

# Liberty

April 2006

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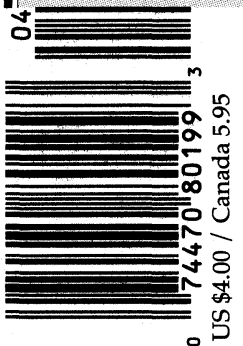
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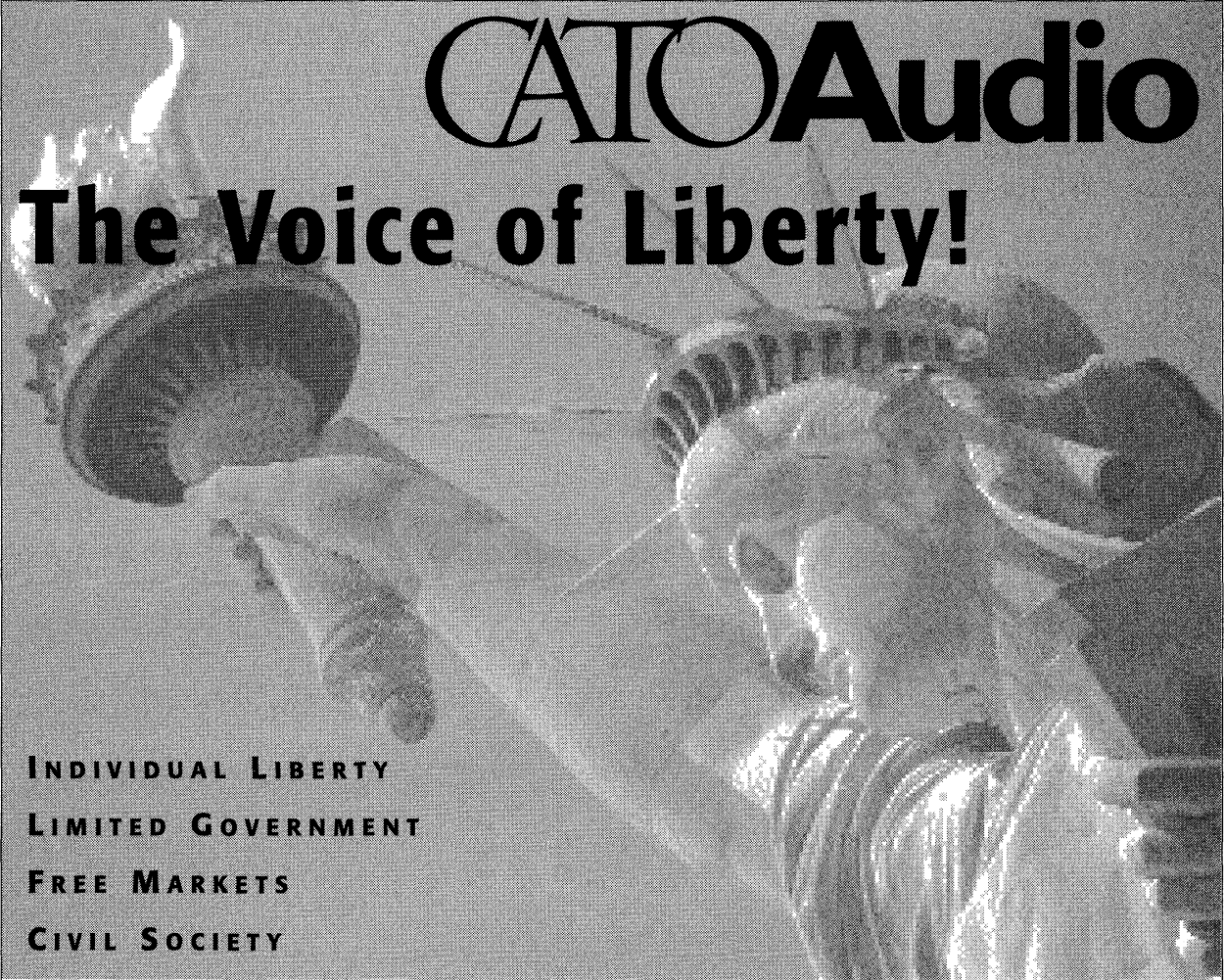
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*by Gary Jason*

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# Letters

## Horse of a Different Color

Robert Nelson's excellent article "The Opiate of Almost Everyone" (February) has a fundamental flaw. The concept of politics, economics, etc. "as religion" is actually a premise rather than a relationship that is proved in the article. Parallels to religion are shown, but religion is quite different. For example, the U.S. Constitution may be advocated with zeal because it works to provide freedom and a high standard of living, but zeal for a political system is not religion.

Religion is primarily a faith that an other-worldly power exists. This may result in a code of behavior, but it differs from a political system because the latter is continually tested in the real world, while religion is founded on unprovable faith.

The essential aspect of religion is belief in a Supreme Being or force. The essential aspects of the U.S. Constitution and resultant political system are that each person owns himself and the product of his efforts. The result is that power resides primarily in the individual and private property is advocated. In religion, power resides in an other-worldly force and private property is irrelevant.

Allen Appell  
Kentfield, Calif.

*Robert Nelson replies:* I readily acknowledge that, if you define religion as requiring a God in the hereafter, then most of my article is not about religion. However, most theologians have a wider understanding of religion. Some forms of Buddhism, for example, do not have a God — at least in any concrete sense familiar to Western understandings — and yet few would dispute that they are real religions. Similarly, there is wide agreement today that Marxism, the progressive gospel of efficiency, and other secular religions (which some peo-

ple are now calling "implicit religions") have been powerful expressions of religious conviction that have had a great influence on the history of the past 200 years. Moreover, as my article points out, these secular religions often derive much of their belief systems from earlier Judaic and Christian sources, if now partially disguised, and so the use of the term religion is a helpful reminder in this respect.

## Gilding the Guild

In Mark Skousen's enjoyable review "Weighing the Gilded Heroes" (February), he writes: "When Carnegie ordered workers to return to the twelve-hour shift, the workers not surprisingly staged a strike, which Carnegie . . . violently suppressed."

First, Carnegie's "order" is more accurately described as Carnegie setting the terms under which he would continue to offer employment. The workers were free to decline his terms, accept them, or attempt to negotiate (striking being a form of the latter).

"Meet You in Hell" author Les Standiford is certainly no apologist for capitalists or capitalism, but he thoroughly refutes the claim that the strike was "violently suppressed."

Briefly, Pinkerton agents were hired to protect the plant and river-barged to the site (to reduce the chance for violence). A mob representing a supposedly moderate union strove to prevent their landing, and a battle broke out. Both sides were armed, and there were multiple deaths on each side. The Pinkerton agents withdrew.

What followed was nothing more than a government doing the one thing that a government should do: enforce the law. The National Guard was brought in to restore order. Because it was based on mob rule, the strike fell apart, and the plant reopened. No further injury or death resulted.

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Obviously any claim that the union was “moderate” is bogus; it was moderate only so long as it got what it wanted. When it did not, it resorted to violence.

“Meet You in Hell” also reveals that the union, far from representing the “working man,” was representing the highest-paid workers in an effort to protect their jobs and pay from competition. The laborers seemingly had no idea why they had to go on strike, other than the pressure (and, yes, coercion) from those who had already gained higher pay scales. Rank protectionism.

Why Frick, Carnegie, capitalists, or capitalism wear this particular crown of thorns is a wonder to me. It should be seen as a well “spun” appeal to mob rule and truly an embarrassment to “labor.”

Ron LaDow  
San Francisco, Calif.

## Dredful Jurisdiction

This is in response to Bob Tiernan’s letter (February) disagreeing with my letter (November), wherein I pointed out that the U.S. Supreme Court’s *Dred Scott v. Sandford* decision of 1856 had upheld “original intent.”

Mr. Tiernan views that decision as an example of a “living Constitution” because he believes the Supreme Court made the Constitution “say something it didn’t, namely, that no blacks could be U.S. citizens or have any rights.”

The U.S. Constitution didn’t define “citizens” until 1868 (14th Amendment). The *Dred Scott* decision reviewed state constitutions and laws — not federal. They found no provision for any non-whites to become citizens. To the contrary, they found many state laws that

specifically prohibited it. That’s the “original intent” the High Court documented in its 241-page historical review.

(Even in 1859, three years after the *Dred Scott* decision, Oregon was admitted to the Union with an “Exclusion Law” on the books, which barred non-whites from even entering the state, and a “Lash Law” that required an annual beating of nonwhites already there, to encourage their leaving.)

Citizenship and federal court jurisdiction are constitutionally linked. *Dred Scott v. Sandford* was a suit between a non-citizen (Scott) and a citizen (Sandford) of the same State. Thus, it was outside federal-court jurisdiction — even if Scott were a citizen.

Mr. Tiernan’s mention of the Judicial Act of 1789 is right on point. (It was the document whereby the just-created U.S. Congress established the federal court system.) It states that the Supreme Court shall have jurisdiction of “controversies of a civil nature, . . . except between a State and its citizens . . .”

Federal courts *never* had jurisdictional authority to hear cases “between a State and its citizens,” which did not

arise from “the laws of the United States.” So, whether Scott was a citizen or not, no federal court could hear his case.

Thus, in *Scott*, Chief Justice Taney was correct in dismissing “for want of jurisdiction.” Using Scott’s lack of citizenship of Missouri as grounds was misleading. When courts find *any* grounds for dismissal, they rarely consider other grounds. So Taney didn’t address the court’s lack of jurisdiction even if Scott *were* a citizen.

Tiernan’s argument that “federal laws regarding slavery came into play” is a stretch. Congress is empowered to make “rules and regulations respecting the territory” — not “laws.” Such “rules and regulations” may not go beyond the constitutional bounds of federal power, and they vanish at statehood. Scott was taken to Illinois (a free state), and his attorneys argued that made him free, but that’s a state matter, not federal.

Contrary to popular assumption, the U.S. Supreme Court does not have power to hear every controversy.

James Harrold, Sr.  
Springdale, Ark.

This issue of Liberty has a special and (unfortunately) a timely focus: War.

Like most other matters, war is something on which libertarians have very diverse and individual views. Planning an issue about libertarian thoughts on war was interesting to me because it gave me the chance to watch truly independent minds at work. It was also a great excuse to invite contributions from some of the best writers I know: Robert Higgs, Bruce Ramsey, and Aeon Skoble. I think you’ll love, hate, and be invigorated by their essays.

Meanwhile, this issue offers our editors’ predictably unpredictable Reflections on human life, David Beito’s account of politics among the historians, Timothy Sandefur’s examination of everybody’s favorite earthquake (San Francisco, 1906), and Randal O’Toole’s ideas about my favorite government program (Amtrak): you won’t see these thoughts elsewhere. Bettina Bien Greaves tells the tale of a T-shirt, Gary Jason unmasks modern liberal hypocrisy, and Jo Ann Skousen gives us her verdict on a new film — and her anti-elitist wisdom on the films of 2005.

As Liberty’s still-wet-behind-the-ears editor in chief, I want to take this occasion to say how much fun it is to work with the people of Liberty: with Kathleen Bradford, who, in the spirit of our founder, R.W. Bradford, is the gracious host to this symposium of ideas and inspirations; with Mark Rand, our Assistant Editor, and Drew Ferguson, our Managing Editor, two very cool and clever guys; and with Patrick Quealy, whom we are welcoming back to Liberty in his new job as Publisher. Patrick is a young man who knows how to do everything that I don’t, and that’s a lot of things.

For Liberty,  
Stephen Cox  
Editor

## Letters to the Editor

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

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In the February review of “Unintended Consequences” by John Ross, we indicated that the book is not available from most bookstores. This is no longer the case. It is available from amazon.com or any major bookstore.

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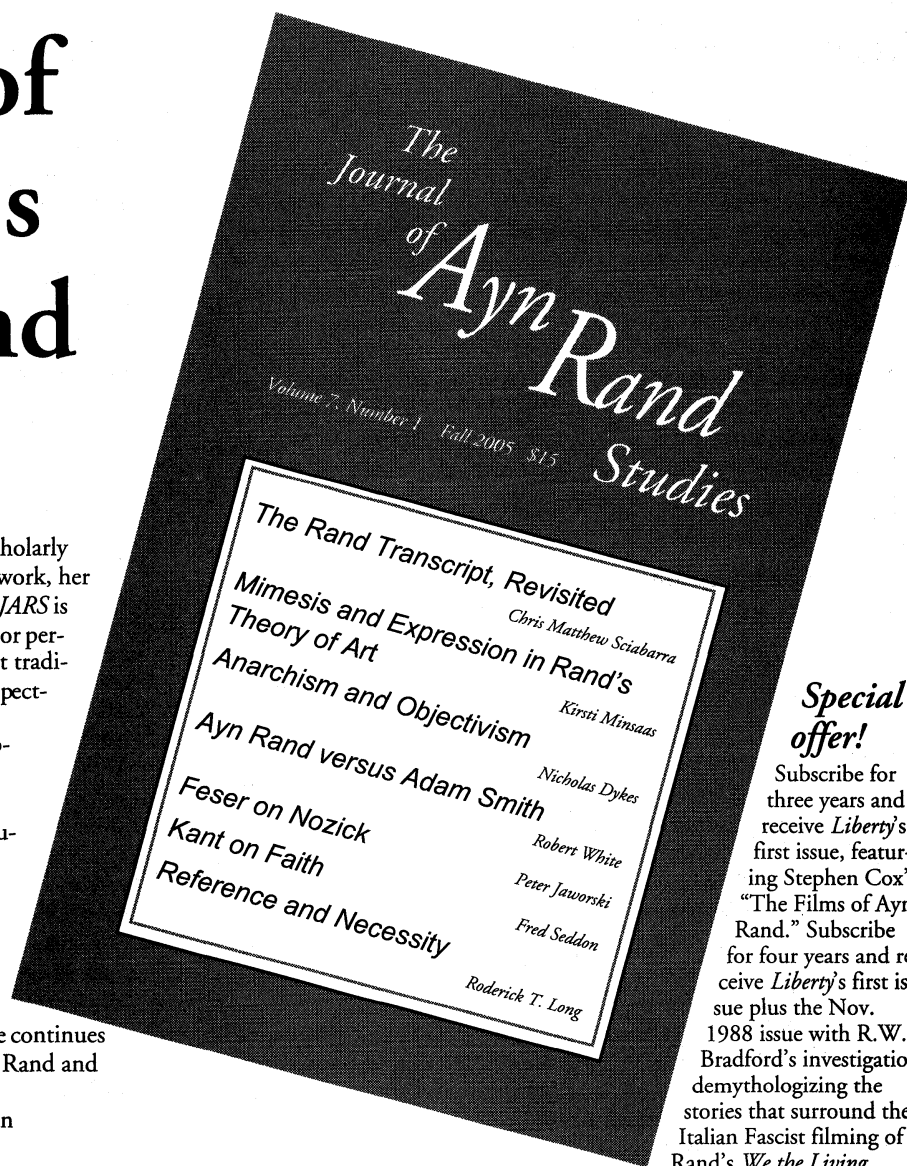
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# Reflections

**Buckshot blunder** — It's typical of the behavior of this administration that when the Vice President managed to shoot somebody, it was by accident and it was a fellow Republican.  
— Stephen Cox

**Democracy's a bitch** — Turnout was high, the debates were free and open, and, when it was all over, Hamas won big. Democracy, long worshipped by Victor Davis Hanson and other pro-warriors, is proving to be a bitch goddess.  
— David T. Beito

**Prosecutor, indict thyself!** — In 18th century England, criminal cases were privately prosecuted, usually by the victim, although by law any Englishman could prosecute any crime. In an old article on that system, I suggested a possible reason. Over the previous century, England had gone through a civil war, a military dictatorship, and two successful coups. It may have occurred to people that, if the crown controlled prosecution, the king's friends could get away with murder.

Under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, intercepting communications in ways not permitted by the act, or using information obtained by such interceptions, is a criminal offense punishable by up to five years in prison and a fine of up to \$10,000. It is a crime — but only the state can prosecute it.

Would anyone like to estimate the probability that either Bush, who by his own admission has been using information thus obtained, or the people who obtained it for him, end up facing criminal prosecution?  
— David Friedman

**Shot through the heart** — Rumor mills were abuzz in the nation's capital over the White House's 24-hour news blackout regarding the Cheney "hunting accident." Not since Richard Nixon's infamous 17 and a half minute tape gap has Washington engaged in such fevered speculation over a span of lost time at the highest levels of our government.

Adding to the mystery was the assertion by one unnamed Secret Service agent that he heard a second shot emanating from a location to the left of the Cheney hunting party. Was Dick Cheney the lone gunman? Ballistic experts are skeptical. Former ATF expert Shel Casing said, "The

injured man's face was a patchwork quilt of lacerations. No single burst of buckshot could account for the extent of those injuries."

At the time this story was filed, various Mafioso crime figures with a potential axe to grind had not been reached for comment because they were either dead or in jail.  
— Norman Ball

**The Kelo clause** — I signed a lease on a new apartment the other day and noticed a clause that wasn't in any of my previous, pre-Kelo v. New London leases. If the government takes my apartment complex through eminent domain, I agree that I'll immediately vacate, give up my interest in the lease, and not claim a right to a portion of the "just compensation" the management gets from the government.

It's a condemned new world.

— Patrick Quealy

**The greatest game** — Can I be alone in thinking that the plodding pace of the prosecution of Saddam Hussein, imprisoned for over two years now, reflects a reluctance to inspire the Iraqi violence that would follow his conviction and likely execution? Wouldn't a better solution be an invitation to go hunting with Dick Cheney?  
— Richard Kostelanetz

**What's not done is done** — The cartoon crisis brings out a blind spot in libertarians. The best example is Virginia Postrel's blog, with which I generally agree. But while embassies

burned, Postrel posted the inflammatory caricature of Muhammad: "My response to this nonsense is to wonder why Muslims don't grow up. If your co-religionists are going to take political stands, and blow up innocent people in the name of Islam, political cartoonists are going to occasionally take satirical swipes at your religion. Those swipes may not be nuanced, but they're what you can expect when you live in a free society, where you, too, can hold views others find offensive. If you don't like it, move to Saudi Arabia."

I disagree. Liberty is about what the government does. I agree that the government should not enforce standards of religious blasphemy, but there is more to the cartoon calamity than that. There is an issue of decency and respect. In America, at least, you do not attack the other fellow's religion — at least, not unless he's signaled that he's open to it.





That is not the law, but it is the custom, and helps make freedom of religion work. An image of a bearded man in a turban, with a bomb on his head, is not objectionable as such; label it Muhammad and it is.

I worked for a Muslim managing editor once, and I learned that. The editors in Copenhagen knew the page of cartoons was, to Muslim eyes, blasphemous. Certainly the French and German papers who reprinted the cartoons knew it. They printed them anyway, as if to say, "Hey, look here. How ya like this, you silly believer?" We don't show images of Jesus with his pants down or the Pope embracing a prostitute, or — well, you can imagine a hundred things that are

*In America, you do not attack the other fellow's religion, not unless he's signaled that he's open to it. It's not the law, but it is the custom, and helps make freedom of religion work.*

not done, whether you have a free press or not. In a world where there are Muslims, showing cartoons of the Prophet is one of them. That some Muslims are violent, and burn down buildings, or are fanatical and have failed states or believe in what you call "Islamofascism" is totally beside the point. The images don't single out those Muslims; they attack all Muslims, and that is *not done*.

— Bruce Ramsey

**Cindy descending** — In Cindy Sheehan, my generation finally has its own Hanoi Jane. Whether in Crawford camping out in a ditch with a bunch of hippies, cozing up to Hugo Chavez, or getting thrown out of the State of the Union address, she's rapidly descending to Fonda-level. I can hardly wait to ridicule her first autobiography.

— Brien Bartels

**Caveat lector** — The implicit theme of the revelations about the fakery of authors J.T. LeRoy and James Frey is that publishers are easily deceived by stories they think will sell, as indeed they did. Though news, this is scarcely new. Doesn't anyone remember Clifford Irving, who sold

McGraw-Hill "The Autobiography of Howard Hughes" a few decades ago? That time, it was Hughes himself who revealed Irving as a hoaxer before the book was officially published. (Later another house published the book as a sort of fascinating fiction, as indeed it is.) The truth is that, since bookselling is, fortunately, an unregulated industry, those purchasing books, especially those recently published, should always remember *caveat emptor* — buyer beware.

— Richard Kostelanetz

**A national failure** — According to the inspector general of the Department of Homeland Security, the federal government purchased 25,000 trailers at a cost of nearly \$900 million as housing for Katrina victims. Most of them were never used, and thousands are rotting away because they were improperly stored.

The same day as this report came out, the GAO reported that many of the federal \$2,000 emergency debit cards given to hurricane victims were used to buy such things as porno tapes, tattoos, weapons, and diamond rings.

Meanwhile, a Republican-dominated committee in the House plans to release a report saying that the federal response to Katrina was "a national failure, an abdication of the most solemn obligation to provide for the common welfare."

I'd like to ask the so-called Republicans who wrote this report: Did you ever consider the possibility that the federal government is simply too big and too clumsy to fulfill such an obligation? And isn't that exactly the reason why the Constitution leaves such activities to the states, not the federal government? And why President Cleveland once vetoed a bill providing relief to a drought-stricken area, saying "I find no warrant for such an appropriation in the Constitution and I do not believe that the power and duty of the General Government ought to be extended to the relief of individual suffering which is in no manner properly related to the public service or benefit"?

Apparently not even the Republicans in Washington consider a limited federal government an option anymore.

— Randal O'Toole

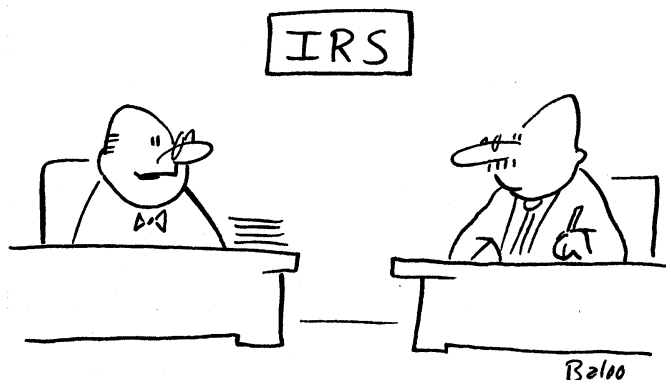
**Pattern recognition** — "I've asked why nobody saw it coming," explained Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice regarding the striking victory by the militant group Hamas in the recent Palestinian election.

Good question. It's not like Ms. Rice's department was blindsided by a surprise election in Botswana or some other place of no consequence in the administration's battle to neutralize the evildoers of this world. This was front-line territory grabbed by a top terrorist group.

Gallup could have probably called the election correctly to within a point or two with ten pollsters in the field for two days. The State Department, in contrast, couldn't see it coming with a \$30 billion budget and 30,000 employees.

It was the same with Katrina. Three days after the storm hit, the official word from the White House was that the storm's horrendous damage was unexpected and unpredictable. "I don't think anybody anticipated the breach of the levees," President Bush said.

In fact, detailed warnings about Hurricane Katrina's probable impact, including forecasts of breached levees, mas-



"Quiet day, isn't it? — Want to go out and snatch some purses?"

sive flooding and major losses of life and property, were steadily flowing into the White House for 48 hours before the storm made landfall.

Go back to Aug. 6, 2001, five weeks prior to the Sept. 11 attack. President Bush received a "presidential daily brief" at his Crawford ranch that specifically pointed to the threat of al Qaeda hijacking airplanes within the United States.

In Senate testimony eight months after the attack, Secretary of State Rice declared, "I don't think anyone could have predicted that these people would take an airplane and slam it into the World Trade Center."

And who could have predicted that Hamas would win, or that the levees wouldn't hold? Anyone see a pattern?

— Ralph R. Reiland

**Decriminalizing hatred** — The riots throughout the world by Muslim fundamentalists irate over the publication of cartoons of the Prophet display an unintended consequence of creating new categories of crime. Violence has always been criminal, but now there are two kinds of violence: against those one likes (bad), and against those one doesn't like (worse). We're told that "hate speech" isn't to be tolerated, and the First Amendment is reinterpreted to say that political speech must be heavily restricted to protect democracy.

Europe has already gone far in this direction, and the inability of Europeans to respond to religious fanatics suggests the obvious result. The classical liberal belief that tolerance — not endorsement or respect — is both the minimum *and* the maximum society should strive for may finally gain a new hearing.

— Fred L. Smith, Jr.

**A use for the NEA** — Twelve cartoons of Muhammad published in a Danish magazine sent Muslim

fundamentalists into a frenzy. It is blasphemous to make any drawing of Muhammad, even if it is flattering; even though some of the drawings were almost illegible, and others didn't even depict the Prophet, the cartoonists responsible were forced into hiding. Very few Americans ever saw the

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*If we really want to fight terror in this country, we should stand up to those who terrorize artists as well.*

---

cartoons because the American media refused to reprint them. It was unclear if their refusal was based on fear or political correctness.

Over in Moscow, a brave gallery owner has agreed to stage an exhibit of the original drawings. No word if the art show will ever find its way to the U.S. Not long ago, a clamor was raised here in America over National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) funding of Robert Mapplethorpe's erotic photos and Andres Serrano's urine-soaked crucifix. Despite the previous insistence of the arts community that controversial art is important in a free society, I doubt there will ever be an offer to host an exhibit of the Muhammad cartoons here in the States. Perhaps gallery owners in the former Soviet Union are more sensitive to censorship of the arts, and have a stronger will to stand up against their oppressors.

If we really want to fight terror in this country, we should stand up to those who terrorize artists as well. Although I

#### News You May Have Missed

## Angry Muslims Call for "Death to Anger"

RANKOR, Angristan — Following widespread protests against irreverent cartoons of the prophet Muhammad published in a Danish newspaper, hundreds of thousands of angry, chanting Muslims took to the streets again here and throughout the Muslim world to protest something. "We are angry, angry, angry, and we swear by the beard of the Prophet that we will accept nothing less than the beheading of the people who are responsible for making us, like, totally angry!" shouted one protester. Asked what exactly he was protesting this time, the demonstrator said, "I forget. But whatever it is, it is making me so very, very angry, as you can see. And it has got

to stop! I mean it! Right this minute!"

Meanwhile, angry, chanting demonstrators in Kaput, the strife-torn capital of neighboring Pistoffistan, also took to the streets, shaking their fists and burning their own flag to protest what they called "1,300 years of being absolutely furious," a state of affairs that had, they said, left them "speechless with rage . . . well, okay, maybe not speechless."

And in East Rabid, a strife-torn area of the small Persian Gulf sultanate of Insult, angry, shouting Muslim demonstrators called for the severe punishment of angry, shouting Muslims everywhere for giving Islam and the prophet Muhammad a

bad image. "All this angry shouting is making us oh so very annoyed, because Islam is a religion of peace, and we Muslims are in fact practically always going to peaces, so we are just going to have to remain really, really angry until we stop getting so damn mad!" one protester shouted into the ear of whoever would listen. "According to the holy Koran," he added, "only Allah has the right to wax wroth on a daily basis, with no weekends off. The faithful should avoid waxing wroth as much as possible, because there's always the chance that Roth will wax the faithful, and that is such an old joke that I am right now feeling kind of angry about it." — Eric Kenning

am normally opposed to any NEA funding, I think that it might be appropriate to provide an NEA grant to any gallery owner brave enough to host an exhibit of these drawings. Since defense of liberty has always been a legitimate function of government, defense of ideas from an encroaching new Dark Age should be a legitimate government expense.

— Tim Slagle

**Congress' silk purse** — During the Capitol Hill budget debates, many spectators must have found the use of the term "earmarking" somewhat strange. What does it have to do with budgeting?

The term refers to the practice of specifying that a portion of a generalized spending bill will be used for a certain purpose — for example, a bridge in Alaska. In theory, this practice reduces the power of the bureaucracy and requires Congress to become more accountable for spending decisions. In practice, the degree of specificity makes it easier to create alliances to increase overall spending. I'll back your bridge, if you back my convention center — on and on.

When I grew up in rural Louisiana, "earmarking" was something we did to our pigs. There wasn't a lot of money to purchase feed, so a few weeks after a sow delivered her litter, we'd cut a pattern in the ears of the piglets and release them into the woods. As in many tribal cultures, the woods were the commons, used by all for common pasturage (pigs are omnivores, eating roots, nuts, and almost anything else). A few years later, we and our neighbors would get our hog-hunting dogs and we'd all traipse out to the woods to round up the pigs. The "earmarks" would allow them to be sorted out.

That's the logic behind linking the term "earmark" to spending policies on Capitol Hill: everyone tosses pork in, and retrieves it once it's fat up enough to take home.

— Fred L. Smith, Jr.

**Ain't that America?** — James Carville said on talk radio that most Americans describe themselves as "socially liberal and economically conservative." If that's true, why isn't the Libertarian Party doing better? After all, we're socially *very* liberal and economically *very* conservative. Perhaps Carville, a political adviser with a history of success, has bestowed upon us a persuasive slogan.

— Richard Kostelanetz

**The bell tolls still** — The year was 1898. Uncle

Sam wanted to fight a musical comedy war with Spain. Safe and short. A nobody-gets-hurt war. But in those years credit was not yet enthroned. You couldn't put the Army payroll on a credit card. So, first you got the money — *then* you fought the war.

Just like today, the government looked for pockets to pick. Ah — that newfangled instrument that jangled your nerves at suppertime — the telephone. Everyone who had one ought to pay a flat 3% tax, to cover the costs of the war. And so, the government legislated.

One hundred and eight years passed. The Spanish-American War now gathers dust in the annals of history; only one American in a hundred remembers the *Maine*. But we still pay the tax.

Now, after all those years, big outfits like Office Max and

Honeywell International are fighting the phone tax in court. And they've won some preliminary cases. The Congressional Budget Office worries that by 2007, the IRS will lose the tax revenue on toll long distance calls.

Until then, check your phone bill and note that 108-year-old 3% fee. Then go look up the Spanish-American War on the Internet. May as well know what you're paying for. — Ted Roberts

**A day in the**

**sun** — This January in Chicago, the thermometer climbed to almost 60 degrees. The sun was out, and

we had a beautiful, premature spring day. It was delightful to get outside in shirtsleeves and breathe some fresh, warm air before the snowstorms returned. On that day, I decided that hippies are completely insane.

While the rest of us were enjoying that rare January sunshine on our faces, the hippies were moping around, complaining about how humans have destroyed the planet. Although I don't believe the January warmth was engineered by humans, it was certainly an improvement over the miserable January days I've grown accustomed to. If it were truly a human achievement, it should have been applauded, and given an encore.

— Tim Slagle

**Meanwhile, back at Minitrue** — The Internet offers a wealth of information, much of it bogus. Thoroughly reliable resources, such as snopes.com, devoted to verifying or debunking urban legends, or thesmokinggun.com, dedicated to posting documents obtained from government and law enforcement sources, are scarce and valuable.

One site that's building up a reputation for reliability is wikipedia.com. It's an online encyclopedia, much larger than





the Encyclopaedia Britannica — and, according to the science journal *Nature*, equally accurate. That's surprising, because Wikipedia is open-source, meaning *anyone* can add new articles, or edit existing ones. This seeming weakness is actually a strength: anyone can enter false information, but anyone else can take it back out again.

Some articles, such as the one on Abraham Lincoln, provoke spirited discussions on the "neutrality" of the content. Others, such as the one on George W. Bush, prove so tempting to anonymous vandals that the volunteers who run the

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*For several days, Wikipedia had to block all Capitol Hill computers from editing because so many of the changes made by them were inaccurate or inappropriate.*

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site have to put them temporarily off-limits. Still, there are many other articles about many other subjects, including many other elected officials, open to all editors.

"All editors," of course, includes the paid staffers of those elected officials. Rep. Marty Meehan (D-Mass.) admitted to having his staff replace the biography in his Wikipedia entry with a new version, one that omitted (among other things) his broken term-limits pledge. Sen. Norm Coleman's (R-Minn.) staff took out references to his voting record. Sen. Tom Harkin's (D-Iowa) deleted a paragraph about combat missions in Vietnam that he'd made up. And the staffers didn't keep to their own bosses' pages, either: someone working off the Congressional computer network edited the entry on Sen. Tom Coburn (R-Okla.) to note that he had been voted the "most annoying Senator." For several days, Wikipedia volunteers had to block all Capitol Hill computers from editing because so many of the changes made by them were inaccurate or inappropriate.

In "Nineteen Eighty-four," Winston Smith spent his workdays at the Ministry of Truth altering historical records to match the Party's version of events. In trying to co-opt one of the Internet's few reliable resources, our elected officials have shown their resolve to do the same. — Andrew Ferguson

***The freedom to discriminate*** — In late January the state of Washington passed a gay-rights bill banning discrimination against homosexuals in employment, housing, and accommodations. It was an odd issue: virtually all public voices were for it, except some conservative Christian ministers. In a place like Seattle, which has the greatest concentration of gays in the Pacific Northwest, people could not imagine a principled reason for opposing the bill. I saw this at a public forum with state legislators. A woman stood up and asked one of the Republicans, a party leader, why he opposed it. He deflected the question by interpreting it as a query about why his party opposed it, and then said he couldn't speak for the party on that issue.

A libertarian would oppose it, I think, because a libertarian believes in the freedom of association. Freedom implies a

private right to discriminate. That doesn't mean the libertarian wants to discriminate, only that he thinks discrimination should not be criminalized. But that argument applies to all antidiscrimination law, and nobody wanted to extend it that far. Even the libertarians didn't make it — at least, not that I saw. Apart from a couple of suburban ministers chiefly concerned with sin, the opponents didn't say anything.

The bill passed the final chamber of the legislature when a Republican state senator from Seattle's suburbs changed his vote. The media praised him for voting his conscience, which maybe he was. About then the *Seattle Times* ran a news story about discrimination against gays. Seattle, Tacoma, and some other cities have had gay-rights ordinances for years — and it turns out there aren't many complaints. Even fewer cases have been won by complainants. The paper found one victory in Tacoma, involving two gay women who were denied a family membership at the YMCA. In Seattle, a city a good deal more liberal (and gay) than Tacoma, there was one victor under its longstanding gay-rights ordinance. He was one of a group of waiters who had been fired and replaced by young gay men. This waiter was a heterosexual man. He was awarded \$5,000.

— Bruce Ramsey

***The unhappy few*** — Stendhal famously said that he wrote for "the happy few." Meanwhile it's the unhappy few who have been causing most of the trouble since about the time he said it — nasty nationalists and militant militarists, Marxists, fascists, fundamentalists, fanatics of all stripes. These are people who aren't just unhappy, there are millions of those, but the much smaller minority of people who are incapable of being happy and who force others to be

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*That's why a personal incapacity for happiness so often translates into a personal obsession with power — and why politics is full of such people.*

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as incapable of it as they are. This is usually accomplished by imposing some kind of despotic moral or political surveillance state on everyone else and ruthlessly stamping out all signs that life is something that can sometimes be enjoyed. Which is why a personal incapacity for happiness so often translates into a personal obsession with power. And why politics is full of such people, as is religion, since these are the two fields where the lust for power and the abject worship of it (in the form of all-disposing dictators and Almighty God) are considered normal. So the best examples naturally come from politics when it turns into a kind of mad religion (Robespierre, Lenin, Hitler, Mao, Pol Pot), and religion when it turns into a kind of mad politics (Torquemada, the Taliban, the jihadists, and, closer to home and to farce, Pat Robertson). The unhappy few, incidentally, are almost always puritans in theory and (a little more sporadically) in practice. And it was Mencken who defined puritanism as

"the haunting fear that someone, somewhere, may be happy."  
— Eric Kenning

**Aiming for abstracts** — The Journal of Ayn Rand Studies (JARS) just completed its seventh year of publication. When the journal was first published, we knew we had our work cut out for us. We were the first interdisciplinary scholarly periodical ever established as a forum for the critical discussion of Ayn Rand's ideas. But one of the most important achievements of any academic journal is its ability to be added to the indices of established abstracting services. This is a way of gaining "acceptance" in the scholarly marketplace, of bolstering a journal's reputation as an organ of serious discussion and contributing to the idea that its subject is worthy of such discussion.

In its first few years of operation, JARS was able to add

over a dozen of these services in the social sciences and humanities. Coverage in such indices has facilitated the expansion of JARS citations, and, by consequence, Rand references, within the global marketplace of academic scholarship.

It has been an uphill battle to get JARS added to three of the most prestigious indices: the Arts & Humanities Citation Index (A&HCI), Current Contents/Arts & Humanities (CCA&H), and the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI). Some years ago, we approached those organizations (each of them a subsidiary of Thomson Scientific) with the requisite three consecutive issues in the hopes that they would add JARS to their lists of the world's leading journals. The first three-issue review failed; JARS was still too young to join the global ranks.

Another concern was expressed by some involved in classical liberal or libertarian scholarship: does SSCI operate

# Word Watch

by Stephen Cox

People who don't like this column — and there *are* people who don't like this column — complain about its haughty tone, its arrogant desire to instruct, its guilt-inducing emphasis on rules and logic. Who appointed you, these people ask, to be judge over us?

These complaints are wholly without merit. But in the spirit of toleration and benevolence, even to miserable whiners, I will devote this column not to rules, and especially not to logic, but to pleasure, guilty pleasure. What interests me today is the linguistic free-for-all, the open-all-night funhouse, the constant, ridiculous denial of common sense that makes our life as speaking creatures such an inexhaustible source of merriment.

So, to paraphrase the "Divine Comedy": Abandon All Thought, Ye Who Enter Here.

Thought is always the enemy of fun. One of Richard Nixon's amusing campaign slogans was "America Can't Stand Pat." He meant to say that America shouldn't stay in one place; America had to progress. Fine. But think (as apparently Nixon never really did): his *wife's* name was Pat. It's a silly pleasure, taken on the sly, but almost anyone will enjoy a snigger at Dick's expense.

Or his opponents'. Who was it in the Kennedy camp who called his great new push for harmony with our southern neighbors "La Alianza para el Progreso"? The phrase means, "The Alliance for ['para'] Progress." It also means, "The Alliance Stops ['Para'] Progress."

Napoleon's first wife was a lady from the West Indies. When she was asked where she came from, she said, "Je suis d'Inde," which means, "I'm from the Indies." But it sounds exactly like "Je suis dinde": "I am a turkey." (Experts on the French language doubt that this story is true, but who cares? It ought to be. Besides, we speak English here.)

But speaking of names, how much forethought would it take, if your last name were Hogg, not to name your daughter

"Ima"? However much that might be, it was too much for Governor James Hogg of Texas, who named his daughter that very thing. And his fellow Texans just can't leave it alone. One of the state's proud cultural institutions is the Ima Hogg Museum. Didn't they ever think of using just the last name?

Of course, many ridiculous expressions are the products of a *little* thought. A little thought, like a little learning, is a dangerous thing. Until recently there was an apartment house in my neighborhood called the "Cota Arms." Get it? Cota Arms: Coat of Arms. I believe it was owned by a man named Cota. It's possible that Mr. Cota's antic disposition was bequeathed to the owner of a building across the street — a three-story structure called the Hillcrest Towers. It's also possible that the builder of this "tower" was a student of philosophy who had automatically imbibed the relativism so characteristic of modern thinkers. Height, after all, is relative. Maybe someplace there's a one-story "tower."

I wouldn't change that name for anything. Nor would I change the name of Oblong, Ill. My family comes from a place near Oblong, and I'm reliably informed that "nobody knows why they call it by that funny name." I do know why Normal, Ill., is called what it's called. It was the seat of a "normal school," that is, of a teacher's college. But the great thing is the persistent legend that a down-home newspaper once ran the following headline: "Normal Man Weds Oblong Woman." I don't think anything like that happens in France or Russia — or their newspapers, either.

Neither do things like the phenomenon that anthropologist Louise Pound noticed in the 1920s, calling it "The Kraze for 'K'": Krazy Kat, Krispy Kreme, Ken's Kwikie Kleeners, and, not kwise so kute, the Invisible Empire of the Ku Klux Klan. Then there's the wonderful density of puns that certain American industries attract. I'm thinking right now of hair salons. You'd be disappointed, wouldn't you, if you walked by one of those places and found that it was *not* called "The Mane

according to a left-wing ideological bias? That was one of the points of a 2004 "Econ Journal Watch" essay by my friend and colleague Daniel B. Klein (with Eric Chiang). Klein found that of all the journals centering on classical liberal or libertarian scholarship, only "Critical Review" was indexed by SSCI. But, as Klein suggests, "Critical Review" publishes lots of material that is actually critical of classical liberalism; it is a core journal abstracted in "The Left Index."

Well, in retrospect, maybe that was one of the linchpins of the JARS strategy. Because JARS is a self-identified "non-partisan" scholarly periodical, because we have been willing to publish papers with both left- and right-wing perspectives on Rand, we too gained acceptance into the pages of "The Left Index" and even "Women's Studies International." I have no idea whether this helped us with the most recent rigorous Thomson Scientific review process, but JARS was

indeed finally selected for full coverage in A&HCI and CCA&H. Abstracts of relevant journal articles centered on the social sciences (economics, political science, psychology, etc.) will also be selectively included in SSCI. I'm delighted that JARS is finally among the journals selected for coverage in these important indices, whatever their alleged ideological biases.

— Chris Matthew Sciabarra

**Hot air in Europe** — Although the United States is often portrayed as an ecological villain for declining to sign the fabled Kyoto treaty, a British think tank reports that Britain and Sweden are the only countries in Europe that have met their commitment to cut greenhouse gas emissions. And Britain, despite placing restrictions on industry and cutting its rate of growth, is not even close to its 2012 Kyoto target.

France, Germany, and Greece haven't begun to reduce emissions, though they have some policies in place that theoretically are supposed to do the job. Ireland, Italy, and Spain haven't even adopted emissions-reduction policies.

Unfortunately, most European countries are unlikely to acknowledge, even as they violate its guidelines persistently, that the Kyoto treaty is a dud. But it is. As Patrick Michaels, Virginia's state climatologist, has written, meeting the Kyoto treaty's targets would require regressive and economically disastrous energy taxes. Even if all the targets are met, these draconian measures will reduce world temperature by only seven-tenths of a degree over 50 years.

European leaders probably know this, which may be why they have taken little action to reduce greenhouse gases. It would be nice if they came right out and said it.

— Alan W. Bock

**Reform the reformers** — On the Saturday Show (Jan. 21), NPR commentator John Ydstie, in a statement called "Lobbying Reform: Not Likely!", talked about the provisions of the various "reform" bills now being considered and noted that they weren't likely to work. Indeed, he noted that "short of public funding of election campaigns," nothing was likely to work.

Let me repeat — unless government controls the election process, corruption remains likely. To address a political scandal, the solution is . . . more politics! This is the brain-dead philosophy that led to McCain-Feingold and a host of other measures which have turned Congressional seats into tenured positions. Still, the reformers push on — if a bit of government intervention doesn't solve the problem, then go with more. If more government intervention doesn't work, take over the process entirely. Would-be reformers just can't grasp the idea that the most corrupting influence is government itself.

— Fred L. Smith, Jr.

**My subsidy, your subsidy** — When a challenge is made to the recipient of a subsidy, or the petitioner for one — "Why should you get a subsidy?" — the challenge is on the axis of fairness. "No special rules for you." The reply, almost always, is on the same axis: "Look at those people over there. They get a subsidy; I should have one too." This is the argument for subsidizing everything from export finance to light rail — and, in this case, biodiesel.

In my state an alliance of greens and farmers — not a

Thing," "The Hairport," "The Clip Joint," or "The Cut Above." Ah, sheer delight.

English seems to lend itself to strange effects. I've always thought it's charmingly ridiculous that in English we "drive" a car, as if we were shooing it down the road, like a horse or ox. But calling a supermarket the "Piggy Wiggly" or an RV emporium the "Pacific Home of Mobile World" is somewhat overdoing this poetic license. By the way, at Piggly Wiggly a "Smile Manager is here to do whatever it takes to make you happy."

Of course, merchants and advertisers know not what they do. But the English language is apparently so hard to nail down that even those masters of style and grace, American journalists, can never quite get the hang of it. You gotta love 'em all:

- The Fox News correspondent who was alarmed by the damage done to New York City's economy by the recent transit strike: "Scores of people stayed home."

- The pundits at the distinguished journal *Science* who selected "evolution" as "the breakthrough of 2005."

- The Yahoo headline writer who insisted that "Ex-EPA Chiefs Blame Bush on Climate Change." (Yes, that's our president — just another one of those monsters who are always crawling onto the beach whenever "something has happened, something very very bad" in the boiling seas just off Japan.)

It's worth a bet: in America, any earnest thought is likely to become a joke. In this context, of course, one naturally thinks of the inscription on Elvis's tomb: "He became a living legend in his own time." I don't know why the people who turn up at Graceland aren't all screaming with laughter. Maybe they are. A popular webpage, solemnly entitled "Evidence that Elvis Hoaxed His Own Death," observes that "the coffin weighed 900 pounds: Elvis is known to have been overweight at the time of his death . . . but not that much." Well, can you prove it? And can you prove you don't mean to be so funny?

"Brokeback Mountain" is an earnestly provocative film about a gay romance. How gratifying it is, therefore, to hear the radio ads invoking it in the warm, ripe tones associated with re-releases of "Dumbo" and "Snow White": "Brokeback Mountain!": the phenomenon that is connected with the heart of America!" I don't say that this is gratifying because of some special meaning that I believe it has, but because it is absolutely and completely meaningless, in some inexplicably American manner. Let me put it to you this way: it's a phenomenon that is connected with the heart of America.



usual alliance — is clamoring for subsidies to start an industry to produce diesel fuel from oilseeds. It is technically possible to do this, without a subsidy, for about double the market price of petroleum diesel. On the surface, the argument for subsidy hangs on replacing foreign oil and creating a new industry, both of them attractive propositions. But challenge the idea of subsidy, and the reply you get is that petroleum is subsidized, too. The biodiesel industry has to “level the playing field.”

This is asserted in a tone that suggests that if you disagree, maybe you work for Exxon. But poke it for particulars — what subsidy? — and you get the battleship argument. It is

only to protect the sources and flow of oil that the United States has a great Navy, and Army, and has occupied Iraq, and all of these military expenditures really are subsidies that ought to be included on the social income statement of petroleum. We pay for them in the federal income tax, but really we should pay for them at the gas station.

Hearing that, I think there is some truth to it, but how would you know how much? How much of the Navy is necessary to protect trade, and how much is it for oil specifically, and what would it mean to start allocating and charging costs

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*News You May Have Missed*

## Memoir Unfabricated, Author Confesses

NEW YORK — Just after author James Frey admitted that he had fabricated crucial elements of “A Million Little Pieces,” his best-selling memoir of drugs, crime, and jail time, and got scolded by former fan Oprah on national television for it, the publishing world was sent reeling by a new memoir scandal, though it had to take several expensive reeling lessons before it was able to complete the maneuver.

This time, 26-year-old writer Pliny the Elder has confessed that while his name is totally fake, everything else about his new memoir, “A Million Little Boring Details,” is accurate. The book, which chronicles his hopeless, lifelong addiction to memoir-writing, is numbingly truthful at every point, he now says, adding that his addiction prevented him from leading a normal memoirist’s life of crime, drugs, and getting out of the house, and the experience probably adversely affected his memory, leaving it intact. The result is a memoir that is, from a publishing standpoint, seriously unflawed. The following excerpts were made available to the cleaning lady.

*Chapter One:* One by one all my classmates in the second grade were not only expelled from school for engaging in behavior tending to lead to lucrative publishing contracts, they were given lengthy prison sentences, so eventually I was the only one left in the class, but I hardly noticed, because I was too busy expanding my “What I Did Last Summer” essay into a much longer essay titled “The Same Thing I Am Doing Right Now.”

*Chapter Two:* I remember once when I was about 13 my mom came into my room on a hot summer afternoon and said it was high time that we had incest, but I just told her to get lost — couldn’t she see I was busy writing something? It was at this moment that I realized a profound spiritual truth, which is that it’s hard to write a memoir when people keep interrupting you.

*Chapter Three:* I was already 16, and I hadn’t even robbed a bank yet. What kind of memoirist was I? So I talked my friend Joey into going in on a bank robbery with me. But the bank was closed, because it was Sunday. Some people never catch a break. Also Joey didn’t show up, because there was no Joey, not at that time. Joey came somewhat later. So I said to him, with a kind of weary sadness, “Joey, if you’re not careful, I’m going to have to do something that I’ll probably regret doing for the rest of my memoir. I’m going to have to put you in Chapter Three.” I hated doing that to Joey, because Joey always wanted to be in Chapter Six.

*Chapter Four:* It was about this time that I became seriously anorexic between meals.

*Chapter Five:* I looked and I looked, but Lily, the love of the first draft of my life, seemed to have vanished into thin air, though I could have sworn it was right here that I last saw her, here in the place where we had always been so happy together, Chapter Nine. This *isn’t* Chapter Nine? Oh. Sorry.

*Chapter Six:* I was going to go through absolute hell, but I guess I took

a wrong turn somewhere and ended up spending the afternoon at the mall instead.

*Chapter Seven:* It was a crazy time in my life. I wasn’t taking drugs, but I was taking notes, notes of all kinds, which I bought from note-dealers on street corners in the most dangerous part of town, the Book Publishing District. They were powerful notes, but as luck would have it, they were notes to a different chapter, in somebody else’s memoir, a memoir about a wise talking horse. So I moved on, toward Chapter Eight, the chapter in which the illusions fall away, the excuses end, and the truth blazes forth, culminating in what can only be called redemption, or, as some might put it, a high-six-figure advance.

*Chapter Nine:* After my release from Tabula Rasa, the renowned New Mexico facility for recovering memoir-writers, I tried to stop trying to remember everything I had been trying to forget, or was it everything I had been trying to remember? I forget. Anyway, I started avoiding my old haunts: memoir, accessory and appliance shops, stenographer bars, used-memoir lots. But it was no use. I couldn’t get the monkey off my back. The monkey finally got off at 14th Street to transfer to the Number 6 uptown local, and it was then that I realized that I was a victim, yes, but a survivor among victims, and a victim among survivors, and I gave up writing memoirs, wrote a memoir about it, and that’s how I became rich and famous and lived happily ever after, to the best of my recollection. — Eric Kenning

# America Won, Americans Lost

by Robert Higgs

War kills the innocent, strengthens the state, supports dictatorships, and stirs up hatred. How can anyone be considered a winner?

General Thomas Power, commander in chief of the Strategic Air Command from 1957 to 1964 and Director of the Joint Strategic Target Planning Staff from 1960 to 1964, ranked near the top of the U.S. Armed Forces waging the Cold War. An ardent warrior, he did not subscribe to the Aristotelian maxim of moderation in all things. In 1960, while being briefed on counterforce strategy, he reacted petulantly to the idea of exercising restraint in the conduct of nuclear war: "Restraint!" he retorted. "Why are you so concerned with saving *their* lives? The whole idea is to *kill* the bastards. . . . Look. At the end of the war, if there are two Americans and one Russian, we win!"<sup>1</sup> Everyone who knew Power seems to have thought that he was crazy.

Even the man he replaced as SAC commander, General Curtis LeMay, regarded him as unstable — and everybody knew that LeMay himself was, as "Dr. Strangelove's" Group Captain Lionel Mandrake would have put it, "as mad as a bloody March hare." After LeMay left his command at SAC, he became Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force in 1957 and Chief of Staff in 1961. He is most often remembered as a tireless advocate of an all-out, nuclear first strike on the Soviet Union and its allies, and as the most likely inspiration for General Buck Turgidson in "Strangelove." Either Power or LeMay might have served as a model for the "Strangelove" character General Jack D. Ripper, whose own nuclear first strike on the Ruskies came straight out of the LeMay-Power playbook.

It is chilling to recall that such men once held — and may still hold — the fate of the world in their hot hands. In

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Power's day, heaven be thanked, the civilian leadership had slightly more sense than the military leadership, but in more recent times, that relationship seems to have been reversed, and now men such as Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, and their zealous, bloodthirsty subordinates vividly attest to F.A. Hayek's observation that "the worst get on top."

## Winning

Whatever else one might say about our glorious leaders, it must be admitted that they have had, just as the current gang claims to have, a dedication to "winning" the wars they set out to fight. President George W. Bush characteristically declared on January 11 that he wants to bring the troops home from Iraq, but "I don't want them to come home without achieving the victory."<sup>2</sup> Indeed, winning a war strikes most people as a splendid idea until they stop to think about it.

Given an option to fight and win a war a la Thomas Power, however, with just two Americans and one Russian (Iraqi, Iranian, Chinese, or other foreign devil du jour) left alive at the end, sane people recoil. Such "winning" seems all too clearly absurd. As we back away from this *reductio ad absurdum* to consider less extreme conceptions of "winning the war," a great deal of the senselessness continues to cling

to the notion as long as we insist on an honest account of what actual war and actual winning involve.

The major reason for people's confusion on this account probably pertains to their reification or anthropomorphization of the collectives — whether they be clans, tribes, nation-states, or coalitions of such groups — whose violent conflict defines the war. Lost in the fog of war-related thought is the concrete, unique, individual person. Hardly anyone seems capable of talking about war except by linguistically marshalling such collectivistic globs as “we,” “us,”

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*“Restraint!” Power retorted. “Why are you so concerned with saving their lives? The whole idea is to kill the bastards.”*

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and “our,” in opposition to “they,” “them,” and “their.” These flights of fight-fancy always pit our glob against their glob, with ours invariably prettied up as the good against the bad, the free men against the enslavers, the believers against the infidels, and so forth — on one side God's chosen, on the other side the demons of hell.<sup>3</sup>

Of course, which is which depends entirely on the side that people happen to find themselves on, usually as a result of some morally irrelevant contingency, such as birthplace, family migration, or a line that distant diplomats once drew on a map.<sup>4</sup> More than 50 years ago, sociologist George A. Lundberg observed that despite “the cavalier fashion in which ‘statesmen’ revise boundaries, abolish existing nations, and establish new ones, . . . the demarcations thus arrived at thereupon become sacred boundaries, the violation of which constitutes ‘aggression,’ an infringement on people's ‘freedom.’”<sup>5</sup> It's almost as if human beings clamored to slay one another on behalf of little more than historical accidents and persistent myths. French philosopher Ernest Renan aptly characterized a nation as “a group of people united by a mistaken view about the past and a hatred of their neighbors.”<sup>6</sup>

A widespread inclination to think in terms of the group, rather than the distinct individuals who compose it, plays directly into the hands of violent, power-hungry leaders. Without that popular inclination, the leaders' capacity to wreak destruction would be reduced nearly to the vanishing point, but with it, the sky's the limit — or maybe it's not the limit, now that space-based weapons are all the rage in the military-industrial-congressional complex. Nothing promotes the sacrifice of the individual to the alleged “greater good of the whole” more than war does. On this ground, government leaders successfully levy confiscatory taxes, impose harsh regulations, seize private property, and even enslave their own country's citizens to serve as soldiers, to kill or be killed in hideous ways.

Sometimes, as in the aftermath of World War I, people have the wit to recognize, with the benefit of hindsight, that

the alleged “greater good” for which so many individuals' lives have been sacrificed and so many individuals' wealth and well-being have been squandered actually consists of little more than their leaders' foolishness and vanity. On other occasions, however, people never come to that realization, preferring to live with a mythical justification of their losses. Even now, after 60 years have passed in which people have had ample opportunity to see through the official lies and cover-ups, the myth of World War II as “the good war” (in this country) or “the Great Patriotic War” (in Russia) remains robust.

Once memories of the War Between the States had faded, the mythologization of war came more easily to Americans because all our wars from the Spanish-American War on down to the current wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have been fought on other people's soil. No one can recall in sorrow and bitterness the wartime devastation of Philadelphia or Chicago because it never happened — devastation is what Americans dispense to Tokyo or Dresden or Fallujah. In an immensely important sense, our wars have long seemed to be, in their worst aspect, somebody else's problem, something that happens “over there.”

If Ambrose Bierce could observe a century ago that “war is God's way of teaching Americans geography,”<sup>7</sup> one shudders to imagine what he might say today. Guadalcanal, Tarawa, Saipan, Peleliu, Iwo Jima, Okinawa — in 1940, probably not one American in a hundred had ever heard of these remote places where tens of thousands of young American men, and far more Japanese, would soon lose their lives. Our good fortune in this regard has been real and important, but it ought not to blind us to the great variety of genuine losses that we have sustained notwithstanding our capacity to

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*Winning a war strikes most people as a splendid idea until they stop to think about it.*

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make all our wars since 1865 — apart from the sporadic clashes between whites and Indians — take the form of “foreign wars.”

For one thing, many Americans have gone “over there” and done some definite dirty work — let's be honest, war is always dirty work, no matter how hyped up we might get about its seeming necessity. World War II, the so-called good war, might have been the dirtiest work of all. American forces abroad slaughtered not only multitudes of enemy soldiers but also hundreds of thousands (maybe more) of non-combatants — men, women, and children — most notably in the terror bombing of German and Japanese cities.

Curtis LeMay had a hand in this evil work, as commander of the B-29 forces that laid waste to scores of Japanese cities. Speaking of his flyers' devastation of Tokyo with incendiary bombs, LeMay declared: “We knew we were going to kill a lot of women and kids when we burned that



town. Had to be done."<sup>8</sup> Oh, did it really? Brigadier General Bonner Fellers, an aide to General Douglas MacArthur, called the March 10, 1945, raid on Tokyo "one of the most ruthless and barbaric killings of noncombatants in all history."<sup>9</sup> As a result of the U.S. air attacks on Japanese cities, by the end of July 1945, "civilian casualties exceeded 800,000, including 300,000 dead," and more than 8 million people had been left homeless.<sup>10</sup> Unsated by this orgy of savagery, the Americans went on, completely unnecessarily, to annihilate scores of thousands of the hapless residents of Hiroshima and Nagasaki with atomic bombs.

These events were not just losses for Germans and Japanese. The men who carried out these barbarous acts also sacrificed their decency and a vital part of their humanity. War brings many of its participants to that tragic end. Only a deranged man can live complacently with the knowledge that he has committed such heinous acts. In greater or lesser degree, however, every war encompasses an enormous mass of such indecencies. Soldiers may excuse themselves on the ground that they are "just following orders" or, if they are especially naive, that they are acting heroically in defense of all that is good and great about their own country. Kept in combat long enough, however, nearly everyone who is not a natural-born killer becomes either psychologically disabled or absolutely cynical in his single-minded quest to survive.

Government leaders and their blindly nationalistic followers invariably tolerate and even glorify many of the bestialities perpetrated during warfare and elevate the perpetrators to the status of heroes, but these ignoble rituals of apotheosis ring hollow when placed alongside the raw realities, not only of the conduct of warfare but of its typical outcome. A half century ago, looking back on 15 years of warfare and its aftermath, William Henry Chamberlin wrote, "It was absurd to believe that barbarous means would lead to civilized ends."<sup>11</sup> It is no less absurd today.

In the past century, in the United States, the two world wars required the greatest degree of mobilization, and therefore they entailed the heaviest losses for individuals both on the battlefield and on the home front, notwithstanding that this country is said to have "won" both wars.

## World War I

Although American casualties in the Great War were very few in comparison with those of the major belligerents, their seriousness must have loomed a great deal larger to each of the 116,516 men who died as a result of their service, and to their wives and sweethearts, mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, among others. In addition, 204,002 men sustained nonmortal wounds, and an undetermined number had their minds rearranged for the worse — "shell shock" was the common name for battle-induced psychic derangements in that war.<sup>12</sup> All these individuals, vaguely denominated "casualties" in military parlance, paid the heaviest price, but many other Americans — in some respects, all others — also bore substantial costs.

World War I changed the character of the American political economy for the worse in ways too numerous to list completely here. Before the war, federal revenues had never exceeded \$762 million in a fiscal year; during the 1920s they

were never less than \$3,640 million. Before the war, federal expenditures had exceeded \$747 million in a fiscal year only twice, in 1864 and 1865; during the 1920s they were never less than \$2,857 million. Although part of the increase in the level of fiscal activities reflected price inflation, itself the product of the government's war finance, the bulk of it was real. The public debt ballooned from slightly more than \$1 billion before the war to more than \$25 billion at its end. Income-tax rates were pushed up enormously during the

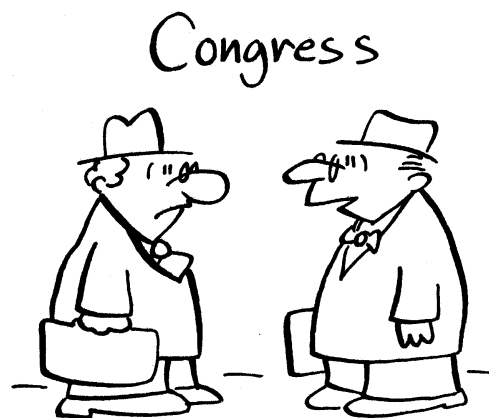
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*WWI's consequences in fostering freedom-quashing, prosperity-destroying federal interventions in the economy have no equal in U.S. history.*

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war, and although they were reduced somewhat in the 1920s, they never again returned to the prewar level or even close to it.<sup>13</sup>

Many aspects of the "wartime socialism" left enduring legacies. The War Food Administration became the model for the New Deal's agriculture program, which, despite countless changes to and fro over the subsequent decades, continues to plague consumers and taxpayers today. The Railway Administration gave way to a near-nationalization of the railroad industry in 1920. The Shipping Board inaugurated the government's regulation of shipping rates and routes and its direct participation in the ocean shipping industry, which have continued ever since 1916. After the war, the War Finance Corporation continued to operate until 1925, came back to life as the Reconstruction Finance Corporation in 1932, and transmogrified into the Small Business Administration in 1953, misallocating resources by means of its extensions of subsidized credit and other interventions at every step of the way.



"You're quitting to rejoin the private sector? Good heavens, man . . . you're *accountable* out there!"

The War Industries Board roared back to life in 1933 as the disastrous National Recovery Administration, which unsettled the entire economy at the depths of the Great Depression with a muddleheaded program to cartelize every industry in the country, thereby making a mighty contribution to prolonging the depression. Although the Supreme Court struck down this loony experiment in 1935, the NRA in effect then fragmented into a variety of interventionist components, such as the National Labor Relations Board, that persisted for decades, some of them permanently.

Space does not permit me to continue this doleful recitation. Suffice it to say that the war's consequences in fostering freedom-quashing, prosperity-destroying federal interventions in the economy have no equal in U.S. history. People typically think that this sort of government policy began for the most part in the 1930s, but almost everything the New Dealers did along these lines amounted to a revival of some wartime precedent.

The war's constitutional legacies also took big bites out of American liberties. In virtually every case, the Court upheld the extraordinary powers that the government had exercised during the war. Highly significant was the blessing the Court gave to military conscription. Chief Justice Edward White could not take seriously the idea that the draft constituted involuntary servitude and was therefore proscribed by the 13th Amendment. He declared that the Court was "unable to conceive upon what theory the exaction by government from the citizen of the performance of his supreme and noble duty of contributing to the defense of the rights and honor of the nation as the result of a war declared by the great representative body of the people can be said to be the imposition of involuntary servitude."<sup>14</sup>

While the Court was smashing individual liberty under the iron heel of "the great representative body of the people" — the same gang that Mark Twain had described more accurately as "America's only native criminal class" — the justices did not hesitate to give their approval to the government's rampant wartime assaults on the freedoms of

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*Worse than any economic control was the forced relocation of more than 110,000 persons of Japanese ancestry, who were herded at gunpoint into camps surrounded by barbed wire and guarded by armed troops.*

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speech, press, and assembly, many of these outrages being the products of the Espionage Act (1917) and its notorious amendment, the Sedition Act (1918). The justices also validated the government's wartime takeovers of the railroads, telephone and telegraph lines, and oceanic cables. They sustained wartime rent controls. Everything, so far as the Court was concerned, was fair game. Said the chief justice, "[T]he complete and undivided character of the war power of the United States is not disputable."<sup>15</sup>

In later times, Franklin D. Roosevelt and other presidents would boldly seek, gain, and exercise quasi-wartime powers triggered solely by their declaration of a national emergency, even when the country was not at war, thereby cloaking their crimes in a mantle of pseudo-legal legitimacy. Owing to the consolidation of the various war-spawned assaults on liberty, now codified in the National Emergencies Act (1976) and the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (1977), nearly all economic liberties in this country exist at the sufferance of the president. If he decides to take over the economy, he possesses ample statutory power to do so.

Perhaps equally disastrous in their implications for the future were the Great War's ideological legacies. Because the wartime economic management schemes did not have much time to operate during the short U.S. engagement as an active belligerent, they did not have time to reveal how badly they were working. When the war ended, their managers, not surprisingly, announced that the programs had been splendid successes, critically important in equipping the Allies to defeat the Hun. Bernard M. Baruch, the chairman of the War Industries Board and a wealthy gray eminence for many Democratic politicians, did much to promote this myth and incorporate it into received wisdom.

Hordes of businessmen who had played roles in the government's wartime economic planning emerged from the experience with, as a contemporary writer described it, "a sort of intellectual contempt [for] the huge hit-and-miss confusion of peace-time industry. . . . [and with] dreams of an ordered economic world."<sup>16</sup> In other words, they came away from the war with a bad case of what Hayek famously called "the fatal conceit," the fallacious idea that central planners can produce a better social outcome than the free market. These same misguided men would reappear in later crises to preside over additional assaults on liberty.

## World War II

The Big One took a far greater human toll on Americans than had the previous world war. The 405,399 deaths loomed largest, for the deceased and for all those who cared about them as individuals. The seriously wounded amounted to 670,846, many of them suffering total disability for life.<sup>17</sup>

Approximately 25–30% of the casualties were psychological cases — victims of "combat fatigue," as it was dubbed this time around. In the fighting on Okinawa, for example, American mental casualties accumulated to 26,221 out of the total (65,641) dead and wounded.<sup>18</sup> In the entire war, more than a million men "suffered psychiatric symptoms serious enough to debilitate them for some period,"<sup>19</sup> and "by V-J Day, 504,000 Americans soldiers, enough for 50 divisions, had been lost to emotional collapse."<sup>20</sup> Some went raving mad for life. Others, seemingly having gone back to normal, endured mental tics and phobias for the rest of their lives, often treating their conditions with copious doses of alcohol or narcotics.

Some 75,000 men were listed as missing in action. Most of them, says historian Michael Adams, "had been blown into vapor."<sup>21</sup>

So repulsive were the sights, sounds, and smells of actual combat that the government heavily censored what the folks

at home were permitted to see or hear. If many of the soldiers, sailors, and airmen ultimately came home seeming fairly normal, chances are that they were among the great majority who, though serving in the armed forces, never got very close to harm's way or stayed there for long — laborers, clerks, technicians, mechanics, trainers, supply troops, and millions of others who constituted the big "tail" behind the relatively small fighting "tooth."

A minority of the men, most prominently the infantrymen and in a different way the bomber crews over Europe, bore the brunt of the sustained horror and paid the most

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*Thanks to the various war-spawned assaults on liberty, if the president decides to take over the economy, he possesses ample statutory power to do so.*

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awful price. Recognizing their position as sacrificial lambs, condemned to remain at terrible risk until they were killed or seriously wounded, or the war ended, the infantrymen came to despise their numerous comrades who stayed safely behind the lines as well as the people who remained back home in a regular job.

On the home front, with World War I already in the books, the men who ran the political economy during World War II could not do much that was genuinely original, but they did almost everything on a vastly greater scale. The Wilson administration had built up military and naval forces of some 4 million men, including 2.7 million draftees, by the end of 1918. Roosevelt and his lieutenants commanded more than 12 million in 1945, and during the course of the war they drafted some 10 million of the 16 million who served at some time. In prosecuting the war, the government spent approximately ten times more (in dollars of roughly equivalent purchasing power) than it had spent on World War I, and it imposed much more comprehensive and longer-lasting economic controls.<sup>22</sup> Federal outlays increased from \$9.5 billion in fiscal year 1940 to \$92.7 billion in fiscal year 1945, at which time those outlays amounted to almost 44% of officially measured GNP. To get the wherewithal for this huge gush of spending, the government proceeded, as it had during 1917 and 1918, to impose new taxes, to increase the rates of existing taxes, and to lower the income thresholds above which people were required to pay income taxes. Annual excise-tax revenue more than trebled between 1940 and 1945. Employment-tax revenue more than doubled. The major sources of increased revenue, however, were individual and corporate income taxes. The latter zoomed from \$1 billion in 1940 to \$16.4 billion in 1945 (the greater part of that sum representing an "excess-profits" tax), while individual income taxes jumped from \$1.1 billion to more than \$18.4 billion.

Before the war, fewer than 15 million individuals had to file an income-tax return; in 1945, approximately 50 million

had to do so. And not only did most income earners have to pay; they also had to pay at much higher rates: the bottom bracket rose from 4.4% on income in excess of \$4,000 in 1940 to 23% on income in excess of \$2,000 in 1945. The top rate became virtually confiscatory: 94% on income in excess of \$200,000. In one mighty wartime push, the government had completed the transformation of the income tax from a "class tax" to a "mass tax," which it would remain ever afterward. Moreover, payroll withholding of income taxes, which the government imposed midway through the war, also remained an essential component of the great federal revenue-reaping machine. Notwithstanding the stupendous increase in taxation, the government's revenues amounted to less than half its outlays, and it had to borrow the rest. As a result, the national debt swelled from \$54 billion in 1940 to \$260 billion in 1945.

Entire volumes would be required just to summarize all the economic controls the government imposed: price, wage, and rent controls; materials allocations; shutdown orders, some of which applied to entire industries (e.g., civilian automobile production, gold mining); employment controls; allocations of transportation services; rationing of many consumer goods (e.g., shoes, clothing, meats, fats, canned goods, gasoline, tires); consumer credit controls; and countless others.

Vastly more outrageous than any economic control was the forced relocation of more than 110,000 persons of Japanese ancestry, two-thirds of them U.S. citizens, who were herded at gunpoint from their homes in the coastal regions of California, Oregon, and Washington into camps in desolate areas of the West, surrounded by barbed wire and guarded by armed troops. Although not one of these people received due process

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*Business leaders took from World War II an appreciation that government could provide a bottomless reservoir of subsidies, cozy deals, and other benefits.*

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of law, the Supreme Court, dominated at that time by justices who saw no limits to FDR's war powers, could find nothing unconstitutional in the government's actions.

Nor could they bring themselves to strike down any of the government's arbitrary and capricious economic regulations. Of course, with the precedent of World War I decisions in their back pockets, the justices had no interest in hearing constitutional challenges to military conscription. This judicial stance was more than convenient for the government, because, as Justice Hugo Black wrote in a 1942 decision, employing the logic that would guide the Court throughout the war, "Congress can draft men for battle service. Its power to draft business organization to support the fighting men who risk their lives can be no less."<sup>23</sup> As presidential powers rose to unprecedented heights, Roosevelt's appointees on the Court only smiled approvingly.

Perhaps even more consequential than the war's constitutional legacies were its effects on the country's dominant ideology. The Big One produced a prominent move toward acquiescence in, and often demand for, collectivism, as World War I had done, only more so. Not only did the masses now look more expectantly to the federal government for salvation from life's troubles large and small, but

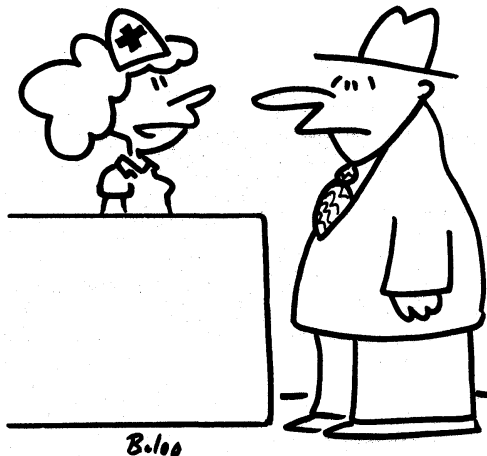
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*Since 1789, the only government on earth that has had the power to crush the American people's liberties across the board has been the government of the United States.*

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the leadership of the business class also came finally to make a complete peace with the government it had long seen as a nuisance and a menace.

Although the war had brought countless regulations and demands for reports in octuplicate to the government's control agencies, it had also brought a deluge of government contracts, from whose fulfillment the typical contractor had earned extraordinary profits with little or no risk. Thousands of leading businessmen had served in the government as dollar-a-year men. From this experience they took away not so much an appreciation of the ponderous irrationalities of government bureaucratic action as an appreciation that government could provide a bottomless reservoir of subsidies, cozy deals, and other benefits. The experience, wrote Calvin Hoover, "conditioned them to accept a degree of governmental intervention and control after the war which they had deeply resented prior to it."<sup>24</sup> In short, the war had broken them to the yoke, either coercing them or co-opting them to comply with the government's schemes — indeed, holding out the prospect that they might have a hand in guiding those schemes, if they behaved themselves.



"The doctor isn't seeing any more patients this year — he's in too high a tax bracket."

Eventually, the old business-class hostility toward government faded into a pale semblance of its former self. As Herbert Stein observed in the 1980s, after having observed the process at close quarters for nearly half a century, businessmen "had learned to live with and accept most of the regulations [they] had strenuously opposed in the New Deal." Disturbed only by new and unfamiliar regulations, "they regard the regulations they are used to as being freedom."<sup>25</sup>

### War Is the Mother of Tyranny

Stein's comment, which might aptly be applied far more generally, captures the essence of how the American people transformed their society from one in which, circa 1910, people enjoyed a great many freedoms to one in which, circa 1950, they had lost many of their former freedoms, perhaps irretrievably. Nothing propelled that process more powerfully than the two world wars — along with the New Deal, of course, but that crisis response itself involved little more than the revitalization, expansion, and elaboration of measures first taken during World War I, and therefore it must be understood as causally linked to the nation's participation in that war. Whenever the government went to war, whether the war was real or metaphorical, it necessarily went to war against the liberties of its own citizens.

Of course, it invariably justified these assaults on liberty by characterizing them as necessary, merely temporary means of preserving the people's liberties in the longer run — in General George C. Marshall's words, "sacrifices today in order that we may enjoy security and peace tomorrow."<sup>26</sup> That claim was either a mistake or a lie, because the U.S. government did not need to go to war, not even in the world wars, in order to preserve its people's essential liberties and way of life: neither Kaiser Wilhelm's forces nor Hitler's — and certainly not Japan's — had the capacity to deprive Americans of their liberties, "take over the country," "destroy our way of life," or do anything of the sort. This country has always contained persecuted minorities, and it still does; but since 1789, the only government on earth that has had the power to crush the American people's liberties across the board has been the government of the United States.

U.S. participation in World War I was the classic instance of a war whipped up by self-interested elites and carried into effect by a megalomaniacal president. As Walter Karp and other historians have shown, the upper-crust, Anglophile, northeastern movers and shakers — leading figures in what Murray Rothbard dubbed the Morgan ambit — maneuvered the psychically twisted, wannabe world saver Woodrow Wilson into seeking U.S. entry into the war.<sup>27</sup> Wilson, in turn, on completely spurious grounds, stampeded the overwhelmingly opposed populace into the war against its better judgment. Once war had been declared, the government used a combination of relentless propaganda and Draconian coercive measures to beat down active opponents and to stir up a generalized frenzy of chauvinism — One Hundred Percent Americanism, as its devotees called it.

Within a few years, most people came back to their senses, but by then the harm had been done. U.S. participa-

tion in the war had brought about many inauspicious, irreversible, politico-economic developments within the United States, as I've already indicated. More important, it had contributed decisively to the creation of a worldwide complex of interrelated ethnic, political, and economic disequilibria whose resolution would entail many of the great horrors of the following century, including World War II, communism's geopolitical triumphs, the Cold War, and endless troubles in the Middle East.<sup>28</sup> So obvious and poisonous were the war's fruits that soon after it ended, most Americans vowed never to take part in such an idiotic and destructive orgy again. Unfortunately, within a generation, they permitted themselves to be lured into an even more horrific charnel house.

Roosevelt idolaters and the jingoes of all parties have long maintained, of course, that the United States went to war altruistically to save the Jews of Europe from the monster Hitler and to stop Japan's horrible aggression in east Asia, especially in China. A fair reading of the evidence will not support either claim.

As for the European Jews, the U.S. government did not go to war to save them; once in the war, it did not conduct its military operations in a manner designed to save them; and, most importantly, it did not save them. Ultimately, some 80% of them were killed.<sup>29</sup>

The U.S. government can claim some credit for stopping Japan's aggression against the Chinese, of course, owing to its defeat and occupation of Japan, even though the same result might well have been achieved by peaceful means — "in the year before Pearl Harbor the Japanese were willing to abandon their expansionist program if they could be provided some face-saving formula, but this the United States persistently refused to grant."<sup>30</sup> In any event, however, one must bear in mind what came next. With Japan no longer acting as a powerful counterforce to the Chinese and Russian communists in east Asia, the North Koreans and the Chinese soon fell victim to communist totalitarianism — a far worse fate than integration into Japan's Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere would have been.

With regard to the idea that Japan launched an unprovoked "sneak attack" on the United States and thereby "started the war," I can only say that anyone who believes this simplistic contention needs to learn more about the Roosevelt administration's actions in the years leading up to the Japanese attack. Long before the bombs and torpedoes rained down on the Pacific fleet conveniently concentrated at Pearl Harbor, the United States had become an active, if undeclared, belligerent against Germany, cooperating closely with and providing enormous quantities of vital supplies to the British, the French (until late June 1940), and the Soviets (after late June 1941).

Moreover, the Roosevelt administration had imposed a series of increasingly stringent sanctions on Japan, culminating in joint American-British-Dutch economic embargoes that placed a stranglehold on the Japanese economy. Finally, the U.S. government presented an unnecessary and completely unacceptable ultimatum that "called for complete Japanese withdrawal from China and Indochina, for Japan to support only the Nationalist government of China, with

which it had been in conflict for four years, and to interpret its pledges under the Tripartite [Germany, Italy, and Japan] Pact and the [Cordell] Hull program so that Japan would be

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*No one can recall in sorrow and bitterness the wartime devastation of Philadelphia or Chicago because it never happened — devastation is what Americans dispense to Tokyo or Dresden or Fallujah.*

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bound to peace in the Pacific and to noninterference in Europe, while the United States should be free to intervene in Europe."<sup>31</sup>

By these measures, among many others, the U.S. government provoked (and, having broken the Japanese diplomatic and naval codes, knew full well that it was provoking) the desperate Japanese to attack U.S.-controlled islands in the Pacific as well as the Asian colonies of Roosevelt's European co-conspirators in these hostile actions.<sup>32</sup>

Whether the U.S. government's publicly pronounced rationales for entering the wars be viewed as self-serving falsehoods or as mere mistakes, however, the ultimate outcome of waging the wars was the same. As William Graham Sumner wisely wrote, "It is not possible to experiment with a society and just drop the experiment whenever we choose. The experiment enters into the life of the society and never can be got out again."<sup>33</sup> Thus, although the wars eventually ended, society never reverted fully to the relatively freer status quo antebellum.

Every year, on Veterans Day, orators declare that our leaders have gone to war to preserve our freedoms and that they have done so with glorious success, but the truth is just the opposite. In ways big and small, crude and subtle, direct and indirect, war — the quintessential government activity — has been the mother's milk for the nourishment of a growing tyranny in this country. It remains so today. □

#### NOTES

1. Power as quoted in Fred Kaplan, "The Wizards of Armageddon" (Stanford University Press, [1983] 1991), p. 246.

2. Deb Reichmann, "Bush Open to Hearings on Domestic Spying," Associated Press, Jan. 11, 2006, at <http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20060111/apongoprwh/bush>.

3. Vice President Henry A. Wallace, characterizing World War II as "a fight between a free world and a slave world," declared: "We shall cleanse the plague spot of Europe, which is Hitler's Germany, and with it the hellhole of Asia — Japan. No compromise with Satan is possible." One ought to bear in mind, however, that Wallace also said, "The object of this war is to make sure that everybody in the world has the privilege of drinking a quart of milk a day." Wallace as quoted in William Henry Chamberlin, "The Bankruptcy of a Policy," in "Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace: A Critical Examination of the Foreign Policy of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Its Aftermath," ed. Harry Elmer Barnes (Caldwell, Id.: Caxton Printers, 1953), pp. 498–99.

*continued on page 28*



# Shooting Elephants

*by Bruce Ramsey*

War may keep the state healthy, but that doesn't mean we can dispense with it.

Who won America's wars? The libertarian answer is that the state won them because, as Randolph Bourne said in World War I, "War is the health of the state." War made the state big. That is a piece of the answer that libertarians like to stress, and they should. But Bourne's answer is part of a larger picture.

America would not have been without war. War secured its independence from Britain and extended its territory to the Mississippi. Thomas Jefferson took advantage of another war, which he kept the United States out of, to buy the Louisiana Purchase from France. War with Mexico brought Texas, California, and the Southwest. Under the slogan, "54-40 or fight," presidential candidate James K. Polk threatened war with Britain in order to press a claim to the Pacific Northwest. And much of the country was made available for settlement by warring with Indian tribes.

From the perspective of nations, which is where this discussion mostly starts and ends, America won all its important wars. It was America that wrote the post-World War II constitution for Japan, and not Japan that wrote one for America. America won bases in Germany, Italy, and Japan, and not vice versa. America won a veto in the U.N. Security Council, and became a superpower, and the losers of World War II did not. America dethroned gold as the world's money and replaced it with the dollar, which it alone can print. Of all the sovereign states, only America emerged from World War I and World War II stronger than when it went in.

Let's not pretend America didn't win its most important wars. In the simplest and most obvious sense, it won them,

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and in the war that it had with itself, the side favoring union won.

Now look through an individualist lens. The people who died in wars lost. Also people who had their homes destroyed, workplaces wrecked, family members killed. But set them aside, and focus on deaths. The "Infoplease Almanac" lists America's battle deaths, in all wars, at 651,008, and non-battle war deaths at 539,254. All those individuals lost. Then consider the foreign dead from U.S. bullets and bombs. Some 2,000 American soldiers have died in battle in Iraq, but a civilian British study estimated total war-related deaths at 100,000 on the Iraqi side. The study used an expansive definition of war-related deaths, so the total is arguable. The U.S. estimate is closer to 30,000. In any case, many more foreigners have died in our wars than Americans, and they were losers, too.

Now consider economics. War depreciates currencies. That helps borrowers, including the #1 borrower during war, the government. It hurts savers. Buyers of U.S. war bonds came out of World War I all right because they were repayable in gold dollars. After World War II they were not, and they came out behind. Holders of Confederate paper money and bonds came out with nothing.

By wrecking things, war raises the value of the

unwrecked. War also raises hugely the demand for munitions, fuel, transport, and many other things, stimulating business. World War I pulled millions of men off the farm in Europe, and farm output there fell. Appetites remained, and as a result, the price of wheat in the United States rose tremendously, reaching \$2.58 per bushel in 1919, the year after the war ended. That was in *gold dollars*, the equivalent of almost \$25 per bushel today, about six times the current price.

War causes more ore to be mined, oil drilled, trees cut down, factories raised up. There is waste in it, and also profit. War is the reason a road was built to Alaska, and it is

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*Let's not pretend America didn't win its most important wars.*

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a useful road still. War stimulates invention. War created the atom bomb — and nuclear power. War brought us the computer, whose first use was the calculation of artillery trajectories. War caused the Germans to build the first jet aircraft.

War creates a shortage of labor. In 1917 in my hometown, Seattle, skilled shipyard workers won a 31% pay increase, to \$5.50 a day, in gold dollars. By late 1918 they were demanding another 45% increase, to \$8 a day. In World War II, when government put cash wages under control, companies invented the employee medical benefit. Labor shortage also helps unions, as does the government's need to manage labor costs and labor peace. During World War I, union membership in Seattle quadrupled. The two high points of union membership in America were World War I and World War II, including the decade that followed it.

The Civil War freed the slaves. Every slave liberated was a winner. Some historians have argued that slavery might have been ended without a war, meaning that liberation could have come with fewer losers. Perhaps so, but the slaves were winners still. World War II liberated the Jews and other prisoners that survived in the Nazi camps, and increased the political freedom in Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Italy, and Greece. It also brought the Communists to power in Eastern Europe for 40 years.

The Civil War, World War I, World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War all came with conscription. Every citizen conscripted is, in that sense, a loser. He cannot choose whether to work in a shipyard or in a pillbox. The state chooses for him, and its choice may cost him his life.

War is a subspecies of tribalism. It exalts the nation at the expense of the provincial. The Civil War was about states' rights — and the states lost. Before it, all paper money in America was issued by state-chartered banks; after it, all paper money was issued by the Treasury or by national banks. War unifies and demands loyalty. Consider the Pledge of Allegiance. It was written in 1892, and languished

for 25 years. It became part of the national pantheon in World War I. Early in World War II, the Supreme Court ruled that students who refused to say the Pledge could be expelled from government schools. The 8–1 opinion came in June 1940, when German tanks were rolling across northern France. It was written by Justice Felix Frankfurter, a Jewish emigre from Vienna who was particularly horrified by Nazi advances. The Court reversed that decision three years later, when the war was going our way and the Court could think twice about the persecution it had unleashed. Finally, it was during the Cold War with the officially atheistic Union of Soviet Socialist Republics that Congress added the now-contentious “under God.”

World War I included disloyalty hunts, and was followed by the Red Scare, when Emma Goldman and others were deported to Russia. World War II was followed by a hunt for Reds who had infiltrated the government during the alliance with Stalin.

There is an egalitarian aspect to war. War disrupts and undermines civilian hierarchies. World War I leveled the aristocracies of Europe and replaced them with mass democracies — and dictatorships. World War II ended the production of private cars and brought the century's last large increase in the use of public transit. George Orwell noted that in Britain, war austerity had killed frivolity and style-consciousness. He was a socialist, and appreciated that. The labor shortage in World War II brought American blacks into high-paying factory jobs, many of them for the first time, and set the stage for the decision in the late 1940s to end racial segregation in the military.

War has a relation to the welfare state. In any given year the two are usually opposed, because they compete for resources, with the military interest represented by Republicans and the welfare interest by Democrats. Yet the first

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*The more our national politics turn on conflicts and threats abroad, the less the room for liberty.*

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seed of the welfare state in America was veterans' pensions. The opening wedge of federal aid to education was the G.I. Bill. The two ideas go together: we fight for the state, and the state takes care of us.

War promotes sacrifice. Most obvious is its celebration of bravery, which has been the subject of endless propagandistic movies. But consider a film not often so labeled: “Casablanca,” made in 1942. In it, the hero meets his lost love and unexpectedly has a second chance for happiness. At the movie's end he throws his happiness away to fight the Germans. He not only gives up the woman he loves but saddles her with a man she considers second-best. He sacrifices himself *and her*. At the human level, his decision is preposterous, but it is what war demands, and what we celebrate.

Now arrive at the libertarian point. A war may promote a

libertarian end in the long run and it may not; but in the short run it negates liberty. War makes private citizens into state employees, puts them into uniform, and requires that they kill people they don't know, for purposes chosen by the political authorities. War is a government program; you might think of it as the ultimate government program. It is entirely parasitic on the private sector, and essentially destructive. It spawns loyalty oaths, censorship, suppression of dissent, propaganda, and lies. Also spying, arrests, intern-

war amount to only about 4% of GDP, but for a long time it was more than that. War took the territory, and social welfare colonized it.

Consider war from another angle. In 1990, when I was working in Hong Kong, Iraq invaded Kuwait. The Americans in the office asked each other, "What should we do about this?" — meaning, of course, what should our government do. The Australians and Canadians wondered what our government was going to do, knowing that their governments would be asked to follow along. The Malaysians also asked what "we" were going to do, but not from any idea that their country would be a part of it. Their view of American motives was cynical, arguing that American moralistic pronouncements were fronts for economic interests. Then there were the Hong Kong Chinese. They were not interested enough in the moralistic pronouncements to be cynical about them. They were interested in how currencies would move, and how the war would affect their investments.

One day I looked out from my high-rise home, and warships were going by below my living room, the sailors lined up in white uniforms. They were American. I felt pride that my country could make this show of power. I also felt annoyance that it was *expected*, and that I was paying for it and my Canadian, Australian, and (British) Hong Kong colleagues were not.

I thought of an old essay by Orwell called "Shooting an Elephant." It was about an experience he had had as an imperial policeman in Burma. An elephant had been chained up because it was in heat, and had broken the chains and gone rampaging through the bazaar, knocking down bamboo stalls and upsetting a garbage truck. Orwell was sent after it, and soon discovered that it had trampled a man who had not been nimble enough to step aside. Orwell reached the elephant, which had calmed down. He did not think it necessary to kill it. But he had an elephant gun, and was surrounded by a crowd that expected him to use it. As an individual, he might decide not to shoot it. But he was acting as a representative of the British crown; he had a duty to act in the crown's interest, which meant acting like the Burmese expected an imperial policeman to act. It was his *job* to kill the elephant, and he killed it.

War has put America into the position of killing elephants. Not all of the elephants are harmless, and not all elephant kills are without self-interest. Still, the force of expectation is similar. A bad thing is done — Iraq invades Kuwait, Serbia unleashes "ethnic cleansing" on Albanian Kosovars, Rwandan Hutus start chopping Tutsis with machetes — and an expectation arises that the United States of America will act. In Kuwait and Kosovo it did; in Rwanda it did not, and we now have a movie, "Hotel Rwanda," to make us feel guilty about it. It is a fine movie. The viewer cannot fail to feel sympathy for the victims, to want them to survive, and to admire the heroic Rwandan hotel manager. And yet the company that owns the hotel, which has the clearest duty to get its people out, is Belgian. The former imperial connection, which may imply a duty and may not,

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*Some politician may say he's making you safer when he's not. But you're also running a risk when some antiwar leader says a war is useless.*

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ment, and summary punishment. Some wars are worse than others, but all expand state power, including its nonmilitary respects. War allowed Woodrow Wilson to put Eugene Debs in prison and Franklin Roosevelt to put Japanese Americans into camps. It allowed Wilson to seize the railroads and Harry Truman to seize the steel mills. War allowed George W. Bush to order Jose Padilla taken from a civilian jail and put into a military brig. War allowed Abraham Lincoln to suspend habeas corpus and put the editors of Copperhead newspapers in jail.

Most of these things end with the war, and sometimes the people say, "never again." In that sense there may be some profit in war, just as there is sometimes a blessing in defeat. Free speech is more secure today than it was under Wilson. The internment of an entire ethnic group, accepted with hardly a peep when Roosevelt ordered it, would not happen today. The Supreme Court told Harry Truman he could not seize the steel mills on his own authority. In 2004 the Supreme Court handed George W. Bush a partial defeat in the Yasser Hamdi case, and in late 2005 the threat of an adverse ruling caused him to release Padilla to the civilian courts.

But precedents go the other way, too. Woodrow Wilson's Trading with the Enemy Act was used by Franklin Roosevelt in his confiscation of private gold. The *Quirin* decision of 1942, in which the Supreme Court accepted the military trial and swift execution of would-be German saboteurs, was cited by the George W. Bush administration as reason for the extrajudicial internment of Hamdi and Padilla. The *Wickard* decision of 1942 allowing federal control of farming set the precedent for the *Raich* ruling of 2005, which allowed federal control of medical marijuana. And so on.

World War I raised the top rate of income tax from 7% to 70%; World War II raised it to 94%. It is back down to 35%, which is a big improvement, but it took a long time to get it there. And it has not gone back to 7%.

A century ago the federal government took 3% of the nation's economic output. Now it takes 20%. Defense and

*continued on page 35*

# Winning the Moral War

*by Aeon Skoble*

There's no such thing as a just war — but there may be just warriors.

I'm often asked by inquisitive colleagues who are familiar with my views, "So, what's the libertarian position on \_\_\_\_?" Since a question like that places me in the role of ambassador, I try to answer carefully.

In some matters, there is a "right answer," or at least a standard answer. What's the libertarian position on protective import tariffs? We don't like them. But in other cases, I cannot fulfill my ambassadorial role as easily. What's the libertarian position on abortion? Well, it's that definite article that causes the problem — there isn't one "official" libertarian position on abortion. Reasonable people with libertarian convictions can and do disagree over that issue. When my inquisitive colleagues ask that sort of question, I tell them that, and then if they're still interested, I talk about what my position is, and I note that others disagree. After the September 11 attacks and the ensuing military actions in Afghanistan and Iraq, my inquisitive colleagues came with "So, what's the libertarian position on the war?" In this case, there are two instances of the definite article, and therein lies our tale.

First of all, it should be obvious that, as with abortion, not all libertarians agree on war issues, and "hawkish libertarian" isn't oxymoronic in the way that "pro-censorship libertarian" or "protectionist libertarian" likely are. One reason for this is the second "the": some wars may be legitimate and others not. In what follows, I will outline some of the reasons why both definite articles are problematic, and why my colleagues sometimes end up talking to me for 30 minutes rather than the three they were hoping for.

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Are all wars unjust? Actually, the very language of "just and unjust wars" is confusing.\* Strictly speaking, a war itself cannot be either just or unjust; it is the actions of the participants that are the proper objects of those judgments. Consider first a microcosm: Smith starts punching Jones (say they had a disagreement about music), and Jones, defending himself, starts punching back. Is the fight just or unjust? The question makes no sense. The fight as a whole cannot be just or unjust. However, we can say that Smith's attack was unjust: it was wrong of Smith to attack Jones. Conversely, we can say of Jones that what he did (defending himself) was just. This reflects the moral distinction between the use of force to commit aggression and the use of force to repel or defend against aggression. While we might say that Smith had no right to strike Jones, Smith's aggression creates a right for Jones to strike Smith.

Similarly, say that the army of Bellicosia invades the country of Freedonia (the latter has desirable raw materials), and the Freedonian army mobilizes to repel the Bellicosians. Is this war just or unjust? Again, the question makes no

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\*But Michael Walzer's book of that title is not confusing, and worthwhile for anyone interested in these issues: "Just and Unjust Wars" (Basic Books, 1977).

sense. What does make sense is to say that it was unjust for the Bellicosians to invade, but just for the Freedonians to resist. The (aggressive) use of military force by Bellicosa was not legitimate, but the (defensive) use of military force by Freedonia was. So when talking about "just and unjust wars," we must keep in mind that we are talking about the justice or injustice of *one side or the other*. So, was World War II justified? Well, it wasn't just for the Germans to attempt to conquer Britain, but it was just for the British to fight back.

One might argue that the same is true with "winning": one side wins and another loses. But in some cases, of course, both sides could lose. Vietnam is often cited as an

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*The idea that a free society has no business interfering in other societies' internal politics is, paradoxically, a holdover from the old monarchist mindset.*

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example of an American "loss," but of course the victory of communism there was a loss for the Vietnamese people. Korea also had no clear victor: the North was unsuccessful at assimilating the South, but neither was it dislodged, and it remains a dictatorship today. In some cases, to be sure, there are clear winners and losers: the Americans were the clear winners of the Revolutionary War, just as the Nazis were the clear losers of the Second World War. But we need to distinguish the people from their governments: while the Nazis lost World War II, the German people ultimately prospered as a result. So "winners" and "losers" are not always as clearly defined as we might like. The Confederate Army was the "loser" in the American Civil War, but many see the resulting expansion of federal power as a net loss for all Americans.

What then can we say about the justice of American involvement in World War II, or any other war, for that matter? There are a number of factors that need to be considered. One key consideration, especially for libertarians, is whether the purpose of the involvement is consistent with the ideal of liberty. If a war is about imperial expansion, a libertarian ought to oppose it, but if it's about protecting against legitimate threats to liberty, a libertarian might well support it. Another consideration is the issue of voluntary versus coerced support. I do think libertarianism entails the wrongness of conscription. The war must be fought by people who have agreed to be warriors. (A corollary issue is the funding of the war — more on that anon.) Thirdly, there are practical considerations: even if it would be morally justifiable to do something, there are sometimes countervailing pragmatic considerations. For example, I would argue that the Tibetans would be morally right to rebel against China, but this may be practically impossible. Another sort of pragmatic consideration is the phenomenon that Robert Higgs has identified: the tendency of governments to expand the scope of their

powers in a wartime crisis and then never relinquish it, even when the crisis has abated.\*

I think a clear case of the use of force by Americans which is morally justified and consistent with a libertarian view is the War of Independence. The Declaration of Independence has it exactly right when it states that the purpose of government is to secure rights that the people have by nature, and "that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it . . ." The colonists' rights were being routinely violated, and the British were responding to unrest and dissension with force. The colonists' taking up arms to secure independence was legitimate. By contrast, from a libertarian point of view, it's hard to see how America's actions in the Spanish-American war could be reconciled with a libertarian framework: American claims to rightful ownership of Cuba and the Philippines don't stand up to careful scrutiny.

In other cases, we see multiple rationales, some of which are legitimate and others of which are not. In the War of 1812, for instance, the British were actively aggressing (e.g., on the high seas), and the American military response seems plainly defensive, and hence justified, although some of the other reasons for the war had to do with conquest of British territory in Canada. These cases are a bit of a philosophical conundrum: if I have two reasons for my action, and one is a good reason and the other a bad one, am I justified? Say, for instance, that Smith is attacking Jones again. Jones fights back, partly because he is defending himself against Smith, and partly because he disapproves of Smith's religion. While punching Smith simply out of religious hatred would be unjustified, it's nevertheless the case that Smith is the aggressor and Jones' self-defense is legitimate.

While self-defense versus conquest is relatively straightforward, aid to third parties and interventionist wars present greater conceptual difficulties. To return to my earlier fic-

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*Saving one people from genocidal slaughter at the hands of another is not contradictory to libertarian principles.*

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tional example, given that it's just for the Freedonians to use force to repel the Bellicosians, imagine that Freedonia is far outmatched by Bellicosa. Since it's right for Freedonia to resist, it would be right also for a third party to come to Freedonia's assistance. Many libertarians argue that this may not be wise, either because such intervention would make an enemy of Bellicosa, or because it might ratchet up the scope of government power. In many cases, the intervening nation risks getting drawn into an entanglement that it really cannot control, the results of which may turn out to be much more complex than anticipated.

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\*Robert Higgs, "Crisis and Leviathan" (Oxford University Press, 1987), another book that is a must for those concerned with these issues.



In other cases, intervention carries fewer risks and greater rewards. The United States did not intervene in Rwanda, but if it had, it's hard to see how it would have been unjustified: saving one people from genocidal slaughter at the hands of another is not contradictory to libertarian principles. Oppressed populations have the right to use force to resist the oppression (as we did in the Revolution) but may lack the power to do so and hence need assistance (as we did in the Revolution).

What, then, about the current war in Iraq? I think a case can be made that overthrowing a tyrant to liberate an oppressed people is legitimate, but in any event, the time has long since passed to conclude American involvement in Iraq. I had high hopes during the invasion that the Iraqis would embrace freedom and institute a pluralistic, democratic republic, but either they have been slow on the uptake, or the American presence during the transition has been poorly handled, or both. Ultimately, only Iraq can make a free Iraq, and regardless of what was the case in 2003, I think the best we can do now is exit. That is partly because the administration is not (on my view) making the most of the opportunity here, and partly because the Iraqis seem more interested in power struggles than constitutionalism. It's not because I think Saddam should not have been removed from power, or because I think that military force is always wrong. Neither of those ideas is true, and neither follows from libertarianism.

Here are some potential libertarian objections to the positions I've been explicating, and some reflections on (and possible responses to) them.

1. *Despite what you might say about any particular case, America should, as a general rule, strive for a less interventionist military policy. What we have now is a global-policeman mindset, which besides costing a fortune, gets us hopelessly entangled in ancient hatreds and makes many enemies. Wouldn't it be better if, for the most part, we kept to ourselves?*

Short answer: yes, where possible. But a lot hangs on that qualifier. What does "keeping to ourselves" mean? Does it mean forbidding U.S. companies from conducting business abroad? That's not consistent with libertarianism. Even without an adventurous foreign military presence, in today's global economy "keeping to oneself" is not a realistic option. The unfortunate reality is that we also make enemies by practicing capitalism.

2. *When there are problems requiring the use of force, we ought to go back to letters of marque and reprisal, in essence privatizing the use of force.*

I agree entirely! But sadly, this is currently illegal. Until we actually have a privatized military, "we should privatize it" cannot be an objection to using the one we have. That's like objecting to the New York City subway on the ground that it is a government program. Ideally, it ought to be privatized, but until it is, the people of New York need to get around. To paraphrase Dick Cheney, you go to work with the subway system you have, not with the one you wish you had. The "Lincoln Brigades" who, on their own dime, went off to Spain to fight against the fascists, would today be considered criminals. The suggestion that modern-day "privateers" ought to be the ones chasing after al Qaeda is good but moot.

3. *A free society has no business interfering in other societies' internal politics.*

This is ironically, or paradoxically, a holdover from the old monarchist mindset. The old order, on which traditional just war theory is based, and in which sovereignty is the paramount value in international relations, depends on a moral equivalence between states that is derived from a statist

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*Since the state exists, and has a standing army, the only live issue right now is what guidelines should constrain the use of military force.*

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view, not an individualist one. On a non-statist, individualist view, *individuals* have rights, not states. States may have powers, but their just powers derive from the consent of the governed. The putative right of any state to sovereignty is thus a function of its protection of the rights of the people in its domain. So a free society may very well have some business "interfering" in tyrannical or genocidal states — namely, the business of protecting life and liberty. The very language — that this is "interference" in a state's own affairs — implies that the state has some right of action which is presumptively respected; again, this can only be justified by statist thinking, not by libertarian thinking. That doesn't mean that anyone necessarily has an obligation to interfere, only that people are permitted to do so, or that they do no wrong by doing so.

4. *Even if the troops are volunteers rather than conscripts, the funding for their operations is coercively obtained through taxation. Isn't that a violation of libertarian principles?*

This argument proves too much. It's true that the funding for any service provided by government was coercively obtained, and that's antilibertarian in general. But what's immoral is the government's coercively taking money; some of the activities the money gets spent on may be legitimate in and of themselves. Here's a good example: municipal fire departments. Firefighters aren't acting immorally when they jump in the truck, save lives, and extinguish fires. That's a good thing to do. The libertarian objection isn't to firefighting per se, it's to the government's imposed provision of the service. The argument that, as a matter of policy, the government ought to privatize a service is conceptually separable from an evaluation of the intrinsic morality of that service. If it is intrinsically legitimate to engage in firefighting, then the municipal firefighters are morally correct when doing their job, even if it's also true that the municipality ought not to monopolize that business.

To put this in another way, *everything* the state does entails some coercion by means of taxation. That is an argument in favor of anarcho-capitalism, but not an objection to the moral legitimacy of any particular thing the state does. Using the military to conquer the Philippines was unjust because it was aggressive, so it would fail to meet libertarian

standards regardless of whether it was the state's military or a private force doing the conquering.

5. *You still haven't offered a satisfactory reply to a Higgisian objection, that there's something especially pernicious about the state's use of the military to ratchet up the scope of its power by exploiting war crises.*

That's because I agree with it. For this reason, I believe that libertarians need to have a well-thought-out approach to military affairs that is neither dogmatic nor unprincipled. Since the state exists, and has a standing army, the only live issue right now is what guidelines should constrain the use of military force. Libertarians need to be at the forefront of such debates, making sure that, to as great an extent as possible, the military is used defensively and prudently, as consistently as possible with the ideal of individual liberty.

We must be vigilant about the exploitation by the state of war crises to erode liberty at home, and we must try to ensure that the military is not used for adventurism. But we cannot do that effectively by claiming to be above such minutiae. I

once knew an anarcho-capitalist who answered every question that began "Do you think Congress should . . ." with "No" — because he thought that Congress shouldn't do *anything*. He denied the legitimacy of its power, but in a way that robbed him of a critical voice. His answer to "Do you think Congress should repeal the Patriot Act?" becomes indistinguishable from his answer to "Should Congress extend the Patriot Act?" There is a Congress, so we ought to be able to argue for guidelines constraining its power.

So also with the military. It is there, and it can be used for legitimate ends or abused and exploited. The best role for libertarians is to keep arguing for the priority of individual liberty, as a guideline for limits on state power at home and abroad. This would have the effect of keeping liberty in the forefront of popular thinking, reducing the appeal of other, less savory rationales for fighting. Also, elevating protection of individual liberty to the forefront of just war theory would help reinforce it as the paramount value in politics generally. Neither absolute pacifism nor neocon *realpolitik* is consistent with that vision. □

## America Won, Americans Lost, from page 21

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5. "American Foreign Policy in the Light of National Interest at the Mid-Century," in "Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace," p. 581.

6. Renan as quoted by Ethan Bronner in New York Times book review excerpted at "Roundup: Talking About History," at <http://hnn.us/roundup/comments/3698.html>.

7. Bierce quotation at [http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Ambrose\\_Bierce](http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Ambrose_Bierce).

8. LeMay as quoted in Sven Lindqvist, "A History of Bombing," (New Press, 2000), p. 109.

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10. Stanley L. Falk, "Strategic Air Offensives," in "The Oxford Companion to World War II," ed. I.C.B. Dear and M.R.D. Foot (Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 1078.

11. Chamberlin, "Bankruptcy of a Policy," p. 519. Strange to say, Chamberlin later became a fanatical Cold Warrior. See Justin Raimondo, "An Enemy of the State: The Life of Murray N. Rothbard" (Prometheus Books, 2000), pp. 75–76.

12. Casualty data from U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970" (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975), p. 1140.

13. Unless otherwise noted, the factual information about World War I given in this paragraph and the remainder of the section is drawn from Robert Higgs, "Crisis and Leviathan: Critical Episodes in the Growth of American Government" (Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 123–58, and the sources given there; and from Robert Higgs, "Government and the Economy: The World Wars," *Independent Institute Working Paper Number 59*, April 20, 2005, and the sources given there (available at <http://www.independent.org/pdf/workingpapers/59government.pdf>).

14. *Joseph F. Arver v. United States of America*, 245 U.S. 366 (1918), at 390.

15. *Northern Pacific Railway Company et al. v. State of North Dakota on the Relation of Langer, Attorney General*, 250 U.S. 135 (1919), at 149.

16. Grosvenor B. Clarkson, "Industrial America in the World War: The Strategy Behind the Line, 1917–1918" (Houghton Mifflin, 1923), p. 312.

17. Casualty data from U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Historical Statistics," p. 1140.

18. Michael C.C. Adams, "The Best War Ever: America and World

War II" (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), p. 95.

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22. Unless otherwise noted, the factual information about World War II given in this paragraph and the remainder of the section is drawn from Higgs, "Crisis and Leviathan," pp. 196–236, and the sources given there; and from Higgs, "Government and the Economy: The World Wars," and the sources given there.

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# Wins, Losses, and Libertarian Ideas

by Stephen Cox

Separating the winners from the losers is harder than one might think.

Libertarian ideas are based in part on moral principles, in part on economic or “praxeological” principles — ideas about the nature of human choice and action (“praxis”). I’ve been wondering how America’s wars would appear when viewed from the standpoint of the “praxeological” principles taught by Ludwig von Mises (“Human Action”), Friedrich Hayek (“The Road to Serfdom”), Murray Rothbard (“Man, Economy, and State”), and other authors in the libertarian tradition.

Five ideas seem especially relevant to the subject.

1. *“Wins” and “losses” aren’t just material; they’re psychological as well.*

That’s one of the things that Isabel Paterson had in mind when she said that wars would cease when people stopped thinking they were fun. She didn’t mean that everybody enjoys war — far from it. She knew that war was not a pleasure for the multitude of young soldiers who bled to death in the hellish heat of the cornfield at Antietam. But the majority of people who took part in the Civil War, America’s bloodiest conflict, did not die that way. They lost a certain amount of their time, energy, and freedom, but many of them were richly recompensed by the challenge and adventure that war often brings, and by the sense of significance that even people on the losing side often derive from a brave and determined fight. Many Southerners who “lost” the war in a material sense “won” it in terms of psychic benefits — or the quasi-material benefits of social esteem and political power that come to men respected for their military prowess.

Of course, psychic gains can be as ephemeral as material ones. The veterans of the Great Patriotic War who, 50 years later, found themselves vending military mementos on the

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streets of Moscow no longer looked — or, presumably, felt — like the victors of World War II. Yet I well remember the groups of Great Patriotic War veterans I saw touring Prague in 1985: little old men with horrible teeth and miserable clothes, men who seemed, nevertheless, to be on top of the world, luxuriating in their awful communist hotel, gleefully rubbing their hands over their awful communist meals, and proudly displaying the medals that had earned them this largesse and grandeur. At that point, at least, these particular Russians were profiting mightily from their war.

A similar, though less dramatic, thing has happened to some American veterans, men who suffered unenthusiastically through World War II but have now become convinced, by flattering propaganda in the media, that their service makes them glorious constituents of The Greatest Generation. The human mind is a wonderful mechanism for turning misery into magnificence.

Who “won” the War of 1812? Most Americans think that “we” did, despite plentiful evidence on the other side: Washington put to the torch by a British raiding party; Michigan surrendered without a fight by a general later convicted of cowardice; the ignominious failure of American attempts to capture Canada. Yet the fact that America survived the war, and the fact that General Jackson managed to

beat the British at New Orleans (though only after peace had been concluded), and Americans' sheer ignorance of many other facts, have for the past two centuries created the impression that a glorious victory was somehow attained.

The impression of having won or lost can have large effects, not just on people's sense of their history, but also on subsequent historical events. The biggest losers of the War of 1812 were probably the Indians of the northwestern frontier, potent enemies of the United States who were backed and

were hardly constrained to separate from the empire because of any great material damage it had done to them. Who can deny that the Revolution was motivated in large part by pride — by Americans' increasing pride in their own importance and by their increasingly frustrated pride in the British rights and privileges that they felt the home country appeared to be denying them? Their angry separation from the parent country entailed great material losses, not only among British loyalists, many of whom lost their possessions and were forced to flee the country, but also among leaders of the Patriot party.

It was no joke, in those days, to pledge your life, your fortune, and your sacred honor to either the revolutionary or the counter-revolutionary cause. Yet without this suffering, America would never have been born as the first nation whose fundamental documents squarely affirmed a libertarian idea of rights. Everyone who now invokes that idea is a winner of the American Revolution. From this intellectual benefit, material benefits have flowed in an unending stream.

Was it "worth it"? Were such benefits worth the expenditure of the 4,000 American lives that were lost in combat in the Revolutionary War, not counting all the other lives that were lost as a direct result of that war?

Before you answer, "Yes, of course; that's nothing compared with the 400,000 Americans who perished in World War II, or the 550,000 in the Civil War," consider another basic principle of "praxeological" analysis:

## 2. Human values cannot be quantified.

That's my way of putting the idea that when someone says that X is more valuable than Y, and that he therefore prefers X to Y, we have no way of *calculating* how *greatly* X is

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*We can't calculate the threat of terrorism; we can't calculate the value of even one human life. We can only do the best job we can to define the results that ought to be preferred on moral or practical grounds.*

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then abandoned by the British. Their loss of morale was overwhelming. Immediately after the war, white settlers poured into the states and territories of the Old Northwest, confident that the Indian threat was vanishing. Indeed it was; and soon after, so were the Indians. The land of Pontiac and Tecumseh suddenly became the heartland of the United States and the model of its culture. In this sense, every Average American is a winner of the War of 1812.

Morale matters. The greatest American casualty of the War of 1812 was the Federalist Party, the party of New England, which covered itself with shame by its association with the Hartford Convention, a gathering of antiwar politicians that implicitly threatened New England's secession from the union. The convention had no practical result, but the moral impact was enormous. The Federalists never recovered.

It would take a celestial mathematician to calculate the psychological effects of the Civil War: the pride of abolitionists in having ended slavery, the pride of many former slaves in the accomplishment of their freedom, the sickening disappointment of many others on the discovery that legal liberation offered no escape from grotesquely demeaning social discrimination. Who "won" the Civil War? There are as many answers as individuals, and individual psyches.

That's one way of putting it, anyway. At least this way of thinking makes a necessary qualification to the principle that Benjamin Franklin enunciated in a letter of 1773, where he told Josiah Quincy that "there never was a good war or a bad peace." That idea didn't keep Franklin from helping to start the Revolutionary War. Earlier in his career, it hadn't kept him from leading the effort to mobilize Pennsylvania for war against the French and Indians, in opposition to the many pacifists in Pennsylvania who took the idea literally and devoutly.

One reason why it's hard to make such general principles stick is the complex relationship between psychic and material harms and benefits — as Franklin's big war, the War of the Revolution, clearly shows.

The 13 American colonies could easily have remained part of the British imperial system, as did Canada, Florida, and the British possessions in the West Indies. Americans

superior to Y, even from that person's point of view. We know only that when he needs to choose, he chooses X over Y. Even if he can state his reasons, and they're the real reasons, there is still no formula for *calculating* either his choices or his values. Reasons are real and important, but they are no more quantifiable than choices.

If you think the Constitution was worth the expenditure of 4,000 American lives, would it have been worth the expenditure of 10,000? 20,000? 100,000? Would Congress' decision to go to war have been four times likelier to be right if the figure had been only 1,000? How shall one answer such questions — especially if one looks at each set of figures and adds, "including my own life"?

Piling up statistics about wars is useful in showing the scale of choice and preference, and in that sense it can be very

persuasive. Few people would object on practical grounds to any military adventure if they could be assured that only ten lives would be lost in it, and none of those lives would be their own. Few people would *fail* to object if they were assured that the cost would be hundreds of millions of lives.

But the values themselves cannot be calculated, and it's easy to think of statistics that do not persuade. If you knew you could prevent all future terrorist attacks on the United States by a military campaign that might kill up to 50,000 American soldiers — about the number lost in Vietnam — would you do it? Pacifists and hardened militarists know how to handle that question, because for them it's not really a question. They already know the answer. The rest of us will thank God that we can't conduct such a cruel calculus. We can't *calculate* the threat of terrorism; we can't *calculate* the value of even one human life. We can only do the best job we can of defining the results that ought to be preferred on moral or practical grounds and guessing what is likely to happen when one instrument or another is used to attain them.

It's a complicated job, because lives can be lost by not going to war as well as by going to war, and decisions must be based on both material and psychic, both practical and moral considerations. It becomes still more complicated when one considers yet another basic principle:

3. *Actions invariably have multiple effects.*

The fact that I have chosen to type this sentence means that I am not typing any other sentences. The fact that the Treasury disburses \$5 billion to construct a Nimitz Class aircraft carrier means that it is not disbursing \$5 billion dollars for some other purpose, which might conceivably contribute more to the national security, or returning \$5 billion to the taxpayer, which might conceivably contribute still more.

Let's look at another of America's wars, the war with Spain. America's conquest of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines resulted in an increase of material prosperity for many Cubans, for virtually all Puerto Ricans, and even for many Filipinos who fought against the American occupation of their country. Except in Cuba, American conquests in this war still return enormous dividends on the material side of the ledger, with some heavy offsets on the psychological and social side, especially as a result of the heavy dependence of Puerto Rico on American welfare programs.

But what were the effects of American victory on America itself? So far as I can tell, the material benefits were minuscule. The war was not especially costly; even the effort to put down the ensuing insurrection of part of the Filipino population was not a major event. The returns consisted mainly of an extension of American power into the danger zone of the Pacific, where it would, a generation later, engage the competing power of Japan, with hideous results.

So, who won the Spanish-American War? The American imperialist party, in the short run — and also, perhaps, the long run, if we think of the United States as an empire growing out of its engagement in the war with Japan and Germany. But to the list of winners we must add everyone in Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Philippines who profited or continues to profit from America's involvement in his own country.

Who lost the Spanish-American War? In the short run, the old regime in Spain, which was hastened toward its end by its miserable defeat by a New World power; in the long run, the non-interventionist party in America, the fiscally conservative party in America, and, perhaps, the millions of Americans, Japanese, and Filipinos killed in World War II — assuming that America would not have become involved in that war, had it not become so heavily involved in Asia in 1898.

On the same assumption, our list of victors in the Spanish-American War and World War II should include the modern Japanese. To develop this point, I need to mention a fourth idea:

4. *Moral analysis must be distinguished from practical analysis.*

Suppose I write an article about a foreign nation that possesses a markedly illiberal character. Its monarch is worshipped as a god; its political parties function as masks of

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*Libertarians, like other good people, assume that bad decisions necessarily produce totally bad results — and that is an assumption that needs looking into.*

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oligarchic interests; it has many of the attributes of a military dictatorship; its social system is remarkably anti-individualistic. But, I argue, I know the way to reform this nation. First you provoke it into attacking you by choking off its oil supplies. Then you firebomb its cities and, for good measure, annihilate two of them with atomic weapons. You occupy the country and execute as many of its leaders as you feel like executing, preserving its monarch as the figurehead of a new political and social system, dictated by yourself. Finally, you ally yourself with the country in such a way as to guarantee its continued military impotence and subservience to you.



"I can't believe you granted Attila the Hun a visa!"



How would my readers react to such a proposal?

Most would denounce it on moral grounds, and virtually all would tell me contemptuously that my scheme couldn't possibly work. I would be told that war never accomplishes good ends, that violence merely begets more violence, that you can never do good by doing evil; that you can never teach liberal values by imposing your will on others. I would be given many additional pieces of advice as well — most of them angry, and most of them correct. I would be read out of the libertarian movement. I would become a target of public scorn, a topic of discussion on CNN. But that's what actually happened in America's struggle with Japan.

I certainly do not recommend that we try this approach again. I'm bringing this episode up because libertarians, like other good people, ordinarily assume that bad decisions necessarily produce totally bad results — and that is an assumption that needs looking into.

You can't make moral choices on the assumption that bad decisions are likely to lead to good results. But we can all think of cases in which moral courage has led to destruction,

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*How easy it is, if one believes that America has a moral responsibility to bring freedom to the rest of the globe, to be serenely confident that our interventions will always be met with practical success.*

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and moral confusion has accomplished stupendously favorable ends. You may believe, as Abraham Lincoln did, that the Mexican War was morally wrong, but it doesn't follow that you think, or should think, that the territory ceded from Mexico as a result of that war should be given back to it. I don't. I live in California; I am one of the victors of the Mexican War.

What I'm saying is that morality and practicality are not the same thing. They're related, surely; but there are many good moral reasons not to lie, cheat, or steal, no matter how good the anticipated results might be. And it's clear that moral failure doesn't always add up to practical failure. One reason lies in a fifth principle of human action, much discussed by libertarian theorists:

5. *Human choices commonly have unforeseen and unintended consequences.*

In no field of human action is this more obviously true than that of war. Every competent military strategist bears this in mind. Every pacifist does too, and for good reason; it's one of the best arguments for belief in nonviolence. Who can tell whether a "strictly limited" act of violence will not result in an ocean of blood, an overwhelming defeat, a deadly blow to one's way of life?

Unfortunately, however, many people have come to regard this important principle as if it meant, "Political choices commonly have unforeseen, unintended, and *unfortunate* consequences." These people expect the unintended

effects of war to be uniformly *unfortunate*, which means that they must be uniformly foreseeable in some way.

Their view is wrong, but there is plenty of evidence to support it. War is so terrible a thing that one can never complete the list of its terrible effects. Any description of the hospitals of the Civil War or the battles in the Pacific theater of World War II can tempt one to endorse almost any expedient short of war, if only out of pity for the hideous things that war can do to human bodies. Any investigation of war's political entailments can tempt one to vote for the peace candidate, whoever it is.

Yet both the bad and the good effects of war are unforeseeable.

One of war's worst characteristics is its association with a large, intrusive, and literally murderous government. The conduct of war ordinarily demands centralized authority, and successful wars appear to vindicate the centralized authorities that managed them, legitimizing their powers and providing reasons for their continued existence. Wars, successful or unsuccessful, also generate debts, necessitate repairs, and solicit all kinds of after-the-fact payments for the people who fought them. In other words, they generate taxation, inflation, pensions, educational supplements, public welfare schemes, and hundreds of other functions of big government. The work of Robert Higgs, the great analyst of this cycle of war and waste, shows how it all happens. It's predictable.

But predictions of this kind are not infallible. During the 18th century, the British colonies in North America assisted the empire in winning a series of wars on their soil and near it, but no appreciable increase of either the military or the civilian establishment resulted. The colonies' refusal to support a serious military establishment was a principal reason for Britain's disgust with them. The War of the Revolution produced many of the worst features of big government: conscription, indebtedness, confiscation, monstrous inflation, and as much centralization of authority as could be achieved under the existing political system; yet the American armed forces melted away immediately after the war, and the bank that was created to manage the war debts was eventually liquidated also. Big government was hardly the obvious winner of the revolution.

Nor was it the winner of America's next declared war, the War of 1812. During that conflict, the capital of the United States was destroyed and much of its territory occupied by the enemy. One might have predicted that such events would produce demands for a large standing army, to prevent the same thing from happening again. If such demands were made, they fell on deaf ears. Again the army melted away. While the early republic remained warlike, its habits were much more adventurist than defensive. Its military involvements were many and diverse, but they entailed no large military establishment.

Besides declaring war on Britain in 1812, America fought France in the West Indies (1798–1800), raised an army in North Africa and enforced its will on the small states there (1801–1805), sent armies into parts of west Florida and seized them from Spain (1810, 1813), fought a second war in North Africa (1815), invaded east Florida and rendered Spanish

possession of it untenable (1816–1818), and took possession of Oregon (1818). From the 1820s to the 1850s American forces raided or occupied parts of Africa, Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Aegean, Sumatra, Fiji, Samoa, Nicaragua, Panama, Argentina, Peru, Uruguay, and China, attacking slave traders or protecting American interests in some way. America made such a threatening exhibition of its power against the empire of Japan (1853–1854) that the empire abandoned its policy of isolation and began trading with the rest of the world — an action that military historian Craig L. Symonds appropriately calls “the most successful example of

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*I live in California; I am one of the victors of the Mexican War.*

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American expeditionary warfare in the 19th century” (“Milestones Along the Path to World Power,” Naval History [December 2005]. For the full, and very long, list of American engagements in the 19th century, see Ellen C. Collier, “Instances of Use of United States Forces Abroad,” <http://www.history.navy.mil/wars/foabroad.htm>.) Yet this ample display of interventionism failed to produce any heavier engagement of the military in the counsels of the republic, or any significant expansion of government.

Neither did the Indian wars in which Americans engaged for over 200 years, or the great war with Mexico (1846–1848). Many libertarians would have predicted that the latter conflict, successfully prosecuted on several fronts by a central government that emerged victorious over virtually incredible challenges of distance, supply, and strategy, would produce continual wars of intervention and conquest in Mexico, the Caribbean, the Pacific, and other areas of the world where Americans found desirable territory. It didn’t. When, a few years after the war, Mexico sold southern Arizona and New Mexico to the United States, Congress spurned the offer of yet more land. At the conclusion of the Civil War, serious proposals were made for the United States to turn its massive army toward Mexico. That didn’t happen, either. By 1870, there were only 50,000 men in the armed forces of the United States, one eighth of 1% of the population.

Of course, this identifies only part of the situation. The Civil War may have left the United States with a small army and a relatively small government, but it left it with a government that was potentially much more intrusive, on the home front, than it had been before the war. President Lincoln had authorized conscription on a massive scale, suspended habeas corpus, debased the currency, prevented the sitting of state legislatures, terrorized the Supreme Court, and provided virtually every bad precedent for big government he could come up with. His reason and excuse was war.

But certain kinds of eggs tend to come from certain kinds of chickens. The Republican Party, the biggest political winner in the Civil War, was the big-government party before

the war started, and it naturally continued in that way. Like the Whig Party, its honored ancestor, it was the party of high tariffs and “internal improvements,” especially of railroads subsidized with government money — the foundation of the 19th-century military-industrial complex. This is the kind of party that would willingly accept military “necessity.” It was also the kind of party that would try mightily to continue wartime controls by creating dictatorial regimes in the post-war South. Plainly, what we see is a continuum from the pre-war to the postwar period — a continuum of assumptions about the powers that government needs in order to get things done, either in war or in peace.

Unfortunately, these assumptions about government were not confined to the Republicans. While some important political figures still believed that federally financed internal improvements were unconstitutional, the battle for that position had been lost before the Civil War. Even Jefferson Davis, a proponent of states’ rights if ever there was one, had urged federal construction of a railroad to the west coast when he served as secretary of war in 1855. Throughout the Western world, governments were awaking to new powers, either to manage industry or to dominate foreign states. It would have taken a miracle to keep statist assumptions from realizing themselves in American life. Eventually, and very naturally, such assumptions led the Republican Party into war with Spain. Eventually the consciousness of American power and the “moral responsibilities” attaching thereto led even the Democratic Party, once generally antiwar and anti-imperialist, into a second great national crusade, World War I.

Perhaps we should consider the possibility that it isn’t war that produces permanent increases in the size and power of government; it’s attitudes about government that

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*It isn’t war that produces permanent increases in the size and power of government; it’s attitudes about government that increase its size and power and its tendency to make war.*

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increase its size and power and its tendency to make war. If big government were the inevitable winner of all wars, American history would be very different.

Consider what happened in America when the hideous and unnecessary World War I was over. The armed forces shrank dramatically: in 1920 they stood at one-third of 1% of the population, not much of an increase over the remarkable one-sixth of 1% in 1820, and a dramatic contrast to the 1.5% of 1970, when statist assumptions had had another 50 years to mature. (Today’s figure is .5%. To put this in context: employees of state schools are about 3% of today’s population.) Businesses that had been managed by the government returned to private control, despite the federal managers’ grossly inflated reputation for having at last gotten the hang of “running” an economy.

The economic dislocations of the war remained — enor-

mous unpaid foreign debts, suddenly deflated prices of agricultural land and commodities, demands by farmers for protracted government intervention, a perceived necessity for the United States to support various injured European economies. These dislocations helped to produce the Great Depression, and the next world war. Yet there was nothing

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*An America that had not entered the Great War would probably have suffered the same economic dislocations. Similar assumptions, in similar minds, could easily have produced similar effects.*

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about America's involvement in World War I that required the federal government to prop up Germany, "help" the farmers, or manipulate the currency — nothing except the assumption that governments ought to do such things, just as they ought to fight wars for world democracy.

Some of the greatest political winners of the Great War were the men who accepted these assumptions, such men as Herbert Hoover and Franklin Roosevelt. But it is very possible that an America that had not entered the Great War would still have suffered virtually the same economic dislocations: the wartime boom and postwar bust in agriculture, the mismanagement of money by the Federal Reserve, and the carnival of European debts and revaluations to which the government of the United States happily bought every ticket being sold. Similar assumptions, in similar minds, could easily have produced similar effects.

By the same token, it is perfectly conceivable that a United States that had emerged victorious from World War II would have declined to make any longterm commitments in Europe, the Mideast, or Asia. It might have continued the policy of disengagement that was begun (against strong

modern-liberal opposition) with the ending of rationing and continued with the (brief) dismantling of the draft. It might have sought disarmament in the same ways in which the Harding administration sought it after World War I. I'm not saying that this course would have been right or wrong. I'm noticing only that who "wins" a war is not necessarily determined by who wins the military conflict. There is also the question of who "wins the peace" — and that depends on the attitudes and assumptions that in one way or another dominate the political landscape after the war is over.

Who won the military conflict in Vietnam? North Vietnam. Who won the peace thereafter? In America, the revulsion of public opinion against the war meant that the chief beneficiaries of Vietnam were the antiwar movement, the counter-culture, and most other opponents of the current military and political order — including libertarians. No longer were libertarians lonely academics or people uncomfortably affiliated with conservatism. They were members of a popular movement distinct from both the party of Johnson and the party of Nixon, a movement that benefited from the prestige of opposition movements generally. Politically speaking, war was a very good thing for libertarians — one of those weird and ironic exchanges of good and evil that help make war such an inexhaustible object of debate.

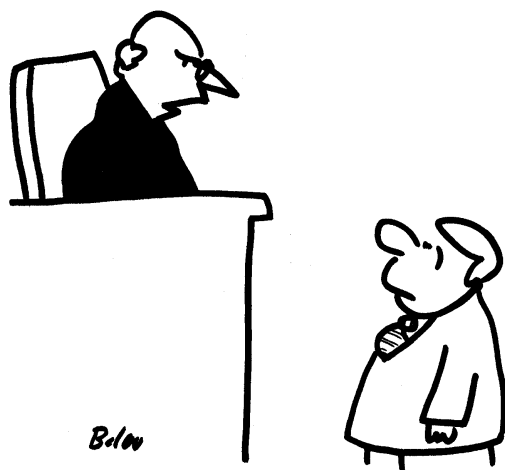
But certain conclusions can be drawn. One of them is this: if we confuse practical with moral arguments, or convince ourselves that we know very well what will happen if war takes place, we are likely to get ourselves into a good deal of trouble, practical as well as intellectual. This is advice that I commend to hawks as well as doves, because I believe that the two types of political fauna are equally likely to confuse causes and effects, principles and practicalities.

How easy it is, if one believes that America has a moral responsibility to bring freedom to the rest of the globe, to be serenely confident that our interventions will always be met with practical success. President Wilson thought that. So, apparently, does our current president. It's not a good thing to think.

But mistakes can be made on the other side, too. Very few modern liberal (or libertarian) pundits, opponents of war in general, believed that America could possibly conquer Afghanistan. Many believed that America would incur tens or hundreds of thousands of casualties in the first Gulf War, that America's invasion of Grenada would be fraught with the direst consequences, and so on. They were wrong; and in being wrong they made future warnings much less likely to be taken seriously.

How much better it would have been for them to have said, "I believe this action is a violation of principle. It may 'succeed,' in the practical sense of that word. Nevertheless, I believe it's wrong. Here's why." Instead, they played the role of seer, and seers are very easily discredited by the results of wars.

It's all so unnecessary. Most people believe that there are certain things that should not be done, no matter how much one may profit from them. You don't steal an old lady's pocketbook, even if you're sure you'll get away with it. You don't steal it, even if you're sure she's on her way to deliver a substantial donation to the American Nazi Party. You just



"If you're not guilty, then what were you doing on the news last night?"

don't. In addition, most people believe that you don't bulldoze the neighborhood and fill the ruins with cops, in order to make sure that old ladies can walk the streets unmolested; that's just not practical. Most people take moral considerations seriously, and they know that morality is distinct from practicality, but they realize that the two are not entirely distinct, and that their relationship isn't always easy to define.

It's in this spirit that I believe libertarian argument about war should take place, and libertarian agitation against the aggressive power of the state should be carried on. Freely

admitting that we don't know everything, anymore than the government does; that we can't foresee everything, anymore than the government can; that we haven't discovered any iron laws of history, anymore than Karl Marx did; and that we can't always understand, anymore than Sophocles could, exactly what choices should be made when morality and practicality appear to conflict, we can still offer the best suggestions we can, both moral and practical — and be listened to, because we're not screaming wildly, as everyone else in the debate seems to be. That's a strategy that might succeed, if only because nobody but us ever tried it. □

## Shooting Elephants, from page 24

was with Belgium. In the movie the foreign military officer on the scene is a Canadian working for the United Nations. Yet the movie was made by Americans and has a message for Americans: *You should have been here.* At least that is the message many Americans have taken from it.

In the distant past, the expectation was that if Americans were not threatened by some foreign devilry, their government would steer clear of it. Now if a friendly nation is threatened, or oil is involved, or aid workers are being killed, or American students threatened, or there is a hint of chemical or biological weapons, or a nuclear program, or a substantial economic interest, people think the Americans will go in. Maybe if there is a massacre entirely of locals, Americans will go in. Perhaps if there is a democracy to be created for geopolitical purposes, Americans will go in. Once we get used to war, and more comfortable with our duties regarding it, more reasons offer themselves.

The more our national politics turn on conflicts and threats abroad, the less the room for liberty. When your national security is at stake, or when you think it is, liberty will appear to be a liability. More voices will be heard want-

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*Orwell had a duty to act in the crown's interest, which meant acting like the Burmese expected an imperial policeman to act. It was his job to kill the elephant, and he killed it.*

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ing to limit it. Also, the Constitution places foreign affairs mostly in the hands of the president, and makes a virtual king of him. In the 1990s, the interregnum between communism and "Islamofascism," the Republican Party came to have a libertarian-conservative element, focused on such domestic issues as limiting welfare, preserving private health insurance, issuing school vouchers, privatizing Social Security, limiting government spending, and cutting taxes. But in foreign affairs the Republicans are America's nationalist party, and after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, they signed up for war, including one against Iraq. More Republicans began quoting Franklin D. Roosevelt, the war president. The

Republicans still have some libertarian-like ideas, but none to implement during what they think of as a war on terrorism.

Some wars are good and some bad: the Revolutionary War was justified to create American independence, as was the War of 1812 to preserve it. But it is my belief that overall, wars have been a net loss for America, despite its victories in them. At the margin I have to admit that this is a faith-based argument. There is an argument the other way, that *Pax Americana* has made the world safer, that democracy and the rule of law have flowered under this umbrella of safety, and that it is all a net political and economic benefit to the United States.

That is also a faith-based argument. I'm suspicious of it, particularly when it's applied to wars that I think are started for myopic American reasons. And yet I cannot lay down a principle about the benefit from war. Security is not a question of principle; it is a question of fact. It involves judgments about tradeoffs. The immediate effect on the liberty of Americans is not the only consideration. You are better off giving up some of your liberty if it keeps you alive, and maybe even if it keeps you safer, depending on how much liberty and how much safer.

And yes, I know, some politician may say he's making you safer when he's not. We've seen it done. But you're also running a risk when some antiwar leader says the war is useless. Maybe he's wrong. Each time, you have to decide. Each time, people with their own reasons make arguments they think will fetch you, and their arguments may not be the ones they believe themselves.

Being an American is not like being a member of an ordinary, normal country. I saw that when I lived overseas. Malaysia was a normal country; it could decide what to do based on what it wanted. It didn't have a lot of capabilities, but it certainly had the freedom not to get involved. America had a lot of capabilities and was expected to use them. It had the shooting-an-elephant problem.

Who won America's wars is a question of hindsight. But with the next war, or the current one, there is a question of foresight about who *will* win and who *will* lose. In foresight also comes another question, which is not about who will win, but about whether it is morally proper to jump in or to stay out. On that question, the older I get the more I am inclined to tighten the qualifications, requiring an ever-stronger case before I sign on to the government's most dangerous and costly program. □

# The Fight for Freedom at AHA

*by David T. Beito*

America's historians had a chance to make a stand against political interference in education — but settled for much less.

Do the letters AHA now stand (in the words of Robert Shibley) for American Hypocrites Association, rather than American Historical Association? Apparently they do. In January, the members rejected a resolution to oppose all attacks on academic freedom, whether from the Right or from the Left. Instead, they passed a weaker resolution that selectively condemned only threats coming from the Right. But it is not over yet. I participated in this controversy as part of a three-man libertarian, left, and right coalition for academic freedom. The other members of the coalition were Ralph Luker, the head of the Cliopatria blog at the History News Network, and Robert K.C. Johnson, a historian at Brooklyn College.

In this first foray in the fight for academic freedom, we made some valuable inroads. We may yet have the last word.

Our chances were slim and we knew it. Also, we had only a few weeks to prepare. Not until December did we learn that the AHA business meeting would consider a resolution to oppose David Horowitz's Academic Bill of Rights (ABOR). A leftist in the 1960s, Horowitz is now a militant activist for conservative causes. He founded the Center for the Study of Popular Culture in Los Angeles and publishes FrontPage Magazine. Many of the provisions of Horowitz's ABOR seem laudable, at least on first scrutiny. It seeks to prohibit faculty from being hired on the basis of their political or religious beliefs. It requires that faculty expose students to diverse perspectives and, according to Horowitz, prohibits raising political issues in class that are outside the course subject matter. This provision opens the

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door for a student to file a complaint by making a charge of "indoctrination."

Whatever the intentions of the drafters, the ABOR has already unleashed forces that seek to stifle free and open debate on campus. In Florida, for example, Rep. Dennis Baxley says that his version of the ABOR would enable students to sue professors who do not teach Intelligent Design (ID). Horowitz denies that the ABOR would have this effect, but in doing so he raises additional, troubling questions. His bill does not mandate ID, he says, because it reserves special protection only for ideas within "the spectrum of significant scholarly opinion." This rationale provides little reassurance to libertarians, especially if they are antiwar or anarchist, with views falling well outside that spectrum.

The most serious danger posed by the ABOR, however, is that it could snuff out all controversial discussion in the classroom. A campus governed by the ABOR would present professors with a dilemma: either play it safe or risk their jobs by saying something that might offend an overly sensitive student. As Jesse Walker of Reason has argued, the result is a "chilling effect" that makes the ABOR analogous to the now defunct Fairness Doctrine in broadcasting.

Equally striking are the parallels between the ABOR and



current campus speech codes, even though support for these codes comes overwhelmingly from the academic left. They exist on most campuses in the United States. If literally enforced, many would suppress nearly all controversial, and much noncontroversial, campus speech.

For example, Brown University prohibits "verbal behavior," whether "intentional or unintentional," that leads to "feelings of impotence, anger, or disenfranchisement." Colby College proscribes words that cause a "vague sense of danger" or threaten loss of "self-esteem." In 2004, the faculty senate of the University of Alabama proposed sweeping rules denying university funds for "any behavior which demeans or reduces an individual based on group affiliation or personal characteristics, or which promotes hate or discrimination, in any approved University program or activity." Would this all-inclusive language apply to Alabama fans who heckle Auburn players or students at football games? It is hard to see why it would not.

When campus administrators enforce speech codes and related rules, conservatives and libertarians often bear the brunt of the attack. In January 2003, for example, California Polytechnic State University (Cal Poly) subjected Steve Hinkle, the president of the College Republican Club, to a grueling seven-hour hearing after a student accused him of "offensive" speech. Hinkle had done nothing more than attempt to post a flier in the school's multicultural center advertising a speech by Mason Weaver, a black conservative and author of "It's OK to Leave the Plantation." Cal Poly pronounced Hinkle guilty of "disruption of a campus event" and commanded that he write a letter of apology.

A year before the Ward Churchill imbroglio, the University of Colorado banned an "affirmative action bake sale" by College Republicans who sold cookies at "suggested" lower prices to racial minorities. Even as the AHA

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*Rep. Baxley's version of the Academic Bill of Rights would enable students to sue professors who do not teach Intelligent Design.*

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met in its business meeting, the University of North Carolina at Greensboro was pursuing the charge of "violation of Respect" against two students for demonstrating outside a small limited "free speech zone." Ironically, the students were protesting against the university's policy of designated speech zones!

Just as troubling is the case of Hans-Hermann Hoppe, a professor of economics at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas (UNLV). In 2004, a student complained that Hoppe's assertion in a lecture that homosexuals were more likely to have higher time preferences (that is, to favor present-day consumption over long-term savings and investment) constituted hate speech. In February 2005, UNLV Provost Raymond W. Alden III sent Hoppe a "letter of instruction" that announced a reprimand and suspension without pay for a week for creating a "hostile learning environment."

Alden stated that Hoppe's statements were improper because they "were not supported by peer reviewed academic literature" and "not qualified as opinions, theories without experimental/statistical support." The fallacies of such a standard are obvious, or at least should be obvious.

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*The bill would present professors with a dilemma: either play it safe or risk their jobs by saying something that might offend an overly sensitive student.*

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What professor can claim (at least with a straight face) that he has not violated this peer-review rule in lecture, not just once but many times?

While academic freedom eventually triumphed in most of these cases, it was only because outside organizations, especially the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE), stirred up adverse publicity or threatened lawsuits. In the meantime, the college administrators in question had displayed to the world an appalling disdain for free speech, while all too many faculty, by not speaking out, showed either failure of nerve or outright complicity in injustice.

It is impossible to escape the conclusion that these attitudes can be traced, at least in part, to the fact that the victims of repression were often conservatives or libertarians. But the Right will probably prove no better at protecting liberty if it is ever given the same power. As long as so many continue to follow the credo of "free speech for me, but not for thee," prospects for academic freedom are bleak.

With all this in mind, we began our campaign to sway the AHA by making a principled private appeal to the sponsors of the anti-ABOR resolution. We urged them to add a friendly amendment condemning speech codes. We expected to be rebuffed but retained some hope. Because Luker and I are members of Historians Against the War (HAW), the chief group behind the anti-ABOR resolution, it was easier (or seemed easier) for us to make the case that a consistent stand would help the antiwar movement win support from conservatives and libertarians. We also warned that if HAW and the AHA remained silent on speech codes, the effect would give Horowitz an unintended victory by allowing him to triumphantly charge us with hypocrisy and selectivity. On the other hand, if the AHA upheld academic freedom for everyone, we predicted that Horowitz, not the members of the AHA, would be rendered speechless.

The sponsors were not buying it. They refused to compromise. Meanwhile, Horowitz began to criticize our resolution for fostering "complete anarchy" on campus, giving aid and comfort to Ward Churchill and others on the Left who try to indoctrinate. Now almost everything was going according to expectation. We were smoking out critics on both the Left and the Right and, to a limited extent, were making them confront uncomfortable truths. Also, FIRE, the

most consistent organizational champion of academic freedom today, was highly supportive of our cause and provided valuable publicity.

It was time to take it up a notch. The three of us drafted a substitute to the anti-ABOR resolution, proposing that the AHA oppose the ABOR and campus speech codes as "the two leading threats to academic freedom today."

Just prior to the final showdown, we pushed our substitute at the meeting of Historians Against the War. We lost overwhelmingly. The most favorable development was the failure of our opponents to defend speech codes per se. Their

courts have generally ruled against the codes, a visit to FIRE's website will confirm that they continue to present a clear threat to academic freedom.

The AHA business meeting was more of the same, although we did pick up a few allies. While the AHA officers bent over backwards to be fair to us, more than seven out of ten of the members voted down our substitute — despite the fact that, as in the HAW meeting, not a single opponent stood up to make the case for speech codes. When it was over, the AHA meeting unanimously approved the anti-ABOR resolution. Although we regarded that resolution as weak and overly selective, we voted with the majority.



*As long as so many continue to follow the credo of "free speech for me, but not for thee," prospects for academic freedom are bleak.*

favorite retorts were almost entirely practical: "this is not the right time," "speech codes are an entirely different issue," "the ABOR presents a bigger threat," "your wording is not specific enough," etc. Some claimed that we were beating a dead horse because the courts had almost always struck down speech codes. This contention is misleading. While the

Was it all worth it? It was not a pleasant experience to be beaten at every turn, but the answer is yes. While we have lost for the time being, we seem to be on the offensive in the arena of ideas. The failure of anyone at the convention to go on record in favor of speech codes was especially encouraging. Several of our opponents even came up to us after the meeting to promise their support for a resolution condemning the codes at AHA's next convention. We have our doubts but intend to take them up on their offer.

The most valuable lesson of this experience is that standing on principle can send a powerful message about the importance of academic freedom and win unanticipated friends for freedom's cause. □

## Reflections, from page 14

of protection in the way this question suggests? If Americans reduced their use of foreign oil by 10% by substituting biodiesel, could the Navy be reduced by 10% on account of that? 5%? Any? Where does this line of thinking get us? I think where it gets us is to subsidized biodiesel, which was the intent. And the intent ends there.

— Bruce Ramsey

**Leaving the WTO behind** — Increased flows of goods and people around the world can be disruptive to settled ways of operating, especially in poorer countries with poorly developed financial and service sectors and cozy political relationships. In the early stages, opening to foreign investment can mean sweatshops. Protecting locals from global competition, however, tends to keep countries in poverty and "protect" consumers from lower prices.

The anti-globalization protesters at the WTO meetings in Hong Kong late last year were fewer, less disruptive, and less influential than in years past — and a few in the media noticed they were mostly South Korean farmers who don't want to give up their privileged position in a highly subsidized sector. But the minimal agreement the WTO managed to squeeze out will have little effect on trade.

Fortunately globalization operates more through company-to-company deals than through governmental negotiations, and it increased nicely over the year. High-tech workers in India and farmers in Brazil have become world-competitive and are setting an example for others. The World Bank notes that two-thirds of recent tariff reductions in poorer countries have come unilaterally rather than as

"concessions." Reducing more barriers worldwide would be helpful, but trade happens anyway.

— Alan W. Bock

**Arthur Seldon, RIP** — The recent passing of Arthur Seldon merits more than summary notice. Seldon was one of the leading libertarian voices in the 20th century. Though hardly known in the United States, he was a key intellectual inspiration for the Thatcherite revolution in Great Britain.

Margaret Thatcher herself wrote Seldon in 1996: "At a time when free enterprise and the free market were unfashionable you championed their cause, laying the foundations for their revival in the 1970s. . . . You always refused to accept Britain's decline and through your visionary work and rigorous preparation, you inspired much of our success during the '80s."

Milton Friedman wrote Seldon the same year that he had "always been a very strong, very outspoken, very honest voice in the fight for human freedom. Your fellow fighters have benefited from your persistence and effectiveness."

Seldon was the editorial director of the London-based Institute for Economic Affairs for three decades, from the late 1950s to the mid-1980s. In this position, he published hundreds of articles, pamphlets, and books that helped to move Britain intellectually from a socialist to a capitalist view. Friedrich Hayek said of the Institute of Economic Affairs that, as a result of Seldon's work, it became "the most powerful maker of opinion in England."

Seldon died in England in October 2005. He was 89.

— Lanny Ebenstein

# Can Trains Be Saved?

*by Randal O'Toole*

Amtrak is stupendously funded and scarcely ridden. Is there any future for passenger rail in America?

Like many libertarians attracted to transportation policy — Reason founder Robert Poole comes to mind — I love trains, especially passenger trains. So Amtrak is a particularly painful subject. On one hand, I know that government subsidies are wasteful and likely to be abused. On the other hand, I am thrilled by the idea of taking a train from Seattle to Los Angeles or Chicago to San Francisco (actually Oakland).

Joseph Vranich, who helped create Amtrak back in 1970 and later worked for a pro-Amtrak lobby group, gives train lovers some reason for hope. Working with the Amtrak bureaucracy for years has convinced Vranich that the best way to protect passenger trains is to get rid of Amtrak. His 1997 book, "Derailed: What Went Wrong and What to Do About America's Passenger Trains," argued that killing Amtrak would lead many railroads or other private entrepreneurs to get back into passenger service. His more recent book, "End of the Line: The Failure of Amtrak Reform," showed why Amtrak reforms approved by Congress in 1997 were never put into place.

Amtrak is truly a failure. After nearly \$30 billion of public investments, Amtrak logged fewer passenger miles of travel last year than the railroads did in 1970, the last full year of private rail operation. From 1975 to 2000, airline passenger miles grew by 260% and highway passenger miles by 83%, but Amtrak passenger miles increased by less than 40%.

Amtrak cannot blame its failure on greater subsidies to competing modes of transportation. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, subsidies to highways in 2000 averaged less than four-tenths of a penny per passenger mile, while subsidies to airlines were just one-tenth of a

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penny per passenger mile. At close to 20 cents per passenger mile, subsidies to Amtrak were 50 times highway subsidies and nearly 200 times airline subsidies. As the Washington Post wrote earlier this year, "every 10,000 miles that a train passenger traveled in 2002 cost federal taxpayers \$200 in subsidies, compared with \$6 for passenger jets and \$4 for long-distance buses."

Yet I can't help feeling that it didn't have to be this way. If it had been properly designed from the start, Amtrak could have operated and possibly expanded passenger service without any operating subsidies. While it might have needed federal or state grants for capital purchases of new rail cars, it is even possible that passenger revenues could have paid for part or all of the cost of such new cars.

Was Amtrak doomed to fail from the start? Are passenger trains truly obsolete outside of a few busy corridors? Or was Amtrak's failure due to poor management, ill-advised business models, congressional meddling, or any other factor within our control? With a different history, could Amtrak have done better? And if so, can we still save it today?

## **Agreeing on the Mission**

America's freight railroads have proven that rail transport is not dead. Between 1970 and 2000, railroads increased their freight movement (measured in tons carried times miles

traveled) by 92%. During this time, overall freight movement increased by only 71%, so rail's market share increased.

How was this gain accomplished? The simple answer is that Congress deregulated the railroads in 1979, allowing them to be much more responsive to their customers. The more complicated answer is that the railroads took advantage of deregulation to create a new business model that made more effective use of both labor and equipment.

Congressional deregulation of the airlines was also the key to their huge gain in passengers over the past two-and-a-half decades. It is especially worthwhile to compare Amtrak with Southwest Airlines, which, like Amtrak, began operating in 1971. After the airlines were deregulated, Southwest followed a different business model than its competitors, making far more effective use of its airplanes and workers.

*Years of working with the Amtrak bureaucracy convinced Vranich that the best way to protect passenger trains is to get rid of Amtrak.*

This model has made it the most profitable, most imitated, and, by some measures, the largest domestic airline in the nation.

By comparison, Amtrak followed the same tired business model for passenger rail that the railroads had used for decades. This model required high labor costs and high capital costs that made it unable to compete with highways and deregulated airlines.

Could a government entity such as Amtrak be as innovative as Southwest Airlines? Libertarians would say no. As Great Northern Railway builder James J. Hill once observed, government operation is "slow, cumbrous and costly." But for the sake of argument, let's assume we are in 1970 and Congress is writing legislation to take over the nation's private passenger trains. What would we include in that legislation?

The first thing government agencies need is a clearly defined mission. "Government will malperform if an agency is under pressure to satisfy different constituencies with different values and different demands," says management expert Peter Drucker. "Performance requires concentration on one goal."

At first glance, Amtrak's mission would seem to be simple: attract and carry passengers. But for many powerful members of Congress, that goal has been secondary to the mission of providing pork to their states and districts. West Virginia Sen. Robert Byrd, for example, was famous for diverting Amtrak's high-speed turbo trains to low-speed service through his state. For unions, the goal of carrying passengers has been secondary to keeping labor costs high. For many urban mayors, Amtrak's chief goal would seem to be to restore oversized, but little used, historical train stations. These and other side goals detract from the supposed chief mission of carrying passengers.

Perhaps it was this confusion over goals that led early Amtrak president Paul Reistrup to tell a rail-enthusiast mag-

azine in the mid-1970s that "we can't afford to subsidize sightseeing." That might have been true if Amtrak's goal was to provide pork or support unions. But if Reistrup thought that Amtrak's goal was attracting passengers, he would have realized that sightseers were part of his core market and that sightseeing was Amtrak's main competitive advantage over the airlines.

Once everyone agrees that Amtrak's sole goal is to carry passengers efficiently, the company must be insulated from congressional pressure to do otherwise. Amtrak must be made as independent as possible, especially for operating costs.

### Partnerships to Minimize Costs

The best way to lower operating costs is to create incentives to reduce costs so that minimal subsidies, and ideally no operating subsidies, are needed. The first step would be to rely on competition and private enterprise rather than government monopoly to carry out core passenger rail services: train operations, food services, interior cleaning, and railcar maintenance.

Urban transit agencies that contract out bus services to private operators spend 40-50% less per bus mile than agencies which operate buses themselves. The agencies purchase buses, then lease them to Laidlaw or other bus operators who maintain them and hire the drivers to run them. Transit agencies in Boston, Los Angeles, Ft. Lauderdale, and other cities also contract out their commuter rail operations to Herzog Transit Services and other companies.

Amtrak could start by contracting out dining car services. Many passenger trains have both a full-service diner and a grill car providing fast food. Rather than operate these services itself, Amtrak could accept bids from restaurants to provide them, in the same way that the Fred Harvey Company long provided meal services to passengers on the Santa Fe Railway. McDonalds, Wendy's, Pizza Hut, and Taco Bell might bid on the fast-food services. Chili's, Applebees, or other sit-down restaurant chains might bid on the dining car services. Operators would not have to be national chains, and local restaurants might be particularly interested in serving short-distance corridor trains that pass through their home cities.

With hundreds of daily trains, many different companies could provide meals on different trains. Such competition would encourage each operator to provide better service at lower costs. Ideally, Amtrak would require contractees to charge the same prices on the trains as they do in stationary restaurants. Except possibly on the busiest routes, private operators might not be able to provide Amtrak food services at a profit, but the bids they would submit would offer to provide those services at the lowest possible subsidy.

In the same way, Amtrak could experiment with contracting out first-class sleeping car operations to hotels, just as the railroads once contracted sleeping car service to the Pullman Company. For that matter, Amtrak could contract out actual train operations to private operators, possibly the railroads themselves. Railroads that had proven particularly friendly to passengers before 1971, such as the Santa Fe, might become the preferred operators even off of their own lines.

Contracting various rail services to different operators has been used with varying degrees of success in Britain

since that nation privatized most of its railroads. One result is that Britain is providing rail services as good as or better than those on the European continent at a much lower cost.

### **Maximize Labor Productivity**

Amtrak can save even more on labor. The railroads' business model of large station crews, one attendant for each revenue car, huge dining car crews, plus a five-person train crew was unsustainable by 1970. Today, train crews have been reduced to three, but Amtrak still pays too many on-board attendants, station employees, and baggage handlers.

Americans who marvel at European trains should note that they use significantly fewer workers. Passengers handle their own baggage, there are no coach attendants, on-board crews are held to a minimum, and many stations have no ticket agents or other staff.

Three out of five dollars spent on Amtrak operations go to salaries, wages, and benefits. Cutting labor costs in half would eliminate Amtrak's operating deficit. Reducing labor costs would allow Amtrak to operate more trains, and the revenue from those trains would similarly reduce operating losses.

A revised business model could considerably reduce Amtrak labor requirements. First, ticketing should be handled mostly by travel agents or machines. Rather than employ ticket agents at every station, Amtrak could rent out part of its stations to travel agents who would sell all forms of travel including rail travel. Ticket machines and on-board sales by conductors would suffice to serve towns too small to support a travel agent.

For baggage handling, Amtrak could contract with UPS or another shipping company to move goods that wouldn't take up an entire train car. As a part of the contract, the company would also handle passengers' baggage. This might work only in larger cities that generate lots of business less than a carload. In smaller towns, Amtrak might offer no bag-

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*Subsidies to Amtrak have been 50 times greater than highway subsidies and nearly 200 times airline subsidies.*

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gage service, but would encourage people bringing baggage that is too large to fit in overhead luggage racks to stow it in lockers provided for them on selected train cars.

The main reason Amtrak has an attendant in each car is to open the doors at stations and help passengers on and off the trains. Instead, Amtrak should equip all rail stations with high-level platforms and all passenger equipment with automatic doors that can be centrally controlled by the conductor. The labor savings would quickly repay the cost of these changes. At each stop, the conductor opens all the doors, people get on or off, the conductor closes the doors, and the train goes on. This virtually eliminates the need for coach attendants and greatly reduces the need for sleeping car attendants. This could also reduce station dwell time and thereby speed up timetables.

Sleeping car attendants might be completely eliminated by contracting for cleaning crews to clean coaches and sleep-

ing cars on every train each day. Such cleanings, including the replacement of all linens in sleeping rooms that had been occupied the night before, might take place during long layovers or while the train is traveling between two cities. When

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*For many members of Congress, the goal of carrying passengers has been secondary to the mission of providing pork to their electorate.*

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the crew is done, they would get off the train and get on the next train back, cleaning that train while returning to their home city.

Aside from the engine crew and food service workers employed by restaurant-contractees, the train crew effectively becomes no more than a conductor and a trainman, themselves perhaps employed by railroad-contractees. Ultimately, Amtrak itself might have no employees other than the managers who oversee all of the contractees.

### **Maximize Use of Equipment**

Reinventing passenger rail service also means making more effective use of equipment. The old business model had trains travel for anywhere from several hours to two days, then sit for as long as 24 hours before making a return trip. The result was that cars would be in service for as little as 65–75% of the time. Eliminating this downtime would allow Amtrak to operate more trains with the same number of cars.

One of Amtrak's early discoveries was that a continuous Seattle-to-Los Angeles train was much more popular than the Seattle-to-Portland, Portland-to-Oakland, and Oakland-to-Los Angeles trains that the railroads had been running. Why not extend this lesson and run a train from, say, Florida to Chicago to Seattle to Los Angeles to New Orleans and back to Florida?

A more complex routing would have a train weave back-and-forth across the country for several weeks at a time. After three to four weeks, the train would be taken out of service for a day or two for major maintenance. Passengers from, say, Oakland to Albuquerque could make the trip without changing trains. The "weave" would also be designed so that popular routes, such as San Francisco-to-Los Angeles, would get more than one daily train.

Naturally, schedules would include padding to allow for late trains, including long layovers at "corner" cities such as Seattle and Los Angeles. But through passengers might appreciate these layovers as an opportunity to get a quick tour of the city. Even with such padding, Amtrak could get 90% use of its equipment instead of 70% or less, while the increased connectivity offered by such schedules might actually boost ridership.

### **Make Trains Interesting**

In addition to cutting costs, Amtrak needs to attract passengers. Depending on the route, Amtrak serves three different markets. First are business travelers who appreciate high-speed downtown-to-downtown service. Second are stu-

dents and other low-income travelers who don't have a car but want to travel by something more comfortable than a bus. Finally there are vacationers who believe that getting there should be half the fun.

Amtrak can compete for business travelers in the Boston-to-Washington corridor based on speed and convenience. Elsewhere, Amtrak is often slower than driving for short-distance trips and certainly slower than flying for long-distance trips. To compete for passengers, especially on long-

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*To compete for passengers, especially on long-distance trains, Amtrak has to realize that it is really in the entertainment business.*

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distance trains, Amtrak has to realize that it is really in the entertainment business. This means it has to make its trains interesting places to be.

Some of the railroads realized this in the closing years of private rail passenger operations. The Great Northern Empire Builder of the late 1950s, for example, had three non-revenue seats, in eight different locations, for every four revenue seats. The non-revenue seats were located in grill cars, diners, and various observation cars and lounges, and were for use by any ticketed passenger.

While Amtrak inherited the equipment of the Empire Builder and other fascinating trains, most of this equipment was near the end of its expected service life. When private bus companies were taken over by public transit agencies in the 1970s, the first thing the public agencies did was obtain federal grants to replace their aging fleets. But Amtrak made little effort to replace its long-distance passenger cars for several years, leading to a reputation for being unreliable. When it did replace the trains, the double-decker cars it purchased, known as Superliners, were a step backwards from the Santa Fe passenger cars that inspired them.

In contrast to the 1955 Empire Builder, Superliner non-revenue areas were limited to the diner, the Sightseer Lounge with its inexplicably small number of seats, and a cafe below the lounge. The non-revenue spaces were inadequate, and the revenue spaces were boring. Coaches combined the monotony of Greyhound buses with the discomfort of airline seating. With four different room configurations, sleeping cars were slightly better but were priced out of reach of most travelers.

Instead of developing its own unimaginative specifications, Amtrak should have invited railcar manufacturers to propose their own plans for medium- and long-distance train cars. Here is how I envision long-distance, double-decker Superliners.

Instead of a mid-train lounge car, I would put lounges at the beginning and end of every long-distance train. One half of each car would be covered with wraparound windows, giving passengers a tremendous view of the passing scenery.

These windows would face forward on the first car on the train and provide viewing for 30 to 40 theater-style seats. The back half of this car would be the train's fast-food or grill car.

On the last car of the train the windows would face backwards, with 30 or so seats facing in different directions, parlor-car style. The front half of this car would have tables and seating for 40 to 50 dining car patrons. When demand was high enough, diners could also eat in the lounge.

Coaches would have two different configurations downstairs. One would have room for handicapped passengers or other riders who don't want to climb stairs to their seats. The other would have a large self-serve baggage area with lockers, ski racks, bicycle hooks, and other storage areas.

Upstairs, coaches would have seating in various configurations and might be divided into more than one compartment for variety's sake. Comfortable seats would face forward in some compartments, but seats in other compartments might face to the side or circle around tables. Long-distance trains would have a children's car with toys, games, and playsets. "Quiet cars" might serve business travelers by providing power outlets and wireless Internet. Of course, laptops and the Internet were not known in 1970, but the idea of keeping some cars quiet while encouraging noisy children to use another car is timeless.

Another style of coach could provide revenue seats in the off-season but quickly be converted into a mid-train feature car during high-demand seasons or on popular routes. The car could include a small stage for musicians and other family entertainers to perform on board in exchange for tips and travel discounts. Movies could be offered when no live entertainment was available. The lower section of the car might hold vending machines with snacks and beverages.

Sleeping cars would come in first-class and second-class configurations. Second-class sleepers would be divided into compartments with seats for four that fold down into two double bunks at night. The bunks would have mattresses but passengers would bring their own sleeping bags or linens, and parties of fewer than four people would expect to share

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*Ultimately, Amtrak itself might have no employees other than the managers who oversee all of the contractees.*

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compartments with other passengers. First-class sleepers would be private rooms similar to or better than those found on current Superliners.

Amtrak's red-grey-and-blue pointless-arrow exteriors and Betsy-Ross Moderne interiors promised passengers a journey devoid of excitement. Each car should instead be individually decorated, with a strong regional emphasis. Exterior colors would give potential passengers a preview of the forests, fields, mountains, and streams they would see on their journeys. Interior decorations might include regional Native American art, scenic photographs, and, in the feature cars, the type of "found" decorations seen in many restaurants and bistros. Every train, and every car on the train, would offer passengers something new and exciting.

*continued on page 53*



# Reviews

**"The Great Earthquake and Firestorms of 1906: How San Francisco Nearly Destroyed Itself,"** by Philip Fradkin. University of California Press, 2005, 432 pages.

**"A Crack in the Edge of the World: America and the Great California Earthquake of 1906,"** by Simon Winchester. HarperCollins, 2005, 480 pages.

**"San Francisco Is Burning: The Untold Story of the 1906 Earthquake and Fires,"** by Dennis Smith. Viking, 2005, 384 pages.

## While San Francisco Burned

Timothy Sandefur

A century before Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast, an earthquake measuring around 8.0 and lasting more than a full minute smashed into the city of San Francisco, overturning lamps and cracking gas lines. The fires that spread over the next three days reduced almost the entire city to smoldering piles of stone. The devastation of April 18–21, 1906, is hard to believe today: 508 square blocks were destroyed; 28,188 structures burned. It remains the largest peacetime urban conflagration in history, and modern estimates suggest that some 3,000 people lost their lives.

The story has some eerie parallels with this summer's hurricanes. Like New Orleans, San Francisco had been warned, but government agencies spent their money and attention on bossism and political favors instead of on public safety concerns. In both cities, the political structures proved just as rickety as the physical structures, and when the disaster came, the city fractured on racial lines while bureaucrats responded with a mixture of

blundering and brutality. San Francisco's corrupt and incompetent mayor, Eugene Schmitz, gave the order to execute looters summarily, although the chaos made it impossible to tell looters from innocent civilians rescuing their own property. Nobody knows how many perished at the hands of trigger-happy soldiers who, led by the ruthlessly inept General Frederick Funston, assumed martial law — even though it was never declared.

Clumsy as he was at maintaining order, Funston was an even worse fire-fighter. He sent troops racing through the city to blow up buildings with dynamite and gunpowder to make firebreaks — but the soldiers didn't know how to use explosives, and the city's only demolition expert was drunk. Pulverized buildings only made more kindling, and flying gunpowder only started more fires. Civilians who tried to remain in their homes were dragged out at gunpoint, although those few who were allowed to make a stand were able to save their homes. Meanwhile, firemen rushed from fire to fire, finding most of the

water pipes broken and most of the emergency cisterns dilapidated and empty. They were forced to use sand, and even sewage, to fight the flames. (There was enough wine in the city's warehouses to quench the fires, but nobody seems to have thought of it.) At one point, a tugboat in the harbor pumped water through a linkage of firehoses stretching over a mile in length, to help fight fires deep within the city.

The ships offered one of the few scenes of unambiguous heroism. Lieutenant Frederick "Frisky" Freeman, in command of the fire tug *Leslie*, directed the efforts to save the city's waterfront, which would prove essential to receiving relief supplies in the days to come. Freeman, oftentimes dodging General Funston's meddlesome commands, managed to save almost the entire Embarcadero from destruction.

The rest of the city, of course, was not so lucky. Hundreds of thousands were rendered homeless, and virtually the entire city was destroyed in the worst calamity in the history of the West Coast. But San Franciscans were

eager to dust themselves off and start anew. Within a decade, the "Phoenix City," as it called itself, had rebuilt, prouder and more ostentatious than before, in time to host the Panama-Pacific International Exposition, one of the great showpieces of a proud age.

Along with the rebuilding came reforms to the city's profoundly corrupt politics. For years, Mayor Schmitz had been ruled by political boss Abraham Reuf, who, from his office as city attorney, served as a middleman for bribing the state legislature, and commanded labor unrest whenever it would produce a profit. Just before the earthquake, former mayor James D. Phelan had started the process of ending Reuf's control over the city, and when the dust settled, he and sugar magnate Rudolph Spreckles financed an investigation that culminated in convictions and jail time for Schmitz and Reuf.

To many people, this sounds like a story of resilience testifying to the greatness — if also the recklessness — of the American spirit. But for Philip Fradkin, it's a story not of triumph, but of foolhardiness, exploitation, and greed, all of which is ultimately traceable to a sinister "oligarchy" of capitalist schemers. Although his book delivers outstanding new research, at the end of 400 pages of scattered and inelegant prose the reader is left with a timeworn caricature of early 20th century capitalism, complete with watch fobs, handlebar mustaches, and smoky back rooms. San Francisco, he tells us, was rebuilt because greedy industrial-

ists concocted a vigorous PR campaign to purge all mention of the word "earthquake" and delude people into thinking the city was safe.

Fradkin seethes with contempt for American industrialism: he calls railroad employees "minions"; refers to looting as "liberating"; describes the architecture of San Francisco as "faux-European monstrosities of the silver and railroad barons." He even complains that the name firefighters gave to the "Ham and Eggs Fire" has "a working class connotation," when in fact it was based on the understanda-

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*Mayor Schmitz gave the order to execute looters summarily, but the chaos made it impossible to tell looters from innocent civilians rescuing their own property.*

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ble folk tale that the fire began when someone cooked breakfast. Mayor Schmitz's order to shoot looters was not just rash, according to Fradkin, but part of a class war — proven, he says, by the fact that "price gouging" was not similarly punished. (Of course, contrary to Fradkin's characterization, a sudden increase in prices in a disaster area is not a "crime committed against the needy in times of crisis," but a natural, ultimately beneficial

reaction which draws supplies to where they are needed most.)

Business leaders simply could do nothing right, in his view. This leads him into some curious contradictions. He complains that free market institutions failed to give serious study to the possibility of a major earthquake — yet he admits that the insurance industry had been predicting catastrophe for San Francisco years beforehand. He claims the city's capitalists ignored the warnings of the 1868 quake — yet admits that the Palace Hotel was built with state-of-the-art earthquake and fire-proof technology. He depicts the 1900s as an era of heartless greed; of Snidely Whiplashes fantasizing about evicting poor widows. Yet he admits that the relief effort was the largest the nation has ever known to this day — \$10 million in gold-backed 1906 dollars, almost all from private donations — and that the hated Southern Pacific railroad offered free passage to the refugees. He complains that businessmen blamed the city's destruction on the fire, rather than the earthquake, as part of a vast right-wing conspiracy to hypnotize the public into forgetting there even was an earthquake. Yet he admits that the fire was the major cause of destruction — at least 90% of it — and that the fire was spread mostly by incompetent government employees blowing up block after block with incendiaries. And if the "oligarchs," as Fradkin insists on calling them, thought they could make people forget about the danger of earthquakes, they were remarkably unsuccessful. A flood of books, magazines, and coin-operated stereopticons brought images of The Quake — as well as the word "earthquake" — to the attention of the country within months of the devastation.

Throughout all his contradictions, Fradkin's one constant is unrelenting negativity. Although one critic has hailed his book as a tale of "hubris and heroism," there are exactly four and a half pages of heroism in his book: his description of Lieutenant Freeman's efforts at the Embarcadero. The rest is a constant hissing at "the rich and powerful" who "manipulated" society and cruelly put "the rights of property owners" ahead of "the safety of the community." Fradkin seems to think

## Calling All Economists!

Since the Left depends entirely on the assumption that taking from the rich to give to the poor reduces inequality, it would be utterly demolished by the opposite-most conclusion, that it didn't reduce but increased inequality.

That is the "new idea" with the gold coin prize for refuting it regularly offered here, and completely ignored by the masterminds of libertarianism, too busy to demolish the Left. They're irrelevant. The problem isn't figuring out the form a free market should take. It would figure that out for itself. The problem is getting to it. And the obstacle to it is not uncertainty over the feasibility of the market principle, for the majority wouldn't allow it even if it were feasible. It doesn't want non-aggression; it wants aggression, plunder, and redistribution, and could be dissuaded from it only by the demonstration that it didn't pay, that taking from the rich to give to the poor didn't reduce but increased inequality.

That is the only logical strategy, and the neophobic libertarians who can't be bothered with it are certainly not leaders in the fight for freedom but irrelevant to it. So, when you've had enough of their intellectual sideshows, and are ready to demolish the Left, see *Intellectually Incorrect* at [intinc.org](http://intinc.org).

San Francisco should simply not exist at all, and that in a world free of corporate greed, it wouldn't. "It is a marvel," he writes, that San Franciscans "did not just give up and go away." But that marvel is not a source of admiration to him — it's a sign of weakness. Why Fradkin himself continues to live in the Bay Area, as he has for 30 years, he doesn't explain. Is he, too, a victim of the capitalist plot?

Simon Winchester, who studied geology at Oxford, approaches *The Quake* from a very different perspective, resulting in a book much broader and shallower than Fradkin's. He is interested in why the ground shook to begin with — and it doesn't start shaking until almost 250 pages into his book. His discussion of *The Quake* is over 130 pages later, and the rest is devoted to the nature and causes of earthquakes in general, mixed with his trademark amusing digressions. Although Winchester is the best writer of the three, "A Crack in the Edge of the World" is light on the history of the earthquake itself, relying much more on secondary sources and his personal trips to earthquake zones.

It's a relief that, possibly because of his broader perspective, Winchester resists diving into feeble sociological

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*Civilians who tried to remain in their homes were dragged out at gunpoint, although those few who were allowed to make a stand were able to save their homes.*

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whining. Yes, he acknowledges, many business leaders tried to play down the effects of *The Quake* and the likelihood of another, "setting a tone of rather forced jollity." And they did so in part to prevent a flight of investors. But there were other reasons, too — for one thing, insurance companies were more likely to pay for fire than for earthquake damage. And in any case, the pro-business spin doctors were unable to prevent the presses from flooding the market with books like

"The San Francisco Calamity by Earthquake and Fire," and ultimately making Los Angeles, farther from fault lines and relatively safer, into the new capital of California's economy. Ultimately, the "forced jollity" was less a capitalist conspiracy than a combination of can-do spirit, self-defensive whistling in the dark, and a conscious, understandable love of the places that we call home. As Winchester points out, Yellowstone Park "sits on top of a potential super-volcano, the eruption of which — at some unpredictable moment in the geological near term — will devastate nearly all of Western America." Yet people continue to live in the path of destruction, not because they are fools, but because they believe the risks are worth the rewards, and they refuse to cower before Nature's fickleness. "All that man does, and everywhere that man inhabits," writes Winchester, "is for the moment only — like the cherry blossoms in a Japanese springtime, exquisite simply because of their very impermanence."

But it's Dennis Smith who, in "San Francisco is Burning," directly challenges Philip Fradkin's approach. Smith's primary interest is in heroism, and particularly in Lieutenant Freeman, whose leadership and intelligence have never been adequately recognized. Even Smith's writing style is the opposite of Fradkin's. He writes like a pulp novelist, with unabashed enthusiasm for the might and perseverance required to fight fires without gas masks, to carry hundreds of pounds of firehose without automobiles, or, in the fire's awful climax, to push an iron steam engine nine blocks up the hill toward Mission Dolores Park to link to the one "golden hydrant" that somehow still worked, and there to conquer the fire on April 21st.

Unfortunately, Smith is willing to rely on questionable sources, including the mass-market books published only months after *The Quake* — books Winchester describes

as simply "fiction." He makes some outlandish statements (e.g., "San Franciscans were not prejudiced against the Irish . . . The city prided itself, then as now, on its liberal acceptance of all people"), and repeats unverifiable and even apocryphal stories, such as tales of policemen shooting people trapped in the rubble so as to put them out of their misery, or the story that the Ham and Eggs Fire started in the kitchen of "a

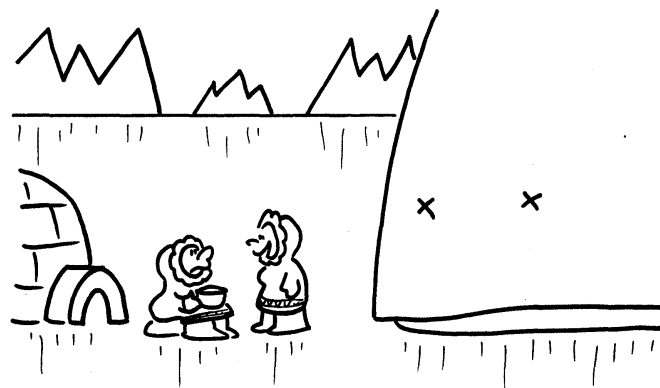
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*Fradkin depicts the 1900s as an era of heartless greed; of Snidely Whiplashes fantasizing about evicting poor widows.*

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woman living on Hayes Street" — which is about as reliable as the story of Mrs. O'Leary's cow. A reader is understandably skeptical about the rest of Smith's facts, and this suspicion is only deepened by the fact that he provides no footnotes, but merely a lame "author's note" assuring "that all information contained in the book may be relied upon as historically accurate."

These flaws are fatal, and that's regrettable because the story Smith wants to tell very much deserves to be told. There was much heroism in San Francisco; it was an age of heroism. But while Smith excels in putting a personal face on the triumph and tragedy, his portrait is often just as shallow as Fradkin's. For Fradkin, Rudolph Spreckles and James D. Phelan were coldhearted moneygrubbers, on a dia-



"Be sure to save room for dessert."

bolical mission to snatch the scepter from the persecuted Abe Reuf; for Smith, they were spotless paragons of civic virtue, fighting the lonely fight against Reuf the Archvillain. Fradkin skates over the undeniable fact that Reuf was engaged in shameless brib-

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*A.P. Giannini, founder of the Bank of America, set up shop on a park bench amid the wreckage, lending small amounts to devastated workers so they could rebuild their lives.*

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ery; Smith ignores the illegal interrogations and corrupt trial procedures that convicted him.

But the difference between Smith's focus on heroism and Fradkin's obsession with greed is more than just a difference in perspective. It's symptomatic of a deepening cultural gulf that has serious implications for everyday life in America, and certainly for how we deal with great disasters. More than anything, the can-do spirit of San Francisco — what that age was proud to call being "indomitable" — was the spirit of enterprising individualism, which has in many ways been rejected by today's culture of entitlement and need. San Franciscans of 1906 saw that they had lived through an awful catastrophe, but they would not let it get the best of them. They rallied around ideals best exemplified by A.P. Giannini, the Italian capitalist who founded the Bank of America, and who set up shop on a park bench amid the wreckage of Union Square, lending small amounts to devastated workers so they could rebuild their lives. Today, a growing spirit of helplessness and servitude has inflicted upon society images of angry victims screaming demands into CNN cameras that the

government come and help them. An older generation would have thought this undignified — not because they were exploited, but because they believed in taking pride in the hardness of one's spirit. That kind of pride was the spiritual backbone of America's commercial republic, which built skyscrapers and spaceships, cured disease, and lit the nights. But it has weakened under a tide that idolizes the mundane and turns its back on "indomitability." This, combined with hysterical news media saturating the airwaves with manufactured crises and pitiful spectacle, has largely replaced the spirit of rugged individualism with one of grasping bitterness that John McWhorter has called "the victimology cult."

This is the psychological keystone of the welfare state, and its consequences are evident in the contrast between 1906 and 2005. Then as now, people suffered horrifying catastrophes, and those who came to their aid deserve all the gratitude possible. But today's relief efforts are tinged with a resentment that seems absent from the more self-reliant atmosphere of 1906. In 2002 alone, state and local governments in Louisiana spent \$7,094,373 on social programs, not counting schools. That's seven times the amount spent on police and fire services combined. Such a vigorous welfare machine has enormous moral consequences: destabilized families; violent inner cities; ruined public schools. But worse than these is what even Franklin Roosevelt recognized as the moral decay that accompanies welfare addiction. "Continued dependence on relief," he admitted, "induces a spiritual and moral disintegration . . . To dole out relief in this way is to administer a narcotic, a subtle destroyer of the human spirit." The welfare state inculcates a sense of relaxation even in those who do not receive aid, loosening the demands of responsibility, and sapping the energies that might otherwise be devoted to enterprise and self-improvement. A person is never really on his own today; never wholly in charge of his destiny; never truly accountable. We are relieved of the danger of failing, at the price of never having to try with all our might. Thus we never discover

what it means to succeed completely on our own. The result is a stifling of the moral imagination.

Time and Newsweek have seriously questioned whether New Orleans should even be rebuilt at all, a question that would have struck Americans of a century ago as absurd. But for writers like Philip Fradkin, for whom heroism, individualism, and achievement are trivial episodes in a tale of Dickensian woe, such questions are murmured in all seriousness. Interpreting the 1906 quake as an incident in the class struggle is of a piece with the modern static mindset that sees construction and reconstruction as an affront to community, or the environment, or other idols of the sensitive class. At bottom it is contempt for human achievement.

One contemporary observer of the earthquake recalled that in the days after the disaster many people considered moving elsewhere. But "it only required a moment's consideration" for them to choose to remain. San Francisco was the place where they

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*People choose to live in dangerous places — and to rebuild after disasters — because they believe in the possibility of an admittedly fleeting happiness.*

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were known and where there were still over 300,000 people to be fed, clothed, and housed. Here there was an adjacent country big enough for an empire, as rich in possibilities as any land on God's footstool, for which San Francisco was the bank and clearing house, the shipping point for the products, and the supply house for the needs. San Francisco was the place for them, for had not the commercial hand of the Orient and the islands been reaching out to this port, taking more and more of the things we grow and make, and returning to us things that the people of the Occident crave and need? San Francisco then was the place to renew business, where the conditions not only invited but demanded it, with the promise of great profit.

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To the welfare-state mentality, these words reveal desperate need, which cruelly forced people to stay in a place they knew to be dangerous. But to the people themselves, the "promise of great profit" meant opportunity — an opportunity for a happy and successful life, which in the broader sense meant the opportunity to make a city and a home. People choose to live in dangerous places — and to rebuild after disasters — because they believe in the possibility of an admittedly fleeting happiness, and because they love these cities.

No city is more deserving of that love than San Francisco, the most charming city in America. Every land has its dangers — the North has blizzards, the Midwest has tornadoes, New Orleans has hurricanes, and San Francisco has earthquakes. But cities are more than just places to live; they are connotations, images, and meanings, built a day at a time by the people who choose to make their lives there. They're cultures. As comedian Steve Martin wrote in his screenplay for "L.A. Story": "It's a place where they've taken a desert, and turned it into their dreams."

Like the residents of San Francisco and Los Angeles, the people of New Orleans knew for years that a major hurricane would devastate their city. But they chose to stay for many reasons, not the least of which was its charm. Novelist Anne Rice recently wrote in the *New York Times* that the city where she was born "shaped who and what I am. Never have I experienced a place where people knew more about love, about family, about loyalty and about getting along than the people of New Orleans. It is perhaps their very gentleness that gives them their endurance." The people will rebuild, she wrote, "because it is where they have always lived, where their mothers and their fathers lived, where their churches were built by their ancestors, where their family graves carry names that go back 200 years. They will stay in New Orleans where they can enjoy a sweetness of family life that other communities lost long ago." This doesn't sound like a victim of exploitation; is there any reason to think differently of the people who rebuilt San Francisco? □

**"The Travels of a T-Shirt in the Global Economy: An Economist Examines the Markets, Power, and Politics of World Trade,"** by Pietra Rivoli. John Wiley, 2005, 254 pages.

# T-Shirt Safari

Bettina Bien Greaves

Pietra Rivoli, associate professor at Georgetown University's McDonough School of Business, got the idea for this book when a crowd of raucous students invaded the Georgetown campus in 1999 to protest evil corporations, globalization, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization. One young woman seized the microphone and shouted "Who made your T-shirt? Was it a child in Vietnam chained to a sewing machine without food or water? Or a young girl from India earning 18 cents per hour and allowed to visit the bathroom only twice per day? Did you know that she lives 12 to a room? That she shares her bed and has only gruel to eat? That she is forced to work 90 hours each week, without overtime pay? . . . All in the name of [corporate] profits." How did the young woman know all this? Rivoli, a college professor, did not know about these things. But she determined to find out.

Her search began in Florida. She reached into a large bin of T-shirts (\$5.99 each; 2 for \$10) near the exit of a Walgreen's drugstore and pulled out a white shirt printed with a flamboyantly colored parrot. "You're it," she said; she would trace that particular shirt to its origin.

Rivoli's tale is delightful and informative. It covers the history of the U.S. cotton industry from cotton farming, to the development of the textile industry, to the globalization of trade in fabrics and clothing. Her conclusion, as she researches the background of her T-shirt, is that the production and mar-

keting of cotton, cotton textiles, and cotton T-shirts have not been the result of free markets and free trade. Rather they have been supported, assisted, and subsidized from beginning to end by countless government interventions. She follows the trail of cotton production from pre-Civil War southern plantations to Industrial Revolution factories in England, from New England and the South to China and other Asian nations, and finally to secondhand markets in Africa.

At every step along the way, producers enjoyed the assistance of government. Thanks to slavery, the cotton planters of the South had at hand an ample supply of workers who were forced to pick cotton under the lash — they had no alternative. The textile factories in England benefited from the availability of many desperate and docile workers — paupers, children, and farmers who had been forced off the land by the enclosure movement. When Eli Whitney's cotton gin made it possible to separate the seeds from the fiber much faster and more easily than before, U.S. cotton farmers could expand production, thanks again to the inexpensive labor of slaves. Thus U.S. cotton farmers were able to keep up with the demand of the mechanized British textile factories. Although the British tried to prevent the export of textile machines and technological



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know-how, the industry gradually shifted in the 19th century to the United States and New England, where new factories again found a ready supply of docile, desperate, hardy, uncomplaining workers — young women dissatisfied with life on the farm and willing to work at low wages.

The U.S. government has assisted cotton farmers in many ways. Department of Agriculture scientists helped them improve the quality of their crop. The FDA also developed new insecticides, new fertilizers, and new techniques for extracting oil from cotton seeds, as well as new uses for the oil. Government marketing specialists helped cotton farmers find markets and encouraged the creation of marketing cooperatives. Government irrigation and crop insurance guaranteed farmers that they could survive droughts without going bankrupt. As new machines were invented, cotton farming became a large scale business that no longer required big numbers of

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*Tenant farmers, who couldn't afford big machines, dropped out of cotton farming, pushed off the soil by bureaucrats.*

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manual laborers to weed fields, spray pesticides, pick cotton, and clean cotton seeds. New technology and government red tape helped big operators by discouraging would-be competitors. Small, uneducated sharecroppers or tenant farmers, who couldn't afford big machines or read well enough to understand the instructions or the government regulations, dropped out of cotton farming, pushed off the soil by bureaucrats. Of course, government also subsidized cotton farmers directly. And now that textile manufacturing has largely shifted overseas, government protects domestic producers with a complicated system of quotas, tariffs, and import duties, depending on where the textiles were manufactured, where the fibers came from, and where the garments were cut, sewn, and assembled.

As Rivoli tells the story, the production, worldwide distribution, and sale of cotton T-shirts has not been a victory for free markets and competition, but rather for government assistance. She concludes that the only truly free market in the world is now in Africa, where secondhand clothing and T-shirts, cast off by well-to-do American consumers, find eager buyers.

It is true that the production and marketing of cotton, cotton textiles, and cotton T-shirts has had the support of countless government interventions at every stage in the process. But in my view Rivoli doesn't stress strongly enough the most important factor — that the market, even if not completely free, has operated all along. The market consists of individuals, dealing with one another, buying, selling, transporting and combining raw materials, producing goods, and supplying services. And that market, directed by entrepreneurs, has functioned. Cotton farmers were already growing cotton when government began offering subsidies, set up the FDA, the AAA (Agricultural Adjustment Administration) and other acronymic agencies. Factories were already operating when government enacted labor rules and regulations in an attempt to prevent employers from "exploiting" workers. Chinese factories were already producing textiles and manufacturing cotton T-shirts with inexpensive local workers, placing U.S. factories at a competitive disadvantage, when the government was asked to introduce tariffs and import quotas to protect U.S. manufacturers.

The entire textile industry owes its development, its pattern of production and trade, to the activities of energetic, innovative, industrious entrepreneurs, savers, and investors who at every stage of production were trying to cope with the situation as it actually existed, trying to satisfy the wants of consumers. They were always looking for ways to produce better, cheaper things that consumers wanted. Once slavery was abolished, no one was forced to work on a farm or in a factory unless she preferred that work to all other opportunities.

Entrepreneurs who are engaged in the production and trade of cotton textiles and manufactured goods do not



operate in a completely *free* market — nothing is perfect in this world of imperfect men. They operate in a *hampered market economy*, in which producers frequently seek special advantages from government for themselves and others in their industry. Entrepreneurs have been helped at times and hindered at others by government taxes, interventions, subsidies, tariffs, rules, and regulations. Such government interventions inevitably alter the pat-

terns of production and trade. They influence the market. But the interventions — the laws, the government rules and regulations — are political, non-market phenomena. The entrepreneurs, not the interventions, are responsible for production. Entrepreneurs, not government interventionists, have been the prime movers in the hampered market economy in which cotton and cotton textile businesses have functioned since they began. □

**"Do As I Say (Not As I Do): Profiles in Liberal Hypocrisy,"** by Peter Schweizer. Doubleday, 2005, 272 pages.

# Lifestyles of the Rich and Leftist

Gary Jason

I have felt for a long time that it is as important to preach what you practice as it is to practice what you preach. This theme is well illustrated in Peter Schweizer's droll new book, "Do As I Say (Not As I Do): Profiles in Liberal Hypocrisy."

Schweizer looks at a number of contemporary icons of the American left, with an eye to detecting hypocrisy. Among his subjects are Noam Chomsky, Michael Moore, Al Franken, Ted Kennedy, Hillary Clinton, Ralph Nader, Nancy Pelosi, George Soros, Barbra Streisand, Gloria Steinem, and Cornel West. He finds in each case a private life markedly at variance with the public persona.

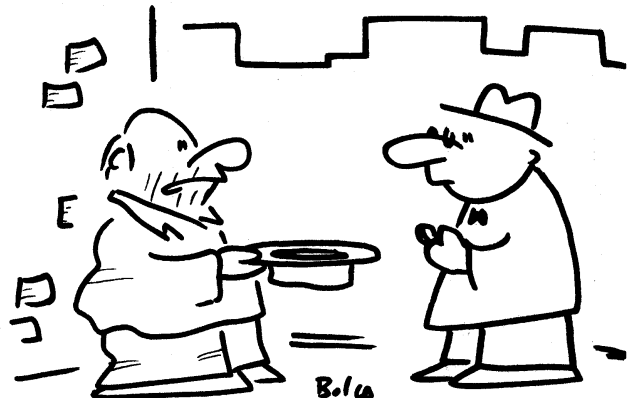
Now, one has to be careful when playing the *ad hominem* game. A person's intellectual claims are not disproved by his bad character. Commendably, Schweizer doesn't attempt to discredit these pestiferous statists by looking for sexual peccadilloes or substance abuse issues. Instead, he focuses on their financial lives, which seem to me fairer game. To hear John Kerry bash the "rich" for not pay-

ing their fair share in taxes, and then to find out that he and his wife (worth \$700 million) pay less than 15% of their own income in taxes, or to hear Katrina vanden Heuval denounce efforts to end the inheritance tax, and then discover that she herself is a multimillionaire heiress, is to face a serious question. Granted, as a matter of logic, that their hypocrisy doesn't disprove the principles they espouse, still, which principle should the listener adopt, the one espoused or the one embodied in the speaker's life?

Consider the case of Nancy Pelosi, the ultimate San Francisco big-government liberal, and leader of the Democrats in the House of Representatives. She is the daughter of Big Tommy D'Alesandro, boss of the Baltimore Democrat political machine. She grew up in a household built around the use of political power for personal gain, under

the banner of compassion. In her career in Congress, she has garnered the highest praise from the AFL-CIO, the Americans for Democratic Action, and the League of Conservation Voters. She is grotesquely pro-union and pro-regulation, and a fierce "environmentalist," of course. Her favorite pastime is attacking people on her political right — which is everyone to the right of, say, Mao Zedong — as enemies of clean air, clean water, the working man, or whatever. To her, we're all greedy, vile exploiters of the poor.

Actually, to be fair, her favorite pastime is enacting laws to increase the power of unions, trial lawyers, and the federal government. But Pelosi's private life is all capitalist. She and her husband have a net worth of over \$50 million — not bad for champions of the poor. Much of their wealth comes from real estate ventures, such as the development of the Corde Valle Golf Club and Resort in Silicon Valley. Schweizer documents how the Pelosis' private partnership (Lions Gate Limited) managed to get approval to develop some raw land over the objections of environmentalists and other local groups, by contractually promising that the club would be primarily a public course and that the development would be ecologically friendly. But the developers stiffed the public. The golf course turned out to be primarily for the use of the ultrawealthy: the *hoi polloi* have to reserve three days in advance and pay \$275 for a round of golf. A membership at the club costs \$250,000! And Lions Gate failed to live up to the promised environmental



"It's a dollar minimum, sir — union rules."

guarantees. When the San Jose Planning Commission started thinking about looking into whether Lions Gate had made fraudulent representations to get the development approvals, the Pelosis simply hired some local, well-connected lobbyists, and the Planning Commission backed away like frightened kittens.

In a similar manner, Schweizer shows that Pelosi, winner of the Cesar Chavez Legacy Award, uses companies without United Farm Workers contracts to harvest grapes on her vineyard, and she sells those grapes to nonunion wineries. Again, this darling of the AFL-CIO (and recipient of a huge amount of its money for her campaigns) owns a big chunk of two

lavish hotels and a chain of chi-chi restaurants that are all resolutely non-union shops.

Next consider Ralph Nader, the ultimate corporation basher and perennial candidate for the presidency (not

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*Nancy Pelosi is worth more than \$50 million — not bad for a champion of the poor.*

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to mention sainthood). Nader's persona is that of the Spartan lefty, the "walk the walk not just talk the talk"

opponent of the hideous corporate greed that dirties the soul of America. When he visited the Soviet Union back in the 1960s, he admired the lack of consumer products, and when he returned to Russia after the collapse of the Soviet system he was dismayed to hear people praising free market economics. To Nader, corporations are evil: they dominate governments, rig prices, sell dangerous and useless products, and generally hurt our standard of living.

But in his personal life, about which St. Ralph is very secretive, things are different. He lives well, using a D.C. mansion that he apparently owns (though the title is in his sister's name), earns millions from

## The 2005 Mainstream Movie Awards

Hollywood's picks for the Oscars this year demonstrate the industry's utter disdain for the viewing public. Of the twelve films nominated in the top categories (Best Picture, Director, and Actor) nine opened only to limited release (fewer than 500 screens nationwide), five opened only in New York and Los Angeles, and three have earned less than \$2 million at the box office; they are available only on DVD.

I love independent films, but I hate the art houses where they are often shown, with their broken seats and small screens, and the level floors that make it difficult to see if the theater is full. Moreover, most of the Oscar contenders are released in December and stay around for only a week or two. The average American is not going to tune into the Oscar show this year, when it is about films they haven't seen.

So here are my favorite mainstream films of 2005. All of them received wide release (over 2,000 screens) and all of them earned over \$100 million. Perhaps you saw them too.

**"Cinderella Man," directed by Ron Howard. Universal Studios, 144 minutes.**

Many people boycotted this film after Russell Crowe's petulant treatment of a New York hotel clerk when his phone call wouldn't go through. It's a shame, because it's one of Ron Howard's best. James Braddock (Crowe), driven from a successful boxing career by injury, then into poverty by the stock market crash, goes back into the ring to face heavyweight champion Max Baer, risking injury and even death to keep his family together. Baer is a high-living lady's man fighting for a title, but Braddock is a simple dockman, fighting for his family. The result is a gripping film, full of brutal punches, unrelenting poverty, and tender emotion.

Critics say that the best direction does not draw attention to itself, but I have to give Ron Howard credit for actors who are emotional but not maudlin, lighting that creates atmosphere without being gimmicky, and powerfully effective editing techniques. Crowe delivers a knockout performance, with fine performances as well by Paul Giamatti ("Sideways") as Braddock's coach Joe Gould, who practically fights along with him in the ring; Craig Bierko,

who plays Baer; and Paddy Considine ("In America") as Braddock's friend and fellow dock worker. Even Renee Zellweger is tolerable as Braddock's wife. Wynn Thomas, the production designer, also deserves praise for his recreation of 1930s New York.

**"Charlie and the Chocolate Factory," directed by Tim Burton. Warner Bros., 115 minutes.**

Ultimately, this is a standard morality tale in which the nice guy wins and the bad guys get punished. The story starts with a contest in which five golden tickets have been packaged inside chocolate bars produced in Willy Wonka's candy factory. The finders of the golden tickets are invited to tour Wonka's factory, where Wonka's contempt for the mostly obnoxious children and their parents leads to hilariously dark consequences for all but the last boy standing. The theme is the only thing standard about this film. Burton infuses it with bizarre humor and a whimsical set that gives new meaning to the phrase "eye candy."

The key to the film's success is Johnny Depp, the most versatile film actor since Dustin Hoffman, and

speaking and writing, and invests in — big, multinational corporations! He has net assets of about \$4 million, most of it in corporate stock, such as the \$1 million he owns in Cisco Systems, not to mention his stocks in major defense contractors such as GE and IBM. He controls nonprofit organizations and trusts, all secretly run, with his family members on the governing boards. His charitable foundations give away 4% of their assets every year, the lowest amount possible to keep their IRS tax-exempt status. The remaining assets are also in corporate stock, including telecom monopolies such as Verizon, BellSouth, and Qwest.

It is no surprise that his hidden ownership of these various entities

involves conflicts of interest, as when he pushed hard in speeches and legal briefs to break up Microsoft, all the while standing to gain enormously should the breakup have occurred, or when he privately brought shares in Ford while hammering General Motors. (Remember the Corvair?) And, oh yeah, while he praises unions, he blocks unionization of his own organizations. All of this Schweizer documents in loving detail.

His book is an enjoyable read, and in places downright hilarious. Could a comedy writer ever come up with a joke as funny as Michael Moore's owning Halliburton stock? Schweizer's investigative research on these icons of the Left, these Learjet liberals and

mink-draped Marxists, is good reporting — although the lack of any real social analysis is disappointing. After finishing the book, the reader knows that many activists who attack capitalism live quite well off it, but does not know the why of it all. What motivates people who have profited so much from our free market democracy to bash it so angrily?

This is a surprisingly subtle question, one that I don't really have a settled opinion about — it being rather out of my field (I'm a lowly philoso-

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*Nader's charitable foundations give away 4% of their assets every year, the lowest amount possible to keep their IRS tax-exempt status.*

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Freddie Highmore as Charlie, who performed with Depp in last year's stunning "Finding Neverland." Depp gives pathos to the quirky owner of the town's candy factory; we realize he is not merely egocentric but also agoraphobic, and while this takes the edge off his menacing treatment of the children, it also reminds us that he is just one step away from the mental asylum. As with Turkish delight in Narnia, we know we should get out, but we just can't resist the staying for more.

**"Walk the Line," directed by James Mangold. 20th Century Fox, 136 minutes.**

This is one film the Academy got right, nominating both leads. Joaquin Phoenix reveals the inner torment of Johnny Cash, and Reese Witherspoon seems born to play the witty, homespun June Carter. In fact, the film is as much about Carter as it is about Cash. Phoenix manages Cash's deep bass vibrato with aching emotion, and Witherspoon's southern accent is delightful without being corny.

The theme of redemption is subtle, but it rings true. Framed as a flashback during the concert Cash recorded at Folsom Prison, the film is about breaking free from one's own captivity and finding redemption in a partnership with the person one loves. It works for me.

**"King Kong," directed by Peter Jackson. Universal Studios, 187 minutes.**

Like all heroic tragedy, this film contains a fatal flaw: it's too long. But it's terrific nonetheless, with its classy, intellectual screenplay, its thrilling action scenes, and its romantic story between Beauty and the Beast, played luminescently by Naomi Watts and Andy Serkis, who brings life to the computerized Kong.

**"Crash," directed by Paul Haggis. Lions Gate Films, 100 minutes.**

A powerful film about isolation in crowds and interconnectedness despite indifference, "Crash" slams into you, midway through, with the unexpectedness of a rear-end collision. Just when you think you've had enough of this "why can't we all just get along" public-service announcement, it turns into something completely different and intensely compelling. Suddenly, you're hooked.

The film is rough, particularly the language, and while the concept of examining stereotypes is interesting, I was turned off by the preachiness of the dialogue in the first half hour. Then, midway, when the multiple stories begin to crash into each other, the film developed a breathtaking intensity. First-time director Haggis knows how to use a camera as well as how to tell a story, and this movie is best when he lets the story do the teaching. If the Academy offered a "Best Ensemble" Oscar (and it should) this film would win it.

pher, not an exalted sociologist or psychologist). But I'll hazard a few guesses, i.e., suggest a few psychological explanations of why wealthy people push leftist agendas. Different mechanisms can be found in different individuals, of course.

First, some people earn their money by manipulating the rules they help create. Consider a case that Schweizer surprisingly *doesn't* discuss, Jesse Jackson. As Ken Timmerman documents in his recent book, "Shakedown: Exposing the Real Jesse Jackson," Jackson has made himself and his family a bloody fortune shaking down corporations by threatening them with affirmative action lawsuits. Of course, he just happens to be one of the driving forces behind electing leftist politicians who push for laws expanding affirmative action. In one case, Jackson started a boycott against the Anheuser Busch beer company because (he alleged) they didn't have enough black distributors. He changed his tune after the company gave \$10,000 to his "Citizenship Education Fund" and \$500,000 to his Rainbow PUSH coalition, and set up a fund to help non-whites buy distributorships. After two of Jackson's children bought a distributorship guaran-

teeing them millions, Jackson dropped support for the boycott.

Then again, there is what I would call "PR compassion." Entertainers and sports figures are typically instructed by their agents to affiliate themselves with some highly visible charity as part of their public relations presentation. A genuine altruist would anonymously donate large amounts of money to charity, but that wouldn't work as a public relations tool; it helps your career to look compassionate and caring, especially if your career is either just starting or rapidly fading. Think of all those "Live Aid" and "Farm Aid" worldwide telethon concerts, in which geriatric rock stars strut their stuff with walkers, and long-forgotten celebrities get to remind the public that they still exist.

I suspect that there is also a subtler phenomenon at work, one that I would call "warding off the evil eye." I suspect that some successful people —

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*Think of all those "Live Aid" and "Farm Aid" worldwide telethon concerts, in which geriatric rockers and long-forgotten celebrities get to remind the public that they still exist.*

---

here I have in mind certain businessmen who have become enormously rich — fear that the envious lower classes will possibly do them harm. Considering the long history of class warfare politics, this is not an irrational fear. To ward off envy, these captains of industry make a conspicuous show of being kind and caring, setting up foundations that prominently feature their names.

Finally, there is power envy. Nietzsche famously argued that slave

morality, the morality of compassion, of altruism, was devised by the weak out of envy and fear of the power of the strong. This is doubtful, but there does seem to be a real envy of the powerful, harbored by such people as academics. They hold a Ph.D. in some subject or other, publish lots of articles, make tenure, but still exert no influ-

ence on society. This is galling to them. They despise people with power and do their best to bring them down. Perhaps this explains the attempts of many academics to indoctrinate their students. It may also explain the palpable bitterness of a Nader or a Moore: feeling that they are entitled to rule, they hate those who appear to do so. □

## Notes on Contributors

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of social interaction.*

**"Match Point,"** directed by Woody Allen. DreamWorks LLC, 2006, 160 minutes.

# Neuroses and Nets

Jo Ann Skousen

One of the reasons why Woody Allen movies have lost their box office appeal in recent years is his somewhat provincial focus on Manhattan, both as a location and as a source of character types. I love New York, but the self-absorbed quirkiness of his stock characters hasn't aged well. Perhaps the best thing to be said for his latest movie, "Match Point," is that it doesn't feel like a Woody Allen movie.

Yes, it explores familiar themes of infidelity, obsession, and class structure, and Allen can't resist occasional vintage Woodyisms, such as one character's observation about an off-screen couple, "They're so right for each other. Their neuroses match perfectly." But the move from Manhattan to London seems to have given him a new canvas and a new vision. The result is an engaging film with natural, subtle wit and a noir atmosphere that allows the audience to sink into the characters and savor the experience

like a fine meal. It may be slow at times, but it's worth the wait.

Chris Wilton (Jonathan Rhys Meyers), a former tennis player, now a country club pro, might have had a great career except for the fact that the net balls too often fell back onto his side of the court. "I'd rather be lucky than good," he observes wryly as the film opens. Luck — both good and bad — figures prominently throughout this film. Chris is soon befriended by Tom, a wealthy member of the country club who shares his interest in opera. He eventually marries Tom's sister Chloe (Emily Mortimer) while falling hard for Tom's fiancée Nola (Scarlett Johansson). Who could blame him? Chloe is rich, intelligent, perky, and pretty. She gets him a job in one of daddy's companies and provides him a living to which he is delighted to become accustomed.

By contrast, Nola is sexy and aloof, with a sensuous mouth and a smoker's husky voice, an actress who never seems to pass the audition. It's a story

as old as the hills, iconically presented in "Dr. Zhivago": how can one resist the forbidden and needy Lara, when Tonya is so safe and predictable? Nola and Chloe even look like "Dr. Zhivago's" Julie Christie and Geraldine Chaplin. In short, the guy is a despicable cad. But like Dr. Zhivago, he's such a charming cad. Doesn't he deserve to have what he wants?

This sense of privilege permeates the film. Chloe and Tom come from "the privileged class," but Chris has been raised with all the privileges of a professional athlete. Serious tennis players (or figure skaters or virtuosi or any other elite performers) often become stiflingly self-interested, surrounded as they are by devoted coaches, trainers, fans, and parents whose sole purpose is to help them succeed in their game. Chris no longer has his entourage, but he is totally self-absorbed, caring only about the fulfillment of his own desires. The film is presented entirely from his point of view; he appears in virtually every scene until the denouement. His obsession is despicable, yet he never wavers in his sense of entitlement.

The film's conclusion is wickedly satisfying, leaving several existential questions to linger over during dessert. Is one entitled to happiness? If so, at what cost? Is one justified in being completely, totally self-interested? What is justice, if net balls fall into one court or the other with no apparent reason? For Chris Wilton there is no question: He would rather be lucky than good. □

## Can Trains Be Saved?, from page 42

### Would It Work?

If this new business model had been implemented in 1971, would it have prevented the disaster that Amtrak has become? As previously noted, reducing Amtrak's operating costs by 30% would eliminate its operating deficit. If passenger revenues covered all operating costs, federal and state governments would be limited to providing capital grants for rail equipment. If better-designed trains further increase revenues and better-utilized equipment further reduces costs, Amtrak might even be able to cover some or all of those capital costs. Reducing Amtrak's financial dependence on taxpayers would protect it from pork-barrel Congressmen.

Amtrak would benefit by making such improvements today, though resistance to change is now greater and it will take several years for the benefits to be seen. The 1997 Amtrak Reform Act allowed Amtrak to contract out services and cave

less often to unions. However, as Vranich detailed in "End of the Line," Amtrak failed to take advantage of this law.

Amtrak could start by contracting out dining car services, experimenting with through schedules that better utilize equipment, and refitting Superliners and other cars with automatic doors. Once most trains were refitted, Amtrak could build platforms at all stations on selected routes to see if it could reduce the size of on-board crews.

Would these changes allow Amtrak to become a significant player in American travel? Probably not. Despite billions in subsidies, European trains have a small and declining share of intercity travel. But a new business model that minimizes or eliminates subsidies would allow passenger rail to stay on the tracks in the United States without the periodic political threats and continuing fiscal crises that characterize it today. That would be enough for most everyone to call it a success. □

### *Washington, D.C.*

Innovative criminal defense, noted by the *Washington Times*:

Gwendolyn M. Hemphill, a former Washington Teachers Union official who was convicted of stealing union dues, is seeking leniency because she thinks she's being stalked by a small person with a spear.

### *Port Townsend, Wash.*

Rectification of an unfortunate oversight, from the *Peninsula Daily News*:

The Washington Environmental Council has filed petitions claiming Jefferson County's development code failed to use the best available science to determine development near rivers. The council claims that, although the code zones development 150 feet from rivers, it fails to incorporate past and future river channels.

### *Philadelphia*

New methods in mass transit, reported in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*:

Bus driver Mario Edney was charged with aggravated assault, reckless endangerment, and making terroristic threats after an altercation on his Route 17 bus. After a passenger began an argument about Edney not stopping at her stop, he grabbed her by the hair and knocked her head into a pole.

Edney then opened the door and threw the passenger into traffic before continuing on his route.

### *Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.*

Rigorous training in today's military, observed by the *Wall Street Journal*:

Troops traveling in an Iraq-style convoy were "hit" by a series of smoke-spewing roadside bombs. Enemy fighters, represented by pop-up targets, sprung from nearby prairie grass. A drill sergeant ordered a counterattack.

Instead of leaping off the back of a truck, as they would in actual combat, the privates waited about ten seconds for someone to walk to the back of the truck and place a ladder on its rear bumper. They climbed down the five-foot drop, one at a time.

### *Findlay, Ohio*

Admirable generosity, lauded in the *Akron Beacon-Journal*:

Margaret Elizabeth Taylor, who died recently at age 98, has bequeathed her \$1.1 million estate to the federal government and requested that it be used to help pay down the \$8.1 trillion national debt.

### *Princeton, Minn.*

Note from the campaign trail, in the *Princeton Union-Eagle*:

Self-described vampire and Minnesota gubernatorial candidate Jonathan "The Impaler" Sharkey has been arrested on charges of stalking and escape.

Sharkey gained the limelight earlier in January with his Friday the 13th announcement of his candidacy for governor under the Vampires, Witches and Pagans Party banner.

Among his proposals was one that would use impalement to execute murderers, rapists, and terrorists.

### *Tulua, Colombia*

A haven of enlightenment in the Southern Hemisphere, from *El Espectador*:

Tulua councilman William Pena wants to require everyone in town 14 or older to carry a condom to prevent pregnancy and disease. Those caught empty-pocketed would have to pay a fine of \$180 or take a safe-sex course.

"Sexual relations are going on constantly," Pena said. "If you carry a condom, chances are you'll use it during the day. It's not going to be there forever."

### *Rome*

A celestial harmony, recorded in *Il Gazzetta*:

Father Giuseppe Moscati of the Edizioni Musicali Terzo Millennio, which specializes in church music and organizes musical events at the Vatican, said his company had the rights to 24 of Pope John Paul's prayers and was assembling a group of international artists to set them to music.

Michael Jackson is believed to be among the artists interested in the project.

### *Baghdad*

The costs of building a strong, free Iraq, reported in the *New York Times*:

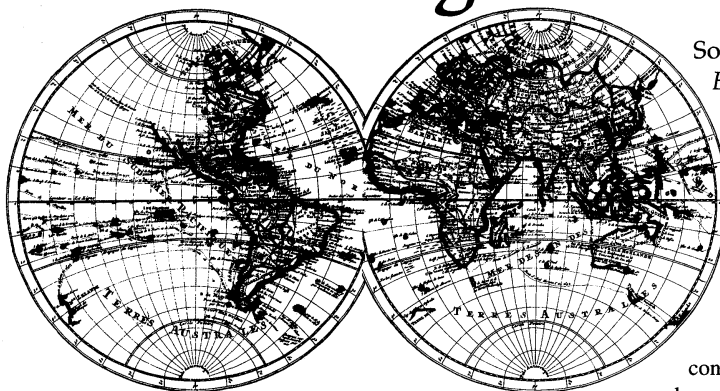
An American soldier assigned as an assistant to the Iraqi Olympic boxing team was given huge amounts of cash for a trip to the Philippines, where he gambled away somewhere between \$20,000 and \$60,000. Exactly how much has not been determined, because no one kept track of how much money he received in the first place.

### *San Francisco*

Getting guns off the street, from the *San Francisco Chronicle*:

In November, voters approved Proposition H, which bans all sales and transfers of firearms and ammunition within the city. The measure did not include an exemption for police officers, making it technically illegal for departments to issue handguns, or for officers to turn in handguns seized from suspects.

## *Terra Incognita*



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



# Why do the worst get to the top?

In 1947, Friedrich von Hayek posed this question. While he explained the economics, he omitted the psychology of those driven to abuse power. Shortly after, Ayn Rand suggested that producers stop playing host to parasites, but also missed identifying the motive force behind the parasitic need to control.

The psychology can be explained by a megalomania usually rooted in alcohol or other drug addiction. Stalin, Hitler, Mao Zedong, Saddam Hussein and Kim Jong Il have all been such addicts. Coincidence? Hardly.

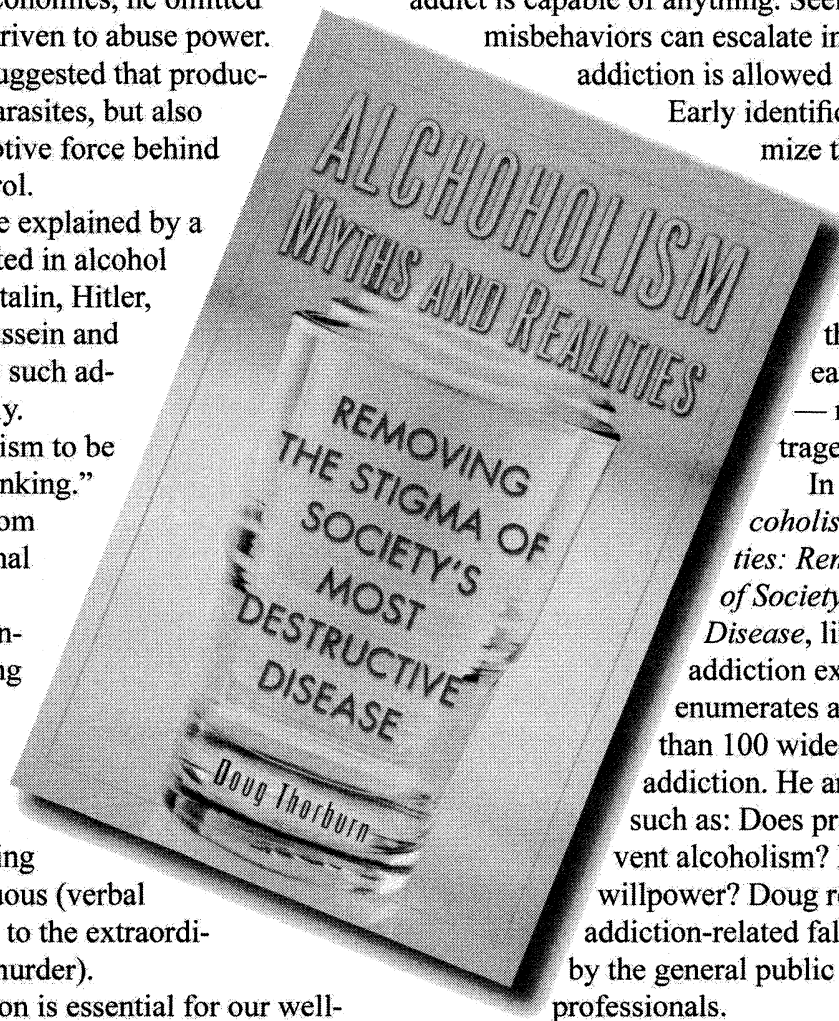
Most consider alcoholism to be a "loss of control over drinking." Yet, this is but one symptom of the disease in its terminal stages. The early stage is characterized by a differential brain chemistry leading the afflicted to develop a god-like sense of self. Resulting misbehaviors include unethical or criminal conduct, ranging from the relatively innocuous (verbal abuse and serial adultery) to the extraordinarily destructive (mass murder).

Understanding addiction is essential for our well-

being, both personally and on a geopolitical scale. The addict is capable of anything. Seemingly innocuous misbehaviors can escalate into tragic ones when addiction is allowed to run unchecked.

Early identification can help minimize the effect it has on our personal and professional lives and, with the right treatment, may get the addict sober far earlier than is common — maybe even before tragedy strikes.

In his latest book, *Alcoholism Myths and Realities: Removing the Stigma of Society's Most Destructive Disease*, libertarian author and addiction expert Doug Thorburn enumerates and dispels more than 100 widespread myths about addiction. He answers questions such as: Does proper parenting prevent alcoholism? Do alcoholics lack willpower? Doug refutes a myriad of addiction-related falsities considered true by the general public and even medical professionals.



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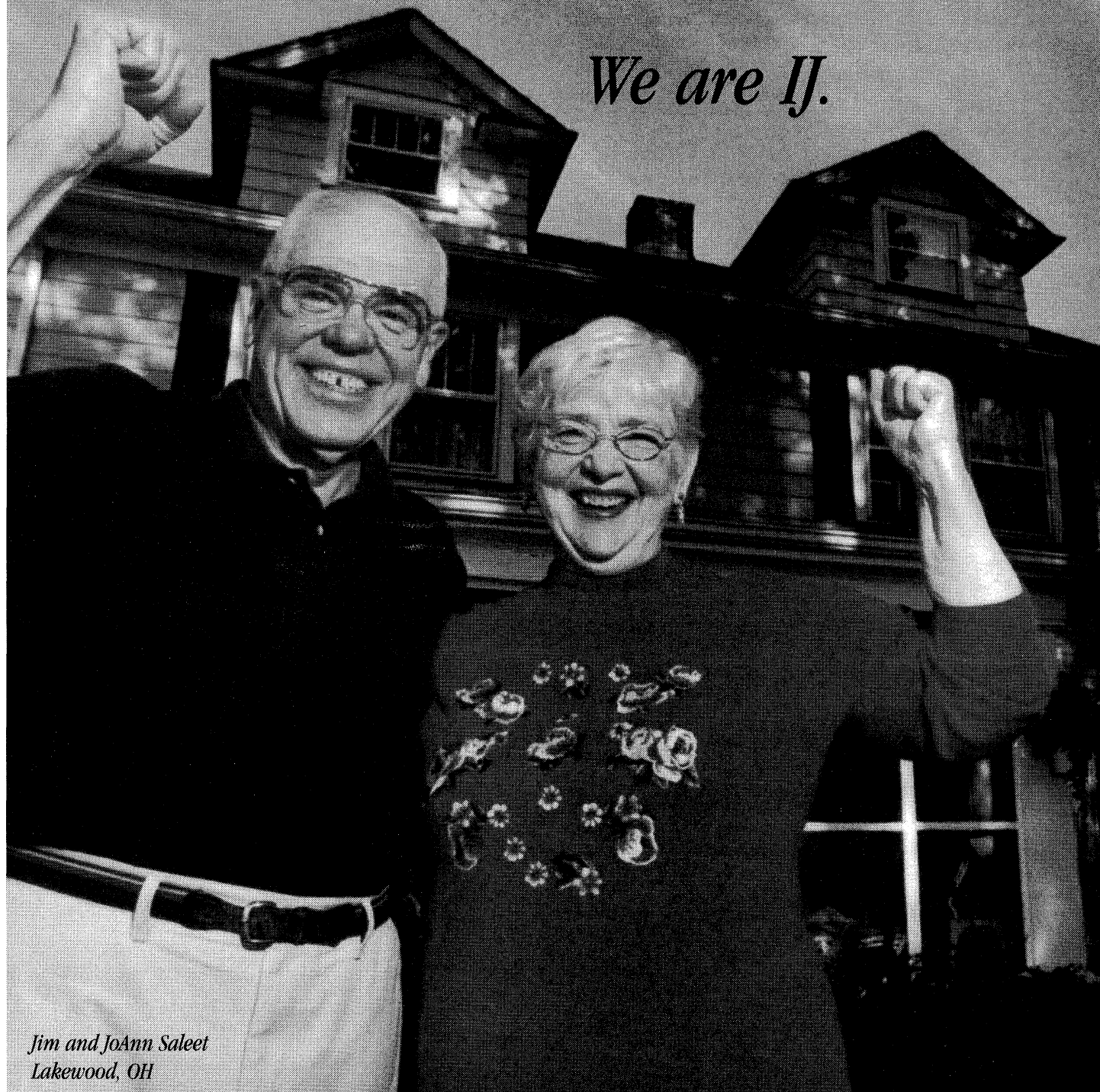
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