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CALIFORNIA REVIEW

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO VOLUME XIII, No.1

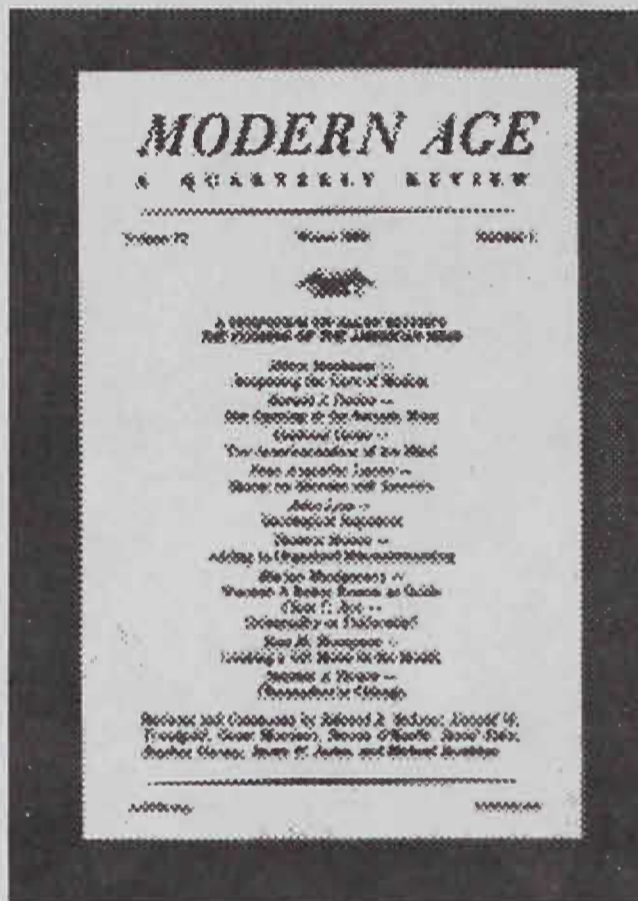


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CALIFORNIA REVIEW

Volume XIII • No. 1  
November 1993

*"Imperium et Libertas"*

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The *California Review* (Restitutor Orbis) was founded on the sunny afternoon of the Seventh day of January, Nineteen Hundred and Eighty-Two, by discipuli cum civitas listening to Respighi and engaging in discourse on preserving the American Way.

Please address all letters, manuscripts, and blank checks to: *California Review*, Temple of Mars the Avenger, P.O. Box 12286, La Jolla, CA 92039

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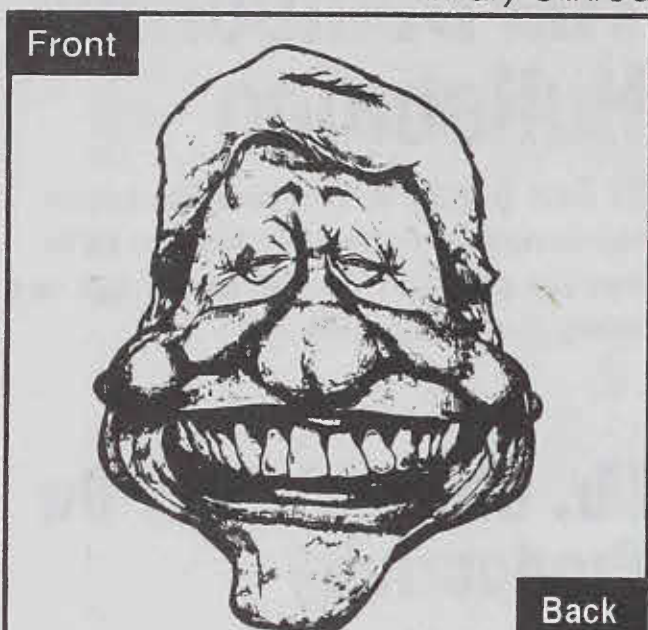


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Back


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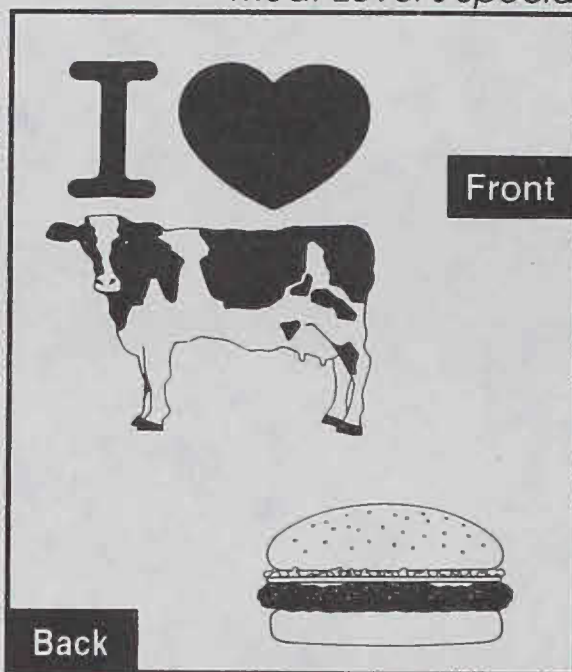
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## Letters

Editor:

In 1989, Don Henley recorded "The End of the Innocence", a song complaining about capitalism in the Reagan Era. Now that Mr. Henley's man is in the White House, I offer this response. "The End of the Excellence" (To the tune of Don Henley's "The End of the Innocence")

Remember when we worked all day,  
And were satisfied by decent pay.  
The future looked so very bright,  
And lofty goals were well in sight.  
But now we've bought the liberal lies,  
And history's easily revised.  
Your taxes will be doubled twice  
And government provides.

CHORUS:

Is there still a place where we can go  
Where freedom means a thing?  
People are judged by competence,  
And quotas don't exist.  
Where there's respect for property  
And speech not governed by P.C.  
Offer up your best defense  
But this is the end  
This is the end of the excellence

I pledge allegiance to the flag,  
But now that flag is tarnishing.  
They're bastardizing Jefferson  
For this socialist that we elected we king.  
The press feeds us the liberal lies,  
And history's easily revised.  
Your taxes will be doubled twice,  
And government provides.

CHORUS

Who knows how long this will last  
Now we've come so far, so fast.  
And no one seems to want to say,  
Maybe we're going the wrong way.  
We grow old and fade away,  
And socialism's here to stay.  
Just let me take a long last look  
As freedom says good-bye.

Good-bye respect for property,  
And speech not government by P.C.  
Offer up your best defense  
But this is the end  
This is the end of the excellence.

—Ed Wagner

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# FROM THE PEN OF THE EDITOR

Volume XIII, No. 1  
November 1993

## Right Ideas — Better Than Ever

If you are a conservative at UCSD, you may feel voiceless. Too often, classes become nothing more than politically correct diatribes by professors who are more interested in forwarding their leftist agendas. Organizations like CALPIRG, MEChA, and the Women's Resource Center pursue their radical causes, and will smear their opponents in any way, justified or not, in order to achieve their goals. The Guardian, once a beacon of fairness with opinion writers representing all viewpoints, now leans to the left.

Fortunately for conservatives at UCSD, there is an alternative. The California Review remains a voice of reason in the midst of the liberal university.

The goals of the California Review are manifold. We strive to present an accurate view of conservatism, along with eloquent rebuttals to liberalism. We will try to make each issue enlightening, as well as entertaining.

Each issue of the Review will provide the ammunition UCSD's conservatives need to resist the pressure to abandon their principles. In our Right Facts column, we will cut through the misleading statistics thrown about by the left. Another column, Broadsides, will call UCSD's other media to task for their faulty thinking. On the last page, Parting Thoughts will leave you with some pearls of wisdom, as well as some humor.

For too long now, conservatives have remained silent at UCSD. Despite the hard work of last year's staff, the California Review came out only three times. This was due to a severe lack of staff on our part.

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**CONSERVATIVES**  
should never  
forget the  
words of  
Edmund Burke,  
who said "The  
only thing  
necessary for  
the triumph of  
evil is for good  
men to do  
nothing."

---

The Review is not alone. After being in hibernation for over two years, the College Republicans are finally awakening from their slumber. The Young Americans for Freedom still remain nowhere to be found.

In 1992, UCSD students voted for Bill Clinton in droves. In fact, Clinton's margin of victory among UCSD students was the largest for any presidential candidate in UCSD history. While this was partly due to the candidacy of Ross Perot, the lack of any vocal opposition to the Democrats at UCSD certainly played a part in this debacle.

It is important that conservatives join the battle of ideas on campus, because ideas can have serious consequences. Ideas eventually are transformed into policy decisions by our nation's leaders, where they have direct effects on our lives.

Many may argue that they do not have time to join the war of ideas, as they are too busy studying. While it is important to study and earn good grades, so is the need to confront and challenge liberalism on campus. After all, if you are short for time in college, how are you going to find time after college to make the extra money needed to pay for another tax increase?

Conservatives should never forget the words of Edmund Burke, who said "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." With liberals dominating Congress and the Presidency, now is the time for action. If conservatives remain silent, the war of ideas will be lost, and as a result we will all be worse off. We cannot let this happen.

Although this may be the first issue of the year, this is the last issue for Ben Boychuk, the Review's art director. For more than two years now, he has helped make the Review the best looking publication at UCSD. Because of his hard work, the California Review has won awards for its layout. Ben will be dearly missed. We wish him well in the future, and hope that Clintonomics will not prove too much of an obstacle in finding employment.

We hope you enjoy the Review, and will pick it up again in the future. Thank you for reading the California Review.

—Michael J. Malervy  
Editor-in-Chief

# In Review...

■ REMEMBER THE "TWO DAY PRIORITY MAIL" program, in which the Postal Service promised to deliver a 2-pound package in two days for \$2.90? It appears that this pledge was about as valid as Bill Clinton's pledge not to raise taxes on the middle class. A congressional report says that 34 million pieces of "priority" mail took at least three days to be delivered, or 23% of all mail in the program. The Postal Service responded to this report by calling Priority Mail "a delivery commitment, but not a guarantee."

With such a poor level of performance, maybe it is time to consider privatizing the Postal Service. Federal Express, UPS, and other overnight delivery services, which operate under the profit motive, would never tolerate such a poor level of service. In the last 10 years, these companies have forced the Postal Service to lower the cost of its own overnight delivery program, while providing better service at the same time. Similar changes should occur if these companies were allowed to compete in the delivery of all other types of mail.

■ IN FRANCE, LONG A BASTION OF SOCIALISM, the Reagan Revolution has not died. French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur recently announced a tax cut equivalent to \$3 billion. Further, Balladur plans to simplify France's tax structure, reducing the number of tax brackets from thirteen to eight, with probably even fewer in the future. In a few years, when France's economy is growing strongly, and unemployment is much lower in France, we will have more evidence that Reaganomics works.

How ironic it is that countries all over the world are dismantling their welfare states and cutting taxes, while Clinton continues to lead the United States down the road towards socialism.

■ IS AL GORE A HYPOCRITE? IT WOULD APPEAR so, given the new porch on the Vice President's house. The front porch on his house was recently renovated with wood



from old-growth trees in the Pacific Northwest. According to the Spokane, Washington *Spokesman-Review*, 3,000 board-feet of "vertical grain Douglas fir" was used for the renovation. Apparently, vertical grain comes only from the old-growth forests that provide habitat for the Northern Spotted Owl, which Gore has fought to protect.

■ AS LAST YEAR'S CABLE BILL STARTS TO BE implemented, it is becoming more and more obvious that this is a bad law. When Congress enacted this law, overriding George Bush's veto, Congress wanted to make cable more affordable for the consumer who wanted only basic programming. Not surprisingly, the opposite has occurred. Because converter boxes, remote controls, and other equipment must be set according to their costs, what has happened is that the consumers of basic service are subsidizing those wealthier people who wish to purchase extra services.

Further, many cable consumers are losing channels they previously enjoyed, as space must be set aside for foreign language and religious stations that consumers do not want.

Even worse, stations can choose not to offer their signal to the cable companies

for free. As a result, cable companies are being forced to drop free stations that their customers want. The perverse effects of the cable bill on the consumer should come as no surprise. After all, why would one expect Congress to successfully regulate the cable industry when regulation failed miserably when applied to the trucking and airline industries?

■ THE STRATEGIC DEFENSE INITIATIVE'S success has come under fire yet again. Recent reports have suggested that the Pentagon rigged tests of SDI technology. Whether or not these reports are true, the success of SDI cannot be disputed. Vladimir Lukin, chairman of the Supreme Soviet Foreign Relations Committee in the 1980s, has said that SDI accelerated the collapse of the Soviet Union by five years. Considering that a total of about \$26 billion has been spent on SDI, SDI has to be considered a major success. The amount of money that has been cut from the defense budget due to the end of the Cold War has vastly exceeded this sum. The reaction by the Soviet Union to SDI, and not the results of scientific tests, can be the only true measure as to the success or failure of SDI.

■ RUSH LIMBAUGH MUST BE THE MOST FEARED man on Capitol Hill. What else could explain those Liberal Democrats in Congress now trying to bring back the Fairness Doctrine? The Fairness Doctrine, which requires television and radio stations to give free time to opposing viewpoints, sounds harmless enough.

In reality, this bill is meant to silence conservatives in the one area of the media not dominated by liberals: talk radio. Radio stations, fearing regulation by the Federal Communications Commission and weary of lawsuits, would be likely to drop controversial talkers like Limbaugh if the Fairness Doctrine is restored. If members of Congress dislike Limbaugh, perhaps they should switch off their radios rather than indulge its censorious impulses.

# Right Facts...

This issue's column was prompted by a lengthy discussion over the environment the author had with an environmentally inclined, yet reasonable, acquaintance. The conversation primarily consisted of a series of rebuttals to the seemingly endless number of popular environmental factoids, based on junk science and junk statistics. Since the volume of environmental facts and statistics is so immense, we will concentrate on a single topic this issue. But before we wade into the wetland that is the truth, first a little tidbit inspired by Hillary Rodham Clinton's favorite policy initiative.

## Sick

One statistic frequently bandied about in the so-called health-care debate is that there are about 37 million Americans who do not have health insurance. This figure is cited as a reason why the government must become more actively involved in the proposition of health care than it already is, despite the fact that the government picks up 30 percent of the tab.

This is a little misleading, however. While there are about 37 million Americans uninsured at any one time, more than 26 million of those will acquire some form of health insurance within a year. Less than 9 million are uninsured in the long term, about 3.6 percent of the population. Let us hope that health-care reform doesn't make us wish we were part of that 3.6 percent.

## Full of Holes

By now, everyone must be aware of the hole in the ozone layer above Antarctica (and the Arctic, it turns out). Less well known, however, is what this hole really is and how ozone in fact protects us. A popular misconception is that the ozone layer is like a sort of shield protecting us from ultraviolet radiation, and that human pollution (CFCs in particular) are chipping away at it. In truth, ozone is created (and destroyed) by ultraviolet radiation breaking down oxygen in the stratosphere, and this



is how ozone shields us from ultraviolet light. It cannot be "used up," so to speak. It has been conjectured that chlorine radicals interfere with this process, but the evidence is sketchy at best, owing to the difficulty of conducting experiments in the upper atmosphere.

In addition, human industry may not be responsible for the chlorine in the upper atmosphere. In 1976, Mount St. Augustine in Alaska erupted, adding 570 times more chlorine and fluorocarbon compounds into the atmosphere than total world production of those compounds for the previous year. The ocean alone dumps 300 million tons of chlorine into the atmosphere each year. CFC production by man peaked at 1.1 million tons per year — the equivalent of 750,000 tons of chlorine.

So what about this so-called hole? The "hole" only exists for a few weeks each year, and its growth has not been steady. It grew during the early 1980s, shrank in 1986, and reached its maximum in 1987. In 1988, it was found displaced over the ocean and 85 percent smaller than predicted.

The dynamics of ozone creation and depletion are incredibly complex and barely understood. Evidence from the ground, meanwhile, seems to indicate that there is nothing wrong with the ozone layer. Since 1974, the amount of ultraviolet radiation reaching the earth has decreased at a rate between 0.5 percent and 1.1 percent per year. During that same period, our best

evidence indicates that the ozone layer decreased in average thickness, after increasing during the 1960s.

The hysteria surrounding the supposed increase in skin cancer cases is also unfounded. The particular form of skin cancer related to higher levels of ultraviolet radiation has a 99 percent cure ratio if caught in time. The deadly form of skin cancer, malignant melanoma, has been shown to be unrelated to ultraviolet radiation and its true cause remains unknown.

Those who claim to speak for the environment often subscribe to the view that the environment is a complex, interrelated "organism," to some extent. And yet they offer up simplistic causes (and solutions) to phenomenon we barely understand and have only begun to investigate.

The scientific community has by no means remained objective on this issue. The prominent environmentalist Stephen Schneider summed up the attitude best: "[W]e [scientists] have to offer up scary scenarios, make simplified, dramatic statements, and make little mention of any doubts we may have. Each of us has to decide what the right balance is between being effective and being honest."

## Goethe: The Anti-Environmentalist

As a final note, it is worth mentioning that in Goethe's *Faust*, Faust eventually finds contentment in a land reclamation project (i.e. clearing swamps, or wetlands). Why? As Goethe put it, "whosoever, aspiring, struggles on, for him there is salvation." This is sound advice for the EPA, which sees no salvation in such projects.

Author's Note: Much of the information that comprises this article is contained in the book *Trashing the Planet*, by Dixy Lee Ray, which we strongly recommend you read.

—Michael Nolte



# The CONSCIENCE of a Young Conservative

By Matthew S. Robinson

THE LEFT HAS RUN ROUGHSHOD OVER CONSERVATISM FOR TOO LONG. A FORMER REVIEW EDITOR LOOKS AT LIBERAL-DRIVEN MYTHS ABOUT CONSERVATISM AND BLOWS THEM AWAY.

I find no group more filled with clichés or more disposed to postures of moral superiority than liberals. Four years at UC San Diego continually reinforced the idea that liberals, progressives, socialists, feminists, multiculturalists, and the other elements of the university left do not have the slightest notion of what a conservative is or believes.

In my frequent debates with liberals, if I had come into the discussion with the same startling misconceptions and ignorance about their ideas I would have been labeled a narrow-minded bigot, insensitive to their experience and intolerant of other perspectives. In fact, if these various liberal prejudices about conservatism were accurate, I would probably drop everything and embrace liberalism, too. Perhaps I might even strike the moralizing pose of the leftist. The bugbear called conservatism that exists in the minds of leftists is a hideous creature indeed, and one that is unworthy of support. But is it true?

Is the Right really “the ‘why can’t we go back to slavery, women in the kitchen, and naked aristocracy?’ reactionary fringe” as one flyer

accused last year? Is it true that when the *California Review* puts up flyers for its meetings that it is Anti-semitic, Nazi, or anti-women as the added graffiti suggests? Where are the facts to support these claims?

If my experience debating and writing over the last three years at UCSD gives any hint to this question, it is that this is the wrong question to ask.

### The Pathology of the Leftist

The strategy of leftism is *not* to engage conservatism head-on. The most immediate and effective way of maintaining a blackout of conservative ideas is just impugn the motives of its adherents. In the liberal political demimonde, conservatives do not believe in equality under the law, economic and political liberty, or in moral truths to protect all human beings. These are only verbal feints intended to distract public debate.

The telepathic liberal really knows what is going on inside the head of the conservative when these laudable ideas are invoked to support policies. The real motive is to harm race relations, oppress women, protect the rich, exploit the poor, avoid paying one’s fair share, and so forth. For the liberal, there always exists an ulterior motive, a deeper purpose, a more insidious design.

It was my original hope that liberals and





**Liberalism has  
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to the point that  
thought is now  
dominated by  
feeling.**

conservatives have the same desire for justice, compassion, and liberty, with only differing opinions about how to secure these goods. On the contrary, I learned that conservatives are really political Neanderthals unworthy of being one of the valued different perspectives or persons of "diverse" backgrounds.

This is why I believe that liberals are so prone to clichés and moral posturing. They are informed and morally enlightened, while conservatives are the morally retarded (or is that "morally-challenged"?). A conservative's failure to "get it" is not something that can be explained with facts or persuasive support, it is a consequence of his defective moral antennae.

**The Diagnosis**

**T**he problem is that liberal prejudices about conservatism strangle the healthy and vigorous debate that makes democracy and the university flower. And that debate is beginning to disintegrate even more. Political correctness is not the only example of growing liberal intolerance. Its hatred of conservatism extends beyond the university.

The reason? Liberalism has gone through a transformation, to the point that thought is now dominated by feeling.

Once a vibrant political idea, liberalism is now concerned with the *feeling* of compassion, the *feeling* of justice, the *feeling* of equality. The once popular "teach-ins" of the '60s have become "rage-ins." Bumpersticker threats from liberal leaders like "No justice, no peace" are the staple of liberal politicians. Rhymes, clichés, and the mantra of an all-powerful, albeit amoral education are invoked to solve social problems. Multiculturalism, feminism, Afrocentrism are devoid of any positive aspirations except perhaps the blind incantation of "diversity."

In reality, however, liberals are motivated by little more than an intense quasi-socialist hatred of Western civilization. Absent are thoughtful, constructive solutions.

The tendency is to talk in terms of victims of history, to eschew questions of responsibility, to view human beings not as free, autonomous thinkers and actors, but instead as robots, formed solely by socio-economic forces. Old liberalism, which focused on the power of the individual to make wise choices, accept the consequences, and better himself in a climate of freedom, withered in the 1960s. Liberalism as we know it today is a list of grievances to be resolved by the State.

Compassion, justice, equality are all to be measured by how

much the government spends. Materialistic dollars are the answer — certainly not the inner restraint of citizens, the moral compass of society, or the help of a neighbor or community. Indeed, it is an unspoken assumption of liberalism that what is spent by the government is a good indicator of how good a society we really are.

A few facts, however painful, are in order.

Since the Great Society, when the liberal faith in the omnipotence of government reached its zenith, the United States has spent \$2.5 trillion (in constant 1990 dollars) on welfare spending. Total annual federal, state, and local welfare spending reached \$215 billion in 1990. This is more than twice the money required to lift every American above the poverty threshold. Every responsible American looks at these statistics and wonders what substantive benefits we have reaped with this money.

For our efforts, we have seen a 560 percent increase in violent crime, a 400 percent increase in illegitimate births, a quadrupled divorce rate, a tripling of the percent-age of children living in single parent homes, a 200 percent increase in teen-age suicide, and a nearly 80 point drop in S.A.T. scores. All this during a period when inflation adjusted spending on welfare increased 630 percent and inflation adjusted spending on education increased 225 percent.

For the conservative these numbers are disconcerting to say the least. They point to a deeper and more profound problem in American culture. Questioning welfare and other liberal programs is thus not based on hatred or prejudice or indifference, because the supposed facts of government success do not exist. These programs hurt those they are intended to help. *True* compassion demands a reevaluation.

Conservatives also look at affirmative action programs, the growing tension in sexual relations, and increasing taxes as exacerbations of America's most serious cultural problems. In fact, liberalism and its alliance with government has despoiled everything it has touched.

The primary difference between liberalism and conservatism seems to be on the issues of freedom and responsibility. Conservatives favor policies that maximize the freedom of the individual and increase the equality under the law.

**Liberty vs. Paternalism**

Implicit to this conservative desire for freedom is a willingness to accept the consequences of human freedom. Instead of insulating every decision from its result and protecting human beings from

the consequences of their actions, conservatives are prepared for Americans to act as responsible and free citizens. If we wish to be a free country we must be prepared to accept and be tolerant of different actions and beliefs of our peers.

This conservative desire for liberty is not an invitation to licentious behavior, hence the conservative emphasis on morality, community, and culture. The most important means for the preservation of freedom and the respect of our fellow citizen is internal restraint and discipline.

This contrasts profoundly with the liberal penchant to blame society and not the criminal, the tendency to treat minorities as victims in need of a constant intravenous fix of government programs, and the thought that government is smarter than the consumer and the citizen.

Liberty is a scary idea and most modern liberals fear the consequences of giving people freedom over their own lives. School vouchers, for instance, strike stark terror in the minds of most liberals because of the fear that parents cannot make the right decisions for their children and that some parents might not send their children to the best schools.

Liberals are elitists, believing that they make better decisions than their fellow citizens. This is seen in the economy where market controls and redistributive policies are ever tempting. It is seen in education where liberals in bed with unions believe teachers and self-esteem classes are superior to parental freedom and hard work. It is present in the new feminism which views women as helpless and incapable of freedom without state mandated

paternalism and protection from date rape.

The contempt for freedom and responsibility is seen in the indifference to victims of crimes and the treatment of criminals as patients to be cured by the therapeutic "compassion" of the state. It is even evident in the hatred for other lifestyles and uses of freedom such as the Boy Scouts, who elicit the virioli of the left merely because as a private organization they attempt to define themselves in a way that is not politically correct.

Instead of striving for equality under the law, liberalism levels and attempts to bring equality by condemning all to the same meager servitude to a state ruled by committees of liberal elites. Liberalism strives after equality in slavery as it strips the citizen of the choice to live and be a free and responsible citizen in associations, communities, churches, synagogues, schools, groups, and jobs he desires.

Above all, liberalism seeks conformity to its ideals on the campus with political correctness and in the public square where original political ideas are derided and dismissed as racist, sexist, or homophobic. Freedom is acceptable inasmuch as one uses his freedom to believe, act, and conform to being a liberal.

The key to conservatism is the belief that human beings are free to make their own decisions about what to believe, and with whom they interact. It reminds them they are responsible to others and to the moral consequences of the actions they take. It therefore looks at the State as a poor replacement for churches and synagogues, parents and neighbors, friends and co-workers, and those groups which truly give meaning to our lives.

# Issues & Views

*An open forum on issues affecting the black community*

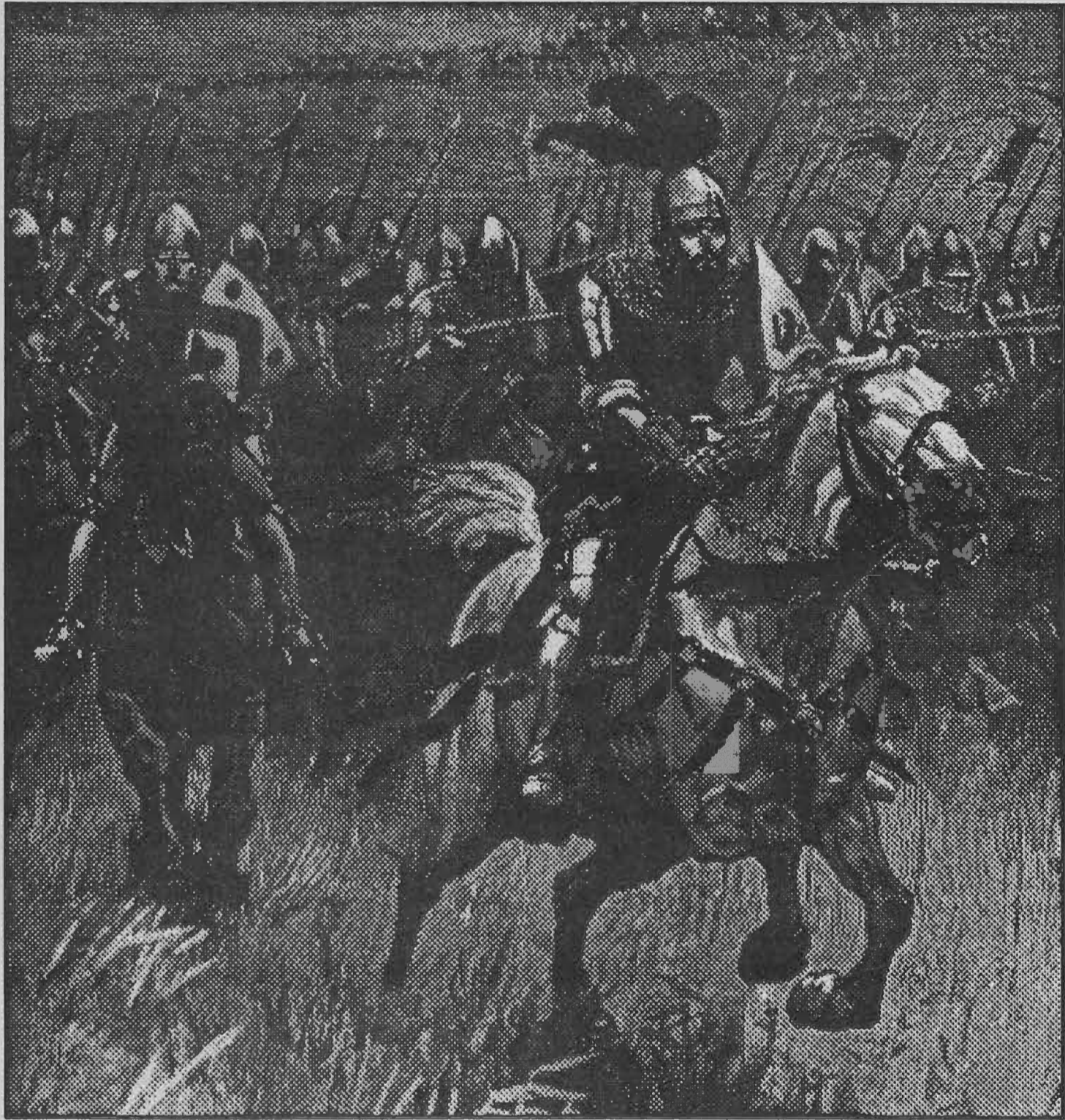


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# Join the Battle Against The Forces of Darkness



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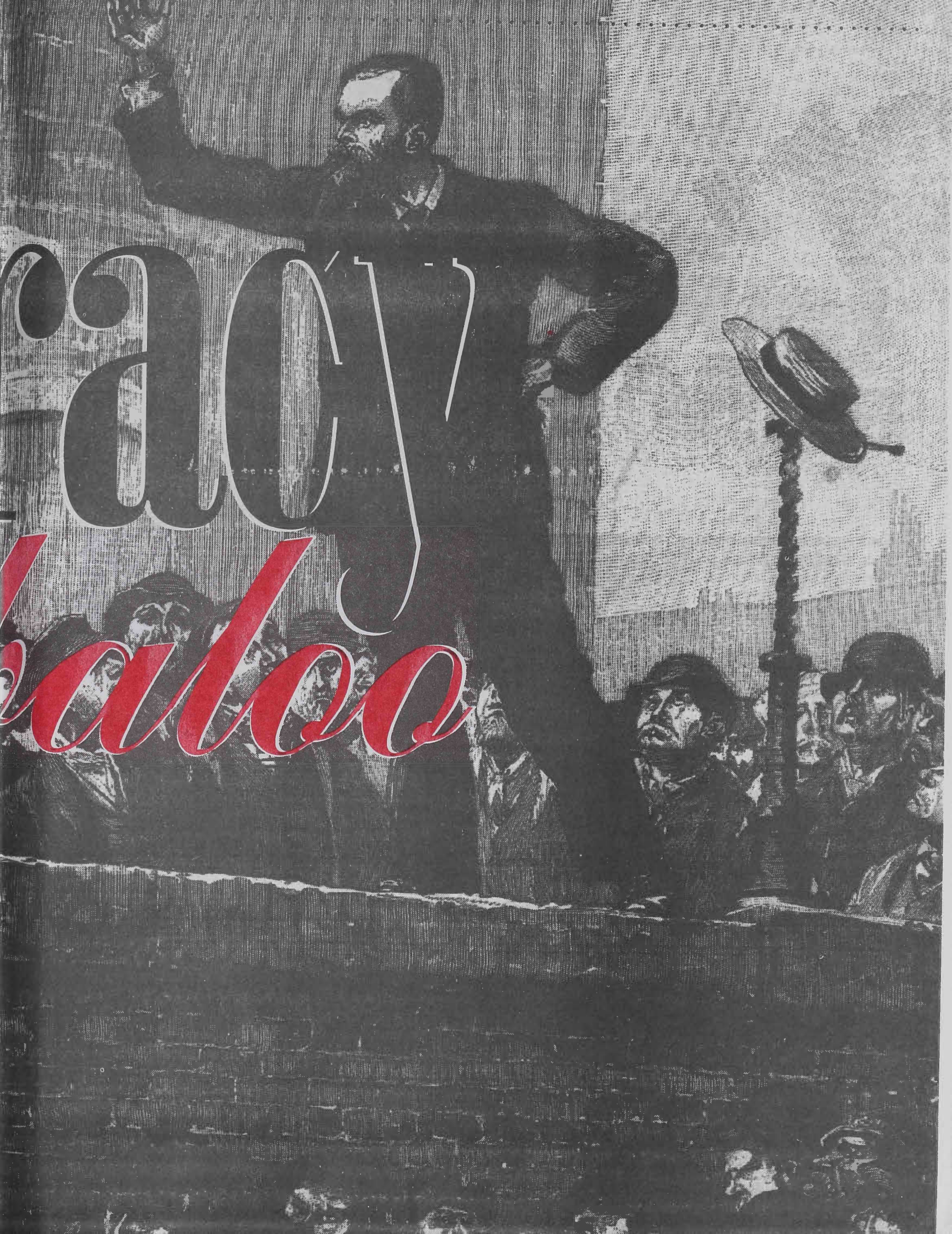
We look forward to meeting you.

# The Democrat Hullabaloo

**NO POLITICAL IDEA** is more beloved or less understood than democracy. Nothing is held more sacred by Americans than the principle of *vox populi, vox dei* — whether they know what it means or not. Indeed, in the United States of America today, to question the omniscience of the electorate is treated as political heresy of the first degree. *By Ben Boychuk*



The Sage of Baltimore:  
H.L. Mencken



Coca-Cola

**G**overnment by the people, H.L. Mencken observed, can often open the door to tyrannies of the worst sort. Critics have long argued that democracy is a form of government founded essentially on envy. Mencken endorsed this view, but took it one step further. Envy is not so much a unique trait of democracy as it is a sort of by-product. "It is not, of course, a specialty of democratic man," Mencken wrote three-quarters of a century ago. "It is the common possession of all men of the ignoble and incompetent sort, at all times and everywhere. But it is only under democracy that it is liberated; it is only under democracy that it becomes the philosophy of the state."

Provocative words, especially in this democratic era of good feeling. But why summon the words of a relatively obscure 1920s critic and journalist today, other than for reasons of nostalgia or amusement? Much of Mencken's political commentary is rather dated, and students of political science have scarcely heard of him, much less know of his philosophy. Those who are familiar with his work might well say that he was hardly the first person to observe that democracy is plagued with all sorts of contradictions and vices. In truth, Mencken said nothing especially new or revolutionary. Plato was denouncing democracy as an invitation to anarchy and tyranny well over two-thousand years before Mencken excoriated it in his own eloquent manner.

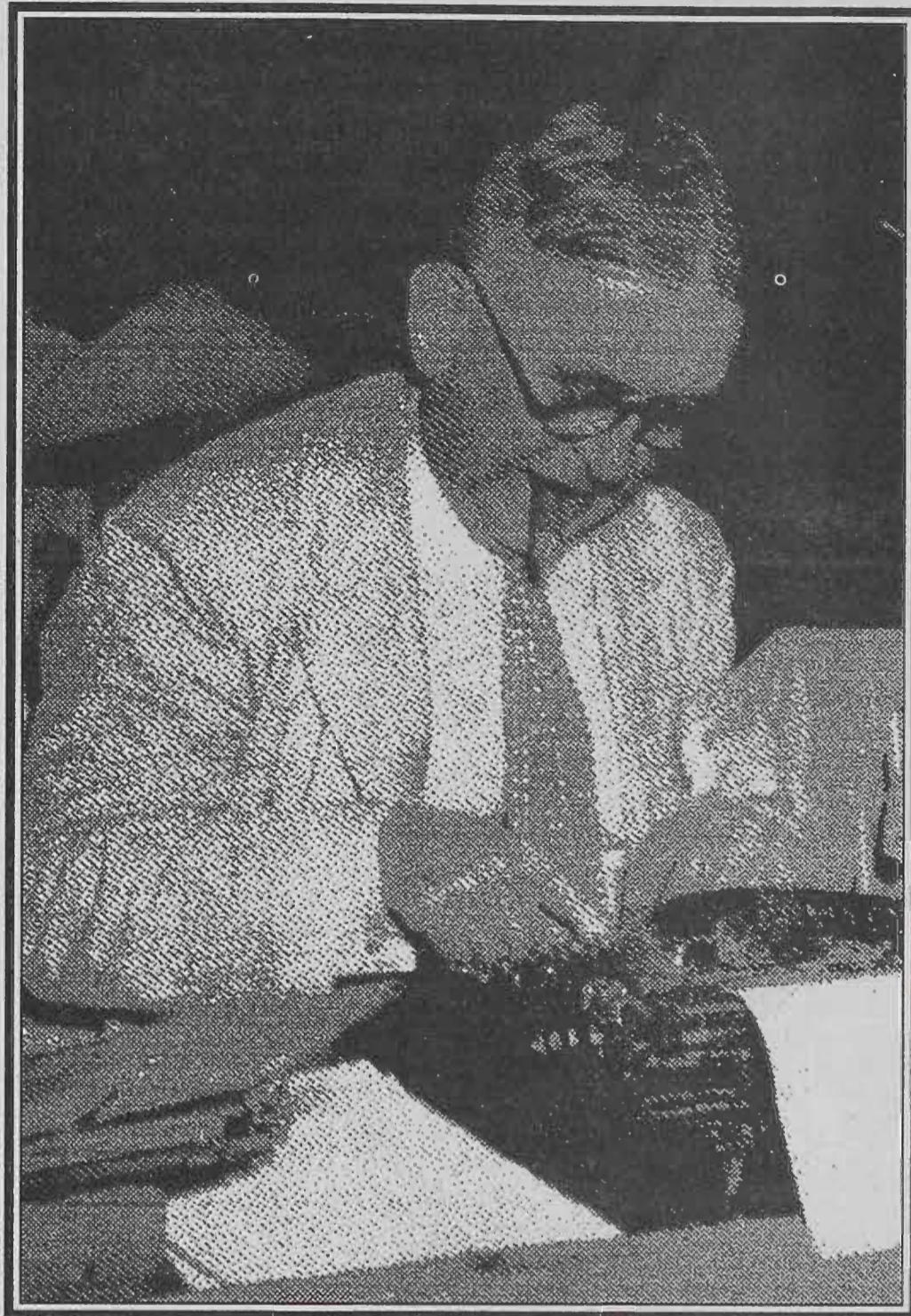
And yet, despite his recent lack of broad recognition, there is no question that Mencken had a major impact on American thought in the twentieth century. His assaults on the glaring hypocrisy of national values and prevailing social mores arguably transformed the whole landscape of American culture. His contributions to American letters, his eloquent and often strident defense of personal liberties, and his vitriolic attacks on the innumerable frauds and mountebanks of his day all serve to ensure Mencken a comfortable place in the history of American social criticism and literature. But most importantly, Mencken helped vindicate the fears and concerns of the skeptics and naysayers who came before him at a time when faith in democracy achieved a fever pitch. While America sought to make the world safe democracy, Mencken asked whether democracy was safe for the world. That question is even more relevant today, as democracy spreads across the globe at an epidemic rate.

A simple definition is in order. Democracy is the theory that the great mass of people can and should have the capacity to rule

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themselves. It is, by some accounts, the safest and most just form of government ever conceived by man, placing the power to shape the collective destiny in the hands of the many rather than in the hands of the one or the few.

At its foundation is the belief that all men are created equal, that the government's role should be limited by a constitution, and that the free play of ideas is sacred. We know this because the civics texts tell us so. And if the optimists are correct, the end of the twentieth century will be remembered as the era when democracy ultimately triumphed over the cruelty and injustice of totalitarianism, spreading liberty and equality the world over and assuming its rightful place as the dominant global political ideal.

Whether that will continue to hold true remains to be seen. Liberal democracy has survived not only the test of time but innumerable political trials by fire. Neither war, nor famine, nor fleeting philosophical fads, nor overt political indoctrination have been able to dislodge the fundamental democratic ideal from

the psyche of those exposed to it. And as a result, with few exceptions, democracy reigns supreme.

Indeed, confidence in democracy has lately reached a

near-orgasmic high, impelled by the shameless accolades of a fawning media and the Orwellian posturing of the present administration. One year after Bill Clinton fibbed, schemed and bamboozled his way into the Oval Office, the shining white knight of democracy has lost much of his luster. Propelled to the heights of power on a platform of change, the New Democrat from Little Rock resembles the Old Democrat from Plains. Behold, this Tribune of the People, this Great Democratic Hope, this Emissary of Change is, at a glance, an Emperor with No Clothes.

America's latest political savior has shown himself to be little more than a third-rate carnival fraud, a political quack, a hen-pecked husband, a pathological liar, an incompetent policy-maker, and a horrific dresser. His administration is in the hands of children and do-gooders, mostly starry-eyed academics, socialist-poseurs and Carter refugees intent on achieving the old goal of making the world safe for democracy — by any means necessary.

So what else is new?

The glorious, new democratic regime is only less than a year old. There is still much damage to be done. And while the Clintonites run roughshod over freedom and attempt to rewrite the Constitution of the United States, the American electorate can only stand by with its collective mouth agape, wondering ruefully just what exactly it voted itself into.

Ah, let the voters wonder. Any fault for the present Clinton catastrophe falls squarely on the shoulders of the voters. "Democracy," Mencken said, "is the theory that the common people know what they want, and deserve to get it good and hard." So it is.

## The Sage of Baltimore

**B**orn September 12, 1880 in Baltimore, Maryland, Henry Louis Mencken knew when he was only eight-years-old child that he wanted to be a newspaperman. He went on to become one of the most celebrated journalists of this century. Though still admired today chiefly for his talents as a wordsmith and humorist, Mencken's writings on politics in general and democracy in particular are mostly neglected. His central treatise on politics, *Notes On Democracy*, written in 1926, is considered an embarrassment by many Mencken scholars, and was dismissed by critics of its time as a mean-spirited and shallow disquisition. Some even suggested that Mencken's ideas, taken to their logical conclusion, had implications resembling the fascist sentiments beginning to froth in Europe.

But Mencken was no fascist. He was, above all else, a great lover of liberty, opposed to censorship and tyranny in any form. He described himself as both "an extreme libertarian" and "an educated Tory," yet he found himself deliberately at odds with many of the conservatives and liberals of his day, most of whom he regarded as ghost-chasers, do-gooders and mountebanks.

Today, Mencken would likely count himself among cultural conservatives, though he was influenced by a diversity of thinkers. One sees in his writing elements of

Edmund Burke, John Stuart Mill, Voltaire, Benjamin Disraeli, Thomas Huxley, and Friedrich Nietzsche. He came to consider himself a critic first, explaining that, "all my criticism is, at bottom, a criticism of ideas, not of mere books. But ideas — i.e., the follies and imbecilities of men — interest me. Blowing them up is the noblest of human occupation."

Mencken summed up his critical philosophy thus: "[A]ll my work hangs together. Whether it appears to be burlesque, or serious criticism, or mere casual controversy, it is always directed against one thing: unwarranted pretension. It always seeks to expose a false pretense, to blow up a wobbly axiom, to uncover a sham virtue.... My weapon is adapted to the enemy and the fight. Sometimes I try to spoof them, and sometimes I use a club. But the end is always the same."

To say that Mencken was merely a vocal critic of democracy would be an understatement. He did not merely criticize democracy; he poked its nose, pulled its hat over its face, tied its shoelaces together and gave it a hotfoot. In short, he terrorized it. Mencken truly despised democracy — he referred to the masses as "the booboisie" — and he thought that no place on earth exemplified the absurdity of it better than the United States. "Democracy," he once quipped, "is the art and science of running the circus from the monkey cage." (Mencken liked definitions.) He rejected the whole notion as the unrealistic fantasy of dreamers and poets — a colossal swindle rife with contradictions, driven by nothing so much as the envy felt by the socially and intellectually inferior masses toward their betters.

Philosophically, democracy is a cop-out. No wonder it is so widely embraced. Everywhere, Mencken wrote in *Notes on Democracy*, its fundamental principles are accepted: "(a) that the great masses of men have an inalienable right, born of the very nature of things, to govern themselves, and (b) that they are competent to do it."

Mencken merely argued what to him was plain as day — that the premises upon which democracy is based are so flimsy as to be laughable were they not so dangerous. He noted that the constitutional restraints placed upon government are only effective so long as the people remain vigilant in guarding their inalienable rights against the interests of politicians and factions. Easier said than done.

In this age of entitlement, Mencken argued, government by the people is no less prone to tyranny than a monarchy, or some other form of totalitarianism. "That government is

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called good," he wrote, "which responds most quickly and accurately to [the people's] desires and ideas. That is called bad which conditions their omnipotence and puts a question mark after their omniscience."

At no other time in history is that proposition so completely accepted than now. This is due in large part to the entangling of democracy with modern liberalism. The liberals are forever chasing butterflies. They have spent the century or so attempting to explain why the buffooneries of the people are really acts of subtle and profound genius.

Great tracts have been written in hopes of proving the existence of "the rational public" and "the reasoning voter." What this means, in brief, is that debating the virtues of candidate A against those of candidate B with the shopping mall barber is called reasoning, and telling the pollster what he wants to hear is considered rational.

Mencken laughed at such foolishness. "Plenty of Americans," he wrote, "perhaps even a majority, are too stupid at twenty-five, or thirty-five, or even forty-five to vote with anything properly describable as intelligence, and large numbers of those who are apparently smart enough are too dishonest to do so conscientiously." It is difficult to take the franchise seriously when the average voter's political education is limited strictly to a musty recollection of high school civics, a glance at the daily paper, and a tedious diet of television news.

The young voter is worse. He doesn't read and probably slept through civics class. But he does watch television — music television, to be exact. And any reasonable person who witnessed the Rock the Vote travesty in the last national election now cannot help but wonder if the 26th Amendment was a mistake.

## The Equality Trap

**B**ut the problem with democracy rests only in part with extending the franchise to any citizen with a pulse and over the age of eighteen. The words "liberty" and "equality" invariably appear together, almost interchangeably, in every discussion of the democratic ideal. But no one can agree on what they mean, or why they are important. The truth is that the two are mutually exclusive — liberty and equality have always been at odds. If democracy is a means of promoting liberty, as its apologists have maintained, then the opposite must also be true. History demonstrates that freedom is always the first casualty of the general will.

In a democracy, this emphasis placed on the rather obscure notions of equality and liberty often creates hazardous conflicts. The Founders' idea of equality before the law has over time been replaced with the modern liberal idea of equality in fact. Mencken insisted that given the choice between individual liberties and equality, the people, to their detriment, will always choose the latter. With freedom lost, equality — like most democratic values — is taken to extravagant lengths.

Democratic Athens, the student of history will note, is not exactly remembered for its commitment to individual liberty. It was in the name of democracy that Socrates was pronounced an

enemy of the people and sentenced to die. Punishing the dissident and enforcing the prevailing orthodoxy is the bedrock upon which democracy is built. Yet, for as long as there has been democratic

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thought, there has been an even longer history of anti-democratic thought. For every Pericles there has been a Plato, and very often an Aristotle to back him up. Democracy as a theory has existed longer than democracy as a real form of government — often because, as John Adams observed, every democratic experiment has self-destructed for one reason or another.

"It remains impossible," Mencken wrote, "to separate the democratic idea from the theory that there is a mystical merit, an esoteric and ineradicable rectitude, in the man at the bottom of the scale — that inferiority, by some strange magic, becomes superiority — nay, the superiority of superiorities."

But, as Mencken demonstrated so well, this theory is sheer nonsense. It withers under the slightest scrutiny. The facts are clear: first, some men are demonstrably superior to other men. "Men differ inside their heads as they

differ outside," Mencken writes. "There are men who are naturally intelligent and can learn, and there are men who are naturally stupid and cannot." Second, democracy and the vaunted superiority of the inferior man is based mostly on sentiment and emotional appeals.

Mencken, a consummate devotee of the empirical sciences, found such appeals disgusting. "Democracy, alas, is... a form of theology, and shows all the immemorial stigmata. Confronted by uncomfortable facts, it invariably tries to dispose of them by appeals to the highest sentiments of the human heart. An anti-democrat is not merely mistaken; he is also wicked, and the more plausible he is the more wicked he becomes." The mob, consisting wholly of inferior men, sets out to debase his superiors that he might achieve some fleeting fantasy of happiness and equality.

Equality dictates that education is a right. Fair enough. Equality dictates that housing is a right. Then health care. Then jobs. Equality demands that each group comprising a certain percentage of a population be represented proportionally in the workplace and in the schools. Hence quotas, affirmative action, and the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission. Equality dictates that no one be left to go hungry, live in squalor, or go without some means of livelihood. Hence the New Deal, the Great Society and a seemingly endless parade of government entitlement programs.

This is the tragic flaw of government in a democratic society. It cannot suppress its urge to play the role of provider, caring nurturer and playground supervisor all at once. The presupposition of any government is that anything the private citizen can do, state can do better. "All government, in its essence," Mencken wrote, "is a conspiracy against the superior man: its one permanent object is to oppress him and cripple him."

The state needs servile citizens to justify its existence. If anyone doubts this, I would respectfully direct their attention to a pair of



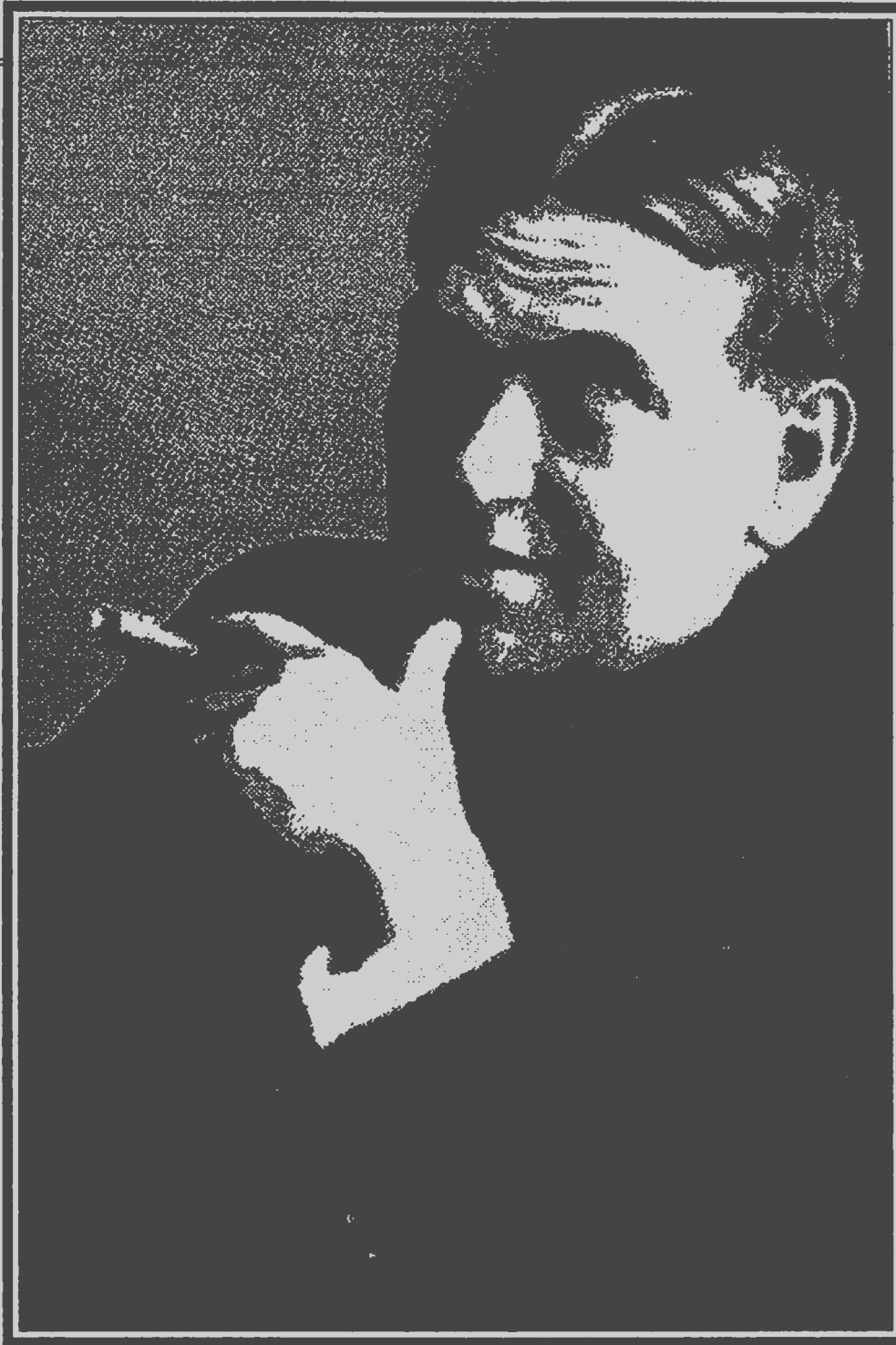
government documents recently made available to the general public: *The Gore Report on Reinventing Government*, and the *President's Health Care Reform Plan*. Both seek to validate and reaffirm government's role as an effective supplier of services every citizen wants and needs. It should come as no surprise that neither report suggests that private citizens or groups are capable of providing the same services to each other without state assistance, or that the federal bureaucracy is too bloated and too redundant to be of any good to anyone — save the bureaucrats themselves.

Mencken firmly believed that "the most dangerous man, to any government, is the man who is able to think things out for himself, without regard to prevailing superstitions and taboos. Almost inevitably he comes to the conclusion that the government he lives under is dishonest, insane and intolerable...." It is hard to believe that the party of Jefferson has strayed so far from the founder's fundamental belief that there is no government like no government. Conservatives and libertarians have been making this argument for years, to no avail. Mencken concluded, echoing Jefferson before him, that the "ideal government of all reflective men [i.e. the intellectually superior few], from Aristotle onward, is one which lets the individual alone — one which barely escapes being no government at all."

"This ideal," Mencken said, "will be realized in the world twenty or thirty centuries after I have passed from these scenes and taken up my public duties in Hell."

For if individual liberty was truly one of the core values in a democracy such as the United States, then no self-respecting person would allow conditions of legal inequality to continue in the first place. It is not a defect in the law so much as it is a defect in the culture making the law. The condition of blacks in America in Mencken's day is an obvious case in point. However prone Mencken might have been to reflect some of the more unsavory prejudices of his time, he nonetheless recognized the inherent injustice of keeping down one particular class of people solely on the basis of their skin color. He supported federal legislation against lynching, a crime still fairly common in the South in the 1920s and 30s.

In one of his many Monday articles in the *Baltimore Evening Sun*, Mencken excoriated the state of Maryland for barring a black man from entering one of its law schools. The man was clearly qualified — he had passed all of his tests and had a superb academic record — and, as a resident of the state, paid taxes which allowed the



school to operate. For the state to deny the man admission was typical democratic hypocrisy — a classic case of democracy failing to practice what it preaches.

Upon further examination, it would appear that the democratic pretense of equality is quite at odds with reality. Mencken suggested that inequality is as integral in democracy as liberty is ephemeral. There is inequality now, Mencken argued, "but with the difference that the balance of power tends to fall into the hands of a class that is not useful at all."

The result is the rise of the democratic leveling urge — the desire to create conditions of social and economic equality, not by elevating the lower classes, but by dragging down the upper classes. The truth is that the democratic man is utterly incapable of handling freedom. Giving unfettered liberty to *Homo boobiens* is like serving *filet mignon* to a vegetarian or taking a Trappist monk to a topless bar; he is at first dumbfounded, then repulsed.

The democratic man, Mencken says, "is not actually happy when free; he is uncomfortable, a bit alarmed, and intolerably lonely. He longs for the warm, reassuring smell of the herd, and is willing to take the herdsmen with it." He cannot enjoy it himself, and thus, being the creature of envy that he is, he cannot allow others to enjoy it either. This is precisely why the civilized minority struggles to maintain its "precarious existence." Its superiority threatens the democratic order. It is too high, too great, too noble.

Freedom requires an understanding of personal responsibility. It requires strength, will power, a desire to achieve. The average man lacks these traits, preferring instead safety. Recall the poor lout who spoke up during the 1992 presidential debates, urging the candidates to think of Americans as their children.

This is what American democracy has given us — mental eunuchs, prostrating themselves before the alter of the state, pleading with their politicians to take care of them. The American democrat, Mencken wrote, is "against every human act that he is incapable of himself — safely." Thus, the citizen is protected, supposedly, by a virtual mountain of rules and regulations, and empowered with all sorts of bogus rights he never knew he had, such as the right to sue the city, the mayor, the alderman, the power company, the tavern he frequents, the booze distillery and the manufacturer of his automobile for damages inflicted on himself when he ran his car into a power pole after having one too many gin and tonics. In some places, colleges and universities mostly, he is protected from "misdirected laughter" and "inconsiderate jokes," not to mention a whole host of other

derogatory epithets which may be hurled in his direction while strolling innocently across the quad.

Quite contrary to popular opinion, this argument in no way suggests that the citizenry be stripped of the rights granted them under the Constitution, or that chattel slavery be revived, Jim Crow be resurrected, women be shackled to their kitchen stoves, martial law be imposed to restore order in the cities, or a benevolent despot be installed to make sure that the trains run on time.

Yet it is conceivable that similarly oppressive measures may be taken in the service of democracy. If social equality, not merely legal equality, is the aim, then appeals to liberty suddenly ring hollow, like the vulgar pleas of street cranks and insane pamphleteers. The result is obvious: when equality is the sanctioned goal of the state, liberty necessarily yields. Personal freedom becomes redundant when the state guarantees the life, welfare and happiness of its "children."

In the last fifty years, the American understanding of rights has evolved from a negative conception to positive one. It used to be that a citizen had a right to be free from government interference. The state could not bar him from attending church on Sunday, or distributing leaflets in a public park, or joining an organization which advocates abolishing of the Bill of Rights and establishing a dictatorship of the Proletariat. The state could not prohibit him from owning a gun, nor could it send its policemen into his home without probable cause. The state cannot quarter troops in private residences, regardless of pressing national security concerns.

With the exception of the prohibition against quartering troops, most of the rights of citizens to be protected from state intrusion have given way to more "positive" rights. The right to welfare comes immediately to mind, but there are countless other such rights. The right to abortion is a giant among them, as is the right to cheap, government subsidized housing, the right to a fair wage, the inexplicable right to comfort, and the right to free education in state-subsidized schools.

Today, we have politicians and citizens alike arguing at once, and with a straight face, that free health care is as fundamental a right as free speech, while the constitutional provision granting right to keep and bear arms was a mistake and ought to be repealed. The first lady of the United States, an unelected official, is travelling the country preaching that guns are a health problem. Her words are being translated into real policy, but no one is questioning her authority. No one is asking who put her in charge.

Positive rights have even wormed their way into negative territory. The citizen is now entitled to be free from unkind language, from "hostile" environments, from damage stemming from psychological trauma, from non-denominational benedictions at high school commencements, from oppressive religious symbols littering the public landscape, and from discrimination of any sort

(such as the increasingly difficult task of firing a worker for incompetence). In a democracy, it seems, it isn't who you are, but with what victimized group you are affiliated that counts.

Mencken exemplified the traditional conservative view of equality, articulated by such thinkers as Disraeli and Sir Henry Sumner Maine, which holds that all men are equal before the law, which is considerably different from the egalitarianism of modern democracy.

The idea that all men have a right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness is not a problem for Mencken — it is only when the state feels compelled to guarantee those rights by any means necessary that he sounds the alarm. In order to make such guarantees, he believed, democracy in effect has to betray every principle it holds dear. "The only sort of liberty that is real under democracy is the liberty of the have-nots to destroy the liberty of the haves." Thus, democracy is in a never-ending cycle of self-consumption. And although this makes for a fine spectacle, the show exacts a heavy toll.

When the majority rules, the minority necessarily suffers. Constitutional safeguards against such tyranny are little match against the general will. History demonstrates that the arcane words of an ancient parchment drafted by men who have long since shuffled off this mortal coil are little match against a government intent on maintaining national security, safeguarding the public welfare, or upholding prevailing standards of decency, whatever that might entail.

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## The Aristocratic Solution

**T**he assault on liberty is so successful in because it meets so little resistance. According to Mencken, liberty was able to flourish in the early days of the Republic because the Founders put elaborate checks on the transitory interests of the masses. Once those checks eroded away, however, the descent into "mobocracy," which men like Alexander Hamilton called "the beast," was assured. "This dominance of mob thinking," Mencken said, "this pollution of the whole intellectual life of the country by the prejudices and emotions of the rabble, goes unchallenged because the old landed aristocracy of the colonial era has been engulfed and almost obliterated by the rise of the industrial system, and no new aristocracy has arisen to take its place."

Mencken believed that America suffers today from the lack of a genuine aristocracy. "Everywhere else on earth," he noted, "despite the rise of democracy, an organized minority of aristocrats survives from a more spacious day, and if its personnel has degenerated and its legal powers have decayed it has at least maintained some vestige of its old independence of spirit." Not so in the United States, which Mencken described scornfully as a "commonwealth of third-rate men." In America, Mencken explained, the stifling political climate and cultural banality prohibited a genuine aristocracy from flourishing. The fledgling aristocracy was "paralyzed by Jackson and got its death blow from Grant, and since then no successor has evolved." Thus, he concluded, "there is no organized force to oppose the vagaries of the mob," and "the worst excesses go almost without challenge."



Mencken's case for an American aristocracy is made for the most part in his essay entitled "The National Letters," which levels a devastating attack on the dreary state of American literature. Noting a general intellectual paralysis among the nation's literati, Mencken observed that "[o]ne is conscious of no brave and noble earnestness... no generalized passion for intellectual and spiritual adventure...."

What he perceived, instead, was profound intellectual malaise — "a highly self-conscious and insipid correctness, a bloodless respectability, a submergence of matter in manner." What he observed in literature might easily be projected on society general, in its political institutions, its universities, and its churches. Mencken believed that the lack of an aristocracy is the chief cause of society's ills — specifically, its love for cheap thrills and fads, its hackneyed culture, its hollow literature and lack of original thinking. A civilized aristocracy — "secure in its position, animated by an intelligent curiosity, skeptical of all facile generalizations, superior to the sentimentality of the mob, and delighting in the battle of ideas for its own sake" — is what America really needs, not more democracy as liberal critics claim.

In a democracy, the transient interests of the mob pose a threat to liberty in the long and short run. Even Thomas Jefferson, the patriarch of American democracy, stood with the arch-conservative John Adams in support of the idea of a "natural aristocracy." In this

sense, Mencken carried on the philosophical legacy of the founders. His anti-democratic message echoed the warning of James Madison in *The Federalist* that "[m]en of factious tempers, of local prejudices, or of sinister designs may, by intrigue, by corruption, or by other means, first obtain suffrages, and then betray the interests of the people."

Mencken contended that the founders had little faith in democracy whatsoever, and that they would surely disapprove of how the Republic has since evolved. A seed of aristocracy was planted by the founders, only to be neglected and ultimately discarded by their descendants. "They invented very ingenious devices for holding the mob in check," Mencken explained, "for protecting the national polity against its transient and illogical rages, for securing the determination of all the larger matters of state to a concealed but nonetheless real aristocracy. Nothing could have been further from the intent of Washington, Hamilton and even Jefferson that the official doctrines of the nation... should be identical to the nonsense heard in the chautauqua, from the evangelical pulpit, and on the stump."

While the "lower orders are inert, timid, inhospitable to ideas, [and] hostile to changes," an aristocracy is "autonomous, curious, venturesome, [and] courageous." But, as Mencken makes clear, America has no such aristocracy, nor is it likely that such a self-determined class of individuals will ever spring up so long as

America remains mesmerized by the democratic ideal.

Of course, Mencken understood that the very word "aristocracy" would cause the average reader to recoil in horror. "Any mention of an aristocracy to a public fed upon democratic fustian," he wrote, "is bound to bring up images of stockbrokers' wives lolling obscenely in opera boxes, or of haughty Englishmen slaughtering whole generations of grouse in an inordinate and incomprehensible manner." But that wasn't at all what Mencken had in mind.

Mencken believed that aristocracy, rather than democracy, could best guarantee liberty because the best and brightest men would govern. Under a democracy, the transient interests of the masses pose a threat to long-term liberty. An aristocracy is capable of acting with careful deliberation, while the herd can only react instinctively. An aristocracy does what it believes is right and in its interests; the people, desiring only to be safe, will do what is expedient.

Mencken's concept of aristocratic liberty was less concerned with free enterprise and economic individualism as it was with the right to spiritual and moral self-determination. In that sense, Mencken's idea of liberty was closer to that of Jefferson than Hamilton. According to Mencken biographer Douglas Stenerson, "Mencken's libertarianism was strongly Jeffersonian in tone because it insisted that *all* persons, not only members of an elite, have inalienable rights, and that any interference with these rights by either an agency of government or community mores is intrinsically evil." Mencken's aristocracy, consisting of his "superior few," wanted an orderly and stable society, but was also fiercely committed to self-determination, or, more precisely, rugged individualism.

This aristocratic vision holds that all are equal *under the law*. A democracy, Mencken believed, cannot guarantee even that. "If [government] be aristocratic in organization," he argues, "then it seeks to protect the man who is superior only in law against the man who is superior in fact; if it be democratic, then it seeks to protect the man who is inferior in every way against both."

Naturally, there exists an upper class in this country, but it is not a true aristocracy. In democracy, even the upper class is shabby. In America, the dominance of the democratic ethos had created a sort of vacuum, replacing the aristocracy with a "plutocracy," or a "bugaboo aristocracy." According to Mencken, the only thing which sets the plutocracy apart from the mob is its money. Otherwise, he contends, the plutocracy is "badly educated, it is stupid, it is full of low-caste superstitions and indignations... above all, it is extraordinarily lacking in the most elemental independence and courage."

Who is this plutocracy? The rich, mostly. Mencken cited some of the big men of his day: Rockefeller, Carnegie, J.P. Morgan. Today, he would no doubt include the likes of Donald Trump, Ross Perot, or any of Dan Quayle's much ballyhooed "cultural elite." They may have monstrous bank accounts and live in palaces, but they lack the real characteristics of a true elite: courage, intelligence, and independence.

Mencken concluded that by destroying aristocracy, democracy has effectively destroyed everything good and noble in the world and replaced it with everything shabby and cheap. "What one beholds, sweeping the eye over the land," Mencken says, "is a culture that... is in three layers — the plutocracy on top, a vast mass of undifferentiated human blanks at the bottom, and a forlorn *intelligentsia* gasping out a precarious life between."

Alas, Mencken concluded, the virtues of aristocracy are all but devoid from American society. "In a century and a half," Mencken duly observes, "[democracy] has failed either to lift up the mob to intellectual autonomy and dignity or to purge the plutocracy of its inherent stupidity and swinishness."

## What Goes Up . . .

**D**espite all of Mencken's posturing, hyperbole and vitriol, there is a disturbing core of truth to his critique, however heretical it may seem at a time when history is supposed to be ending with the global triumph of democracy. He was a sophisticated critic of democracy, especially the American version. He saw its weaknesses clearly and, for all his bombast, he made an effective critique. Unfortunately, he failed — in fact, refused — to develop a constructive alternative. And as for the future survival of democracy, he wouldn't hazard a guess. At the most, he conceded that the rascality of democracy may be needed for human existence, and that democracy itself is a "self-limiting disease."


"My business is not prognosis, but diagnosis," he wrote in the conclusion of *Notes on Democracy*. "That simple statement of fact, I daresay, will be accepted as a confession, condemning me out of hand as unfit for my task. . . . For it is one of the peculiar intellectual accompaniments of democracy that... to lack a remedy is to lack the very license to discuss the disease."

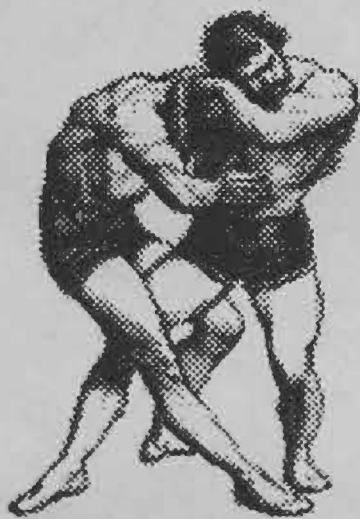
Although he failed to develop a constructive alternative, his view lays the foundation for such an alternative — a libertarian constitutionalism to maintain the best element of democracy and protect the freedom of all people, and a meritocratic elitism designed to overcome the chief failure of democracy and exalt the very best men of intelligence and ability.

Mencken thought what democracy needed most was "a party of liberty" — though not necessarily a Libertarian Party — that could "separate the good that is in it theoretically from the evils that beset it practically." But, he added, such a party will never flourish until there is a genuine aristocracy to "breed and secure" it.

Certainly the concept of universal suffrage should be re-examined, and — in a perfect world — the Twenty-sixth Amendment repealed. Obviously, the days of limiting the franchise to white, male property owners are over — and rightly so. But extending the vote to every citizen on the basis of such arbitrary criteria as age is absurd.

Mencken argued that only productive members of society should be given the right to vote. "I believe that any man or woman who, for a period of say five years, has earned his or her living in some lawful and useful occupation, without any recourse to public assistance, should be allowed to vote." And no one else — especially not students.

The mark of a good citizen is the capacity to pull his or her own weight. But if the twentieth century is to be remembered as the age when democracy triumphed, it must also be seen as an era when that capacity diminished as the state grew larger than ever before. As the struggle between liberty and equality intensifies, it becomes difficult to say how democracy can exist peacefully. Or, as Mencken asked in the conclusion of his treatise on democracy, "How can any man be a democrat who is sincerely a democrat?" 



**CLASS WARFARE IN THE '90s**

# Mr. Clinton's Assault on Productivity

**B y M i c h a e l J. M a l e r v y**

**H**istorically, the United States has always been the land of opportunity. People believed in the American Dream, and upward mobility. Immigrants risked their lives to come to this country in hopes of achieving this dream. With a little luck and a lot of hard work, it was believed, success would soon come.

Unfortunately, this attitude is no longer shared by many Americans. Conventional wisdom holds that people who are rich or successful have not worked hard. Rather, the rich have either cheated their way into prosperity, or were born into a wealthy family. This attitude could be seen in the rhetoric used by President Bill Clinton during the recent battle over the budget. According to a report by the House Republican Conference, the share of total tax revenues which were paid by those making \$40,000 or more increased from 45.1 percent to 48 percent in the 1980s.

At the same time, those making less than \$40,000 saw their tax burdens drop. Yet, Clinton still had the gall to charge those who succeeded in the 1980s of "not paying their fair share." Between the years 1983 and 1989, the poorest 20 percent of the population saw their incomes rise 12 percent, while the richest fifth similarly saw their incomes rise 12 percent. Despite this fact, there are people on the left who will argue that the rich benefitted at the expense of the poor in the 1980s.

The hatred of the rich among many can also be seen in the debate over health care. When pharmaceutical companies pass the huge costs of research and development of new drugs to the customer, they are accused of price gouging. Doctors have been portrayed as greedy people who are more concerned about open wallets than open heart surgery.

This animosity towards hard work and success is prevalent in our nation's cities, where blacks who try to break out of poverty are derided as "oreos": Black on the outside, but white on the inside. To be black and successful is incompatible. As long as there remains such hostility towards those who work to escape the poverty of our inner cities, no social program proposed by the Republicans or the Democrats will result in any improvement in the condition of our nation's cities.

The United States is served well by these successful people. These are the people that provide jobs for the majority of our country. Think about it. When you are looking for employment, who do you ask for a job? Most likely, you will look to the

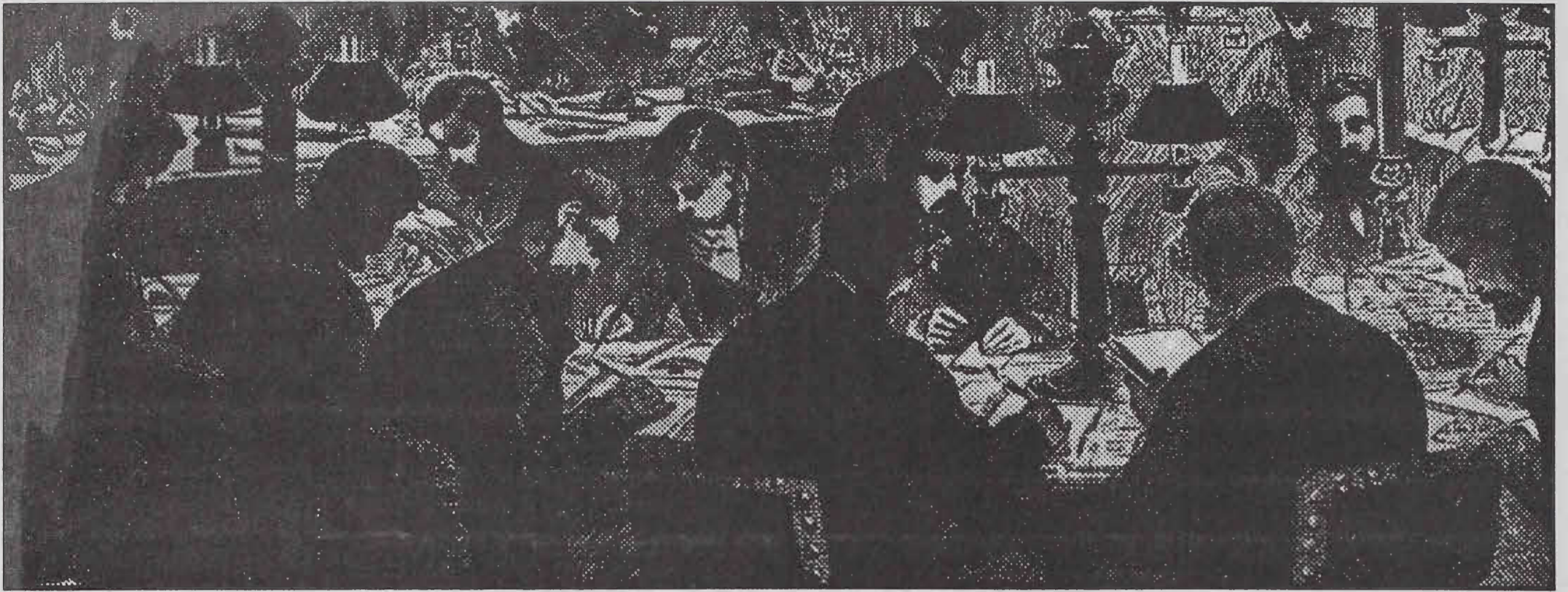
successful people in our society for work. After all, employers are more likely to be found in La Jolla or Coronado than in Southeast San Diego.

This is only of the reasons why the "tax the rich" cries of the

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**Even in the  
"worker's  
paradise" of  
the Soviet  
Union, there  
was the  
working class  
and the ruling  
class.**

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demagogues on the left are so dangerous. When the taxes on the rich are raised, it is the middle class workers who produce goods and services desired by the rich that get hurt. A perfect example of this could be found in New England. When the luxury tax on yachts was raised in 1990, the yacht building industry in New England suffered greatly. Because of the higher taxes, yacht sales plummeted, and many found themselves laid off because of the lack of demand in the yacht industry. While a rich person may have been inconvenienced because he could not buy a new yacht, it was the unemployed worker who suffered.

In comparison with the rest of the world, however, the United States has been unhurt by those preaching class envy. In Germany, Adolph Hitler used class envy to turn impoverished Germans against comparatively wealthy Jews in order to obtain power. In France, class envy led to the deaths of Louis XVI and Marie Antionette at the guillotine, and the Great Terror that followed soon after. While it is unlikely class envy would lead to such horrible results as the Holocaust or a revolution in the United States, these examples show why it is so important Americans not heed the cries of those who want to see the rich and successful in our society suffer.

The prosperous in our society have worked hard and taken chances to get to where they are today. Doctors and lawyers had to study hard for many years in college, and later medical or law school, to get to where they are today. Proprietors have had to risk huge sums of money and overcome the possibility of failure in order to achieve success. Professional athletes and entertainers have also had to overcome staggering odds in order to amass their wealth.

Without the rich and successful, there would be no motivation to work hard. How can you justify working at an undesirable job, or studying hard in college for a midterm, if there is not a long term reward of a better job or a higher salary? It is this desire to improve one's lifestyle that encourages people to work harder.

When this self-improvement is punished through higher taxes and animosity by those filled with class envy, the temptation for many is to forget about studying, and to head for the beach.

This motivation to work hard is why the 1980s, derided by liberals as a decade of greed, were so successful. As the Laffer Curve accurately predicted, lowering tax rates increased tax revenues, as people worked harder and invested more money into the economy.

As a result of Ronald Reagan's tax cuts, more revenues came into the federal government's coffers. According to the Treasury Department, the federal government collected almost \$600 million in revenues in 1981. By 1987, government revenues swelled to over \$850 million.

Ultimately, the hard work on the part of an individual benefits society. If a scientist had spent his time in college sitting in front of the television instead of studying, society would not benefit from any discoveries, inventions, or ideas he may develop as a result of his labor. Instead of being envious of such a person and punishing him with a higher tax burden, we should reward the scientist in question with gratitude.

While there are many examples of the rich being excessive in their spending habits, the rich are also among the most generous people in our society. They provide many of the scholarships college students need to continue their studies. They provide funding for arts programs, helping struggling artists and musicians who are trying to perfect their art.

Hospitals, museums, and universities bear the names of rich benefactors who have given massive sums of money in order to get these projects to completion. There is plenty of anger for those who waste their money on gourmet food for their pets and other extravagancies. If anger against this wasteful spending is justified, however, appreciation must also be expressed for those who give back to their communities.

Americans who look negatively upon the rich and successful should realize that equality cannot be achieved. Life is not fair, and there are inequalities in the distribution of wealth in this country. This is true, however, of every country that currently exists or has ever existed. Even in the "worker's paradise" of the Soviet Union, there was the working class and the ruling class.

Equality in the distribution of wealth is not necessarily a good thing. A country where wealth is shared equally but people are mired in poverty is in no way preferable to a country where there are inequalities, but almost everyone is better off.

Those full of envy would do better to change their attitude toward the rich. Instead of looking upon the rich with hatred, the envious would be better off working hard and viewing the successful as models to emulate. Not only would they be better off, but so would the rest of us as well. ♣

# The California Review

## Guide to Conservative Reading

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**I**t is impossible for conservatives to survive and flourish in the university if they do not read. The university is supposed to be a place for the free and open exchange of ideas, so long as those ideas do not threaten the liberal status quo. Embracing liberalism is, as the Patriot Limbaugh has so correctly observed, the most gutless decision a person can make. But it is also true that young conservatives have their own intellectual crosses to bear. The *California Review* and publications like it are only part of the solution, and a small part at that. Conservatism requires curiosity and a healthy skepticism of the prevailing political orthodoxy. There is a vast intellectual arsenal available to the eager, young conservative. Use it. Exploit it for all it is worth. If you are interested in conservative thought, the literature is diverse and easily obtained — for now. The following is a short and by no means complete list of recommended reading. You need not read all of it to be a sound conservative — but it would sure help.

- |  |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| Adams, Henry                                   | · | Hentoff, Nat                            | · | von Mises, Ludwig                         |
| <i>The Education of Henry Adams</i>            | · | (A rare leftist worth reading)          | · | <i>Human Action</i>                       |
| Ames, Fisher                                   | · | <i>Freedom of Speech For Me But Not</i> | · | Murray, Charles                           |
| <i>Works</i>                                   | · | <i>For Thee</i>                         | · | <i>Losing Ground</i>                      |
| Aristotle                                      | · | Hollander, Paul                         | · | Nietzsche, Friedrich                      |
| <i>Nicomachaen Ethics</i>                      | · | <i>Anti-Americanism</i>                 | · | <i>Thus Spoke Zarathustra</i>             |
| <i>Politics</i>                                | · | Johnson, Paul                           | · | Nixon, Richard                            |
| Bennett, William                               | · | <i>Modern Times</i>                     | · | <i>In the Arena</i>                       |
| <i>The Devaluing of America</i>                | · | <i>Intellectuals</i>                    | · | Nock, Albert J.                           |
| Berns, Walter                                  | · | <i>Birth of the Modern</i>              | · | <i>The State of the Union</i>             |
| <i>Taking the Constitution Seriously</i>       | · | Kirk, Russell                           | · | Olasky, Marvin                            |
| Bork, Robert                                   | · | <i>The Conservative Mind</i>            | · | <i>The Tragedy of American Compassion</i> |
| <i>The Tempting of America</i>                 | · | <i>The Conservative Reader</i>          | · | O'Rourke, P.J.                            |
| Buchanan, Patrick J.                           | · | <i>Roots of American Order</i>          | · | <i>Give War a Chance</i>                  |
| <i>Right From the Beginning</i>                | · | Lecky, W.E.H.                           | · | <i>Parliament of Whores</i>               |
| Buckley, William F.                            | · | <i>Democracy and Liberty</i>            | · | <i>Republican Party Reptile</i>           |
| <i>Keeping the Tablets</i> (editor)            | · | Limbaugh, Rush                          | · | Plato                                     |
| <i>Gratitude</i>                               | · | <i>The Way Things Ought to Be</i>       | · | <i>The Republic</i>                       |
| <i>Up From Liberalism</i>                      | · | Lippmann, Walter                        | · | <i>The Symposium</i>                      |
| Burke, Edmund                                  | · | <i>The Phantom Public</i>               | · | Rossiter, Clinton                         |
| <i>Reflections on the Revolution in France</i> | · | Machiavelli                             | · | <i>American Conservatism</i>              |
| Burnham, James                                 | · | <i>The Discourses</i>                   | · | <i>The Grand Convention</i>               |
| <i>The Machiavellians</i>                      | · | <i>The Prince</i>                       | · | Smith, Adam                               |
| <i>Suicide of the West</i>                     | · | MacDonald, Forrest                      | · | <i>Wealth of Nations</i>                  |
| Cooper, James Fenimore                         | · | <i>Novus Ordo Seclorum</i>              | · | Sowell, Thomas                            |
| <i>The American Democrat</i>                   | · | Magnet, Myron                           | · | <i>A Conflict of Visions</i>              |
| D'Souza, Dinesh                                | · | <i>The Dream and the Nightmare</i>      | · | <i>Inside American Education</i>          |
| <i>Illiberal Education</i>                     | · | Maine, Sir Henry Sumner                 | · | Sykes, Charles                            |
| Gross, Martin                                  | · | <i>Popular Government</i>               | · | <i>A Nation of Victims</i>                |
| <i>The Government Racket</i>                   | · | Mencken, H.L.                           | · | <i>Hollow Men</i>                         |
| Hamilton, Alexander, James Madison, and        | · | <i>Notes on Democracy</i>               | · | <i>Prof Scam</i>                          |
| John Jay                                       | · | <i>A Mencken Chrestomathy</i>           | · | Tocqueville, Alexis de                    |
| <i>The Federalist Papers</i>                   | · | <i>Selected Prejudices</i>              | · | <i>Democracy in America</i>               |
| von Hayek, Friedrich A.                        | · | Mill, John Stuart                       | · | Tyrell, R. Emmett                         |
| <i>The Constitution of Liberty</i>             | · | <i>On Liberty</i>                       | · | <i>The Conservative Crack-Up</i>          |
| <i>The Road to Serfdom</i>                     | · | <i>On Representative Government</i>     | · | <i>The Liberal Crack-Up</i>               |

# Parting Thoughts...

There is never enough time, unless you're serving it.

—Malcolm Forbes

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I'd rather entrust the government of the United States to the first 400 people listed in the Boston telephone directory than to the faculty of Harvard University.

—William F. Buckley Jr.

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It takes two to speak the truth—one to speak and another to hear.

—Henry David Thoreau

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Laws are like sausages. It's better not to see them being made.

—Otto von Bismark

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Immigration is the sincerest form of flattery.

—Jack Paar

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Friends may come and go, but enemies accumulate.

—Thomas Jones

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I'm a great believer in luck, and I find the harder I work the more I have of it.

—Thomas Jefferson

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Liberty is always dangerous, but it is the safest thing we have.

—Henry Emerson Fodsick

Congress is so strange. A man gets up to speak and says nothing. Nobody listens — and then everybody disagrees.

—Boris Marshalov

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Government lasts as long as the under-taxed can defend themselves against the over-taxed.

—Bernard Berenson

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It could probably be shown by the facts and figures that there is no distinctly American criminal class except Congress.

—Mark Twain

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In a country of pushers and yearners, what a joy it is to meet a man who envies no one and wants to be nothing that he is not!

—H.L. Mencken

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Politics has got so expensive that it takes a lot of money even to get beat with.

—Will Rogers

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A banker is a person who is willing to make a loan if you present sufficient evidence to show you don't need it.

—Herbert V. Prochnov

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Berra's Law — You can observe a lot just by watching.

—Yogi Berra

What is honored in a country will be cultivated there.

—Plato

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The vast wasteland of TV is not interested in producing a better mousetrap but in producing a worse mouse.

—Laurence C. Coughlin

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The road to Hell is paved with good intentions.

—Samuel Johnson

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The avoidance of taxes is the only intellectual pursuit that still carries any reward.

—John Maynard Keynes

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The impersonal hand of government can never replace the helping hand of a neighbor.

—Hubert H. Humphrey

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Nothing is easier than spending public money. It does not appear to belong to anybody. The temptation is overwhelming to bestow it on somebody.

—Calvin Coolidge

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Nothing can bring you peace but the triumph of principles.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson



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