THE FREEMAN

IDEAS ON LIBERTY

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IDEAS ON LIBERTY

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PERSPECTIVE

The New Statism

While the ordering of economic resources under a socialist structure is failing throughout the world today, a more insidious successor to state socialism has developed. A form of statism has evolved whose adherents are less concerned with outcome and more concerned with controlling the processes of society. These new statists are interested in a social order which can be manipulated politically to interfere with private property ownership without completely repudiating the market order framework. While state socialism seized all claims of private ownership to property, this new form of statism captures only the economic ownership of private property, achieving its political objectives by imposing mandates and injunctions upon the legal owners of the property. It has become a system of social organization which can best be described as a pragmatic, neo-fascist state.

—ROBERT G. ANDERSON, writing in
A Man of Principle: Essays in Honor of Hans F. Sennholz

Who Benefits from Property Rights?

People who own no property at all benefit from property rights, because they benefit from living in an economy with a higher standard of living, made possible by having innumerable self-interested guardians of the economy's resources. In this sense, property rights are very similar to free speech rights, which do not exist just for the benefit of that 1 percent (or less) of the population who are writers or lecturers.

—THOMAS SOWELL, writing in the
March 2, 1992, issue of *Forbes*

Crime in the Black Community

I think that making excuses for criminals betrays our black tradition. In the days when every hand was against us in this country, when the laws were against us, when employers openly discriminated and were supported in law, fathers and grandfathers didn't use this as an excuse to destroy their own community, to prey on their own people. And the people who did were ostracized and

put down for what they were. And that's the way we understood things ought to be. In those times, we had a strong sense of religious values and moral standards, where people were bound to take care of each other, not slaughter one another.

And if in those days of oppression we didn't use that oppression as an excuse, how can we say today that there is any excuse for this kind of behavior? Doors are open, and people have worked to open those doors, and we need to move forward now with the same sense of discipline possessed by the people who suffered during Jim Crow and slavery.

—ALAN KEYES, quoted in the summer 1991 issue of *Issues & Views*

The Role of Rules

Today, much of the economic game is in the political arena. It is played by getting rules on your side, or making sure that somebody else doesn't get the rules on their side against you. The action is in Washington, D.C.

It's interesting to look at the statistics of many large companies and see how much of their time goes into lobbying, where their business headquarters are, who the big players are, etc. It turns out that it's just as important to try to make sure that the rules favor you as it is to produce better products. Any society in which the rules are not clearly defined, whatever they are, is at risk. You need a society of stable, legitimate and just rules in order to have people productively engaged.

—PETER J. HILL, from an interview in the November/December 1991 issue of *Religion & Liberty*

Man's Place in Nature

An environmentalism that began from the principles of American liberal democracy would recognize that the worst form of tyranny is not the tyranny of man over nature, bad as that might sometimes be, but the tyranny of man over man. In order to prevent the latter tyranny, it is necessary to recognize that it is not proper for men to treat other men as though they were but another species of animal. Men are worth more than animals. To sacrifice their freedom and the quality of their lives in the name of species equality is both unethical and shortsighted. This is the proper starting point for environmental policy.

But from that recognition, it is not proper to draw the conclusion that we should be unconcerned with the protection of other species. It is wrong for humans to be cruel to animals, but the true evil cannot be grasped without seeing the evil this cruelty does to human beings. It is the corruption of the human soul revealed in cruelty to animals that is the most shocking aspect of this cruelty. For the same cruelty practiced by a hawk upon its prey would not be the same evil—indeed it would be no evil at all. Hawks are not interested in protecting kangaroo rats and cannot be blamed for their indifference. Human beings should care for the earth, but more for their own sake than for the sake of the earth. Earth is glorious among planets above all because it is the home for men. It would be unworthy of our human dignity, as well as being shortsighted, to foul our own nest.

—GLEN E. THUROW, "Endangered Species and Endangered Humanity," published by The Claremont Institute

On Bureaucracy

Bureaucrats, like private business people, act to further their self-interest. Instead of financial gain, their reward is the perquisites resulting from advancement. Because they do not "profit" from their decisions, they do not necessarily manage their bureau in a manner designed to generate the most satisfaction or benefits for the users of the bureau's services.

Decisions by the bureaucrat do not result in more or less profit as the customers or users react by purchasing more or fewer goods or services. People in private business, seeking profit, consider their customers. If their business decisions produce more satisfaction, they gain more income. A successful bureaucrat, in contrast, would gain salary, rank, and prestige. The bureaucrat's most advantageous policy, therefore, is one that increases the size of the bureau, the size of its budget, and the number of people the bureaucrat supervises.

—MICHAEL D. COPELAND, writing in *The Yellowstone Primer*

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IDEAS ON LIBERTY

The Commonwealth of Independent States: Land of Opportunity

by Peter J. Hill

Conditions are dire in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the confederation of former Soviet republics. The economy is paralyzed. Agricultural products rot in the fields, while store shelves are empty. Workers make shoddy goods for which there is no market, and even if there were a market, the products couldn't be delivered because there is almost no distribution system.

But the bleak landscape of the CIS economy can be viewed through another set of glasses. Every one of the problems we hear about is also an opportunity, a chance in a lifetime for someone.

Today, for example, the inland waterways are dotted with rusting hulks of sunken ships. The state agency in charge of shipping found it too troublesome to remove ships that ran aground.

But to a man I will call Sergei, a former high official with this agency, they represent an opportunity for profit. He has obtained rights to these ships on sections of two rivers in Russia, the Volga and Oka, and is starting to find a market for the scrap metal he is removing.

Similarly, to a former student I will call Vladimir, the absence of consumer goods in state stores represents a chance for profit. Vladimir has dropped out of school, constructed three kiosks, and placed them on the streets of Gorky (now called by its original name, Nizhny-Novgorod), where he sells children's clothes, shoes, and whatever other consumer goods he can get his hands on. A recent visitor even found chewing gum from India for sale.

Such entrepreneurs are still few in number, and the lack of private rights in the Commonwealth of Independent States creates serious obstacles for even these. I have used pseudonyms for them because their legal status is hazy. It is not clear that they have the right to purchase the goods they are selling. Since most property still belongs, at least nominally, to the state, does the person they are buying from have clear title to those resources? Until these issues are resolved, many opportunities will go unmet.

If CIS citizens are to respond to the myriad opportunities around them, some conditions are critical. Private ownership and freedom of contract must be allowed. Without these conditions, individuals who perceive better ways to do things and better uses for existing resources will be unable to gain control of property or enter into profitable agreements with others. Entrepreneurs must also

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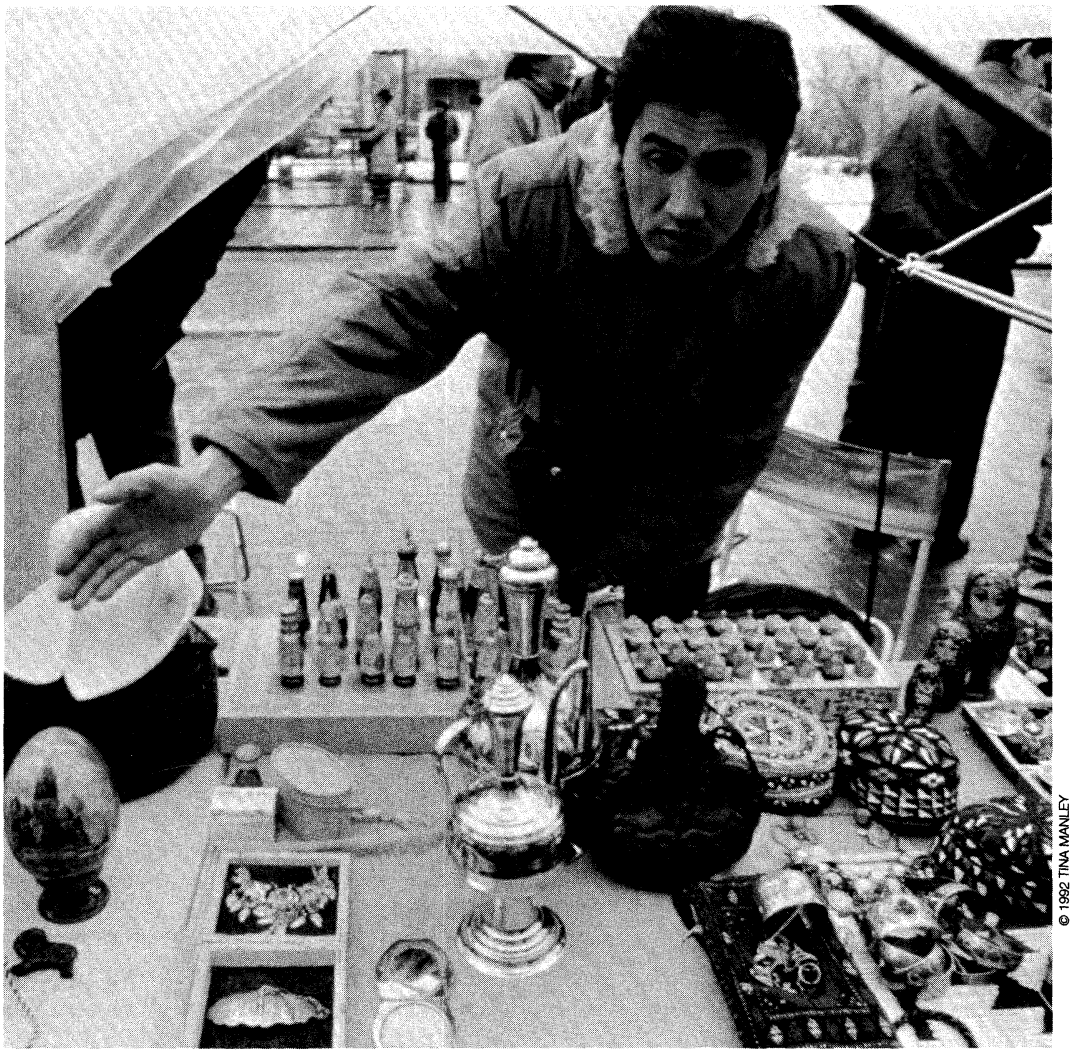

An entrepreneur selling Matrioshka dolls and other souvenirs on Arbat Street in Moscow.

have the assurance that their property rights will be protected from predatory activity by other citizens and from state expropriation. Confiscatory taxation must not remove most of the profits. A stable and convertible currency would facilitate exchange.

But one should not be too pessimistic.

Suppose a factory in Ukraine depends on a part manufactured 1,000 miles away in Uzbekistan; deliveries are sporadic and quality is low. This provides an opportunity for a Ukrainian entrepreneur who learns the specifications for the parts and opens a small operation nearby. He—or she—can earn profits by becoming a reliable supplier.

Is wheat disintegrating in the fields of Belarus while there is a shortage of bread in Moscow? If so, anyone with a truck can profit by delivering grain to a miller near Moscow.

Does a factory in Georgia produce little of value? A competing, more efficient factory can hire away its workers by offering greater wages.

With even minimal progress toward the introduction of property rights, the people's mood could shift dramatically. Perhaps only a small fraction of the CIS population will be optimistic entrepreneurs at first, but others will observe and learn. Many who try to capture the new opportunities will fail, but some will succeed, and their success will encourage others. The people who seem to Westerners to be apathetic wards of the state may soon be ablaze with energy and zeal. Opportunity knocks! □

The Separation of Church and State

by Ralph A. Raimi

My father, Jacob, arrived in this country as an immigrant in 1923. He would have come here earlier, but was drafted for service in the Polish army in 1919 and, under the banner of Marshal Pilsudski, helped fight Poland's successful war against Trotsky and the Communists. In America he joined his wife and son, who had preceded him. He settled in Detroit and opened a dry-goods store, begot two more sons (myself the middle of the three), thrived, and prospered. He died last summer, at the age of 92 years, the seventh after the death of his faithful wife.

Fighting for Poland did not particularly please my father, since as a Jew in Nasielsk, a small town near Warsaw, he was never truly at home. The distinction between Jew and non-Jew in the Poland of the Russian Empire was in most ways more strict than the distinction between Negro and white in the American South in, say, the period 1890-1915. It had been a newly virulent sequence of pogroms, murderous mob attacks on Jews and their goods and houses, that had generated the great emigration of Polish (and other) Jews to America at that time. Jews feared Eastertide in particular, a time when provincial priests often preached the guilt of the Jews, and even fostered the libel, widely believed among the Polish and Russian peasants, that Jews used the blood of murdered Christian children in the making of matzos for the Passover.

But with the fall of the czar and the liberation of Poland one might hope for better times, even for Jews. My emigrating father left his own father and mother in a new Polish Republic, reborn with his help and with that hope. The worst excesses of Polish anti-Semitism did in fact diminish after the war, and in the end—20 years later—it was the Nazis, not the Poles, who murdered those of his family that did not follow him to America.

At my father's death last year I collected some of his personal papers and among them found his Certificate of Naturalization, given in the U.S. District Court of the Eastern District of Michigan. It concludes, "IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF the seal of said court is hereunto affixed on the ninth day of July in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and twenty-eight, and of our Independence the one hundred and fifty-third."

The "year of our Lord" 1928? Much evil had been done, in the name of that Lord, to my father and his family in Nasielsk. Too, anno Domini 1928 was equivalent to the year 5688 in the Hebrew calendar, which counts, instead of the years since Christ, the years since Creation, the work of an earlier Lord. Was not the language of the United States Court for the Eastern District of Michigan a bit ethnocentric? Insensitive? Did not my father feel left out of things, with his citizenship dated according to a Christian tradition with its casual assertion that "our" Lord was Jesus?

I must say that he did not. He never ceased to bless the United States of America, from the day of his arrival to the day of his death.

He loved even the police because he knew the nightstick was not intended for him, but for those who might want to harm him. In Nasielsk, he told me, the sight of a policeman would induce him to cross to the other side of the street and pass at a distance—why take a chance? Here in America, on the other hand, he would sometimes get a call

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in the middle of the night from a policeman telling him that he had left a door unlocked in his store. "Best come round, sir, and lock it up properly," the cop might say. "Sir"? To a Jew? It was a miracle, America.

I never asked my father what he thought about the separation of church and state. It was not a question. They were separate here; he knew that, and he also knew the Constitution required it so. Everyone could attend the church of his choice, or no church at all, and at school nobody asked the religion of his children, either.

But Christmas was a legal holiday; what about that? We sang Christmas carols at school; what about that? I might have asked him these questions, but I never did, for it would never have occurred to him that these things constituted "an establishment of religion." They were merely an American tradition. We were in a country that had been founded by Christians, a country whose Constitution owed its structure to English philosophers, all of them Christians; why shouldn't the echoes of these origins remain in our public documents? There is a difference, after all, between a Christian sentiment and a pogrom.

My father knew all this. In America we speak a language whose origin was in England, and we follow a law whose origin was in England. Our very liberties, won "from" England in 1776, had their origins in England nonetheless; there was nothing like them in Russia either before or after their Revolution. That the year of my father's citizenship should be styled "anno Domini" 1928 did not make it for him any less blessed a year, or restrict its boon to Christians alone.

Even so, I'm glad the Certificate of Naturalization also included that other, more secular date, "and [in the year] of our Independence the one hundred and fifty-third," for my father (and I) owed a great deal to those who secured our independence, as the celebration of the 200th anniversary of the Bill of Rights has recently reminded us. But the Founders, who insisted in the First Amendment that Congress should make no law respecting an establishment of religion, had no intention of making religion, or its milder echoes in our public observances, downright illegal. They knew as well as we that 1776, watershed though it was, was still not The Beginning. Unlike the French Jacobins who declared the date of their ill-fated revolution to be Year 1, our American forebears saw danger in rejecting all tradition, and they were right.

American Jews in 1791 were as free as Christians, and they still are, nor does their liberty suffer from an occasional Christian reference, whether in a prayer at the opening of Congress or in a carol sung at school. It is not words that tyrannize, after all, but evil intention. Communist Russia for 70 years oppressed all religion and practically forbade all public religious expression. Nineteen Seventeen was Year 1 for their new order; Lenin be praised! Did that make their Jews—or anyone else—free? Secure? At home?

I intend to have my father's and my mother's naturalization papers framed for the wall of my study. I am proud of those documents, or, more accurately, grateful. My parents came to America so that I might be free. I will point this out to visitors. It might be that some of them, infected by American Civil Liberties Union propaganda, will be horrified by that impermissible Christian reference, "in the year of our Lord," printed right there on a United States Federal Court document. If so, I will explain:

"Well, it's not exactly *my* Lord they're talking about, sure, but that's the way they said it in 1928. Maybe they still do. My father never saw any harm in it. 'Establishment of religion?' Don't make me laugh." □

IDEAS ON LIBERTY

George Washington on Religious Toleration

It is now no more that toleration is spoken of as if it was by the indulgence of one class of the people that another enjoyed the exercise of their inherent natural rights. For happily the Government of the United States, which gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance, requires only that those who live under its protection should demean themselves as good citizens in giving it, on all occasions, their effectual support.

—A letter to the congregation of Touro Synagogue, Newport, Rhode Island, 1790

Freedom of Education Will Solve Our Education Crisis

by Jack D. Douglas

Most Americans have always been passionately devoted to education. The current national panic over our plummeting learning scores is only the latest sign of this devotion and is remarkably similar to the panics over purported education crises that have occurred throughout U.S. history.

Unfortunately, almost all of the politicians and so-called expert educationalists rushing forward to solve this latest education crisis seem to have forgotten the simplest facts about the early history of American education, which enabled this country to produce far more than its share of the world's most creative thinkers. This ignorant panic is inspiring a headlong rush into the central planning and bureaucratization of education that have been increasingly destroying the effectiveness of U.S. education for over 40 years.

The founders of the new American colonies were completely convinced that individual learning was the way to self-improvement of all forms. That faith in individual learning was most intense among the Puritans of New England and was a direct result of their passionate religious faith. The Puritans knew from their experience that control of education was the foundation of the church bureaucracy's tyranny over individual hearts and minds. They believed that each individual must be able to read the Bible in his native language so that the bureaucratic experts of the church could not assert themselves as the powerful intermediaries between Christians and their omnipotent God as revealed in ancient tongues read only by the bureaucrats. They knew that real learning—individual knowledge and thought free of the church's control—was the first prerequisite of freedom from the tyranny of bureaucracy.

As soon as they had overcome their immediate anxieties about starvation and disease, those devotees of individual education founded what is now Harvard College (in 1636) to ensure a steady supply of educated young men for their growing colony. By the time of the Revolution, that devotion to education had supplied the American people with a remarkable community of scholars and scientists who led them in creating "The First New Nation." The Founding Fathers of our constitutional democracy were probably the most brilliant, creative, and knowledgeable group of leaders in human history. They certainly vastly surpassed the politicians who now press upon us a miasma of bureaucratic solutions to our education crisis.

Individual Education

The great accomplishments of American scholarship and science in the nation's first three centuries were not the result of great wealth, huge government expenditures, massive centers of formal education, or expert theories of learning. Learning was overwhelmingly a simple, difficult,

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but excitingly challenging task of self-help and local community action. Families commonly taught their young the rudiments of the three R's. Some went on to the now-famous one-room schools where a local teacher worked one-on-one with individual students in the ancient ways of the tutor, the apprentice's master, and the novice's mentor. Some of the better-off and more dedicated students also had individual tutors, and they went on to the tiny colleges for more individual tutoring and small-group instruction.

The entire nonsystem of individual education was based on tutoring and apprenticeship—learning by directly doing and teaching, observing and doing, and self-help. The few tutors and teachers in any community worked for what today would be seen as slave wages, but they got far more self-fulfillment and self-education out of teaching than they would have from pieces of gold. Local help and self-education led to the great accomplishments of Franklin, Jefferson, Hamilton, Lincoln, Edison, and a multitude of other American scholars, scientists, inventors, and leaders.

The colonial and later state governments became increasingly, but sporadically, involved in passing laws mandating some vague, general standards of minimal educational achievement for everyone. But they had few powers of enforcement, since they had almost no bureaucracies to carry out their proclamations of anxiety for the state of general education. Most education seems to have been carried out by families, with intermittent help of a highly individual nature from paid tutors, unpaid tutors who were friends and neighbors, and the local schools.

These same basic forms of individual education have always been the foundation of learning for the most creative scholars and scientists of all Western societies since ancient times. From the gardens of the peripatetic philosophers of ancient Greece to the patent offices of modern Einsteins and the garages of personal computer whizzes, self-education and tutorial education have been the path to the most creative and productive learning.

Even in the famous large universities of Europe, such as Oxford and Cambridge, self-education and the help of the individual tutor have been the very heart of the highest formal education. The open secret of the success of Western formal education is that in fact it has always been highly informal—highly individualized and unbureaucratic. The formal aspect consisted largely of setting public standards of achievement that, in effect, gave individuals an official stamp of approval as educated people that was much desired for status purposes.

Franklin and Jefferson

Benjamin Franklin, who was certainly the greatest technologist-inventor-scientist of his day, and one of the era's greatest businessmen, writers, and political leaders, was almost entirely self-educated. He learned to read very early, helped no doubt by any member of the family and any neighbor who was willing. He spent one year in a local grammar school, became a dropout, studied one year with a private tutor, and ended all formal education at the age of 10.

Although books at the time were rare treasures compared to today, Franklin taught himself well enough to work on the frontiers of science and become one of the most creative inventors and scientists. He learned the highly skilled craft of printing in the age-old apprenticeship way, by directly observing and doing. Mastery of that craft gave him a lifelong sense of fulfillment and pride that no formal certification can give an honest person who knows that such a degree is merely a symbol, not the reality, of knowledge and ability.

Thomas Jefferson is hailed to this day as the founder of America's whole tradition of public education. But his formal schooling is actually an extreme example of the creative power of tutorial learning by observing and doing, dialogue, and above all of self-education (autodidacticism). Virginians of his time were predominantly frontiersmen who learned few if any reading and writing skills because they did not need them and were fully engaged from dawn to dusk earning a living. But almost all of those who got ahead enough to have some leisure time quickly learned the rudiments and encouraged their children to learn far more.

Being the son of a well-off planter, Tom Jefferson spent several years in typical one-room local grammar and classical schools. His first schoolteacher, William Douglas, actually did little to help him learn, but his second, the Reverend James Maury, made a lasting impression on him. As was common at the time, Jefferson boarded with Maury's family, so his education was one of

total immersion. His class at the one-room school included four other boys, so learning was by the ancient tutorial. He proceeded entirely at his own pace, a torrid one indeed since he learned to read classical Greek and Latin works in the original in only about two years.

History books today routinely refer to Jefferson's education at the College of William and Mary, thereby summoning up modern images of large lecture halls and dozens of professors who did not even know his name. Actually, his foray into formal education was largely one prolonged tutorial and discussion between him and William Small, the only teacher there who had any significant effect on him.

William and Mary was in chaos at the time. The students were rowdy and in a state of near rebellion. The president admitted being drunk most of the time. Almost all of the professors were Anglican clergymen and were dismissed while Jefferson was there. The school was hardly a picture of centrally planned bureaucratic rationality. Dumas Malone noted in *Jefferson the Virginian* that:

> Jefferson said that [Small] gave to his studies enlightened and affectionate guidance and was like a father to him. Actually . . . [Small] made a daily companion of young Jefferson, and taught him no less through informal talk than by his memorable lectures. . . . [if] his college course can be described separately it is best summed up by saying that he continued to be taught privately, and that his tutor was William Small. The same sort of statement can be made about the five years after that, when he studied law under George Wythe. He gained clear title to fame in later years as a prophet and architect of public education, but his own training was preeminently personal and private.
>
> Self-imposed, rather than external, discipline shaped his education from his youth onward.[1]

When Jefferson left William and Mary, he entered the law office of George Wythe and learned the practice of law by the ancient practice of self-study (that is, reading the law), tutoring, and apprenticeship by observing and doing. The many practices of the ancient forms of informal, individual mentoring and tutoring were the foundation of the education of the great philosophers, scientists, and leaders in our civilization until the advent of the age of bureaucratic education in this century. (Mentoring and tutoring probably have been the primary modes of education in all civilizations during their creative periods, being replaced by bureaucratic education only in their final periods of stagnation and decay. However, I know of no study comparing civilizations in such terms.)

Although Jefferson's experience at William and Mary has often been presented—mistakenly—as evidence of his college education, there is no such distortion in the case of our appreciation of Abraham Lincoln's educational experience. Americans have long been thrilled by the texts, stories, and movies depicting Abe Lincoln walking miles to get a scarce book so he could read by the firelight after his day's work was done. And they learn in early childhood that this master of the English language never learned English from a Dick and Jane reader nor spent endless hours cutting up beautiful prose into lifeless words.

Does Science Require Formal Education?

It has often been claimed that although reading and writing skills can be learned by individual means, the highly technical fields of modern technology and science demand the formal education of specialized professionals—bureaucratically certified experts—using classrooms and laboratories full of expensive equipment that can be paid for only by millions of taxpayer dollars.

However, if there is any difference between the two cultures of learning—the humanities and science—in this context, it is probably the opposite. The basics of reading and writing are completely formalized—they are preordained symbolic forms that must be mastered before one can go on to creative enterprises. Formal education is better suited to the learning of such totally formalized symbolic activities than to any other kind of intellectual activity. The costs of such bureaucratized modes of teaching the basics of reading and writing are more long run, thus hidden.

If students are willing to have the basics pounded into their heads by such routinization, they can learn even if they have little enthusiasm and little individualized tutoring. But it kills their motivation and teaches them to take a generally submissive, dependent approach to learning, rather than the aggressive, independent initiative found in self-education. Formalized education of this sort

can teach the rudiments to millions, but it kills the spirit of learning—the passionately curious rage to know that is the beginning of all creative education and enterprise.[2]

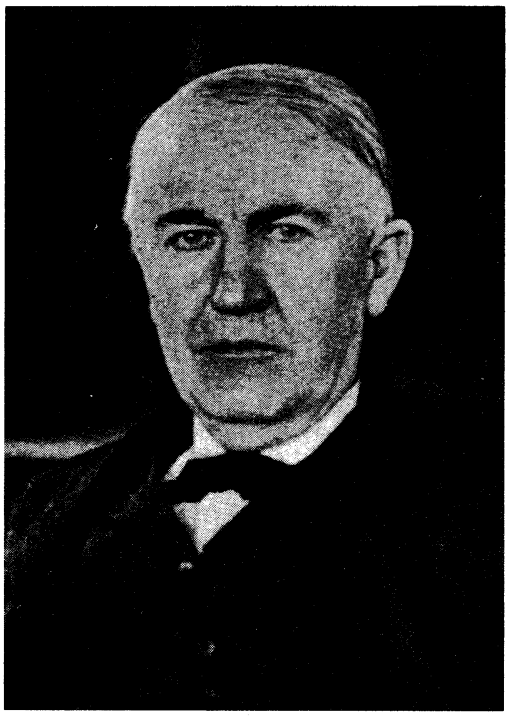
In technology and science, the short-run costs and the long-run costs of bureaucratic formalization are all much higher. Science and especially technology are only partially subject to formalization. The basics of mathematics can be learned as the alphabet can (one, two, three, two plus two, etc.), but as soon as one tries to apply mathematics to real-world problems, the element of uncertainty—"art"—must be considered in unroutinizable ways.

The creative struggle with the uncertainties of reality is inherent in all real science and technology, just as it is inherent in all free-enterprise business. Anyone who learns science by rote is actually unlearning the very heart of real science and will never be a good—creative—scientist until he or she unlearns the rote learning.

The best way to learn to be a creative scientist, technologist, or entrepreneur is to wrestle individually with all of the uncertainties from the beginning. An individual who has already been through this heroic struggle with the primordial uncertainties of life can help by serving as a model and as a mentor and tutor who encourages and allows learning by observing and doing. But a tutor cannot produce creativity by presenting formalized, textbook-based, bureaucratized knowledge in the rote forms of formalized education.

No American scientist or technologist, not even Benjamin Franklin, has had a more creative impact on the world than Thomas Edison. Edison had even less formal schooling than Franklin. Whereas Franklin lasted one year in the local one-room school, Edison lasted only three months. Rather than being allowed the graceful exit of becoming a 7-year-old dropout, he was expelled for being "retarded." His mother then taught him the basics for three years by the universal methods of tutoring. As he later said, "She instilled in me the love and the purpose of learning."[3]

When Edison was an overly tender 10 years old, his mother introduced him to an elementary book on physical science, and that marked the beginning of his lifelong effort to teach himself. He set up his own chemistry laboratory in the basement. Since he was crushed by the overwhelming disadvantage of poverty and had no welfare net to save him, he went to work at the age of 12, and he became self-supporting while continuing to educate himself and carry on his own experiments that eventually helped to revolutionize the world.



Thomas A. Edison

Many years later, having built the first world-famous scientific laboratory, he was asked about the bureaucratic rules by which he ran the organization. As he said emphatically, "Organization! Hell! I'm the organization! . . . Hell! There ain't no rules around here! We are trying to accomplish some'pn'."[4]

It is almost always claimed by the expert educationalists that modern science cannot be learned or done by such informal methods. They claim that so-called Big Science is now done by huge bureaucracies because that is the most creative way or even the only way that creative advances can be made. Their claim, though, is the opposite of the truth, and the most creative scientists of our time generally realize that Big Science is a danger to all scientific creativity.

None of the great discoveries of modern science, such as the recent discovery of superconductivity at relatively high temperatures, has been made by scientists in our vastly expensive university or other government bureaucracies. As Robert Root-Bernstein argues in his recent book

Discovering, the important discoveries are made with remarkably cheap equipment in small, unheard-of laboratories, or in even cheaper garages.[5]

Physicist Richard Feynman worked in the niches of our scientific bureaucracies, but he lived his science by the rule of always thinking about it in concrete, real-world terms and did it himself in the simplest, most commonsensical way possible. After NASA lost the space shuttle *Challenger* and its crew in 1986, an official commission was set up to determine how a project costing so many tens of billions of dollars could have failed. The many experts who testified showed that, with all their expensive research, they could not determine whether the shuttle's O-rings might have become brittle and failed, thereby causing the fatal accident, because of the cold weather at Cape Canaveral on the morning of the flight.

As the conflicting public testimony swirled around him, Feynman placed a piece of an O-ring in a glass of the ice water set out for the commissioners to drink and showed that it quickly became brittle. This bit of very little science took only a few minutes to perform and cost a few pennies. Feynman wrote that "I never pay any attention to anything by experts.... I calculate everything myself."[6] Earlier in his career, teaching a class in Brazil, he had found that he could not convince the students to think of how the "principles" in the textbooks really work in the everyday world they observed and lived in. Latin American students were—and still are—taught by the bureaucratic methods and experts of the church and state against which the early American colonists revolted.

Root-Bernstein argues that other creative scientists agree overwhelmingly with Feynman. The two basic principles of creative science in this respect are "Do as large a proportion as possible of your experiments with your own hands" and accept something "Only when I have convinced myself."[7] As Root-Bernstein says, "This means, in effect, you must train yourself—be an autodidact, learn your subject your way."[8]

Root-Bernstein takes note of "the surprising fact that many discoveries are made by young scientists just moving into a field and by older scientists with little or no formal training in that particular science. Pasteur and his invention of the germ theory of disease is a prime example."[9] James Watson and Francis Crick's revolutionary discovery of the double-helix structure of DNA is another prime example, since they worked on even less than a shoestring and without grants, and one of them had just earned a doctoral degree but was unemployed and the other was just a graduate student.

All really creative scientists are contrarians. They perform acts of creative deviance, going against the paradigms that are used as the formalized founts of wisdom for the least-common-denominator education of the students who will never become creative after their indoctrination into the accepted knowledge of their expert professions. Root-Bernstein's principles of scientific creativity sound like the nonrules of contrarian's *I Ching*: "Challenge expectation"; "Find a contradiction between theory and data"; and "Play contradictions."[10]

The Creativity of Dropouts

In an age in which the mass media of least-common-denominator doctrines keep dinning into us the horror stories about dropouts who can never earn a living without a certificate of formal education, it may be surprising to find how many people drop out anyway to create new worlds. George Gilder notes in *The Spirit of Enterprise* that Bill Gates dropped out of Harvard University to create Microsoft, which has been the most successful software firm in the age of computers. He also notes the general fact about the creators in these new high-technology enterprises:

> In all the history of enterprise, most of the protagonists of major new products and companies began their education—and discovered the secrets of their later breakthroughs—not in the classroom, where the old ways are taught, but in the factories and labs, where new ways are wrought. Among all the legions of lawyers, financiers, bureaucrats, and masters of business administration strutting into the American economy from the nation's leading schools, nothing has been so rare in recent years as an Ivy League graduate who has made a significant innovation in American enterprise.[11]

Although he does not mention it in his book, Gilder himself is a fine example of the dropout creators. Just like Gates, Gilder found that the educational atmosphere at Harvard tends to suffocate

creative deviance. He too dropped out and went on to become one of America's most creative social thinkers.

Of course, some Ivy League graduates do go on to become creative. There is actually a large minority of students in all these bureaucratic status mills who quietly deviate from the enshrined dogmas and retain their creativity. They wind up giving the public the false impression that such formal education produces creative thinkers. Their creativity occurs in spite of the bureaucratic controls, not because of them.

Many bright and creative young people choose to go to large and prestigious universities for various reasons: they do not know that such places can stifle creativity, they need the money, they crave discussions with other bright students that encourage creativity, they want the status that assuages the personal insecurities so common in creative people, or they know of one of the minority of faculty members who also encourage creativity. Correlations—such as that between formal education and creative thinking—can be totally deceiving when the relationships are not looked at over time to see which come first.

The brightest and most creative students at all levels who do not formally drop out of our leviathans of education generally find it easy to make high grades and, in their own parlance, beat the system, tune out the bureaucratese, and turn on to their own more serious and more creative interests. I had a very large group of friends and acquaintances who did that at Harvard even back in the less bureaucratized 1950s. Most of them also engaged in individual study and took graduate seminars. A small number of us even graduated in three years to escape it all.

Although the number was much smaller in high school, those same people were commonly far more tuned out in high school and spent most of their time doing their own work. At Miami Jackson High School, a small group of us were able to make nearly perfect grades to go on to college without spending much time at it, so we spent our time educating ourselves and each other in many different realms. The bureaucracy could be bothersome, as it was when the principal and dean of boys berated me for being a "Marxist nonconformist" because I read Russian literature and Marx and was a democratic socialist at the time. (That was in the early 1950s, the era of McCarthyism.) But for the most part we could avoid the whole system and get on with our serious work. There were no social workers investigating our families, no psychological counselors trying to force us to conform in the name of science, and no omnipresent national testing system forcing the teachers and us into one great mold.

Bureaucracy and the Ordinary Student

Educationalists, who are not totally unmindful of such obvious facts of life in our schools, generally insist that self-education, mutual self-help, tutorials, and other forms of informal education are all fine for the brightest and most creative, but that they are totally unavailable or useless for the ordinary (mean or least-common-denominator) students. That is the opposite of the truth. All of our schools at all levels and in all communities are pervaded by a plethora of informal, local, individualized learning groups studying and teaching themselves and each other how to repair motorcycles and cars, how to build radios or computers, how to surf every good surfing area in the world, how to dive in the ocean or soar in the sky, and how to do millions of other things.

Most of those autodidacts, tutors, and mentors rely largely on direct learning experience and word-of-mouth traditions, just as the members of all human cultures always have. And in our literate society, almost all of them also make extensive use of the written word, such as the magazines and instruction manuals on everything from surfing and diving to fixing the most exotic sports cars. High school students who go completely "dumb" when faced with a bureaucratically mandated science text or literature quiz may well be whizzes at reading auto manuals that are all Greek to the math whizzes and Shakespeare "nerds."

The obvious fact is that the education bureaucracies are far more destructive of the motivation and learning of the less symbolic students than of the symbolically brightest students. The bureaucratic teachers do not understand them or sympathize with them because they rely far more on direct learning by observing and doing and by word of mouth than on the textbooks the teachers use. They can be brilliant at doing marine biology when their fishing or diving motivations are fully engaged, and they can directly observe a master at

work; wading through a textbook mandated by a teacher or central planner, however, may turn them off completely. (As I am a highly symbolic type, textbooks were easy for me from the earliest years. A cousin, who was a whiz his whole life at personnel management but hated texts, dropped out of high school and completed it through painful correspondence courses. To reduce the pain, he bribed me to do his course on auto mechanics. I passed it quickly with flying colors, without knowing how to find the carburetor on a real car. If a real car needs repairs, I recommend my cousin, not me. I've written many books since then, but I have never fixed a car.)

Bureaucratic education has had little negative effect on the symbolically brightest and most creative. People like the late Richard Feynman still manage to survive the formal processing of their minds, largely by tuning out and going their own ways in spite of the bureaucratic tentacles. But the ever greater bureaucratization of U.S. education at all levels has had a devastating effect on the less symbolic and more least-common-denominator students. As the bureaucracy has grown, those students have come more and more to loathe the schools and almost any form of text-based learning associated with the schools.

Science has been the worst victim of this trend because the students are first introduced to science in the schools by the rote methods of bureaucracy and because creative science demands more freedom, more curiosity, more individualized learning, and more contrarianism than most other realms of knowledge. In a 1990 survey of U.S. science education, *Newsweek* summed up the situation nicely: "Unfortunately, few American students ever get to taste real science, for few of the nation's schools teach it. All parties now seem to agree that American science education serves not to nurture children's natural curiosity but to extinguish it with catalogs of dreary facts and terms."[12] What could be more dismal—and enraging—to already rebellious teenagers than to have authoritarian bureaucrats order them to learn everything in a dreary textbook—or else!

There is a direct and remarkably high correlation between the growth of the educational bureaucracies and the growth of rage and rebellion against education on the part of less-symbolic students. The bureaucratization came first and directly caused the rage. Now some of our schools trying to educate such alienated students are literally being patrolled by police, but even they cannot stem the tide of revolution. Teachers dream of returning to the good old days of *Blackboard Jungle*, way back in the 1940s and 1950s when schools were neighborly and informal and before students hit, raped, and murdered teachers. In view of what has been happening in the centrally planned, bureaucratic states around the world, is this really so surprising?

Community leaders and the parents of the less-symbolic students are now revolting against the whole bureaucratic system. They know their children are not inherently dumb and really want to learn what they themselves value and what they can see from direct experience will help the children to develop in the world. They are seizing control of their local schools through decentralization movements that may return the schools to the traditional American form of local schools, self-education, tutoring, neighborly help, and individual initiative everywhere.

The educational bureaucrats are furiously resisting this reactionary movement, in spite of the violent revolution on their hands, and they contend that ignorant parents will only make a mess of it. They forget that motivation is the beginning of all real learning and that the complexity of individual motivation and learning is precisely the reason that radical decentralization—individualization —is the only nonsystem that works in education. Where the bureaucrats have incentives to preserve and expand the system, the parents and their children have all the incentives to learn, discover, and pursue the ways of learning that work for them in the real world they live in.

Big Schools and Big Government

The worst enemies of this return to the glorious past of real education in the United States are the bureaucratically educated elites that staff our universities, mass media, churches, foundations, government agencies, and most other big bureaucratic institutions. Even the best of our big bureaucratic schools at all levels not only focus the minds of the young on the past, as Gilder notes, but focus their minds on those parts of the past that embody and justify the bureaucratic mind-set that is now the foundation of all such schools, as well as our big government, big businesses, and big founda-

tions—and of much of the rest of our conflict-ridden society.

This situation is easy to demonstrate by application of a few commonsensical tests of the culture items learned by the students at the prestigious universities. Take any random sample of students from Harvard, Stanford, the University of Wisconsin, the University of California, or any other educational leviathan. Ask them whether they've read Adam Smith (or Edmund Burke) and Karl Marx. Result? Who now reads the ingenious analyses of Adam Smith? Who does not get subjected to the enraged hate-mongering of Karl Marx?

Go to your local college bookstore and look for the books on Smith and those on Marx. Look up the number of references to Smith and Marx in the indexes of the faculties' publications. Even more revealing, do the same culture-item test for Friedrich Hayek and John Kenneth Galbraith. Try to find even an economist at your local prestigious school who has read Hayek or any other real free-market economist.

The average ignorance quotient about the entire literature of freedom—Locke, Smith, Hume, Burke, the *Federalist Papers,* and on and on—is astounding. Average students from the best of the prestigious universities have a sure grasp of Marxism, socialism, and many other brands of collectivist-bureaucratic thinking, but they have never read any classical liberal thought and do not even know the names of the great thinkers about freedom in our own century.

It is not the least bit surprising that the most successful of our students from our big bureaucratic schools assume that big government, big science, and all forms of bureaucratic rationality are the embodiment and fount of all rationality —hence of creativity, productivity, and everything else good. They have succeeded in learning what they were taught explicitly and, far more important, implicitly over and over again—relentlessly and with the sincere, passionate convictions felt by their bureaucratic teachers. (Such students, of course, are not the creative students, the Richard Feynmans, who tuned out the texts. They are the bureaucratic successes who fit into the mold, generally without knowing it was a mold.) Did they not learn in minute detail in their sociology courses that Max Weber "proved" by his definition of bureaucracy that it is the most rationally organized form of human activity? Did they not learn from John Kenneth Galbraith that big business is good because it can rationally (bureaucratically) plan its own sales, even of the Edsel? Did they not learn in their Keynesian economics courses that the only thing better than big business or big education is immensely bigger government, which is what is needed to make all the lesser goods really good?

The Bureaucratic Closing of Young Minds

Bureaucratic rationalism closes off possible new lines of action in direct proportion to its success. It is based overwhelmingly on the assumptions that there is no inherent uncertainty in the world and that the organizational rules developed to fit the past situation will work in the future because they worked in the past. (Bureaucrats assume the parameters remain basically the same, so the bureaucratic forms only have to be adjusted slightly as the world changes.) Bureaucratic, formalized, rule-bound education makes the same assumptions and takes the further step of assuming that there are no inherent uncertainties in the motivations and ways of learning of individuals. It assumes that all the peas and all their pods are basically the same and, therefore, that the more the methods of education are the same (that is, the more equal everything is), the more effective teaching and learning will be.

All the basic assumptions of the bureaucratic system lead rationally to the conclusion that the closing of minds is exactly the way to be creative and productive in anything. Thus, the closing of minds so well described by Allan Bloom[13] is the rational outcome of the standard bureaucratic operating procedures of the central planning of our education system. The bureaucratically mind-closing ideas of the teachers and professors are the only ones consistent with the basic assumptions on which the entire system is built. The teachers are not the ultimate causes, they are only intermediate products—the people chosen to teach the students to have closed minds because they are the teachers who fit the assumptions of the political choosers.

Perform another simple culture-item test: Find a single president of a prestigious university, which is supposed to be dedicated to creativity, who now does anything creative. Once you despair in that quest for the holy grail of university education, try

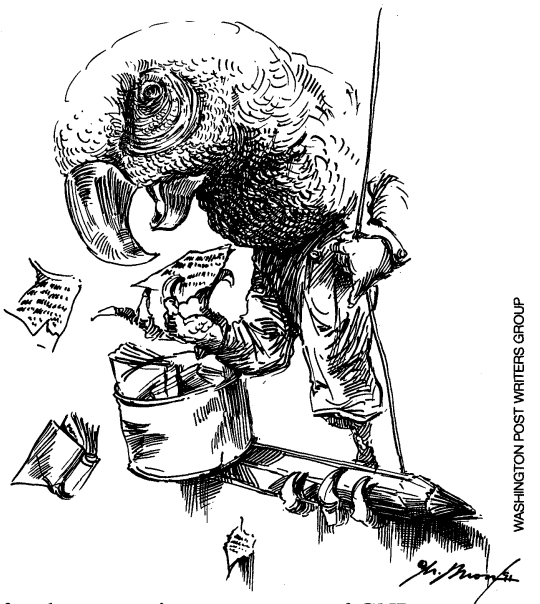
to find a single president of such a prestige school who even says something different from what all the other university presidents say. There actually are a few such deviants at small, liberal arts schools, but you will probably never find them because they are so drowned out in the mass media by the big talks of standard bureaucratese.

In *The Troubled Crusade*, which is probably the most influential book written on U.S. education in many years, Diane Ravitch notes that from 1945 to the present, the Jefferson-proclaimed crusade against ignorance has become a crusade for equal education.[14] During these 45 years, Americans have striven relentlessly to close out differences in the forms of education, to reduce all of education to the same basic rational formula administered in the most rational way possible—by a centralized bureaucracy of education experts. The result has been perceived as a growing crisis in education worse than any earlier ones. Over the decades, Americans have become more and more panicky over the obviously declining learning of students; government expenditures for education have soared steadily, increasing over 30 percent in real terms in the 1980s, and average real learning has plummeted steadily. (Test scores have stabilized because vastly more school effort now goes into teaching students how to take the tests.) How does this situation differ from what has happened in the highly planned, centrally bureaucratized economies?

If giant bureaucracies could centrally plan creative education, the Soviets long ago would have outdistanced all of us, instead of immiserating their entire society. In fact, if mandarin education experts could produce creativity, instead of causing all minds to stagnate, the massive, centralized, equal bureaucratic education system of the Chinese mandarins would have produced a great blossoming of Chinese civilization centuries ago, instead of the awful decay of that once-vibrant civilization.

Rising Costs, Declining Achievements

In the past 30 years the United States has steadily increased its spending on gigantic education bureaucracies, so that today we spend more per student per year than any other major nation. (The education bureaucrats try desperately to deny this



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fact by comparing percentages of GNP spent on lower education, excluding college costs, which are so much higher in the United States, and so on. We do actually spend more of our GNP on education than most other industrialized countries; but, more important, because we have a higher GNP per capita, our spending per student is much higher.) A higher percentage of our young people attend college than is the case in any other major nation. But by all significant measures, the educational attainments of our average young people (not the creative ones who tune out the system and learn the test items on their own) has steadily declined, so that today they rank near the bottom among major nations.

Japan, the nation that has rapidly improved in all categories of development and now frightens the entire world with its stunning productivity and creativity, spends almost nothing on research in gigantic university bureaucracies. It invests two to three times as much as the United States does in such research, but that research is undertaken by private businesses, not by gigantic government bureaucracies comparable to the University of California, the University of Wisconsin, or our hundreds of other leviathans of bureaucratic education.

The nation that rivals Japan, Germany, has not even a single university research leviathan that is comparable to the hundreds in the United States. The Germans rely far more on much less-expensive forms of direct learning by observing and doing—that is, by apprenticeship, on-the-job

education, part-time education, industrial research, and so on.

It is obvious from the entire history of learning that all real education, and especially all creative education, is the result of complex individual motivations and of ways of learning by observing and doing, tutoring, and mentoring. Any central planning or bureaucratization of this inherently individual activity will reduce the paths to learning to equal forms that close off almost all new ways of thinking and doing, and will turn them into the deadly rote education we have seen in all the once-great societies that have succumbed to government bureaucratization of education.

The present crusade that is carrying our society toward Federal testing standards for education is based explicitly on the assumption that there is a set, predetermined, closed body of culture-items that constitute worthwhile learning. If the crusade to make all our children learn this closed set of items succeeds, what will become of creativity—that openness to and production of new, unplannable, unforeseen items?

Teachers around the country are already focusing more and more student attention on learning those predetermined items, so that they themselves can get higher ratings and salaries tied to the test scores. And students have less and less time left to pursue their own unplanned, unbureaucratized interests.

The worst calamity will come if the bureaucrats succeed in attaining their goals. Fortunately, they probably cannot do all of what they are crusading to do because of the inherent ineffectiveness of bureaucracy. Unfortunately, with their greatly increasing resources and police powers, they are already succeeding at an accelerating rate in unintentionally murdering the curiosity and other motives to learn of ever more students and robbing them of the free time to learn what they really want to learn in the ways they can learn.

Conclusion

The goal of all people sincerely committed to real, creative education should be to decentralize, deregulate, decontrol, depoliticize, and debureaucratize, and to increase incentives for direct, individual, and local education of all forms. Some individuals will find that they learn best entirely on their own. Some will find they need more group support, stimulation, and discipline. Almost all will find that the ancient forms of individual tutoring and mentoring will help immensely in any learning situation. The more freedom they have to decide how to learn, what to learn, how to fit learning to their long-run goals and opportunities, and how to continually change all of that to meet emerging motives and situations, the more effective their education will be—and the more effective and happy our entire society will be.

As long as most Americans and most of our officials continue to build leviathans of bureaucratic education, we can confidently predict more of what bureaucratization has been producing for many decades—less and less real learning, less and less creativity, more and more stagnation, more and more decline in our position around the world, and ever more anxiety and panic among a people who remain passionately committed to real education but have forgotten their own gloriously creative past. However, if we can return to the freedom of education that Americans enjoyed when they were astounding the world with their creative energies, then the vast new learning resources that technology makes available to individual learners will enable them to be more creative and productive than was ever before possible. Think of what self-reliant autodidacts such as Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, or Thomas Edison would be able to do with the computer technology that will soon place the entire world at our fingertips. □

1. Dumas Malone, *Jefferson the Virginian* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1948), pp. 54-55.
2. Page Smith has entitled his brilliant historical indictment of American higher education *Killing the Spirit* (New York: Viking, 1990). Lower education is an even worse killing field.
3. "Thomas Alva Edison," in *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), vol. 6, Macropaedia, p. 308.
4. Wyn Wachhorst, *Thomas Alva Edison* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1981), pp. 180-83.
5. Robert Scott Root-Bernstein, *Discovering* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989).
6. Richard Feynman, *Surely You're Joking, Mr. Feynman!* (New York: Norton, 1985), quoted in Root-Bernstein, p. 418.
7. Root-Bernstein, p. 418.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*, p. 417.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 412-13.
11. George Gilder, *The Spirit of Enterprise* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), pp. 246-47.
12. *Newsweek*, April 19, 1990.
13. Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987).
14. Diane Ravitch, *The Troubled Crusade* (New York: Basic Books, 1983).

A School with a Money-Back Guarantee

by Scott Payne

In Lansing, Michigan, one finds a new wrinkle in education: a money-back guarantee. HOPE Academy, a primary and secondary school operated for profit by Eleanor Sambaer and Marina Farhat makes this unique offer: *Give us your kindergartner. If, by the end of the academic year, your child can't read at least on a second-grade level, you get your money back.*

The guarantee is one means by which HOPE's founders have given a future both to their school and to their dream of offering children an education of the highest caliber. Mrs. Sambaer and Mrs. Farhat began HOPE (Heightened Options in Private Education) because they believe that public schools neither challenge children academically, nor support families' beliefs and moral codes.

That the pair even managed to open HOPE is remarkable. Early on, they discovered that one cannot set up classrooms in, say, an empty store. State and local codes require prohibitively expensive retrofitting of wiring and plumbing, the addition of fire walls and security doors, removal of asbestos, plus a myriad of other requirements having little to do with education.

The women sidestepped these obstacles when they found a home for HOPE in a partly vacated public school dating from the 1930s. Like the school's oak doors and bannisters, the desks exhibit years of battering, but this doesn't concern HOPE's owners. "The amount of money public education wastes on brand-new architecture and pretty new desks is crazy," they say. "Education takes place in the mind. Old desks and 50-year-old buildings don't matter."

When the two women opened HOPE in 1985, half of its first 35 students were black children from inner-city homes—a proportion that persists today. HOPE's enrollment rose to 68 in 1986 and 80 in 1987.

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HOPE Academy's teaching methods were inspired by Marva Collins' Westside Preparatory School in Chicago. Mrs. Farhat, in fact, attended Mrs. Collins' teacher-training program and employs some of the techniques Mrs. Collins has revived from the past:

- minute-to-minute teacher contact with each pupil
- strong non-denominational religious emphasis in the curriculum
- reliance upon timeless Western literature from *The Iliad* through *The Little Red Hen*
- use of phonics in reading instruction
- insistence on mastery of standard spoken English, with enforced use of complete sentences in classroom discourse
- relentless emphasis on neatness and proper conduct.

But whereas Marva Collins can subsidize Westside Prep with royalties from her books and fees from her lecture tours, no such resources were available to Mrs. Farhat or Mrs. Sambaer. By the end of 1988, HOPE seemed headed for financial collapse, despite holding costs to $3,000 per student (substantially less than Michigan's public schools). "When I look back on what we went through," Marina Farhat says, "I'm surprised we were able to keep going."

The problem, in part, was that neither woman was trained in business. Mrs. Farhat is a teacher, and Mrs. Sambaer is a nurse. They were offering a unique curriculum, but in the manner of public schools: 8:00 to 4:00 daily, nine months a year. Perhaps the only thing keeping HOPE open was its founders' sense of mission.

Farhat and Sambaer wanted HOPE to train the

intellect. "We want our children to be able to think and act for themselves in a free society," Marina Farhat says. Whereas public education stresses feelings above reasoning, she says, she and her partner want HOPE to do the opposite. "You can't expect to lead life based on good feelings," Marina Farhat says. "We want children to be able to deal with the things that *don't* make them feel good."

Many parents would agree with that remark, but debates between liberal and conservative educators go over most laymen's heads. Accordingly, a businessman challenged HOPE's owners to stop responding to public education's feel-good jargon. He suggested instead that they focus on all parents' instinctive expectation of education: that their children leave school better equipped for life than were the parents when they completed their own schooling. And the only way parents can assess that, he added, is by observing how their youngsters measure up against other children. The thought chimed with Marina Farhat's feeling that large numbers of black parents want their children to attend HOPE to acquire the skills and training the parents themselves did not derive from public education.

Sacrifice and Commitment

Enrolling children at HOPE means sacrifice for most inner-city parents. One working couple with a modest income pays $710 a month in tuition for three daughters—a kindergartner, a first-grader, and a third-grader. The school has no scholarship program, though the HOPE Academy Foundation is a vehicle through which contributors could assist with tuition. Farhat and Sambaer oppose full-ride scholarships, however. They believe direct parental financial commitment contributes to quality schooling.

That impression dovetails with the businessman's perception of preschool and kindergarten as the keys to the school's survival and growth. If parents could discern substantial progress in their children at those school levels, he said, they would not view tuition as a sacrifice—particularly not in the case of HOPE's year-long preschool which isn't available at all through public education. He further challenged Farhat and Sambaer not just to pay lip service to making a profit, but to pursue profit because it is the most reliable feedback. If HOPE is good, he told them, it will earn money. The public schools' product is free, he added, so you've got to show the consumer that their product is not in the same league with yours.

Seeing their school through a businessman's eyes surprised HOPE's owners. They hadn't realized that by adopting public education's 8-to-4 day, they overlooked the convenience of parents, their sole revenue source. They also realized that public education's three-month summer vacation is a remnant of agrarian times that teachers' unions protect as a perk. But for a private school, summer vacation is a heavy cost. Rent and insurance payments don't stop in June—so revenue must not stop, either. Thus, Sambaer and Farhat put HOPE and its teachers on a year-around schedule.

With the help of a consultant, they developed a marketing campaign featuring the money-back guarantee for kindergartners. They also began fitting HOPE's schedule to parents' schedules, 6:30 A.M. to 6:15 P.M., so the school is a home away from home, and HOPE preschoolers and pupils need not be latchkey kids. Enrollment has climbed to 200—still equally divided between suburban and inner-city families—and the school is solvent. In addition to its preschool, HOPE's summer schedule offers remedial training for public school students and accelerated classes for students who want to get ahead.

Summer also is when HOPE screens prospective transfer enrollees to ascertain whether their work habits and academic skills are up to HOPE's speed—and, if not, to get them there. "Often we find that public school students just don't have work habits. And their skills aren't at a point that they can handle HOPE's program," Marina Farhat says. "Sometimes we have to tell parents that we must hold their child back a year."

In addition, Sambaer and Farhat are thinking about offering a full summer semester at HOPE. Marina Farhat says parents seem equally divided about enrolling their youngsters in the summer, but she believes that in a year or two HOPE will provide the option.

Meanwhile, she chuckles over the year-long debate in the state capitol about "equalizing" funding for public education's "rich" school districts, which spend $6,000 per pupil per year, and "poor" districts that spend only $4,000.

"Boy, with that kind of money . . ." she grins. "Well, we think we're doing pretty well here with only $3,000." □

Private Treasures at Antietam

by Jo Ann Frobouck

The 1990 PBS documentary "The Civil War" stirred our emotions and sparked a renewed interest in the battlefields of the war. *Newsweek* noted that 14 million Americans—more than the entire population of the Confederacy—viewed the series, "rekindling old partisan passions" and raising questions about the meaning and memories of war. Literally overnight, legions of converts joined the ranks of preservationists answering the call to "save hallowed ground."

Nowhere is this pressure felt more keenly than in Sharpsburg, Maryland, where 23,000 soldiers fell on September 17, 1862, making the Battle of Antietam the war's bloodiest day. The creation of a national cemetery in 1867 at Sharpsburg, coupled with 1890 legislation establishing the Antietam National Battlefield Site, made Antietam a model for land-protection strategies. Long before PBS brought the war into our living rooms, Antietam was under the preservation microscope.

Since 1988, the National Park Service (NPS), working in concert with preservation organizations, has been developing a new general management plan at Antietam that will govern the management, use, and interpretation of park resources. The plan reviews changing land-use patterns to determine if they threaten the "integrity" (original character) of the battlefield. It calls for a public takeover of some privately held lands within Antietam's 3,245-acre boundary to restore the historic scene and provide for tourist use of planned "interpretive plazas."

The private landowners who have been Antietam's faithful stewards, some for generations, are viewed by the NPS as impediments to the planned restoration. Their reward for preserving Antietam's pristine setting, virtually unchanged since the Civil War, may be the loss of their land and their heritage—a heritage that goes back 200 years, long before the Civil War.

The NPS plan prescribes land-use sanctions for other tracts along the perimeter that provide a visual backdrop for the park. To preserve the view from a central point, forced scenic easements will prohibit the erection of new farm structures such as barns, sheds, and silos.

Some farmers may be subjected to public right-of-way easements across their land, jeopardizing farming operations. The NPS plan, by endorsing such sanctions and controls, would reduce the viability of farming—which it is supposed to protect.

In 1990, the Conservation Fund, a private land trust, quietly bought a working farm inside the park boundary. Even though the Park Service has eminent-domain authority to protect land within the park, the NPS urged the purchase to save "blood-spilled" ground from exploitation. With great pomp and circumstance, the land was donated to the federal government last year.

The land, which was not imperiled, will not be any more protected: The only thing that changed is the name on the deed. The American public becomes the caretaker, footing the bill for maintenance and management.

Jo Ann Frobouck is co-founder and former editor of Land Rights Letter, *a national newsletter focusing on private property rights issues. She lived for six years in Sharpsburg, Maryland, near Antietam Battlefield where she became interested in battlefield preservation issues. She currently lives in Middletown, Virginia.*

Many landowners in and around the park are descendants of the families who lived there at the time of the battle. These fourth and fifth generation farmers feel they know something about historic preservation.

The Kefauver Farm

Millard and Nancy Kefauver, who own and operate a 280-acre dairy farm inside the northern edge of the park, worry about pressure for Federal acquisition of private land. Since the day in 1978 when they were informed by registered letter that their land was inside an expanded park boundary, the Kefauvers have been living with uncertainty about their future.

This uncertainty is fueled by Park Service studies to determine where Clara Barton, founder of the American Red Cross, nursed while at Antietam. The NPS has concluded that Barton used the Kefauver house as her headquarters, even though two other NPS studies concluded that she nursed at other farmhouses. The Kefauvers are certain the NPS picked the third study as a rationale for including their land in the expanded boundary.

The Kefauver farm has been in the family for four generations, since 1862. They have seen park superintendents come and go, as well as new management plans for the park, each time wondering if their land will be condemned.

While the Park Service claims that private lands are vulnerable, the Kefauvers—like many other farmers in the area—have preserved the agricultural and historical character of the region. Their incentive is pride of ownership and a unique heritage to pass on to their children.

Private stewardship has not gone entirely unnoticed at Antietam. Recognizing the pride of the people in their community and their resistance to the commercialism that characterizes many other battlefields, the National Trust for Historic Preservation paid tribute to local preservation efforts. A 1991 letter to residents concerned about public acquisition stated: ". . . we commend the stewardship that local landowners have demonstrated at Antietam and view continued farming operations as appropriate to the historic character of the battlefield and its vicinity."

Perhaps the most ambitious plan put together by the NPS and preservationists to seize private land is called "Preserving Richmond's Battlefields," released in early 1991. The plan proposes "green-lining" (targeting for preservation) 250,000 acres on the outskirts of Richmond, 95 percent of which is privately owned.

In the works since 1987, the plan recommends designation of potential areas for NPS acquisition, and Federal review of construction plans on remaining private lands. Much like Antietam's master plan, the Richmond plan would intensify tourist amenities through the construction of "heritage interpretive sites."

Is Public Ownership the Solution?

Contrary to NPS rhetoric about the vulnerability of privately owned historic property, historic structures under the aegis of the NPS do not bear out that public ownership is the solution. At Antietam, the farmhouses under park management (many of which are on the National Register of Historic Places) are in such disrepair that they are literally falling into the historic ground upon which they sit.

A 1991 report of the National Parks and Conservation Association, a private foundation and NPS lobbyist, concluded that the NPS is unable to maintain and operate the facilities it already owns nationwide. The report, *A Race Against Time: Five Threats That Endanger America's National Parks and the Solutions to Avert Them*, estimated a maintenance backlog of $2 billion and a major repairs backlog of $5 billion.

Despite maintenance backlogs and groaning Federal budgets, the NPS has appropriated $500,000 for still more land acquisition at Antietam this year. The funds will be used to purchase 93 acres of farmland, taking more private land off county tax rolls and putting the burden of its upkeep on the public. Year after year, this wasteful scenario is repeated, tearing away at the vestiges of privately owned land inside the battlefield. Before the ink dries on a newly acquired deed, plans are being laid to get the next piece of land.

Private landowners have been the uncelebrated protectors of Antietam's rich history. They have preserved the region, so well, in fact, that historians call it a "time capsule" battlefield. When preservationists recognize the invaluable role of private owners, and seize upon the mutuality of their goals, the rural landscape that is an integral part of Antietam's legacy will be preserved for the enjoyment and enrichment of future generations. □

The Case of the Sighing Mechanics

by Tibor R. Machan

A few months ago, while Bush Administration officials were twisting Japanese arms to try to convince them to stop selling well-made cars at low prices, my local service manager was attending a regional meeting of American Mazda mechanics. It is interesting to note how the mechanics view American auto workers.

At the Mazda meeting, an announcement was made that some of the company's minivans henceforth would be assembled in Michigan. The 27 American mechanics reacted with a collective sigh. According to the service manager, they felt that even if the parts were assembled to exacting Mazda standards, there would be repair problems because American auto workers don't perform up to Japanese standards.

This, unfortunately, corresponds with my own experience. I drive a 1985 Chrysler minivan, and I am always faced with problems—mostly with the suspension and the CV joints. Every four months or so I have to spend around $350 on something or other. My mechanic, an American, has told me I'd be much better off with a Japanese minivan. I can't afford one just now, but I am looking forward to when I can buy a Toyota or a Mazda.

Why is this happening in the United States, whose "Made in USA" emblem once was a mark of excellence?

Tibor R. Machan teaches business ethics at Auburn University, Alabama. He edited Commerce and Morality *(Rowman & Littlefield, 1988).*

One reason might be that we now live in a society where workers are more concerned with job security, health insurance, and other "entitlements" than with doing well at their jobs or careers. Moreover, this attitude is encouraged by social and political theorists.

American academics and politicians focus not on merit but on equal welfare. The main thing in life, they tell us, is fairness. And fairness is mostly concerned with how well one's salary and benefits stack up against other workers'. Fairness is the nice term to use when one feels envy.

So, the reason the American mechanics were distressed seems to be that they were beginning to sense the auto workers'—or at least their union leaders'—priorities. And these priorities no longer put a job well done at the top. Instead, U.S. auto workers are concerned mostly with getting even, obtaining a "fair" wage, ample pension, good health insurance, and whatever else their leaders—from academic political theorists to union officials—think they are "entitled."

Entitlement politics has turned into entitlement ethics—including the professional ethics of America's auto workers. That is what appears to have been perceived, at least implicitly, not only by car buyers but by their mechanics.

There are, no doubt, other problems with America's competitive posture. It is very likely, however, that in industries where workers are organized by leaders convinced that envy is a sound basis for collective bargaining, America's competitive edge will be difficult to recover. □

Saying "Yes"

by Robert Zimmerman

It is the winter of 1992 in New York City, and everyone is talking economic doom and gloom. Macy's has just declared bankruptcy, Citicorp has lost almost a billion and a half dollars in the last six months, local unemployment has topped 10 percent, and shuttered storefronts dot local shopping districts.

Into the midst of this dismal situation comes yours truly, trying to find (of all things) a location for a film shoot. I am representing *Weekend at Bernie's II,* a Hollywood feature film with a week's shooting in middle May. One of the locations I am searching for is a high-level corporate boardroom with a spectacular view of the New York skyline. Filming would take a day, with a second day for setup and cleanup. Because this is a Hollywood film, we have the money to cover costs and pay any additional fees. In other words, the location can make a profit from our filmwork.

After some preliminary scouting, I located an excellent boardroom on the 40th floor of the corporate headquarters of one of the world's largest banks. This bank, which happened to be saddled with an enormous debit sheet, couldn't get its act together to do anything. Four different departments said that the other three had to give their approval before they would say "yes." Because we loved the location, and the office manager of that particular space was willing to let us use it, I spent four weeks bouncing back and forth between several different levels of bureaucracy before finally giving up.

Another bank was willing to rent us their space, though its boardroom didn't have the exact look we wanted. The bank owned a building in a prime spot in lower Manhattan. Four of its five floors had been sitting empty for the last five years, and they saw this as a way to earn a little from the unused asset.

Though at first this seemed sensible, I couldn't understand why they hadn't rented the space to a more permanent tenant. The bank had owned the building for over 60 years, and their costs were limited to taxes and maintenance. With such low costs, they could certainly make a profit renting the space below the market rate, which would make it easy to find a tenant. Why let the space sit empty when it could be rented and, at a minimum, cover their costs? I was curious, and I asked the business manager if she knew. She shrugged her shoulders. "They can't make up their minds what to do, so it's easier to let it sit empty."

My search continued. I found about a dozen other banks and businesses with beautiful boardrooms overlooking the majestic towers of New York's skyline. One after another considered the idea of letting us film, and then rejected it. The typical reason was that they weren't in the movie business. One bank officer said, "Even for $15,000 a day it wouldn't be worth our bother."

Too much bother? We would *pay* them for their bother, and would even shoot on the weekend to avoid interfering with their normal operations. Nah, they'd say, we don't want to deal with the problems.

Maybe the Japanese Prime Minister is right, and we Americans are losing our work ethic.

Mr. Zimmerman is a feature film producer in New York City.

A New York City panorama.

One company willing to let us film on their property was a small real estate firm that managed a building in midtown Manhattan. They went to their tenants and found one who was eager to make some quick money on the side. Both the real estate company and tenant had rented to film companies before, and knew the job would involve long hours and numerous complications and surprises. They also knew that, with hard work, they could fit us in without losing any other business. Why not add to their profit sheet? Unfortunately, our director didn't like the view.

Eureka!

We finally found the right location on the 51st floor of a large corporate building. Once again I had to deal with three different departments all unwilling to make a commitment. After much haggling and many phone calls, we settled the deal and planned the shoot.

Consider the responses I got: One company couldn't get organized enough to make the deal and consequently let it pass them by. Another company was willing to deal for a quick, short-term gain (a one-day shoot), but seemed unwilling to work for a more permanent profit (a long-term tenant). Most of the rest were just plain lazy, willing to let the business slip away because they didn't want to bother, even when guaranteed a profit.

And the people working in these businesses probably blame the Japanese because the economy is bad.

Most of the companies that said "yes" were small, and our fee would have gone directly to the individual owners. The firms that said "no" were large corporations, and their middle management employees were the ones saying so. Since these individuals didn't own the company, wouldn't earn any more money by letting us film on the property, and might catch some heat if things went wrong, they had no incentive to say "yes." Hence, they rejected the idea outright, and each company lost a chance to improve its bottom line.

The two large corporations that said "yes" did so only because I was extremely persistent, and used some influence with friends at higher executive levels. In other words, I had to pull strings. I wouldn't call this an efficient way to run a business.

Because the employees' earnings were at most tangentially connected with the company's profit-

or-loss statements, it didn't matter to them if their company did better. They did their jobs from 9:00 to 5:00, cashed their paychecks, and went home. As far as they were concerned, the company could go to the dogs and they wouldn't care, *until they lost their jobs.* Then they would blame their boss, the President, the Japanese, the American consumer, or anyone else they could point a finger at.

Obviously, if their salaries had been directly tied to profits, their incentive to figure out a way of saying "yes" would have increased by many orders of magnitude.

This, however, is only a partial explanation. Mere profit should never be the sole motivation for doing the right thing.

My first job out of college was in the northeast real property office of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Because the operator was the federal government, there was no profit to be earned, nor could the company go out of business if managed badly. No one had any incentive to keep costs low. In that sense, the FAA employees were similar to the middle managers I had met during my location search.

Yet, the older supervisors and middle managers, government employees since the 1940s, would not have dreamed of wasting government funds. They had principles and respect for the organization where they worked, and insisted on doing the job right. As a result of this responsible attitude, three people had been able to run this FAA real property office efficiently and cheaply for almost 30 years, during a time when almost all the nation's airports and aviation facilities had been built from scratch.

In the three years I worked there, these older managers retired one by one, and were replaced by new people who had no reluctance to expand their offices unnecessarily, to sit at their desks and do as little work as possible, and to squander the government's resources in order to build their bureaucratic empires. By the time I left, the office had 11 people, and the manager in charge was drawing up plans to expand it further. And this was when newer technologies should have made it possible to reduce the real-estate costs of the FAA.

Because the work was not directly connected with profits, the employees had a choice: They could work efficiently and responsibly, or they could ignore the consequences and trash the agency. The older employees chose the former; the newer employees chose the latter.

A Matter of Choice

It is *all* a matter of choice. Work is more than just making a few bucks for oneself. It is an act of creation. Even if my job is divorced from the company's profits, it is morally reprehensible to avoid my responsibilities simply because I am not forced to face them. Besides, I'm alive, I work there, why not do the best job I can? Anything else seems a waste of the precious gift of life given us all for so short a time.

The old-timers I met in the federal government knew this. Even though their incomes would not be affected, they were going to do right by their employer because they would be doing right for themselves.

By saying "yes," everyone gains. Even though we, the film company, would have to pay for using the space, we would be served because now we could make the film, from which a profit might be earned. Many people will see the film, serving them (we hope!) by the entertainment it will provide. Also served will be the many people on the periphery of the project—the janitors, theater workers, and manufacturers of film equipment—as well as everyone working on location. Saying "yes" allows many people to become creative and earn wealth for themselves.

Saying "no," however, accomplishes nothing. Like misers, everyone hoards their services while denying the commerce of human endeavor that is the very purpose of life. Eventually, this can only lead to bankruptcies, unemployment, empty storefronts, and poverty.

It is all a matter of choice. We can choose to build a society where creativity, wealth, and profit are directly linked with a person's actions, and as individuals we can choose to say "yes," to work well and responsibly.

Or, we choose a society where our actions have nothing to do with the successful creation of wealth, and as individuals pocket what we can, rip off everyone else, and let our children reap the whirlwind.

The United States and Japan chose the former and became prosperous. The Soviet Union chose the latter and went bankrupt. What do *we* choose, now, for the future? □

Microcosm: The Decline of U. S. Competitiveness

by Donald G. Smith

During my long stint in the aerospace industry, I spent ten years as a publications supervisor. I was responsible for the production of reports, proposals, manuals, technical papers, and slide and chart shows. In those Great Society years of 1965-1975, ominous changes occurred in our workplace.

When I took over the publications group, which usually numbered around 12 people, we used one of the typists as a part-time clerk. She answered the phone, typed memos, filed, collected and recorded time cards, and generally handled administrative details. For these duties, we allowed eight hours of overhead charge for the week, and this was quite realistic. The remaining 32 hours were spent on direct-charge work, which means she spent 80 percent of her time making money for the company and 20 percent on the unrecoverable costs of doing business.

By 1971, because of increased Federal regulations imposed on defense contractors, this job had grown to a full-time position: 40 hours a week spent as an overhead charge. By the time I left in 1975, I not only had a full-time administrative clerk, but another typist was authorized to assist her when needed.

Thanks to the Great Society and the increased complications of doing business with the federal government, we had to expend more than 40 hours a week in lost time to produce the same amount of work we had turned out ten years earlier. We not only had to contend with affirmative action and OSHA, but with edicts from such Federal departments as Defense, Commerce, Labor, and HEW, as well as state and county bureaucracies. All these involved forms, and most required memos and letters as well as exhaustive bookkeeping. And there was record-keeping. Lots of it. We even had to record each employee's overtime, keeping a kind of point system so that each person had an equal share of the premium pay, as though we were passing out party favors.

This alone proved to be an added cost, since overtime, up to that point, had always been regarded as nothing more than a way to meet a deadline. The idea had been to get the job done and then go home. So, we used to meet an overtime assignment by grabbing the best people and getting the job out as fast as possible, saving the company and the government money in the process.

With the coming of the Great Society, however, we had to be *fair*. We had to bring in the slower and less productive people to do little more than stay out of the way, at premium rates, in order to justify the workers who were there to get the job out.

Bond drives required additional record-keeping. The federal government leaned heavily on defense contractors to have their employees buy bonds through payroll deduction. Management made it clear that everyone was expected to

Mr. Smith, a frequent contributor to The Freeman, *lives in Santa Maria, California.*

participate. The few holdouts were repeatedly reported, and lists were kept on every level of the management hierarchy.

What I have noted here is the little world of a rather insignificant organization that existed almost 20 years ago. The importance of this microcosm, however, is that it was not unique. It was, in fact, typical. During the Great Society years, government intervention into private industry grew at an alarming rate, and if it has since been retarded, which I doubt, it has never been stopped. Most certainly it has not been reversed.

I haven't kept a close tab on the activities at the old post, but I know that the 40-hour group clerk is still a fact of life, and the non-productive paperwork is worse than ever. No one produces more work than before, but it requires far more overhead to do the same job.

It is interesting to note that the Great Society years are precisely when foreign manufacturers began to make deep inroads into traditionally American markets. The automobile is the obvious example, but let's not forget that the commercial aircraft market is no longer an American show either, with the Concorde and the Airbus coming to us from foreign factories. In electronics we see pretty much a lost cause, and clothing and shoes are rapidly disappearing down the black hole.

The irony is that the chief adversary of American business is our own government. Our declining role in world markets is not solely the fault of management or labor. It is the fault of stifling government regulations. We cannot have one employee in 12 assigned to government paperwork and still hope to survive in a competitive world.

Government should take its hands off the free enterprise system and let people get back to work. Private industry cannot continue as the nation's record-keeper. It cannot provide for the health care, the recreational and psychological needs, and the baby sitting of its employees.

Let companies hire according to their needs, and let them get rid of unproductive employees. Above all, let's eliminate the mountain of paperwork and use the talents of every employee in the cause of honest competition. As long as we are forced to employ 40-hour group clerks, we have little chance of surviving. □

Are We Only Good at Waging War?

by Evelyn Pyburn

The mayor of one of Montana's cities was recently caught with his foot in his mouth, having been overheard to say, with the press close at hand, that "The only thing Americans are good at is waging war."

The mayor could hardly be more wrong about Americans, as a broad and candid look at the world and at history clearly demonstrates.

It's true that, while there is never much to glorify about war, when Americans have to wage war, they are a force with which to contend as no force in history has ever been.

The United States' "war machine," muddled even as it is in bureaucracy and waste, is in fact the very kind of war machine that despots and dictators the world over have tried to build for centuries. Since these tyrants have never held much regard for common folk, they have thought nothing of subjugating, mutilating, and even destroying their own people in this fervent quest. Each tyrant has drained the resources of his country, wreaking havoc and destruction, in trying to create the war machine of his dreams.

But never has one succeeded in building a war machine equal to that of the United States, which was, by comparison, built almost incidentally to the general growth and development of the country.

It's an economic vitality so great that even to launch that war machine into major action hardly causes a ripple in the functioning of the rest of the country. As one man noted at the height of the war with Iraq, "It's hard to believe we are at war because it hardly affects our everyday lives."

The explanation for this phenomenon lies wholly within the means—the economic system. Americans are not superior people, they simply have more freedom than the people of other countries—that alone makes the difference. The opportunity to pursue individual goals and for each person to use his mind and stand by his actions is what created the awesome wealth and capabilities that the United States government has drawn upon to construct its war machine.

To build a war machine has never been the goal of most Americans, just as it is never the goal of average citizens of any country, but because of the capabilities of individuals and their freedom to use their talents, the results are significantly greater. It is the strength of the individual that makes the United States such a military power.

Americans are good at war because they are so good at everything else. □

Evelyn Pyburn is editor of the Big Sky Business Journal *in Billings, Montana, where an earlier version of this article first appeared.*

The Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence

by John P. Finneran

One could have wished that this excellent instrument had been preserved for a longer period in this place, and had stayed in use, or else, that another instrument had been constructed in its place. Since, however, men as a rule are more interested in worldly matters than in things celestial, they usually regard with indifference such happenings which will perhaps be more harmful to themselves than they themselves realize.

—TYCHO BRAHE, the great 16th-century Danish astronomer, on the ruining through government neglect of a giant quadrant he had constructed.[1]

Tycho's lament is common among scientists who rely on government funding. As Tycho discovered, the state can be a wobbly crutch, since government aid can vary greatly from year to year.

One scientific program currently receiving Federal support is SETI—the search for extraterrestrial intelligence. SETI consists mostly of listening for alien communication signals, although, in some cases, signals are sent from Earth in the hope of provoking a response. The importance of SETI has been summed up by Lewis White Beck, who pointed out that, if intelligent aliens are discovered, "there is no limit to what in coming centuries we might learn about other creatures and, more portentously, about ourselves. Compared to such advances in knowledge, the Copernican and Darwinian Revolutions . . . would have been but minor preludes."[2]

Mr. Finneran is a writer from Marshfield, Massachusetts.

Is There Extraterrestrial Intelligence?

Great thinkers have debated the likelihood of extraterrestrial intelligence for many centuries. The probable existence of intelligent aliens has been supported by Aristotle, Plutarch, Lucretius, Nicholas of Cusa, Giordano Bruno, Pierre Gassendi, John Locke, Johann Heinrich Lambert, and Immanuel Kant. It has been opposed by Albertus Magnus, Augustine, and Thomas Aquinas.[3]

The mathematical probability that extraterrestrial life exists and will attempt to communicate with Earth was expressed by Frank Drake: The probability = (the probability that a given star system has planets) x (the number of habitable planets among those planets) x (the probability that life evolved on those planets) x (the probability that intelligence developed among planets with life) x (the probability that an intelligent species will attempt interstellar communication within five billion years after the formation of its planet). The problem with the Drake equation, of course, is that many of the variables are unknown, so that, depending on the numbers you plug in, the results can vary widely.

Those who doubt the existence of extraterres-

trial intelligence point to the apparent lack of von Neumann machines on Earth. According to a theory put forward by the mathematician John von Neumann, a von Neumann machine could enter a galaxy and, using the raw materials it finds, build replicas of itself. The universe could rapidly be explored by numerous von Neumann machines expanding in all directions. Therefore, goes the argument, since a technologically advanced alien society has not yet sent von Neumann machines to Earth, such an alien society does not exist.[4]

However, proponents have a number of counter-arguments. Carl Sagan and William I. Newman contend that if von Neumann machines had limited reproduction, then their absence on Earth would be understandable. If, on the other hand, von Neumann machines' replication could not be limited, then it would be dangerous to build them in the first place, lest, like a cancer, their numbers should grow uncontrollably.[5]

The debate about the existence of extraterrestrial intelligence, then, is inconclusive. But, given the doubts that alien intelligence exists, and the rival demands for funds, SETI is low on the list of Congressional priorities. There have been a number of SETI searches, but scientists often have had to share telescopes and reuse data collected for other purposes.

Unofficial Searches

However, SETI is not a government monopoly. Faced with limited funding, SETI enthusiasts are becoming more self-reliant. Once more, Tycho Brahe anticipated the problem, and he also anticipated the response:

> Since a very limited number of people occupy themselves with these celestial sciences and enterprises, and since it is very seldom that among the statesman who wish to govern a state that there are any so strongly attracted by these sciences that they consider it their duty to favor and support them, but are much more often repulsed by them and consider them futile, owing to their ignorance; so the person who cultivates divine astronomy ought not to let himself be influenced by such ignorant judgments, but rather look down upon them from his elevated position, considering the cultivation of his studies the most precious of all things, and remaining indifferent to the coarseness of others.[6]

A number of "cultivators of divine astronomy" have heeded Tycho's advice and taken astronomy into their own hands. There have been a number of unofficial searches. A group of enthusiastic amateurs in California have turned their home computers into makeshift SETI signal analyzers. This amateur SETI project is called, appropriately, AMSETI.[7]

Discoveries, however, often occur not because of conscious design, but as the happy fruit of circumstance. Christopher Columbus's search for a shorter route to India resulted in the discovery of the New World, and several theorists have speculated that a similarly unintended event may alert extraterrestrials to our existence.

In fact, radio, television, and other communications signals broadcast over the years continue their journeys into space, so they may be more likely to be discovered than directed signals.[8] Indeed, we might witness an alien response via television or radio, evident to any viewer sitting in his living room or to any listener in his car—and make a mockery of our scientists' sophisticated listening apparatuses. Thus could a wayward broadcasting signal act as an inadvertent Columbus, making known to some new world the existence of our old. □

1. Bernard Lovell, "Tycho Brahe" in *History Today*, October 1963, p. 680.
2. Lewis White Beck, "Extraterrestrial Intelligent Life" in Edward Regis Jr., editor, *Extraterrestrials: Science and Alien Intelligence* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 15.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 3-18.
4. This is the argument in Frank J. Tipler, "Extraterrestrial Intelligent Beings Do Not Exist," pp. 133-50 in Regis.
5. Carl Sagan and William I. Newman, "The Solipsist Approach to Extraterrestrial Intelligence," pp. 151-61 in Regis.
6. Lovell, p. 684.
7. Jill Tarter, "Searching for Extraterrestrials" in Regis, p. 181.
8. *Ibid.*

The Home-Birth Controversy

by Hannah Lapp

Modern America has much to say about rights and opportunities for women, even down to the right to terminate a pregnancy. However, when it comes to nurturing and bringing their offspring safely to birth, American women often find their options severely restricted.

More than a dozen states have enacted laws to prohibit unlicensed midwifery, while others prosecute midwives for practicing medicine without a license. Some midwives have responded by ignoring the laws; some have gone underground; others have been arrested or imprisoned. But most have ceased to practice their profession and thus have failed to pass their skills on to new generations. As a result, most of our expectant mothers are denied a feasible alternative to a high-tech hospital delivery dominated by a hurried and often distant male physician, and overshadowed by a one-in-four chance of undergoing a Caesarean section—much higher than the rate for midwife-attended births.

Throughout history, midwifery has been an integral part of health care. Marsden Wagner, M.D., European director of the World Health Organization (WHO), reports:

"Even today the midwife attends two-thirds of all births in the world. She is the basic care-giver for maternity care services in every single European country. And in the European countries with the lowest infant mortality rates (all lower than the United States which ranks an embarrassing 21st in infant mortality), the midwife is the senior person attending at 75 percent of all births, whether the birth occurs in a hospital, a clinic, or the home. It is, therefore, an incredible enigma that women within the United States and Canada can be denied the services of a midwife when the rest of the world considers midwifery to be an essential and basic service."

Wagner further notes that "there has never been a single scientifically valid study which shows that the hospital is safer than the home for low-risk women."

After studying the health implications of various approaches to childbirth, WHO issued a "Report on Appropriate Technology for Birth," which calls for a greater emphasis on emotional and social factors rather than on advanced technology, and which rejects a number of common obstetrical practices, including the routine use of electronic fetal monitors or drugs during labor, the imposed flat-on-the-back position for delivery, and unnecessary separation of the newborn from the mother. For a birth to proceed successfully, the organization emphasizes, the woman must be comfortable and in control of her situation.

The issue, however, goes beyond the pros or cons for one method of delivery versus another. Indeed, we shouldn't summarily dismiss the technical advances in modern obstetrics. The real issue is freedom of choice in what many mothers and their families view as a profoundly personal experience: bringing a new life into the family circle.

Despite nationwide complaints on the availability and quality of obstetrical care, and the corresponding demand for birthing alternatives, there is strong political opposition to midwifery in the

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United States. The family choosing home birth risks being scrutinized by social welfare and medical agencies, and may even face child-neglect charges. The attending midwife may be prosecuted, particularly if something goes wrong during the birth. Even licensed nurse-midwives and physicians who assist a patient seeking home birth are in danger of being ostracized by the medical community—or worse.

The Home-Birth Movement

The home-birth movement is made up of people from all walks of life, including medical professionals. It includes parents who quietly and privately choose a home birth, as well as men and women turned into "childbirth activists" when their convictions clashed with a powerful social-welfare/medical monopoly.

J. L. English, a biologist from California, became involved in the child-birth controversy when, after she had labored for 24 hours while awaiting her first child, her hospital's doctors insisted she have a Caesarean section. When her objections were disregarded and nurses began restraining her, she fled to a hospital bathroom where she easily and successfully gave birth on the floor while her friends and relatives fended off the staff.

Drusilla Gonzalez, from upstate New York, is a homemaker who decided on a home birth for her fourth child because "that's the way Mom had hers," and because it was always a hassle to get to the hospital on time. After a frustrating search, she found a nurse-midwife to help with her delivery. Like many women who have experienced home birth, she felt she "just had to let everybody know how wonderful it is." Her midwife moved out of the area at about the time Mrs. Gonzalez's sister decided she wanted a home birth too, so Gonzalez started studying midwifery material and going on calls with an older midwife, to learn enough to help her sister.

Soon other mothers she met in childbirth meetings started asking her to help in their births, since no one in the area would risk serving them. Gonzalez says that was when she had to reassess her principles. "My primary aim in life," she says, "is to serve God and my fellowman. How could I turn them down just because I feared what someone else might say or do?"

Although Gonzalez does not solicit clients because she prefers to stay at home with her family, she hesitates to turn down anyone who asks for her services. As a result, she finds herself swamped with requests. She makes no secret of her work. "If your cause isn't good enough to defend publicly, it's not worth it," she says. "The law has no right to interfere with friends and neighbors helping each other in their own homes." Even if they'd want to interfere, she points out, there is nothing they can do. "Nature will bring forth the baby, no matter what a doctor or legislator has to say about it."

Since most regulations regarding midwifery are difficult to enforce, the legal threat usually takes the form of intimidation from medical and welfare agencies, backed up by a few arrests and raids. In California, there have been several murder charges filed against midwives after infants died in delivery, even though the parents and midwives did what they felt was their best. One of these midwives, 62-year-old Rosalie Tarpening, was convicted of second-degree murder and jailed. Now free on an appellant bond, she is appealing her case and is determined to clear her name.

In a 1989 Pennsylvania case, parents of a baby delivered by midwife Lucille Sykes were charged with child abuse by Mercer County Children and Youth Services. Agency director Eugene Montone explained that the charges were necessary to expose Mrs. Sykes' practice. The child-abuse petition, he said, would force the family to provide information on Sykes, or face a juvenile court hearing by which he could obtain the evidence. The charges against the couple would be dropped as soon as they "were honest and said what happened."

The parents were frightened and outraged over being confronted by Montone and two police officers, simply because they decided to have their daughter delivered by Mrs. Sykes. Their baby was perfectly healthy, and both parents attested to the midwife's competent and caring handling of the birth. Lucille Sykes had successfully delivered over 600 babies during the previous 13 years. Montone, however, contended he could not allow Mrs. Sykes to practice because she wasn't licensed, and "because we are going to do everything under the sun to protect children."

In Missouri, state and county investigators raided a birth clinic headed by a registered nurse who thought she was operating legally. The 2:15-A.M.

COURTESY OF HANNAH LAPP

A Pennsylvania baby is greeted by her family shortly after her midwife-attended birth at home.

raid interrupted a mother nursing her hours-old infant, her sleeping husband, and their 2-year-old son. It ended with the seizure of a variety of items, ranging from sheets upon which the mother had lain to essential equipment and records pertaining to the clinic's 38 pregnant clients.

Even physicians are not exempt from intimidation. In California, Dr. Patte Coombes was forced out of practice when the executive committee at Sonora Community Hospital declared her incompetent and revoked her hospital privileges. The committee was unable to find a single patient who would testify against her, and no wonder: Dr. Coombes' record reflects two decades of exceptionally humane and responsible medical and birth services. Among 3,000 deliveries, there were no infant or maternal deaths, no malpractice suits, and less than one-tenth the national rate of Caesarean deliveries.

The committee dismissed Dr. Coombes' infant-survival record as mere "luck" and got down to the real issue: their philosophical differences with the doctor. Coombes rarely performed episiotomies (vaginal incisions for delivery), questioned what she felt were unnecessary surgeries, and delivered babies wherever parents wished. On top of everything, she refused to perform abortions, although she contends she made referrals to doctors who did when her patients wished. In an interview with J. L. English, published in *Midwifery Today*, Dr. Coombes declared: "I respect each patient's right to non-aggressive medical intervention; I refuse to control my patients; I serve all patients regardless of financial status. For this, I have been accused and judged incompetent."

Although official measures against midwives are meant to discourage home births, they don't always work that way. In the case of midwife Lucille Sykes, the litigation against her backfired on those who initiated it. Eugene Montone had her arrested on criminal charges in April 1989; by May the charges were dismissed after a brief trial attended by hundreds of Sykes' supporters. An injunction sought against her by the State Board of Medicine was similarly dismissed by a Common Pleas judge on the grounds that the state's midwifery regulations did not clearly apply to lay midwives. The ruling essentially gives the Pennsylvania home-birth movement a green light, and its repercussions are being felt nationwide. In the meantime, Montone came under severe public fire and was temporarily removed from his office as the county Director of Children and Youth Services.

In Arkansas, a midwife threatened with a physician conspiracy to deny her hospital backup sued in Federal court and swiftly won an out-of-court settlement. The Arkansas State Department of Health, fearful of finding itself a defendant in the suit, scrambled to change the wording in its regulations that had required midwives to have physician backup for their work. Thus, an attempt to force a midwife out of business ended up offering greater liberties to midwives statewide.

In Iowa, two midwives charged with practicing without licenses are carrying the constitutional-rights issues surrounding midwifery to Federal court. If the case continues to the Supreme Court, it will have tremendous impact on childbirth options nationwide.

Unclear Laws

The dilemma of unclear laws regarding midwifery can be seen both as an advantage and a disadvantage. Some midwives are weary of the legal uncertainties and are calling for state licensure for midwifery on feasible terms. (Most states that license midwives have educational and legal requirements that make licensure inaccessible to the average midwife.) Thus, some in the childbirth controversy say that the requirements should be changed. Others feel that legislation isn't needed, that every woman has the inherent right to choose the birth attendant she wants. After all, fathers can and do deliver their own babies successfully. If this is legal, why ask the government whether friends and neighbors can help?

There are midwives who will have nothing to do with government regulation. The only kind of certification they might find acceptable would come from private childbirth organizations and would not be based on the midwife's formal qualifications, but on how competent she proves herself. And the tradition of apprenticeship training and peer review for midwives, they contend, must not be lost to academic studies.

No one is denying that physicians and hospitals are sometimes needed in complicated pregnancies or deliveries. Obviously, the medical and hospital setting offers services the midwife cannot provide: fetal monitors, drugs, I.V.'s, and surgical procedures. These services, however, differ from those needed for normal deliveries, and may become detrimental when applied to every situation.

Marsden Wagner observes that the physician's role is different from that of the midwife. "Physicians," he notes, "are trained in pathology rather than normality. They are committed to a 'do something' approach with routine intervention. . . ." Midwifery, on the other hand, should encompass "continuity of care; good nutrition; a normal, natural (non-medicalized) birth without intervention unless absolutely necessary; birth within the home; . . . and a moral respect for every woman's need and right to be in control and retain the central role in all aspects of the birth process."

It's not only impossible for most male physicians to take the place of midwives, but attempting to do so would be unethical if the midwife's total range of duties is considered. Midwives often attest to a one-to-one "sister" relationship with their clients, beginning with prenatal consultations and continuing through the baby's first weeks or even years. Many mothers prefer to have these consultations supplemented by physician checkups or tests to prevent complications.

At the delivery, the midwife offers her client every possible psychological and physical comfort—anything from confiding about motherhood to massaging the laboring woman's feet, to helping with household chores. Family members, particularly the birthing woman's husband, are encouraged to remain involved and pick up skills themselves. In her home surroundings, the laboring woman can take advantage of the law of gravity to encourage progress, sometimes remaining active and on her feet until minutes before her little one's arrival. The midwife stays at her beck and call, distracts her from the pain, and helps support her in kneeling, prostrate, or squatting positions—anything the mother prefers.

The midwife's most important task is promoting her client's happiness and comfort. According to data from a number of states, these services result in an astonishing record of maternal and infant well-being. As a reward, midwives enjoy almost zero risk of malpractice suits.

Safe childbirth in America, as well as personal liberty for women and families, can be attained only when midwifery and medicine recognize each other as two legitimate professions whose boundaries are established by free consumer choice. □

The Defense of Our Civilization Against Intellectual Error

by Friedrich A. Hayek

The Foundation for Economic Education notes with sorrow the death of eminent social philosopher and economist Friedrich A. Hayek on March 23, 1992, at age 92. Professor Hayek, a pupil of Ludwig von Mises, was awarded the Nobel Memorial Prize for Economics in 1974. He was professor emeritus at the University of Freiburg in Germany and the University of Chicago. His many books include The Road to Serfdom, Individualism and Economic Order, The Pure Theory of Capital, The Constitution of Liberty, The Fatal Conceit, *and* Law, Legislation, and Liberty.

The following remarks are reprinted from What's Past is Prologue, *a collection of tributes published in honor of Leonard E. Read's seventieth birthday, September 26, 1968.*

I believe that The Foundation for Economic Education, which Leonard Read founded, and all his co-fighters and friends have been committed to, is nothing more nor less than *the defense of our civilization against intellectual error.*

I do not mean this as the kind of high-flown phrase that one is apt to coin for an occasion like this. I mean it literally, as the best definition of our common task. I have chosen every one of these eight words advisedly and will now try to explain what I mean by them.

In the first instance I wanted to emphasize that what is threatened by our present political trends is not just economic prosperity, not just our comfort, or the rate of economic growth. It is very much more. It is what I meant to be understood by the phrase "our civilization." Modern man prides himself that he has built that civilization as if in doing so he had carried out a plan which he had before formed in his mind. The fact is, of course, that if at any point of the past man had mapped out his future on the basis of the then-existing knowledge and then followed this plan, we would not be where we are. We would not only be much poorer, we would not only be less wise, but we would also be less gentle, less moral; in fact we would still have brutally to fight each other for our very lives. We owe the fact that not only our knowledge has grown, but also our morals have improved—and I think they *have* improved, and especially that the concern for our neighbor has increased—not to anybody planning for such a development, but to the fact that in an essentially free society certain trends have prevailed because they made for a peaceful, orderly, and progressive society.

This process of growth to which we owe the emergence of what we now most value, including the growth of the very values we now hold, is today often presented as if it were something not worthy of a reasonable being, because it was not guided by a clear design of what men were aiming at. But our civilization is indeed largely an unforeseen and unintended outcome of our submitting to moral and legal rules which were never "invented" with such a result in mind, but which grew because those societies which developed them piecemeal prevailed at every step over other groups which followed different rules, less conducive to the

AS HISTORY remembers Hayek it will be told that his great quest was to ask why liberty is so slippery to our grasp. While other current social scientists have devoted their research to discovering programs to replace free and spontaneous human interactions by imposed "scientific" solutions, Hayek has prowled about to find why classical liberalism, which has given Western Man so very much, is being cashed in for a statism which promises neither peace nor freedom. Nor, most obviously, prosperity. In fact, socialist, real-world experience has been so bitterly painful that those contemporary reformers who clamor for increased state intervention have given up the pretense that such controls can give us more than free markets and free men. . . .

[F]or those who would rather look to a future which offers liberty for the oppressed and progress for the poor, there can be no better resource guide than the writings of F. A. Hayek. His fine and sensitive touch with the subtlest workings of human (and humane) civilization will sprinkle us with understanding for millennia to come.

—**THOMAS W. HAZLETT**, "F.A. Hayek: Classical Liberal" (*The Freeman*, September 1979)

growth of civilization. It is against this fact to which we owe most of our achievements that the rationalist constructivism so characteristic of our times revolts. Since the so-called Age of Reason it seemed to an ever-increasing number of people not worthy of a rational being that he should be guided in his actions by moral and legal rules which he did not fully understand; and it was demanded that we should not regard any rules obligatory on us except such as clearly and recognizably served the achievement of particular, foreseeable aims.

It is, of course, true that we only slowly and gradually begin to understand the manner in which the rules which we traditionally obey constitute the condition for the social order in which civilization has arisen. But in the meantime, uncomprehending criticism of what seemed not "rational" has done so much harm that it sometimes seems to me as if what I am tempted to call *The Destruction of Values by Scientific Error* were the great tragedy of our time. They are errors which are almost inevitable if one starts out from the conception that man either has, or at least ought to have, deliberately made his civilization. But they are nevertheless intellectual errors which bid fair to deprive us of values which, though we have not yet learned to comprehend their role, are nevertheless indispensable foundations of our civilization.

This has already brought me to the second part of my definition of our task. When I stressed that it is genuine intellectual error that we have to fight, what I meant to bring out is that we ought to remain aware that our opponents are often high-minded idealists whose harmful teachings are inspired by very noble ideals. It seems to me that the worst mistake a fighter for our ideals can make is to ascribe to our opponents dishonest or immoral aims. I know it is sometimes difficult not to be irritated into a feeling that most of them are a bunch of irresponsible demagogues who ought to know better. But though many of the followers of what we regard as the wrong prophets are either just plain silly, or merely mischievous trouble-makers, we ought to realize that their conceptions derive from serious thinkers whose ultimate ideals are not so very different from our own and with whom we differ not so much on ultimate values, but on the effective means of achieving them.

I am indeed profoundly convinced that there is much less difference between us and our opponents on the ultimate values to be achieved than is commonly believed, and that the differences between us are chiefly intellectual differences. We at least believe that we have attained an understanding of the forces which have shaped civilization which our opponents lack. Yet if we have not yet convinced them, the reason must be that our arguments are not yet quite good enough, that we have not yet made explicit some of the foundations on which our conclusions rest. Our chief task therefore must still be to improve the argument on which our case for a free society rests. □

BOOKS

CULTURE WARS: THE STRUGGLE TO DEFINE AMERICA
by James Davison Hunter
Basic Books, 10 East 53rd Street, New York, NY 10022
1991 • 416 pages • $25.00 cloth

Reviewed by Jim Christie

Environmentalists align with homosexuals, flag burners with gun control advocates. Evangelicals align with Catholics and orthodox Jews, pro-life advocates do the same with capital punishment backers. Welcome to just part of the new, if confusing, alliance paradigm in the ongoing struggle to make sense of the American enterprise—how we define right from wrong, what is socially acceptable, and what should not be tolerated.

It's a messy undertaking if only because so many cultural issues have turned into political ones, argues Professor Hunter, who teaches sociology and religious studies at the University of Virginia. But beneath all the hysterics and showmanship —burning flags on the Supreme Court steps, defying Federal marshals during abortion clinic demonstrations—there is something worth noting. No longer is American culture being defined through denominational struggles, Hunter maintains. Now, instead of Protestants, Catholics, and Jews fighting each other, we have them opposing secularists, who have a "progressive" agenda of compulsory tolerance for whatever fad or lifestyle gains their favor.

At stake is the mythical meaning of America. Progressives consider it to be framed in terms of equality. Traditionalists, whom Hunter terms the orthodox—both Jew and gentile—see a different definition, one based on freedom. But one wonders why they don't just say so instead of painting caricatures of each other: Elmer Gantry representing traditionalists, amoral libertines representing secularists. "With the realignment of pluralism, the boundaries separating groups have shifted," writes Hunter. "As the lines dividing Protestant, Catholic and Jew have become more indistinct, tolerance has increased among the denominations. But as the lines dividing orthodox from progressivists or conservatives from liberals have become clearer and sharper, new bigotries have begun to take shape."

Both sides claim the moral high ground and have appropriated and redefined the nation's original egalitarian and libertarian ideals. It's little surprise then that they might as well be speaking foreign languages to each other when they try to debate: "The fundamental reason why each side characterizes their rivals as extremists outside the mainstream is because each ardently believes that the other embodies and expresses an aggressive program of social, political, and religious intolerance," writes Hunter. "Given all of this it is entirely predictable that each side would portray the other as an exceedingly dangerous force in American public life."

This is obvious to anyone who follows special interest politics. For example, just how many rights has the American Civil Liberties Union told us we've lost during the "Reagan-Bush" years? Many, in their eyes at least. Why else the smearing of Robert Bork and Clarence Thomas by secularist-oriented special interests? Just remember how both jurists' political baggage, their written records of traditionalist opinions, were manipulated to make them seem as if they alone would launch the assault on the implied rights that progressives have labored for the past half century to argue are inherent in our Constitution.

Of course, traditionalists also fall prey to the same shrillness. Looking back on it, was it so necessary to agonize over the flag-burning issue? Surely it's a distasteful spectacle when it happens, but does the conduct of a handful of publicity-seeking misfits merit so much attention? Shouldn't we just let them prove themselves to be the hateful, alienated brats they are than have Congress tie itself into knots over such an occasional incident?

One would think the traditionalists and secularists would know better than to resort to the politics of fear and resentment. After all, these are smart, articulate, charismatic, and connected people who head up, for example, the National Abortion Rights Action League and the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights. Why then does each side exhibit a "proclivity to indulge the temptation of social bigotry," as Hunter claims?

Perhaps because they assume the common man

and woman to be ignorant of the central role of symbols within our culture, which is probably somewhat true as one can hardly expect most people to have handy the type of detailed history of religious movements, popular politics, and cultural mythology Hunter puts forth in this book. And given the pace of modern life, one can also hardly expect most people to follow the evolving relationships between traditionalists and progressivists.

No, your "average Joe" is just as likely to tune out Jerry Falwell's Old-Time Gospel Hour as he is to chuck the hyperbolic, fund-raising junk mail of, say, People for the American Way, Common Cause, or anything with Molly Yard's picture on it.

The real opinion swayer may just come in the form of the standard paycheck, which secularists, being good progressives, still want to diminish through redistribution via the government to such worthy endeavors as the National Endowment for the Arts, and then to obscene artists such as Andres Serrano. Who then can blame the American Family Association for asking, "Is this how you want your tax dollars spent?" □

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RATIONALISM IN POLITICS AND OTHER ESSAYS

by Michael Oakeshott

Liberty Press, 7440 North Shadeland Avenue, Indianapolis, IN 46250-2028 • 1991 • 556 pages • $24.00 cloth; $7.50 paper

Reviewed by Robert A. Peterson

When British political philosopher Michael Oakeshott died in 1990, the world lost one of its greatest defenders of liberty. Not that Oakeshott ever stood near the Berlin Wall and asked for it to be torn down; nor had he published a systematic critique of the failures of socialism. Rather, Oakeshott's contribution lay in carrying on a continuing conversation on the origins, opportunities, and future prospects of human freedom. In doing so, he offered some important insights that other writers missed or ignored.

Fortunately, a transcript of much of that conversation is now available from Liberty Fund. When *Rationalism in Politics* was first published in 1962, it was a major event, promoting Oakeshott to the forefront of contemporary political philosophers. This new edition adds six essays, five previously published, and the never-before published "Political Discourse," each of which is consistent with the themes of the original book.

Along with Hobbes (Oakeshott was an expert on the author of *Leviathan*) Oakeshott agreed that life was short, but not necessarily nasty and brutish. What made life worth living were the possibilities offered by our ability to choose. But because life is short, it is impossible for any individual or group to usher in an ideally "free" society. Instead, much of life has to be spent in learning a culture's existing patterns of behavior and traditions, then making wise decisions based on these traditions. Traditions that enhance individual liberty—trial by jury, voluntary associations, religious freedom, and so forth—should be encouraged, while those that inhibit the human spirit should be discarded.

Men and women are free to choose, but they will not always make the right decisions, Oakeshott says, and will consequently hold back the progress of human freedom. That there are those who fail is one of the mysteries of the human condition; there is no single formula for solving this defect.

According to Oakeshott, the best we can do—the only thing we can do—is follow those "intimations" that lead to a better world. Oakeshott frequently employs the word "intimation" because he wants to avoid the idea that there is a logical, rational direction in which we can go. Timothy Fuller, who wrote the foreword, says that "Oakeshott the man wouldn't be so much concerned with where you planned to go as how you proposed to travel." Karl Marx had a seemingly rational, detailed plan on how to order society. Over 100 years later, many Russian, East European, and Chinese citizens know by hard experience the consequences of such rationalism in politics.

But Oakeshott doesn't stop at criticizing Marxism; he turns his critical mind to all rational plans to remake society in man's image—the modern Towers of Babel. Whether it's a Great Society or a New Deal, rationalism in politics always runs roughshod over the existing practices, associations, and political traditions that men have developed to make life easier: "The Rationalist has

rejected in advance the only external inspiration capable of correcting his error; he does not merely neglect the kind of knowledge which would save him, he begins by destroying it. First he turns out the light and then complains that he cannot see, . . . In short, the Rationalist is essentially ineducable; and he could be educated *out* of his Rationalism only by an inspiration which he regards as the great enemy of mankind. All the Rationalist can do when left to himself is to replace one rationalist project in which he has failed by another in which he hopes to succeed. Indeed, this is what contemporary politics are fast degenerating into: the political habit and tradition, which, not long ago, was the common possession of even extreme opponents in English politics, has been replaced by merely a common rationalist disposition of mind."

To the practical American way of thinking, Oakeshott's armchair philosophy may seem too simplistic. We want a plan of action, a set of marching orders. We want to *do something*, even if it's wrong. But as Oakeshott points out, every time social engineers have tried to solve problems through "rational politics," they have only created new ones that are worse. By contrast, most of the liberties we enjoy were developed during a long historical process, totally outside the offices of the world's central governments. New freedoms that we experience as part of the computer and information age are coming not from rational political planning, but from private sector initiatives and voluntary associations.

Oakeshott's laissez-faire philosophy may work in societies with long traditions of individual liberty, such as the United States and Great Britain. But what about societies with no recent memory of freedom? We are already seeing how difficult it is for the Eastern European countries to free up their economies and people. What Oakeshott might suggest is that freedom in these countries cannot develop overnight, but only through many years in which existing institutions—the "black market," religious groups, the family, voluntary associations—are cultivated and allowed to take over spheres of life once dominated by government.

Years ago, Oakeshott predicted the breakup of the Soviet empire, as he felt the human spirit could only be suppressed for so long. (Unlike many economic historians, Oakeshott finds the origins of modern freedom in the works of the artists and artisans of the Renaissance.) But he was also concerned that the nations which cast off Communism might replace one form of rational politics for another, and that the West might unwittingly aid in such folly. This book can help us avoid that temptation. □

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THE MACROECONOMICS OF POPULISM IN LATIN AMERICA
edited by Rudiger Dornbusch and Sebastian Edwards
University of Chicago Press, 11030 S. Langley Avenue, Chicago, IL 60628 • 1991 • 402 pages • $65.00 cloth; $21.95 paper

Reviewed by Doug Bandow

The decline of Latin America has long been one of the most potent indictments of interventionist economic policies. Countries like Argentina, once among the richest in the world, are now basket cases. But we may finally be seeing a turnabout, with Presidents Carlos Salinas de Gortari of Mexico and Carlos Menem of Argentina, for instance, implementing serious economic reforms.

What makes their progress so dramatic is Latin America's history of populist economics. "Macroeconomic instability has long been a salient feature of the Latin American economies," write economists Dornbusch and Edwards. "Inflationary outbursts, balance of payments crises, and painful stabilization attempts have dominated the economic history of the region since, at least, the early twentieth century."

There is, of course, no guarantee that this cycle will not recur, and the situation in a number of Latin American countries, such as Peru, is not promising. Nevertheless, several nations in the region appear to have learned from their mistakes.

This volume begins with a review of the common characteristics of the various populist episodes in the region. Although every country faces unique problems, the governments' overall economic strategies remained quite similar: expansive fiscal and monetary policies "to accelerate growth and redistribute income."

Nevertheless, there are at least two variants of Latin American populism. Tufts University professors Eliana Cardoso and Ann Helwege argue that "classical populism favored activist governments committed to a strong role in price determination, to protection of workers and wages, to policies of cheap food, to state ownership of key industries, to state allocation of credit at low interest rates, and to favors for private industry." The more recent variety, symbolized by Peru's Alan Garcia, were more nationalistic and protectionist, intended to benefit selected businesses as well as labor.

Ironically, both the old and new populism have tended to bypass the poorest segments of the population. Urban workers and businessmen, rather than peasants, have been the primary beneficiaries of populist economies. Moreover, since growth did occur in the short term, "these gains were more distributive than redistributive," conclude Cardoso and Helwege.

Unfortunately, the end result of the recurrent bouts of populism have been the same all over—a disaster for everyone but the best-connected. Write Dornbusch and Edwards, "at the end of every populist experiment real wages are lower than they were at the beginning of these experiences."

Even this understates the agonies suffered by most "beneficiaries" of populist policies. In the short term, growth accelerates, but then bottlenecks start appearing. Finally, explain Dornbusch and Edwards: "Pervasive shortages, extreme acceleration of inflation, and an obvious foreign exchange gap lead to capital flight and demonetization of the economy. The budget deficit deteriorates violently because of a steep decline in tax subsidies and by a real depreciation. Real wages fall massively, and policies become unstable."

Of course, the economic and social problems that have so often led to populist excesses are very real. Because the Latin American economies have been badly manipulated by influential political elites, income inequality in Latin America is two and one-half times as great as in Asia, report professors Robert Kaufman and Barbara Stallings. The sharpness of the distinctions between labor and business has also played a role in promoting populism, as have institutional and political factors. Observe Kaufman and Stallings, "the possibility of new rounds of populism has been highest in systems where severe electoral rivalries encourage an emphasis on redistributive issues and/or the exclusion of partisan adversaries."

These factors are evident in most of the countries covered in detail in this book. For instance, over the past nearly five decades, Argentina has suffered under populist demagogues and military dictatorships. MIT economist Federico Sturzenegger says that its travails fit the general populist pattern, though "the adjustment phase appears to have been extremely long, alternating back and forth between shock and gradualist policies. The end was characterized by social unrest, political violence carried to its height, a fall in real wages, an increase in inflation, and discreditation of the political parties and democratic system in general."

The experiences of Brazil, Mexico, and many other Latin American states have been scarcely better. All accumulated huge foreign debts, suffered economic decline, and failed to eliminate gross income inequalities.

Yet a few nations have always resisted the sirens' call to populism. For instance, Miguel Urrutía, executive director of a Colombian think tank, writes that "such policies have never been tried" in his country. In his view, a number of factors worked against the populist temptation, including the strength of the political parties and a generally non-ideological political class.

But Colombia remains a rarity. Is there reason for hope elsewhere in the region? Yes, precisely because the populist failure has been both so consistent and great. William Cline, of the Institute for International Economics, argues that the populist lessons "are not only compelling, but . . . they have already been learned by key political actors," such as Menem, Carlos Andrés Pérez of Venezuela, and Fernando Collor de Mello of Brazil. Cline may be too optimistic, but the economic prospects of Latin America do seem brighter today than at any other time in recent years.

After reading Dornbusch and Edwards, it should come as no surprise that nations such as Argentina have proved to be ongoing examples of the disastrous consequences of statism. One can only hope that the newly emergent reformers will have the courage to persevere. □

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