollster Mr. Louis Cheskin a few weeks before the election. Mr. Cheskin conducts polls to ascertain the underlying prejudices of the voter, rather than how the voter thinks he will vote, and thus forecast how the voter will vote even though the voter himself does not yet know. He gives a long series of elaborate questions to ascertain the underlying prejudices. He said his key question as to the poll for the presidency had to do with deer hunting. There were three questions on deer hunting of which I will mention the first, which was as follows: "Suppose that Mr. Johnson and Mr. Goldwater are out on a deer hunting expedition. Do you think that either of these gentlemen would be likely to fire at the first movement in the brush?" Of the public poll seventeen percent said that President Johnson would fire at the first movement in the

brush. But thirty-seven percent said that Goldwater would fire at the first movement of the brush. Therefore Mr. Cheskin said, it was all over, the prejudice against Mr. Goldwater on that score is very deeply rooted and cannot be compensated for by prejudice in his favor on any other score. And indeed, so it turned out. In short, the election had nothing whatsoever to do with the question of conservative policy.

## IS AMERICA BIG ENOUGH FOR CONSERVATIVES, TOO?

By George Stigler

I am grateful to receive these hints at my growing scientific obsolescence, but I am going to discuss the question of my philosophical obsolescence. All economists are greatly attached to the principle of the division of labor, but it has one minor deficiency: that when a portion of the labor is performed in Charlottesville and a portion in Chicago, there is some danger of duplication. And so, I am going to say—from a somewhat different viewpoint—a good many things that I think were said quite well enough by themselves by Warren Nutter. I might take some consolation in a phrase that Frank Knight has used with telling effect on occasion—I believe a quotation from Herbert Spencer. He says that “only by constant iteration can alien truths be impressed on reluctant minds.” The thing that worries me is that I think there is a corresponding quotation: “Only by constant iteration can familiar truths be transformed into uncertain conjectures.” Well, that is probably what I will end up doing.

I read the elections of last fall as having clarified rather than as having increased the burden of the conservatives in again achieving power in the American society. The election seems to me to have demonstrated with conclusive clarity that conservatives are a small, unpopular minority of the American public. They have shown indeed, I think, that we are no longer an interesting minority. Last fall, I recall a group being launched with an impressive title, something like the Committee for Civic Responsibility, headed by Arthur Larson of Duke’s

Law School, whose task was going to be to be a truth squad to fight the right. The purpose was to make sure that whenever a local radio station had a session which could be characterized as rightist that there would be an answering program, which would clarify the facts and restore enlightenment to the benighted. What interests me is that a week ago in the Times it was reported that this very extensive and elaborate enterprise is being called off because the fear of the right has diminished to such an extent that it was no longer possible to raise funds.

Well, I read this as a correct statement of the relative appeal of the conservatives at the present time. That the burden of proof should be on a minority is, of course, obvious. If you are in the majority, there are easy ways to dispose of problems and issues. You can use any simple corollary of general theoretical position and it will carry persuasiveness to your listeners. You can appeal to popular sympathies which are in the ascendant and they will generally carry conviction to your listeners. Indeed, if you are truly in the ascendant, you can dismiss the arguments of your opponent by an ejaculation of horror. And this was well demonstrated in the last election when the proposal of a voluntary Social Security System, something which I personally think is a very interesting and I think attractive proposal, had merely to be mentioned in order to be put outside the bounds of tenable discussion. Well, this is the intellectual environment, I think, in which we are presently working.

How are we going to meet this burden, which I say properly is imposed on a minority? Properly, because there are many minorities and if minorities did not have large burdens put on them, the society would become hopelessly fragmented in its opinions.

We have had, of course, traditionally two basic ways of reinforcing our positions on concrete issues. One was the call to individual liberty. And the second was the use of the classical economic analysis to demonstrate the optimum properties of a free market. I would say that both of those pleas have lost their vitality in the United States at the present time. I do not say their truthfulness or their validity, but their

vitality. I am impressed by the fact that when I asked my conservative friends what things have made them mad, which losses of liberty have they encountered in recent times that seem to them outrageous invasions of their proper domain. I am met by a long, painful, awkward silence. Then it is followed by some essentially whimsical reply like they are opposed to the California requirement that you cannot have a blood test taken without a prescription from a physician. I cannot really believe many hours have been lost in nervous irritation.

The classical price theory, I do not think, is wrong—it is here a little bit similar to that one about why Cushman swore to support the Constitution because for many years it had supported him. But I do feel that again the formal propositions are universally accepted but their bite, their relevance to a question like whether supermarkets have corn flakes boxes that are only half full, is lacking. And people who are full masters of this apparatus do not really think it carries guidance at the policy level. Well now the question is how to revive a belief in and the fervent desire for individualism.

I am going to make my remarks only on the economic front because that is the only front I know anything about. But I really am not at all clear that it is not one of the least important fronts on which the issue is going to be fought. And I personally think it is a sign of weakness of the conservative movement in America that such a substantial part of its intelligence and diligence is contained in the economics profession. I wish that a much larger fraction of it were found in the humanities, philosophy, and the like.

Well, if I were to pick the period in history when I would have liked to have lived, I sometimes think that it would be in the Victorian age, providing I could be an upper-class Englishman. It was a very urbane age. Things were improving all the time. Science was marching forward. It was a society so elevated that the way it resolved slavery was to buy the slaves for a hundred and twenty-five dollars apiece instead of fighting one of the bloodiest wars in history to release them as an inadvertent byproduct.

It was a period in which it was very hard, in retrospect, for any person living in that time to complain at the pace of social, political, or moral improvement. And yet, of course, it began to go downhill, and go downhill at an accelerating rate, in the latter portion of the nineteenth century. How was that brought about?

Well, it was brought about, I think at least approximately, by two kinds of things: by massive eloquent assaults. And of these, of course, much as the most important is in some ways the Marxist assault: a general violent denunciation of the existing regime on many fronts which spawned a whole hierarchy of descendants who carried on the fight. Now, I think it would be fine if we could write a massive, violent, persuasive assault upon the current trend of affairs, but that is something you do not do on order. That depends on luck and genius and those are still not to be purchased, even by the Ford Foundation. I do not say, by the way, that this massive assault has to be right. Marx demonstrated that is not true. But it has to be powerful.

Well, there is a second way in which you can proceed and that is by the accumulation of demonstrations of weakness in the existing system. They must be sufficiently varied and sufficiently significant that they begin to cast doubt on the validity of the entire system. And this is the kind of work that an ordinary man can do. This is not the kind of work that requires the incredible stroke of genius that catches the year of the time and the unsatisfied desires of the masses.

Now here we can take advantage of the fact that this is an age of quantification, in which no scientist, no matter how colored his views are on policy and on ethical issues, can really push aside the conviction of numbers. And I would like to illustrate this at the cost of intervening on the privacy of Milton Friedman by what I consider to be a comparison between two kinds of work he does. Both, of course, of the highest quality. One kind is to write books like *Capitalism and Freedom* in which the corollaries of modern economics are brought to bear with cogency, and vigor, and rigor, and eloquence upon contemporary

policy questions.<sup>6</sup> That is essentially an a priori work but done with great skill and great ingenuity. I am in some doubt whether the sum total of the converts which Milton has achieved by this method sum up to zero, and that may well be an upper bound.

I do not know though and perhaps the number has been large. I hope so. But what I want to compare it with is his work in the field of money and in particular his comparisons of the effects of changes in the quantity of money as compared with changes in the amount of investment, the famous analysis comparison between the Keynesian and the quantity theory approach.<sup>7</sup> I am not sure this has had many converts yet. But what I am impressed by is that a fair fraction of the monetary theorists of the United States are spending their time trying to find out what is wrong with it. That no man feels comfortable in the light of these numbers and of these statistical results and that it has had an impact on every money and banking course and every fiscal policy course in the United States and an irresistible impact and one which will grow. And this is a case I think, to document my general position, that even when our broad policy positions lack a degree of persuasiveness in unharmonious times, we can take advantage of the fact that perhaps the facts are on our side.

I might illustrate, in a much less dramatic and important way, the same kind of thing in a piece I did not too long ago on the Securities and Exchange Commission. There it happened that my work coincided with a very large study that had been issued by the Securities and Exchange Commission called "Special Study," which had cost well over a million dollars and which had as its purpose of survey the existing regulations of security markets and the study of any possible extensions that might be needed. That study proceeded in the usual way. A few scandals were recited and then, as a result, a few policy

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6 Milton Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

7 Milton Friedman and Anna Jacobson Schwartz, *A Monetary History of the United States, 1867-1960* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963).



extensions were proposed.

For example, they cited two or three brokerage houses that hired inexperienced people. One brokerage house hired a vacuum cleaner salesman who came around and tried to sell a vacuum cleaner to the head of the brokerage house and did it. He recited in hearings before the Cohen Commission, which is what the special study may be labeled, that he got very good at it. That for example, when he got a wrong telephone number, he was able to sell stock to the telephone operator—and I am going to try to find that person's name because I rather think we conservatives need him.

What impressed me about the SEC study was that the recital of two or three such cases was deemed to be a sufficient basis for the extension of new legislation. The implicit question, "Will there be two or three scandals after any new legislation as well as before?" was never faced. Well, the study I made happened to be on a slightly different issue and that is "should you subject the issues of new securities to detailed right supervision by the Security Exchange Commission before they are released?" As you may know in the 1920s you issued a prospectus in order to sell a new issue and it had more than a family resemblance to a Seed Catalog. It was a rosy, gorgeous, utopian, forward-looking document and a pleasure to read. The current perspective of the Securities and Exchange Commission have, on the whole, a tone of Cassandra's memoirs. The gruesome failures in the expiration, the number of incompetent relatives, everything that could possibly discourage an investor enters. And, indeed, I make it a point not to read these perspective when buying stocks. They take all the fun out of it.

But what was interesting to me was not this change in the language, which I on the whole consider to have been an unfortunate change, but what the effects were on the fortunes of the investors. And the study seemed to indicate that you should not buy new stocks in the 1920s, that on balance you lost something like twelve percent of your money in the first year, and you lost another twelve percent in the next three or four years. But that also you should not buy stock in the 1950s in

new companies, you lost about twelve percent of your money in the first year, and you lost about twenty-five percent in the first four or five years. There were no noticeable differences between the two periods.

Well now this particular study has been denounced—whether properly or improperly I am not the one to say—what I want to point out is that it turns out that this is the kind of a problem we face across the board. This was the first study in thirty years that asked concretely: did a Securities and Exchange Commission have any noticeable effect upon the course of events? Just as Friedman's study was the first study that asked, after a generation of violent discussion of Keynes, what really is the historical record on the performance of the two theoretical models?

Again, this is true across the board. There is not, so far as I know, as yet—although they are coming, or at the edge of coming—a really objective intelligent informative analysis of whether a Fair Employment Practice Act helps negroes in the least in the obtaining of employment. There is not, so far as I know, the slightest empirical evidence to support the protection of consumers' legislation, which is now rampant in Congress. These are areas in which it seems to me the conservative who bears the burden can carry it by the conduct of objective and high-class research.

Now that is a very narrow area, a very slow area and one which even if it is greatly successful will take twenty or thirty or forty years in order to have a noticeable influence upon professional opinion generally, and therefore upon the state of the world. There are other areas which were more immediate and more important, but I have forsworn discussing them simply because I do not know about them. Thank you.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

By Frank S. Meyer

I think it has been intellectually extremely stimulating. I think that speaking in terms of the broad tasks—and there are enormous ones that have been discussed here—it has been an excellent beginning. To a considerable degree, it perhaps may be the only meeting of this particular kind the Philadelphia Society ever holds because it has been a clearing of ground. A beginning meeting which has cleared ground, which has tended, I think, to a considerable degree to indicate problems and the kind of problems that have to be worked. And I do think that, while there has been disagreement, there has been a fairly general agreement on a number of questions. And by and large, I think it has proved in the very course of the discussion that we have in a very real sense, as Eliseo Vivas said, everything to do.

And here is where I wanted to refer to what Professor Kirk said about the dangers of ideology. I would say—and a question asked of him here—I would say that it would be precisely if we rested on our oars or if we took the attitude one or two persons here have raised that we know what we are for now, let us just go out and do it and get it done. If we considered that we had already achieved a whole program, that all we have to do is to bring it into action, then we would be falling into an ideology. That is just what an ideology is. That is taking a complex, difficult world in which things are constantly in motion, in which tradition, prejudice, reason are all affecting us and saying, “Oh no, brush that all aside. A-B-C-D, bang, shoot.” That is essentially the characteristic of an ideologist and I believe the emphasis here on the

enormous amount that has to be done, and has to keep on being done, is the best defense against ideologization that we can possibly have.

I can also say that I think another aspect of the meeting has been stated very sharply by Warren Nutter. And I am in complete agreement—and I think I would feel from the discussion that most persons are—that all levels of activity and thought have to go on at once. It is not a question, as someone put it last night criticizing something I or someone else had said, of retiring into a closet and philosophizing and then coming out after seventy-five years and getting to work. It is a question of action, of programmatic developments of the kind Professor Stigler spoke about, of the philosophical endeavor, which Professor Vivas spoke about, all going on at once.

I think, if nothing else, the whole way in which things have gone we have not proved anything and nobody has set out here, I think in a sense, to prove anything. It has certainly proved to me the value of discussion, the value of the existence of some spot in the conservative movement which exists purely for the sake of discussion, for cross-checking, for cross stimulation, for cross-fertilization of ideas, for moving forward. I think, as I said earlier, that future meetings will not perhaps have this general spread. That it may even be very wise to take one of the dozens, one or two of the dozens of questions, specific questions that have been raised here—both on the philosophical and the programmatic level—and devote an entire session to one or two of those questions. And really begin, not to hope to solve it, but to encourage people to work hard on bringing views forward, to get a clash of views about these questions, and to move on. This is how I would envision future meetings at any rate.

The fact of the matter is, we are as a movement held together by opposition to a palpable and empirically horrible development in the world, which takes the various forms of communism, fascism, socialism, American welfare liberalism, an attack upon the whole development which I have called Western civilization, others have used other phrases for, we are held together by our opposition to that

and by a few very general propositions. But—and this impressed me enormously here and I think any of you who have had experience with scholarly meetings will know what I mean—but we are able to talk in English and not in jargon, in words which have meaning and do not have that strange jargonese which hides a lack of thought which has been so characteristic of our age in most of the scholarly disciplines, particularly in the social sciences. We are able to do this. We can talk to each other. We can to some degree understand each other.

But I cannot emphasize too much that we have proved ourselves here what several of us have been saying, that we are actually only at the beginning of an immense endeavor. I tend to disagree a little bit with Warren Nutter, I think his pessimism was overdone. Not only—it is not exactly a numbers game of how many people there are in the academy—I think that the readiness of what one might roughly call the Conservative Libertarian Academic Community to move forward, the depth of its thought, its readiness to keep moving is much, much greater. I think qualitatively an enormous amount has been done in the past few years and I do think we should pay some attention to what Professor Kirk says on the optimistic side because these are all signs of a greater maturity essentially. And one other point, and I ask those of you of my age and those that are younger to look around this room. The most encouraging point, without doubt or question, is the very large number of persons in this room and scattered around the country in the universities and elsewhere aged from eighteen to twenty-five. This is the really phenomenal thing because the endeavor that Eliseo Vivas called us to will end, will not end, but will come to its climax someday with a Plato, or an Augustine, or a Thomas. But none of these people arose out of a void. They arose out of a long discussion, a dialogue, a process in which hundreds of persons were involved and I think that what has been going on in the universities as far as the conservative movement is concerned, what is reflected by the attendance of university students, graduate students, young instructors here is that we are beginning to get a core of such persons.

I repeat that I hope we can take up at our next meetings, one-by-one, a number of the twenty or thirty specific problems that have been raised here. And I would hope on the basis of the experience of these few days, as was as of general optimism, but the existence of the Philadelphia Society will, if I may be permitted the phrase, serve one great function apart from its usefulness to its own members: that is, to raise the sights of the conservative movement.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> After a long applause, Meyer returned for one final remark to the gathering: "One more thing, I would like to propose a vote of thanks to the single individual, without whom this never would have occurred, who has done a magnificent job of bringing this Society together and bringing this meeting together: Don Lipsett."



## CHAPTER 3

# THE OUTLOOK FOR FREEDOM IN THE 70S

**FEBRUARY 26-27, 1965**  
**CHICAGO, ILLINOIS**

**OCTOBER 24-25, 1969**  
**PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA**

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25**  
**2:45-4:45PM**

***Dangers and Opportunities***

Victor Gold, Chairman

Kevin P. Phillips,  
“Dangers and Opportunities for Freedom in the 1970s”

Frank S. Meyer,  
“Dangers and Opportunities for Freedom in the 1970s”



## DANGERS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR FREEDOM IN THE 1970S

By Kevin P. Phillips

I suppose one of the first things I better deal with here is to state that I am unfamiliar with whether or not the president has read *The Emerging Republican Majority* and I can only presume to reiterate his comments at his own press conference. So putting that one to bed, I think what I would like to do is assume—very quickly after a brief sketch of my thesis—that people have some general familiarity with it and then pass on to the 1969, 1970 and 1972 elections. And also the way I would anticipate the course of the administration and of the Republican party may mesh with the idea in my book and also the general thrust of conservatism as it is perhaps seen by the gathering here and then as it might be seen by people, say, in South Boston, or East Cleveland, or Staten Island, which might be a bit different.

The first thing, perhaps, is to capsule the idea of the emerging Republican majority by saying that it is my theory that we have now come to a point in history aside with a turning point where a new majority party is going to take over the basic guidance of the United States political orbit. This has been the pattern of the past where you generally had periods of party supremacy. It is pretty easy to set them aside from 1828 to 1860 with Jacksonian Democracy. From 1860 to 1896 it was the Civil War orbit of American politics. From 1896 to 1932 to it was the McKinley period of industrial republicanism. And from 1932 to 1968 it was the New Deal. Now, I do not like to say that this is any kind of guarantee that what starts in 1968 is going to last

until 2000 or 2004 or anything like that. There just seems to be certain evidence for a recurring pattern and hopefully we are moving into that.<sup>9</sup>

Now to structure this in a little bit more geopolitical and ideological detail, the new alliance—the new grouping—seems pretty definitely to be a conservative one, but conservative perhaps only in the sense of it forming an opposition to what you might call a liberal establishment or the institutionalization of New Deal liberalism. The interesting thing is that the emerging Republican majority seems to be forming in the South, in the West, in the middle-class suburbs, and in the lower middle-class areas of the cities. Anybody who has followed political history in the United States will immediately pinpoint these areas as the areas of populist insurgency in most of the Great American political upheavals, be it Andrew Jackson's, or William Jennings Bryan's, or of Franklin D Roosevelt's. When Franklin Roosevelt was elected president in 1932, the only six states in the country he lost were in the Northeast. His movement was essentially rooted in the South and the West, and in these white city sidewalks, and outlying areas of the cities in the poor suburbs. So that what you have now is a new movement which is perhaps not very classically conservative.

You have to understand some of this in order to be able to rebut the shibboleth of the left that meaningful and lasting political upheaval in the United States has only come from the left. That is incorrect. It has come from the people. In all cases previously the people, when moving politically, have moved against an economic oligarchy of some sort—conservative vested economic interests. The major vested economic interest of the United States right now seems to be substantially liberal, whether or not they be the knowledge industry or the socio-governmental complex—which Michael Harrington has written about—or even a great new conglomerate of corporations, which are

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9 Republicans ended up holding the White House for twenty of the next twenty-four years—winning five out of the six presidential elections from 1968 to 1992.

substantially headed by Democrats who found they have enjoyed more useful access to government and its many programs when they are registered in that party. So, I think you have a new basically populist impulse and, thus, by nature is not really very classically conservative, but I will get back to that in a few moments.

What is happening in this year 1969 seems basically in tune with the Republican Party moving into an orbit, which is essentially tapping that impetus. I say that because the popularity of the Nixon administration as compared with the vote that the president received in the last election is perhaps greatest in the South, and the southwest, and the lower middle-class areas of the cities, all of these areas in Southern California. He won basically with a Nixon electorate. I suspect that Mayor Lindsay is going to be reelected in 1969. There seems probably every likelihood of that at the present time but what he is doing is he is winning, or appears to be winning, with what will be the Democratic party support base. And this will probably come to pass in this way: the “silk stocking” liberal Republican—essentially the Manhattan group in New York City—is grafting itself onto the basic minority group body of the Democratic Party. Then return the segment which is definitely drifting out of the Democratic coalition, which are often Democrats or friends and peers of Democrats who voted Republican in 1968, or who might have voted for George Wallace. I think this electorate probably represents the future of the Republican Party in New York City and the Lindsay electorate probably represents the future of the Democratic Party. But if you take that Democratic Party future as being embodied in John Lindsay’s presumed and anticipated electorate you come up with a very real national problem for the Democrats, because while we just heard of the power of the media, I think perhaps that power can be exaggerated.

It has been quite amusing to me in the last couple of years to go back and read the editorials and the columns of 1936, and 1940, and 1944. I have never seen such vituperation heaped in often such an absurd way on a president of the United States, as the handmaiden of

Bolshevism, and a whole lot of other things. And the mass fire power of the media in 1936 not only could not defeat Franklin Roosevelt, but they paved the way for one of the greatest political triumphs of our times. I think that the media can, through the penetration of television, have a rather great influence, but not so much in saying what they want you to do as perhaps in a much more subliminal sort of way. That may be the danger. As far as their being an overt instrumentality of the liberal establishment, that is likely to receive about the same public reaction as it did in 1936. It may help President Nixon who certainly does seem—along with Vice President Agnew—to be on the receiving end of a lot of their dislike these days.

Now New York City, as I already suggested, I think will be a very interesting case study this year. Because New York City has a history often of suggesting the way certain facets of American politics are about to break. It has been a vanguard of realignment because so many of your sociological forces meet and converge in New York City. The lower middle-class and blue-collar trend of the Republican Party, which is now beginning to surface nationally, has been taking place in New York City for quite some time. The liberal establishment trend of the Democratic Party, which is now becoming newsworthy, has been taking place in New York City for quite some time. Patterns tend to spread outward from New York City, and they affect the rest of the country, and the rest of the country reacts.

It is now quite apparent that you are getting a reaction towards populist conservatism on the part of the areas of the country which have always disliked the northeastern seaboard power elite. Or perhaps they disliked the different power elite a generation ago, or in William Jennings Bryan's era, or in the Jacksonian era. The fact is a lot of their attitude was just related to that base distaste for what went on in the most fashionable streets and salons, and partners rooms, and clubs of the northeastern seaboard. We are seeing that again.

There is a very interesting race taking place this year in the state of Virginia. Now in all likelihood—and totally off the record—my

suspicion is that the Democrats will win there. They probably will win, if they do, only for this reason: Senator Harry Byrd is supporting the Democratic nominee Battle. The Democratic state chairman, Wat Abbitt from the old southside, cotton-growing area of the state, is likewise supporting Mr. Battle. So are some of the old Byrd machine Democrats in other areas of southern Virginia. You have not yet had the type of realignment in Virginia state politics in this race that you have had on the national scene. It is starting, but it has not gone far enough. Now the odds are very good that the migration, slow but steady, of conservative Democrats to the Republican Party will continue during the next four years. Under those circumstances, even if Mr. Battle is elected governor this year, I cannot see how the moderate to conservative Democrats can possibly remain in the Democratic Party in sufficient numbers in 1973 to control a primary. Then you will have your National Democratic-Republican pattern in the state of Virginia.

Senator Harry Byrd, Jr. is, as it says in a lot of the media, dicker-ing with the Republican Party to hop the party line. If he thought that Lin Holton, the Republican nominee, was going to win I suspect he would jump before the election. If Holton does win, he will probably jump right after the election. But whatever it is, he faces a major problem because the realignment which has taken place just in the last year, and may continue to take place, probably makes it very difficult for him to win a Virginia Democratic primary. So even if we lose this year—and I think it is probably a very great likelihood—the realignment is taking place in Virginia, is moving and will undoubtedly in the next three or four years go further. That is when you will get your Republican strength down south.

Now to move on to some topics which may be of slightly more interest. The latest and most detailed polls available in Washington—not exclusively to the Republican Party or the administration, but they have been commented on by a wide range of the media—suggest that if the presidential election were held at the present time with Richard Nixon against an unnamed Democratic presidential nominee, and

against George Wallace, the best information we have is the president would carry every one of the eleven Southern States. It would be close in Alabama and Mississippi, but even Evans and Novak in one of their latest bi-weekly bulletins concede that at the present time the President is slightly ahead in the state of Mississippi. In a state like Georgia, which is not quite so solidly deep southern you have a very, very strong Nixon lead in a three-way race. And if you get to the point where Wallace is out of the race, you have Nixon leading the Democrat who can run nearest by over thirty percentage points. This is to say that you have a very, very strong trend in the South which is likely to continue to consummate itself.

In the last six or eight weeks there have been five more members of the Georgia state legislature who have hopped party lines. Last week the Virginia County attorney and several circuit judges down there came over. It is a slow steady process, which the Northern press for obvious reasons does not care to give too much coverage. But it is continuing, and it is moving, and there is no doubt that the Republican Party has a very strong and vital future in the South, and that the overall trend of Republican Party movement towards a southern and western base is very definitely underway.

Now as far as what this means for the Nixon administration, I think it is probably this: in the first part of the New Deal you have the Democrats waffling around and not being very sure about their party base and their long-range movement. Franklin D. Roosevelt had been elected on a promise to balance the budget and his first cabinet officers substantially included a number of conservatives. The Southern Democratic power position was considerable and remained so all through the New Deal. You have some interesting analogies there.

You see, right now the president has a senate Republican leader not wholly in sympathy with the politics of the presidential wing of the Republican party. Franklin D. Roosevelt had the same thing. When you have periods of realignment you often have a presidential party a bit out in the vanguard of this realignment, and the presidential candidate

will be elected carrying states which on the local level are still electing Democrats. So, if this is true, Roosevelt carried a lot of northern states which still had not elected Democratic senators and representatives, and the Democratic base in the Congress was more Southern and border state and Western and, consequently, was often anti-New Deal. The Nixon Republican presidential level gains have been coming in the South and West as compared with the Republican party say of fifteen years ago, but we still do not have too many senators from the Sun Belt and the Confederate States. So, you do have more of a resting on the northeast of the Great Lakes, the old Republican seats of power.

But I would say in the course of the next four years you are going to see in the Republican Party, both in congressional and in presidential terms, the center of gravity should move so much to the right as to the south and west. Now it probably is accurate to say move to the right, too, but to harken back to this comparison of the different types of conservatism you have at work, this new electorate which is moving very strongly into the Republican Party, I have sketched the southern movement. It also perhaps is worthwhile pointing out that polls taken in the middle-class areas of the big cities and the Catholic areas principally show that the president tends to run fifteen to eighteen percent stronger than in the last election, with Wallace's vote typically dropping from eighteen percent to ten or eleven percent, with a slight increment coming from Hubert Humphrey. This is the area of principal pick up. The president is no stronger really in the very liberal, rich, "silk stocking" areas like the east side of Manhattan, where he received about forty percent of the vote last time, and it seems to be about the same there now. So, the overall movement is towards a Republican Party more substantially influenced by this electorate.

Now in terms of what this means for classical conservatism, it means you are dealing with an electorate that was a mainstay of New Deal economics right down the line. And it is interesting to take the leading lights of the conservative resurgence in the United States and think back to where they were in 1936. Because you have Ronald Reagan, you

have Strom Thurmond, among the more prominent, George Wallace, just to take those right there.

George Wallace even in the early 60s was one of the most free-spending economic populists the state of Alabama had. He had many, many bills which enlarged trade schools, vocational colleges of different sorts. Strom Thurmond, when he was first inaugurated as governor of South Carolina, had a picture of Franklin D Roosevelt hanging in his office. He was trying to get rid of a poll tax and expand federal aid to education which he wanted, and to increase Social Security. He made a statement which according to an article appeared in the *New York Times* some time back in the Fall, an attack on the real estate lobby, which the National Association of Real Estate Boards said could have been written by the Communist party in New York, this from Strom Thurmond in 1947. Ronald Reagan of course was a New Deal Democrat. He became a Republican officially back in about 1960-61. He was quite liberal back in the 50s and the 40s. This constituency and many of these leaders come from a brand of politics which can only be called neoconservatism. And I would think that the liberal side, if you can call it that—I do not really think it is accurate because liberalism has become, it is not an economic thing anymore, it is a social thing. It is limousine liberalism and a manipulative society where everybody is employed figuring out how you can move people around, you can move ideas around, you can disseminate misinformation, and all these things. That is what makes them rich these days.

But conservatism is no longer in this economic posture. And if you take a look at these types of phenomena, then you can understand perhaps why you can get a welfare program like you get from the president. Why you are going to have Social Security benefits increased. Why undoubtedly, there is going to be an emphasis on, perhaps not to the extent that some of the screaming liberals want, but on food stamps and on job rehabilitation. The current administration's antitrust policy is very Bryan-esque when you come right down to it, lots of things like this. So when you talk about the future of conservatism as it relates to



this Republican conservative resurgence, it is only half, or at least a certain portion of this resurgence, that relates to what conservatives are geared to, conservatives of the intellectually scholarly or classical bent.

In the sense of perhaps the government is not being omnipotent in the social sense of moving people around, perhaps the extent to which the government can reform human nature, that may be the denominator which gives your new popular blue-collar conservatism its simpatico position with the old conservatism. But certainly not in economics, and not in a lot of other policies. The people who are in under the new conservatism are eminently Keynesian in their economics. They just want to spend it on their electorate. That is certainly not the old conservatism.

So, I would close on that note and just say that I think it is something which conservatives will have to ponder, that probably the only conservative resurgence which is coming is called conservatism more because it is directed against a liberalism which has gone astray institutionally than because it corresponds with anything that was promulgated by Edmund Burke, or any landed or other set of economic interest, and it will be very interesting to see how it goes. But that would be my surmise. Thank you.

## DANGERS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR FREEDOM IN THE 1970S

By Frank S. Meyer

Should conservatives be flexible and pragmatic?  
SI must say that a lot has been added to my notes by Mr. Phillips' proceeding speech. Let me say this: it is an axiom of historical understanding that when grand movements get underway or when great civilizations hold a position or begin to achieve a position where masses and the created minority move on the whole together—a society in which this is not the case is a sick society, one with schism—however, whether it is an established society like that which we had in the thirteenth century after several centuries of Christian development and the development of Western civilization, or whether it is one in turmoil, the masses and the created minority understand the same reality. This is what makes for unity and makes for a healthy situation. But they understand it in very different ways. The masses understand it instinctively and directly. The created minority's function is double: to understand it deeply and then to transform the instinctive grasp of reality of the masses in a direction which moves toward achieving what they wish. This is a fallacy of Mr. Phillips' presentation.

The American masses have in the past few years begun to feel in their bones, and blood, and children, and situation, the horrors of liberalism and they are revolting against it. To that degree the description is correct. But that it presently takes a populist, or it carries with it, a populist overhang, it is perfectly natural considering that they have come out of a populism officialized by liberalism. If they continue

their revolt solely in terms of a populist program, they will go right back to the environment from which they have come.

Anyone who rides upon that tide—whether our current president or anyone else—utilizes a conservative understanding of the created minority, gets the power, and then attempts to carry out a populist program on the grounds that they can get away with it before this group would be betraying that for which they are elected. They would be taking the masses and instead of leading them in the direction of their instincts, landing them right back at the Franklin Roosevelt-Karl Marx position.

This is precisely the problem. The topic I was originally given by Mr. Tonsor is exactly relevant. Should conservatives be flexible and pragmatic? The answer must be a resounding no! Pragmatism involves, by its very definition, the belief that there are no values of an objective kind. That there is no such thing as a constitution of being that is impossible to evade. That there is no reality which has to be dealt with as it is. It involves the concept that in your actions are all your ends.

I would say that against which we are developing a new majority—Mr. Phillips' analysis of it has been magnificent—is precisely a revolt against the populist, egalitarian attitude which the liberals have taken advantage of to gain their own power. It is a revolt which desires ends that can only be achieved by a classic conservative, anti-egalitarian, structured society. Freedom for the person. There is no possibility of liberty and equality existing in the same context. Only an unequal society can have liberty. And populism raises the question of equality, of equality without concern for the differences between persons. As long as there is equality there is tyranny, because to treat the unequal alike, and force the unequal to have the same fate can only be done by a totalitarian society.

The question—Should conservatives be pragmatic?—therefore places the problem totally incorrectly. The conservative political position must, by its very nature, be based upon firm principle. Now, this does not mean that conservatives should ignore reality: the complexities

of reality, the limitations of reality, such problems as the movement of a media indoctrinated mass, which is finding the horrors of New Dealism in our direction. It does not mean you should not learn how to carry out principle in practice. To carry out principle in practice is not pragmatism. It is prudence, an ancient virtue of the West.

Therefore, recognizing that abstract principle cannot be carried into practice is not pragmatic but prudential—this is not a play upon words. Prudence bases itself upon principles, solidly and firmly, and then discovers the ways of carrying out that principle in practice. It never forgets principle, which is its foundation. The pragmatic, or the expediential, denies the existence of objective truth and principle and goes with the wind.

Thus, for example, a conservative leader facing Vietnam, after two presidents have told the American people they were fighting to guarantee the Vietnamese free elections—something that nobody could buy unless they were blind drunk (It explains why there has been no enthusiasm for this war). Instead of pragmatically basing himself upon the dislike of the war in the country and leading the country to a defeat—which will be followed by another defeat, and by another unless the principle is changed—would have come before the people and explained why we are fighting in Vietnam. Cancel out the Kennedy-Johnson nonsense. Say that we are fighting there to defend the United States and the interests of the United States. He would have mobilized the people behind him. That is what a Reagan would have done. That is what a fundamentally classical conservative would have done. He would have taken the needs, issues, demands, and safety of his civilization and his country, and put them above the simplicities of going along with the ignorant masses. This is the difference between a Nixon and a Reagan. I use Reagan as an example. He is the best man I know of, but maybe I am wrong about him. But the kind of man that I stand for, the kind of man that a classical conservative would stand for.

Or take another example. Let us move from our basic struggle with communism, and the question of basic American national interest, to

an internal problem. About three-quarters of the population of this country or more are forming in social and economic terms a similar mass of producers. Classes, in the sharp sense, are being eliminated by the virtue of American productivity. This is the new group of the Sun Belt or the suburbs. These are not there because of ethnic groups primarily, though rebellion has a certain amount of foundation. But fundamentally what has happened in this country is that we have a massive group of producers who under the liberal leadership are being victimized and robbed for the sake of those who do not work and do not intend to work.

What would a conservative do under these circumstances? What should be done by a conservative elected by the mass of the producers, analyzed by Mr. Phillips on a geographical and city-suburban basis? What he would do is to see to it that our entire welfare program is reorganized but reorganized on the only basis that makes a legitimate society possible. One which would answer the problems that have made these people vote for him. He would make welfare as uncomfortable and disruptive as it could possibly be made, except for those who are old and crippled. He would make it a stigma to receive welfare. He would remove by his leadership—nobody can do it by himself—but would lead the removal of a stigma from personal service, from the jobs which the ancestors of all of us did when they got going. It would promote the idea that you must move to a “suitable job” in one generation. A job is what is necessary to start a family on its way, not a welfare check. There are millions of jobs in this country that are not suitable, but like my ancestors and most of yours, have to be done so that your children can move forward. He would: one, make welfare stigmatic; two, take the stigma away from jobs of a service kind that this country desperately needs to be done if we are to remain a civilized country; and third, would destroy the minimum wage and at once.

This is the kind of position which a conservative of principle would carry out, because it is in accord with reality. It is the only possible way of ending the consummate robbing of the producers of this country, of

massive taxes, of internal privileges for those who do not work. We should align with such things over a whole group of programs. Conservatives have the function of leading the instinctive feelings of the masses who voted as they voted, quite correctly because they were fed up with liberalism. We cannot give them more of the same vomit and tell them we can do it better than the liberals did it. We must reverse the liberal program. And, no, this could not be done overnight. I am making here a sharp statement of the direction of the kind of thing that has to be done.

Those who oppose what I am saying will say “politics is the art of the possible.” Obviously, interpreted literally, that is a truism. All human arts are arts of the possible. The impossible is by definition that which cannot be achieved. But this is neither the intended meaning of the idea that “politics is the art of the possible” nor is it the sense in which my critics would employ it. It is, instead, a triumphant flourish as a final argument against anyone who refuses to accept the present structure of society, the limits of presently accepted public political opinion. It means, in reality, politics is the art of operating within fixed and determined conditions set by established power. So, forget about fundamental principle, forget about the character of reality when it clashes with the accepted shibboleth, if you want to be politically effective. That is what “politics is the art of the possible” is used to mean in criticism of a classical conservative position.

And indeed, such a definition of politics as a practical matter would be true at most times and places, this I will accept. When the social order is stable and firm. When an accepted hierarchy of beliefs unites men of all stations of life and of all parties upon fundamental ends. When the pulling and tugging of political activity towards one emphasis or another within the common agreement upon ends, that definition of politics will work. But this is not our situation.

In fact, I have felt this for the past two days as we have spoken here, we live on top of a volcano. There is a small—in terms of numbers—section or two of society, not strong enough to carry through

a revolution in the classical sense—that is, to take power—but plenty strong enough to destroy society. They are led by the leaders of the militant blacks and the leaders of militant students who, unless they are put in their place by the restoration of order and by the restoration of their goods to those who produce them, can bring our society down in dust, not by taking power, but by bringing chaos about.

We are not in a normal situation. We live in a social order uncertain, affrighted, cut loose from all fixed standards. We are uncertain before the more nefarious signs of social decline. Civil peace deeply disturbed by manifold and spiraling crime and mounting civil disorder. Family security shattered by the institutionalization of divorce. Economic sobriety, personal and familial prudence mocked at by pressing taxation and by progressive inflation. The robbery of the producers for the non-producers. We are terrified to the point of constant retreat and shameful appeasement by a foreign enemy whose only superior weapons are our confusion, our hesitation, our lack of belief in anything for which we are willing to dare the risk of death. We are cut loose from all fixed standards and deeply held beliefs in the trail of forty years of violent revolution abroad and insidious revolution at home. We face catastrophic wars, philosophical and technological innovations with social results eating to the very heart of the inherited way of the nation. What is patently wrong is not this or that incorrect emphasis, this or that badly conceived policy, but the entire concept of the ends accepted by those in power. Not only by the liberals but by those who, building on the conservative instinct of the masses, want to carry on American political business as usual. In such circumstances an approach to politics which for practical purposes might be reasonably adequate in normal times becomes hopelessly inadequate. The possible can only mean a little more or a little less of the same.

A little more, a little less of the same on the Supreme Court and on inflation, a lot more of the same on welfare and burning out in Vietnam. Politics, if it is to have meaning beyond an empty game, must be conceived in terms of an older and a deeper vision. It must be an art

based upon philosophical principle and devoted to the achievement in the body politic of the conditions of freedom. It must be an art which in terms of the accepted norms of a rotten society is the art of the impossible. An impossible which is in the last seven years a lot closer to the possible when we observe the willingness of the electorate to strike out against anybody who will attack the structure that has been built in recent years. It must lead the masses toward what they are groping for. It must take as its standards concepts founded in truth, not in pragmatism. And in the tradition of the West, but scorned today by the enlightened, the responsibility of individual men for themselves, their family, and their future. The moral evil and the sickness of the criminal, the moral excellence of patriotism, the shame of paternalism, and the deep danger of government that amasses power beyond its natural limits.

By prevailing contemporary judgment, a politics based upon such principles is a politics of the impossible. Certainly, political men in a representative republic have always had to consider the opinions of their constituencies—and to that degree about the opinions of the media. But sometimes in the past the sheer love of power has led them to an extreme pampering of the whims of those constituencies against the dictates of morality and their own better judgment. But by and large until very recent times, it was thought the duty—even if it was not always carried out in practice—of those elevated positions of legislation and administration to act as a created minority, to guide and educate the opinion upon which they were dependent. Thus, the appeal to the electorate was on large issues, at least an appeal to choice on the level of principle.

It would be idle to idealize the past or to deny that even at the best principle and politics has always been mixed with a large element of interest in advantage, that it has always been more or less heavily loaded with pork from the barrel. But it has been left to our enlightened time to make a virtue of opportunism, to make a God of the computer, to deny there is any place of principle in politics, to make



a sensitive and immediate reaction to the surface mood of the voter, skillful interpretation of public opinion polls the highest quality of the rising political man. The result is that political decisions which are fraught with nonimplications of the most far-reaching significance. The very structure of society, the very continuation of its economic well-being, and of its moral well-being, of its very survival against a bitter enemy.

Such political decisions are taken on the grounds of the surest expediency to satisfy the appetites or satiate the thoughtless passions of whatever combinations our collections of voters believe powerful enough to affect an election. It is this kind of leadership, which at its extreme has been one of the major factors in creating over the past hundred and fifty years the French political imbroglio. It is this from which Americans and Englishmen over the past hundred and fifty years have been accustomed to extract so satisfactorily a sense of political superiority. But any serious consideration of the content of the rivalry between the conservative and labor parties in Britain, present time, or between the Republican and Democratic Parties of the present policies of the administration are continued.

We had a hope in '64, we had some hope in '68 that we might be more different than Labour and Conservative are in England. But any continuation of the kind of policy which has been recommended to us on this rostrum in which the president of the United States is assiduously groveling after and in consideration of that will continue a situation where any serious consideration of a difference between the Republican and Democratic Parties will quickly remove any grounds we have for self-satisfaction vis-à-vis the French. That we are in better case over the years than the French would seem to be due to the survival, though in a battered state, of institutions we owe to the wisdom of our ancestors. To the fact that we have not as yet exhausted the moral capital bequeathed to us by past generations. We have made efforts in '64 and '68 towards the politics of principle, and we may still carry through even if it becomes necessary for some right-wing

“Dump this Administration” movement after 1970 if it does not reform. But to any profound differences in the caliber of our present political leadership, we have little.

As a random spectator said some time ago, remarking upon an editorial in the *Daily Telegraph*—an editorial that posited public opinion as a sovereign reason for political action on a moral question—“the argument from public opinion has neither moral nor intellectual validity.” As Burke said to the electors of Bristol, “Your representative owes you not his industry only but his judgment, and he betrays instead of serving you if he sacrifices it to your opinion.” Perhaps it is too much to hope that conservatives should pay as much attention to Edmund Burke as to Dr. Gallop.

Nor either on domestic or foreign issues is the spectacle of American politics any more edifying than the British. Samuel Lubell, who despite his liberal bias is a most astute analyst of the political scene, once summed the matter up as being no less ludicrous than disgraceful: “With both the Democrats and the Republicans committed to preserving the gains of the last generation (let us read collectivist developments) our parties have become, as one voter pictured them ‘like two fat men in a narrow hall.’ They cannot squeeze past each other. Either they move in the same direction or ever remain stuck in an unbudging deadlock.”<sup>10</sup> And if due to the ministrations of Dr. Lubell, and Dr. Phillips, and Dr. Nixon, we should succeed in slimming the waistline of the Republican Party so it does get down the hall a little way, it will not make one goddamn bit of difference unless there is principle behind the position of the Republican Party.

Those who are called to the positions of natural leadership within the constitutional structure of this republic forfeit their role, while fearful issues of domestic and foreign policy are manipulated to secure the approval of the lowest common denominator of the electorate.

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10 Samuel Lubell, “The Return of Two Party Politics,” *Commentary Magazine*, March 1956.

In such a vacuum it is obvious that when the raw presence of crisis penetrates—as it is now beginning to do—to the people, to their consciousness, they will look elsewhere for leadership. And they are. As the twentieth century has amply shown, totalitarian demagogues quite outside of the traditions of the West to us are standing ready to give them that leadership.

What is not so obvious is this: even as things are, the attitudes and desires of the peoples to which political leadership panders are by no means the simple views of simple people, but the creation of irresponsible elites who shape and represent public opinion. Now the people are moving to a reaction against the collectivism of our century and are being foiled in the sense of they are not given the kind of leadership that will show them how to get out of the mess they are in but being led right back to the pig's trough from which they have come. The tremendous power of the mass communication trades—particularly since the advent of television but long developing in multi-million circulation magazines and newspapers, radio and the movies—play first part in the shaping, although the government departments, the trade unions, the so-called voluntary organizations, interact and coordinate with the publicist proper through their own public relations activities. And it is these latter which are considered as representing the public opinion to which the politician defers.

We have an example here, an example which we will have more and more of. The moratorium which recently took place represented at the widest stretch of the imagination one-sixtieth of the number of people who voted in the elections of last November. In those elections, ninety-nine percent of the voters voted against the aims of the moratorium. Those who voted for Humphrey, those who voted for Nixon, those who voted for Wallace. And for that matter even those who were trying to get McCarthy or Kennedy nominated were opposed to a unilateral bug out of Vietnam. Yet by the manipulation of a fraction of the people of a country through the media, we are achieving a new form of what has destroyed every government in the

history of mankind which has attempted to combine order, liberty, and popular participation.

In the past, every government of this kind has been destroyed by physical mobs led by demagogic leaders breaking through the representative form of that government. Today we are finding a new mode of destroying representative government. We are finding the mode of establishing a small group of people—small in terms of our country and of our voters—using the media to build them up and then say this is the voice of the people, the hell with a representative government. Nixon was, this I will say for him, absolutely 100 percent right when he said as the leader of a representative government, I am leaving representative government her methods and I will pay no attention whatever to this comedy on the streets. This comedy on the streets which can become a tragedy because what is in common between the moratorium, the New Left, the blacks, Hitler, Mussolini, and Lenin is one thing: street theater as a way of governing society.

This is part of that which rumbles underneath. This is part of that with which we are dealing. This has to be dealt with as the problem of robbing the producers for the nonproducers has to be dealt with. This has to be dealt with as the problem of safeguarding the existence of our country and our civilization has to be dealt with. On grounded principle, not ungrounded from the fact that the people who happen to be voting our way in their reaction against liberalism have large liberal remnants in their thinking.

They have to be told why it is that they are upset, what it is that has been hurting them, and that the way out is the way of classical conservatism, classical libertarian conservatism of the American model derived from our Founding Fathers. Gentlemen, reality will win out no matter what you do.



## CHAPTER 4

# A POST-LIBERAL AMERICA

**APRIL 2-3, 1971**  
**CHICAGO, ILLINOIS**

**FRIDAY, APRIL 2**  
**3:30-5:30PM**

***Liberals and Conservatives Revisited***

Ben Rhoaden, Chairman

Irving Kristol, "Reflections of a 'Conservative Liberal'"

Milton Friedman, "Liberals and Conservatives Revisited"

Ernest van den Haag, "Liberals and Conservatives Revisited"

## REFLECTIONS OF A “CONSERVATIVE LIBERAL”

By Irving Kristol

**A**fter writing this paper, I gave it a title and I called it Reflections of a “Conservative Liberal” and in a sense what the paper is about are those quotation marks.

Some months ago, I had a telephone call from a newspaper man who was asking a group of people, mainly survivors of the old anti-communist left, how they were today to find themselves, either politically conservative, liberal, radical. I thought for maybe five seconds and said “conservative-liberal or liberal-conservative. Take your choice.” He pressed me a bit and I finally said: “Oh, well, I suppose conservative-liberal suits me a bit better,” and so it appeared in print the next day.

I have been intermittently brooding over that incident ever since. I find myself being nagged, not only by my lack of theoretical certitude, but also by the feeling that this lack of theoretical certitude itself needs explaining. I am not ordinarily indifferent to matters of political philosophy and even tend to think that political philosophy shapes the world of politics to a far greater degree than it is shaped by it. I therefore find myself uncomfortable in my equivocation.

That word liberal is more than a little misleading as applied to my political outlook. The plain fact is that I can rarely find a kind thing to say about all those other Americans who call themselves liberal.

On the other hand, the term conservative does not much appeal to me either. Most of the time I do not know what it means, and when

someone steps forward to articulate its meaning, I rather wish he had not. It is all confusing and more than a little depressing. A man of my age and experience really ought to know where he stands, and I take no pleasure in being ideologically *déraciné*.

So, I have been wrestling with this problem for some time now and I have come to some tentative conclusions. The first is that I would indeed like to be a conservative. The second is that precisely because I would like to be a conservative, I cannot be an American conservative as that species is variously understood today. And the third is that for me to realize my desire to be a conservative, I have to be in favor of several reforms—perhaps even many reforms—usually thought to be liberal.

This is not really as mixed up as it sounds, nor is it a terribly subtle and highly personal accommodation—one that is idiosyncratic and of no general relevance. I think these three conclusions flow less from my own personal bewilderment than from the condition of American society and of American civilization, a society and civilization that is essentially dynamic, which is to say anticonservative, in its deepest principles.

This kind of society and civilization is peculiar to the modern world: the world since the Industrial and French Revolutions. And that is why earlier models of conservatism, and/or liberalism, have only an indirect, though important, bearing upon what it means to be a liberal and/or conservative today. Our condition is without precedent. It is not surprising therefore that so many of us may be confused to an unprecedented degree.

I rather think there is no need to explain at this time, in this place, to this audience, why I am not a liberal in the contemporary or twentieth century sense of that term, a sense in which it differs little from what is also called democratic socialist. Suffice it to say that I find liberalism today to be trapped in an impossible set of contradictions. To try to combine a large measure of economic collectivism with a decent measure of personal liberty may or may not be impossible, as Mr.



Hayek says. It certainly is not a probable combination on the face of it. But to combine economic collectivism, and personal liberty, and a materialist hedonistic ethic, is indeed as impossible as squaring the circle.

For collectivism and liberty can only exist together when people freely practice self-restraint, and self-denial, and self-sacrifice. As for instance on the Israeli kibbutz. When their personal liberty becomes truly personal, when they enjoy individual pleasures more than a sense of collective identity, then the whole arrangement collapses. Precisely something of this sort, I understand, is now happening on the Israeli kibbutz.

What this comes down to is the fact, and I believe it to be a fact, that economic collectivism can only be wedded to personal liberty when this union rests on a religious basis. Whether this be a transcendental religion, or a civic religion is not too important. What is important is that people should find their greatest personal satisfaction, and hence their most perfect expression of liberty, in sacrificing their personal pleasures through the common good. And such a community, of course, is not a liberal society at all in our sense of that term. The Greek polis, the medieval monastery, the utopian socialist colony, are the very antithesis of our kind of liberal society where each individual is encouraged to do and think as he pleases—except when he begins to think and act in violation of the law, at which moment legal and forceful intervention constrains him to do and think otherwise.

The inherently unstable relationship among these three points of the liberal triangle—economic collectivism, personal liberty, and a materialistic hedonistic ethic—means that to an ever-greater extent liberal self-government is always suffering encroachment by bureaucratic government. And there's not much sense in complaining that the bureaucracy is soulless and mindless. Of course, it is. That is the nature of bureaucracy. If, nevertheless, such complaints are being made today, and with ever increasing intensity, this simply testifies to the fact that most liberals are discovering that their version of the good society is in the event a society unacceptable even to them. That

they should not recognize or admit this is, of course, entirely to be expected. That they should blame non-liberals for this state of affairs is also to be expected. Men do not give up their ideological commitments lightly. They will not even reexamine them until the pressure to do so becomes irresistible. So much for twentieth century liberalism. There is more that can and should be said, but indeed it has already been said by others including many who are here today, and I really have little of significance to add.

My problems with conservatism are of a different order. I have said that I would like to be a conservative and when I read Michael Oakeshott's description of the conservative predisposition, as he calls it, I recognize a kindred spirit and temperament. He writes: "The general characteristics of this disposition...centre upon a propensity to use and to enjoy what is available rather than to wish for or look for something else; to delight in what is present rather than what was or what may be...What is esteemed is the present; and it is esteemed not on account of its connections with a remote antiquity, nor because it is recognized to be more admirable than any possible alternative, but on account of its familiarity...To be a conservative, then, is to prefer the familiar to the unknown, to prefer the tried to the untried, fact to mystery, the actual to the possible, the limited to the unbounded...the sufficient to the superabundant."<sup>11</sup>

The conservative, Mr. Oakeshott goes on to say, is willing to suffer change. But he experiences it as a kind of deprivation, and he is reluctant to innovate, most especially in any large and sudden way. As I have said, I respond instinctively to this description of the ideal conservative. That is the kind of person I take myself, at bottom, to be. I am attached to familiar things and to customary habits. I am the sort of person on whom advertisers waste their money, for I almost never switch brands and never purchase new products while they

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11 Michael Oakeshott, "On Being a Conservative," in *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1991), 407-437.

are still new. I prefer to eat always in the same restaurant, stay at the same hotel, do my writing with the same kind of pen, on the same kind of paper. And I prefer to watch on TV reruns of old movies rather than learn the latest news. Moreover, I think I have always been this kind of person. Even when I was young and a radical socialist, which suggests perhaps behind the radical impulse of our times, there lies a deep yearning for stability as much as a mindless urge to innovate.

But as much as I admire Michael Oakeshott, I have my problems with him. On a general level, I find him, well, let us say a bit philistine in a very British way. The conservative predisposition, I think, cannot be celebrated with quite so unqualified an enthusiasm. Some allowance ought to be made for the authentic needs of the philosophic predisposition. The predisposition that, however discreetly, asks embarrassing questions of the world. Questions like: Is this society we are fond of a good society? Is this life we are comfortably and familiarly attached to a good life? I am not one of those who believes that the unexamined life is not worth living; that is one of the most ridiculous assertions ever made by a literary intellectual. On the other hand, it is no less ridiculous to suggest that the unexamined life is identical with the good life. And though I cannot think that Oakeshott really believes this, he comes perilously close to saying it.

To be sure, if we were supremely confident that we were in fact leading a good life in a good society, then the conservative predisposition would be the same thing as the philosophical predisposition. It may be possible, or it may once have been possible, for Englishmen to be so splendidly confident about their national condition. But I doubt that this confidence was ever fully justified and in any case those of us who have not had the good fortune to be born British are left with our anxieties.

On a less elevated level, I find myself wondering how on Earth this conservative predisposition can prosper in a world that is not only in a constant state of flux but is committed to flux by reason of its prior commitment to personal liberty and economic improvement. In our

world people are encouraged not to have a conservative predisposition. What one wonders on Mr. Oakeshott's intentions toward this state of affairs: Is he in favor of restricting advertising? Does he wish to slow down the rate of technological innovation? And if so, how would he do it without giving the state enormous new powers? Does he wish to abolish installment buying? Is he for circumscribing the freedom and power of the mass media? And again, how would he accomplish this without undue interference with personal liberty?

One knows from Mr. Oakeshott's other writings how strongly he prizes individual liberty. What one does not know, what he has never explained, is how the kind of individual liberty we have today is to be reconciled with the conservative predisposition, which he also prizes. I am not blaming Mr. Oakeshott for not knowing the answers to these questions since I do not know them either, and I sometimes wonder whether such answers exist. But all that this means is that being a conservative today, in the sense of having a conservative predisposition, is a very problematic enterprise. One really does not know what to do with this conservative predisposition.

One of the things you can do is to fix yourself to a critical posture that deplores modernity itself for raising such intractable questions. This is Mr. Russell Kirk's strategy and within its limits it is a very useful one. In a way, it is a strategy for converting a conservative predisposition into Tory energy. I do not use that term "Tory" in a derogatory way. I appreciate Mr. Kirk's writings and share many of his values, but no one can say, and he would be the last to say, that he is familiarly at home in the modern world, that he is attached to things as they are, that he is fond of things as they are, that he would be grieved if things change from what they are. On the contrary, it is quite clear that he detests most things as they are, that he is very angry at the world he lives in. That he esteems only those existing things that have a clear connection with a remote antiquity.

I am not even sure that Mr. Kirk would like to be a conservative in the same way I would. He has an adventurousness of spirit. There is a

romantic quality to his imagination, which marks the trueborn Tory. It is hard to conceive of Mr. Kirk not being nostalgic no matter when he was born. And such nostalgia, of course, being the primordial source of all poetry and much religion, must have evoked a response in any man of sensibility.

Having said this, I must also go on to say that, as I see it, Toryism is essentially a literary posture rather than a political one. It is one of the most decent and humane of the literary postures available today. But while I would encourage statesmen to read Mr. Kirk, I would not expect them to find him of much practical help in coping with the modern world. Even if they were statesmen of conservative predisposition.

We today are all caught up in a huge historical tempest, lost at sea, and we consider ourselves lucky if we can get both hands on the rudder. Under those circumstances, there is not much profit in reflecting aloud on how much better things would have been had we never left port. I much prefer to hear some informed guesses as to the nearest harbor. One not infested with savages—if possible.

I must admit to not knowing quite what to do with Milton Friedman. On the one hand, he rejects the conservative label and insists he is some kind of nineteenth century radical-lib. On the other hand, he is widely regarded, especially by the business community, as a conservative defender of the free enterprise system. I suppose that, through some strenuous dialectics, these two points of view could be reconciled in theory. In practice, however, I think one has to be guided by public opinion and public definitions rather than private ones. Though the free enterprise system under which we live may not be as free or as enterprising as Mr. Friedman would like, it is a real enough thing, and one who defends it can legitimately be called a conservative.

I also seriously doubt that a nineteenth century businessman would be as impressed by Mr. Friedman as is his twentieth century counterpart. The bourgeois ethos of the nineteenth century is not Mr. Friedman's ethos. Indeed, that bourgeois ethos is moderately at odds with his libertarian and free enterprise ethos.

Imagine Soames Forsyte running into Milton Friedman at the Reform Club.<sup>12</sup> Their conversation might, at the outset, have been most amiable as they chatted about the stupidity of politicians and the merits of *laissez-faire*. But I cannot see how this amiability could have lasted beyond those first few moments. And I fear that Mr. Forsyte would have quickly come to regard Mr. Friedman as an eccentric bohemian—a decidedly unsound man.

Mr. Forsyte like most nineteenth century liberals may have had his personal doubts about the existence of God, but he would have had no doubt at all about the importance of organized religion, and about the desirability of the government's sustaining organized religion. He would not, for instance, have had the slightest qualms about laws which punish blasphemy. Similarly, Mr. Forsyte would have believed that personal moral conduct fell within the scope of law. In the form say of legislation with regard to adultery, homosexuality, pornography and so on. Mr. Forsyte's *laissez-faire*, it would quickly have become apparent, did not extend very far beyond the marketplace and Mr. Friedman's libertarian notions of individual freedom would have struck him as anarchistic and irresponsible.

Moreover, had the conversation lasted long enough, which I doubt, it would have become apparent that even with regard to business and businessmen they have profoundly different attitudes. For Mr. Forsyte, *laissez-faire* meant only that government should not try to substitute legislative fiat for the economic laws of the marketplace. It most emphatically did not mean that businessmen were not to be governed by a strict moral code, or that businessmen were to be concerned only with the rational pursuit of profit.

I know of no better illustration of this than the bourgeois attitude toward bankruptcy, an attitude very different from that of a spokesman for free enterprise today. To Mr. Forsyte, and his friends, bankruptcy

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12 Soames Forsyte is the main character in John Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga*, which was a serialized publication from 1906 to 1921.

was no mere economic fact, it was a shame and a disgrace. Bankruptcy testified not simply too bad luck or bad management, it testified to a deep flaw in moral character. You did not want your sister to marry a man who had been bankrupt because he was the kind of man who did not responsibly meet his obligations. In Mr. Forsyte's world, a man who went bankrupt and then spent his entire life paying off his creditors, even though he had no legal duty to do so, such a man was honorable. In Mr. Friedman's world, which is our world, such a man would be viewed as some kind of a nut.

What this comes down to is that Mr. Forsyte's belief in *laissez-faire* did not interfere with his conviction that successful businessmen were to cultivate some of the traditional attributes of a ruling class. That is to say the bourgeois businessman was to serve, not simply as a model of success, but also as a model of virtue and propriety. Never mind, whether or not this model was a particularly glorious or even attractive one. It was an authentic model deeply believed in. And not by businessmen alone, but by a good part—perhaps a majority—of the population.

In this model, personal virtue and personal merit had some connection with worldly success and a high social position. The connection may have been established after the event as often as not. A great many crooks and scoundrels, once they made their fortunes, were quick to assume the airs of respectability and to make themselves over into model bourgeois characters. But this itself testifies to the power that the model exercised over men's imaginations. Not every bourgeois businessman had, in fact, the pristine character of a Horatio Alger hero. Probably very few did. But they accepted this character as their ideal type and tried very hard, at least in public, to approximate it.

Today our most powerful businessmen, the top corporate executives, are men of a different breed. One knows little of their personal lives and one could not care less. They do not think of themselves as a ruling class and the only model they propose to us is that of managerial efficiency. A model that is to say of a function, not of an individual, and not of

a class. One may be deferential to them out of prudence—so long as they hold corporate office. One has no deference to their persons, and they expect no such deference. They succeed to the extent that they increase earnings per share. They fail to the extent that they do not. Their existence has no other justification. They are their economic performance as we say. And this performance is measured in strictly utilitarian terms. Mr. Forsyte was not unfamiliar with this kind of one-dimensional businessman. He called them speculators, and he tried never to let them into his club.

I can already hear Mr. Friedman intervening urbane: “For goodness sake who on Earth wants businessmen to serve as a model? They are supposed to be useful people, not admirable people.” And since he is no kind of a snob, Mr. Friedman would surely go on to say the same thing about economists, or professors, or magazine editors. The objection has a specious plausibility since we all know businessmen, and economists, and professors, and magazine editors who, so far from being suitable models to the young, ought to be kept at a safe distance from them. But that is not the issue. The issue is whether when men live together in society they live together as a social order, in which classes and institutions have moral legitimacy, or rather merely as an aggregate of social functions whose claims to legitimacy are dependent simply upon efficient performance.

A nineteenth century liberal believed that *laissez-faire*, when wedded to what we now call the protestant ethic, could be an integral part of a bourgeois social order. A twentieth century conservative believes that free enterprise in a free society is a substitute for a social order. Mr. Friedman is such a twentieth century conservative. He is not a nineteenth century liberal, as he sometimes says, because nineteenth century liberalism was, in the main, bourgeois liberalism. And Mr. Friedman’s cast of mind is decidedly post bourgeois.

So, the question that confronts me is if one wants to be a conservative, why should one not be Mr. Friedman’s kind of conservative? I could answer that question in two ways. I could say, first of all, that I



don't really like the ideal of free enterprise in a free society as much as Mr. Friedman does. But there is a more important objection. In practice, I believe that this kind of twentieth century conservatism is self-defeating. That it does not lead to a tranquil life, but rather leads, or perhaps I should say has led and will lead, to social convulsions. And there is not much point of being a conservative if it results in societies having a series of fits and seizures—the very condition that conservatism most abhors.

The trouble with our kind of free society, and the materialist thinking on which it rests, is that it makes dubious legitimacy of all institutions: the family, the church, the state, the corporation itself. Arguments from utilities seem clear enough when presented in the mathematical language of economics. They have, however, but little bearing on the real world where it is extremely difficult to judge whether or not an institution is working efficiently and where the blame or the credit lies.

Take the business corporation. During their periods of prosperity almost all corporations look good. During periods of recession, they almost all look bad. In addition to the major swings of the business cycle, there are always smaller swings within particular markets that affect the so-called performance of any corporation. People talk glibly about well-managed corporations, but there is in fact very little consensus—even among knowledgeable observers—as to which is which and when. The best-informed observers are, I suppose, on Wall Street; and there, the cynical wisdom of the street is to always discount the management. To survive such cynicism, and I should say it is a cynicism appropriate to the management of any institution in the complexities of the real world, an institution needs a claim to legitimacy on other than utilitarian grounds. Oh yes, business corporations do go bankrupt as Mr. Friedman is fond of pointing out. From this he draws the neo-Hegelian conclusion: What exists is legitimate. What is bankrupt is not. I fear that such a definition of legitimacy is inadequate, to put it mildly.

The original legitimacy of the business corporation was based on

the theory of private property. This was a bourgeois theory in that corporate executives and directors could, as surrogates for the stockholder, claim a right to their prerogatives—just as a small shopkeeper could claim the right to his shop and to the perquisites thereof. This right rested on the assumption that the right to property was identical with the right to the fruits of one's labor: one's diligence, one's thrift, one's foresight. In short, on one's possession of the bourgeois virtues. Obviously, status, and power, and wealth that derive from the exercise of virtues could not be anything but legitimate.

Equally obviously, this Bourgeois conception of property has little relevance to the American corporation today in which stockholders and management are, in effect, partners in speculation. They are wildly unequal partners. The number of prominent business executives who took cuts in salary equivalent to the drop in value of their company shares, during the recent unpleasantness on Wall Street, can be counted on the fingers of one hand. Perhaps even on the fingers of no hand. But that is only a marginal issue. The main issue is whether the American corporation, as it exists today, has a plausible claim to economy—and economy is simply another way of saying legitimacy. Corporations affect the lives of too many people for management to argue persuasively that their sole, or even major responsibility, is to those who trade shares on the stock exchange. Already a great many people are wondering why the people who now sit on the boards of directors are there? And whether it might not be a good idea to have some directors whose loyalties are not to the great speculative game? It is easy to predict that this kind of thinking will gain momentum.

But it will be said that whatever the theoretical doubts about the legitimacy of our existing economic arrangements, there can be no doubt that they do promote dynamic economic change and growth. I agree. There can be no doubt about it. And I think this constitutes another problem for the conservative. Anyone who is genuinely conservative has to be worried about dynamic change and growth. He should of course be accepting of slow gradual organic change and

growth. A conservative is not a man who believes that time and history should come to a stop now that they have produced so perfect a creature as himself. But dynamism is not a feature of the world he ordinarily finds congenial. The trouble with dynamism, as he sees it, is that it upsets and confuses people. It strains the bonds of civility, and it encourages all sorts of human appetites to flourish at the expense of contentment and happiness.

Now I have to be careful here because what I am going to say may sound sacrilegious even to rather friendly ears. I have to face the inevitable question as to whether I really am in favor of a somewhat slower rate of economic growth, a slower rate in the diminution of poverty, a slower rate of improvement of the material well-being of the population? It is not an easy question to face up to. But after thinking this over for a long time, I have come to the only possible conclusion: Yes, if one wishes to be a conservative one has to answer all these questions in the affirmative.

I have little doubt that this may sound bizarre to those who believe that happiness consists in the incessant satisfaction of desires. If you are a conservative, however, you will not find it hard to believe that happiness has more to do with a fond attachment to familiar things and to familiar ways. To the extent that such familiarity is disrupted by rapid economic improvement, as measured by economists and statisticians, people become anxious, uneasy, suspicious, aggressive, neurasthenic. To the conservative, therefore, slow and gradual economic growth at a tempo that permits people to accommodate themselves to it—with the least disruption of their settled habits—is much to be preferred to rapid and dynamic growth.

In this respect, I think, the conservative finds himself more in accord with the majority of his fellow citizens than either he or they realize. True, the materialist, hedonist, values of our age are so firmly established that few people are likely to challenge them openly. But I do not think one can understand the history of our times, unless one acknowledges the degree to which it has been shaped by an urge to escape

from the kind of freedom that prevails in a free society. Totalitarian movements are an obvious and grotesque case in point. But the welfare state too, though it is in part the product of individual and collective greed—an appetite that the free society itself continually stimulates—is also in part a conservative effort to bring stability back into the social order, even if this has adverse consequences for economic growth.

Perhaps if one could be more candid about this, if we committed our statesmen to be more candid about it, our welfare state would not be so messy, since it would not be trying to achieve the incompatible objectives of increasing universal affluence and achieving general stability. But such candor is regarded as political suicide. The sad truth is that it is very difficult to be a candid conservative: what I would call a conservative today. Indeed, I should say that the major task facing American society is reforming itself in such a way as to make it possible for people to begin to be candidly conservative.

Just what reforms would accomplish this objective, it is extremely difficult to say. But I think one has to say openly that at least some of them would, to one degree or another, circumscribe individual and corporate liberty and would be profoundly offensive to all libertarians—some, but not all. One of the truly admirable aspects of Milton Friedman's intellectual creativity is the way in which he manages to propose reforms that serve both individual liberty and social stability. His ideas on the financing of education are, to my view, an excellent case in point. And his recommendation of a modest guaranteed minimum income to replace our present welfare system is another. Moreover, he has no peer in showing how various aspects of the welfare state, presumed to create stability, in fact operate to a perverse effect. So, I find myself always learning from him and agreeing with him on specifics far more frequently than one might expect. But delightful though such agreement is, I am also aware that it has its limits.

The libertarian cause, the cause which faith is free enterprise in a free society is not mine. I also happen to think it is a lost cause, and that what will kill it, if nothing else, is the progress of science and

technology that a free society encourages. In the not too distant future, we shall be living in a world in which any group of clever young men, with criminal or insane purpose, will be able to construct a rudimentary atom bomb, or to produce a deadly nerve gas, or to manufacture pills that have disastrous genetic effects. When that happens, and I do not see how it can fail to happen, scientific and technological knowledge will become secret knowledge and the free circulation of such knowledge will be prohibited. The repercussions upon our political, economic, and educational systems are almost too enormous to contemplate and not less disagreeable. But obviously they will spell the end of the free society as we now know it.

Let me leave that nightmarish prospect—perhaps a miracle will somehow spare us from it—and suggest instead that there are other kinds of reforms, usually thought to be liberal rather than conservative, which might make this nation more fit for conservatives to inhabit. For example, it seems to me that our corporations need to acquire some new increments of legitimacy since the older sources of legitimacy are so depleted by now. I am not entirely clear as to what direction this should take, but I do know that the present system of government by managers whose sole function is to increase earnings per share is becoming less acceptable every day. Though Americans love the stock market, they really do not want to be governed by it.

The present movement toward placing on the boards of our very large corporations directors who represent the public interest, is, I believe, a genuine response to an unnatural situation—even if the motives of the people urging this reform are frequently of a kind that I do not admire. Something of the sort is, I should say, inevitable. Just who these public members should be, and precisely what their assignment ought to be, is still unclear. Presumably, there will be many professors among them, and this could be a good thing. We have created a core of tens of thousands of professors who are interested in neither research or teaching and are not particularly competent in either. They exist, they are not going to go away, and it is terribly important that we

civilize them. Some public recognition, an expense account, and a tiny bit of power might work usefully toward that end. And who knows, some of them may turn out to be pretty good businessmen, which is what some of them should have been in the first place.

There are other specific reforms that I would be willing to contemplate, at least in a preliminary way. Any legislation that curved expenditures for advertising, would seem to me, to be a move in the right direction. Our appetites are too freely stimulated today, in my opinion. And I think the government ought to subsidize homeownership even more generously, and more vigorously, than it does today. And I believe our Social Security payments should be considerably more generous than they are now, and that they should be paid for out of general revenues. Older people are naturally conservative, and we therefore ought to cherish them more than we do.

But I shall stop my agenda of reform right here, lest it degenerate into the fun and games of constitution-making. I do not insist on the importance, or effectiveness, or even sensibleness, of any one of these reforms, but something like them is needed. Our free society, whatever its merits otherwise, is a society that drinks the blood of its own institutions, draining them of legitimacy. And thereby it provokes perpetual unrest and unease among the citizens. We need more stability, more calm, and above all a more tranquil sense that things are not, after all, in the saddle.

To obtain this conservative condition, we need a reforming spirit. A spirit that one ordinarily associates with the liberal rather than the conservative temper. And that is why, when I am asked whether I am a liberal or a conservative, I find it so difficult to answer. For I am frequently the one, but always in order to be the other.

Thank you.

## LIBERALS AND CONSERVATIVES REVISITED

By Milton Friedman

I may say so far as my own designation as conservative or liberal, I got a letter the other day from a woman somewhere near Massachusetts who wrote, or maybe it was a man I am not sure, but the letter went: "My son has been required to read your book in class—has been compelled to read your book on capitalism and freedom in class—and he has decided that you are a quack, but I think you are just confused." Needless to say, this letter might have come from either the left or the right, but it did come, to judge from the enclosures which were from *American Opinion*, from the right. The writer thought I was a collectivist and a socialist of the worst kind, so I am delighted to have Irving refurbish my credentials as a conservative libertarian, or libertarian conservative, or something. I must say personally I do not like those terms at all, and how confusing they are is nowhere better shown, I think, than in the recent debate about the SST.

This was a beautiful example. Here was a proposal that you have a socialistic activity, namely government subsidization and sponsorship of the manufacturing of an industrial item—namely an airplane. Who was voting for it in Congress? All the defenders of free enterprise and all the opponents of socialism. Who was voting against the government subsidy of the SST? For the most part it was the socialists. The ideological distribution of the votes was precisely the reverse of the ideological content of the issue. It is very revealing in terms of the confusion which there is about ideology and the extent to which the people who talk about being in favor of free enterprise and opposed

to socialism do not really mean that. They really mean that they are in favor of a particular collection of objectives, like a strong Air Force, or an anti-communist stand. And the people who are on the other side are not really consistently socialist either. To them, socialism is not an ideological stance so much as it is an excuse for a particular activity. So, I do think that the terminology is very confused today. One of the things that produces a confusion of terminology is that there is an intellectual temper of the time, which tends to infect everyone and is almost impossible for anybody to stay clear of.

The businessman, Soames Forsyte, that Irving was referring to, he was reflecting in his discussion, if it had been held at that time, he was reflecting the intellectual views that were dominant of his time. And he was not unaffected by John Stuart Mill or Jeremy Bentham or the other philosophical radicals whom Irving would have regarded as not really in with the bourgeois ethic of the time. And the businessman today who speaks about activities is also being affected by today's intellectual climate of opinion. He is reflecting the fact that the climate of opinion today is almost wholly collectivist and socialist; and therefore, the businessman who thinks he's talking in the name of free enterprise is nine times out of ten talking socialism.

And my main reaction to the very wise and profound comments that Irving Kristol made is that I thought that, in part, his comments reflected, in a much more sophisticated and subtle way, the same phenomenon. The extent to which he was really reflecting and treating as a necessary part and consequence of a free enterprise society in a free society—he was attributing to that what are really the consequences of an intellectual view that is wholly hostile to a free enterprise world and a free society.

Let me be a bit more specific. I think we have all been aware over a long period of time that, time and again, difficulties in our society, which are really attributable to mistakes in governmental policy, have been treated as being essential characteristics of a free enterprise system or of a business system. So, the Great Depression from 1929 to 1933



was and still is widely regarded as a sign of the instability of a private enterprise system instead of being regarded, as it should be, as a sign of the instability of government management of money.

Well now Irving brought out an idea that I had never heard before, and I think is extremely ingenious, of a triangle of the economic collectivism, personal liberty, and material hedonism. Essentially, he argued that you could have economic collectivism and personal liberty if it was built on a foundation of religious faith, so that what people wanted to use their liberty for was to be like everybody else. That is a little bit of an exaggeration, but it gets the right flavor of it. And he treated these three things (economic collectivism, material hedonism, and personal liberty) as if they were somehow three unrelated strands. As if the material hedonism had developed out of philosophical attitudes in the society, which were not themselves related to the economic collectivism, on the one hand, or personal liberty on the other. And I would argue that the situation is very different. That the material hedonism, which he objects to is, in and of itself, in large part, a manifestation of the economic collectivism and the socialist thinking. That it is not an independent thing which is now difficult to reconcile with the personal liberty, on the one hand, or the economic collectivism on the other. That, on the contrary, the tendency to do things through political processes or through collective processes inevitably leads to an overemphasis on narrow materialism and narrow economic arrangements. Because the elementary fact is that the bulk of humankind is not concerned with much beyond the day's bread and the day's activity. Only small minorities are concerned with things that go much beyond that. And the only kind of climate in which that small minority is able to express those non-materialist ideas is a climate in which there is not too strong a central government, or a central force, or a central power. I do not think it's an accident at all that the socialist and communist countries of the world are the ones that are quite obviously and openly the most narrowly materialistic and the most narrowly concerned with the everyday day-to-day activities.

Secondly, a point of equal importance: Irving stressed, and I agree a hundred percent with him, the fact that you cannot have any kind of a stable society unless you have some set of common values. He expressed it, not in terms of common values, but in the need on the part of institutions for legitimacy. Things will not be accepted simply because they are utilitarian. They must, to some extent, be accepted because they are thought to be right, because they do correspond to some basic values which attribute to those arrangements' legitimacy. I think he is entirely right about that. I think he is also entirely right when he sees that this problem is more and more serious. He concludes from that, that we need to have a conservative society, as he defines it. And that we need to avoid a free enterprise and free society because a free enterprise and a free society, will not have, a sufficiently strong, a sufficiently broad, a sufficiently deep set of common values to enable it to persist.

Now once again, I would argue that the relationship is upside down. While you need a common set of values, the question is, "How much do you need?" How uniform and how wide-ranging must those set of values be? This depends on the kind of society you have. A collectivist society requires a much more extensive set of values and at the same time makes it more difficult to achieve them. It seems to me that it is precisely the extent to which we have broadened the role of the government, that we have broadened the use of political instruments. To the extent that we have done that, we have simultaneously asked for a greater homogeneity of values and made it more difficult to achieve. And that is a major reason why, along that line, you cannot have liberty in a free society: because you undermine the common core of values.

Let me illustrate this in a very concrete way and in a point which Irving raised, and I think is very important: the attitudes toward the corporation. Two major factors that have been undermining the feeling of legitimacy of the corporation is, on the one hand, that it is in fact true that most corporations today drink very, very well from the trough provided by governmental activity, and by governmental subsidies,

and privileges. There is hardly a private corporation today that is not heavily dependent upon government largesse. Because of the spread of collectivism, because of the greater economic centralism of control, the corporations are, in large part, semi-governmental units. They are not independent private enterprises that are allowed to go bankrupt. One of the great troubles is that we do not let corporations go bankrupt. Nobody thinks it is surprising to see Penn Central, or I should say the railroad industry, to come up to Congress and ask for a \$600 million as a one-year grant in order to enable them to become a thriving private enterprise. And the SST battle showed that as well. Those of us who were opposed to the SST were opposed to it. I was opposed to it, not on the irrelevant grounds about the ecology which is mostly silly, but on what I thought to be the relevant grounds that if this was worth building it ought to be done by private enterprise and there is no justification for a socialist movement in this area.

So, on the one hand, the corporations are in fact becoming governmental entities; and as they become governmental entities it is important, it is appropriate, that the people around them should be appointed in ways other than by the self-selection of the ownership of the corporations. On the other side, the businessmen listen to the collectivist philosophy that is so dominant. They believe it. They are in favor of socialism. They do not understand the role and virtue of a profit system. And so, they are engaged in a major campaign to undermine the legitimacy of the corporations which they run.

Now Irving says, correctly, that that raises a problem for the maintenance of a free society. But I think he is wrong when he says that it also shows why free enterprise in a free society is not possible. Because I believe that the most effective way to reestablish the legitimacy of the corporation, the most effective way to enable the society to require only a small set of common values, is to dismantle the governmental activities, to reduce the scale of government, to have a larger degree of free enterprise in a free society.

Now, I really do not know quite how to comment on his fears about

the whole thing being killed by science and technology: the atom bomb in the basement. I suppose it is only innate optimism that leads me to look back on the course of history, to all the other apocryphal predictions about how the world is going to come to an end fairly soon, and leave people isolated—I do not want to be isolated on top of a mountain like those people in India who thought the world was going to come to an end. I admit that Irving's fears have more base, far more base, than most do, but I find it hard to know how to react to that, except to say well we will have to face that issue as it comes up.

I must say I find it impossible and intolerable to accept his opposition to change in the way in which he does. And the question I would ask of him, and the question I would ask of you: "Change for whom?" If I do not want to have any change, I can resist change. I can go sit in my own place. If Irving does not want to read the latest newspapers, that is his right. I do not have any objection if he sits down with those old books or with the rerun. But if you talk about how we ought to have a slower pace of change, I must say I find it very hard to swallow. What that means is: Those of us who are living pretty well are willing to accept a slower pace of improvement on the part of the well-being of those who are living at a much lower level.

I remember years ago having this argument with somebody who I am surprised to see Irving in the same group with, but who was arguing about how—obviously this was on the Galbraith theme of the affluent society and about how obviously everybody had enough consumption now and we ought to stop and look for more quality and quantity. And so, I said to him, as I said to myself, I said: "Tell me how much do you spend each year on your consumption?" And then I calculated out that that was two to three times the amount that the average American citizen was spending on his consumption. And I said, "When the average of everybody else gets up to that, then let us meet again and talk about the fact that we are too affluent and that we don't need further economic development." Well, similarly, I really do find it hard to say, I know Irving expressed these difficulties, but I

find it hard to say how anyone can argue that we should deliberately take measures which will slow down the possibilities of other people achieving what we have achieved.

And I think the way Irving and I ought to come together on it all is by recognizing that our present collectivist measures are doing precisely that. That the difficulties he is worried about, the turmoil he is worried about, come not from change but precisely from the governmental arrangements that make it more difficult for other people to improve their lives. And that it is possible for us to have more of the kind of change he and I would jointly approve, and less of a kind of change that he and I would not approve.

For example, why do we have an overemphasis of advertising? You said we ought to do something about advertising. See this is a good case. Every time one of these things comes up, there are two ways in which you can do something about it. One way is by having the government do something else, and the other thing is by having government stop doing something. Now, Irving said he would be in favor of government imposing restraint on advertising.

**KRISTOL:** No, I said just restraint.

**FRIEDMAN:** Right.

**KRISTOL:** I did not say government.

**FRIEDMAN:** Well who is---

**KRISTOL:** Anything that would diminish advertisement.

**FRIEDMAN:** Anything that would diminish advertisement.

Okay, Irving says that. Well, I will give him something which will diminish advertising, and which will promote change, and that is to abolish the FCC.

We now have an obviously intolerable, undesirable, situation on radio and TV, in which advertising is being subsidized by the government in a major way. Because it is only the fact that the Federal Communications Commission licenses TV and radio, controls the way

in which TV and radio are used, it is that—and only that—which has enabled advertising to preempt almost the entire financing of radio and TV and has eliminated, has made impossible, the development of pay TV and of other means whereby you could have distributed TV and radio programs without advertising. Now if we sold off, as many of us have suggested over the years, all the radio and TV channels, converted them into private property, and abolished the FCC, then you and I would both agree that would be a desirable move. It would restrain advertising, but it would not interfere with change, on the contrary, it would make it easier and more possible for people to develop change.

Now, I must say with respect to the way in which the corporation needs to acquire more instruments of legitimacy. Again, I think that Penn Central will have much more legitimacy when it is not being subsidized by the government—and the railroads in general. I think that the various institutions that are being regulated will have more legitimacy when they are standing on their own feet.

And this brings me to one other point I meant to mention earlier and that was that very fascinating picture of the businessman's attitude toward bankruptcy. Which seems to me to derive from a distinction that was less important in the nineteenth century than it is now, the difference between businessmen as individuals and corporations. And I think that one of the problems is the difficulty of attributing to corporations, which cannot attribute to corporations, moral value. I think one of the problems with our present discussion and talk about GM being socially responsible, is that it is another facet of the collectivist philosophy. Just as you say government is going to do something, when you and I as individualists and libertarians would want to say we are going to do something through a governmental channel, so people say corporations are going to do something. Corporations cannot do anything, only people can do so. And people may do things through government. And so, I think that the whole idea that there should be a morality applied to corporations is wrong. There should be a morality, and values, applied only to individuals.

Well, I have sort of wandered around a lot. These have been sort of instant reactions to Irving's very provocative talk. I want to close, before I go, by raising an issue that I hope somebody else will discuss and that sort of does not come out of Irving's approach or my approach, but yet seems to me to be an extremely important feature of modern liberalism, twentieth century liberalism, as it has developed. See, just as Irving is reflecting doubts about conservatism as it was and about nineteenth century liberalism, so you are having changing attitudes toward twentieth century liberalism. The liberals are getting very uncertain about centralized control. They are getting very uncertain about many of their favorite panaceas. But one feature of the modern liberal philosophy that I think is getting stronger and stronger, and it is causing more and more problems, is the emphasis on egalitarianism, which does not really appear either in your discussion or in my discussion today. And yet, if you ask yourself what is the characteristic feature that dominates the discussion by today's liberals, I think you will find that the one feature that has emerged from their earlier faith, and has become even stronger, is the emphasis on pure egalitarianism.

I have been very much impressed by that in one particular instance, which is what Christopher Jencks and his fellows at Harvard have been doing with the voucher plan. And they are just in the process of ruining a perfectly good idea because they are going to insist that it shall, under no circumstances, be possible for any one person to have anything different from what any other person gets. And this is almost a characteristic feature of the kind of reformist attitude of the modern liberal. And if there be anything which threatens individual freedom—see this is inconsistent with their own emphasis in the past on individual freedom, personal liberty, free speech, and so on, because they are almost, many of them, in the position where egalitarianism has to conquer over any other objective at any cost whatsoever.

And I really do not know quite how this fits into this theme at all. I know neither Irving nor I would go along with it. We would both say that what we want is equality of opportunity and individuals to be

free to pursue their own interests provided they do not interfere with somebody else. And we do not necessarily want, in fact we abhor, a world in which everybody was identical in result—that would be about as dull a world as you can think of. But anyway, those are as I say, some random comments and I am grateful to Irving for giving me more than enough meat to chew on.



## LIBERALS AND CONSERVATIVES REVISITED

By Ernest van den Haag

I do want to start with a Roman patrician; but nonetheless, do not worry, I will be fairly short. I will not bring it all together up to date from there. The semi-legendary Roman patrician, Menenius Agrippa, was said to have made a speech to the proletariats who went on strike against the senatorial class pointing out that society is not like an organization, but is like an organism in which the senatorial class represented its head—and perhaps also the stomach—and the proletarians represented the hands and arms. Therefore, they should not worry if the senators would get the benefit of their work because through their digestive activities these benefits will ultimately arrive back in the proletariats' arms. Well, Karl Marx in the first volume of *Das Kapital* makes a great deal of fun of that. And of course, in a literal sense, he is quite right. He pointed out in effect that there are no neural connections between different human beings; that your drinking does not quench my thirst, hence this simile is quite inappropriate.

As I grow older, however, I have come to the conclusion that Menenius Agrippa was correct psychically, not neurally, but psychically society is like an organism. And it cannot really continue to exist unless people feel empathy with each other and identification sufficient to regard each other as significant, to be interested in the approval of their fellow man, to be willing to make sacrifices for them, as the case may be, in war and in peace. In short, to work together. To put it still differently, society can be rationally analyzed on the condition that the rational analyst is rational enough to realize that society is not a

rational organization. And that it is driven, motivated, and so on, only by non-rational forces such as love, hate, or the wish for prestige, and so on, which function only inasmuch as they are commonly approved values, shared ideas, neutral identification, and so on.

Now many of the things which Milton Friedman said I would agree with and in fact with all the specific details I would, but it does not seem to me that he met the thrust of Mr. Kristol's speech. What Mr. Kristol was basically saying is, if I understand him correctly, that the economic optimal, on which I fully agree with Mr. Friedman, is in conflict with the social optimal. That is that the needs of society, or if you wish communality among other things, cannot be satisfied by a society in which free enterprise really fully is given its head. I will be a little bit more radical in fact in this respect, and perhaps Mr. Kristol, I would say that a society in which individuals are wholly free cannot persist.

The fathers of our Constitution, of course as you will recall, insisted that everyone should be free to pursue happiness as he sees fit. But it should be noted that the fathers of our Constitution believed that there was a benevolent nature that would lead everyone to wish to pursue happiness in ways which were essentially compatible with the pursuit of happiness by his fellow man. Because we were all having a nature that will lead us to value the same things, hence it would be purely a matter of, so to speak, for the government making sure that one would not interfere with the other in trying to do the same things. I do not believe that there is such a benevolent nature. I do not believe that there is such a natural law, or such a human nature, or natural rights, or any of these things on which we could rely for this. It is therefore necessary to rely on human institutions including, and this is where I will call myself a conservative, the institution of tradition itself. Which is, as Mr. Friedman would admit, of course is the institution that is necessarily destroyed by the rapid change that he advocates.

Let me defend, for a moment here, Russell Kirk against Milton Friedman. Russell is indeed nostalgic, as all conservatives are, but he

is nostalgic in a way that seems to me legitimate. He is nostalgic for a golden age in the same way Ovid was nostalgic, for that in which the writers of the Holy Scripture were nostalgic for the prelapsarian bliss that was represented in the Garden of Eden. Where Russell is truly conservative is that, unlike liberals, he does not believe that any future will be any sort of paradise regained. He is anti-utopian. The belief that such a state may have existed before history, and that it will exist after history, is not harmful. As long as that belief is not transmitted into a belief that we can create such a state. Well, if once that is done, and I think here Kristol would agree with Mr. Friedman, we will get into trouble. But there is a disagreement and it is, I think, in terms of is the economic optimal compatible with the social optimal?

Now I said before that I would go a step further than Mr. Kristol has gone because what he has said—particularly the very last part of his remarks that Mr. Friedman, like a good conservative, decided we ought to muddle through, so to speak, and not face namely with a possibility that such knowledge is now achieved as will make it possible for malevolent or stupid individuals fairly easily to annihilate major portions of mankind, whether by mistake or by intent. If that is true, and I believe it is true, then it would mean that in the future we will have either to restrict knowledge or freedom, and possibly both, to a far greater degree than we have in the past. So, what it seems to me that Mr. Kristol really means is not that he is just against free enterprise—which I think he would agree to be willing to leave it largely to Mr. Friedman and economists in general to determine to what extent and where it is effectively efficient and he would be in favor, as I am, to leave it functioning wherever it is efficient. But I think, and that is where the disagreement comes in, and I think in this disagreement I am on Mr. Kristol's side, he would restrict the recognized efficiency of free enterprise where such recognized efficiency, and I will go a step further—I don't know whether Mr. Kristol will agree with me—where such individual freedom would lead to the destruction of the necessary shared values of society. Let me explain that while I speak of shared

values, or conformity if you wish, I do not advocate any particular values, whatever they are. Were I to live among headhunters, I should advocate that we carefully conserve the value of headhunting. We do live in a society where headhunting is not really done but where making money is an important tradition, wherefore, I am in favor of keeping up that important tradition provided, as they say, it does not destroy itself.

As I said before, the notion of the fathers of the Constitution that there is a benevolent nature, that would lead us all to share values because basically we want the same, seems to me wrong. Tradition in the past has made it appear to be true. But tradition is being destroyed and hence that notion now can be, so to speak, concretized very largely only by law. It is impossible it seems to me for the government, as desirable as it may be, to itself create communal institutions or values. What the government can do, at most, is to protect those and possibly foster those that exist.

And here it seems to me there is at least a glimmer of hope that say Mr. Kristol, and Mr. Friedman, and myself could fully agree. When you take for instance educational institutions. The voucher plan proposed by Mr. Friedman would make it possible for those parents who wish their children to be educated in any particular tradition to do so. The present public schools, in effect, destroy all tradition. Any tradition the child comes from is exchanged against the homogenized stock of ideas, good or bad ideas, that is imparted by the public school. Now it seems to me that at least some parents may still be willing to have their children educated according to certain norms of religious or other tradition. They can do so now only if they are in the fortunate position of paying a fairly high price for it. The other possibility is for us to subsidize such schools [but] there are various, not only legal, but also principal difficulties there. So, the voucher plan would solve this particular problem. And I think that the values actual economic ideas that Mr. Friedman has proposed, in various occasions, all would help, curiously enough, in doing what Mr. Kristol and I would like to achieve.

I am very doubtful about one of Mr. Kristol's proposals, namely the public interest being represented at a corporation. I see no need for that. The public interest should be represented in public bodies, and these public bodies should impose on the corporation such regulations as are required by the public interest. Rather than to ask the corporation to pursue the public interest when the corporation, and here I would fully agree with Mr. Friedman, has been founded not to pursue the public, but a private interest. Now, we may want indeed to have persons in these corporations who are having a level of this foresight to vouch for the tradition that Mr. Kristol mentioned, but I think the last persons whom I would entrust are professors. It is entirely true that they are the only ones available. It is also entirely true that one does not know what to do with them. But that is, I think, not enough of an excuse to impose them on the corporations.

Let me conclude this with Mr. Friedman's last point and I do so largely because I do think we should discuss it and I will merely throw out one idea about it, and that is this. The egalitarianism in modern times, it seems to me, has been fostered very strongly by an idea that probably can be traced back much further, but that I might trace at this point to one of Anatole France's famous sarcastic sayings: "That the law, in its majesty, forbids rich and poor alike to sleep in the open or under bridges." Anatole France meant this to be a strong statement against the inequality of society and this statement, I think, is based on a confusion shared today by our Supreme Court, and shared before by Franklin Delano Roosevelt, between legal rights and immunities that can indeed, and should perhaps, be distributed equally and actual abilities that should not be so distributed. The right to buy food could be given to everyone. It does not follow that it is up to the government to provide everyone with the ability to buy food. Since this matter may disturb you a little bit, incidentally, I would say the same as the right to starve—to put it the other way around—should be given to everyone. And I should point out that in those governments where the right to starve is not given, people are of course subjected to compulsory labor.

They are not entitled, in other words, not to earn money and to starve themselves and to be poor. I think they should be. But to indicate the importance of the distinction: the right to travel. I think you all realize it is an important right. But the fact that we all have the right to travel to Rome, is not to be confused with the fact that the ability to utilize that right is, and should remain, differentially distributed.

Let me point out that Roosevelt went further with this confusion in the so-called Four Freedoms. He, as you will recall, described being healthy as freedom from disease, sort of giving the idea it is up to the government on the one hand to make you healthy, or on the other hand to make you diseased. But of course, a man can be diseased and free, and healthy and altogether be a slave. What government does when it gives a freedom is a legal right. The ability to exercise the legal right, to be one thing or the other, I do not think is up to the government to give. And I would certainly fully agree here, with what is probably implied in Mr. Friedman's remarks, that this is something that we should individually achieve.

But to summarize my disagreement lies in the fact that the emphasis on the individual achievement, and the individual freedom connected, somewhat fails to recognize the emotional basis of social life. That emotional basis, it seems to me, can be irreparably damaged if we really permit the individual legally, and by our social attitudes, to pursue each happiness as he wishes. No society can function in which the individual does not regard as terribly important, to the point of compulsion, the opinion of others, and that will require that he shares with others similar values so that he recognizes that their opinion is based on something that he accepts. Without that, there can be no authority. Without authority, there can only be force. And in fact, the difficulties that we are now suffering through will get worse unless a change is made in that direction.



## CHAPTER 5

# CONSERVATIVES AND THE MEDIA

**OCTOBER 8-9, 1971  
NEW YORK, NEW YORK**

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 9  
9:00-11:00AM**

***The State of the Conservative Movement***

Henry Paolucci, "The State of the Conservative Movement"

Will Herberg, "The State of the Conservative Movement"

Frank Meyer, "The State of the Conservative Movement"



## THE STATE OF THE CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT

By Henry Paolucci

I learned that I would be the first speaker only a few moments ago and having assumed I would be the third and that some great sweeping statements would have been made about the state of the conservative movement. But in as much as my theme is that we need to be flexible, I will adapt my discourse to the change. My remarks are based primarily on a piece of paper that I put out called “State of the Nation,” and the title of the present issue is “Conservative Liberation Front.” Because I think a CLF is necessary for it not to collapse into utter political paralysis.

I think those of you who recall what it was like in the spring and summer of 1968 know that there was a tidal wave of conservatism that really frightened the liberal establishment. Bill Buckley last night reminded us what the plank was of the Democratic party framed in Chicago. It was a tough plank about Vietnam and there were tough planks on law and order. The Republican Party, it was assumed, had a man of indelible conservatism as its nominee so to speak—I meant the Republican party nationally—and there was a third candidate who supporters knew they were merely protesting the state of affairs in America. They represented a great number of people estimated to be twenty million at the start of the movement with the understanding that perhaps half of them would desert Wallace because they would not want to waste their vote and that those votes would be distributed between the other two candidates provided they made a direct appeal to them.

The estimate of men like Joe Allsop was that eighty-five percent of

the American people felt that they were conservatives in basic ideology. Now that does not mean that they knew what it is, as you know, who knows what conservatism is? A book edited by Frank Meyer many years ago began and ended with everything in doubt about it, because what conservatives want to preserve requires the writing of the history of the United States. It is a very complex matter to state when you want to defend a thousand values, 200,000 values, how difficult a thing it is to say.

Now, one of the great values that conservatives want to defend, unfortunately, is the American tradition, which is essentially a liberal tradition. And that is our great tragedy. It has been said many times: we want to preserve what the American liberal is weary of and wants to give up. That is the theme as you know of James Burnham's superb book *Suicide of the West*. We want to have programs where an interviewer gives you both sides. Where if he is interviewing Jesse Jackson, Jesse Jackson gets at least fifty percent of the right in the program. Now, there is only one program on TV that I know of like that, that is straight down the middle. It is not on the right. It is straight down the middle and that is the *Firing Line* of Bill Buckley. It is the perfect liberal tradition, but the people who insist that they are liberals in the core say, "Don't you tell us what's liberal. We'll tell you what's liberal. What's liberal is to commit suicide now. We don't believe in Christ, but we're going to commit a Christ-like sacrifice of ourselves so that the blacks in our nurseries can be advanced and all the other people around the world who have suffered and who are backward can be advanced. We're going to die so that they may live."

That sounds very nice. But as Father Andrew Greeley observed in his answer to Galbraith when Galbraith wrote his piece for the *New York Times* saying that he was going to open up the executive suite of big business to the blacks and the Puerto Ricans and other deprived minorities, he said, "I know Galbraith can only do one thing at a time, but I hope after he finishes doing that he will start opening up the universities where there is an absolute monopoly in the elite schools

of Wasps and Jews”—what he means by Wasps and Jews, he means Wasp-like Jews and Jewish style Wasps, as you know.

I mentioned this matter since our panel chairman brought it up, here we are assembled, the white ethnics here as they call us and the Jew who does not somehow qualify as a white ethnic in the liberal hierarchy of values in our country. It is a difficult problem here.

But what has happened is that this liberal establishment now really got beaten in 1968. It was absolutely desperate, and it pulled the ancient tactic when you know that your enemy has a weakness, and the weakness is that he really likes what you are, when you know that the intellectual enemy, when the intellectual conservative really likes what you are, you know that all you have to do is get yourself attacked further from the left and he will leap to your defense. So, they sent their goon squads out to urinate all over the campuses and defecate and put turds in the desks of the presidents of Columbia University and then they called to us, the intellectuals on the right, and said defend us against the enemy. This was our original confrontation. Here is the liberal intellectual, here is the conservative intellectual. He is beaten, eighty-five percent of the people are against him. So, he sends his goon squads out to the left and turns around and then he says to us, here is the front line, cowards. Why do you not come and defend Columbia University, Harvard University, Princeton University? Defend the institutions that for forty years have been wrecking the country. And what have we done? We have rushed, some of my dear friends perhaps, Charles Moses here, rallied to form organizations that will defend the universities, because many of us did love those universities. I have always said Columbia will survive the crap that has been there, if you allow me to say so. I know how many men there secretly want to get rid of their wolves and Herbert Marcuse-types. The young ones are worse than the old ones always, because they can gain by their aggressiveness since they have men who favor that kind of thing up high. So, we came out to defend those very universities.

That is the phenomenon of the elite university. In the Jewish

community it is quite the same thing. A man like Nathan Glazer, who qualifies in my estimation as a first ranking liberal, has said the great tragedy of the American Jewish intellectual now is the great force that the Jew has supplied on the extreme left. That is too much. He cited in a recent article in *Commentary*, as you probably know, the fact that three out of the four students—this used to be done only by *Statecraft* and other anti-Semitic publications—but he said three out of the four students at Kent were Jewish when random shots were fired into a crowd of rioting students. Now that is too large a percentage, but it is what Nathan Glazer said, you know, that is his style: “We have got too many Jewish women in the women’s lib movement. We have got too many Jews in this radical, thing too.” And he said, “We have got to pull them back from there into the middle.” But then he said, “We must not build up the right with Jews, because there are redeeming features on the left.” It is rarely anti-Semitic and the only anti-Semites on the left now are Jews who have to prove that they are really for the Third World and the Black Panthers, so they pretend to be anti-Semites and anti-Zionist, you know, like that.” But he said, “there are no redeeming qualities on the right.” Now I would like to inform you why I am on the right. I am for the center, like Bill Buckley.

I am for the center. But when a ship is careening to the left, you do not straighten it up by setting your compass straight ahead. Someone has got to lean over to the right. If reasonable men will not do it, then unreasonable people will do it, but that force is there. As one of the members of this audience says, it is a gusher. The right-wing fervor in our country is a gusher. Powerful as anything, but what it requires is intellectuals who will not desert it when it seems fierce, but a liberal intelligentsia, who knows that that is our weakness.

We want to be fair. We want to preserve the liberal tradition and so we agree to defend the liberal establishments’ place, both from the left and from the right. So, Bill Buckley’s magazine will devote twelve pages to unmasking a man who I know Bill Buckley regards as the author of drivel because he happens to be on the right and has said some

unpleasant things. Twelve whole pages at a time when our national security is collapsing, and the name of Nixon is rarely pronounced as the author of that collapse even though he has been the Commander in Chief for two and a half years.

This is not some act of nature that is disarming us. This is not some anonymous force working. This is a president of the United States who in himself is trying to embody that liberal middle that all of us conservatives have such a penchant to defend. We do not like what he is doing, but good heavens, all he has done is hired another man from the Harvard-MIT complex to guide our national security, a disciple of McGeorge Bundy, and why not?

We know that it is reasonable still to say that America should guide the world like a beacon light, and not with coercion. That is a very ancient concept of H.G. Wells, of Bertrand Russell. You know why England is great? Well, once upon a time it was William the Conqueror, William the Bastard who crushed everybody and gave us unity in 1066, which the French did not get until Napoleon.

Well, but that is past—and we have had great industrialists, we have had the merchant adventurers who said if you sell unmanufactured goods to the continent, we will slit your throat and you will give us your consent in advance. A tough, industrial complex. And then we have had tough soldiers, a tough military industrial complex. But now, I think—says H.G. Wells—words will triumph, and Bertrand Russell says spinning cobwebs will triumph, and we have got to get rid of the industrial military complex. I believe that now the whole world will accept Anglo-Saxon guidance just onwards, and John Dewey said the same thing here, and they have tried, as the great Pareto, said to get rid of the lines.

It is up to foxes now and guess who frustrates the foxes most? The lions on his own side because that scares the enemy and makes him envious and fearful. So, the worst enemy of the foxy schemes to have American liberal intelligentsia run an empire around the world are the tough Americans.

Now, I say the time is fast approaching when we on the right have got to unite all the forces on our right. That means we have got to ask less and less and less, and we do that by reordering, as James Buckley said last night, of the reordered priorities. We have had a reordering of priorities and now we have to reorder that reordering, and let's just ask this: let us not embarrass a working man by saying you cannot be a conservative unless you make believe you own the factory. You want to be conservative? Make believe that your main interest is how the factory ought to be run and what inducements will make it run better. And you must not say to a tenant, "Make believe you are the landlord." That is unfair to a tremendous number of Americans.

I have heard people who are in the industrial class defend the industrial system, and I say if labor says in America, "I love the country, but I will not vote even for Bill Buckley if he says that he is against the things that I want." I think Bill Buckley ought listen to those people a little bit, because otherwise, we will end up being a trifling group of people that will talk to one another and what we will be talking about is the defense of the liberal tradition, which tradition is committing suicide right in front of us. We have got to forget about preserving it the way it is now. We have got first to preserve the nation and not its liberal tradition, and then rest assured once that is done, if the right wing thinks it is going to do something else, it will find me in absolute opposition. Thank you.

## THE STATE OF THE CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT

By Will Herberg

What is the state of the conservative movement in this country today? What is the future of conservatism in America? I have some ideas on this question, which is of such absorbing interest to all of us. And these ideas I should like to place before you for consideration and comment. In a word, what I should like to do is to assess, so far as I am able, the resources and possibilities, the strengths and the weaknesses, of conservatism in America today. Conservatism today confronts us in this country on several levels and leads us in several directions. Most fundamental I should say is what I would call value conservatism: the basic moral, social, and cultural attitudes of the people. As far as the mass of the American people are concerned there is as no question whatever, but that these are thoroughly conservative attitudes. Sometimes recognized as such, sometimes even named as such. I will display some of the evidence for this generalization in a few minutes.

At the other end of the spectrum is philosophical conservatism. The conservatism of those who hold their conservative views as a well-considered and consciously articulated social and political philosophy. We by our very presence here express and exemplify this kind of conservatism. And there is of course the political conservatism, in the narrowest sense of the term. The conservatism that shows itself in voting patterns and other forms of political behavior. This I think is probably the most perplexing aspect of conservatism in America today. Let us look a little more closely at conservatism on each of these levels.

First, the basic mass conservatism of the American people. I am speaking here of what is nowadays known as Middle America, the blue-collar respectables, the white-collar respectables, and the farmers. The evidence of their conservatism is massive and hardly disputed. The liberals refer to it as the deplorable backwardness of the American people. I have other words for that. Here is some of the evidence: the Louis Harris survey in December 1968 and another one 1970. Now, Louis Harris is not predisposed to favor the conservative direction, but he is a conscientious and scientific surveyor. You ask the American people how do they consider themselves: conservative, middle-of-the-road, liberal, or radical? And you define this a little more closely. If you favor the establishment, you are conservative, middle-of-the-road, and perhaps liberal. If you are against the establishment, thoroughly and entirely, you are radical. Here the results: thirty-eight percent of the American people said that they are conservative by name; thirty-two percent, middle-of-the-road; liberal, seventeen percent; radical, two percent; not sure, thirteen percent. Well, that is not a high proportion. You can confront a man and ask him what he is, conservative, liberal. He has not thought about it at all, you can hardly expect him to right off the bat to tell you. That is not a high proportion. I am defending the American people, you understand.

The Yankelovich survey in New York state, which is supposed to be the hot bed of liberalism, or something of the sort, you have got exactly the same results: 34.8 percent, conservative; 36.8 percent, middle-of-the-road; and twenty-two percent, liberal—of whom you must allow certain amount that are radical. He did not take radical in his categories. The Gallup poll in April 1970 found fifty-two percent of the American people saying that they are conservative, thirty-four percent saying that they are liberal. I want to remember these figures. They are the best evidence we have available of the moral, social, and political attitudes of the American people.

Now, we have something interesting. There are two vacancies on the Supreme Court. In April 1970, Gallup asked the American people:



should Supreme Court appointments go to conservatives or the liberals? Fair question. Forty-nine percent said conservatives, twenty-seven percent said liberals, and twenty-four percent said no opinion. Almost twice as many people who said that the appointees to the Supreme Court should be conservatives. Now, I have massive evidence here, but I am not going to bother you with it. But I think it is perfectly clear that this basic value conservatism—some people called instinctive conservatism, but I doubt the word instinctive is proper—of the American people is definitely there on a massive scale. I do not think there could be any real question. The mass of the American people are conservative in their outlook and nowadays often are ready to call themselves conservatives, because these surveys take on the categories explicitly saying conservative, liberal or middle of the road.

Now for philosophical conservatism. Conservatism held at a social and political philosophy is enjoying a boom or revival—to go back before the Civil War—without precedent in many decades. Surely, I do not have to tell you that. You know it better than anyone else. Less than a quarter of a century ago, conservatism was a term practically unknown in American politics. Senator Taft called himself a good liberal, that is all. And if they ever used the word conservative—if anybody even knew the meaning of the word—it referred to something in English politics, that is all. But now, conservatives are everywhere. I should say that in some circles today there is real danger of conservatism becoming—well, what will I call it—trendy or chic. You know, you have chic. You remember chic around the “radical chic?” We may live to see the day when you have “conservative chic.” A fate worse than death.

Bill Buckley was certainly right when as far back as three years ago he called attention to what was happening. “For the past few years,” he said in January 1968, “any number of ideas developed in the garrets of conservative scribes and roughly dismissed as radical or irrelevant have suddenly begun to appear in the classiest political shop windows.” It will be easy to show without any difficulty—and I

have drawn up such a list for my own academic purposes, which Bill Buckley put in one of his columns, he always does anyway—how rapidly liberal orthodoxies in any number of fields are crumbling and the corresponding conservative positions are being strengthened.

Just about a century ago, John Stuart Mill called the Tories the stupid party and vaunted the liberals as the intelligent ones. Today, it is the liberals who are the stupid party, endlessly chewing on the straw of their tired old slogans, and the conservatives who show the fresh and challenging intelligence. A number of certified liberals I could mention have sadly and with much headshaking admitted this to me.

Now, let me repeat, not only are the conservatives becoming the intelligent party today, but there is a marked movement of intellectuals well known for their creative thinking or scholarship toward the conservative positions, even to the point of identifying themselves as conservatives. Dr. Paolucci mentioned Nathan Glazer. He wrote a letter to Bill Buckley—did you see that letter? A few months ago, he apologized to Bill for having been nasty to him in earlier writings. In the end he says, “I find myself from being a moderate liberal, I have become a moderate conservative.” And on Harvard campus, he is constantly known as conservative, as a conservative—he calls himself a conservative. I am pleased at that, he is an old friend of mine and I like my friends, you know. And I do not have to mention only Nat Glazer. You go along the line. Not only Nisbeth or Banfield on the west coast and in Harvard, but Moynihan, Kissinger, also friends of mine, Nathan Glazer, Irving Kristol, Seymour Martin Lipset, and so on, and on, and on.

Now, the American Jewish Committee—not the Congress—had a conference two months ago of Jewish conservatives, something that ten years ago would have been impossible to find. You would have had to have had an ecological expedition to find them. But there were seventy-five there from all over the country. Ronald Berman—he wrote *America in the Sixties*, a classic book—and Columbia and everywhere, every campus on the west coast, every campus on the

east coast, and some in between—Chicago and the others.<sup>13</sup> They were amazed, Jewish conservatives. Seymour Martin Lipset and I were co-chairmen. Seymour Martin Lipset is one of the best sociologists in the country, at Harvard. I take up the championship of Harvard now. Some of my best friends are at Harvard.

Now this seems to me a very welcome trend, but I am appalled at how many of my conservative friends prefer to deny this and picture themselves as a tiny group of embattled warriors holding forth against the advancing hordes of liberal barbarians. They love the notion of being a tiny minority that has superior virtue and is blessed. Well, maybe there is. Heroic posture, perhaps, but luckily unrealistic and bound to be proved self-defeating. The trend is with us today intellectually. The reality is that intellectually, at least, the trend is the conservatives who are doing the fresh and significant thinking in every field. And even our opponents are coming to recognize this. And the opponent of yesterday may be a friend of today, as Augustine said about those outside the church and in the church, remember? Those who are outside of church today may be found in the city of God in the end, and vice versa. So those who are liberals today may be conservatives tomorrow. You ought to remember the New Testament parable of the sheep and the goats,<sup>14</sup> or the wheat and the tares<sup>15</sup>—do not try to weed them out too soon, too prematurely. We should welcome those who show signs of moving to the right.

Now, the question arises whether, if this is so, if the mass of American people are conservative minded and do not mind saying so, if conservatives are pointing the way intellectually, why does all this not show up in election results? Well, we all know that it is the liberals and the half-liberals who get themselves elected mostly in state and nation. Why is this so? Because—and this is a lesson we all

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13 Ronald Berman, *America in the Sixties: An Intellectual History* (New York: The Free Press, 1968).

14 Matthew 25:32

15 Matthew 13:24-30

ought to learn fast—voting behavior is not determined simply, or even primarily, by ideology, or what we would call political philosophy. There are a number of very important, often decisive, non-ideological factors of voting behavior. Of this, more later.

Now, what is it in conservatism, in conservative values, and conservative attitudes that so appeals to the American people? Some of these points come to mind immediately. Let me repeat them. First, there is stability. The conservative emphasis on stability, on steadiness, on continuity, as against a liberal passion for innovation, for feverish change. For the liberals, nothing ever stays put. Then, there is a conservative emphasis on self-help, on letting people alone, giving them a chance to help themselves, as against a liberal itch for governmental interference, always passing laws on everything. And third, there is a conservative insistence on the old traditional work ethic. The ethic that values work as a substance of man's life. And that insists, in St. Paul's words, that if they will not work, they shall not eat.<sup>16</sup> The liberal position is associated with wild spending, liberal welfarism, where working people are forced to support welfare beneficiaries who will not work, and who regard such support without work as somehow their right, a human right.

But perhaps the most popular conservative emphasis is the emphasis on law and order, the appeal to get tough with disorder and violence on the streets, on no matter what cover or pretext. The resentment that is felt by masses of Americans against the way the courts have been crippling the hand of law enforcement. There is a revulsion against the liberal tendency to find idealistic excuses for violence and disorder, to protect criminals, to hamper law enforcement. Finally, there is a conservative patriotism, pro-Americanism, undying hostility to communism, that so appeals to the mass of Americans, where liberals are seen as soft on communism, embarrassed of patriotism, ashamed of America.

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16 II Thessalonians 3:10

Now, all of these conservative attitudes are wrapped up in an all-enveloping, generalized Lockean old line liberalism. Dr. Paolucci mentioned that. It is true. This is the public philosophy expressed in the Preamble of the Declaration of Independence. It is a public philosophy shared by virtually all Americans, without exception—well, some exception. Myself, for example—but this old line Lockean liberalism is not felt to be liberalism at all by the mass of Americans today. And indeed it is not, if we mean by liberalism the present-day welfare liberalism to which the mass of Americans are vehemently opposed.

Now, what is the impact of these appeals on the various strata of the American people? Undoubtedly, the workers of this country are overwhelmingly conservative in underlying attitude and outlook. Black workers, as well as white. But in their political behavior, American workers are drastically hampered from expressing that conservatism by powerful political ties, formed on other grounds. Let me illustrate this. Right after the Civil War, the Republican Party was riding high, wide, and handsome. The Democratic Party was shattered because it had been Copperhead, that is, it had been mildly or strongly pro-southern. In New England, the Republican Party was a Yankee, Protestant establishment. Hordes of Irish came in, and after the Irish the Italians, and after the Italians the Poles. The leader of the Republican Party, the spokesman of the old Yankee stock looked upon these characters as barbarians. They called them that. I have the documentation. You know what happened in Boston? I bought in an antique shop a plaque on the public parks, government parks: Dogs and Irish Keep Out. And somebody—I think I will not mention who—said, must be the Irish because dogs cannot read. The response to this was, the Irish could not read either. The Republicans did not want them. They were not Yankees and they were not Protestants. They were foreigners and they were Catholics. But the Democratic Party saw a chance of growth, or at least of survival, and welcomed them and there was formed a firm and almost indestructible tie—not entirely indestructible—between the ethnics of the new immigration—the Irish, the Italians, and the

Poles, massively—and the Democratic Party. Now, this had nothing to do with ideology. Absolutely nothing.

I want to show you how. Do you remember the Civilian Review Board Referendum in New York City? You ought to remember it. All the liberals were on the side of a Civilian Review Board. The only ones against it, I think, who spoke was Bill Buckley. I do not remember anybody else. The population of New York voted two and a half to one against it. And I know the people there. I asked an Irish Catholic, he was a taxi driver in the upper city, I asked him, look, that is how you voted? You elect Democrats who vote in the opposite direction, who vote for policies abhorrent to your heart. Why do you vote for them? He looked at me sternly and said, “Well, we are a Democratic family, aren’t we?” It is just as difficult to pry him loose it seems from the Democratic Party as the mother church. But they are being pried loose. Now you understand what I mean by not ideological factors. There are a whole list of them. That is an example, but not the most important.

Now the farmers. I am listing, you remember, I am assessing the impact on the various trends of the population. The farmers: they are overwhelmingly conservative in attitude and outlook, but—and this is not unimportant—there are still lingering traces of populism among them from the 1870s, ‘80s, ‘90s, all along, which often works mischief politically.

What can we say about the business class, which is our present-day American elite? The situation is much more complicated. The business class is typically associated with an old line, *laissez-faire*, Lockean liberalism, which they take to be the proper conservatism. But businessmen, by the very nature of their professional activities often have a strong itch for innovation. Innovation is the law of their life. You have got to get ahead and find the new thing, which is the very opposite of conservatism. For American businessmen the word revolution, believe it or not, is a good word. The word revolution is a popular word for businessmen. They want change constantly, technologically, business procedures. They want change. Old settled ways, custom, tradition,

are looked upon with distaste by the progressive modern businessman, who is so fascinated by the innovative spirit of modern technology.

Of course, businessmen are concerned about protecting and preserving their interests against attack. But so is every special interest group in our society, even the professors. But it has nothing to do with their conservatism and liberalism. There is a real problem there with the business class and those who act in the conservative movement will know that. But it is the suburban middle-class that seems most vulnerable to left-liberal infection. A segment of the suburban middle-class, not too large, but neither is it entirely insignificant, is particularly vulnerable to mod, way out influences, undermining traditional standards of morality, decency, and politics, engendering a significant left-liberal element in cultural and political life.

Intellectuals today are very largely, but by no means entirely, identified with a new status bureaucratic liberalism, what I call welfare liberalism. And yet the same intelligentsia, even the academic intelligentsia is already beginning to produce a small but significant conservative segment, giving body to the new philosophical conservatism. And the other side, the extreme left liberal intellectuals, have been helping to develop a kind of vaguely defined counterculture. A low system of ideas and values, of habits and ways of life and behavior, challenging our moral and cultural tradition, sometimes in a head-on collision. But I am glad to note that the counterculture, with its erosions and corrosions of everything worthwhile, is already beginning to crumble. There are definite signs of returning health among these elements, especially the student youth who would seem to have been most affected by the influence of the counterculture.

Now, the picture is a very uneven one, but is overwhelmingly on the conservative side. Why then such a discrepant record of voting behavior? This is a fascinating subject which has only recently begun receiving scholarly attention, although the practitioners of politics—like Dick Daley of Chicago, most eminent practitioner of politics in this country, have a lot to learn from him. I spent a week interviewing

him and studying the whole Chicago situation. You learn a lot about practical politics from there. The practitioners of politics, the political bosses, have always known the facts of life or as they say in the language that I am referring to, "They know where the bodies are buried."

It would take me too far and too long to make an adequate examination of these so-called non-ideological factors in voting of the forces that more directly and immediately affect voting behavior. I will merely mention some of them just by naming them, that have loomed large in recent studies: historical memory (on which I have already said something), entrenched family tradition, ethnic background, religious belonging, regional alignments, class cultural position, special group advantage, and the public image of candidates. If you want to understand how politics works, study how Procaccino conducted his campaign in the mayoral election. His image, pictorially, is not attractive. He is not a handsome man like John Lindsay. No, but that is not the image I mean. You know what he did? When City College was closed down, you remember? He had a court order and stood at the gates waving the court order, "I will open up City College," and he did! That is an image. And it worked wonderfully. The picture of Procaccino is a conservative Democrat. It worked perfectly.

Well, things do not remain fixed forever, not even in politics. The apparently unbreakable bonds that have tied the ethnic groups, especially the ethnic labor groups, to the Democratic Party with this liberal face are beginning—that is the real basis for the so-called New Deal coalition, you know—they are beginning to crumble. I have the figures on the mayoral election of New York in 1969; a majority of the Irish voted for Marchi. Unbelievable, for a Republican! It is like a good faithful Catholic patronizing the Protestant Church. It is unbelievable that a majority of the Irish voted for Marchi. A majority of Italians voted for Procaccino or Marchi. Forty-nine percent of the Jews voted for Procaccino and about fifteen percent for Marchi. You know what that means? It is unbelievable. And so on. The only ones who voted solidly, almost solidly, for Lindsay were the Puerto Ricans and



the blacks. Nobody else in the whole city. There was a large enough element in the city to give a considerable advance to his election, but we are analyzing these different groups. And this is not only true of New York, of course, we have Philadelphia, Boston, Los Angeles. There is much promise in these developments.

Let me summarize now and bring to focus these somewhat scattered remarks I have been making on the future of conservatism in America. First, liberalism today is everywhere in retreat, in disarray, in disintegration. Conservatism as a value system articulating an entrenched way of life is overwhelmingly dominant among the American people. Conservatism as a political philosophy has been enjoying a notable upsurge in prestige and influence in the past two decades. And since Bill Buckley is not here, I can well say that he played a big role in this upsurge, a tremendous role. He is one of the best stylists in English. I think he is the best English stylist in America since Evelyn Waugh, a magnificent stylist. And that is a good entry, I have some graduate students who came, you know, southern liberals—the worst kind of liberal is a southern liberal. I get them to read Buckley, just as an exercise in literature or something, and merely the style and the play of ideas have a big influence on them. I never preach to them, but they end up as good old conservatives.

Now, the problem remains how to translate this conservatism as an entrenched way of life and as a political philosophy into voting behavior, into political electoral power. That is the problem. It is a problem that can be solved only in realistic practice. No anticipatory, intellectual formula will solve it. You solve it only in practice.

But perhaps it will not come amiss to take heart from a testimony of a political heathen—that is a liberal. Here are the words: “A time of perplexity creates a need for somber and tragic interpretations of man. Thus, we find Burke more satisfying than Paine. Hamilton or Adams more satisfying than Jefferson. Calhoun more satisfying than Webster or Clay. Conservatism, in its true sense, more satisfying than liberalism as we have known it in the past century and a half.” You

know, who said that? Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. They always say that to bring testimony of heathens is the best evidence for Christianity. Well to bring the testimony of liberals is the best evidence for conservatism. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. said that. So, let us take heart. The future is still ours to make. Thank you.

## THE STATE OF THE CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT

By Frank S. Meyer

Will Herberg has shown elaborately and ably the basic strength of contributors in America today socially, culturally, and intellectually. I am going to the greatest degree to concentrate on what at this moment of history is a somewhat darker side of the picture: the narrowly political side. I want to discuss the state of the conservative movement today, not in terms of the political situation in which we find ourselves in 1971, but the great breadth, depth, and general strength of the conservative movement as a movement. That is, those persons who are consciously following conservative attitudes and moved by them today as compared with ten or twelve years ago. But fundamentally, I want to essentially discuss the point that was touched upon in the last part of the previous speech, namely the impact and future of conservatism in the political situation, in the narrower sense of the word.

To know where we are in any situation, it is necessary to stop for a moment and see clearly how we got where we are, from whence we came, and what is the particular moment of our course? Therefore, I think it is worth examining at a little length the genesis and history of our movement and thereby not only where we are, but what we are. The crystallization in the past fifteen or twenty years of an American conservative movement is a delayed reaction to the revolutionary transformation of America that began with the election of Franklin Roosevelt in 1932. I agree with Herberg that a mere fifty years ago, nobody called themselves a conservative in America and Taft did call himself a liberal.

That revolution itself has been seen in the light of history only as a gentler, more humane, bloodless expression in the United States of the revolutionary wave that swept the globe in the twentieth century. Its grimmest, most total manifestations have been the phenomenon of communism and Nazism. In rather peculiar form, as in late years, it has expressed itself in the so-called nationalism typified by the likes of Gamal Abdel Nasser. In Western Europe it has taken the forms of the socialism of England or Scandinavia. Everywhere, however, open or masked, it represents an aggrandizement of a power of the state over the lives of individual persons. Always that aggrandizement is cloaked in a rhetoric and a program putatively directed to and concerned for the masses.

The American form of that revolution differs a little in its inner essentials from Western European democratic socialism. But by an ironic twist of history, it has become known as liberalism—far removed as it is from the classical liberalism of the nineteenth century with its overriding concern for individual liberty and for the limitation of the state. So thorough was the victory of liberalism in the election of 1932 that for many years afterwards it met with no concerted resistance either in the intellectual or political spheres. It is true that islands of resistance remained, and people fought hard from those islands: in the Congress, in the academy, among some economists and humanists, in the business community, in the endemic mass anti-communist feeling among some strata of the population. But these were for some decades only rearguard actions. By and large, liberalism dominated the scene, took over the academy and the organs of mass communication, controlled the Democratic Party, and slowly penetrated the Republican Party.

Only in the past decade or two has there emerged a consistent, cohesive conservative movement based upon a broad consensus of principle, challenging liberal assumptions and liberal power all along the line. Its intellectual origins, centered among a group of writers gathered around the old *Freeman*, *National Review*, *Modern Age*, it

early attracted a following and guided a movement in the universities—one can speak of stages in this development such as the foundation of ISI and of YAF—and gradually focused and channeled the energies of disparate tendencies opposed to liberalism through all levels of society. Later, its attitude began to be reflected in the political world, first among a group of young congressmen. And it fully emerged on the national political arena with the nomination of Barry Goldwater at the Republican Convention of 1964.

Before, however, discussing in detail that emergence, and the more recent developments in the political realm, I should like briefly to describe the consensus of principle that is the consensus of contemporary American liberalism. Because I must say I disagree with Professor Paolucci that that which American conservatism stands for is the liberal tradition. It is not, in my opinion, either a liberal tradition in the nineteenth century sense, or a conservative position in the nineteenth century sense. In fact, one can claim for it the oldest heritage of any existing political sentiment of strength in the world. It goes back to the eighteenth century. It was established by our constitutional fathers. The American tradition is not liberal or conservative; it is pre-liberal and pre-conservative. It predates the French Revolution.

This consensus is reflected with different degrees of understanding and depth at every level of the conservative movement. With greater clarity and greater detail among intellectuals, while more instinctively and a broader sense in the broad base. It underlies the principal positions of the consciously intellectual as it does the empirical positions of political activists. The clearest way to summarize this consensus is to contrast it with the beliefs and attitudes of the liberal world outlook.

Despite the existence of many conservative Democrats and of the occasional possibility of supporting Democrats, the clear tactic throughout the conservative movement politically has been to gain control of the Republican Party as a vehicle for achieving national power. In the years from 1961 through 1964, with incredible rapidity considering the youth of the movement, that first tactical task was

largely achieved. In the course of the struggle to control the Republican Party, the conservative movement grew, strengthened its personnel, and gained experience. By 1964—and this must be realized for a movement of the earliest came into existence in 1950 and did not become politically significant at all until 1960 or 61—the Republican Party was won for conservative leadership. Half the battle was won. The vehicle to achieve national control was in the hands of the conservative movement.

With the defeat of November 1964, however—and heaven knows that in a war defeats are going to take place, that battle after battle will take place—the defeat of 1964 sent the conservative movement into headlong retreat. Instead of consolidating the positions won in the years up to 1964, instead of moving forward toward further control and expansion of that political situation, instead of preparing for the future, the conservative movement suffered nothing less than a colossal failure of nerve. This is the key fact of the history of the past two decades. Having within our hands a vehicle that could have been moved from presidential year to presidential year, constantly gaining in strength, the conservative movement let its nerveless hands fall from the wheel.

Instead of starting in 1965 to consolidate and expand the ground won and working for the next four years to repeat the challenge of 1964 with better preparation, better tactics, better management, better leadership, conservative leaders moved into the camp of the prize opportunist of the twentieth century: Richard Nixon—placing the hope of an easy Republican win over conservative principle.

Despite the failure to drive forward after 1964, conservatives still were in a distinct majority at the Republican Convention of 1968. As people generally moved by the conservative consensus, the majority of that convention were conservatives. But two-thirds of those conservative delegates voted for Richard Nixon, against the clear conservative position of Ronald Reagan at that time. Conservatives could have with ease nominated a conservative candidate had the drive for one began in 1965. But they were divided, and they got Richard Nixon.

In the course of this maneuver, incidentally, they handed over millions of conservative voters—good solid people, people who could not stomach Nixon—to the populism, ignorance, and demagoguery of George Corley Wallace. To the degree that Wallace in any way leads people of basic conservative principle down the primrose path to populism, it is the responsibility of the conservative leaders who led to the nomination of Richard Nixon in 1968. The net result of this politics of pragmatism and opportunism has been the disarming of the conservative movement as a current political force on a national scale. I am not saying it has been disarmed on a local basis. I am specifically not saying it is weaker than it was in 1961 or '64. It is stronger. But insofar as the strength and momentum of this is attached by gears to the political wheel on a national level, I repeat what I have said, this conservative movement has been disarmed. It does not mean to say we cannot elect a Jim Buckley in New York and cannot do that same kind of thing elsewhere. It does mean that as far as 1972 is concerned the energies of the conservative movement were an empty air.

Until the eleventh hour, our movement has been bound in the public eye to an administration of disarmament relative to the rapid super-armament of the Soviet Union and of intense danger to the survival of the United States. An administration of retreat before communism in China. An administration of massive proposed welfare increases, of record expenditures and deficits and record inflation, of across-the-board government control of the economy.

All that differentiates this administration from a Humphrey administration is a couple of Supreme Court appointments, a slower retreat in Vietnam than Humphrey might have carried out, and a great deal of rhetoric about law and order. Something, but not enough to save the soul and the public credit of a conservative movement which in principle stands for the consensus I laid forward and practiced before the public has been attached to support of the Nixon Administration. The result of the failure of nerve of 1965 to 1968—and of the past three years—is proof of the pudding we concocted. At this time the conservative

movement has no serious national presidential political impact.

The recent statement suspending support was a definite step in the necessary actions to extricate the conservative movement from this situation.<sup>17</sup> But I believe it must be said that it certainly came much too late to seriously affect 1972. The only way it can seriously affect it is if it would force Nixon into changing his course under that conservative pressure. So far there are no signs of it. And it would have to be quite a sharp change of course considering the Rubicons he has crossed in the past few months. It is a correct move, in my opinion, because I think conservatives have to begin to put pressure, to show their position. The most important aspect of it, however, is not the possibility of affecting Nixon or 1972 because I do not think it can be done. Instead, we are looking toward saving the soul of the conservative movement in the future.

Although we are larger, stronger, and have many more skilled personnel than we had in 1961. Although in American life, we are more pervasive than we were then, broadened and strengthened out in the social, cultural, intellectual, and political spheres. We are, for all practical political purposes in the presidential arena, about back where we were in 1961.

I think it is necessary to realize where we stand. I want to stress that we are much stronger than in 1961. But in the sense of having the cogs that fit into the gears that will turn the wheels of presidential national politics, we are to some degree with about as much influence as we had in 1961. The job is to rebuild our power, to reach the decisive influence of 1964 again. It is a much easier job this time. The movement is broader. The country is seeing more of the results of liberalism and its radical spawn. The country is ready for this sort of thing in the sense

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17 Here Frank Meyer is referring to a group of conservatives led by William F. Buckley who publicly pulled their support for Nixon in late July 1971 because of his "policies toward mainland China and on conventional and strategic arms." As quoted in Marcus Witcher's *Getting Right with Reagan: The Struggle for True Conservatism, 1980-2016* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2019), 86.



that Will Herberg indicated.

However, today, the circumstances of an incumbent president whom we put there, and who cannot be seriously challenged in his own party, makes anything like 1964 impossible at San Diego. It is not even to be thought of. There is no possibility of in any way affecting the fate of the nation in San Diego. The threat of non-support in the election—which is a serious one—may swing Nixon back a little more to the right, but that is the best that can be achieved this time around.

There is much that can be done in preparation for the future, and it is not just a matter of assembling our strengths and waiting five years. It is a matter of what can be done practically. To work at lower political levels to find, pick, and support local candidates, congressional candidates, senatorial candidates. It is to reassert the conservative presence throughout the Republican Party in the sense that it was being asserted in 1963 and '64. It is to move on issues at every point in campaigns of the various types the conservative movement has put forward. These are the practical possibilities of the next few years. Not to neglect the enormous responsibilities of conservatives outside political action as such: in education, in culture, in the media.

My analysis may sound grim, but I want to stress that it is not defeatist. There is much to be done and the future is as hopeful as ever. But if we do not recognize the results of serious error in the past and the true situation of the present, we would disarm ourselves. A battle can only be fought victoriously if the reality of the circumstances is faced unflinchingly. Lessons must be learned from past errors. The principles of conservatism remain the only hope of the American future, no question. The task may be more difficult than it looked fleetingly a few years ago. But it is a task that can be accomplished if we go about it without false hopes, but with understanding and determination.





## CHAPTER 6

# EASTERN MEETING #1

**NOVEMBER 22-23, 1974  
NEW YORK, NEW YORK**

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 23  
10:15-11:45AM**

***The Future of Representative Government***

Edwin J. Feulner, Chairman

Howard Phillips, “The Future of Representative Government”

Donald J. Devine, “The Future of Representative Government”

## THE FUTURE OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT

By Howard Phillips

The subject of this session is the future of representative government. And I would like to approach that from two perspectives: the perspective of the public sector, government, and the perspective of the presently private sector, the political parties. Although in light of the new campaign reform law, it is unclear how much longer the political parties, whatever they may be, will remain in the private sector.

The central premise of a free society, as I am often accustomed to pointing out, is that citizens may hold their government accountable through the electoral process. They may hold accountable to them the uses to which their taxes are assigned, and they may exercise control over public policy. Increasingly, bureaucracy—which has grown in size—has not merely been implementing policies established by individuals accountable to the people. They have been setting policies. This is particularly true in the social program area, where despite the fact that people are chosen on the basis of credentials, they act in accordance with values.

The problem is exacerbated further by the fact that particularly since the days of the Great Society the bureaucracy is not merely itself setting policy in a manner unaccountable to the electorate through its elected officials, it is assigning policy setting functions to private organizations. Thus, whether we speak of Health Services' programs, or Legal Services' programs, or other kinds of programs: programs out of the Department of Labor, programs out of the Administration

on Aging. Increasingly, private organizations are being given money not simply to deliver services, but to define what is good public policy. They define such policies in the courts. They define them, while fully subsidized by the federal government as registered lobbyists in the halls of state legislatures. They define them drafting model legislation. They define them as representatives of collective interests and groups. They negotiate departmental regulations with officials of HEW<sup>18</sup>, and the Department of Commerce, and HUD<sup>19</sup> and so forth and so on.

Increasingly, we live in a society which concerns itself not with individual rights, but with group interests. It is a society which responds to the organized rather than to the unorganized. And although the organized interests in our society derive their power and influence by virtue of appearing to represent or speak for large segments of the population, the fact of the matter is they much more speak to those elements than they speak for them. This is true of our large professional organizations like the ABA, the AMA, the NEA<sup>20</sup>, where the organizations derive clout from the dues of their members, but the staff positions are essentially defined by the people who run the organizations in Washington, who in turn speak back to them.

In a political sense—and we do not have the time to go into all of these things in great detail, but we will try to touch on them—our problem is compounded by the fact that the strength of liberalism is concentrated in enclaves. It is concentrated in Washington. It is concentrated in the media. It is concentrated in academic enclaves. Liberalism is represented in a series of special interests, many of which are funded by the federal government. Bill Rusher spoke about how the CIA helped fund the Democratic left in Europe. Your government has been funding the Democratic left in this country for almost as

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18 HEW refers to the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. In May of 1980, this organization would change its name to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

19 Department of Housing and Urban Development.

20 National Education Association.

long a period of time, providing the money to create the American Indian Movement, the National Welfare Rights Organization, the Gray Panthers to provide support to the Black Panthers, and the National Tenants Organization. Virtually every activist cause of the last decade and its organizational expressions has been subsidized unaccountably by the taxes of the American people.

And the strength of the general interest is not concentrated in enclaves. It is diffused. The general interest best reflects itself in the communities where people live and work. Community itself has been eroded in our society. And to the extent that it exists people define themselves much more in terms of economic citizenship, the places where they work, than in terms of the places where they live.

Politically, our parties are Washington centered just as our government and our private bureaucracies are Washington-centered. You may have a very conservative person elected to be the state chairman of a Republican Party organization from a particular state, but there is no anchor on his activities. The people who may share his premises are very often unaware of his activities and are therefore in a difficult position to respond to his conclusions or to what he does. He is sensitive to the power of the White House, just as the White House is sensitive to the power of the media. He knows that the White House can withhold those invitations to state dinners, and that patronage, and it can have some influence over what information is provided the Department of Justice, or the Internal Revenue Service, or whatever it may be. There are no anchors on the strength of members of Congress. A member of Congress knows that it is far more hazardous politically for him to offend the lobbyists from the AFL-CIO or the NEA, the Leadership Conference and civil rights, whatever it may be, than it is to offend fifty or seventy-five atomized individuals back home who happen to have written him a letter. Because those individuals have no way of gaining perspective, of gaining information, or indeed of gaining voice, except as they are permitted to do so by the opposition establishment. If he votes against Ralph Nader, he knows that it is

Ralph Nader who will define in the media the manner in which he is perceived by his constituents—even those of his constituents who share his premises.

I think there are a number of lessons that the Republican Party has to learn, and that we have to learn from the last election. For many years when I used to support Ed Brook in Massachusetts, and when I managed Dick Schweiker's campaign in Pennsylvania, I thought that if only we got their votes on organization, when they got into Congress, that it would advance the conservative cause, that it was in our interest to have a broad spectrum within the Republican Party.

But I, perhaps belatedly, have come to realize that the tail wags the dog rather than vice versa. We need only look in the halls of Congress where Senator Javits, as ranking member of Labor and Public Welfare, virtually defines the position of the Republican Party on most domestic policies in so far as they pertain to the agencies under his purview, HEW, OEO<sup>21</sup>, the Department of Labor etc., and he has a similarly high position on foreign relations and government operations. He exercises control over patronage from the state of New York. It is not just Senator Javits. There is a very close contest between Senators Curtis and Javits for control of the Republican caucus in the Senate. It is unclear who will prevail in that contest—the Wednesday Club or the Senate Steering Committee.

The same is true in the House. John Rhodes in the House has opted for a strategy of base broadening which defines the Republican interest in old strategic terms of left, center, and right, asserting the claim that for the Republican Party to survive and succeed it must move to the middle to pick people up, overlooking the fact that the central division in American politics today is between the private sector and the public sector. And although the parallel is not exact, forty percent of the

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21 The OEO or Office of Economic Opportunity was founded in the early 1960s. The name was later changed to the Community Services Administration (CSA) in the 70's. Today, CSA is part of the Department of Health and Human Services.



GNP, roughly, is consumed by the public sector and about fifty-nine percent of the population, according to optimistic Gallup polls last spring, were roughly conservative. And I would argue that these are the private sector elements in our society. The productive forces, the people who work for a living and who support with their taxes upper- and lower-class dependents in the service professions, in our massive social bureaucracies which vest power not in the recipients of services, but in the providers of services, in our education establishment, in all of the entities—indeed business entities—that are subsidized by the federal government.

It is conservative candidates who suffer from association with the Republican Party. What an irony it is that in a time when more and more Americans, perhaps more than ever before, are willing to identify with conservative issues and policies, that conservative candidates were hurt the most during the last election. The reason they were hurt was that as long as Gerald Ford and the rest of the Republican Party failed to assert an offensive strategy, based on appealing to that fifty-nine percent productive majority, the issue was waged on terms defined by the media: Watergate and the mishandling of the economy. They voted against tax surcharges, and amnesty, and so forth, and the ones who benefited were not the conservative Republicans who had been doing things, which if they had been set forth as the main items of debate would have been popular, but the benefit went to the anti-republican Republicans who, on the terms which the media defined, were doing the things which the public could approve.

I have seen a figure that said that something like thirty-eight percent of the eligible voters actually went to the polls in this last election. And I think it is safe to say that the reason for the large absenteeism which existed is that many Americans have concluded that elections no longer make a difference. It is not just that the parties are not offering choices. It is that no matter who wins, the government remains in the same hands. A political party has five things which essentially constitute its life: Ideology—does the Republican Party have one?

A reputation for integrity—does the Republican Party have that? Patronage in the best sense of the word, in the sense of keeping your promises to the people by staffing the government with people who share your values which you clearly articulate and who share your objectives, which you likewise set forth. The fourth thing is more transitory, it is personality, and the fifth thing is habit. I would argue that the main thing the Republican Party has going for it, at this point, is habit—the twenty-three percent of the American people who identify as Republicans. Those who would rest their future on it would be well to notice, however, that fifteen percent of the people under thirty identify as Republicans as compared to twenty-three percent of the public at large. Where do we go from here?

My own conclusion is that the Republican Party no longer deserves our emotional attachment. That the Republican Party does not among its national leadership, offer any plan for changing the policies of the government in the executive branch, nor does it offer any real legislative strategies to counteract the concentration of power. It is not setting forth any plan for deconcentration, debureaucratization, or decentralization of power. It is not offering any plan to reform the civil service system. It is not doing anything to identify the issues that are being decided day after day in the various departments, or to identify people who could go in and actually staff a government and make it responsive to the issues on which Republicans usually campaign.

But by the same token, I do not think that most Republicans around the country have yet reached the conclusion that the Republican Party is no longer the instrument of their hopes or beliefs. I think there has to be an educational process before it is possible to have a new vehicle operational and moving. I do not know how long that educational process will take. But I do believe that for conservatives to become a significant political force in this country, which I think we can become, we have to recognize where our strength is and as I said in the beginning, it is among the people. It is in the countryside. We must build our enclaves. We must recognize that successful political

movements in our history are geographically rooted. They are rooted to electoral districts, and what I am trying to do through the Conservative Caucus is build infrastructures in congressional districts around the country in which we can bring together leadership elements, which are of groups that are already created on the right—key people in the business community, lawyers, doctors who believe in the private practice of medicine, educators who are against quotas, parents who want to control the terms in which their own children are educated. To train them in the issues to make sure that they have a perspective which is not totally dependent on what Walter Cronkite says. To make sure that they understand the rules of the party, that they understand the election laws, that they know how to be effective politically, and to get these people to start developing their own candidates and mobilizing effectively on behalf of those candidates for office within the existing parties, and among the public at large.

Now a new political organization by itself will not lead to a new political party. It will not in itself produce an answer. But it is one of the things that need to be done. Just as Republicans are not prepared to move to a new political party at this point, there are a lot of people like those coal miners in Kanawha County, West Virginia and the mothers in South Boston who are not ready to join the Republican Party. But they are frustrated with their powerlessness and they are prepared to work together with others who have in common something which transcends the disagreements among those of us on the right. What they have in common is the fact that they are out of power. They are witnessing a situation where the influence of the public sector is growing, the private sector is diminishing, and we are in a condition of economic chaos that may lead ultimately to the loss of our liberties.

The other things that we need to do are to work toward greater influence in the media and I think we have made some progress in this direction, but we have to do more. We have to do more than simply serve as commentators on other people's media. We have to begin to buy our own media. We have to begin to be more outspoken in our

leadership in Congress. We have to be prepared to stand aside from our existing party obligations and to stand up for the issues which transcend questions of party. We need a leader but let us not wait for one, because if we wait it may be too late.

In colonial days, people did not wait for a single person, who might or might not look good on television, to come by and rescue them. They took it upon themselves to act in their own interests. And I would argue that if you want to leave this meeting optimistic, the only possible way in which you will have any cause for optimism is if you determine on your own to seize the initiative to do something to change the course of events. And I would argue that it is possible to do so.

There is a majority in this country which is crying out for leadership. Every now and then it comes across candidates who say the right things and provide the rhetoric and so forth and so on, but the promises have not been kept and that has led to greater disillusionment. The promises of 1972 certainly were not kept by the Republican Party, and those little flag pins that Adlai Stevenson took to wearing in 1970, and similar budget-cutting promises that the Democratic Study Group and others made this year, are promises that will not be kept. What we have to do is organize ourselves and prepare ourselves to govern and create enclaves of influence through which we can communicate our message in a manner which is independent of liberally controlled media and in which we can organize politically to advance people who share our premises and who will work for our objectives. Thank you.

## THE FUTURE OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT

By Don Devine

I think the first thing conservatives have to ask themselves is, what is the present of representative government, more than what is the future of it?

I feel very strongly that the conservative movement, by and large, has a jaundiced, European hangover about what democratic politics is all about. And I think that is the fundamental crippling factor about the conservative movement in the United States, and it explains the extent of our losses and our inability to achieve power. I quote from one book (it could be from many others) by a prominent conservative. He is not here. I would mention his name if he were so he could defend himself. It is a book on property—and maybe many of you know who it is just from that—and he is looking for the problem: why is property under attack today? He says, it is unlimited democracy because that means unlimited majority rule. The people become rulers, the voice of God. Democratic government, the mouthpiece for the underprivileged masses, endeavors to gain a more equal distribution of property. That is what the problem is, according to this view.

That is what the conservatives are up against: these masses demanding equality and benefits. And, of course, this goes back to de Tocqueville, who I respect mightily. It is as old as de Tocqueville. It is as recent as the last Mont Pelerin meeting where Professor Hayek also blamed the people for inflation. I think that that is a very distorted view about what politics is. This is especially true in groups that are

mainly made up of economists who think that since the market is rational that politics should be rational also. I think this is a very misunderstood view.

The fundamental fact about politics is that preferences are not necessarily translated into politics. It is a fundamental fact that makes it very different from a market. In a market we know that preferences are translated into outputs, into things we get, because you pay something and you get something. I am guilty of social science, as Leo Rosten put it, but I am going to bore you with some facts, even though they are not going to be as clear facts as what the state flower of New York is. But I think they are clear. And I think the reason that no one has seen the facts before is because the only ones that have looked at the facts of public opinion have been from the left. And that is true. As far as I know—and this is my field—there has never been a conservative or any man from the right that has empathetically looked at public opinion. As a matter of fact, there have not been many on the left either, and I think there is a good reason for that, because those who got serious about it—like Seymour Martin Lipset, V. O. Key, Hadley Cantril, Lloyd Free and hundreds of others I could think of—when they look at it they know what the people think and they turn away from it and then they start talking about elites.

So how about these demands that come from the people? The Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan the last couple of elections has asked the open-ended question: What do you think are problems for the government in Washington to take care of? Over the past ten years that they have been asking this question, no policy has ever received a majority except the question of Vietnam, which I think most conservatives think foreign policy is something for the federal government to take care of. Even a general policy area, which I define very widely, no more than thirty-seven percent of people have ever demanded that a particular social, political, or economic problem be solved by government. The highest single policy that they said should be solved is crime and that was only twenty-nine percent after

three probes made to say, "What is a problem?" The respondent would give one: "Give me another one. Give me another one," the questioner would insist. By the time they asked for three, only forty percent of the people were giving anything, and sixty percent were not.

We find this all through the history of polls. Gallup has been doing this since 1935. In 1936, no one policy was mentioned by more than four percent of the people and fifty-four percent wanted nothing. In 1942, forty-seven percent wanted nothing. In 1948, sixty-six percent wanted nothing. In 1959, sixty-two percent wanted nothing. In 1967, sixty percent did not want anything. Now again, I am throwing a lot of figures at you but that is the only way I know how to make my point, because no one will listen to what I consider the essential facts. You have got to see the facts. One political scientist extended this to all democratic countries in the West and found in every one that was true. Now, I do not know anything about Britain, or Italy, or so forth as we talked about this morning, but I suspect the problem is not the people there either.

I just have to pick a couple of examples to try to make the point. When negroes in Los Angeles were asked after the riots, "How do you think race relation problems should be solved?" and they were given the alternatives of violence, government programs, and private voluntary means, three percent said violence, nineteen percent said government, and fifty-six percent said private voluntary solutions. All right? This is the people who are supposedly demanding the government act?

Lou Harris, in the latest study, found seventy percent of the people prefer local government to solve problems over the other ones. Given a choice between national, state, local, and private for problems of the aged, twenty-six percent say government given that choice. For housing, fourteen percent. Even the big bugaboo, supposedly, of unemployment, twelve percent say national. This is not the demand for national government to solve problems. The area of equality, that is de Tocqueville's point, this is what is undermining democracy? The former head of the Young Socialist League and later president of the

American Political Science Association, Robert Lane, said Americans fear equality because they think it is going to lead to a disorganized, uninteresting society. That is not a right-winger saying that. And of course, why is he calling it a “fear of equality?” Because they should love it. But he recognizes that they fear it, why can we not? The data is all over the place on this.

Let me, again, just give one example (I could give you thousands). Ask yourself what you think the answer to this question would be.<sup>22</sup> Of those people earning under \$4,000 a year, what percent of them do you think would say that they thought that income should be redistributed so that everyone would get an equal income of \$10,000? Alright, that is people earning under \$4,000 in 1969. What percent would say that everyone’s income should be redistributed to give ten thousand? Fourteen percent! Fourteen percent! Now, this is a fact. I am not making it up. This was done by Gallup. I am not doing it. He is not a conservative. Where do these things come from?

I think you have to come to the conclusion: these people are not demanding government! They are not demanding solutions to these problems! Now, you say: “Well I see Gallup and Harris polls all the time that say they want federal aid to education.” But what does he do? He says do you want federal aid to education? Now, what does the average guy say? “Federal, that means federal, state, local right? That is a good thing. Aid? Aid is a good thing. And education is a good thing. So, I am for it.” All right, you get sixty percent of the people.

The liberals got a little confused when they both went out in the November elections in 1964, one asked it that way, the other one got a little confused, and asked “Would you prefer that state and local governments handle education all by themselves, or—hey, they gave me a choice now, this is very dangerous when you do that—or do you

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<sup>22</sup> Devine worried that he might have tainted his listeners’ responses by making his larger point before giving this example: “Now, of course, once you hear me throw them out you will always discount but try to say what you would have thought it would be before I said that.”



think the federal government should help them?” Now, there is a pretty innocuous way of framing it. Well then two-to-one said that it should only be done by state and local.

Now, of course, you see all the time Gallup and Harris saying that they agree, but it is that Mom and apple pie questions as I call them: how the hell do you say you are against it? Now, can you really say you are opposed to federal aid to education if it means that you do not want them to hurt education? And in that sense, I am in favor of federal aid to education. Now remember the average guy out there is not a political science professor, or even an economics professor.

I think the most important thing to understand is that, again, the first rule of politics is that attitudes do not necessarily get translated into votes. Let us even look at the great success of the welfare state. But where does the welfare state come from? James MacGregor Burns said if you want to find out what is the driving force of the welfare state you look at the presidential wing of the Democratic Party, not the congressional one because they are smart enough to pool it, and hedge it, and not be so much in favor of it. How successful have they been? Since World War II, they won three times and they lost four times. That is not a hell of a great success rate, is it?

All right. Forget about polls. Well, let us go back to Roosevelt. How did Roosevelt get elected? Let us remember that. 1932, what was Roosevelt’s platform? Anti-government, balanced budget, gold. He was the Conservative candidate, not Hoover.<sup>23</sup> All right. How did he win in 1936? I have some beautiful poll data on this. People were asked before the election of 1936: “Do you approve of Franklin Delano Roosevelt personally?” Eighty percent said yes. “Do you approve of the way he’s handling his presidency?” Fifty-five percent said yes. “Do you approve of the way he is handling domestic policy?” Thirty-six percent said yes. Why was he elected in 1936? His charisma, his

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23 For more on this, see FDR’s Campaign Address on the Federal Budget, Forbes Field, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, October 19, 1932.

charm, he was getting something done, but they did not like what he was doing. All through this period, people were opposed to unbalanced budgets, priming pumps, government regulating business, the data is all there again.

Nineteen-forty, how did he win? In my book I go into this in a lot of detail.<sup>24</sup> Look at the polls as World War II came in Europe—you know, we tend to think World War II started in 1941, that is when it hit us, but remember it was '39 in Europe—as you watch the polls coming closer to that election, fifty-five percent were opposed to electing Roosevelt president in 1938, and every month as you got closer to the invasion of Poland it dropped to a plurality opposed to him, still more opposed than in favor of him. After the fall of France, it was the first time a majority was going to vote for him.

In 1944, the next election I have to explain, what happened then? Here I have pure laboratory cases. Those in the physical sciences might not like it but it is as close as we can get to them in the social sciences. The same people were asked would you vote for Roosevelt if the war is still going on in 1944, and then they were asked would you vote for him if the war was over. And what happens? A majority said they would vote for him if the war was still going on and a majority would vote against him if it was over. What did they vote for Roosevelt for? Because he was a foreign policy Cold Warrior. They liked his foreign policy.

I have done a study of as many policies as you can get with public opinion polls. I find that sixty percent of the welfare policies were clearly opposed by a majority of the people and fifty-seven percent of the social policies were disapproved over this period. I think it is a tremendous myth to blame our present problems on the people. I mean the people are out there trying to judge what the hell is going on. And the first rule of a politician is to confuse them. Now you cannot blame

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<sup>24</sup> Devine is here referring to his book *The Political Culture of the United States: The Influence of Member Values on Regime Maintenance* (New York: Little Brown & Company, 1972).

that guy out there. I am a political scientist; all I do is follow them. I do not know one-millionth of what the hell they are doing down there with all those billions of things they are knocking back and forth there. Now if I cannot do it and spend full time what about the guy who is out there working? He cannot do it. You cannot expect him to. He operates on the principle of trust and you cannot trust politicians, but they try to as best they can.

I think the problem of conservatives is best illustrated by this. A guy named Barber did a psychological study of presidential character.<sup>25</sup> And one of the things he looked at, one of the presidents he looked at was Nixon, and this is before Watergate. And he came up with a statement that Nixon made back in his early days, which unfortunately I do not have the exact quote, but it went something like this: "I am afraid of the people because the people want to do things I do not want to do. They are greedy. They are demanding things, so I have to be clever."

That is the quote that they got from him. I think that explains his whole personality and much of the problem of the conservative movement. They feel that that great beast out there is their enemy, and they have to be clever to outwit it. And when they try to be clever, they do not outwit it. They get their Watergates.

People act on the basis of trust. How does politics work in the United States if it is not the people? It is what the same Lane, who is now moving back to socialism again after a period of liberalism, he calls it interest group liberalism, right?<sup>26</sup> That is what the reigning ideology is in the United States, you give a little to everybody. But what the guys who were socialists, then in the '50s became liberals, and are going back to socialist again are finally realizing something Madison told them in the first place. The only way interest group liberalism can work is if you do not give them much to do. All right, whatever they get

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25 Devine is referring to James David Barber and his book *The Presidential Character* (1972).

26 Here we believe Devine is referring to Robert E. Lane who was an American political scientist and political psychologist.

assume they are going to steal it, or they are going to screw it up some way, but do not give them much. That is the only protection democratic government has ever had. I mean, how did Parliament limit the Kings? They knew they were going to do whatever the hell they wanted with the money once they got it. You just do not give them much.

That is, the only way you can keep the system working halfway honestly is not give them much. And then you turn to the Republican Party and what do you get? This is the party of cutting taxes. This is the party of cutting expenditures, right? Name one Republican that has done it. I was a major campaign adviser to a local official. I said, you want to win this thing, I will tell you what you do. We got a whole bunch of local Democrats living in each community, each neighborhood, to sign the letter and it said my friend X is going to cut your taxes. Personal appeal, this is what people like, something they can trust, something straight. What did that son of a ... do when he got in office? He raised taxes!

Now do you blame anyone voting against the Republican after that? Nixon, the greatest deficits. This is a Republican cutter? Now can you blame them for voting against it? We are a bunch of hypocrites. We do not deserve their vote. That is "we" as Republicans, unless we do what we say we are going to do. You cannot say "the stupid people." They are smart. Now the fact that they are electing a Democrat that is going to do worse, well their feeling is I will kick these bums out this time, and I will kick those bums out the next time. And that is what they are going to do by and large, unless we do something to stop them.

Now, why should we do something to stop them? The worst thing that can happen to us is that Gerald Ford becomes reelected president the next time. Because what James MacGregor Burns pointed out about the Democratic Party is just as true about the Republican Party.<sup>27</sup> So as he said, the liberals exist in the presidential wing of both parties, and

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<sup>27</sup> James MacGregor Burns was an American historian and political scientist who studied the presidency among other topics.

they do. There is some difference. The ones on the Republican side are somewhat more conservative than those on the Democratic side. They are trying to protect the selfish interest of businesses as they see them, in my opinion improperly. The market is not the same thing as business. So you say to yourself, "Hey, if they are the liberals, what are we going to do?" It seems to me there is only one other answer and thank Heaven the Founding Fathers gave us that. And that is a legislature. That is the only hope of the conservative movement.

Howie's idea of groups and organizing the local community fits in 100 percent with this. It is the only way we have got a chance. The basic fact about the House of Representatives from 1938 to 1965 was something called a Conservative Coalition. One of the reasons Roosevelt turned from domestic policy to foreign policy in 1938 is because the Conservative Coalition murdered him politically.

When was the best presidency we have ever had? Under the most popular Democratic President: John Kennedy. The Conservative Coalition cut him apart. Beautiful rhetoric, going to lead you into the next world, and all that nonsense, the New Frontier. We killed him! We murdered them politically, they did not get a thing.

Now what is the basic fact? The basic fact is since 1938 the Republicans have had around a hundred and seventy members of the House and of these a hundred and forty are conservative. There are a hundred and twenty-five Southern Democrats and of these seventy-five are conservative. A hundred and forty Northern Democrats, of these five were conservative. One hundred and forty plus seventy-five plus five is 220. A majority in the house is 218. That is the political fact of life. That through this period the reason that we kept as much a break on them as we could is because we had a leadership that knew how to use the Conservative Coalition. Someone mentioned Charles Halleck—I think it was Professor Dornan—as teaching him most about politics.

Charles Halleck knew how to use the Conservative Coalition.<sup>28</sup>

Even after this latest election, my rough count is that there are a hundred ninety-six members of the Conservative Coalition in the present Congress which leaves us twenty-two short of a majority. That is not impossible. But we have got to use it. Now let me remind you of something every one of you has forgotten, I bet. Who announced the end of the Conservative Coalition and when? Remember, I said from 1938 to 1965. Who became minority leader in 1965? It is the same guy who is president today. His first press conference he got up and he said, "No more backroom politics. The Conservative Coalition between Republicans and Southern Democrats is ended. From now on we are going to build constructive Republican alternative policies." I do not know who first noticed that that comes out to something similar to crap. "We are going to build Conservative Republican alternatives and no longer deal with the Conservative Coalition. We are going to build on our own." And you see how much success we have had with that new policy since 1965. Since 1965 we have been continuously slaughtered. Let us remember again who is president. The man that ended our only viable political way of surviving.

So, what do you do? I wrote a memo to the American Conservative Union board in 1971—and for those who think that I would make these things up I have it with me—in which I suggested that the optimal conservative position for 1972, which was the title of this memo, would be for Nixon to lose the presidency in a close race.<sup>29</sup> That way we would not get hurt too badly, we could give up ten or fifteen seats and could slide through with the Conservative Coalition majority.

Now, what does that do? When you lose a close presidential race,

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28 Charles A. Halleck was a United States congressman from Indiana who served as the Republican leader for the House from 1959 to 1965. Professor James E. Dornan was a political scientist at the Catholic University of America and earlier speaker at the meeting.

29 Devine added in a side note to the audience: "This was before McGovern became the candidate and it looked like Muskie would run a good race against Nixon."

you do not get wiped out in the House. You have your rough basis for the Conservative Coalition and what happens? The same Republicans who are backing liberal policies when the Republican is president, all of a sudden, because they are in the other party, are against it. They do not have to be great men of principle, by and large of course they are not. They are not bad either by the way, they are just ordinary folk trying to do something. All of a sudden, they are against them. Southern Democrats do not like them either. And there are a couple of saints like Goodloe Byron from my state of the Democratic Party in the North who also comes in and votes with us too and this is how we win. But as long as there is a Republican president in there, they are going around kowtowing to him. I think it was Howie who said about the White House, you cannot understand unless you are in Washington how important it is to these people to get invited to a White House dinner. That can set their whole policy view for years.

Get the Republicans out of the presidency. That is our only hope short-term. Now, maybe we can build to electing a president sometime, but not now. I mean the facts of life are Ford came out in the last issue of *US News* saying he is going to run the next time and believe me you are going to lose if you challenge him in the primary because no matter how liberal he is the Congress is going to be more liberal and all the conservative Republicans are going to rally to him. Except, you know, those of us who know better.

But the average Republican supporter is going to see Ford defending against the Democratic nominee and they are going to rally to him. I mean that is a fact of life. And if you go third party, you are going to split the Republican vote because some of the conservatives are going to go with Ford. Even if you have an ideal type ticket, like Reagan and Wallace, in terms of electoral appeal, I mean “ideal,” you are still going to lose.

The only answer is the kind of thing that Howie’s doing and the kind of thing Ed Feulner is doing, the kind of thing that people who are trying to work through Congress. I think it is even more important to

get out in the grassroots than in Washington. That is the only hope, it really is, and then what do you do? You elect a leadership who will play politics. That is what politicians are. They are supposed to play politics. There was nothing wrong about Halleck dealing “in backrooms.” That is the kind of thing the media wants you to feel bad about. That is what he is supposed to do, that is what a legislature is, it is dealing.

Let us get back and make some good deals, dammit.





## CHAPTER 7

# THE FUTURE OF FREEDOM: THE PROBLEMS AND THE PROSPECTS

**APRIL 15-16, 1977  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS**

**SATURDAY, APRIL 16  
10:15-11:45PM**

***The Present State of the Conservative Movement in America***

William F. Campbell, Chairman

Stephen J. Tonsor,  
“The Present State of the Conservative Movement in America”

Response of George Nash

Response of M. Stanton Evans

## THE PRESENT STATE OF THE CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT IN AMERICA

By Stephen J. Tonsor

The children's story that I think is most appropriate to conservatism is *The Boy and His Dog*. The dog's name was Crispin's Crispian, you remember, and this dog was a conservative. The author tells us he was a conservative because he liked his breakfast at breakfast time, and his lunch at lunchtime, and his supper at suppertime and that is as good a definition of conservatism as I know.

When George Nash's *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America* appeared last year, a widespread discussion concerning the present condition and the future prospects of American conservatism developed. The German idealist philosopher Hegel, you will recall, observed in his philosophy of history that the Owl of Minerva takes its flight at twilight. Now that a scholarly book has been written about the conservative movement, now that the Owl of Minerva, in the very unowl-like guise of Mr. Nash has taken its flight, is it all over with the conservative movement? Except I suppose a decent funeral, at which Clare Boothe Luce and John Kenneth Galbraith would be the chief mourners. Well, that particular possibility it seems to me is very unlikely, and so it seems to a great many observers. Even those not especially friendly to America's conservatives.

One of these, Jeane Kirkpatrick whose article "Why the New Right Lost" appeared in *Commentary* in February this year, concludes:

To read such analyses today is to be reminded that the New Right is not really new at all, but represents a strain of nativist populism whose roots are deep in American history and which has already played a highly important role in American politics, especially in the South and Southwest. As such, it is no more likely to disappear from the contemporary political scene than it is to become the center of a new majority party. It will fail in its current version because of its hostility to another deeply rooted aspect of contemporary politics—the welfare state, whose benefits no majority in any democratic society has yet forsworn. Nevertheless, in one form or another, it will remain with us for a very long time to come.<sup>30</sup>

Now if the tone and some of the content of Ms. Kirkpatrick's article leads us to suspect the soundness of her judgment, we have only to glance at the election returns from the Western world as a whole. They reveal a profound unease with social democratic and liberal explanations and solutions. On specific questions—crime, education, the intrusiveness of big government—the new political climate is profoundly conservative. This, even though during this particular interregnum, it continues to vote for conservative fellow travelers who call themselves progressives. Chancellor Helmut Schmidt is pursuing economic policies which are, for example, somewhat to the right of those advocated by Paul McCracken when he was chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers.

The fuzzy center is dissolving and both conservatives and

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30 Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, "Why the New Right Lost," *Commentary*, February 1977. Accessible online at <https://www.commentarymagazine.com/articles/why-the-new-right-lost/>. Kirkpatrick ultimately became one of many "neoconservatives" and played the important role of President Ronald Reagan's Ambassador to the United Nations.

communists are registering marked gains. In a sense, both social democracy and communism are profoundly reactionary movements. They represent failed and outworn modes of production and social classes. They are the political expression of those groups in the Western world, and in the developing countries, who have been bypassed due to the revolutionary changes which have accompanied the development of post-industrial society. It is possible that these groups may impede, and in some cases disrupt, the forward movement of post-industrial society. They cannot provide leadership for it, nor can they provide its direction. The left today represents an international society of losers.

A Social Democratic mandate no longer exists and the persistent problems which confront the world are not soluble through applications of left liberal rhetoric and doses of Marxist Geritol for the relief of political tired blood. It is of course debatable as to whether or not the future belongs to conservatism. It is quite certain that it does not belong to social democracy.

No one can predict the future of course, and historians are more acutely aware than most observers of the folly of attempting to anticipate the developmental processes of history. Indeed, our essential concern in politics is not with the future, but rather with the present. Our question then is not about the role of conservatism in the future, but about the present condition and prospects of the intellectual conservative movement.

Because of the doctrinaire nature of ideology, the parties of the right and the left are committed to a carpus of irreformable doctrine. This dogma must be imposed upon a recalcitrant and reluctant social and political reality. As Edmund Burke put it, "The theoretical perfection of these dogmas is their practical defect." The reason for this rigidity is easily understandable. Ideologies are born in the political agonies of a particular era. They bear the historical stamp of their origins. They are chained by time to a moment in the past and because they embody irreformable doctrine and are essentially unalterable, they cannot respond adequately either to changes in the mode of production

or to a transformed social and cultural reality.

It strikes one as odd indeed that Marxism, which originally posited the importance of changes in the mode of production for the total political and cultural configuration, should be so incapable of accommodating itself to the historical processes of change. When Marxists view the development of capitalism, they rightly identify important changes which have taken place in the course of the development of capitalism. We may indeed quarrel with their designation of these changes which have taken place in capital. We may quarrel with the designation of early, high, and late capitalism. But we certainly do not disagree with them that capitalism has had a developmental history and that the society which it has produced is vastly different today from the society characteristic of seventeenth century incipient capitalism.

If indeed there is such change in the developmental history of capitalism, one might expect equally important changes in the developmental history of socialism. If there is such a thing as late capitalism, there must be, one might suppose, something to be described as late socialism. If Marxists persist in describing imperialism and fascism as the last and highest stage of capitalism, ought they not be equally willing, perhaps, to describe Stalinism and Maoism as the last and highest stage of socialism? I suggest that they should, and for the very good reason that the revolutionary transformation in the mode of production, which has characterized the development of post-industrial society, has made the categories of Marxism obsolete in any but hopelessly backward countries.

The fact is that the class base of Marxism, that conglomerate class entity Marxists call the proletariat, has been in steady decline since the middle of the nineteenth century. This process in the industrialized world has been an accelerating one. Peter Drucker and Daniel Bell, among others, have called attention to this process. Daniel Bell argues its implications elaborately in his book *The Coming of Post-Industrial*

*Society*.<sup>31</sup> He gives us the gist of his argument in a short statement in the February 1977 number of *Encounter* magazine. And here is what he says:

Today, in every advanced industrial country, the industrial working class is shrinking relative to the rising new classes in society, particularly the professional and technical classes. In the United States today, one out of every four persons in the labour force is professional, technical, and managerial. Probably fewer than 20 percent of the labour force is engaged directly in industrial production. Yet the translation of these *tendencies* into political groups, and the creation of more appropriate political nomenclature than those of the present—assuming with “impervious symbols” that economic and occupational interests have some overt political counterpart—is a long-term historical process that will take decades to complete.<sup>32</sup>

The evolution of a new class—those who invent, control, command, and enlarge the scientific, educational, and technical apparatus of the new society—is politically and socially an event of the greatest importance. The dynamics and energies of this social transformation cannot be contained within the rigidities of Marxist ideology. To employ the language of Marxist social analysis, the contradictions and the irrationalities are simply too great. This does not mean that Marxism is going to be swept away in some sudden apocalyptic series of events. Only Marxists believe that these great social disjunctions are the ordinary processes of social change. It is more likely that the communist states, like a fox caught in a trap, will gnaw off a leg. They will survive for a considerable while, limping into a vicious and

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31 Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society* (1973).

32 Daniel Bell, “Who’s Left, What’s Right?” *Enquire*, February 1977, pg. 8-10 (the quote from Tonsor is on page 10). Accessible online at <https://www.unz.com/print/Encounter-1977feb-00009/>.

degraded decrepitude. So much, then, for the last and highest stage of socialism.

But this transformation of society in the post-industrial era has as many implications for conservatism as it has for Marxism. There are important aspects of this change which seem, at first sight, to be especially favorable to a continued and even greater conservative influence in our society. There are several important factors, however, which may mitigate, and might possibly negate, the growing influence of conservatism.

Although the changes which have produced a post-industrial society have been in process for a long time, the period of most rapid transformation has been the three decades since the end of World War II. You will recall that the title of Mr. Nash's book is *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945*. The date in the title is of some importance for it suggests, what I believe to be the case, that contemporary conservatism, in its broad outlines, crystallized out in the late 50s and early 60s its three major components: the fear of statism and a commitment to market economics, the effort to mobilize against totalitarianism, especially in its Soviet form, and finally a growing concern with values, community, and the conditions necessary to a humane society.

These three elements were philosophically articulated and rather well-balanced by the early 60s. Most of the major creative figures in the movement had developed their positions and achieved eminence in the course of the previous quarter century. While I do not wish to suggest that these great intellectual heroes of the movement have less or little more to say to our contemporary world than they had to say to the world of the 60s, I do want to suggest that meanwhile the world has changed a great deal. And that neither the theoretical formulations, nor the practical applications of conservative theory have kept pace with those changes.

A substantial number of major conservative figures and influences have died in the recent past and it must strike every observer that in



terms of intellectual creativity we are an aging movement. No doubt we have established important bridgeheads into the oncoming generation and have seen conservatism exert a wholly unexpected influence on the new generation of intellectuals. This new generation though, one suspects in spite of its energy and its sophistication, is following the dictum of Galton's Law of Filial Regression, which states that the children of distinguished parents are apt to be less distinguished than their parents. And I say this as a member of this second generation myself.

Let me discuss this second generation of conservative intellectuals at greater length. I believe that they have been powerfully inhibited in the renewal of conservative theorization by the political activism which marked the 60s and the 70s. I note with disappointment the number, among them some of the best minds and potentially most creative abilities, who have turned away from the academy and the intellectual life to what they feel to be a more direct exercise of power in political activism and governmental service. It is true, as I am well aware, that someone remarked in connection with Saint Elizabeth Seton the paradox of detachment and involvement is completely resolved only in the Saints. That is as true as it can be. It is also true though, that in the past some of the major conservative intellectuals have taken an active political role. Burke's name, of course, leaps to mind immediately. Even so, political passion and political involvement, I am convinced, have been destructive forces in the second generation of conservative intellectuals, a generation, and I reiterate it, to which I belong myself. Intellectuals have a very special and a very privileged role in society. We have, as Jesus said to that other Mary in the New Testament, chosen the better part. It cannot be taken from us and we ought not to surrender it voluntarily.

A second and more important factor is what I believe to be the decline in the level and energy of intellectual theorizing, a decline which is contingent upon what is generally being called the impact of libertarianism on the quality and range of conservative affairs. Here I am discussing libertarianism not as a body of economic theory, but

as a total philosophy. Libertarianism as a total philosophy positively prevents thought by reducing the range of options which we have open to us for dealing with post-industrial society, reducing it to a few threadbare platitudes, which libertarian intellectuals recite on every conceivable occasion in the way in which one used to pray the Rosary.

Today it is as important to understand the limits, and the limitations of liberty, as it is to maintain its indispensability to a humane and moral life. It is the failure to discuss liberty in the context of community which gives to libertarianism its utopian character. In the period since 1945, the most impressive influences upon the policy from the side of conservatism have come from economic theory. The impact of the economist has been decisive and overwhelming, but even were the victory of the economist to be complete, the task of conservatism would only be just beginning. As Warren Nutter and many others have remarked again and again, there are other and more important problems in our society, for which there are no economic solutions.

During the next two decades, our society will find political and cultural issues, rather than narrowly economic concerns, will be the primary questions. This is at least in part due to the fact that our society has moved from scarcity to superfluity. It is our concern, for example, with the amenities of a pollution-free environment rather than need, and with the political considerations involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict, which has created the so-called energy crisis. I do not mean that the role of economics will be unimportant, but that economics will be less important than culture and politics.

Similarly, because of the importance of education, research, and professional expertise in the post-industrial era the nature of education and research, and the role of government in education and research, will become increasingly important questions. The role of government in culture and the larger issue of the relationship of politics to values will become increasingly pressing. Daniel Bell remarks in his book *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*, and here I quote him, "The politics of the next decade is more likely to concern itself on the national level

with such public interest issues as health, education, and the environment, and—on the local level—crime, municipal services, and costs. These are all communal issues.” And that final remark by Bell is just the point. These are all communal issues.

The inherent atomism in economic calculation must yield to the collective concerns of the community. If during the past thirty years economics has dominated the conservative movement, conservatives during the next twenty years will have to engage themselves more completely with the realms of value, community, education, and science. The transition will not be altogether easy, even though a considerable block of conservative intellectuals have, from the outset, concerned themselves with these questions. In 1977, the crisis in society is not primarily an economic crisis. It is cultural and political. I quote once more, and finally, from Daniel Bell and this time from *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*. Bell writes there:

Crises of belief are recurrent in human history, which does not make them less significant. Even if the topic risks becoming banal, the invitation to despair arises because the consequences are real, if not always immediate, and yet no one can do very much about them. Gadgets can be engineered, programs can be designed, institutions can be built, but belief has an organic quality and it cannot be called into being by fiat...The major consequences of this crisis, I leave aside its cultural dilemmas, is the loss of *civitas*, that spontaneous willingness to obey the law, to respect the rights of others, to forego the temptations of private enrichment at the expense of the public weal. In short, to honor the city of which one is a member. Instead, each man goes his own way pursuing his private vices which can be indulged only at the expense of public benefits.

The foundation of any liberal society is the willingness of all groups to compromise private ends for the public interest.

The loss of *civitas* means either that interests become so polarized, and passions so inflamed, that terrorism and group fighting ensue, and political anomie prevails. Or that every public exchange becomes a cynical deal in which the most powerful segments benefit at the expense of the weak. Yet even where a sense of *civitas* remains, as in England, the ruts into the future may have been cut so deep from the past, the constraints may be so large, and the freedom to maneuver and change so narrow, the institutions—particularly the economic ones—so encrusted that no regime can substantially stop the slide and a sense of weariness and despair takes over. These are the gray on grays, the crises of the political order, of the next 25 years.<sup>33</sup>

The basis of *civitas* is a commonly held set of values and beliefs. It is consensus. We hold these truths, and unless we do there can be no *civitas*. There is no possible way of deriving *civitas* from a libertarian worldview and should libertarianism become a determining aspect of conservatism we shall have forfeited both our right and our ability to speak to our society. There must be agreement that such a thing as the common weal exists, and we must explore the nature of the consensus which makes it possible. This I believe to be the chief task of conservatives now, and in the years ahead.

It will not do, I think, to believe that this restoration of faith, of belief, and community is nothing more than a reaffirmation of traditional values. This I call the “Pressed Flower School of Conservatism”—a kind of Williamsburg restoration nostalgia—which from time to time trots out a past which never was for the irrelevant admiration of the present. The nature of community itself must be rethought. Institutions and forms of all sorts will have to be sifted and rethought if we are to

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33 Daniel Bell, *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 1976), 244-45.

preserve what we believe to be necessary and perennial values in a world of rapid change. It may even be that some of those things which we hold to be essential are in fact adventitious.

The difference between a traditionalist and a conservative is that the conservative is prepared to abandon the historically contingent, no matter how comfortable or how beautiful it is in the pursuit of perennial values. Traditional forms and attitudes are the special mark of the populist element in American society. They are in effect stuck in the past seizing upon the form rather than the spirit of past values and institutions. In the recent past, a number of conservatives have argued that contemporary conservatism ought to make an alliance with populism, with these traditionalists, even reactionary aspects which come out of the American past, arguing that there is room for the hardhats and the rednecks under the big tent of a broadly defined conservatism. I understand this temptation, for these groups are of great political importance. I do not believe, however and in spite of the evidence and advice given us by Kevin Phillips, that such an alliance can be formed. I do not believe that we ought to do this.

The fact of its impossibility will save conservatism from the temptation of a politics which is reactionary rather than progressive. The conservative intellectual is not going to spend his time constructing defenses for decadent forms. That is not what our occupation ought to be. Conservative intellectuals are particularly well placed to exert an influence in the search for order and community. They are virtually the only political theorists of any importance. Increasingly, conservatives are playing an important role in the field of sociology and law. In theology, there has been a swing away from the pop theology and the social gospelism of the 60s to a concentration on traditional questions and the employment of conventional methods. In the natural sciences, ethology and sociobiology have opened up important new areas of knowledge, which are of the utmost importance to conservative social theory.

The most important single development in the conservative

intellectual movement at the present time is the political and social realignment of America's Jewish intellectuals. In spite of the fact that a number of Europe's great conservatives—Julius Stahl, Benjamin Disraeli among them—were Jewish, the tradition of American Judaism has been one of a close association with liberalism and the left.<sup>34</sup> The process of that realignment of the Jewish intellectuals is a complex and complicated story, and surely one of the most decisive events of this decade. Mr. Nash alludes to this event, but so briefly that it almost escapes one's attention. Were one to read only commentary, one might assume that America's Jews were a bit more conservative than Gerald Ford. Where American Catholic intellectuals have moved steadily to the left, Jewish intellectuals have moved to the right and that is a most interesting development.

For both Judaism and the American polity, the importance of this development cannot be overestimated. In the 1830s and 1840s, the Catholic Church in England was emerging from the persecution and obscurity which had resulted from the Reformation. On the continent, Catholic theologians and philosophers in the nineteenth century had created one of the greatest religious revivals in the long history of Christianity and Catholics in England were quick to appropriate their thought. Neither the ancient recusant families who had kept their faith intact in England in spite of segregation and active persecution, nor the Irish Catholic immigrants who poured into the English cities in such large numbers to work in the mills and the factories, were able to provide intellectual leadership for the growing Catholic population of England. That intellectual leadership did not fail to appear, but it came from a surprising source.

The great English Catholic intellectuals of the Victorian era were for the most part converts from Anglicanism. John Henry Newman,

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34 Friedrich Julius Stahl (1802-1861) was a German constitutional lawyer, political philosopher, and politician. Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881) was a British politician of the Conservative party who twice served as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.

Archbishop Manning, William George Ward, and Frank Weber—to name only a few—carried their talents from the Anglican camp into the Catholic Church. More important still, many Anglicans who remained in the Anglican Church—men such as Pusey, Gladstone, and Dean Church—were so strongly influenced by Catholic ideas that Anglicanism assumed a wholly new and Catholic character. For a while, Catholics enthusiastically were able to talk of the possible conversion of all Anglicans. Newman, in a famous sermon, spoke of the second spring, which the Catholic Church in England was enjoying, and he knew well enough how great a role Anglican converts played in that second spring.

Well now ladies and gentlemen, I have not permitted myself this excursion into an obscure corner of past ecclesiastical history because I believe that conservatism in America is on the verge of a second spring. I do believe that, but I also believe that the intellectual leadership which will manifest itself in that second spring will come from the liberal camp. Even ten years ago one could not have made this bold assertion. Today conservatism's Oxford converts are pouring into the conservative movement, and even more importantly, many who do not acknowledge themselves to be conservatives are busy recasting culture and politics in America in a conservative image.

The Jewish intellectuals are the very visible tip of a very large iceberg. In the 50s and 60s, liberals and leftists still set the terms and provided the vocabulary for the political and social debate, which was then being reawakened in America. Today, to use a Leninist phrase, conservatives hold the commanding heights. It is not important that the establishment is still largely in place and is still liberal. What is important is that a new generation of intellectuals, men who have passed through the conservative experience, men whose contact with the social and cultural reality of 1977 is quite complete and secure, are forging a new body of conservative social theory and practical application. They indeed represent the second generation, and they will produce the second spring.

I believe that a new conservative consensus will emerge in American society, that the center of American politics has moved away from the left. I believe that there is in progress a restoration of liberty, of order, of community, of value in American society. It is an achievement in which we conservatives have participated, and in which we can all be very proud. It is an achievement which we owe, most especially, to the great first generation of scholars and theorists who did not overestimate the importance of politics and power, but who quietly, and often at great personal sacrifice, wrestled with the intellectual problems of their time.



## RESPONSE

By George Nash

Eight years ago, writing in *Modern Age*, Professor Tonsor declared: “Conservatism has become of age. Out of power, rejected even by the party to which every natural and unreflecting conservative belonged, without major financial support and denied access to the public by the monopoly, the establishment maintained in the academy, the churches, and the news media, conservatism made itself heard because it has the arguments and it has the men.” Today, nearly a decade later, it is evident that Professor Tonsor remains an optimist. Indeed, his stimulating remarks this morning, particularly his final comments, are among the most encouraging which conservatives anywhere have recently heard.

Certainly, it is refreshingly easy to demonstrate the intellectual vitality and respectability of the contemporary conservative movement. Signs of success abound and proliferate. In the realm of public policy, for example, one observes the ascendancy of such conservative proposals as deregulation of natural gas, the airlines, and the trucking industry. And the growing receptivity of liberals to conservative perspectives on crime is articulated, for example, by Professors Ernest van den Haag and James Q. Wilson. The current debate over a permanent tax cut versus a temporary tax rebate is still another reflection of conservative intellectual strength. In his paper, Professor Tonsor has perceptively, and properly called our attention to the momentous advent of Jewish intellectuals and liberal converts to the conservative cause. The awarding of the Nobel Prize for economics to Professors Hayek and Friedman is but one of many indications of

increasing conservative prestige and rising public attentiveness to the conservative point of view. Moreover, despite all the traumas of the recent past, the conservative infrastructure erected so laboriously during the '50s and the '60s remains intact. Whether it be think tanks like the Hoover Institution and the American Enterprise Institute, or journals like *The Alternative*, recently discussed in *Time Magazine*, or other thriving media and organizations which time forbids me to mention, the conservative movement, in Professor Tonsor's words, has undeniably come of age.

Yet a sense of balance and candor compel us to confront some unsettling facts. It may be paradoxical, but it seems nonetheless true that for all its intellectual resiliency, organized conservatism in the United States is in political disarray. As Representative Jack Kemp recently observed, there are fewer conservatives in public office today, at all levels of government, than there were ten years ago—a depressing statistic for a self-designated vanguard of the silent majority.

Even intellectually and culturally, despite its newfound status and influence, American conservatism remains a minority movement. Consider this recent assessment offered by Mr. Henry Regnery in *Modern Age*: “We must face the fact,” he says, “that education from kindergarten through graduate school, newspapers, radio and television, the mass circulation magazines as well as those of smaller circulation read by the ‘establishment,’ to say nothing of book publishing, are all largely controlled by the liberal left.” “For all the impressiveness of the conservative movement,” he adds, “we must face the fact that, in the words of Albert Jay Nock, we are a remnant.”<sup>35</sup>

Now I myself do not believe that the situation is as bleak or unpromising as Mr. Regnery suggests. Nevertheless, his analysis

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35 Albert Jay Nock (1870-1945) was an American libertarian author, editor, educational theorist, and social critic of the early and middle twentieth century. He was an outspoken opponent of the New Deal, and served as a fundamental inspiration for the modern libertarian and conservative movements, cited as an influence by William F. Buckley Jr.

should make us pause and reflect. When I was completing my doctoral dissertation at Harvard University four years ago, I doubt that five percent of the graduate students in history, the future interpreters of our national heritage, were what we would call movement conservatives. Nor is it reassuring to recall that in 1972, more than eighty percent of the students at Harvard Business School voted for McGovern. Just last January, I had the occasion to visit a prominent eastern law school. The number of self-conscious, articulate conservatives in this student body of several hundred, the future American governing elite, seemed to be miniscule. Now fashions can change quickly and have to some extent. Yet if, as Professor Tonsor emphasized, post-industrial society with its knowledge sector is upon us, then surely the numerical weakness of conservatism amongst this new class is cause for profound apprehension.

Furthermore, while our topic this morning is the state of the conservative movement and not the state of the world, ominous developments of which we are all aware provide a somber backdrop for any discussion of the prospects of American conservatism. The relentless quest of the Soviet Union for military superiority, the Communist footholds in Somalia, Angola, and Mozambique, the teetering of Italy and France, the astounding possibility raised by Mr. Robert Moss that Anglo-communism may dominate Britain within a few years: all these trends remind us that the future may not be agreeable. I have sometimes wondered what America might become if it could truly live apart from the world, oblivious to all concerns except the luxury of self-indulgence. But as Mr. Ephraim Sevela emphasized so brilliantly last night, the dangers of totalitarianism abroad, the exigencies of our time do not permit such hedonistic self-absorption. And if conservatism fails in the realm of foreign policy, all else will be lost. So far, the prognosis is at best ambiguous.

The conservative movement, then, is definitely alive and appears to this observer to be fairly healthy and competitive. Like Professor Tonsor, I do not expect its precipitous demise. Nevertheless, it is not

yet a dominant or decisive influence in American life. It has earned an opportunity, but only an opportunity, to shape the nation's destiny.

How then should it exploit these potentialities? Some of the most provocative parts of Professor Tonsor's presentation, it seems to me, concern his prescriptions for contemporary conservatism. To begin with one, I am not certain that economics will be quite as secondary as Professor Tonsor appears to believe. One of the notable phenomena of the past half-decade has in fact been the resurgence of economic issues as dominant topics of political discourse and policymaking. Next week, President Carter will announce an energy policy which seems likely to generate a political tempest. In 1977, this very year, we may witness the return of double-digit inflation. The egalitarian and redistributionist impulses may seem muted at the moment, but they are not dead. In an economy in which government consumes nearly forty percent of the gross national product, the continued salience of economic questions and the pertinence of libertarian economic theory seem assured.

Yet on reflection, I do not think that Professor Tonsor and I really disagree in this area very much. In stressing the preeminence of cultural issues, and in beckoning conservatism away from an exclusive fixation on economics and libertarianism, Professor Tonsor deserves our commendation for two reasons. First, the free market wing of the conservative movement is already strong. It has already created an expanding niche for itself in academe, and it has manifested an exciting ability to translate libertarian economic theory into public policy formulations. It is not this sector of the multifaceted conservative movement which most needs intellectual sustenance at the present time. Secondly, and more importantly, as we were again reminded last night, the crisis that America confronts penetrates to far deeper levels than the economic. As Professor Tonsor observed, it is cultural, political, we might even say spiritual. In contemplating a malaise so pervasive, Professor Tonsor has discovered, and many in this audience will no doubt concur, that abstract, formalistic, sometimes sloganeering

libertarianism is insufficient.

Now in a world of Idi Amins and Gulag Archipelagos, liberty as a value is not to be disparaged.<sup>36</sup> But once our freedom is guaranteed, what should we *do* with our freedom? What kind of lives *should* we live? Utopian libertarianism replies that we should be free to do our own thing, free to do whatever we *choose* to do. But what values should guide us in our choices? To this question, we receive no answer, unless it is a statement that such matters are none of the government's business. Perhaps not, but then whose business are they?

Conservatives must ask: are liberty, community, order, and *civitas* automatically self-generating and self-sustaining? Is there an invariably beneficent invisible hand in culture and morals as well as in the marketplace? As Walter Berns, Irving Kristol, and others have asked, can a genuinely free and humane civilization be utterly indifferent to the lifestyles of its own citizens?

All of us are no doubt familiar with the phenomenon of which Professor Tonsor speaks. In my own case, I can recall a conversation three years ago with a Harvard undergraduate who was an apostle of Ayn Rand.<sup>37</sup> When I made the point that a free society requires a moral foundation, he replied by whistling "Deutschland über Alles."<sup>38</sup> And yet, as Edmund Burke once wrote so eloquently, "Society cannot exist unless a controlling power upon will and appetite be placed somewhere, and the less of it there is within, the more there must be without. It is

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36 Idi Amin Dada Oumee (1925-2003) was a military officer who served as the President of Uganda from 1971 to 1979. Popularly known as the "Butcher of Uganda", he is considered one of the cruelest despots in African history. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* is a three-volume, non-fiction text written between 1958 and 1968. It was first published in 1973 and exposes life in what is often known as the Gulag, the Communist Soviet forced labor camp system.

37 Ayn Rand (1905-1982) was a Russian-American writer known for her two best-selling novels, *The Fountainhead* and *Atlas Shrugged*. Her political philosophy has been a significant influence on some conservatives and libertarians.

38 Here Nash refers to the German national anthem once prized by the Nazis, proclaiming Germany's supremacy above all else.

ordained in the eternal constitution of things that men of intemperate minds cannot be free. Their passions forge their fetters.” Or, as the Talmud observed succinctly, “If I do not think of myself, no one else will. But if I think of myself only, what kind of man am I?”

Professor Tonsor then correctly emphasizes the increasing importance of cultural and quality-of-life issues. His analysis, it seems to me, carries two crucial implications for conservatives. The first is that the Right must systematically concern itself with the value-creating and value-sustaining institutions of our society. I refer to the churches, the schools, the arts, and the media. In his speech Professor Tonsor reports that many individuals are now, and I quote him, “busy recasting culture and politics in America in a conservative image.” Certainly, many are trying to do this, but how far, far we have to go.

Consider the media. Why is it that such egregious caricatures of our recent history as *Hearts and Minds*, *The Front*, and *Scoundrel Time*, seem to dominate the cultural politics of our day?<sup>39</sup> Where are the conservative alternatives and rejoinders? Why do there seem to be no conservatively oriented documentaries and docudramas? In an era when television and motion pictures forge the perceptions of reality of more and more Americans, can conservatives yield these spheres of influence to the opposition by default? Why not, for example, and here I concur emphatically with a speaker last night, why not a film on *The Gulag Archipelago*? The next time a documentary appears on the cost of healthcare in the United States, why not one on socialized

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39 *Hearts and Minds* (1974) is a documentary about the Vietnam War. It is a polarizing film with some considering it a masterpiece and others a simple exercise in anti-American propaganda. *The Front* (1976) is a Woody Allen comedy that explores the struggles of a filmmaker in the 1950s who has been blacklisted because of alleged Communist sympathies. *Scoundrel Time* (1972) is a book describing Lillian Hellman’s experience as one of the intellectuals and artists called to testify before the House Un-American Activities Committee. Hellman refused to incriminate herself or others and managed to avoid trial. In both *The Front* and *Scoundrel Time*, congressional conservatives seeking to root out communism are presented as the clear villains, while the defiant artists are the heroes.

medicine in Great Britain? When there is a televised study of “The Selling of the Pentagon,” then why not a conservative report on “The Selling of HEW?”<sup>40</sup> Perhaps it may seem naïve of me to ask, but if the national news media are controlled by an unrepresentative liberal elite, then why should not conservatives establish a national news network of their own? Why should not conservatives be able to turn on the evening news and have the option of seeing Mr. M. Stanton Evans, for example, as a commentator instead of Eric Sevareid and Bill Moyers? Quite seriously, are such goals inherently impossible to achieve? If conservatism truly reflects the values of sixty percent of the electorate, as is frequently claimed, then should not the resources—political, intellectual, financial—exist for such efforts? Should not conservatives, by now, be capable of transcending their role of gadflies and critics of the media?

To be sure, the cultural landscape is not utterly barren. In recent weeks, for instance, some people have noted the restorative achievements in different fields of such individuals as Tom Wolfe, Joan Didion, and Ben Wattenberg. Yet to this observer, such developments, although laudable, seem episodic and uncoordinated. If Professor Tonsor is right, then much of conservatism’s intellectual energy, imagination, and creative talent must now be devoted to cleansing and reforming the cultural transmission belts of our civilization. It is a task, as he says, for which the skills of politics and economics will not alone suffice.

The second implication of Professor Tonsor’s argument derives from his rejection of a conservative alliance with the new populism. After reading his paper and hearing his presentation this morning, I am not certain as to why he regards such an alliance as impossible. Nor do I know precisely what reactionary attitudes and decadent forms the populists allegedly cherish. Perhaps these points will be clarified during the discussion period. In any case, one wonders whether, in

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40 The US Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. In 1979 this Cabinet agency was renamed the Department of Health and Human Services.

repudiating populism, Professor Tonsor desires that conservatism forswear aspirations for success at the ballot box altogether. Should the conservative movement now perceive itself as essentially an intellectual aristocracy, proselytizing the New Class and winning adherence by the sheer cogency of its ideas? Or is there still a necessity for grassroots political activism? Indeed, if the movement is sturdy enough, why must it choose between one or the other?

One final thought. For more than a year and a half, I have been living in a little town in Iowa, population 1,600—the town in which Herbert Hoover was born. It is a farming community inhabited by the kind of Americans whom Willmoore Kendall used to eulogize as the virtuous people. From the perspective of this prairie town, the world of conservative theorizing occasionally seems rarefied and remote. Perhaps it is well, therefore, for us to remember that it is the people in these heartland communities, and in thousands of other cities and villages throughout this land, whom conservatism needs to speak to and to speak for as it seeks to preserve the permanent things.

In 1977, conservatives and all Americans have much to be thankful for, and, like Professor Tonsor, I detect some hopeful portents. But there is no inevitability about these trends. Let us hope that American conservatism will indeed enjoy a second spring. But let us remember soberly what happened to the Prague Spring in Czechoslovakia in 1968. In the world of human action, unlike the world of the seasons, spring is not always followed by summer.



## RESPONSE

By M. Stanton Evans

Professor Tonsor has approached our subject with his usual viscosity and eloquence. His basic argument, as I understand it, is that the conservative movement can prosper only to the degree that it is grounded on consensus, fundamental considerations of right, and solid scholarship. No coherent worldview can be maintained, he suggests, and no long-term successes are possible if we disperse our energies in daily politics or confine ourselves to libertarian homily.

All of this I take to be incontestably true and would therefore agree with the essential thrust of his position. My disagreement such as it is, is of the “yes, but” variety. I would have formed the central argument but would give some of the particulars a different sort of emphasis. Let me focus on the more salient of these.

First, his point about political involvement. Party politics should not and cannot be our major object. If we should lose ourselves in the ephemera of politics, we would be lost indeed, without compass, bearings, or moorings. At a recent ISI seminar, I tried to argue the point myself in somewhat less scholarly accents, suggesting that the ends of politics cannot be politically derived. They must come from a realm of affirmation beyond the legislature and the precinct. Yet it has to be remembered that if we are concerned with the right ordering of our society, with protecting human freedom, combating social entropy, defending our national sovereignty, and so on, someone somewhere is going to have to do the political work: electing candidates, drafting legislation, seeing to the administration of the laws, and so forth.

At some point the insights of the scholar must be translated into the practical functions of the lawmaker. It may be plausibly argued that we have attempted such translation prematurely, or that some among us who should be spending more time on scholarly pursuits are dabbling far too much in party politics. But the fact remains that conservatives, eventually, must grapple with the stuff of politics and the colloquial meaning of that term.

The particular twist I would give to Professor Tonsor's point is this: that when conservatives become involved in politics, they must do so in terms of firm adherence to conservative values. All politics, as we well know, consists of compromise, but the key to a successful politics is to make the other fellow move in your direction. I think we have tended to forget this in recent assays at pragmatism by some among us. Some conservatives, in pursuit of a misguided pragmatism, have told us something rather different. They have told us that we must move in the other fellow's direction, but at a pace less rapid than he initially demanded. And that is a certain formula for defeat.

Such confusions result, I think, from the sort of political immersion, to which Professor Tonsor refers—from an amateurish *realpolitik* that disparages resort to principle in an imagined effort to be practical. That approach is ruinous politically, as well as intellectually, since it permits the opposition to define the terms of the discourse, and thus defaults the argument at the offset.

Which leads me to the second point that I have noted in Professor Tonsor's remarks, his point about libertarianism, and it has to do with the question of defining the terms of political discourse. It is perfectly true that libertarianism, as such, cannot define the terms of politics or set the axioms of the good society. Libertarianism, properly speaking, is not a premise but a conclusion. It is indeed the conclusion one arrives at if certain value postulates of Western faith and learning are accepted. And it is quickly forgotten if those value postulates are abandoned. This means, among other things, that ethical notions of right and obligation are primary, while elaborations of the market

order are derivative. Where there is no community or sense of value, where there are no certain axioms of right, there can be no volitional order and no libertarian politics. The history of the twentieth century affirms this truth abundantly.

Yet it does not follow from this that our emphasis on personal freedom is passé or may be relaxed. We suffer from disorders in our society, it is true, but these disorders are a violation of proper libertarian precept, and not a vindication of it. And on almost every other front meantime, we see that personal freedom is sorely threatened by the forces of compulsion, from within and from without, and that our national affairs are managed with a stunning disregard for economic principle. I would venture to suggest that many, if not most, of the communal problems cited by Daniel Bell—healthcare, environmental problems, municipal finance, education, even crime to some extent—result from a failure by our rulers to understand the central precepts of economic science. Granted the deeper moral sources of many of our problems, most of these communal difficulties, in a practical sense, may best be remedied by practicing libertarian economics rather than abandoning it.

The third point that I have noted in Professor Tonsor's excellent presentation is his point about new allies or potential new allies. Professor Tonsor speculates about two possible new alliances for conservatives: one practical, the other intellectual. The first is the hardhat populist elements so much discussed in recent political theorizing. The second is the group of predominantly Jewish intellectuals associated with *Commentary* and *The Public Interest*. He sees little hope of getting together with the first, but considerable promise of alliance with the second. I view these cases somewhat differently, and granted the obvious distinctions between them, would apply a common rule to both. I think an alliance *de facto* is possible with each of these groups, capable of evolving across the years into something stable and enduring, provided that conservatives in search of such alliance stick by their own principles.

In the case of the populist hardhats, the fallacy of some recent theories is the notion that we must jettison our defense of limited government and personal freedom to advocate a kind of welfare state for blue-collar ethnics—recirculating dollars from liberal client groups to our own. I think this is mistaken in terms of principle and in terms of practical politics as well. It is clear enough that working-class Americans are moving toward conservatism these days, and they are doing so precisely because they feel the costs of the liberal welfare state—in terms of crime, and taxes, and busing, the rest of it—have become excessive. It is precisely because conservatives have articulated that notion all along, that conservatives now have some hope of appealing to these voters. Such potential supporters should of course be addressed in recognizable accents, with stress on issues that concern them most. But they should not be assailed with a pragmatic mish-mosh of Tory welfarism and law and order, that blends in sensibly into the very liberalism they are beginning to oppose.

In a radically different context, the identical principle applies to the one-time liberal intellectuals who have been drifting so perceptibly toward conservatism in recent years. I, for one, welcome this development and believe we should encourage it in every way we can. Some of the research and social analysis that appears in *Commentary* and *The Public Interest* is amazingly good, and as credentialed liberals these writers can reach an audience that is denied to most of us.

Yet, let us understand what is in process here. These intellectuals are moving quite clearly toward our position. We are not, with a few exceptions, moving toward theirs. Their insights have become increasingly profound and increasingly accurate, almost exactly in the proportion that they have come to approximate our own—whether the subject up for discussion is the Cold War, internal security, the economics of healthcare, or the follies of mass transit. And just to pick a few examples from people who are members of this society, I would match the scholarship and the social commentary of a Russell Kirk, Gerhart Niemeyer, Stefan Possony, or a Steve Tonsor against anything

that the liberal intellectuals could put up. George Nash made a very relevant comment about the two books on crime by James Q. Wilson and Ernest van den Haag. I think everyone who has read those books will acknowledge that the Wilson book is very good, but the van den Haag book is better.

I would sum it up in a symbolic formula that I have cast as follows: Kristol is great, but Friedman is greater. Let us therefore be of good cheer. The concerns that Professor Tonsor articulates are very real. The potential pitfalls are many. Yet as both proceedings speakers have indicated, the signs of a second spring do exist. And the vernal impulse may be sensed in many different byways of our national life. What is needed for the ultimate victory is to understand our principles and to act on them.





## CHAPTER 8

# CONSERVATIVES AND LIBERTARIANS

**APRIL 6-7, 1979**  
**CHICAGO, ILLINOIS**

**FRIDAY, APRIL 6**

**6:00-8:30 - *Dinner and Keynote***

Ernest van den Haag, Chairman

Robert Nisbet, American Enterprise Institute

**SATURDAY, APRIL 7**

**9:45-11:45PM**

***Conservatism and Libertarianism***

Henry Regnery, Chairman

Robert Nisbet, "Conservatives and Libertarians: Uneasy Cousins"

Murray Rothbard, "Myth and Truth About Libertarianism"

Walter Berns, "The Need for Public Authority"



## CONSERVATIVES AND LIBERTARIANS: UNEASY COUSINS

By Robert Nisbet

I am going to talk about conservatism and libertarianism, what they have in common, which is something, and what I believe increasingly divides conservatism and libertarianism. The poet Blake wrote, and correctly, that “God and truth lie only in the particulars,” but I have no intention in the next twenty or thirty minutes of addressing myself to particulars. I would rather talk instead in terms of themes or perspectives of the two different ideologies or philosophies.

By common assent modern conservatism, at least as a philosophy, springs from Edmund Burke chiefly, though not entirely, from his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*.<sup>41</sup> Often times, conservatives, and also more often liberals and radicals, forget that Edmund Burke had given his warm support to the American colonists, to the Hindus under the British East India Company, and to his fellow Irish also under the lash of Great Britain, and had been known as an ardent lover of freedom and a hater of what he called arbitrary power. There was really, therefore, no very good reason for Price and others to become so outraged by Burke’s attack on the French Revolution. Burke made it plain that his reasons were precisely those which had governed his political mentality throughout his life: his hatred of arbitrary power, and even by 1790 when Burke published the book, arbitrary power was surfacing in France. And the second reason he gave, which is the more

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41 Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790).

interesting and the more important, is that Burke was able to see—even that early—what even the Jacobins required another year or two to see: that the French Revolution was different from all other political events in history and that it was destined to be, and aspired to be, a universalist, millennialist crusade, not just a change of government.

Well, it is in Burke's *obiter dicta* that the seeds of modern conservatism, I suppose, are primarily to be found. But I am more interested in turning to a successor of Burke's, John Stuart Mill, and particularly to his most famous, most often quoted single work, *On Liberty*, which he wrote and published in 1859, the year after his wife Harriet had died.<sup>42</sup> I hope many of you, if not all of you, are acquainted with the very brilliant and illuminating book on this aspect of Mill that Professor Gertrude Himmelfarb wrote a number of years ago and which was my education into the Mill problem.<sup>43</sup> Not the Adam Smith problem I was aware of, but the Mill problem I was not.<sup>44</sup>

I recently reread his *On Liberty* and I am now coming to libertarianism as well as conservatism. As you know, the most famous single phrase in Mill's *On Liberty* is his reference to one very simple principle. And I will not read the entire paragraph, which is in the introduction, I will simply read the two sentences which make up the core of the paragraph. Mill wrote, "the sole end for which mankind are warranted, individually and collectively, in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number is self-protection. His own good, either physical or moral, is not a sufficient warrant."

Now I would say that that phrase, those sentences, that paragraph,

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42 John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (1859).

43 Here Nisbet is referring to Gertrude Himmelfarb's 1974 book titled *On Liberty and Liberalism: The Case of John Stuart Mill*.

44 Here Nisbet is referencing the so-called "Adam Smith Problem," which was the view that the Adam Smith of the *Wealth of Nations* and the Adam Smith of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* were somehow at odds with one another. Many economists and philosophers no longer believe that there is an "Adam Smith Problem." Jim Otteson recounts this debate in part in *Adam Smith's Marketplace of Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

as it stands in the introduction is—there is no better epitome of the libertarian position today in this country. The libertarians can claim all the fathers and grandfathers they want—William Godwin, Rush, Tucker, etc.—but I cannot think of a single principle from my reading of libertarian literature that better expresses it than that abstract statement of one very simple principle in Mill.

But what many do not realize—Professor Himmelfarb, whom I mentioned, has called attention to it in her book on the subject—is that not only was this statement in utter contradiction with the position on liberty that Mill had taken eighteen years earlier in his *Spirit of the Modern Age*.<sup>45</sup> Not only is it in contradiction with that ethos—that perspective in which Mill had given his ardent respect to the intellectual and cultural authorities and to the need for moral and cultural, and if necessary political, limits upon individual action and freedom—but what I have recently become aware of and struck by are the qualifications that Mill almost immediately makes to his one very simple principle.

To repeat: that no one, mankind, government, society are not warranted to interfere with the action of any individual unless the action of that individual is a direct menace to society or mankind. And that it shall not be interference simply to protect the individual from his own original sin, or whatever it may be. But Mill immediately after the paragraph, on the one very simple principle, says this principle does not extend to those who in their youth are under the age of legal majority, which would have wiped out practically all college students, until a couple of years ago, and today all high school students. Even the Harriet Taylor-formed John Stuart Mill was not willing to see his principal extended to young people.

Second, he indicates that the principle does not extend to those whom Mill identifies as being “in a state to require being taken care of by others.” I do not know who he had in mind: the insane, perhaps,

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45 John Stuart Mill, *Spirit of the Modern Age*, 1831.

possibly the very elderly, congressmen, bureaucrats—whoever knows? But third, he said his principal, this one very simple principle of individual liberty, should not apply to all of the peoples on the Earth who are still in what he called backward states of society. For such peoples, and I am sure Mill had a great many Englishmen in mind as well as people in Africa or Oceania, for them he said despotism is the only answer. The kind of despotism that will elevate in the long run and he uses Charlemagne as an illustration.

And if you go to Chapter three of *On Liberty*, you find that Mill—who by this time had apparently begun to slip away from the mesmeric influence that Harriet had cast on him—you come to the beginning of Chapter three. He writes, “no one pretends that actions should be as free as opinions.” And you find him also indicating that the freedom even of opinion must not be extended to those who, in Mill’s word, are nuisances to society. Or in still another word that Mill uses, who “molest” the people around them by the expression of their opinions. So, the one very simple principle as you see turns out to be not so simple after all, and you come away with the ineradicable impression that John Stuart Mill was extending absolute liberty to those who were formed as he was. Which was not bad.

I have discovered, for the first time, that Mill properly read can be claimed by conservatives as well as libertarians. The principle of course is deathless. Nobody will remember the qualifications, but everybody remembers the principle. And that one very simple principle has the advantage that a half brick has over a whole brick: you can throw it farther. But the qualifications nobody will ever remember.

Now let me come to conservatives and our cousins—libertarians. There are some things that I believe sincerely that we still have in common. One is a genuine repugnance for government, especially national, central government and its intrusions into the moral and social and economic lives of its citizens. I do not think anyone can take that principle, that belief, that philosophy away from either the libertarians or the conservatives.

Second, I think there was a good deal of consensus between conservatives and libertarians as to the definition of just or legitimate equality. And that is the kind of equality that Professor Hayek, among others, many others, have referred to properly as equality before the law. And Professor Hayek is quite correct that equality before the law—insofar as it is achievable, and nothing is perfectly achievable—is necessary to freedom. I think libertarians and conservatives have that in common. I have not seen anything to suggest, even recently, that in libertarian writing that there was any advocacy of, or any kind of endorsement of the use of, taxation for redistribution of American property or income, or for the continued proliferation of entitlements. So, I think conservatives and libertarians have that in common.

Third, I believe there is a genuine community of interest on the matter of economic freedom, freedom of property, freedom from all but the most necessary of taxes, and freedom to make profit. I do not take away from either side. It is possible that conservatives, beginning with the British Tories in the nineteenth century and coming down through the late great Robert Taft in the late 1940s, have qualified that or strayed from it more often than libertarians. But then it is hard offhand to think of any libertarian, thus far, who has held a reasonably high political office and thus becomes subjected to the kind of pressures that were put upon even Senator Robert Taft on the public housing bill in the late 1940s. But I think the two groups have that in common.

I believe there is also a common dislike of mass democracy whether populist, plebiscitary, or whatever. From the conservative point of view what is chiefly offensive about mass democracy is its inevitable disintegration of local, regional, and other loyalties that form a society. From the libertarian point of view perhaps the chief reason for opposition to mass democracy is the suffocation of individual liberty that exists, or is bound to exist, under the blanket of that kind of democracy. And fifth, I think libertarians and conservatives also have in common a distaste for liberalism as it exists in the United States and the Western world today. The kind of

liberalism that is rampant in the schools, universities, the media, and practically all except fundamentalist denominations of Christianity.

**SOMEONE IN THE CROWD: "WHAT IS LIBERALISM,  
WOULD YOU EXPLAIN IT?"**

If you will just sit down, I will come to it. I am about to define it. I believe that libertarians and conservatives have in common a repugnance for the kind of liberalism which William Graham Sumner once defined as A and B getting together to decide what C should do for X. The liberalism exemplified by the New Deal in this country, and earlier in England by Hobhouse, Hobson, and others. The liberalism, which is not liberal at all, but is a means...

**SOMEONE IN THE CROWD YELLS AGAIN**

Do I have to put up with this pestering? I do not have to put up with you, now either subside, sir, or come down and take...

**SOMEONE IN THE CROWD YELLS AGAIN**

Now, I want to come to the differences. I have indicated what are to the—my God, if this character thinks he is a heckler he ought to know some of the people I have spoken to in the last thirty years, God. Only once did I have rocks thrown at me. I was in an outdoor meeting in San Bernardino State College, they literally did, but they did not hurt. Now to the differences.

There are some very real differences between libertarianism and conservatism. And I have a feeling that the time is probably past when it is proper, or legitimate, to speak of a libertarian conservative or perhaps a conservative libertarian. The differences are becoming more and more pronounced and I think they will accelerate in intensity and number. First—and as I told you or warned you at the outset, I am

confining myself to rather broad principles, constitutive principles—is the view of society that is taken by conservatives and by libertarians.

For conservatives, from Edmund Burke right on down to our own day, society is perceived not so much as an aggregate of individuals, but rather a plurality, a multiplicity of interlocking interrelated groups: family, locality, church, region, social class, nation, and so on. Individuals exist and we must not overlook them, but the great original achievement, or merit, of Burke's *Reflections* was his perception of the fact that the French Revolution—in the name of on the one hand the nation, one and indivisible, and on the other hand the individual—that the real impact of the French Revolution was registered upon all the intermediate groups: the destruction, weakening, deterioration of family, local community, guild, church, etc. These are the unities, the social unities, that Burke referred to as our natural inns and resting places.

Now, I am not suggesting that libertarians are blind to the existence of groups, associations, and to traditions, and codes, and conventions. Of course, they are aware of them. And they do not propose, any more than Rousseau ever proposed, a return to the state of nature. It is not very often that any libertarian sounds like a clone of Max Turner. They are as devoted to the principle of voluntary association as conservatives are, and it is well for all of us to remember that even the anarchists Proudhon and Kropotkin base their ideal, their respective utopias, upon the existence and the continuing strength of social groups, family, which for Proudhon meant patriarchal by the way. But I believe that a state of mind is developing among libertarians—perhaps I am wrong, I only know what I read in the journals and papers—but a state of mind is developing among libertarians in contrast to conservatives in which the coercions or the disciplines of family, church, local community, and school seem almost as inimical to freedom as the coercions of political government. And this is not of course the case with conservatives, who regard the coercions that exist within the natural social groups and associations as indispensable to the possibility of political freedom or a limited political government.

That leads me to a second major difference between libertarians and conservatives. The conservative philosophy of liberty is really inseparable from its philosophy of authority, and this too from Burke right on down. It is the existence of authority in the social order—and you have to distinguish between the social and political—it is the existence of authority in the order that is constituted by family, church, local community, voluntary association. The authority that exists here, that staves off encroachments of power from the political sphere. From the conservative point of view, society is not only a plurality of groups and associations, but it is a plurality of authorities. The authority of the parent over the child, the priest over the communicant, the teacher over the pupil, the master over the apprentice, the learned over the illiterate, the authority of the moral over the immoral or licentious. This is fundamental to the conservative point of view: the existence of authority that flows from the very structure, the interaction of roles of mother, father, child, priest, communicant, teacher, pupil. There cannot be a pupil without a teacher, there cannot be a teacher without a pupil. There is this kind of authority which conservatism takes very seriously, always has, and there is implicit—indeed explicit in conservatism—the view that if you dissolve the authorities which are inherent in organized society, we wind up with nothing but a chaos of egoistic and anarchic impulses, feelings, desires, cravings, and appetites. Then some kind of Messiah—political in form—some kind of man on horseback, becomes almost inevitable.

I have great admiration in many ways for Professor Hayek, but I do not agree with his famous essay chapter in his *Constitution of Liberty*, titled “Why I Am Not a Conservative.”<sup>46</sup> I do not agree with that, and I particularly do not agree with Professor Hayek’s point that conservatives are never willing to innovate or to change. The answer to that, it seems to me, lies in history—the Elizabethan Age in England, for example. A.L. Rowse—back when he was still a first-rate historian—in

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46 F.A. Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty* (1960).



his great study of Elizabethan England, pointed out the volume on a social structure. The English people from the Queen on down were very much allied to authority and were scared to death that there was not enough authority in society and the government to protect them. Nevertheless, it was the age in which a few individuals such as Marlowe and Shakespeare flourished. And Shakespeare as you all know was himself an ardent believer in hierarchy, order, authority. And it is interesting to realize that in this century, so far, the most genuinely creative literary minds—I think of Elliott, Pound, Yeats, and half a dozen others in the 1920s—one and all were minds deeply conservative, traditionalist in character, and no one since has registered the innovative impact upon form and content of poetry in the novel that they did. So, it is rather absurd to say that as a political conservative you are therefore hostile to change. There is no evidence for that at all.

I agree that there is a degree of liberty below which nothing of any creative significance can be accomplished—witness post-1917 Russia as compared with pre-1917 Russia. Without at least that degree of freedom, there will be no Shakespeare, no Newton. But what is less often realized, I think conservatives would argue—do argue—is that there is a degree of freedom above which nothing of creative significance can be, or is likely to be, accomplished. Writers in the late twentieth century do their work in the freest air writers have ever breathed while composing their literary works. I am sorry to sound prejudiced, but it is apparent from the wretched mess of narcissism, self-abuse, self-titillation, and juvenile regressive craving for the scatological and obscene that the atmosphere has become so rarefied as to have lost its oxygen. Just as the famous cartoon in the *New Yorker* in the 1930s depicts a little child, obviously miserable, saying, “Mama, I don’t want to be free to do what I want to do, I want something to do!” You see? There is that kind.

For libertarians, as I read them, individual freedom is the highest and by all odds the most important of all social values, irrespective of what forms and levels of moral, aesthetic, and spiritual debasement

may occasionally prove to be the unintended consequences of such freedom. But for the conservative on the other hand, freedom—while very important—is but one of several important and necessary values in the just, good, and creative society. Values such as civility, culture, legitimate hierarchy, a social bond, the preservation of social order itself. These are also values. And freedom that has become so elevated as to become separated from, and even antagonistic to, these other values is not really a very creative force any longer.

There have been a few ages in Western history in which the dominance of individual freedom over the social and moral authorities has become pronounced. I think of Rome of the first century—the late first century—just prior to the ascendancy of Augustus, of London in the period of the Stewarts just before Cromwell came to power, Paris as it surely was prior to first the Thermidorian Reaction and then Napoleon, Berlin during Weimar, and perhaps some would say New York in the 1970s. Though we have not seen the end of the 1970s, and I would not for a moment accuse Mayor Koch of being a Napoleon. But there is a good deal of evidence that the necessary precedent, the necessary prelude, to the appearance of an Augustus, Cromwell, or Napoleon is a period in which liberty becomes so separated from moral and social responsibility as to generate a kind of chaos. And as Balzac once said, human nature cannot stand chaos. It cannot and it will turn gratefully to any kind of authority, however oppressive, as a means of being liberated from chaos or perceptions of moral anarchy.

There is one final, perhaps more particular difference that I think is going to become the most crucial difference between libertarians and conservatives and this has to do with the nation itself. Edmund Burke, for all of his ardent support of the American colonists, the Indians, and the Irish, yielded to no one in his admiration of, and his devotion to, the English nation. He worshipped the English nation, and the nation is—sometimes for bad, sometimes for good—an integral part of modern Western culture. I speak of the cultural nation, the nation that is formed by its artists and intellectuals, its scientists, as well as by

its politicians. Now, we live in a world of nations, and our own nation is obviously living in a world in which more than a few totalitarian, powerful, aggressively militaristic nations exist, and which seem, to a great many Americans, to be a definite menace to the security of the American nation. And who therefore are going to wish to see not fewer, but more steps taken to guard the American nation from the potential depredations of other nations in the world.

And here I think we have perhaps what will become the real ground of conflict between conservatives and libertarians. Because the libertarians, as I read them, though in no degree—in no degree whatever—accepting of the totalitarian form of government. Their loathing for a Soviet Union is at least the equal of any conservative's loathing of the Soviet Union, or a Cuba, or a China. But the libertarians increasingly, it seems to me, are more concerned at the present time by the steps which may, or will be, taken by the United States as a nation to protect itself from a Soviet Union than they are by the threat in the world of nations that is presented by a Soviet Union. This is a matter of degree, and the only possible way in which it can ever be made utterly distinct is through particulars of details, which I do not have the time or inclination to go into.

But I think I have expressed accurately a difference: that conservatives at the present time have become more and more concerned by the actions and operations of the Soviet Union in the world, as far as the security of United States is concerned, and libertarians, though loathing the Soviet Union, are now more concerned by what may be the result of American efforts through its military and related bodies to deal with this mess. This is, I think, going to be the ground on which libertarians themselves, and also perhaps conservatives, will find themselves occasionally in fractional positions.

You see, war—and the preparation for and the entry into war—does not come naturally to conservatives. Burke makes constant use in his writings of military symbolism to indicate his displeasure, or his dislike, of certain forms of organization. And it is an interesting

fact, coincidental though it may be, that from the Spanish-American War on—which you will remember from your history was strongly opposed, that is any American engagement in any war with Spain, was strongly opposed by President William McKinley and strongly favored by the then deeply populist William Randolph Hearst. And it is a matter of record. I have written this in several places, and it is a matter of record. In each of the succeeding wars—World War I, World War II, Vietnam—the impetus, or shall we say the enchantment with war, has been much more considerably from the liberal, I do not say libertarian, but the liberal, progressive side in American society than from the conservative. Whether it was the brilliant young editors of the *New Republic* and other intellectuals who surrounded Woodrow Wilson in 1917 and '18, thus bringing about the first totalitarian state—thank God for only two or three years—but the first totalitarian state in modern Western history: the United States under Wilson. This was the product, basically, of very brilliant, liberal, progressive minds. There is no affinity between conservatism and war, but I will concede that the opposition to the military, the opposition to the nation in a state of military preparedness, is almost certainly going to be greater from the libertarian ranks in the future than from the conservative.

Well, those seem to me the likenesses and the major differences between conservatives and libertarians at the present time. I will close with another moment on the subject that at AEI—where Professor Berns and I are colleagues—a project, a very grand project, is just beginning to take form under Professor Berns's direction and Robert Goldwin's: the study, and the presentation, of the Constitution of the United States. Not the Constitution as it exists today in the form of hundreds of volumes of federal court and Supreme Court decisions, but the Constitution as you find it in the text that was completed in September 1787. I am deeply indebted to Robert Goldwin for this, which took me right to the reading of the Constitution for the first time in I do not know how many years. Dr. Goldwin said that there is only one instance in the Constitution, I am not referring to the

Amendments, but there is only one single use in the Constitution of the word right or rights. And that one single instance is among the powers or responsibilities of Congress. In order to achieve the progress of the arts and sciences, the individual writers and inventors shall have the right for a limited period to the rewards of their creativeness. And I read it, and read it a second time, and that is the only place in the body of the Constitution that I can find any reference, and of course that refers basically to copyright or patent. The founders, those who did not flee Philadelphia in disgust or in a sense of futility or impotence, those who stayed through and finally signed it were so confident that a proper structure of government would take care of the problems of freedom, liberty, and rights that they apparently did not regard it as necessary to set forth any detailed prescripts. They thought, and in my opinion properly, that as long as the executive is checked by the legislature and by the judiciary, that as long as—in Montesquieu's famous phrase—there is one power to check another power, they did not have to be really concerned about rights, natural or other.

I think this was basically the conservative mentality. The Livingstons, Pinckneys, Jays, Madisons, Franklins, and so forth. Basically, the conservative mentality: take care of the structure of government. They all read Burke, well before Burke wrote his *Reflections*, but they did not have to read Burke. They had read Locke. Many of them had read Hooker. And they knew how vital it was that the structure of government have sufficient division within it, sufficient separation of powers, that no one part of it could take to itself what Burke repeatedly refers to as arbitrary power. But I would say that the first nine Amendments—ten if you prefer, although the 10th does not pertain to individual rights—are probably for the most part the constructs of the more libertarian mentality.

It was the Massachusetts Federalists, who of course took the initiative. But this was primarily, I gather, in order to get the opponents of the Constitution to support it—but they were the Federalists in Massachusetts. But this is probably a good note on which to end in

1979, that in the Constitution itself, we really have—with its first ten amendments—we really have two quite different mentalities at work. The first: conservative, which concerned itself solely with Congress, the executive, the judiciary. But the second mentality which concerned itself with a prescriptive list of individual rights.

## MYTH AND TRUTH ABOUT LIBERTARIANISM

By Murray Rothbard

**L**ibertarianism is the fastest growing political creed in America today. Before judging and evaluating libertarianism, it is vitally important to find out precisely what that doctrine is, and, more particularly, what it is not. It is especially important to clear up a number of misconceptions about libertarianism that are held by most people, and particularly by conservatives. In this paper, I shall enumerate and critically analyze the most common myths that are held about libertarianism. When these are cleared away, people will then be able to discuss libertarianism free of egregious myths and misconceptions, and to deal with it as it should be on its very own merits or demerits. Let us discuss in turn the most significant misconceptions of libertarianism.

Myth number one: Libertarians believe that each individual is an isolated, hermetically sealed atom, acting in a vacuum without influencing each other. This is a common charge, but a highly puzzling one. In a lifetime of reading libertarian and classical liberal literature, I have not come across a single theorist or writer who holds anything like this position.

The only possible exception is the fanatical Max Stirner, a mid-nineteenth century German individualist who, however, has had minimal influence upon libertarianism in his time and since. Moreover, Stirner's explicit "might makes right" philosophy and his repudiation of all moral principles including individual rights as quote, "Spooks in the head," scarcely qualifies him as a libertarian in any sense. Apart from Stirner, however, there is nobody of an opinion even remotely

resembling this common indictment.

Libertarians are methodological and political individualists, to be sure. They believe that only individuals think, value, act, and choose. They believe that each individual has a right to own his own body, free of coercive interference. But no individualist denies that people are influencing each other all the time in their goals, values, pursuits, and occupations.

As F.A. Hayek pointed out in the notable article “The Non-Sequitur of the ‘Dependence Effect,’” John Kenneth Galbraith’s assault upon free market economics in his best-selling *The Affluent Society* rests upon the assumption that economics assumes that every individual arrives at a scale of values totally on his own, without being subject to influence by anyone else. On the contrary, as Hayek replied, everyone knows that most people do not originate their own values but are influenced to adopt them by other people.

No individual nor libertarian denies that people influence each other all the time—and surely there is nothing wrong with this inevitable process. What libertarians are opposed to is not voluntary persuasion, but the coercive imposition of values by the use of force and police power. Libertarians are in no way opposed to voluntary cooperation and collaboration between individuals: only to the compulsory pseudo-“cooperation” imposed by the state.

Myth number two: Libertarians are libertines: they are hedonists who hanker after “alternative lifestyles.” This myth has recently been propounded by Irving Kristol, who identifies the libertarian ethic by the “hedonistic” and asserts the libertarians “worship the Sears Roebuck catalog and only ‘alternative lifestyles’ that capitalist affluence permits the individual to choose from.”

The fact is that libertarianism is not, and does not, pretend to be a complete moral or aesthetic theory. It is only a *political* theory, that is the important subset of moral theory that deals with the proper role of violence and social life.

Political theory deals with what is proper or improper for government



to do, and government is distinguished from every other group in society as being the institution of organized violence. Libertarianism holds that the only proper role of violence is to defend person and property *against* violence, that any use of violence that goes beyond such just defense is itself aggressive, unjust, and criminal. Libertarianism, therefore, is a theory which states that everyone should be free of violent invasion, should be free to do as he sees fit, except invade the personal property of another. What a person does with his or her life is vital and important, but simply irrelevant to libertarianism.

It should not be surprising, therefore, that there are indeed libertarians who are hedonist and devotees of alternative lifestyles, and that there are also libertarians who affirm adherence of “bourgeois” conventional or religious morality. There are libertarian libertines and there are libertarians who cleave firmly to the disciplines of natural or religious law. There are other libertarians who have no moral theory at all, apart from the imperative of non-violation of rights. That is because libertarianism *per se* has no general or personal moral theory.

Libertarianism does not offer a way of life. It offers liberty, so that each person is free to adopt and act upon his own values and moral principles. Libertarians agree with Lord Acton that “liberty is the highest political end”—not necessarily the highest on everyone’s personal scale of values.

There is no question about the fact, however, that the subset of libertarians who are free market economists, in which I am included, tends to be delighted when the free market leads to a wider range of choices for consumers, and thereby raises their standard of living. Unquestionably, the idea that prosperity is better than grinding poverty is a moral proposition, and it ventures into the realm of general moral theory, but it is still not a proposition for which I should wish to apologize.

Myth number three: Libertarians do not believe in moral principles; they limit themselves to cost-benefit analysis on the assumption that man is always rational. This myth is of course related to the preceding charge of hedonism, and some of it can be answered in the same way.

There are indeed libertarians, particularly Chicago School economists, who refuse to believe that liberty and individual rights are moral principles, and instead attempt to arrive at public policy by weighing alleged social costs and benefits.

In the first place, most libertarians are “subjectivist” in economics—that is they believe that the utilities and costs of different individuals cannot be added or measured. Hence, the very concept of social costs and benefits is illegitimate. But, more importantly, most libertarians rest their case on moral principles, on a belief in the natural rights of every individual to his personal property. They, therefore, believe in the absolute immorality of aggressive violence, of invasion of those rights to personal property, regardless of which person or group commits such violence.

Far from being immoral, libertarians simply apply universal human ethics to government, in the same way as almost everyone would apply such an ethic to every other person or institution in society. In particular, as I have noted earlier, libertarianism as a political philosophy dealing with the proper role of violence, takes the universal ethic that most of us hold toward violence and applies it fearlessly to government.

Libertarians make no exceptions to the Golden Rule and provide no moral loophole, no double standard, for government. That is, libertarians believe that murder is murder, and it does not become sanctified by reasons of state if committed by the government. We believe that theft is theft, and it does not become legitimated because organized robbers call that theft “taxation.” We believe that enslavement is enslavement, even if the institution committing that act calls it “conscription.” In short, the key to libertarian theory is that it makes no exceptions in its universal ethic for government. Hence, far from being indifferent or hostile to moral principles, libertarians fulfill them by being the only group willing to extend those principles across the board to government itself.

It is true that libertarians would allow each individual to choose his values and act upon them and would ensure every person the right to

be either moral or immoral as he saw fit. Libertarianism is strongly opposed to enforcing any moral creed on any person or group by the use of violence—except of course, as I mentioned, the moral prohibition against aggressive violence itself. But we must realize that no action can be considered virtuous unless it is undertaken freely by persons' voluntary consent.

As Frank Meyer pointed out, "Men cannot be forced to be free, nor can they even be forced to be virtuous. To a certain extent, it is true, they could be forced to act as though they were virtuous. But virtue is the fruit of well used freedom. And no act to the degree that it is coerced can partake a virtue—or a vice." If a person is forced by violence or the threat thereof to perform a certain action, then it can no longer be a moral choice on his part. The morality of an action can stem only from being freely adopted. An action can scarcely be called moral if someone is compelled to perform it at gunpoint.

Compelling moral actions or outlawing immoral actions, therefore, cannot be said to foster the spread of morality or virtue. On the contrary, coercion atrophies morality, for it takes away from the individual the freedom to be either moral or immoral, and therefore forcibly deprives people of the chance to be moral. Paradoxically then, a compulsory morality robs us of the very opportunity to be moral.

It is, furthermore, particularly grotesque to place the guardianship of morality in the hands of the state apparatus—that is, none other than the organization of policemen, guards, and soldiers. Placing the state in charge of moral principles is equivalent to putting the proverbial fox in charge of the chicken coop.

Whatever else we may say about them, the wielders of organized violence in society have never been distinguished by their high moral tone or by the precision with which they uphold moral principle.

Myth number four: Libertarianism is atheistic and materialist and neglects the spiritual design of life. There is no necessary connection between being for or against libertarianism and one's position on religion. It is true that many, if not most, libertarians of the present

time are atheists. But this correlates with the fact that most intellectuals of most political persuasions are atheists as well.

There are many libertarians who were theist, Jewish, or Christian. Among the classical liberal forebears of modern libertarianism, in a more religious age, there were a myriad of Christians: from John Lilburne, Roger Williams, Anne Hutchinson, and John Locke in the seventeenth century, down to Cobden and Bright, Frederic Bastiat, and the French *laissez-faire* liberals, and the great Lord Acton.

Libertarians believe that liberty is a natural right embedded in a natural law of what is proper for mankind, in accordance with man's nature. *Where* this set of natural laws comes from, whether it is purely natural or originated by a creator, is an important ontological question but is irrelevant to social or political philosophy.

As Father Thomas Abbott declares, "If the word 'natural' means anything at all, it refers to the nature of a man, and when used with 'law,' 'natural' must refer to an ordering that is manifested in the incarnations of man's nature and nothing else. Hence, taken in itself, there is nothing religious or theological in the 'Natural Law' of Aquinas."

Or, and as d'Entrèves writes of the seventeenth century Dutch Protestant jurist Hugo Grotius, "[Grotius's] definition of natural law has nothing revolutionary. When he maintains that natural law is that body rule which definition Man is able to discover by the use of his reason, he does nothing but restate the Scholastic notion of a rational foundation of ethics. Indeed, his aim is rather to restore that notion, which had been shaken by the extreme Augustinianism of certain Protestant currents of thought. When he declares that these rules are valid in themselves, independently of the fact that God willed them, he repeats an assertion which had already been made by some of the schoolmen."<sup>47</sup>

Libertarianism has been accused of ignoring man's spiritual nature. But one can easily arrive at libertarianism from a religious or Christian

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47 Rothbard uses this quote a few years later in the first chapter of "Natural Law and Reason," in *The Ethics of Liberty* (1982).

position: emphasizing the importance of the individual, of his freedom of will, of natural rights, and private property. Yet one can also arrive at all those selfsame positions by a secular natural law approach—through a belief that man can arrive at a rational apprehension of the natural law.

Historically, furthermore, it is not at all clear that religion is a firmer footing than secular natural law for libertarian conclusions. As Karl Wittfogel reminded us in his *Oriental Despotism*, the union of throne and altar has been used for centuries to fasten the reign of despotism on society.<sup>48</sup>

Historically, the union of church and state has been a mutually reinforcing coalition for tyranny. The state uses the church to sanctify and preach obedience to a supposedly divinely sanctioned rule; the church uses the state to gain income and privilege. The Anabaptists collectivized and tyrannized Münster in the name of the Christian religion.<sup>49</sup> And closer to our century, Christian socialism and the social gospel have played a major role in the drive toward statism, and the apologetic role of the Orthodox Church in Soviet Russia has been all too clear. Catholic Bishops in Latin America have even proclaimed that the only route to the kingdom of heaven is through Marxism. If I wish to be nasty, I could point out that the Reverend Jim Jones, in addition to being a Leninist, also proclaimed himself the reincarnation of Jesus.

Moreover, now that socialism has manifestly failed, politically and economically, socialists have fallen back on the “moral” and the “spiritual” as the final argument for their cause. Socialist Robert Heilbroner, in arguing that socialism will have to be coercive and will have to impose a “collective morality” upon the public, opines that “Bourgeois culture is focused on the material achievement of the individual. Socialist culture must focus on his or her *moral or spiritual* achievement.”

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48 Karl A. Wittfogel, *Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957).

49 Here Rothbard is referencing Anabaptist rule and later rebellion in the city of Münster in 1534-1535.

The intriguing point is that this position of Heilbroner's was hailed by the conservative religious columnist for *National Review*, Dale Vree. He writes that "Heilbroner is also saying what many contributors to *NR* have said over the last quarter-century: you can't have both freedom and virtue. Take note traditionalists. Despite his dissonant terminology, Heilbroner is interested in the same thing you are interested in: virtue."

Vree is also fascinated with the Heilbroner view that a socialist culture must "foster the primacy of the collectivity" rather than "the primacy of the individual." He quotes Heilbroner's contrasting moral or spiritual achievement under socialism as against bourgeois "material achievement" and adds correctly: "there is a traditional ring to that statement."

Vree goes on to applaud Heilbroner's attack on capitalism because it has "no sense of the good" and permits "consenting adults" to do anything they please. In contrast to this picture, freedom and permitted diversity, Vree writes that, "Heilbroner says alluringly, because a socialist society must have a sense of 'the good,' not everything will be permitted." To Vree, it is impossible "to have economic collectivism along with cultural individualism." And so, he is inclined to lean toward a new "socialist traditionalist fusionism"—toward collectivism across the board.<sup>50</sup>

We may note here that socialism becomes especially despotic when it replaces "economic" or "material" incentives via allegedly "moral" or "spiritual" ones, when it effects of promoting an indefinable quality of life rather than economic prosperity.

When payment is adjusted to productivity there is considerably more freedom as well as higher standards of living. For when reliance is placed solely on altruistic devotion to the socialist motherland, devotion has to be regularly reinforced by the knout. An increasing stress on individual material incentive means ineluctably greater stress on private property and keeping what one earns and brings with it

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50 Dale Vree, "Against Socialist Fusionism," *National Review*, December 8, 1978.

considerably more personal freedom, as witnessed in Yugoslavia in the last three decades in contrast to Soviet Russia.

The most horrifying despotism on the face of the Earth in recent years was undoubtedly Pol Pot's Cambodia, in which "materialism" was so far obliterated that money was abolished by the regime. With money and private property abolished, each individual was totally dependent on handouts or rations of subsistence from the state, and life was a sheer hell. We should be careful before we sneer at "merely material" goals or incentives.

The charge of "materialism" directed against the free market ignores the fact that every human action whatsoever involves the transformation of material objects by the use of human energy in accordance with ideas and purposes held by the actors. It is impermissible to separate the "mental" or "spiritual" from the material.

All great works of art, great emanations of the human spirit, have had to employ material objects: whether they be canvases, brushes and paint, paper and musical instruments, or building blocks and raw materials for churches. There is no real rift between the "spiritual" and "material" and hence any despotism over, and crippling of, the material will cripple the spiritual as well.

Myth number five: Libertarians are utopians who believe that all people are good, and that therefore state control is not necessary. Conservatives tend to add that since human nature is either partially or wholly evil, strong state regulation is therefore necessary for society. This is a very common belief about libertarians, yet it is difficult to know the source of this misconception. Rousseau, the *locus classicus* of the idea that man is good but is corrupted by his institutions, was scarcely a libertarian. Apart from the romantic writings of a few anarcho-communists, whom I would not consider libertarians in any case, I know of no libertarian or classical liberal writers who held this view.

On the contrary, most libertarian writers hold that man is a mixture of good and evil, and therefore that it is important for social institutions

to encourage the good and discourage the bad. The state is the only social institution which is able to extract its income and wealth by coercion; all others must obtain revenue either by selling a product or service to customers or by receiving voluntary gifts. The state is the only institution which can use the revenue from this organized theft to resume the control and regulate people's lives and property. Hence, the institution of the state establishes a socially legitimated and sanctified channel for bad people to do bad things, to commit regularized theft and to wield dictatorial power.

Statism therefore encourages the bad, or at least the criminal elements of human nature. As Frank H. Knight trenchantly put it, "The probability of the people in power being individuals with a dislike of the possession and exercise of power is on a level with the probability that an extremely tender-hearted person will get the job of whipping master on a slave plantation."

A free society, by not establishing such a legitimated channel for theft and tyranny, discourages the criminal tendency view of human nature and encourages the peaceful and the voluntary. Liberty and the free market discourage aggression and compulsion and encourage the harmony and mutual benefit of voluntary interpersonal exchanges, economic, social, and cultural.

Since this system of liberty would encourage the voluntary and discourage the criminal and would remove the only legitimated channel for crime and aggression, we could expect that a free society would indeed suffer less from violent crime and aggression than we do now, though there is no warrant for assuming they would disappear completely. That is not utopianism, but a commonsense implication of the change in what is considered socially legitimate, and of the reward-and-penalty structure in society.

We can approach our thesis from another angle. If all men were good and none had criminal tendencies, then there would indeed be no need for a state, as conservatives concede. But if on the other hand all men were evil then the case for the state is just as shaky, since why should



anyone assume that those men who form a government obtain all the guns and the power to coerce others should be magically exempt from the badness of all the other persons outside the government?

Tom Paine, a classical libertarian often considered to be naively optimistic about human nature, rebutted the conservative evil human nature argument for a strong state as follows: "If all human nature be corrupt, it is needless to strengthen the corruption by establishing a succession of kings, who be they ever so base are still to be obeyed..." Paine added "no man since the fall have ever been equal to the trust" of being given power over all. And as libertarian F.A. Harper once wrote:

Still using the same principle that political rulership should be employed to the extent of the evil in man, we would then have a society in which complete political rulership of all the affairs of everybody would be called for. ...One man would rule all. But who would serve as the dictator? However he were to be selected and affixed to the political throne, he would surely be a totally evil person, since all men are evil. And this society would then be ruled by a totally evil dictator possessed of total political power. And how in the name of logic, could anything short of total evil be its consequence? How could it be better than having no political rulership at all in that society?<sup>51</sup>

Finally, since, as we have seen, men are actually a mixture of good and evil, a regime of liberty serves to encourage the good and discourage the bad, at least in the sense that the voluntary mutually beneficial are good and the criminal is bad. In no theory human nature, then, whether it be goodness, badness, or a mixture of the two, can statism be justified.

In the course of denying the notion that he is a conservative, classical

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51 F.A. Harper, "Try this on Your Friends," *Faith and Freedom*, January 1955, 19.

liberal F.A. Hayek pointed out, “The main merit of individualism, which Adam Smith and his contemporaries advocated is that it is a system under which bad men can do least harm. It is a social system which is not dependent for its functioning on finding good men for running it, or on all men becoming better than they now are, but which makes use of that all have been given variety and complexity.”<sup>52</sup>

It is important to note what differentiates libertarians from utopians in the pejorative sense. Libertarianism does not set out to remold human nature. One of socialism’s major goals is to create which in practice means by totalitarian methods, a New Socialist Man. An individual whose major goal would be to work diligently and altruistically for the collective. Libertarianism is a political philosophy which says given any existing human nature, liberty is the only moral and the most effective political system.

Obviously, libertarianism—as well as any other social system—will work better the more individuals are peaceful and the less they are criminal or aggressive. And libertarians, along with most other people, would like to attain a world where more individuals are “good” and fewer are criminals. But this is not the doctrine of libertarianism *per se*, which says that *whatever* the mixture of man’s nature may be at any given time, liberty is best.

Myth number six—and my final myth: Libertarians believe that every person knows his own interests best. Just as the preceding charge holds that libertarians believe all men to be perfectly good, so this myth charges them with believing that everyone is perfectly wise. Yet, it is then maintained, this is not true of many people, and therefore the state must intervene. But the libertarian no more assumes perfect wisdom than he postulates perfect goodness. There is a certain common sense in holding that most men are better apprised of their own needs and

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52 F.A. Hayek, *Individualism and the Economic Order* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948). He reiterated this point in his article “Why I’m Not a Conservative.”

goals than is anyone else. But there is no assumption that everyone always knows his own interest best. Libertarianism rather asserts that everyone should have the *right* to pursue his own interest as he deems best. What is being asserted is the right to act with one's own personal property and not the necessary wisdom of most such action.

It is also true, however, that the free market—in contrast to government—has built-in mechanisms to enable people to turn freely to experts who can give sound advice on how to pursue one's interest best. As we have seen earlier, free individuals are not hermetically sealed from one another. For in the free market, any individual, if in doubt about what his own true interest may be, is free to hire or consult experts to give them advice based on their possibly superior knowledge. The individual may hire such experts, and on the free market, could continuously test their soundness or helpfulness.

Individuals in the market, therefore, *tend* to patronize those experts whose advice will prove most successful. Good doctors, lawyers, or architects will reap rewards on the free market while poor ones will tend to fare badly. But when government intervenes, the government expert acquires his revenue by compulsory levy upon the taxpayers. There is no market test of a success in advising people of their own true interests. He only need have ability in acquiring the political support of the state's machinery of coercion.

Thus, the privately hired expert will tend to flourish in proportion to his ability, whereas the government expert will flourish in proportion with success in currying political favor. Moreover, the government expert will be no more virtuous than the private one; his only superiority will be in gaining the favor of those who wield political force. But a crucial difference between the two is that the privately hired expert has every pecuniary incentive to care about his clients or patients, and to do his best by them. But the government expert has no such incentive; he obtains his revenue in any case. Hence, the individual consumer will tend to fare better on the free market.

I hope that this essay has contributed to clearing away the rubble

of myth and misconception about libertarianism. Conservatives and everyone else should politely be put on notice that libertarians do *not* believe that everyone is good, nor that everyone is an all-wise expert on his own interest, nor that every individual is an isolated and hermetically sealed atom. Libertarians are not necessarily libertines or hedonists, nor are they necessarily atheists; and libertarians emphatically *do* believe in moral principles.

Let each of us now proceed to an examination of libertarianism as it really is, unencumbered by myth or legend. Let us look at liberty plain, without fear or favor. I am confident that, were this to be done, libertarianism would enjoy an impressive rise in the number of its followers.

## THE NEED FOR PUBLIC AUTHORITY

By Walter F. Berns

As Mr. Regnery mentioned, this is the second time I have been invited to address you. As he also mentioned, on the first occasion almost exactly ten years ago I had just resigned from Cornell University. Some of you may recall that the university had been taken over by students with guns, loaded, and that first the administration, and then the faculty, had collapsed into separate but equally ignominious heaps. My resignation gave me some fleeting fame and led to your invitation. Since then, of course, Americans have been collapsing all over the place and we are all, more or less, resigned to it.

I spoke at the dinner session on that occasion. The following day, I attended a luncheon session addressed by two members of the society. The first speaker expressed his concern that certain elements of civility seem to be disappearing from the American society, and he called for government action designed to restore those elements of civility—or to strengthen them. For example, if I remember correctly, he favored such programs as school prayer, public aid to religious education, and the enforcement of the laws against obscenity.

The second speaker gave a paper that might have been entitled, but was not entitled, “The Withering Away of the State.” Its thesis, I recall, was that government was unnecessary except to provide a defense against international marauders, and he promised to return the next year with a paper demonstrating that this defense role, too, was unnecessary and could better be performed by private police forces or armies. Whether he came back to deliver that paper the following

year I do not know.

What struck me at that time was that the Philadelphia Society must be, at least potentially, a house divided against itself. What besides a common dislike of liberals or of the Democratic Party did its members hold in common? There seemed to be a danger that if the liberals ever folded their tents—or were forced to do so and filed silently into the night of our history—the Philadelphia Society might face what the liberals themselves would call an identity crisis. It is a fact, I think, that the liberals are being forced right now to strike a good many of the tents that they have erected over the face of our political landscape. And so that the time might be at hand when their opponents will have to decide what it is that they are.

If my colleague Robert Nisbet is correct, the choice lies between libertarianism and conservatism. These positions are not finally reconcilable. As I shall argue, libertarianism is an extension of the original liberalism in so far as it depends on the principle of self-interest. Conservatism on the other hand is a vestige of the original opposition to the original liberalism in so far as it depends on the principle of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of mankind. As an outsider, it would be improper for me to attempt to influence your choice between these two positions or principles. But since my topic is the need for public authority, it would be difficult to avoid saying something relevant to the choice. Besides, some of you, I know, are familiar with my work and therefore are sure to know where, on the whole, I stand.

In fact of course, and in this respect my position may be similar to that held by many of you, a part of me stands in each camp. Living in Washington this year, I have been given reason to be appalled, all over again, by the size of the federal government and by its attitude toward the rest of the country. For example, I am appalled by a government that sets aside some 50,000 parking places for its employees—the vast majority of them at no charge and the rest at a very nominal charge—and then in the name of energy conservation dares to tell the rest of the country to drive no faster than fifty-five miles an hour. These parking

places in the District of Columbia, incidentally, guarantee that traffic will not move when the snow falls, or a farmer's tractor is parked on the 14th Street bridge over the Potomac. Mr. Carter the other night promised to do something about the bulk of these parking places, but there remain over 8,000 of them on the Hill outside the control of the executive branch, but in the control of the legislative branch, where parking may be had for no charge at all. And I will not hold my breath until that time comes when the Congress will begin to charge itself and its minions for the right to park.

I am appalled when the people who live here in Washington, and who already enjoy a per capita income some twenty-six percent higher than the national average, dare to argue that the principle of no taxation without representation entitles them to full representation in the Congress. Living in Washington serves to reinforce an opinion of long-standing, an opinion held since I ceased to be a member of the Socialist party: that the libertarians are at least partly right. We would be better off if a large part of this federal state withered away. And I suppose we could all agree, on the whole, where to begin our dismantling of this government. The Department of Energy, for one. Then the Federal Trade Commission, then the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, and a good deal of HEW beginning with its secretary.

We think the economy would be healthier if the government would cease much of its regulation. We might also agree, on the whole again, that we would be better off if the government were to get out of our lives to some extent. We might agree with this statement, which I am about to quote, made in a dissenting opinion in a case decided some seven years ago by the Supreme Court: "The intrusion of government into this domain is symptomatic of the disease in this society. As the years pass, the power of government becomes more and more pervasive. It is a power to suffocate both people and causes." I do not, however, think that all of us would agree with the position taken in that case by this particular judge, and I doubt that any of us would regard that

Judge—William O. Douglas—as a hero. He was complaining about the refusal of the majority of the court to grant newsmen a privilege of not answering questions put to them in a court of law or by a grand jury.<sup>53</sup> Most of us would, I think, say that if President Nixon is required to answer questions put to him by Judge Sirica, then by George the *New York Times* reporter should be required to answer questions put to them by other judges. We do not object to this form of governmental power. At least I do not.

But I am not a libertarian. While I happily support the application of the libertarian principle of self-interest to economic activities, because I think that Adam Smith was right and because it seems clear to me that capitalism is the only economic system ever devised by the wit of man that puts men to work and guarantees that men will in fact work. I am of this opinion, but I cannot support the extension of that principle into other areas.

I can state my reason simply: I do not share what appears to be the libertarians' view of the nature of man. This means that I must disagree with Professor Hayek, for example, when he says that "it is conceivable that the spontaneous order which we call society may exist without government." I do not believe it. I do not believe that without government there can be any order, and certainly not a decent order, one in which he and I would care to live. I do not believe it because, like Thomas Hobbes, I think that life in a society that is not governed, that lacks the authority and power of a government, that such a society

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53 In the case *Branzburg v. Hayes*, 408 U.S. 665 (1972), the Supreme Court confronted a situation in which a newspaper reporter subpoenaed to appear before a grand jury refused to identify certain persons he had seen using and selling illicit drugs. The reporter had observed the illegal activities during an undercover investigation of the local drug scene. Citing the First Amendment, he refused to disclose his confidential sources to the grand jury. The reporters lost their case by a vote of 5-4, setting the precedent that reporters generally cannot avoid testifying before a criminal grand jury.



will be “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.”<sup>54</sup>

Hobbes could be called the first libertarian. He was the founder of the modern liberal state insofar as he was the first thinker to elaborate the principles of that state. I mean by this that he was the first political philosopher openly to argue that government may be founded on an anti-religious basis, and the first to build a politics that takes its bearings from the natural rights of man. And specifically, the right of each man to preserve himself and to do whatever is necessary to preserve himself. This includes the right to kill anyone who threatens him. If libertarianism can be defined as the body of thought that opposes government in the name of liberty, or in the name of the private life, or in the name of the private realm, then Hobbes was a libertarian because he was the first political philosopher to deny altogether the natural existence of the public realm. Naturally, that is to say by nature, there is no such thing as “a public” or “the public,” Hobbes taught. Naturally, that is by nature, there is only a private life.

Those of us who appreciate privacy should not lose sight of our indebtedness to Hobbes. Before him, and for a time after him, it was understood that every human activity was subject to public scrutiny and public control, if not by the state then by the church, and usually by the state as church. The highest claim to privacy was traditionally made by the philosophers. They claimed that whatever might be said about other activities, at least their activity—philosophy—ought to be outside the range of public control. But, as I once wrote, we know from Plato’s *Republic* that even the philosopher can, in principle, be made to forgo his privacy in the best of all possible cities where he will rule as king. In fact, of course, the life of Socrates, and the work of Plato, can best be understood as an attempt to preserve the philosophic life from public attention and from public interference. But that only serves to indicate how difficult it is to make the case for privacy, and how much

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54 Hobbes’s famous observation on the nature of man comes from chapter twelve of *Leviathan*.

our privacy owes to Hobbes. As I said, he was the first philosopher, or to be more precise now the first political philosopher, to argue that by nature all was private. That the public realm was artificial, in the strict sense of having to be made, made by man.

The success of his enterprise was astonishing. True, the British and Canadians continue to carry coins in their pockets bearing the words *Dei Gratia Regina*, “Queen By the Grace of God,” but that is merely a vestige of a pre-Hobbesian politics and of little practical consequence today. We Americans insist that legitimate government can only come from the will of the people. To secure these rights, we say, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. According to Thomas Jefferson, who wrote these words, as well as to Thomas Hobbes, “No one has by nature and no one has by the grace of God a right to rule any other man.”

But there is a difference of some magnitude between Hobbes and the libertarians. Hobbes knew that the nature of man required government. That is why he called for a sovereign with absolute powers, the sovereign he denominated Leviathan: The king over all the children of pride. To repeat, Hobbes taught that by nature man is a private animal, not a public or political animal. That he thinks first of himself and of others only as objects to be conquered or to be put to his own use. This is why life in the state of nature is a war of every man against every man. A war, he says, that ceases only in death. This warring can be avoided only by each man yielding his natural rights to the artificial ruler brought into being by the contract that all the real men make with each other. This artificial ruler, this Leviathan, is in principle an absolute ruler.

In practice, however, this Leviathan will confine himself to keeping the peace and otherwise will leave men alone to pursue their private lives and their private activities, especially their private economic activities. After all, we call the state based on Hobbesian principles a liberal state because its aim is to permit the greatest range of human liberty, consistent with peace. Hobbes stated the principle of this and

his famous reformulation of the Golden Rule: "Do not that to another which thou wouldest not have done to thyself." Not "do unto others as you would have them do to you" but on the contrary in his reformulation, "do not do as you would not have done." Leave your neighbor alone. Leave him alone in exchange for his promise to leave you alone. The job of the sovereign is to enforce that promise, and of course to guard against foreign marauders, and to do nothing else.

Libertarians will recognize this. It is, after all, the prototype of their state, the state that leaves men alone. It is the state that does not get involved in censorship, for example. It is the state that does not get involved in moral education. It would not forbid abortions, for another example. It makes no attempt to form the character of its citizens. It takes men as they are. It does not preach. It does not attempt to make good Samaritans of travelers on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho, or New York to Washington, being content to provide highway police patrols as a way of protecting those travelers. It is the state built on the solid principles of self-interest. Men will obey the law or live up to their contractual promise to leave other men alone, because it is in their interest to do so. And if they do not, they will be punished by Leviathan. In short, this is the prototype of the night watchman state.

Two months ago, approximately, a leading libertarian spokesman honored AEI by agreeing to speak on these subjects and to answer questions. He spoke, he was questioned, and he answered them. He spoke of how in primitive societies there was a spirit of altruism, and of how the progress of civilization could be characterized by the gradual replacement of this altruism by the sounder principle of self-interest. One of the questions he was asked was this: "What if people who had been taught to think first of themselves, or perhaps have been taught to think only of themselves, do not obey the laws, meaning primarily the criminal laws?" His reply was, as one might expect, they will be punished. To which I now, in turn, reply: They will be punished if they are caught, and if the police and prosecutors are not corrupt, and if the society is not seduced by a compassion for criminals that causes them

to pity the criminals. And in the extreme case, of which we have many examples, if they do not have this tendency to blame their victims.

What is our situation in the United States right now? Of the millions of index crimes committed annually, in the United States, 98.3 percent go unpunished. That statistic alone is sufficient to demonstrate the foolishness of the libertarian argument. We live in a state profoundly influenced by Hobbesian principles, and a state that still employs a police force. But the libertarians would do away with the police force in the extreme case. They are Hobbesians without Leviathan. They would substitute, in the extreme case, private police forces. But why, on the basis of their own principles, should the private police forces—however well-paid they are—protect their employers?

I said earlier that the libertarians were Hobbesians, but with a difference, and that this difference was of some magnitude. By advocating this abolition of public authority and its replacement by private arrangements, they are advocating, Hobbes would say, a return to the state of nature. What reason have they for thinking that this state of nature will not be a state of war of every man against every man? Who among them has done the psychological studies comparable to Hobbes's? Who among them has done the studies proving Hobbes was wrong about the nature of man? Or, why this confidence that the spontaneous society will be a decent society?

In 1764, a man who can fairly be described as the first criminologist, Cesare Beccaria, published what is surely the most influential criminal law book ever written, *On Crimes and Punishments*.<sup>55</sup> Beccaria was the first man to apply Hobbes's general principles to the specific subject of crime and punishment. He called for what we call today a massive decriminalization. He also called for enlightenment and a vigorous enforcement of the criminal laws. Men were not to be morally educated,

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55 Cesare Beccaria was an Italian criminologist, politician, and philosopher who published *On Crimes and Punishments* in 1764. In it he put forward some of the first arguments against the death penalty and for a more enlightened approach to criminal justice.

that part of the state was to wither away. But Beccaria was confident that they could be made to obey the criminal law out of self-interest. Enlightenment will remind them of the terrors of the state of nature, and the terrible consequences if that state of nature were to return. And the threat of punishment will demonstrate to them the advantages of obeying the law. Would this system work? And will libertarianism work?

Exactly one hundred years ago, Dostoevsky in his *Notes from Underground*, ridiculed the very idea of it. And I have a paragraph from him that I must quote:

But these are all golden dreams. Oh, tell me, who was it first announced, who was it first proclaimed, that man only does nasty things because he does not know his own interests; and that if he were enlightened, if his eyes were open to his real normal interests, man would at once cease to do nasty things, would at once become good and noble because, being enlightened and understanding his real advantage, he would see his own advantage in the good and nothing else, and we all know that no man can, consciously, act against his own interests, consequently, so to say, through necessity, he would begin doing good. Oh, the babe. Oh, the pure, innocent child.<sup>56</sup>

One hundred years before Dostoevsky, in fact even as Beccaria himself was writing, Rousseau ridiculed this Hobbesian and Beccarian idea of relying solely on self-interest. “Will it not be likely,” he asked, “that if the laws are based merely on self-interest, some wicked men will see immediately that their interest can best be advanced if others obey the rule”—he is referring largely to Hobbes’s Golden Rule, “do not do as you would not have done to you.” “Will not some sick as

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<sup>56</sup> Nineteenth Century Russian author Fyodor Dostoevsky published *Notes from the Underground* in 1864.

wicked men see immediately that their interests will best be advanced if others obey the rule while they disobey it?" Rousseau thought so. And was he not right? He said that the wicked man will profit from two ways: from the good man's justice and from his own injustice. In fact, the wicked man will be delighted if everyone, everyone except himself, obeys that rule.

To repeat, the question to be answered by the libertarians is this: What will be the effect of a system of law that says only that it is not in the interest of a man to commit a crime? Rousseau's answer was: there will be more crime. There will be more crime because once people are not governed by decent morals and manners, once people are no longer morally educated by the laws, once people are not governed by decent habits instilled in them with the assistance of the law, they will soon enough discover the secret of how to evade the laws.

Rousseau was commenting on the Hobbesian state. It is not difficult to imagine what he would say about the libertarian version of the Hobbesian state—the Hobbesian state without Leviathan. This country, the United States, was founded on the principle of self-interest. To secure these rights, says the Declaration, and these rights are private rights, governments are instituted among men. Men institute government, in principle, for selfish reasons. That was, and is, the principle on which we built.

But, of course, the "we" who built on this principle were not simply self-interested men. Not simply Hobbesian or Lockean men. We were, to an overwhelming extent, civilized Englishmen or British men. We were not, contrary to the principle, essentially private men. We were united in families, in churches, in towns, and a host of other private institutions. We were men whose habits had been acquired from a civilized past, whose character had been formed under the laws of an older and civilized politics. Moreover, while the national government did nothing in this area, the states—through their laws—continued to support the private institutions: the churches and the families whose job it was to generate good moral habits. The states also provided a

public education that was designed in large part to provide sound moral training. And the states did not hesitate to act as censor.

I could go on providing such examples, but what I have said is already, I think, sufficient to illustrate my point. We were founded on liberal principles, but we use the public authority in non-liberal ways. We did so partly out of habit, I suppose, and partly because there were men—and to avoid naming the obvious one I will mention someone who is not so obvious, Horace Mann, the central figure in American public education, and he is a good example of it—but there were men who reflected on our situation and who knew that a liberal state could not be perpetuated with simply self-interested citizens. Men had to be taught to be public-spirited, to care for others, to be at least somewhat altruistic.

In the course of time—and partly as the result of Supreme Court decisions affecting public education, public support of private education, and of course decisions affecting the censorship of obscenity—we have ceased to use the public authority in these ways. We can now be said to be living off the fat that we built up in the past. I shudder to think of what would happen if we move all the way from liberalism to libertarianism.

I close with an anecdote. Several years ago, for a period of several years, I served on the National Advisory Board of the National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice, the research branch of LEAA,<sup>57</sup> which happens to be one of those things I think should wither away in Washington, incidentally. One of the subjects frequently discussed in our meetings was the cause of crime. “Why do people commit crimes?” was the way the question was formulated. At one meeting, being in a somewhat puckish mood, I asked my colleagues on the advisory board and the head of the agency and the Deputy Attorney General of the United States who was present, I asked why

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57 Law Enforcement Assistance Administration. LEAA dissolved in the late '80s, and was later replaced by the Office of Justice Programs.

not commit crimes? No one answered. No one said, “Because it is wrong to commit a crime.” I suspect that they did believe that it was wrong to commit a crime. So far as I know they were all decent men. But being sophisticated men, not a single one of them felt free to answer in a simple but honest way: “Because it is wrong to commit a crime.” Their embarrassment, and I asked it at subsequent meetings precisely to embarrass them, their embarrassment speaks volumes to me. That embarrassment is one step away from the point where, when it is to their advantage to do so, they will commit crimes. Then we, and especially the libertarians among us, will have greater reason than ever to understand the point of Juvenal’s famous question: “*Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?*”<sup>58</sup>

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58 This famous Latin phrase is taken from second century Roman poet Juvenal’s satires and translates to “Who will guard the guards themselves?”





## CHAPTER 9

# U.S. FOREIGN POLICY AND NATIONAL SECURITY

**NOVEMBER 21-22, 1980**  
**NEW YORK, NEW YORK**

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 21**  
**6:00-8:30PM**

John A. Howard, Chairman

Arnaud de Borchgrave, "Behind the Headlines"

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 21**

***U.S. Foreign Policy and American Values***

Richard J. Bishirjian, "U.S. Foreign Policy and American Values"

Norman Podhoretz, "U.S. Foreign Policy and American Values"

## BEHIND THE HEADLINES

By Arnaud de Borchgrave

Shortly before the elections, Thomas Hughes, president of the Carnegie endowment, claimed that some of us have been converting conservative biases into other people's perceptions about US strategic vulnerabilities and lack of political leadership, and then confidently asserting our views about what the United States is all about. Well, Mr. Hughes, and many others like him, particularly in the media, were wrong. I do not know of a single head of government, or head of state, or head of intelligence service in the Western world, who did not feel that this was the most critical election in the United States since the end of World War Two, and that four more years of Jimmy Carter would have been an unmitigated disaster for the Western world. While I agree that a defense build-up cannot be substituted for a foreign policy, the liberals, as proved by the electorate, were wrong to dismiss the new team's pronouncements as mythology, petulance, false pride, and nostalgia. Concern over Soviet expansionism, of the loss of US credibility, and support for a stronger defense posture does not translate into truculent nationalism.

In a recent national opinion poll in western Germany, sixty percent of the people thought that another world conflict had become a real possibility and only eight percent of the people—if you had asked for my rough guess, I would have said it was fifty percent, but only percent of the people—still shared a strong conviction that when the chips are down, they can rely on the US as the world's only countervailing power. And fifty percent of the people felt that West Germany should

begin moving to a position equidistant between the two superpowers. In the closing weeks of the campaign, West Germany as you know was already foregoing its NATO pledge to increase defense spending in real terms by three percent a year, and Belgium, Holland, and Denmark are drifting off in the same direction. A year and a half ago, I think the story can now be told, Chancellor Schmidt on the west coast of this country at the Bohemian Grove meeting said, "Give us four more years of Carter and West Germany will be a neutralized nation, and even if I'm re-elected Chancellor," which he was last month, "I will not be able to prevent it."

Allied leaders felt, and I have been privileged to share their confidences, that Carter was strategically unaware, geopolitically ignorant, and diplomatically inept, and that the Carter Doctrine was ill thought through and hastily patched together from a position of weakness after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and was primarily inspired by presidential campaign considerations. All—without exception—all friendly leaders consider our decision-making process, as evidenced by the blunders of the last four years, to be a major security risk for their own future and they feel that the strategic crisis of the 1980s was one that Jimmy Carter brought upon the Western world. No, our nation did not feel safer with President Carter after all. I think the whole nation felt as the hostages did, with fresh evidence accumulating daily that we were being held captive by forces we did not even know how to influence, let alone control. That we had lost our sense of perspective, our sense of orientation, our sense of destiny. And personally, I have never seen a more dramatic illustration of our impotence than the current war between Iraq and Iran, with the Soviet Union, keeping one foot in both camps, gradually emerging as the arbiter of conflict in an area that is critically important to all of our futures.

After four years of Jimmy Carter, friends and allies appear to have forgotten that there is nothing inevitable about history, as the Russians would have us believe. History is neutral, to be shaped by political and military leaders, not by media stars and pollsters. But there is

a growing loss of nerve among Western democracies, which I am deeply convinced stems from a military inferiority complex vis-à-vis the Soviets. The stakes in the next few months—and let us not kid ourselves about this—are nothing short of the de facto neutralization of Western Europe and a rebirth of isolationism in this country. Henri Simonet, a former Belgian socialist foreign minister, and a candidate to succeed Joseph Luns as Secretary General of NATO, recently decried neutralism all over Europe. The British Labour Party, as you know, has not only adopted a platform that calls for unilateral nuclear disarmament but has elected Michael Foot, a left-wing radical, as its leader, defeating the moderate, Atlantic-oriented, Denis Healey. Conditioned reflexes of appeasement are rampant all over Europe today, and I do live on that continent. It is what the French press has been calling for months “disalignment,” but the next step could easily be sleepwalking into non-alignment. And the US relationship with Western Europe will be Governor Reagan’s biggest foreign policy challenge, without any question.

On the night of his appointment on December 5th, 1976, Cyrus Vance told me in his very first interview that one of his first priorities would be to try to redefine détente with the Soviet Union and make it global in scope. Because, he explained, if it is going to remain confined to the two Europes it will be a sham and no real détente. Well, that turned out to be another major non-event under this administration. When Reagan talks about linkage, that is precisely what he means: no more and no less. An administration that can claim, as it has over and over again, as Dr. Brzezinski repeated on *The Today Show* this morning, that it has actually rejuvenated a weak and dispirited NATO alliance, raises very grave doubts indeed about its grasp of reality.

In many of the conversations I had with statesmen and stateswomen, I heard the warning time and again—and many of those interviews were published in Newsweek, including some of them with Third World socialist hardliners—that the confusion, incoherence, and flip-flops, and U-turns, and O-turns, and zigzags, and poor crisis management,

and unmet geopolitical challenges that had become associated with this administration's foreign policy could only lead to disaster. Our electorate understood, even if some of our pundits did not, that we are sliding toward a world out of control with our relative military power continuing to decline, and with the Western world's economic lifeline increasingly vulnerable to blackmail, and with hostile radical forces still growing on every continent, in many cases encouraged by populist influences inside the Carter administration. The populists that Mr. Carter put into key positions shared a belief that military power had become increasingly irrelevant to their unorthodox views about how diplomacy should be practiced in the settlement of international disputes. Strategic superiority was decried as meaningless. *Détente* demanded drastic retrenchment of US forces, a generous opening of advanced technology to communist countries, along of course with more credits, and a redirection of US strategic emphasis from the East-West conflict to the search for meeting the bottomless demands of the radical regimes of the Third World. Then came the rude awakening of the results of the Jamaican elections, a major turning point: the defeat of Castro and Carter's good friend Michael Manley, without any encouragement from the United States.

Third World radicalism simply cannot be tempered by a more generous and understanding US posture, because the radicals of the Third World—and I know them well—object to our very existence, to our capitalist social structure, far more than they do to our foreign policy. And the closer we try to move to them, of course, the more they feel compelled to distance themselves from us if only to maintain their revolutionary credentials. We have placated with humble apologies the most absurd accusations and met radical demands with abject concessions, and this was the sort of appeasement that led the block of so-called non-aligned nations to accept Fidel Castro as their chairman for three years.

I have learned during thirty-four years of journalism, and most of that time as a foreign correspondent, that Soviet leaders are not

impulsive people. They have made very shrewd power political calculations and they are now trying to maximize the advantages that the changed balance of military power in the world confers on the men in the Kremlin, and which they cannot gamble will last forever. I do not think I am telling you anything that you do not know when I say that the Soviets spent twenty years building up to this present point, and that through the 1970s they earmarked three times as much as we did for defense, and in '79 alone outspent this country by fifty percent. I think it was Pat Moynihan who said a few months ago that the notion that the Soviets have surpassed the US militarily has gone from total heresy to respectability, if not orthodoxy, in less than three years.

Not since the 1930s have Western nations accepted so passively such a drastic shift in the balance of power. And Europe's reactions of continued détente at almost any cost would seem to indicate, to me at least, that Soviet leaders have calculated correctly. There is not one national intelligence director in Europe today, in Western Europe, who does not believe that we will face a period of maximum danger over the next five years as the relative military balance continues to shift against this country, and while a cycle of third-world revolutions plays itself out, as play itself out it will (witness what just happened in Jamaica). But during that period there is no question that Soviet leaders, either the tired old men now in the Kremlin or their successors, already in their mid-60s, may be very tempted to unite on a single set of objectives, secure a favorable international environment quickly and brutally before facing their own domestic economic reassessment, as face it they must.

Rough strategic equivalence, a euphemism as you know for growing Soviet nuclear superiority, means an increasingly dangerous world in which conventional weaponry, foreign bases, economic resources, and secure air and sea lanes to protect our supply lines become absolutely vital to Western security. Many of us appear to have very faulty memories with near-zero feedback. Perhaps we have forgotten what Mr. Brezhnev told his Warsaw Pact colleagues in April of '73,

a meeting that had been penetrated by a British agent in the form of a high-ranking East European official who subsequently defected to the United Kingdom. Quoting Mr. Brezhnev: "Peaceful coexistence and the current development of our new weapon systems are designed to achieve global military supremacy by 1985, by which time," he went on to explain, "the forces of world socialism will be in a position to dictate their will to the remnants of capitalist power in the Western world." So where was the moderation that the McNamaras and Kennans thought they had detected?

But liberal intellectuals laughed a few of us out of court for repeating these warnings, for writing about them. We were told that this was empty communist rhetoric and editors spiked—hence the title of our book *The Spike*—spiked stories, killed stories, that did not fit these naive perceptions of a Soviet Union evolving into a "live and let live" accommodation with the United States. The populists, I am sure you all remember, denounced the arrogance of power. They said we would be a lot better off weak or weaker. Well, here we are, a lot weaker. And as I look back again on thirty-four years of journalism, it is very hard to escape the conclusion that the peace of the world was never more secure than when the United States was most powerful.

One of the most spectacular privileges enjoyed by some of my colleagues is that they are always free to demonstrate scandalous stupidity without ever jeopardizing their reputation. Those who worshipped at Stalin's feet in the '20s and '30s have kept their reputations intact and they have found very worthy successors. Remember how they all canonized Mao Zedong, Ho Chi Minh, Pham Van Dong, and General Giap. We have already forgotten, I am sure, that Andy Young was even suggesting that the Ayatollah himself might be worthy of canonization as a saint. I wonder how many of you know this, because this story to my knowledge did not cross the Atlantic. The former communist Minister of Justice of the South Vietnamese National Liberation Front escaped among the boat people, and he said, and I quote, "Compared to the tyrants who rule us today, former president



Thieu of South Vietnam, once described in your media as a fascist American puppet, was an enlightened liberal.”

Pacifism, neutralism, and radicalism have merged into populist perceptions that have led us astray time and again. We know from Soviet defectors that Moscow has long since concluded that the de facto neutralization of Western Europe is already well under way. After all, their definition of détente has survived some very important turning points in post-World War II history. Just a few examples: in ‘75 the introduction of Cuban proxy troops into Africa, in ‘77 a massive Soviet air and sea-lift into the Horn of Africa, ten days after that famous Begin-Sadat Summit meeting in Jerusalem, pouring over one billion dollars’ worth of equipment into Ethiopia in a six-week period. Their détente survived a Soviet-assisted Marxist coup in Afghanistan in April of ‘78, followed immediately by the building of three Soviet military bases in Shindand, Kandahar, and Bagram, which of course put Soviet power to within 350 miles of the eastern shore of the Strait of Hormuz. And détente survived a very little noticed but terribly important pact between South Yemen—the only Marxist state in the Arab world—and the Soviet Union exactly thirteen months ago, whose military clauses went further than anything the Soviet Union has signed with any Arab country since the end of World War II. They also called for the building of three new military bases with extraterritorial privileges and for an increase in the East German, Cuban, and Soviet military advisory groups from 3,000 to 20,000 in a twelve-month period, which expired a month ago. And I checked with some of my intelligence sources in Western Europe just a few days ago, and they say the figure is now 18,000. I have not seen that anywhere in this country. So why should not détente, their détente, survive what has already been, or has been minimized for some months now by Soviet disinformation, as a minor police action in Afghanistan?

I think one has to be irredeemably myopic not to see that the Soviets have been maneuvering their proxies by the projection of their global power which, as you all know, has increased roughly eight-fold in the

last ten years while our own has steadily declined in the very areas upon which our allies depend for their survival. For this book, which you kindly alluded to, *The Spike*, Robert Moss and I had access to some twenty-five defectors from the KGB, the GRU, and other Eastern secret services. And to a man, I am sorry ladies there was not one Mata Hari in the group, but to a man they have all told us the same thing. And that is that Soviet disinformation has time and again successfully anesthetized Western opinion makers and Western governments. The media, as I watched it evolve in recent years, has become a very powerful instrument of illusion, in defiance of basic political, geopolitical, and historical realities. There is no reason why you should have read this it has not been translated yet, but a former high-ranking member of the French Communist party, Auguste Lecoœur, expelled from the party for having denounced the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in '68, recently published a book in France titled *La Stratégie du Mensonge*, the *Strategy of Lies*. He said everything we did, our whole *raison d'être* was a lie. Well, what he has written about in the French context, we have tried to explain in an international context through our book *The Spike*.

Perhaps it is worth remembering, because again memories are short, a letter the Dr. Andrei Sakharov, and we are talking about a man who is still a hero to every liberal in the Western world, who invented the Soviet H-bomb, who had every door to the Kremlin open to him for twenty-five years before he became Russia's leading dissident, now in KGB-imposed exile in the city of Gorky, who smuggles out a letter to the *New York Times* which to the eternal credit of Edward Klein, the editor of the Sunday *New York Times Magazine*, was published as the cover story of their June eighth issue, and which warns in no uncertain terms about four categories of agents of influence busily promoting Soviet interests and Soviet objectives inside our Western societies, but particularly inside my profession.

Very quickly, you know, he is talking about number one as he explains it: the ideologically motivated, motivations that are worthy of

discussion. But number two, he says, there are other people who call themselves progressive because they consider it fashionable or prestigious or financially rewarding or, which is always very convenient, all three. Number three, he says, there are naive, poorly informed, indifferent people who close their eyes and ears to the bitter truth and eagerly swallow any sweet lie provided that it is appropriately sugarcoated with disarmament proposals and peace offensives. And number four, he says the most important category, people who have been bought. B-O-U-G-H-T, in the most direct sense of that word. And here, he says, "I'm referring to businessmen, a great many writers, a great many journalists, government advisors, even heads of press and television." Well, that is a devastating indictment. And it was carefully spiked, because I was in Europe shortly after that came out and nobody seemed to be aware of it. The wire services carried certain passages, but not the passages that I have just quoted.

Sakharov also told us not to reject allegations about links between the KGB and international terrorist organizations. But of course, if our leaders face up to these links, they have to face up to what *détente* is all about, and that they will not do. The world, says Sakharov, is facing very critical times and cruel cataclysms because the West and developing countries do not show the required firmness, unity, and consistency in resisting this totalitarian challenge. And this, he says, relates to governance, to the intelligentsia, to the media, to big business, and it is critically important that the common danger be fully understood. And then, he says, everything else will fall into place. And I happen to agree with this because we simply have to get the diagnosis right before we can begin to come up with the appropriate remedies. It is not simply a question of throwing money at the defense budget.

The dangers—our friends and allies have seen it for the last three years—stem from the erroneous perceptions of this administration, and I do not have to recall what they were but very briefly: unilateral restraint in the development of new weapons systems, unreciprocated concessions, turn the other cheek diplomacy, unmet geopolitical

challenges, and of course a greater emphasis on human rights policies, and that somehow this huge ball of wax, if thrown at the Kremlin, would strike a responsive chord. Well, it struck a responsive chord alright, but not quite the one that Mr. Carter had anticipated.

And the most important question of all was not even addressed in our presidential debates and campaign. And that is the fact that the West has not been using its overwhelming economic might to balance Russia's overwhelming military power, but to support it. Because today we are in effect funding two defense budgets, our own and theirs. Technology transfers have become very big business indeed. Credits from west to east have now gone over the one-hundred-billion-dollar mark. I thought it was seventy-five, but the *Wall Street Journal* corrected me three weeks ago. And the new military trucks that I saw in Afghanistan and those APC engines that I saw Soviet soldiers tinkering with in twenty degree below zero weather had come out of the Kama River Plant in the Urals, built with 132 US licenses, not to mention scores of other licenses from Japan and Western Europe. We did not invent this; Soviet officers who arrested us for getting too close to their positions were proud to tell us where these things had been made. They even said these are the best trucks ever made in the Soviet Union. In my judgment, there is no way they could continue to spend from thirteen to fifteen percent of their GNP on the military given their massive economic problems without this kind of Western assistance.

Businessmen have no desire to make any kind of sacrifice to deter future Afghanistans, and the now ten-month-old Soviet peace offensive in Western Europe is clearly designed to reinforce the reluctance of European leaders to face up to these rather unpleasant facts. Diplomatically, economically, militarily Western Europe is demonstrating almost daily that it believes, at least subconsciously, that Soviet global military power is becoming increasingly relevant, and our own military power increasingly irrelevant, to their future cares and concerns. Some strategists, as you know, see events pushing the United States irreversibly into a new kind of power role which would somehow engage

Britain and some of the other Continental allies into a new strategy for the defense of Western interests outside of the NATO area. But so far, as you know, the new so-called Carter Doctrine has done very little to restore confidence among Western Europe's policy planners and policy makers.

The immediate threat, as you all know, is not a Soviet takeover of the oil fields, which Mr. Carter has pledged to defend against external aggression, but to the remaining pro-Western regimes on the Arab side of the Persian Gulf. The new doctrine moreover is utterly useless against a Marxist takeover, for example, in Tehran tomorrow afternoon. If Mr. Reagan wants to persuade the Allies that they should pursue a new policy vis-à-vis the Soviet Union, he is going to have to come up with very clear, precise concepts both short-term and long-term. Some of the key gut questions: should the West, for example, concede that NATO with an obsolete strategy has been overtaken by events and that the alliance as a whole or in part should now declare that the Gulf is an essential Western interest, not simply an American one? And does not such a policy presuppose an overall Middle Eastern settlement as quickly as possible, that is a solution to the Palestinian problem without of course facilitating the creation of another Cuba, or another Nicaragua, under PLO leadership on the West Bank?

Has the time not come for the Allies to pull together their not insignificant leverage on the economic side and compel the Soviet Union, not into a mindless arms race, but into a veritable reversal of the arms race by driving hard-nosed geopolitical bargains with this not insignificant economic leverage? And if the Soviet Union will not listen, because they feel that the Europeans are too scared, or too weak, or irrevocably hooked on East-West trade, should the alliance not then as a whole or in part begin to shed its inhibitions about giving the Soviets a dose of their own medicine? And by that, I mean supporting a new phenomenon: the growing anti-Marxist National Liberation fronts in areas where Marxist regimes have been imposed by force since our defeat in Vietnam, and you know them by heart.

With a little political will at the top, and real material and medical assistance to the Afghan resistance movement, which we have betrayed, Afghanistan could indeed become Russia's Vietnam and begin to reverse the tide of expansionism, or at least give very serious pause for thought to the next generation of Soviet leaders. This would throw back at the Soviets the case they made for helping North Vietnam during the war. How to restore backbone, consistency, and continuity to US foreign policy is of course, as we all know, the key. How do we do this? Clearly all like-minded nations have to pitch in because demands for American security and support are likely to exceed, if they have not exceeded already, our own capabilities. Should we not be exploring, as some of our strategists have been suggesting, a new Athenian League, an all-oceans alliance, at the very least a three ocean navy for the United States, and last but not least, a new North-South partnership with our advanced technology as the ultimate trump card?

There is, of course, as you all know, an alternative to all of this, as I think it was our friend Norman Podhoretz who expressed it so well recently, and that is a cynical retreat from crisis. But if we persist in adopting the ungainly posture of the proverbial ostrich, we should not be surprised if we get kicked in the most obvious place. We may have a very nutty political system in my adopted country, but our society has enormous underlying strength. America remains the most dynamic society in the world. There is nothing we cannot do if we set our minds to it. And I feel, having covered ninety countries in this world, that American influence must grow not shrink. And I am firmly convinced that the people who voted for Governor Reagan on November 4 intended one hell of a lot more than a repudiation of a failed presidency.

## U.S. FOREIGN POLICY AND AMERICAN VALUES

By Richard J. Bishirjian

Rousseau, more open in his attack, accused Christianity of undermining the unity of the state because a Christian gave ultimate loyalty to God. To replace Christ's teachings, he proposed a civil religion that makes "the Fatherland the object of the citizens' adoration and so teaches that service to the state and service to the state's tutelary deity are one in the same thing." But there are also Old and New Testament origins of the American civil religion. For example, in the Old Testament we find the prophecy of the reconstitution of nature in Isaiah, when he wrote "The wolf shall be a guest of the lamb and the leopard shall lie down with the kid,"<sup>59</sup> and also, Isaiah's expectation of universal world peace, when "one nation shall not raise the sword against another."<sup>60</sup> And there is also Daniel's prophecy of a fifth monarchy that terminates and concludes history.<sup>61</sup> In the New Testament, the book of Revelation speaks of a New Jerusalem, where God dwells among men and governs them directly without the mediation of worldly government.<sup>62</sup> And of course, in the book of Revelation, we also find the symbol of the millennium.<sup>63</sup>

In America our own intellectual classes fashion to civil religion, which in its modern form was composed of a commitment to democracy,

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59 Isaiah 11:6

60 Isaiah 2:4

61 Daniel chapter 7

62 Revelation 21:1-4; Revelation 22:1-5

63 Revelation 20:1-6

a progressive view of history, and a commitment to individual human rights. The commitment to democracy was not one of commitment to democratic procedures, such as majority rule, but to an ideal society, a utopian ideal applicable to America and the world. Here a quotation from Herbert Croly, founder of the intellectual journal *The New Republic*, is apt. Croly wrote, "For better or worse, democracy cannot be disentangled from an aspiration toward human perfectibility and hence from adoption of measures looking in the direction of realizing such an aspiration."

The progressive view of history underlying this expectation of human perfection and democratic form is best illustrated in two passages from speeches of Woodrow Wilson. On September 7th, 1911, he remarked, "There is approaching upon our modern times a sort of expectation of still greater days to come, when every man may lift his eyes with hope to the horizon, when there has come a day of peace and righteousness, when the nation shall be glad in the presence of God." Woodrow Wilson also said on October 24th, 1914 that, "Man has progressed and will continue to progress to that day when he shall live in the full light, where all the light that illuminates mankind shines direct from the face of God." I assume that is why we are still living.

The commitment of our intellectual classes also includes a commitment to the individual human rights that have been hypostatized, removed from their historical contexts, and made over into ideological goals, in the light of which historical communities can only be judged to be defective. I trust that in addressing the Philadelphia Society that a critical reading of the following quotation from John F. Kennedy's inaugural address will not be met with cat calls. Kennedy said, "Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, to assure the survival and the success of liberty." This is beautiful, idealistic rhetoric, perhaps even necessary rhetoric from a president seeking to give conceptual clarity to his goals. But in practice, this commitment presented difficulties.



First, it is not the liberty of the American political community that is to be defended, but liberty in general. Secondly, our friends were put on notice that they would be judged by the standards of an ideal liberty evoked by the president. Our relationship would be based not on mutual interest and security, but on their willingness to impose uniquely American concepts of civil liberty upon their own societies. Thirdly, this presidential rhetoric overestimated the capacity of American citizens to pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, particularly as the toll of deaths of young Americans in Vietnam was tallied. Fourth, since this ideal is not attainable, a skepticism about American civil religion, about the ability of the present system to meet the exigencies of international politics, and a skepticism about politicians set in. In the first instance, this skepticism led to a reaction that gave us Richard Nixon's vicious realism, absent of virtue. And then there was a reaction against that, leading to Jimmy Carter's vicious idealism, absent of prudence.

This is a dilemma of American foreign policy, but it has deep intellectual roots. Political science is the reasoned capacity to act, a capacity that requires maturity, experience, and openness to divine reality. To act politically means to act within a reality of ends that are given in experience and not made. But in the civil religion of our intellectual classes, politics is conceived as a massive project for the making of possible realities that are not grounded in any experienced order, but rests upon the speculative, even magical capacity of the politician to manipulate reality, casting it into any mold suitable to the imagination.

What is required if we are to overcome the influence of this civil religion in American culture is an entire shift in intellectual consciousness. Let me summarize what I consider to be the main points of such a shift. First, our primary foreign policy goal ought to be to preserve and protect the free world. Second, universal peace is not a real possibility. Third, a commitment to human rights must be based on an articulated theory of justice. Fourth, democracy can survive at home if democracy fails abroad in those countries where there is no tradition of

democracy. Fifth, the United States will not survive if our leaders do not engender civic virtue, a commitment to our basic institutions, and a sense of community on the level of consciousness of the common good. Balance of power politics, in itself, is not sufficient.

My first point, that our primary foreign policy goal ought to be to preserve and protect the free world. I first began to think of this proposition when I learned from a young colleague in 1968 that in the nuclear age, survival as a goal is unethical. I concluded that if such of you were to become socially dominant, the end product would be our destruction. We must survive to ensure that the dark night of despotism does not descend on the free world and to survive we must do whatever is necessary to be victorious, within limits. But what are the limits? For Plato and Aristotle, the limits were delineated by the Hellenic world. One standard of ethics was to be applied in wars between Greeks, another for wars between Greeks and non-Greeks. In the Christian era, with the new theological truth of the community of mankind, our moral obligation to our fellow mortals does not stop at our national boundaries. Strangely, this truth seems to escape the attention of the advocates of the policy of mutually assured destruction.

I once had some fun with the third Secretary of the Soviet Embassy by informing him that our own targeting strategy was very immoral. It was aimed at the civilian populations of the Soviet Union, while he was targeted for our nuclear missiles and military sites. Instead, I said to become equally moral the United States should retarget our missiles to strike Soviet-hardened missile sites, other military targets, and of course the residences of the members of the Communist party of the Soviet Union. The danger of the present historical moment is real. Our hardened missile sites are vulnerable to a first strike. Our bombers are obsolete. Our theater weapons are insufficient and in short supply. Our source of oil is in jeopardy. Our allies trade with the Soviet empire. Our technical personnel in the military are demoralized. Our youth have not been given a rational argument that will persuade them to answer the call, if and when it comes. Our commitment to civil liberty leaves

the government vulnerable to massive civil disobedience, and we have become soft. In this context, the rehabilitation of our military capability is not a callous revival of the arms race. The Soviet Union has never stopped perfecting its military capacity. For us to respond is an act of moral obligation and courage, not an incitement to war. If we do not move to establish a balance of power, if the present disequilibrium continues, we will go to war, and the outcome is not optimistic.

My second point: Universal peace is not a real possibility. Once a year I reread Saint Augustine's *City of God* to prepare for my courses in the history of political theory. Though by now I must have read that work ten times if not more, I never cease to give my assent to Augustine's analysis of the human condition. For a man who is sometimes accused of being so otherworldly that he has little to say about pragmatic political reality, I find Augustine's observations on peace to be eminently practical. His civilization had collapsed, Christianity was held accountable for the collapse, and Augustine attempted to rally his fellow Christians to a consciousness of the community of the City of God. The peace of the City of God, he said, is what you would expect of a community of men who love God. Their souls are turned to God. They look forward with hope, while living in this life, towards a life of eternal peace after death. In contrast, the peace of this world is fragile, easily broken, and often more cruel than war. Will there be a moment in time, perhaps for a thousand years, when men will live in peace? No, the millennium cannot be taken literally. It is but a metaphor for the age initiated with the coming of Christ.

When I read these words, I often wonder why so many intelligent people have found inspiration in the millennial visions of the United Nations. Of course, to say anything else than that the United Nations is our last best hope would bring down upon us a storm of censure. Better to let sleeping dogs lie than to raise the firestorm of disdain of our intellectual classes. But political pragmatism is not the real reason for the endurance of the utopian notion that nations will turn swords into plowshares. Engendering the experience of this apocalyptic hope

is, I believe, a rejection of reality as it's presently constituted and a lust for immortality.

Wars are not desired by reasonable men, but nor is a world absent of war expected by reasonable men. This suggests that an element of irrationality has become socially dominant in the modern era, in the sense that there are intelligent men who expect a world absent of war. The modern concept, however, originates in Petrarch's rejection of the Christian era for an idealized golden age of Ancient Rome, and the attempt by Renaissance magicians to reconstitute nature through magic. And that rejection, I believe, is equated to my observation that the expectation of universal peace is related to rejection of reality. Modernity, by definition, is the rejection of reality. In this context, it should be understood that the modern quest for a millennium of universal peace implies rejection of the reality of our mortality. This rejection is not limited to foreign policy, but can be seen in the celebration of homosexuality, discussed so well by Midge Decter in a recent article in *Commentary*, and the regulations that will lead to the prohibition of smoking as discussed by Peter Berger in an article not so long ago in *Worldview*. It is found also in the social dominance of secular views of history such as Marxism and positivism, and in attempts to prepare for life after death through quick freezing as in Woody Allen's movie *Sleepers*.

My third point: a commitment to human rights must be based on an articulated theory of justice. I am always moved by Genesis 1:26 that speaks of the alone, having decided to make man in our image. And the image of man is made in the image of God, and so I must recognize my obligation to treat my fellow men with justice as a moral obligation. But recognizing our obligation to be just and dedicating our foreign policy to the imposition of reified human rights on our allies are two different things. My model was Aristotle, who tried valiantly to confront the Sophistic notion that law and nature were opposed. The Sophists, in the late stage of their development, had become moral relativists and argued that the laws established principles

of right or justice that have as their purpose to keep down the strong. So, the natural strength of the stronger, which of right should prevail the Sophists said, is opposed by the laws of the weak, the numerically larger community of men who fear the strong. Justice, really then, they said, is the will of the stronger. Aristotle's answer, no more than two pages of his life's work, is one of the most significant contributions to the corpus of Western political theory. There is right, there is justice, he argued, by convention, but there is also justice or right by nature. Justice exists by law and by nature, yet because what is right or just by nature everywhere has the same force, and because he said it never less changes, it requires the judgment of just men to know which is which. The just man is the measure by which what is right by nature can be known. Right requires judgment, and principles of right cannot be enumerated in terms of specified specific rights.

If we reflect on this observation, we can perhaps see its truth. Let me give you an example. I know that there are many rationalists here in the Philadelphia Society. But some of us are not rationalists. We do not seek a thoroughly rationalistic explanation of economics, because we know that capitalism is not merely an economic system composed of immutable laws, but an historical phenomenon composed of religious beliefs, cultural traditions, family patterns, and deeply entrenched psychological attitudes. We do not care, therefore, who collects our garbage so long as it is collected. For that reason, we do not join the liberal attempt to define the human rights that is the American obligation to impose on the world. What is right, is not necessarily a right. All the same, we admit that there are moral limits, indeed universal human obligations, but we prefer that our foreign policy be conducted with an eye to our national interest, not human rights. In the economy of justice, who is to say that if we impose a white revolution in Iran and lose a vital source of oil, or if we attain equality in South Africa and lose our supply of vital minerals, or if we achieve democracy in South Korea and yet lose our ally, that we will have contributed to justice in the world?

My fourth point: democracy can survive at home if democracy fails abroad in those countries where there is no tradition of democracy. We Americans are known throughout the world for a type of arrogance that is truly unique among the varieties and strains of arrogance that afflict mankind. There is of course, much of which we can be proud. Until recently, our superior technology, organizational abilities, and entrepreneurial verve were hallmarks of the American character. We have also been applauded for our charitable acts. But there are aspects of the American national character that are less than beautiful. Democracy as a utopian ideal has so saturated the intellectual classes, that we have become feared by non-democratic authoritarian peoples for our propensity to judge their own political life in terms of the American utopian ideal. The list of nations that have felt the sting of American foreign policy in this regard is numerous: South Vietnam, Korea, Taiwan, Japan and others in Asia, and a multitude of South American countries, have all felt the lash of public and private rebuke from American presidents and State Department officials in the post-world War II era.

In World War I, we entered the war largely because President Wilson believed that the world would have no peace until autocratic governments had been utterly destroyed. Wilson viewed this conflict as a final conflict and saw the American commitment in messianic terms. Today, underlying the constant imposition of American concepts of civil liberty and democracy on our non-democratic allies is a complex of secular messianism, moral arrogance, and a profound lack of fundamental principles of political order. Self-government, from the perspective of the American civil religion, is better than good government. Self-determination thus becomes the supreme political good, and for its sake we are prepared to accept brutality.

My objection to the arrogance of utopian democracy is first that it is intellectually bankrupt. The complex network of social interrelationships in non-Western countries is such that to impose a democratic model on these subcultures is to do no more than superimpose an

ideological overlay that will be fragile at best. The substance of order thereby is disoriented, and what order existed previously may then cease to be viable, leaving only the ideological rhetoric of democratic ideals in which no one really believes. Thus, my second conclusion: our policy of imposing democratic utopian ideals on our allies is counterproductive. It is not in our interest, nor in theirs, and ultimately American boys will pay the price in blood.

But can democracy survive at home if democracy is allowed to fail abroad? I do not believe that the real test is whether or not the Shah of Iran, Somoza, Batista, or Franco resisted our demands that they loosen the reins on their internal opposition. The ultimate test, I believe, is whether in democratic countries, like England, the party system serves the nation or only serves a few and radical segments of the nation. That within England itself, anti-democratic forces prepare for a coup. Or, for example, in Spain, Portugal, and Italy, will the democratic process leave these nations open to subversion by the Communist Party? And if the Communist Party participates in power, to what extent will their participation in NATO lead to the subversion of our NATO defenses? The true question then is whether we can survive as a free country, if in the name of freedom our traditional democratic allies fall to the forces of totalitarianism or authoritarianism.

And lastly my fifth point: the United States will not survive if our leaders do not engender civic virtue, a commitment to our basic institutions, and a sense of community, community on the level of consciousness of the common good, because balance of power in itself is not sufficient. The United States is a political community. Our fellow citizens have common traditions, beliefs, concepts of justice and morality, and common interests. But if these things that we share are not articulated, or worse are attacked, by representatives of the new class, the public consciousness of what it is that holds us together will be forgotten. Particularly on the level of the theological truths of the American political order, I am concerned that this public consciousness has deteriorated to new lows. We are not an autonomous entity,

but one nation under God, and thus we have an obligation not merely to ourselves but to God. What we have in common with our fellow Americans cannot be simply found on the level of material goods and the freedom to pursue material success. Though important, the sacred truths of the American political order take precedence. We are not God's chosen people, but a people upon whom God's providence has been bestowed. We are not the best political culture in the world, but it is ours and we are proud of it. Or at least we were proud of it until our new class discovered that successful careers could be made by maligning it.

In this contest between the new class and the defenders of our constitutional legal traditions, we can find the answer to our present foreign policy dilemma. Our public past has no authoritative interpretation, since a major contest is being waged between those on the one hand who see America in terms of a utopian commitment to reconstitute the structure of existence, and on the other those who see in our history lessons on the Constitutional limits of state power. Our present existence has no authoritative interpretation because public discourse is divided by those who see presently constituted American society as fundamentally illegitimate, and those who assert its legitimacy. That inescapable feature of life in the United States today contributes to the anxiety, tension, and disorder of our public lives, and consequently, to the disorder of American foreign policy.



## U.S. FOREIGN POLICY AND AMERICAN VALUES

By Norman Podhoretz

Listening to Dick Bishirjian's penetrating and thoughtful talk, I was struck by the coincidental choice of ground to traverse in his talk and in the one I am about to deliver. But I was also struck by how interestingly divergent two perspectives which share a good deal in their preoccupations and their values can be. It is said by the French that truth lies in nuance, and by Schiller, I think it was, that God lives in detail. I think that one will find both the truth and the Divine light, in the small but not insignificant differences of both of emphasis and of perspective, which the two of us bring to so much of the same historical and philosophical material.

As I look at the political culture of the United States, what I see is two competing traditions. Two traditions which have been in competition for, as you might say, the soul of this political culture—in its relation to the rest of the world, because we are talking about foreign policy—almost from the beginning. They are familiar, they are sometimes called isolationism and interventionism. I am not entirely happy with the tags, but they are serviceable enough to use in an informal talk. The isolationist tradition, which goes back to some of the texts quoted by Dick Bishirjian from the Bible, and which acted as a profound influence on the Puritan founders of this country, looked to the United States as the New Jerusalem, the “City upon a Hill.” It believed basically as its underlying rationale for what we would today call an isolationist foreign policy, that we should look to the perfection of American society as its best way of acting on other countries, on acting

in the world, and on the world stage. If we were to perfect ourselves, our example would so radiate that it would become an influence for all mankind. It is an idea not dissimilar to the biblical idea, indeed, of what Jerusalem itself, the old Jerusalem would be, sending forth the law from there to the rest of mankind through a chosen people, the Israelites, chosen not for special privilege, but for the burden of spreading the law from Jerusalem to the rest of the world. That is one tradition, and I think that isolationism, although it has been bolstered throughout American history by a variety of rationale, I think that the basic spiritual foundation of American isolationism at its best, let us say, is the idea of the “City on a Hill,” the perfection if you like, of the American utopia as the sum and substance, the exhaustive content of foreign policy itself.

There is a competing tradition, an interventionist tradition, which has come in for a good deal of battering both from left and right in recent years. If I understand Dick Bishirjian’s paper correctly, (and it is possible that I do not), he was adding his share to this much battered Wilsonian idea of making the world safe for democracy. That was Woodrow Wilson’s phrase and formulation, but it was not his idea. That is to say that the notion that the United States acts in the world, when it ventures forth particularly into war, that it does so not merely to protect its own boundaries or its own sovereignty, but for the sake of a principle of universal validity. That idea is as deep in the American political culture as the competing idea of staying home and perfecting our own society to act as an example for the rest of the world. Either we stay home and perfect our own society or we go out and do something actively to teach the world, or to create conditions in the rest of the world, that will make it possible for them to develop the kind of blessed society that we have here at home.

Now, it is the nature of the American beast, in my judgment, that it is incapable of undertaking large heroic efforts—particularly undertaking war—without some such idea to justify the sacrifices and to bolster

the effort. Many, many critics, particularly Europeans and particularly transplanted Europeans, have lamented this fact of the American character. I remember Hans Morgenthau, for example, who lamented the absence of a tradition of *realpolitik* in this country and attributed most of our troubles to the absence of such a tradition. He made this point even as long ago as the early '50s at the beginning of the first phase of the Cold War. And people have constantly lectured us about the importance of the concept of national interest, and the sufficiency of such a concept and the kind of foreign policy that flows from it, that is balance of power politics, *realpolitik*, if you like. But almost to no avail. The most recent effort to instruct us in this tradition, and a highly sophisticated one it was, was not so much in theory, but in action.

Under the active tutelage of Henry Kissinger, the United States attempted to develop a tradition or a style of *realpolitik*. And Kissinger in his first volume of his memoirs talks about this. This was one of his conscious, deliberate efforts as Secretary of State. He says this country has had two traditions in foreign policy: a legalistic one, I think he means by that the Wilsonian stress on self-determination and so on, and an isolationist one. And it has no tradition of geopolitical thinking, which is Kissinger's language for what others have called the politics of interest, or *realpolitik*. It seems that the nature of this animal, the American people, throughout its history has been to vacillate or oscillate between two possibilities: one of them staying home and perfecting the society as its foreign policy, the other sallying forth to fight for a principle, whether it is called liberty or democracy. And not necessarily, by the way, fighting in a naive way, in the kind of silly utopian, messianic spirit with which this position has been caricatured. There is a highly sophisticated rationale one can develop for this idea having to do with the creation of an international environment in which our own democratic institutions can flourish, and in which the possibility for their taking root and flourishing in other places is at least established, if not fully guaranteed.

Now, we all know that the isolationist tradition, which had been in the ascendant and indeed triumphant in the wake of the disillusionment with the first World War, was itself discredited as a result of the rise of Hitler and the outbreak of World War II. Most of the premises on which that argument had been based were seen by 1941, if not a bit earlier, as faulty and indeed as creating the spread of evil. The evil at that moment being the evil of Nazi Germany, this phenomenon, which was only just beginning to be called, perhaps not yet even christened, with the term totalitarianism in order to distinguish it from the more classical types of despotisms.

When the discrediting of isolationism in the interwar period, the United States resumed its other style of behavior or resumed its love affair with the other pole of its political culture, the notion of sallying forth to make the world safe for virtue, political virtue, liberty, democracy, and to try to destroy the evil represented by totalitarianism. And that particular crusade—and of course Dwight Eisenhower used that very word to describe World War II, he called it a crusade in Europe, it was the title of one of his books—with the triumphant conclusion of that crusade, after a brief moment at which the country seemed to want to return again to its isolationist soul, the resurgence or perhaps continuation of the interventionist idea became saliently apparent with the outbreak of what came to be called the Cold War. And indeed, it seems in retrospect quite natural that a country which had just triumphantly defeated— contributed mightily to the defeat of the great totalitarian power of the right—should now devote itself to a struggle against its former ally in that earlier struggle, but now its great enemy and adversary, the great totalitarian power of the left: the Soviet Union.

And despite, as I say, resistance from various quarters, the nation did devote itself to this new kind of war, to this new kind of struggle, not in the first instance actually involving armed hostilities, to make the world safe for democracy again. That consensus—that national consensus, that agreement—became a bipartisan one. It was shared

by Democrats and Republicans. There were small minorities both on the left and the right who dissented from the national consensus, but the national consensus on the whole swept everything else before it and rode triumphantly as a guiding principle of American foreign policy through the Democratic administration under Harry Truman—starting in 1947 with the annunciation of the Truman Doctrine, which he committed the United States to what was essentially a restatement of the Wilsonian principle. Truman said from henceforth it will be the policy of the United States to safeguard free peoples against outside aggression or internal subversion. And by free peoples he did not mean democratic countries, because the free peoples he was in the first instance committing us to defend, those of Greece and Turkey, were not democratic countries at that time. By free he meant sovereign, free of foreign domination. And, of course, an internal revolt by a Communist Party was thought rightly to be equivalent to foreign domination since all local communist parties in those days were directly subservient to Moscow and acted as the agents of Soviet foreign policy.

Through the Truman Doctrine and the administration of Harry Truman up into the administration of Dwight Eisenhower, extending from the early 50s all the way up to 1960, this was the guiding principle of American foreign policy. And, of course, in that period we actually did go to war in Korea. We lost fifty-five thousand men as an earnest of our seriousness in the carrying out of this principle, again, not to make the world safe for democracy as such, because South Korea was not and is not a democracy. What we were defending in that case was the independence of a non-communist country against the danger of takeover by the totalitarian communist enemy...[recording cuts out]... It was also made up of those nations which were not free, in our sense or indeed in anybody else's sense, but were also not communist, which meant for all practical purposes that from the point of view of freedom they were freer than any communist country could be, either in theory or practice, because communism as a totalitarian political system allowed and allows no degree of freedom, whatever. That is

why, of course, it is called totalitarianism. It represents the effort of the state power to control every aspect of the life of the society, not merely its political activity.

When John F. Kennedy came into power in 1960—and let us remind ourselves and I think it is useful for us today to remind ourselves that that was a liberal, democratic administration. It is useful not in a polemical spirit to remind ourselves of that, but because it helps us to understand the history that our political culture has undergone in the last twenty years. Kennedy, in his inaugural address, used the words quoted by Dick Bishirjian about paying any price, bearing any burden, supporting any friend, opposing any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty. And what this represented was a ringing reaffirmation by a liberal democratic administration of a rather globalist, if you like, and quite belligerent commitment to the same foreign policy that Harry Truman had enunciated in '47 and that had been ratified and reasserted and reconfirmed in the Eisenhower administration. And indeed, from the point of view of actual belligerence and bellicosity, the Democratic administrations, both the Truman and the Kennedy-Johnson ones, were rather more fervent than the Republican ones, as witness the fact that the two wars actually fought on behalf of this policy were fought by and under Democratic administrations: Korea under the Truman Administration and Vietnam, which I will get to in a minute, under Kennedy.

I often used to say that the Democrats used, especially in opposition, pacific rhetoric but were very bellicose in office, whereas the Republicans tended to use bellicose rhetoric in opposition but were rather pacific in office. It will be interesting, to put it mildly, to see whether that pattern is about to be reversed. But the point I want to make is not either to praise or to criticize the Kennedy administration's foreign policy. I simply wish to point out that it remained consistent with the interventionist idea of making the world safe for liberty, to use his own word, that had been the guiding principle of our foreign policy under two administrations, one of each of the two major parties.

Now, we all know, and I have to go very quickly through this history, but we all know what blasted this national consensus. It was of course Vietnam, and as I would argue, not so much Vietnam itself as the defeat in Vietnam. Vietnam proved to the satisfaction of a great many people, including most of the people who actually got us into that war—although there were so many secret opponents of the war in Vietnam in the Kennedy and Johnson administration, it was very difficult by the end of the decade to figure out who actually had made those decisions, since everyone seemed to have a secret memo which proved that he was fighting against the policy when he was actually in office, and [there seems] to be nobody there who was in favor of the policy. In any event, these people and a great many other people in this country were rightly or wrongly, I think wrongly, persuaded that there was something radically wrong with the whole idea of American intervention in order to fight for the creation of a world which would be safe for liberty, safe for democracy. And what followed—and mostly from the left in those days but I think also from other quarters and again, unless I misunderstand Dick Bishirjian I think he might agree with some aspect of this criticism of the Vietnam adventure—what followed at that point was, quite naturally and predictably, a resurgence of the old isolationist tradition.

The word isolationism had by then been so discredited that nobody used it to describe his own position. People got indignant if you called them isolationist or neo-isolationist. Nevertheless, the substance of the argument that began to circulate was very familiar isolationist talk to anyone who knew anything at all about the history of these traditions. And what people began to talk about was the need to cease being the policemen of the world, to limit our commitments, there was a good deal of criticism of the arrogance of American power, the illusion of American omnipotence. And then through those years, by the way, I never myself met anyone who thought that the United States was omnipotent. I never even met anyone who thought that we ought to be the world's policeman. Be that as it may, these tags did conceal, I

think, an advocacy of return to the isolationist tradition. And another euphemism for that advocacy was the notion that we had to reorder our priorities, by which was meant that we had to stop spending so much money and so much attention on foreign affairs and devote ourselves to building that “City upon a Hill” which was not only necessary for our own domestic peace and tranquility—but in true classical isolationist spirit—would in the end, it was alleged, serve our interests and our ideals in the rest of the world far better than this mistakenly messianic policy, [this] Wilsonian idealistic policy, we had been pursuing and that had come to such deserved grief in the rice paddies of Vietnam.

Now, it is worth recalling some of these, what should I say, morbidly ironic details in our recent history. Even without that memory hole machine that Orwell envisaged, we often seem to forget from one month to the next what it was like a month ago. I remember being struck very forcibly—and incidentally I was then and, though it may surprise you to hear this from the kind of language I have been using, continue to be a critic of American involvement in Vietnam—I remember being in a hotel room in Houston, Texas where I had gone to deliver a lecture, and turning on the television and what was being televised were the hearings of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Vietnam conducted by Senator Fulbright. And the then Secretary of State Dean Rusk was, I do not know how else to put it than to say that he was in the dock, rather like the gang of one. And Senator Fulbright—who was widely represented in the press in those days as an idealist speaking for the ideals of America against this terrible criminal adventure in which we were bogged down. Senator Fulbright kept saying to Dean Rusk, the great idealist Fulbright kept saying, “Now I don’t understand this survey, would you explain to us again in what sense is the war in Vietnam in our national interest?” And Rusk would say, “Well senator, you see we believe in freedom and self-determination and we wish to oppose aggression.” And Fulbright said, “Well, yeah, I know but what sense is it in our interest to be fighting there?” So here was the great idealist Fulbright talking in the crassest, narrowest national interest



terms and here was the war criminal Rusk pleading his case in the most touchingly idealistic terms. And it was a great moment of revelation for me [of] the drama that was going on in the American psyche of those years in which everything was called not only not by its proper name [but also] by the opposite of its proper name. Liberation movements were always movements to enslave, the free speech movement at Berkeley was a movement to shout down speakers with whom you did not agree. So, you had a period in which everything was called by a name that signified the opposite of its true nature. A new kind of nominalism.

But as it happened, the clamor to return to isolationism in the classical sense, came to be represented politically by yet another idealist of that period, George McGovern. You remember McGovern's slogan of the 1972 presidential campaign, "Come Home, America." There could scarcely have been a more explicit appeal to isolationist sentiment than that. And although McGovern like all other isolationists of the period denied being an isolationist, nevertheless, "Come home, America," reorder our priorities [was his slogan]. This did not prevail with American public opinion. It was a very influential idea, but it did not in fact prevail. What you got instead, in my judgment, was a mutation of the classical isolationist thrust, very creatively redesigned under the Nixon-Kissinger regime. Whereas I indicated earlier an effort was made to get around the entire problem of classical isolationism and classical Wilsonian interventionism with a third and quite new alternative, namely the *realpolitik*, a kind of geopolitics without values. They would argue, of course, that the *realpolitik* they were pursuing was moral in the sense that it was aimed at protecting the interests of the United States which were themselves constant with the values the United States represents. Nevertheless, the policy itself was—I would not go so far as Dick Bishirjian did, I would not call it vicious realism—but it was certainly geopolitics without reference to values, and we saw this in, say, the refusal not under Nixon but under Ford to extend an invitation to the White House to Solzhenitsyn, which was in

itself a not very important act but symbolic of an ethos, of an attitude.

Now, why did that policy fail, as everybody, including I think, its own architects Nixon and Kissinger, at least implicitly acknowledged that it did. If you read Richard Nixon's book *The Real War* and Henry Kissinger's *White House Years*—*White House Years* I think is a great book in its way—but you would never know from either of those books that either Nixon or Kissinger had anything whatever to do with the policies of détente. Somebody else did it: the liberals in Congress, *The New York Times* editorial board. They were there kind of fighting it the whole way. Of course, this is not true. But the effort failed, I would argue, because it was untrue to the nature of this country, that it was politically unrealistic, that is unrealistic in the sense of having a false conception of what was politically possible for the American people, that is what kind of policy could actually get the support of the American people, without which for better or worse in a democracy no foreign policy can be conducted. It failed because it misread, if you like, the nature of the American animal. For better or worse, but that is the nature of the beast. It cannot, I think, sustain or maintain indefinitely a foreign policy based on realpolitik or a value free geopolitical design, however commendable the maneuvers and purposes of that geopolitical design might be.

When Carter came into office you had an interesting swing to the other evasive extreme. What Carter attempted to do in still trying to get around the isolationist/interventionist conflict in the American soul and to evade a choice between those two traditions was to construct the human rights policy—which again I would agree with Dick Bishirjian, and I would not call it vicious so much—but just as the Kissinger, Nixon, Ford policy might be described as geopolitics without values, the Carter human rights policy might be described as values without geopolitics. It was an effort to sally forth into the world as the interventionist tradition would have us do with the ideals of our own political culture, but at the same time, at no cost to ourselves. We were not to use force, we were not to pay any price, let alone bear any burden. We

were not to support any friend or oppose any foe, on the contrary we were to oppose any friend and support any foe in the pursuit of this policy, and that sounds funny and frivolous, but it actually works out if you look at the way in which the human rights policy was applied. It was applied for the most part to authoritarian regimes which were friendly to the United States, and there was, shall we say, a degree of reticence in the application of this policy to the worst offenders of human rights on the face of the Earth, namely the communist countries, particularly the Soviet Union.

So, this policy, as I think everyone agrees, failed—everyone but poor Jimmy Carter himself, who rather pathetically defended the human rights policy. I think almost everybody agrees that it failed, not for the reasons that the geopolitical approach under the last Republican administration failed, [not] because it did not take sufficient account of the American character and therefore the political resources that could be mobilized in this country in support of such a policy. [It] failed for the opposite reason. The human rights policy does indeed take account of the realities of the American character, perhaps too much so. But it fails because it takes no account of the realities of the international situation. It is blind to the questions of politics and power. If anything, the Kissinger-Nixon approach was only too aware of the realities of power, perhaps over impressed with them, whereas the Carter people have been entirely blind to them.

And so, we come to the present moment, and I have already gone past my time, so I am going to have to go quickly through the last phase of this extremely interesting and extremely important, indeed apocalyptic drama. What we have seen in reaction against the Carter foreign policy—and I would also argue against the foreign policy that preceded it—that is the two efforts to evade a choice between isolationist and interventionist traditions that are intrinsic to the American political character. We have seen in reaction to this the rise of what I and some other people have called a new nationalism.

This new nationalism has expressed itself in a variety of ways.

I think we are all here familiar with its manifestations. I personally would argue, and indeed have argued in the piece I just did to appear eventually in *Commentary* on the meaning of the 1980 elections, that it was the principal force behind the Reagan landslide. But the real question is how this new nationalism, this new assertion of the value and virtue of our political culture, will express itself, not merely in action, but in concept and theory. Because even within this new upsurge of nationalist sentiment we find two conflicting strains. One of them is a descendent, if you like, of the isolationist strain. It expresses itself as a kind of belligerent, almost xenophobic, contempt for other peoples, including some of our allies—not that they do not deserve it once in a while, by the way—and is quite bellicose. It says in effect—it is the kind of thing that gives rise to what you might call sporadic outbursts of indignant energy—get in there, zap them, and get out. If I had to pick an American political figure who embodies this approach, this idea, most closely, I would choose Governor Connally, who as Secretary of the Treasury did indeed talk and act in this way and who I think does speak for that strain in the new nationalism which I would link despite Governor Connally's tough talk and belief in a strong defense and so on, all of which is consistent with such a position—I would nevertheless link it to the old isolationism.

There is another strain of the new nationalism which I would characterize as resurgent Democratic, or even if you like Wilsonian, idealism that speaks for a yearning in this country to return to the days, well to go no further back of the early Kennedy administration, 1960. This is an idea—I am tempted to go into this at some length. I do not have time, but I would only throw out, to those of you who have not seen this particular point, the thought that Governor Reagan ran on a program or platform uncannily similar to the platform and campaign of John F. Kennedy in 1960. He quoted Franklin Roosevelt in his inaugural address, but the ghost of that campaign was not the Democratic ghost at that banquet, as you might say, it was not Roosevelt, but Kennedy. It was Kennedy who campaigned on a slogan of let us get the country

moving again. Get it moving again economically through a tax cut that would stimulate economic growth, get it moving again through a tough foreign policy standing up to the Russians and pay any price, and so on, for the defense of liberty. And it was this ethos that Reagan fascinatingly reincarnated, reembodied in his campaign.

It calls for the re-undertaking by the United States of a responsibility to lead the free world, to defend the free world—that is at a minimum those nations already free and extending beyond those not yet under the sway of communist totalitarianism. It defines this as our national objective, our national responsibility as the potential source of a renewed national greatness. Kennedy said, let us get the country moving again. Reagan said, let us make the country great again. In my judgment, this idea, this strain of the new nationalism answers to both the realities of the American national character and to the realities of the international situation. I support it. I support it as a lifelong Democrat, though to tell you the truth I am not entirely sure that I still am a Democrat. Ronald Reagan became a Republican at the age of fifty-one. I am about to be fifty-one in January, and I just wonder... I would not take that as a commitment. As a matter of fact, I am about to issue a warning to the Republican Party about what to do if it wishes to get me and my kind.

I am very much afraid. I tremble in all seriousness and in all solemnity both for the future of this country and the future of liberty in the world at this moment. I do truly consider that we have reached a major historic turning point. If Carter had been reelected this would have been tantamount to a declaration by the American people that they had given up, that they were going to lie down and die. The election of Ronald Reagan means that the American people have no intention of lying down and dying and are demanding that a new period of national greatness—which involves in my judgment a period of democratic idealism in American foreign policy and anti-communist idealism as its obverse and corollary. Whether this demand will be met and satisfied, even by the Reagan administration, I continue to wonder.

I wonder because, as I said earlier, the record of Republicans in office in our time has been, to put it cruelly, talking loudly and carrying a small stick. I would hope, and I trust based on President-elect Reagan's record and on the conviction that he apparently brings to bear on his ideas and most of all his blurb for my book, that we could look for a serious effort to implement and actualize the rhetoric on the basis of which he was elected, by the way, by not only a majority of the American people but in my judgment by a solid bipartisan majority of the American people. A lot of Democrats voted for Ronald Reagan. People say that he was elected by only twenty-six percent of the eligible electorate. Well, if you apply exactly the same arithmetic to the 1932 election, when the turnout was the same as it was in 1980, fifty-two percent, Roosevelt had 30.1 percent of the popular vote, of the eligible electorate. Reagan got 26.7 percent. So, Roosevelt had 3.4 percent more of the eligible electorate than Ronald Reagan, and no one doubts that Roosevelt was given a mandate in 1932. Some have doubted that Ronald Reagan has been given a mandate. Well, Ronald Reagan obviously has been given a mandate, just as surely, or only three percentage points less surely, than Franklin Roosevelt was.

Whether he will use that mandate to realize the opportunity that he has is the great question of our age. Not just for us, not just for the Republican Party, not just for the American people, but for the world and for the future of liberty, which now hangs in the balance. A few months ago, I would have said that we have no chance, and liberty has no chance. Today, I think we do have a chance, but it is only a chance, it is Act One Scene One. We must all hope and pray that the opportunity becomes a reality, because if it does not, not only are we in some essential sense finished as a free nation, but liberty will have no prospect anywhere else on the face of the Earth. And for failing in our responsibility to defend it, in its hour of maximum peril, we will be cursed by our children and our grandchildren, and we will deserve to be cursed. If on the other hand the opportunity with which we as a nation have been presented, and have presented ourselves, if we can

hold the course, if we can do what is necessary, we will earn, to use the phrase that our founding fathers used, the blessings of posterity. And we will deserve those blessings.







## CHAPTER 10

# REAGAN ERA REFLECTIONS

**APRIL 16-17, 1982 – CHICAGO, ILLINOIS**  
**NOVEMBER 12-13, 1982 – SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA**

**Friday, April 16, 1982**

***6:00-8:30 – Dinner and Keynote***

Bob Bunning, Introduction of William F. Buckley Jr.

William F. Buckley Jr.,  
“Conservatism and the Reagan Administration”

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 1982**  
**6:30-9:30PM – DINNER AND KEYNOTE**

Edwin J. Feulner Jr.,  
Welcome and Introduction of Milton Friedman

Milton Friedman,  
“The Reagan Administration: A Report Card”

## CONSERVATISM AND THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION

By William F. Buckley

Thank you, Bob. I will never again conceive of the Philadelphia Society as an anarchical association—seeing how strictly they comply with your orders. Don Lipsett sent me, by way of research material suitable for this occasion, a smug little portfolio of about seventy documents, two of which in particular caught the eye. The first was a financial statement of the Philadelphia Society, dated September 15, 1965, showing a net deficit of \$229.07 attested to by its treasurer Ed Feulner. The Society was primarily burdened in those days by two debts of \$100 each—owed respectively to Don Lipsett and to me. I had forgotten that I had advanced a part of the incorporation money for the Philadelphia Society. I had not forgotten that Don Lipsett had done so. Burke, Russell Kirk never lets us forget, spoke of the unincorporated graces and I doubt that anyone here would disagree with me, these abound quietly, as it is almost demanded that they should, in Don Lipsett—whose creation really this extraordinary Society is. It reflects, for one thing, Don's utter disorderliness. But also, his quiet devotion to reasonable speculation: Why are we here? What is life's point if man is not free? What are the permanent things, which the transitory? How can we effectively channel our moral energies?

The second document was an account of the first annual meeting of the Philadelphia Society covered for *National Review* by Guy Davenport—one of the most interesting minds in America. And in it, he referred to one speaker, among others, the late Stanley Parry, who

singled out for attention on that occasion the disharmonious notion that there might be such thing as a conservative philosophy, his point being that any such formulation came as awkwardly to the lips as a description of say German physics.

The temptation is great to reminisce. And as one grows older, it is important to resist that temptation because, on the whole, reminiscences tend to bore younger people and, for the most part, for good reason. But it would be to deprive you if I kept from you my keenest memory of Father Parry. It was during the Spring of 1951 at a little church in New York City that Father Parry baptized his old friend Willmoore Kendall into the Catholic Church while I stood by as godfather to my old mentor.

After the ceremony, during which if I remember the liturgy, Willmoore was required one after another to renounce in Latin most of the things in life he most enjoyed. We drove happily in my little convertible to lunch at Stamford. En route, Father Parry suddenly turned and said to Willmore, "Do you realize that probably the best thing that could possibly happen to you is if Bill ran into a lamp post right now causing you to depart this veil of tears?" The question before the house, I take it, has to do whether the veil of tears has however been completely, in some ways, staunched by the occupancy at this moment of the White House by Ronald Reagan. What can he do?

In fact, almost to the hour one week ago I was with him in a helicopter returning to the president's house in the southern part of the island of Barbados from dinner at the house of Ms. Colbert. It had been planned to spend the next two days on the beach, but I had heard grave mutterings about the distress of the Secret Service and knew that such distress often alters presidential plans. So, I asked him, "Are they going to let you swim tomorrow?" And to which he replied, "I think so, Nancy tells me I'm the most powerful man in the world."

That amusing declaration uttered by the most self-effacing president of the century nicely situates the question: Can the most powerful man in the world presiding, however, over a free society, appease

conservative appetites? The answer to this, I think, is only in part. If that is so, the logically ensuing question is: Well, has he done so? The answer to that is: only in part. And this is the text of my lesson today.

When Reagan was elected, we were asked at *National Review* how we would position our editorial policy with respect to him? I said that we would endeavor to make two measurements: the first being how is he doing given political reality and the second is how is he doing up against the paradigm? There are, I think, three general criteria by which the question posed here tonight is examined. The first is of course the domestic management, the second our foreign policy, the third his philosophical leadership.

Concerning the first, I read only yesterday a manuscript submitted by Professor Hadley Arkes, who served briefly as a speechwriter for the president but is now attached, I think, to Georgetown. I plan to publish that provocative manuscript in which he makes—patiently, affably, and appreciatively—certain points about the conservative movement and President Reagan.<sup>64</sup> And he ends by asking could it really be that the conservative movement stands to be validated or to be discredited according to the price of interest on the first of November of this year?

He uses this insight to ask questions concerning the Reagan administration's position on certain issues in which he believes, as do I, that certain principles should have been asserted without any necessary reference to their instrumental usefulness. Mr. Arkes uses as an analogy as follows: Let us suppose, says he, that many Congresses ago a general tax was levied at twenty percent with the following exception, namely that all Americans of Oriental descent should pay fifty percent. If we had a president who proposed repealing the surcharge on Orientals, it would not be asked what would the effect of this repeal have on the budget or on deficit financing. It would be recognized that to tax one set of people by standards different from the taxes levied on another

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64 Hadley Arkes, "A Lover's Lament for the Reagan Administration," *National Review*, May 28, 1982, 615-619.

set of people is simply morally wrong. And without any reference to the empirical effect of righting that wrong one could suppose that a moral consensus behind that reform could be stimulated.

By the same token, Professor Arkes stresses that it is morally wrong to inquire into skin color, morally wrong to exclude on that basis, morally wrong on that basis to go in the opposite direction. And that under the circumstances, a conservative leader ought to make these points because those points, irrespective of his power to affect obliging legislation, are points that need to be made under the circumstances. He professes a disappointment, which some of us I suppose share, at the president's failure simply to point that it is morally wrong to compel, for instance busing, to compel for instance affirmative action, when the state is the instrument of such measures.

It is, I think, an unhappy failure of the president to make a philosophical declaration against what Mr. Hayek has singled out as "the most subversive instrument at the disposal of self-government, namely the progressive feature of the income tax." It is his failure to make such declarations unequivocally that has caused so much emphasis to be put on the alleged favoritism, he is showing towards the Orientals in our society who pay a different rate of taxation from other people.

I do not mean to suggest that the conservative movement ought to disdain pragmatic argument or empirical argument. Milton Friedman, several years ago arguing for a reduction in the top rate of the income tax to twenty-five percent, came forward with a fascinating historical example of the extent to which people will exert themselves in order to avoid exposure to a tax rate they considered to be inconsiderate, or even inordinate. In 1924, he points out, at \$100,000 Americans were subjected to a tax of twenty-five percent. In 1924, fifteen thousand Americans reported themselves as having an income of \$100,000 or more. In 1977, the last year for which the complete figures are available, those figures changed in the following way: Americans had increased by eighty percent and \$100,000 in 1929—thanks primarily to inflation, but thanks also to a real growth in income—had risen to one million

dollars. How many people then declared themselves in 1977 to have an income of one million dollars or more? The corresponding figure would have been 27,000 Americans. The actual figure was 1,785.

Now from this Milton Friedman concludes, not necessarily that this is a total validation of supply-side economics, but that it is an empirical validation of how people tend to behave in a free society when rates of taxation are discriminatory and what is their philosophical justification for doing this? Three years ago, when I was fifty-three, I decided to attempt to put some money aside every year for the benefit of my wife and son. I gave only two instructions to the man who was to handle these exiguous funds. The first was that he should try to do better than inflation and taxes and the second was that he was not tell me what he did because I find the whole subject boring.

Last week, I received a telephone call from Mr. Margolis of the *New York Times* to tell me that he had run into a datum earlier that week that there had been a ruling by the internal revenue department disqualifying the tax deductions taken by 180 people who had invested in a movie. He asked me had I ever heard of the movie *Rape of the Innocence*, in which I apparently invested? I told him I had not, but that I supposed it was a documentary of the Democratic Party.

But the episode of course reinforces Mr. Friedman's point and the empirical argument that if the race will reduce the twenty-five percent today, only thirteen percent of existing revenues would be forfeited—instantly to be made up as the result of at least a ten percent extra tax base as a result of reexposure of the kind of people who end up investing in movies in order to search out tax shelters.

Or since Mr. Reagan communicates so well by anecdote, he might have picked up an episode given by Congressman Phil Gramm—as you know a professional economist. He did, after an experience six months ago, do a little work, and he came up with the following rather remarkable figure. The average money bill in Congress costs fifty million dollars. The average beneficiary of those money bills stands to receive \$500. These figures, by the way, are gorgeously circular.

But the average taxpayer pays for that money bill fifty cents. One can, says Phil Gramm, understand the differences in the pressure on our representatives exerted by the people who stand to lose fifty cents against those who stand to benefit by \$500. Illustrated by the fact that the preceding week it had been suggested that in order to save three billion dollars Social Security be indexed not twice a year but once a year which measure was passed by an overwhelming voice vote. But then a congressman stood up and said that he insisted on a headcount which was there upon taken and the measure lost by 270 to 80.

Such empirical arguments are always at the disposal of the Reagan administration, but tend to be primarily useful only to reinforce the philosophical argument. It strikes me that any skeptics in the matter of the Laffer Curve can only be skeptical as to its exact configuration. Professor John Kenneth Galbraith recently wrote in the *Washington Post* that he had been asked by the American Heritage Dictionary, of which he is a consultant, to define supply-side economics and he had replied by saying this would not be necessary because by the time the next edition of the dictionary was released the term would have been entirely forgotten as meaningless indeed. He went so far to say, characteristically, that if memory serves, the Laffer Curve originated—rather he said memory is insecure here—on a piece of tissue paper, or it was a napkin, or it was a piece of toilet paper. Whichever was the case, they would have better been used conventionally than by Mr. Laffer.

The point certainly is that the Laffer Curve cannot be laughed out of existence except to the extent that one is willing to say that people are willing to work for nothing. But the mistake, clearly, is to suggest, as some of its advocates have done, that it will act in such a way as instantly to replace funds that are lost through a reduction in taxation. The validity of the Laffer Curve is intuitively recognized by people who know how, in fact, they tend to behave and how, in fact, their friends tend to behave. And such arguments are always at the disposal of a president but are ultimately only appealing to the extent that they are grounded, not in instrumental predictions, but in matters of



philosophical affirmation.

In the matter of foreign affairs, it appears to me that the president has made progress in resuggesting the globalist nature of the challenge. Gerhart Niemeyer so frequently said that what we lost under Lyndon Johnson was primarily that insight. Namely, that we are fighting at whatever front against a force which is intricately wedded to forces around the world that seek, roughly speaking, the same objective. Now, Senator William Fulbright gave us, I think, a marvelously useful distinction when he wrote ten years ago that the government of the United States has no proper quarrel with any other government no matter how odious its policies unless it seeks to export them. Nothing could have been clearer than the dominance of this when in 1965 we invaded with our Marines the eastern half of a single island because it appeared that there might be a chance that it might become a part of that globalist defensive while leaving completely undisturbed the western half in which Papa Doc reigned over a society at least as odiously as any Communist.<sup>65</sup> So, in Salvador, in Nicaragua I would say that Mr. Reagan has successfully reinforced the conservative of perception of the globalist challenge.

His failures are, in my judgment, failures to have mobilized the natural weapons at our disposal. They are primarily the economy and the word. We have not revitalized the ideological, to use a suspect word, "offensive." We have not given breath, to the extent that we are in a position to do so, to that which characterizes the difference between our society, with all its shortcomings, and life under gulag. In economics, it seems to me that we have failed to recognize that intervention, for instance in the matter of agriculture, can be viewed as a paramilitary experiment. If indeed we prevent the Soviet Union from getting seven, or eight, or nine billion dollars' worth of wheat from the United States, from Argentina, from Canada, we are and

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65 Buckley refers to the US involvement in the Dominican Civil War. Papa Doc was a common moniker for Francois Duvalier, the leader of Haiti in 1965.

should judge that as being a defense expenditure. To the extent that the number of Russians who are sent back to till the soil are Russians who are not, as of that moment, engaged in making bullets we have in fact advanced the identical goals that are advanced by the construction of one more battleship or aircraft carrier.

The failure of the Reagan administration to assert with a resonant seriousness its determination to use the economic weapon has led, for instance, to plans to continue with a pipeline stretching from Siberia to Austria, the effects of which will be not only to bail out the Soviet economic system marginally, but also to transform industries in Western Europe into a reliance on gas which the Soviet Union is in a position easily to disturb. There looms of course the great test, in the late part of 1983, when the question is: do we or do we not deploy our Pershing and cruise missiles? It is too early to say whether Western Europe demoralization and presidential leadership will come to the rescue of that critical decision. We do know that Mr. Reagan has up until this moment satisfied us of the seriousness of his intentions.

On the philosophical issues there are of course many. The one that vexes so many people so acutely is that of abortion. If indeed we are permitting the liquidation of one and one-half million human beings every year, it is difficult to understand any sense of hierarchy that relegates to that act of genocide less than primary importance. But we are after all a nation in which even the gradual perception of the evil of slavery caused a temporization that is consistent with the natural rhythm of this country. So much so that even in mid-war Abraham Lincoln, who had certainly become the purest apostle of the essential wrongdoing of slavery, said that his goal was to save the union even if it remained half slave and half free. It may very well be that notwithstanding the exemplary declarations by the president on the matter of abortion, he recognizes intuitively that until they are shared it becomes impossible to get the kind of legislation usually preceded by the consolidation of a social sanction, which would actually change our position in the matter.

As regards prayer, and busing, as regards tuition tax credits, there is progress. It is not a progress that depends, as the economy depends, on this or that tactical victory of an empirical order. But it is hard, I think, to fault the Reagan administration for being less than properly exercised on these two matters that do relate to our understanding of freedoms that are preserved for the individual.

The final question has of course to do with the question of when, if ever, would the nuclear bomb be used. My own private conclusion is that the most effective deterrent we have in our arsenal at this moment is not our minuteman missiles, nor our submarines, nor our Air Force, but Ronald Reagan himself. I say this because Mr. Reagan is a man who long ago came to the, I think proper, conclusion that certain things would not be permitted to happen and unless in the next period Congress contrives to take the authority away from the president it is plain that he would use his unique power in order to retaliate in the event of a Soviet economic initiative.

I have urged, and intend to do so more elaborately in a few weeks, what I call the demystification of nuclear strategy. Most of the apocalyptic talk we hear is based on a fear that in an exchange the parties would be carried away. As recently as three weeks ago, *Time Magazine* described with some specificity the football that follows the president wherever he goes. It is called a football; it is in fact a briefcase. What is inside that briefcase was not divulged because no one is supposed to know what it is. But it gives the president all kinds of variable opportunities with which to describe the kind of retaliation with which you would visit against the Soviet Union in the event of an attack. Now it is the conventional wisdom, taught no doubt in the freshman year at West Point, that you keep the enemy guessing and in point of fact the president continues to enjoy that proposition that the enemy must never know exactly how far you intend to go. My own feeling is that we have got to jettison that conventional wisdom as inappropriate to the nuclear age.

*Time Magazine* described what would happen to the city of Detroit in the event that a single megaton bomb were exploded 7,000 feet

above the heart of the city. What would happen, roughly speaking, is that the city would disappear. 350,000 Americans would be killed. What would we then do? We do not know what we would do because the football is a secret document, and we are not supposed to probe its intentional scrutability. I think this incorrect and have passed along my own recommendations, with which I hope some of you would agree, that we open that football and say exactly what we would do.

For the sake of shorthand, I call mine the Leningrad Doctrine because it is a very simple doctrine namely that any American city that is destroyed by a nuclear Soviet bomb will result in the elimination of the city of Leningrad. That all the orders to that effect have gone out, that it is not necessary to reconfirm them and that under the circumstances we have only to assert our willingness to prevent the elimination of an American city by singling Leningrad out as that city which would disappear in the event of that offensive. It has to me certain obvious advantages. One is that there is a moral symmetry. One is that you eliminate the time in which the moral transaction takes place in which having sustained damage you need to make the moral commitment to inflict damage—the moral redundancy of which might strike some people as immoralizing that particular act under the Lenin Doctrine. These would be automatic. They would be certain ancillary advantages for instance—for all we know the growth of a peace movement in Leningrad.

I think it unwise, ladies and gentlemen, to choose the moment to reflect that it was written that this world would one day end. It is, I think, blasphemous to anticipate the Lord's hand in any such eschatological undertaking. We do right to wish to survive, but merely to make that statement is not to cope with misgivings that creep into the body politic and which Ronald Reagan is uniquely situated to withstand.

Conservatism cannot retreat from its traditional position that some things are worth dying for. The special challenge of the time is the proposition that although some things may be worth dying for, it is not worth dying for nothing, which is what would be left in the event

of a nuclear exchange. All the strategic wit at our resources must be summoned to prevent such an exchange but the deepest reserves of that wit is a willingness to say acquiescently: That yes, rather a nuclear exchange than the sale of our souls to the Faustian monsters who sit unsmiling behind their hydrogen missiles seeking to mastermind the greatest act of human choreography in the history of the world.

Jonathan Schell calculates that the explosive power of the present inventory of nuclear weapons worldwide is equal to 600 million times the force that exploded over Hiroshima. That datum, which has stormed the consciences of so many readers, means very little, I think, to us because we dredge up from the macro horrors to which we are so constantly exposed the one relevant datum: namely that if the Soviet Union opted for massive nuclear war our option must be to return that hell in kind. And this option we would need to choose for so simple a reason as that we would not then have died for nothing because it is better than nothing to rid the world of such monsters as would unleash such a war.

It is needlessly distracting to multiply the figures so as to deal with hundreds of millions of people, when the poetry of the cosmic situation is reducible to the single apprehensible vision of a single man resolved that he will not leave his family to the mercy of a monster. It is, I think, rather the imagination of the conservative, whose knowledge is that the permanent things, and who always has acknowledged that death is not the primary human affliction, than that of the positivists whose values are finally so pliable as to guide them not merely to sell their souls, but to grant to the purchasers dominion over the whole world—rather to the conservatives that we turn for moral guidance.

I have said that I do not doubt that Ronald Reagan has intuitively reached the correct conclusion and so long as he has, we are effectively protected. But he terribly needs our help, because it is charted more exactly than the next eclipse of the sun, that the great tidal wave of pacifism is about to hit us. And its force—generated by such great passions as human fear, as the biological yearning to survive, the sense,

however misdirected, of human altruism—will be great. But for so long as such as you live, work, and contend this tidal wave will not overwhelm us. And then I think it will once again have become safe to speak of generations of Americans yet unborn, who experiencing liberty, will be grateful that at the threatened nightfall, the blood of their forefathers ran strong.

## **THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION: A REPORT CARD**

By Milton Friedman

**S**o far as the Philadelphia Society is concerned, I am sure all of us here believe in private property. And if there is anybody who does not think that the Philadelphia Society is a private property of Don Lipsett, he does not have a proper appreciation of private property and is therefore fundamentally disqualified from being a member of the Philadelphia Society.

I had completely forgotten those long past days in 1964 when the Philadelphia Society was founded. I may say I have enormously enjoyed my contacts with Bill Buckley ever since, particularly on the ski slopes. He is better than I am, but still. But the thing that it brought to mind was the enormous change that there has been in the intellectual atmosphere since we met at that hotel in New York.

Go back to the Goldwater year of 1964. I was a visiting professor for that year at Columbia University, so I happened to be in New York, and they had an extremely hard time finding any other intellectual in New York who was willing to stand up and say he was in favor of Barry Goldwater. As a result of which I had an extraordinary opportunity to be in touch with all of the various groups in New York, because for about the month before the election I spent most of my time going around from one group to another: from the financial journalist group, to the foundation people, to the academic group, to the church groups. You name them, I spoke to all of them. And I was fascinated at that time by the impression I received of the extraordinary homogeneity

of the intellectual atmosphere in New York.

It explained to me why it was that those few people who are exceptions in New York, people like Ludwig von Mises—who was at that time in a very adjunct basis at New York University—why they were kind of kooks over there. They were regarded as not quite in the right mind; they were not in the swim. But I was also impressed with what a pushover the New Yorkers were when it came to these arguments. They had never heard a reasonable justification for the kind of position that Barry Goldwater was taking. It did not occur to them that there could be a reasonable justification. They had talked to one another, they had set up strawmen, they had found all the silly answers, and they were able to dismiss these things right off the hand, but they had never heard a real argument. And they did not have an answer to the real arguments. They were in that sense pushovers.

Now, I think you will agree that the atmosphere today has moved a little. Not so much in New York, but around the rest of the country. New York remains a very backward area in this respect. I see some New Yorkers here. Ernest van den Haag can testify to whether I am wrong in my description, whether I am not so up to date. Have they improved any? A little. Yes, I think that is right. I think Lew Lehrman would not have made the kind of progress he did in 1964, and the fact that he can make the progress he did testifies to the fact that even if the intellectual climate has not changed, the climate of opinion among the public at large has changed very drastically.

That in a way brings me to the subject that I was going to talk about tonight. I think we have a tendency, all of us, to get carried away by the short-term situation, by what is going on this year, by the current election, by the current developments. And that it is important for us from time to time to step back and take a much longer point of view. And what I had thought I would talk about tonight was that much longer point of view, which is to some extent suggested by this contrast between the intellectual climate of the country when Goldwater was running for president and the intellectual climate when Ronald Reagan



ran for president in 1980. There was a tremendous change between those two dates.

Ronald Reagan, of course, got his political start as a national figure in that marvelous speech he made for Goldwater in 1964.<sup>66</sup> But Goldwater's defeat in 1964 was overwhelming. Reagan's victory in 1980 was also overwhelming. That was partly accident. I have no doubt that if you go back to the 1964 episode, the assassination of Kennedy established a political climate which was very unfavorable to a Goldwater. If Kennedy had lived, the 1964 campaign would have been between Goldwater and Kennedy, and it would have been a much different kind of a campaign. It would have been conducted on, at least one half of it, would have been conducted on a higher level. But as it was, it was a very difficult situation and I think that was a very special feature, which made it almost impossible, I think, under the sort of attitude of the time for almost anybody to have defeated the successor to John F. Kennedy—particularly someone like Lyndon Johnson who was willing to play the game the way he was willing to play it.

In 1980, undoubtedly there was an adventitious circumstance that the opponent was Jimmy Carter. And that helped a great deal, and certainly added to the change in intellectual climate. But even if you allow for all those special circumstances, there was a very real change in the attitudes and beliefs. And what I would like to talk about is really these long-term trends and where we are and what the future's likely to hold for us.

I am sure many of you in this room, like myself, are great admirers of what I regard as one of the great classics of all time: A.V. Dicey's book on law and public opinion in the nineteenth century in which he points out that trends in public opinion tend to go in very long swings.<sup>67</sup> That they tend to develop a momentum of their own as they go. That

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66 Ronald Reagan, "A Time for Choosing," 1964.

67 A.V. Dicey, *Lectures on the Relation Between Law and Public Opinion in England During the Nineteenth Century* (1905).

when they are in full flower almost nothing can stand on their way. They will roll over anything. But that as they develop counter currents develop. Sooner or later these counter currents reach a maximum, you have a sort of an uncertain position, it is only at such times that you can get significant changes in the actual course of events. And he stressed in there the tendency for the actual course of events to follow some twenty years or so behind the changes in the intellectual climate of opinion. His position really predated that famous quotation from Keynes that is repeated over and over again whereby he says the politicians today are listening to some long-dead economist, and other philosophers, but of course only economists count. Keynes and I would have agreed on that.

Now what I want to do is to trace out what I believe these long-term trends have been for the last almost 200 years and where we are now. Because I think there is more reason to be optimistic about the long run possibilities ahead of us than one might gather from the short run situation.

I think at the moment we are at a very low point. I think for a variety of reasons I will not go into this 1980 election has been very much of a backward step on the right road. We have sort of had a very real setback—I do not think there is any doubt—arising out of the unemployment situation, the recession we have been going through. And I am not too optimistic whether we will be able to consolidate the progress that was made in 1981, or whether we are going to slip farther back on the wrong road.

But I think that is taking much too short time a point of view. If you take the kind of broad view I am looking at, you have to recognize that in these times that Dicey talked about, when there were cross currents of opinion at a maximum, you have a very unsettled state in which things do not work themselves out right away. They go back and forth, back and forth, back and forth. And finally, after an interval, a new direction emerges and when that direction gets going—that trend gets going—it is almost unstoppable for a while until it sets up

counter currents.

The first of these major trends that I want to talk about started really in the world of ideas with Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* in 1776. The man we have all got on our ties thanks to Don Lipsett's clever commercial promotion, free advertisement done. He will give me a free tie in return, so there is no free advertisement.

But Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* marked a distinct change in intellectual attitudes. It took a very long time before that affected policy. It did not affect policy fundamentally, it did not really reach its fruition, until you have the repeal of the Corn Laws in just about seventy years later. But it did take place, and most of the nineteenth century was a century which represented a carrying out in policy of those ideas that Adam Smith had favored. The ideas of free markets, of *laissez-faire*, of minimal government.

Now, the interesting thing to me about these developments is that they are worldwide. They are not restricted to one country. They are not parochial. Governments have been very successful at times at interfering with the flow of goods and the flow of people. But they have never been able to interfere fundamentally with the flow of ideas. Sooner or later, and generally sooner rather than later, ideas are contagious and go across boundaries and influence everybody, and you can see this if you take the nineteenth century episode.

The real impact of the *laissez-faire* ideas was not at all restricted to Great Britain. The US, of course, was another place where it was carried over very much. It is true Alexander Hamilton wrote his "Report on Manufactures," which was intended to be a criticism of Adam Smith's doctrine in demonstrating that it did not apply to the United States.<sup>68</sup> It is true the United States did have tariffs and departed from the pure doctrine, but it is also true that you had a great era of *laissez-faire* in the United States, particularly after the Civil War. You really did not have the Adam Smith doctrine effective in the United States. Well,

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68 Alexander Hamilton, "The Report on the Subject of Manufactures," (1791).

it first became effective really after the 1830s, when you had many state governments around the country that engaged in what we today would call socialist ventures: the state of Illinois setting up and owning commercial banks; Indiana having a whole collection of state banks, canals, and railroads. You had a very large, widespread era of state socialism. But most of them went broke in the panic of 1837 and that ended that era and really laid the groundwork for a very long era of essential *laissez-faire*.

But I think an even more interesting example, and one I have referred to on many occasions, was the case of Japan. In 1867, you had the Meiji Restoration in Japan, in which a young group of upstart nobility took over. They had no interest in free markets as a matter of principle. They had no interest in democracy from a political point of view. They had one interest and one interest only, and that was to make Japan into a great world power—into a great country. But what policy did they follow? Well without even thinking about it, they immediately followed the British policies of capitalism and free markets. They agreed on a treaty with Britain which prevented them from imposing a tariff of more than five percent for thirty years. So that their early stages of development were entirely free trade. The government did get involved to some extent in the steel industry and shipbuilding, but in the main you had essentially a free market development. It was facilitated by the way in which they converted from serfdom by buying off the daimyos of feudal lords with government bonds. And the feudal lords proceeded to take much of that and invest it in industry as a way of getting some capital going. But in the main, you had a free market development. I think it is a dramatic illustration of the effect of the leading ideas of an epoch around the world.

Along about the end of the nineteenth century, these counter currents that Dicey refers to started to grow and grew very rapidly. The intellectual tide of opinion started changing in Britain around the 1870s, 1880s with the emergence of Fabian socialism. And the ideas that there are many evils that the market system left, which there certainly were,

and that the right way to attack them was through government. And I would say that that set in motion in the intellectual world a period of some seventy-five to eighty years of a long-term trend toward governmental control, toward centralized government. That trend, again, took twenty, twenty-five, thirty years before it was manifested in actual policy. It was manifested in policy in Great Britain before World War I: in the unemployment insurance, the old age benefits, and so on.

One of the most fascinating documents I know of is Dicey's preface to the 1913 edition of *Law and Public Opinion*. I may say *Law and Public Opinion* was originally given as lectures at Harvard in 1899, and it was then published in its first edition I think about 1902 or 1903 when it had been polished up. But there was a second edition in 1913, in which Dicey added a preface—a very, very long preface—which is a fascinating document because he predicts in that preface, before World War I, the future trends of policy in Great Britain with extraordinary accuracy. Which makes it very clear that the emergence of Fabian socialism and the welfare state in Britain was not a consequence of the effect of World War I or World War II, but was fundamentally a consequence of the following out of these ideas of the Fabian socialists and their associates.

Now that era of a move toward welfare states, toward collectivism, again lasted about seventy-five, eighty, eighty-five, years and again was absolutely worldwide. It hit the United States intellectuals before and during World War I and during the 1920s. By 1929, the intellectual climate in American campuses was almost wholly socialist. *The New Republic*, *The Nation*, which were the sort of publications of this Fabian socialist idea, were the leading publications on college campuses. The Socialist party was the leading party of the academics and the intellectuals. The Socialist party platform, as we pointed out in our book *Free to Choose*, of 1928 has been completely adopted in the period since then. I have always said that the Socialist party was the most influential political party in the United States in the first fifty years of this century—not because it elected anybody to office, but

because it was part of the process by which this revolution of ideas, this trend of ideas, was carried out.

And that, as I say, that trend of ideas really came to fruition in the United States after the New Deal in 1933, after the Great Depression, when you had the major change in public opinion. When you had a shift in public attitudes away from regarding the state and government as an umpire and toward regarding government and the state as a big brother who is going to solve all the problems. But it was the same trend that Britain had shown some twenty, thirty years earlier. But again, these same ideas really underlay the Russian Revolution, the form which it took in 1918 when you had Russia go communist.

These same ideas of the Fabian socialists spread everywhere around the world and again a very interesting example, and one I like to cite because of its extraordinary parallel with the Japanese case, is the case of India. When India achieved its independence in 1948, the new leaders of India were very different from the people who attained the control in Japan after the Meiji Restoration. India and Japan are a fascinating comparison because they are both ancient civilizations with ancient cultures. You are not talking about backward lands. You are not talking about entering into virgin territory or anything like that. You have got old civilizations with old cultures, very similar in that respect.

But the leaders, Gandhi, Nehru, the rest of the great leaders of India had been raised in a British democratic tradition. They professed, and I am sure were sincere, in believing that they wanted a democratic society with political freedom and yet what economic policies did they follow? Because they also had been raised and taught at the London School of Economics where Bill Hutt was unfortunately no longer was teaching. They had sat at the feet of Harold Laski who was undoubtedly, by far and away, the most influential intellectual so far as India was concerned—just as Adam Smith was the most influential, in fact, so far as Japan was concerned. And they took it for granted, without even thinking about it, that the only way in which a modern society could go was in the direction of Fabian socialism, central planning,

and collectivism. And as a result, whereas the Japanese leaders who had no interest in democracy produced an economic policy which generated democracy and fostered it, the Indians adopted an economic policy which has prevented democracy and has fostered a restrictive collectivist state. In both cases, they got results in the political area, against their own ideas, because they took over these economic ideas, which were so much in the air. And of course, the consequences are very clear as well. Japan rose very rapidly, became a leading world power, grew by 1907 to a position in which it was able to defeat Russia in war. India has stagnated, its people have not progressed, and it has remained a very backward, underdeveloped country.

But that is not my main point. My point is rather the different one, to show how universal and widespread are these trends. That the collectivist trend was manifest in the Russian Revolution, it was manifest in the Communist Revolution in China, it was manifest in what happened in India.

Now in the past twenty, thirty, forty years there has been another change in the intellectual climate of opinion. Fabian socialism, the ideas of socialism, are really dead. You will look long and hard before you find any intellectual who will tell you how collectivist organization is a way to get efficient production, that it is a way to eliminate the waste of competition and to ensure that you get a high productivity and ample output. I do not think you can find anybody who will tell you that. I do not know. But any of you who have been in Britain and you try to find an Englishman who will tell you the nationalized industries are the efficient industries. If you do, he will be a very rare bird indeed and when you find him, he will probably be employed by one of those nationalized industries.

At any rate, shortly after World War II you started to have an intellectual trend the other way. Hayek's *Road to Serfdom* was probably one of the most important books that came along that helped that set

of ideas along.<sup>69</sup> Ayn Rand's novels had a very great influence.<sup>70</sup> Those people who became complete and utter Randites were spoiled forever.<sup>71</sup> But those people who are influenced by Rand but were able to return to their senses were much the better for it. She had a very great and I think a very good influence, on the whole—I am not disparaging her influence. You had organizations like the Foundation for Economic Education spring up.<sup>72</sup> You had the Mont Pelerin Society founded by Hayek in Switzerland in 1947: Originally a small group of people who were isolated from their own intellectual communities and who met once a year so that they could spend a week in which they did not have to think that they had to be careful about every word they said.

That was part of the idea behind the Philadelphia Society in 1964, which Ed Feulner was talking about. The people who had the kind of ideas that those of us in this room represent today, were very few and far between, were isolated in a few places. Many of them were the only one or two people at their institutions or their organizations who had the views they had. And the Philadelphia Society, like the Mont Pelerin Society, served an enormously important function in enabling them to get together, to get to know one another, and to feel that maybe after all they were not really such complete kooks as their colleagues had made them out to be.

This has nothing to do with it, but I very well remember once when I came back from the founding meeting in the Mont Pelerin Society and I was sitting around the table at the Quadrangle Club with various

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69 F.A. Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom* (1944).

70 Here Friedman is referring to Ayn Rand's novels *We the Living* (1936), *Anthem* (1938), and especially *The Fountainhead* (1943) and *Atlas Shrugged* (1957).

71 Friedman is referring to Ayn Rand's most ardent followers who embraced what she termed Objectivism. For more information on Objectivism and the life of Ayn Rand consult Jennifer Burns, *Goddess of the Market: Ayn Rand and the American Right* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) and Anne C. Heller, *Ayn Rand and the World She Made* (New York: Doubleday, 2009).

72 The Foundation for Economic Education was founded in 1946 by Leonard Read.



of my colleagues, one of whom at that time was Hans Morgenthau the political scientist. And Hans asked me where I had been, and I told him. “Oh,” he said, “you have been to a meeting of the veterans of the wars of the nineteenth century.” I thought that was an excellent description. I do not know of any better description of the Mont Pelerin Society than that.

But the point I want to make is really a different one. What produced that intellectual trend? It was not generated by the intellectual attitude alone. In large part it was generated, and it has been able to be effective and be widespread and adopted, by the observable consequences of the welfare state—of the collectivist society that followed from the earlier intellectual trend. After all, the bright vision which the extreme form communism had held up, a vision which made it possible—it is hard to understand this now—but made it possible, back in 1933-34 when the United States was in the depths of depression, for groups of intellectuals to support the Communist party candidate for president.<sup>73</sup> John Dos Passos, I believe. Arnold Beckman in a recent article, he is here somewhere, had a list of the various people who signed that, and it is kind of shocking when you look at the list of the people who signed that.

But at that time, here was the United States in deep depression, twenty to twenty-five percent of the population unemployed, a catastrophe of the most extreme kind. And here was this fresh new hope over there in Russia, a communist society, centrally planned, the intellectuals were going to run it. And of course, when American intellectuals went over there for a visit, they were shown one Potemkin village after another and came back very much impressed. That hope, that dream, has disappeared. There is nobody, again today, who will have a good word to say for communist Russia along the lines of building a society

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73 Earl Browder was the Communist party presidential candidate in 1936 and again in 1940. He received less than 75,000 votes in both elections. Friedman here indicates that American novelist John Dos Passos, among others, signed a letter of support for the communist ticket.

that will benefit the ordinary man. What you will have people who are still collectivists say, “Oh well, that is the wrong kind of communism, that was distorted by Stalin,” or “It is the fact that you had this ancient Russian tradition of authoritarianism that made it impossible.” But then the other attempts at socialism, whether you take East Germany or Red China, none of them have served to fulfill those bright promises. It was that experience—more I believe than the ideas or abstract ideas of a von Mises, or a Hayek, or a Rand—it was that experience with the actual results of a collectivist society that I think was responsible for the change in the intellectual climate of opinion.

I have cited the most extreme example, but we come closer to home in the Western societies. Sweden was a great exemplar of the middle way. Never mind that it had escaped World War I and World War II. Never mind that it was saved from the Great Depression by German rearmament which established a demand for Swedish steel. But it was a middle way, and it was showing how it was possible to combine a welfare state with individual freedom and with prosperity. But Sweden has been showing many, many strains in recent years. It is not anything like the kind of success story that it was some five or ten years ago.<sup>74</sup> Britain has been of course a more extreme case. But everywhere, wherever the welfare state was adopted, whether in the United States, whether in Britain, whether in Sweden, in France, the consequences were a growing role of government, higher and higher taxes, an unwillingness on the part of the public to finance the expenditures that the political process was generating, and as a result inflation—a way of imposing taxes on people without anybody having to vote for it, an expedient to enable the government to finance a larger amount of spending by government than the public at large was willing to pay for. And everywhere, this combination of growing government expenditure, with many programs that were clearly failures, of inflation.

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74 Here Friedman anticipates the shift in Swedish society toward market liberalism, which took place over the next decade in the country.

And along with it, much against the ideas of the Phillips Curve—of Keynesianism and so on, growing unemployment. These things became manifest everywhere whether in Britain or in France, in Sweden or in the United States. And in my opinion, it has been this experience, more as I say than the abstract writings that predicted this experience, that has caused a dramatic change in the intellectual climate of opinion.

And that change in the intellectual climate of opinion has again been worldwide. We tend to think of the change in the intellectual climate of opinion in terms of the election of Margaret Thatcher in Great Britain or the election of Ronald Reagan in the United States, but it also explains Solidarity in Poland. It is inconceivable that the Solidarity movement, or a movement like Solidarity, could have arisen in Poland twenty or thirty years ago, when the intellectual climate was so much more favorable to centralized control and collectivism. The same trend explains the kind of movements in Hungary, in Russia, in communist China toward trying to introduce greater elements of market arrangements in their collectivist systems. It is all a response to the same intellectual opinion.

It was earliest reflected in actual policy in that small collection of states in the Fertile Crescent of the far east, Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea. What is that saying? Somebody says the four, the ugly four? No, the gang of four, right. The gang of four, that is what I was looking for. The gang of four countries, which have outpaced almost all other underdeveloped countries in terms of their rates of growth. And which have done so by largely, though by no means exclusively, following free market arrangements.

Hong Kong has come closest to following a really free market arrangement and it is in some ways the biggest paradox. Here is a dependency of Great Britain, of socialist, Fabian socialist Britain, at the height of the Fabian socialist state. And what does it do? By a series of accidents, it follows an Adam Smith policy, as close to it as any country in the world has followed. And that policy enables the population of Hong Kong to multiply close to tenfold in the post-war

period—from about a half a million just after the end of the war to over five million now—and at the same time have a four-fold increase in the real income of the individual person on the island. It is one of the most extraordinary examples.

Hong Kong is not a place where any of us would want to live, or most of us would want to live. It is not a place where most of the people in Hong Kong want to live. They would much prefer to come to the United States. There is no doubt about that. But the miracle is that with no resources, with nothing there but what I would call good government, what Adam Smith would have called good government, what many social reformers of our earlier years would have called a callous neglect of social welfare, Hong Kong has been able to provide these people with a far better level of living than they were able to get by staying in communist China or by any of the other alternatives available to them.

Taiwan had somewhat better circumstances and it followed less of a free market policy. It had much more government intervention than Hong Kong, but it did extremely well. Given its better circumstances it did not do as well as Hong Kong did. But it did very well, and it followed largely free market policies. Singapore, the same thing is true. Korea, similar thing is true. Hong Kong comes the closest to being a pure case, the others are not. Singapore is a case of benevolent dictatorship. But this benevolent dictator adopted free market techniques and was very successful, I am speaking of course of Lee Kuan Yew.

When you come to the West, and you get away from there, the free market ideas—this change in ideas—has been manifested in Great Britain. As I have already indicated it was manifested there by the election of Margaret Thatcher. It may appear that the election of Mitterrand is a contradiction to the thesis I am now expressing and to some extent it is. But it is very far from being a complete contradiction. Mitterrand's talk today is very different from what Mitterrand's talk would have been ten or twenty years ago, and moreover Mitterrand's policies are very different. He started out with a straight socialist policy.

And whereas typically and historically a policy of big government spending, of inflating the money supply, of holding down wages and prices, has typically worked for about a year until people caught on to it—when it has been catastrophic.

As I said earlier, when that kind of a trend gets underway, it is very unclear where it is going to go, and you always have an interim period of great uncertainty. You had such an interim period in the United States around the time of the New Deal when we were moving into a new pattern. It took some time before it straightened out. And I believe that many of the uncertainties that are so much with us today around the world: expressed in the fears that people have that there is going to be a financial collapse, that the banks of the world are going to collapse, in the doomsayers who say that Kondratieff's third wave is about to break on our backs and drive us into the depths of depression. That kind of uncertainty, I think, really reflects the fact that we are in one of these in between, interim periods, when one trend has ended and another trend has not yet emerged.

I think the change in philosophical ideas is clear. That the episode of Fabian socialism is over. The episode of the real welfare state is over. What is very unclear is where we are going to go from here. And I do not believe that you can give a single answer to that. I think that is still in the laps of the gods.

I think a very likely answer, for countries like the United States and Great Britain, and that is the title I suggested to Don for this talk today is that we will move toward a limping welfare state. What I mean by that is that those of us who would like to see us move toward a far greater degree of market freedom, toward eliminating almost all of these welfare state approaches, we are not going to get our way. When you have a change in trend, you never go back to where you were before. You go in a new direction and you carry with you a lot of the debris from the period you have been through. So unfortunately, we are not going to be able to do what we should do, which is to abolish Social Security and replace it by a more sensible voluntary system—get rid

of all of these government measures.

After all, the test can be expressed in terms of government spending as a fraction of income. At the height of Britain's prosperity at the end of the nineteenth century, government spending in Britain was ten percent of the national income. In 1928, in the United States, government spending was about ten percent of the national income. The church has always been in favor of a tithe. It is clear to me that ten percent is the right proportion of the national income to be spent by government. We are now spending something over forty percent of the national income. And I am very skeptical that we will be able to cut that down to the right ten percent.

So, when I say we are going to go into a limping welfare state, it is one real possibility. I think we are moving to cut down the role of government, despite the twist and the turns, the backlashes, and the forward movements. I think the trend will be to cut down the role of government. But it will not be to eliminate all of these programs. We will continue to have them with us, and we will have that is a reduced and limping welfare state.

But fortunately, we have the heritage of our long period of essentially unrestrained market economies and we can stand a good deal of waste. Adam Smith, you know, once said there is a deal of ruin in a nation. And there is a deal of ruin. So, we can stand a lot of waste, and I think that we can carry this load and if we can open up the markets, give the markets a greater role, put a lid on government spending and gradually bring it down—not to ten percent but maybe to thirty to thirty-five percent. Then we can have a period of very great economic prosperity, and a very great amount of political freedom and diversity.

But I do not think that is the only possibility. The other possibility, it seems to me, the other major possibility is going all the way to a complete totalitarian society. The kind of thing that seems to be in process in Central and South America. The kind of thing that is going on in Nicaragua. The kind of thing that has been spreading like a plague through so much of the world—the whole Russian Empire, wherever

it goes. Now, that is not really a product of the Fabian socialist trend. It harks back to a much earlier set of attitudes of authoritarian control from a small elite group at the center. But unfortunately, that seems to me to be the next most likely development. The one thing I feel sure you will not have is simply a continuation of the way things have been going. You will not have a welfare state à la Britain, à la the 1970s in the United States. You will either cut it back and open up the greater role of government, which I hope we will have, or you will move in the totalitarian direction.

It is very hard to predict when these things are going to happen or what back-and-forth fills there will be. Many of us had great hopes that 1980 marked the real turning point. Those hopes may still be fulfilled. It is not too late. But at the moment they do not look as bright as they did a couple of years ago. But if they are not fulfilled, you have got to take some perspective. We have been in this fight for a long time. We have had disappointments before. There are those of us who had high hopes when a Mr. Richard Nixon was elected to office. Those hopes were disappointed and people at that time thought the disappointment was forever. But it was not, and we had another chance in 1980. I hope this one will be a more successful case. But if it is not, we will have another chance again, some of us may not be around to see it. But most of you in this room will be.

Because the thing that gives me optimism is that the public at large in the United States has clearly changed its attitudes. You do have people objecting to the elimination of government programs from which they directly benefit. But you go around and nobody objects to the proposition that government is too big, too pervasive, and ought to be cut down. It is only that they want to do it at somebody else's expense, which is perfectly natural. That is why it seems to me the right way to move is in the direction of trying to package these things together in a package and try to make a combined deal, whereby you give up some of yours, if I give up some of mine, if he gives up some of his. That is the route which is possible.

You know there have been some very interesting studies of referenda versus legislative action, and they show that referenda are almost invariably more fiscally conservative and more libertarian than legislative action. Here in the state of California, now California has a reputation as being a very liberal state—it is. It has had a very liberal governor. The state legislature has not been dependable. But the people of California have been much more sensible and dependable. They have eliminated by their votes the inheritance tax in the state of California. They voted this year on various issues. They voted against the gun control bill. They voted against the bottle bill. And what is true in California is true in other states around the country. There have been many states in recent years that have had referenda on introducing a graduated income tax or increasing its productivity. Those have almost invariably been voted down.

Now this is fundamentally a democracy, and although there is many a slip twixt the opinion of the public at large and what Congress and the legislatures do, ultimately Congress and the legislatures are going to be dominated by what the public at large wants. And that is why I feel very confident that sooner or later in this country, the public opinion will be effective and we will succeed in moving toward that limping welfare state—which may not be the ideal state to which we would like to go—but would be a lot better than where we have been heading up till now.



# **PHOTOGRAPHS**



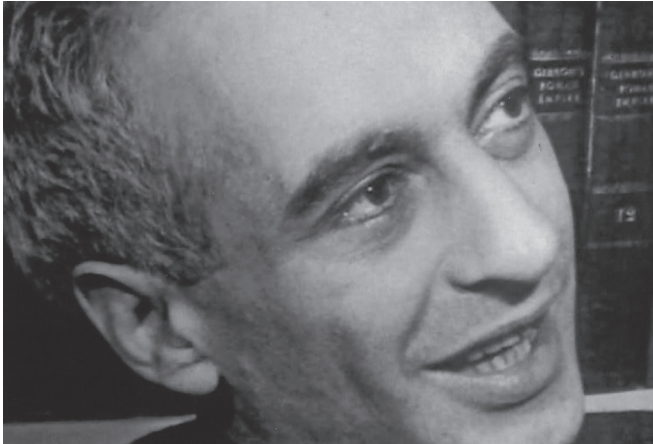
WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY WAS A FOUNDING AND DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE PHILADELPHIA SOCIETY AND PROVIDED AN EARLY LOAN TO ENABLE THE ORGANIZATION TO GET STARTED.



NOBEL PRIZE-WINNING LIBERTARIAN ECONOMIST MILTON FRIEDMAN IS SEEN HERE AT THE MINT. HE WAS A DISTINGUISHED MEMBER AND PROVIDED AN ESSENTIAL PERSPECTIVE FOR THE SOCIETY IN ITS EARLY YEARS.



DON "THE COMMODORE" LIPSETT FOUNDED THE PHILADELPHIA SOCIETY AND SERVED AS ITS PERMANENT SECRETARY FROM 1964 UNTIL HIS DEATH IN 1995.



FRANK MEYER WAS AN INFLUENTIAL MEMBER OF THE PHILADELPHIA SOCIETY WHO PROMOTED THE IDEA OF FUSIONISM AND DID A GREAT DEAL TO ESTABLISH THE CULTURE OF THE SOCIETY AS ONE WHERE THOSE INTERESTED IN ORDERED LIBERTY COULD COME AND DISCUSS AND OFTEN DISAGREE.



PICTURED HERE IS A YOUNG M. STANTON EVANS. EVANS WAS A FOUNDER OF THE CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT. HE WORKED WITH WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY IN THE EARLY DAYS OF NATIONAL REVIEW AND DEDICATED HIS LIFE TO THE PROMOTION OF ORDERED LIBERTY. EVANS WAS A DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE PHILADELPHIA SOCIETY.



PICTURED HERE FROM LEFT TO RIGHT DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY AL CAMPBELL AND RICHARD WEAVER ARE IN DISCUSSION. THROUGH HIS SCHOLARSHIP, WEAVER FOUGHT TO DEFEND AND PRESERVE SOUTHERN VALUES AND TRADITION.



NOBEL PRIZE-WINNING LIBERTARIAN ECONOMIST F.A. HAYEK PROVIDED MANY IN THE FLEDGLING CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT WITH A CRITIQUE OF CENTRALIZATION. HIS WORKS *THE ROAD TO SERFDOM* AND *THE CONSTITUTION OF LIBERTY* ARE STILL WIDELY READ AND HIS ARTICLE "THE USE OF KNOWLEDGE IN SOCIETY" IS DEBATABLE THE MOST IMPORTANT ARTICLE IN ECONOMICS IN THE 20TH CENTURY. HAYEK WAS A DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE PHILADELPHIA SOCIETY.



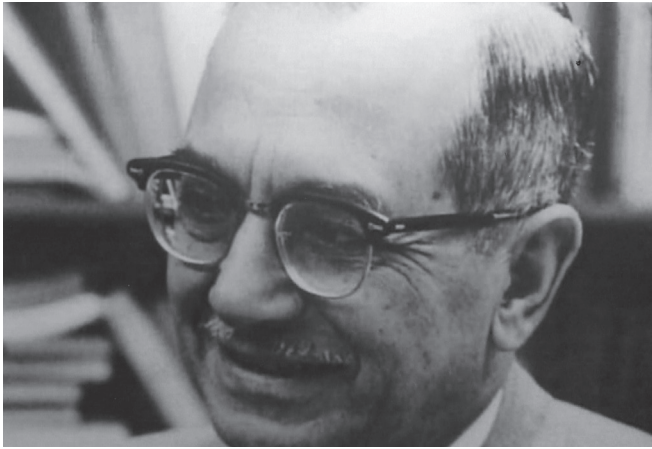
RUSSELL KIRK WAS A MEMBER AND FREQUENT SPEAKER AT THE PHILADELPHIA SOCIETY AND HIS BOOK *THE CONSERVATIVE MIND* WAS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT WORKS IN GIVING SHAPE TO THE EARLY CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT.



ANNETTE KIRK IS A DISTINGUISHED MEMBER AND STILL ATTENDS PHILADELPHIA SOCIETY MEETINGS. SHE HAS SPENT THE LAST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AS PRESIDENT OF THE RUSSELL KIRK CENTER FOR CULTURAL RENEWAL WHICH CONTINUES THE LEGACY OF KIRK BY PROMOTING TRADITIONAL CONSERVATISM.



FORREST McDONALD WAS ONE OF THE MOST PROMINENT CONSERVATIVE HISTORIANS IN THE UNITED STATES AND A DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE PHILADELPHIA SOCIETY. HIS WORK ON THE EARLY NATIONAL PERIOD, THE CONSTITUTION, REPUBLICANISM, THE SOUTH, AND THE AMERICAN PRESIDENCY ARE STILL READ IN HISTORY GRADUATE PROGRAMS TODAY.



ELISEO VIVAS WAS A CONSERVATIVE PHILOSOPHER AND LITERARY THEORIST WHO WAS A DISTINGUISHED MEMBER AND REGULARLY ATTENDED AND SPOKE AT PHILADELPHIA SOCIETY MEETINGS.



HERE, LEFT TO RIGHT, ERIC VOEGELIN AND ELLIS SANDOZ ARE SPEAKING. VOEGELIN WAS AN INFLUENTIAL POLITICAL PHILOSOPHER AND SANDOZ WAS THE DIRECTOR OF THE ERIC VOEGELIN INSTITUTE FOR AMERICAN RENAISSANCE STUDIES AT LSU. BOTH MEN HAVE BEEN HONORED AS DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS OF THE PHILADELPHIA SOCIETY.





FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, HENRY REGNERY IS SHAKING HANDS WITH RUSSELL KIRK WHILE LOUIS DEHMLOW LOOKS ON. REGNERY, THROUGH HIS PUBLISHING COMPANY, PLAYED AN ESSENTIAL ROLE IN THE ADVENT OF THE CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT. HE FINANCED *HUMAN EVENTS* AND PUBLISHED BUCKLEY'S *GOD AND THE MAN AT YALE* AS WELL AS KIRK'S *THE CONSERVATIVE MIND*. REGNERY WAS A DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE PHILADELPHIA SOCIETY.



HARRY JAFFA WAS A POLITICAL PHILOSOPHER, HISTORIAN, AND DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE PHILADELPHIA SOCIETY. IN ADDITION TO HIS WORKS OF HISTORY—MOST NOTABLY *CRISIS OF THE HOUSE DIVIDED: AN INTERPRETATION OF THE ISSUES IN THE LINCOLN-DOUGLAS DEBATES*—JAFFA DEVELOPED AN AMERICAN APPLICATION OF LEO STRAUSS'S PHILOSOPHY.





LEFT TO RIGHT, EDWIN FEULNER AND ANTONIO MARINO POSE FOR A PHOTOGRAPH. FEULNER DEDICATED HIS LIFE TO THE CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT AND IS BEST KNOWN FOR ESTABLISHING THE CONSERVATIVE THINK TANK THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION AND SERVING AS ITS PRESIDENT FOR THIRTY-SEVEN YEARS. FEULNER IS A DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE PHILADELPHIA SOCIETY.



PICTURED LEFT TO RIGHT, HENRY REGNERY SPEAKS WITH NOBEL PRIZE-WINNING ECONOMIST RONALD COASE. COASE IS BEST BEST KNOWN FOR HIS ARTICLES "THE NATURE OF THE FIRM" AND "THE PROBLEM OF SOCIAL COST."



DON DEVINE IS A POLITICAL SCIENTIST WHO PROMOTED FUSIONISM AND HAS PUBLISHED NUMEROUS BOOKS ON AMERICAN POLITICS. HE SERVED IN THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION AS DIRECTOR OF THE U.S. OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT. DEVINE IS A DISTINGUISHED MEMBER AND FREQUENT ATTENDEE AND CONTRIBUTOR AT THE PHILADELPHIA SOCIETY.



GEORGE NASH IS BEST KNOWN FOR HIS INFLUENTIAL BOOK *THE CONSERVATIVE INTELLECTUAL MOVEMENT IN AMERICA SINCE 1945*. HE IS ALSO A BIOGRAPHER OF HERBERT HOOVER AND HAS WORKED TIRELESSLY TO UNDERSTAND THE EVER-EVOLVING CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT. HE IS A DISTINGUISHED MEMBER AND REGULAR ATTENDEE OF THE PHILADELPHIA SOCIETY.



PICTURED LEFT TO RIGHT, RICHARD RAHN AND GEORGE GILDER. RAHN IS AN ECONOMIST WHO SERVED AS THE VICE PRESIDENT AND CHIEF ECONOMIST OF THE UNITED STATES CHAMBER OF COMMERCE DURING THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION WHERE HE WAS A STAUNCH ADVOCATE OF SUPPLY-SIDE ECONOMICS. GILDER IS AN INVESTOR AND CO-FOUNDER OF THE DISCOVERY INSTITUTE. IN 1981 HE AUTHORED *WEALTH AND POVERTY* WHICH ADVOCATED FOR SUPPLY-SIDE ECONOMICS WHILE REAGAN WAS PUSHING HIS ECONOMIC AGENDA. GILDER IS A DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE PHILADELPHIA SOCIETY.



STEPHEN TONSOR WAS A HISTORIAN WHO WROTE FREQUENTLY IN CONSERVATIVE PUBLICATIONS. HE WAS AN ARDENT DEFENDER OF CONSERVATISM, A DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE PHILADELPHIA SOCIETY, AND A FREQUENT CONTRIBUTOR AT MEETINGS.



PICTURED LEFT TO RIGHT, BILL CAMPBELL AND PAUL KENGOR PARTICIPATE IN A PANEL SESSION. CAMPBELL SERVED AS THE SECRETARY OF THE PHILADELPHIA SOCIETY FROM 1995 TO 2004 AND IS A DISTINGUISHED MEMBER. KENGOR IS A POLITICAL SCIENTIST AT GROVE CITY COLLEGE AND THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE INSTITUTE FOR FAITH AND FREEDOM. HE HAS AUTHORED NUMEROUS BOOKS ON AMERICAN POLITICS.



PICTURED LEFT TO RIGHT, HELEN CAMPBELL, ANNE EDWARDS AND LEE EDWARDS. LEE EDWARDS HELPED FOUND YOUNG AMERICANS FOR FREEDOM AND HAS SPENT HIS ENTIRE LIFE CHRONICLING THE HISTORY OF AMERICAN CONSERVATISM. HE IS ALSO A DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY.



PICTURED LEFT TO RIGHT, DAVID MEISELMAN AND LENORE EALY. MEISELMAN WAS AN ECONOMIST WHO WORKED WITH MILTON FRIEDMAN ON MONETARY POLICY AND ITS EFFECT ON ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE AND INTEREST RATES. EALY BECAME THE THIRD SECRETARY OF THE SOCIETY IN 2004 AND HAS BEEN TIRELESS IN HER EFFORTS TO BRING YOUNG CONSERVATIVES, LIBERTARIANS AND CLASSICAL LIBERALS INTO THE ORGANIZATION.





PICTURED HERE LEFT TO RIGHT, BACK TO FRONT ARE MANY OF THE FORMER PRESIDENTS OF THE PHILADELPHIA SOCIETY. BACK ROW: EDWIN J. FEULNER, GEORGE NASH, CLAES RYN, DANIEL B. HALES, LEONARD P. LIFFIO. MIDDLE ROW: EDWIN MEESE III, ELLIS SANDOZ, FORREST McDONALD, JOHN WILSON, WILLIAM C. DENNIS. FRONT ROW: MIDGE DECTER, LEE EDWARDS, T. KENNETH CRIBB, JOHN HOWARD, WILLIAM F. CAMPBELL, LOWELL C. SMITH, VICTORIA HUGHES.



IN RECENT YEARS THE PHILADELPHIA SOCIETY ALONG WITH PARTNERS—INCLUDING HILLSDALE COLLEGE—HAVE PROVIDED FELLOWSHIPS TO ATTEND MEETINGS. IN THE BACK ROW, FIFTH FROM THE LEFT IS CHRIS MALAGISI WHO IS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF OUTREACH AT HILLSDALE IN DC. ON THE FAR RIGHT IS ALLEN MENDENHALL WHO IS A TRUSTEE OF THE PHILADELPHIA SOCIETY AND HAS WORKED TO BRING MORE YOUNG CONSERVATIVES, LIBERTARIANS, AND CLASSICAL LIBERALS INTO THE ORGANIZATION.



## **SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES**

**WALTER BERNs (1919–2015):** Berns was an American constitutional law and political philosophy professor whose work focused on American governance and society. He published nine books and a wide range of articles in publications such as the *New York Times*, the *Atlantic Monthly*, and the *Wall Street Journal*. He also served as a delegate to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, the National Council on the Humanities, and on the Council of Scholars in the Library of Congress. In 2005, President George W. Bush awarded him the National Humanities Medal, an honor recognizing Berns's decades as a constitutional scholar.

**RICHARD J. BISHIRJIAN:** Bishirjian was Founding President and Professor of Government at Yorktown University from 2000-2016 and is a self-described “education entrepreneur.” He earned a B.A. from the University of Pittsburgh in 1964 and a Ph.D. in government and international studies from the University of Notre Dame in 1972. He is the author of *The Conservative Rebellion*, a history of conservatism across the phases of American history, and his essays have appeared in publications such as *Modern Age*, the *American Spectator*, and *The Imaginative Conservative*.

**WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR. (1925-2008):** Buckley, a World War II veteran, completed his Bachelor's degree in political science, history, and economics with honors from Yale University in 1950. He first achieved national notoriety with the publication of his 1951 book *God and Man at Yale*. In 1955, Buckley founded *National Review* magazine, which became a leading voice in post-World War II American conservatism. From 1966 to 1999, he was the host of the PBS debate program *Firing Line*. He was also the author of more than fifty books on a range of topics.

**ARNAUD DE BORCHGRAVE (1926-2015):** Borchgrave was a foreign correspondent for *Newsweek* whose storied career carried him across

the globe, covering at least seventeen wars and countless Cold War hotspots. After leaving *Newsweek*, Borchgrave teamed with Robert Moss, a journalist from the *Economist* magazine, to co-write the best-selling novel *The Spike*, which drew on Borchgrave's life experiences to outline a scenario in which Soviet agents infiltrated Western media to disseminate communist disinformation. Borchgrave later served as editor of the *Washington Times* and an adviser at the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies.

**DONALD J. DEVINE (b. 1937):** Devine earned his Ph.D. in political science from Syracuse University in 1967. He held a professorship at the University of Maryland from 1967 to 1980 when he left to serve in the Reagan administration. He later served as an advisor to Senator Bob Dole. He was the author of several acclaimed books on political science and the Reagan administration, including *The Political Culture of the United States* (1972).

**M. STANTON EVANS (1934-2015):** Evans received a BA in English from Yale University and did graduate study in economics at New York University under the direction of Ludwig von Mises. He became an influential conservative journalist writing for *National Review*, *Human Events*, the *Indianapolis News*, and the *Los Angeles Times*. He also authored eight books on the conservative movement.

**MILTON FRIEDMAN (1912-2006):** Friedman received his Ph.D. in economics from Columbia University. After serving during the Roosevelt administration, he took a professorship in the University of Chicago's School of Economics in 1946. He was the author of numerous important works in free market economics, including *Capitalism and Freedom* (1962) and *A Monetary History of the United States* (1963). In 1976, he was awarded the Nobel prize for his work in economics. Friedman was a public intellectual who, along with his wife Rose, converted their book *Free to Choose* into a ten-part television series espousing the

benefits of free enterprise. Through that series they reached millions of people around the world. Friedman also served as an important economic adviser for Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher and was a tireless defender and champion of free markets and individual liberty.

**WILL HERBERG (1901-1977):** Herberg, most known as a social philosopher and a Jewish theologian, was a prominent traditionalist conservative. Attracted to Marxism in his early life, Herberg later turned from radical socialism and became a prominent religious conservative, rising to the position of religion editor of the *National Review*. His 1955 formative work *Protestant, Catholic, Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology* created a sociological framework for the study of religion in the United States.

**RUSSELL KIRK (1918-1994):** Considered by many as the “Father of Modern Conservatism,” Kirk was an American political theorist, conservative intellectual, historian of ideas, social critic, and man of letters. He authored thirty-two books on conservative theory, and frequently wrote for such publications as *National Review* and *Modern Age*. According to the *New York Times*, Kirk’s 1953 book *The Conservative Mind* “gave American conservatives an identity and a genealogy and catalyzed the postwar movement.” His work is continued today by The Russell Kirk Center for Cultural Renewal, in Mecosta, Michigan.

**IRVING KRISTOL (1920-2009):** Kristol, considered one of the most influential thinkers of the twentieth century, was a leader and intellectual founder of neoconservatism. His defense of conservative ideas in the face of 1960s liberalism laid the foundation for the resurgence of the Republican party and the “Reagan Revolution” of 1980. Among the more prominent positions held by Kristol during his lengthy career include managing editor of *Commentary*, co-founder and co-editor of *The Public Interest*, and the John M. Olin Distinguished Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute. In July 2002, President George

W. Bush presented Kristol with the Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor.

**FRANK S. MEYER (1909-1972):** Meyer was a philosopher and political activist best known for his promotion of the theory of “fusionism,” an attempt to unite libertarianism and traditional conservatism into a political synthesis known as modern American conservatism. Meyer earned a B.A. and an M.A. from Balliol College, Oxford, and played a central role in defining the post-war American conservative movement. A founding senior editor and longtime literary editor of *National Review*, Meyer's political philosophy was presented primarily in his 1962 book *In Defense of Freedom: A Conservative Credo*, and a 1969 collection of essays entitled *The Conservative Mainstream*.

**GEORGE NASH (B. 1945):** Nash, an historian of American conservatism, graduated from Amherst College in 1967 and received his Ph.D. in History from Harvard University in 1973. He is best known for his book *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945*, which first appeared in 1976 and has since been twice revised and expanded. In addition, his works have appeared in such publications as the *American Spectator*, *National Review*, *Claremont Review of Books*, the *New York Times Book Review*, *Policy Review*, and the *Wall Street Journal*, among many others.

**ROBERT NISBET (1913-1996):** Nisbet earned a Ph.D. in sociology from the University of California, Berkley in 1939. He was a World War II veteran. He held academic appointments at the University of California, Berkeley; University of California, Riverside; the University of Arizona, and Columbia University. His most influential book was *The Quest for Community* (1953) and he went on to author eighteen books. The concerns of conservatism motivated many of his works. Following his retirement, he served as a scholar-in-resident for the American Enterprise Institute.

**HENRY PAOLUCCI (1921-1999):** Paolucci was a professor-emeritus of government at politics at St. John's University and vice chairman of the Conservative party of New York. He received a B.S. from City College in New York, an M.A. and Ph.D. from Columbia University, and was a veteran of the United States Air Force. Paolucci was a frequent contributor to the Op-Ed pages of the *New York Times*, *National Review*, and is perhaps best known for his classic 1968 work *War, Peace, and the Presidency: A Classical Conservative Views America's Great Dilemma*.

**STANLEY PARRY (1918-1972):** Father Parry was a priest of the Congregation of Holy Cross and Professor of Political Science at the University of Notre Dame. Parry, along with Gerhart Niemeyer and Eric Voegelin, led a renaissance of classical political theory at the institution. His greatest contribution to conservative thought was his insistence that a "civilization in crisis" could not save itself through anything less than a spiritual "communal experience of truth." Thus, Parry's theory stood as a challenge to Frank Meyer's fusionist movement.

**HOWARD PHILLIPS (1941-2013):** A 1962 graduate of Harvard University, Phillips played an instrumental role in both the leadership of the New Right and the founding of the religious right in the 1970s. After leaving the Republican party in 1974, he served as chairman of The Conservative Caucus, a public policy advocacy group which he also founded. He was also a three-time presidential candidate and a founding member of the Constitution party.

**KEVIN PHILLIPS (B. 1940):** Phillips is an American writer and commentator on politics, economics, and history. He received a B.A. from Colgate University in 1961, an M.A. from the University of Edinburgh, and a J.D. from Harvard University in 1964. Serving as a strategist on voting patterns for Richard Nixon's 1968 campaign led to his book, *The Emerging Republican Majority*, which predicted the rise of conservatism in national politics. He was also part of the design of Nixon's

“Southern Strategy.” A former Republican now turned Independent, Phillips is a regular contributor to the *Los Angeles Times*, National Public Radio, and *Harpers’ Magazine*, among many others.

**NORMAN PODHORETZ (B. 1930):** As the editor of *Commentary* magazine from 1960 until his retirement in 1995, Podhoretz became a leading member of the neoconservative movement. He received three bachelor’s degrees (two in English literature and one in Hebrew literature) and an M.A. from Clare College, Cambridge. He is the author of more than twenty books. In 2004 he was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by George W. Bush for his contributions as editor of *Commentary* and as a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute.

**MURRAY ROTHBARD (1926-1995):** Rothbard was an Austrian school economist, historian, and political theorist who was influential in modern libertarianism. A graduate of Columbia University where he received a B.A. in Mathematics in 1945 and a Ph.D. in Economics in 1956, he first taught at Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute. Later he held the title of S.J. Hall Distinguished Professor of Economics at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Rothbard published fifteen books including his 1973 title *For a New Liberty: The Libertarian Manifesto*. He also served as Vice President of the Ludwig von Mises Institute, and Research Fellow and founding Member of the Board of Advisors for the Independent Institute.

**GEORGE STIGLER (1911-1991):** A key leader of the Chicago economic school, Stigler is most known for developing the *Economic Theory of Regulation*, also known as capture. Throughout his career he authored a number of academic articles and books and was the recipient of the 1982 laureate in Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences. Milton Friedman praised Stigler’s important article, “The Economics of Information” for “essentially create[ing] a new area of study for economists.”

**STEPHEN J. TONSOR (1923-2014):** Stephen Tonsor was Professor Emeritus of History at the University of Michigan. He was the author of *Tradition and Reform in Education* and published essays and reviews in such publications as *Victorian Studies*, *Journal of Modern History*, *The Catholic Historical Review*, and *The Review of Politics*. He received his B.A. from the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana in 1948 and received his PhD in history from the University of Illinois in 1955.

**ERNEST VAN DEN HAAG (1914-2002):** van den Haag was a German born, American sociologist, social critic, and author. He received a B.A. and M.A. from the University of Iowa and served as the John M. Olin Professor of Jurisprudence and Public Policy at Fordham University. A frequent contributor to *National Review*, van den Haag was most known for his writings in defense of the death penalty as a deterrent.



## **ABOUT THE PHILADELPHIA SOCIETY**

The Philadelphia Society was founded in 1964 and for the past fifty-five years it has served as a venue for conservatives and libertarians to discuss the “foundations of a free and ordered society.”

## **ABOUT AIER**

The American Institute for Economic Research in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, was founded in 1933 as the first independent voice for sound economics in the United States. Today it publishes ongoing research, hosts educational programs, publishes books, sponsors interns and scholars, and is home to the world-renowned Bastiat Society and the highly respected Sound Money Project. The American Institute for Economic Research is a 501c3 public charity.



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