

The Heritage Lectures

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Objections to Conservatism

Russell Kirk • Lewis Lapham

Philip M. Crane • Carl Gershman

Ernest van den Haag • Paul Weyrich

George Gilder • Ben Wattenberg • Paul Johnson

Shirley Robin Letwin • Lester Hunt

Tom Palmer • Aram Bakshian, Jr.



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**Objections
to
Conservatism**

FEATURED SPEAKERS

RUSSELL KIRK is a Distinguished Scholar of The Heritage Foundation, the Editor of the *University Bookman* and author of, among many other books and articles, *The Conservative Mind*.

LEWIS LAPHAM is the Editor of *Harper's* magazine and the author of *Fortune's Child*.

PHILIP M. CRANE is the Republican Congressman for the 12th District of Illinois.

CARL GERSHMAN is Executive Director of the Social Democrats, U.S.A., and is currently a Resident Scholar with Freedom House in New York.

ERNEST VAN DEN HAAG, a Distinguished Scholar of The Heritage Foundation, is the editor and a contributing author of *Capitalism: Sources of Hostility*, a professor at New York Law School, and a lecturer at the New School for Social Research.

PAUL WEYRICH is the Executive Director of the Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress, in Washington, D.C.

GEORGE GILDER is Program Director of the International Center for Economic Policy Studies in New York and the author of *Wealth and Poverty*.

BEN WATTENBERG is a co-editor of *Public Opinion*, published by the American Enterprise Institute, and Chairman of the Coalition for a Democratic Majority.

PAUL JOHNSON, former editor of *The New Statesman*, holds the DeWitt Wallace Chair in Communications at the American Enterprise Institute.

SHIRLEY ROBIN LETWIN has taught at Cornell, Harvard, and the London School of Economics. She is the author of *Human Freedom and Pursuit of Certainty*.

LESTER HUNT is A.W. Mellon Fellow in Philosophy at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore.

TOM PALMER is Assistant Director for Communications of the Libertarian Party in Washington, D.C.

ARAM BAKSHIAN, JR., is a contributor to the *Wall Street Journal*, *National Review*, *The American Spectator*, and many other magazines. He is the author of *Candidates 1980*.

INTRODUCTION

Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan has stated that the best new ideas are now coming from "the Right." It is a result of this philosophical fertility that much of the debate on public policy is taking place *within* "the Right." The old ideological shorthand of liberal or conservative, Left or Right, will no longer do. This is shown by the proliferation of labels used to describe those who are more or less right of center. Struggling with labels—New Right, Neo-Conservative, Traditionalist, Social Democrat, Coalition for a Democratic Majority, Libertarian—indeed reflects a struggling with ideas. Carl Gershman notes that Leo Labedz takes the label Neo-Neanderthal. Mr. Gershman says he prefers this term to anti-communist, with which it is synonymous, "since it has a fresh ring to it and suggests that one was right from the start."

Recognizing the "conservative" upsurge over the last decade, The Heritage Foundation sponsored a series of lectures during 1980 to explore the varieties of conservative thought. The first lecture, "The Conservative Movement: Then and Now," was an overview of the conservative movement in America by Russell Kirk. Lewis Lapham and Congressman Philip Crane responded to Dr. Kirk. This was followed by a lecture entitled "Why I Am Not A Conservative" by Carl Gershman, with respondents Ernest van den Haag and Paul Weyrich. Then George Gilder explained "Why I Am Not A Neo-Conservative," and was critiqued by Ben Wattenberg and Paul Johnson. The final lecture, "Why I Am Not A Libertarian," was delivered by Shirley Robin Letwin. Dr. Letwin had three respondents—two Libertarians, Lester Hunt and Tom Palmer, and one traditional conservative, Aram Bakshian, Jr.

The thinking of all the lecturers and respondents was marked by "conservative" elements, and to a public not academically or philosophically inclined, all might somehow be labelled "of the Right." This even goes for Mr. Gershman, who rejects the "conservative" label, but whose staunch anti-communism has led him to decry as inadequate the conservative response to the communist threat. It even goes for Mr. Palmer, who entitled his response "Why I Am Not in Any Way, Shape, or Form a Conservative," since the public automatically tosses Libertarians,

with their individualism and defense of private property, into the "Right" camp. But beyond anti-communism and a suspicion of the designs of central government, modern "conservatism" displays various disagreements: in such areas of public policy as labor unions and foreign affairs, or in such theoretical realms as natural law and the nature of self-interest. With learning, shrewdness, and good humor our speakers were more than able to display the variety of those best new ideas coming from "the Right."

Edwin J. Feulner, Jr.
President
The Heritage Foundation

THE CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT: THEN AND NOW

RUSSELL KIRK

In the United States, as in Britain, the passage of some three decades is required for a body of convictions to be expressed, discussed, and at last incorporated into public policy. Ordinarily this slowness in the movement of public opinion is to the nation's advantage—by contrast with the mercurial politics of France, say. It is the devil who always hurries. However that may be, in America nowadays, it appears, such a fruition of ideas is about to take form.

I mean that we are entering upon a period of conservative policies in this American Republic. In both the great political parties, I suggest, conservative views will tend to dominate. Men and women who profess conservative convictions will be elected to office. And what matters more, the conservative political imagination will set to work to allay our present discontents and to renew our order.

For a thoughtful, renewed conservatism began to appear in print at the end of the 1940s and the beginning of the 1950s, with the publishing of books and periodical writings by men of a conservative bent. Ideas do have consequences, as Richard Weaver wrote about that time; and now, a generation later, those conservative concepts, popularized, are about to enter into practical politics.

It does not signify that most "activist" conservatives may have read only scantily, if at all, in the serious conservative books of thirty years ago; that is to be expected; serious thought always is vulgarized and filtered and transmuted, through newspaper editorials and Sunday sermons and college lectures and paperback books and even television programs, until a crowd of people perhaps wholly unaware of the sources of their convictions come to embrace a particular view of religion or of morals or of politics. As Henry Adams remarks in his *Education*, during his editorship *The North American Review* had only a few hundred subscribers; but he found his journal's views plagiarized, happily, in hundreds of newspapers. Thus the average American citizen will have no notion that his vote, in 1980, has been moved in part by certain books three decades old which he has never opened; nevertheless it will be so.

Similarly, it does not signify that some of the writers who

have moved minds in conservative direction do not call themselves "conservatives." (This is particularly true of Europeans residing in the United States—the historians Eric Voegelin and John Lukacs, or the economist F.A. Hayek.) We are concerned not with ideological tags, but with practical influence upon informed opinion.

I am suggesting that the present conservative movement in America commenced as an intellectual development—in this like the Fabian movement in Britain, which also required some thirty years for its fruition in public policy. But quite unlike the tightly concerted Fabian Society, the American intellectual renewal of conservative ideas about 1950 was perfectly unorganized and undirected, the work of isolated individual scholars and men of letters only slightly acquainted with one another's work, let alone enjoying personal acquaintance. Take the names of men whose books obtained some attention, perhaps as novelties, shortly before or after 1950: Richard Weaver, Daniel Boorstin, Peter Viereck, Francis Wilson, William Buckley. When I published my book *The Conservative Mind* in 1953, I never had met any of these gentlemen except Weaver; nor had they met one another, with but few exceptions, I believe; besides, no two of them agreed perfectly about everything—not even about the word "conservative." Nevertheless, the gentry whom Sidney Hook calls "ritualistic liberals" took this recrudescence of conservative opinions for a wicked conspiracy. A rumor went round among professors of history, for instance, about 1954, that Daniel Boorstin, Peter Viereck, and Russell Kirk were plotting industriously to dominate the teaching of history in this land. Actually, no one of us three ever had set eyes upon the other.

Until this renewal of conservative thought at the end of the 1940s, liberal dogmas in morals and politics had been everywhere triumphant in the United States since the 1920s—as Lionel Trilling still declared, with some misgiving, at the end of 1949. Irving Babbitt and Paul Elmer More had been dead for years; Donald Davidson and Allen Tate were read as poets and literary critics only. In practical politics, the leading men of both parties then employed merely the vocabulary of latter-day liberalism. Yet as if Trilling's remark had conjured spirits from the vasty deep, no sooner was his *Liberal Imagination* published than the literary adversaries of liberal dogmata rose up in numbers.

The New Conservatives

In the book-review media and weeklies of opinion, at the beginning of the Fifties, it was the fad to refer to these writers as "New Conservatives" or "Neo-Conservatives"—the prefix "neo" usually implying the contempt of the commentator. Recently, at the end of the Seventies, the epithet "Neo-Conservative" has been clapped to yet another set of writers and scholars. Or are these new neo-conservatives really another set? Some of them, certainly, are recruits or converts to a conservative view of American society. But a chief among them, Irving Kristol, in London as editor of *Encounter* at the beginning of the Fifties, actually has not changed his views in any very important respect during the intervening three decades: he was quite as prudentially conservative then as he is now, and wrote as candidly and convincingly. Or Robert Nisbet, often mentioned in conjunction with these latter-day New Conservatives, was one of the more conspicuous of us original New Conservatives, with the publication of his principal book, *The Quest for Community*, in 1953.

But I digress. This fell recrudescence of conservative thought at the end of the Forties and the beginning of the Fifties was paralleled chronologically by the decline and fall of the New Deal Democrats, and the abrupt ascent of Dwight Eisenhower to the grandest seat among the seats of the mighty. But there was next to no connection between these two political phenomena, except that they both may have been provoked in part by a general American boredom with the clichés of the New Deal and by the obvious feebleness of what remained of New Deal measures during the Truman administration.

Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. endeavored to taunt the "New Conservatives" for their failure to be appointed to office by President Eisenhower; for Mr. Schlesinger himself yearns always after "place," as eighteenth-century politicians called it. But the writing conservatives of the Fifties were not disconcerted by not having been appointed Eisenhower placemen. Some of the "New Conservatives" were Democrats; and of the Republicans among them, most had preferred Robert Taft to Dwight Eisenhower. So far as we conservative writers had anything in common, it was this: we were social critics, innocent of any design for

assuming personal power. For one thing, we set our faces against political centralization, so that a cushy appointment in Washington would have been a repudiating of our own convictions.

We were sufficiently ignored by both Republican and Democratic presidents, except that Richard Nixon did occasionally invite one or another of us to the White House for general conversation. Now and again a United States senator or a member of the House—rare birds—might send one of us a note of appreciation. We fared no better among state politicians. We had no central apparatus; few publishers approved our books; the great foundations rarely assisted us; in the Academy we were a forlorn remnant.

Still, we were not ignored by the movers and shakers of public opinion. I owe my job to the *New York Times*: that is, to Gordon Chalmers' cordial review of *The Conservative Mind* in the pages of the *New York Times Book Review* (a publication then less doctrinaire and more interesting than it is today). *Time* followed by devoting its entire book-review section, on July 4, to *The Conservative Mind*; and the other influential journals of large circulation fell into line. Once my book had made a breach in the ramparts that liberals watched, other authors fought their way in: Robert Nisbet, Thomas Molnar, James Kilpatrick, Frederick Wilhelmsen, Robert Fitch; somewhat later, Ernest van den Haag and Jeffrey Hart; a score of others. We were allied, too, with older men, some of whom had been very different in their politics at an earlier time—writers like James Burnham, William Henry Chamberlin, John Davenport, and John Chamberlain; professors like Leo Strauss, Will Herberg, Ross Hoffman, and Eliseo Vivas. Milton Friedman and a few other American economists of a cast more or less conservative had weight early in the Fifties. We made ourselves heard. The breach in the liberals' literary ramparts has been closed since then, but the liberal reviewers have not yet succeeded altogether in stamping out the forlorn hope of conservative writers who penetrated within the citadel.

There sprang up conservative weekly and quarterly magazines, among them *Modern Age*, *National Review*, and *Orbis*; presently others. Some few book publishers, besides the courageous Henry Regnery, began to indulge us occasionally, among them Louisiana State University Press and a few other scholarly publishers. More wondrous still, now and again people of con-

servative bent actually were permitted to speak upon campuses, M. Stanton Evans among them. There was organized a national campus discussion society, distinctly conservative, now called the Intercollegiate Studies Institute, with its widely-circulated *Intercollegiate Review* and other journals, and its intellectually vigorous summer schools; there appeared also national and local "activist" conservative student groups. ISI and some others have outlasted the belligerent radical student clubs of the Sixties and Seventies. These were large gains—if one had an eye to the future.

The Conservative Renewal

Of course this haphazard intellectual revival of conservative thought affected American elections only a little. In this land, I repeat, it takes a long while for new or revived political concepts to supplant in citizens' conscious and subconscious minds accustomed political loyalties and prejudices. Still, the immediate influence of the conservative renewal would have been larger, had not certain political accidents occurred. I refer to the extravagances of Joseph McCarthy, the absurdities of the John Birch Society, the murder of President Kennedy, the fiasco of Barry Goldwater's presidential campaign, Lyndon Johnson's Vietnam War. Despite our protestations, the liberal and radical publicists tarred us conservatives with these alien brushes. Even so, the public-opinion polls showed a steady increase in the number of Americans who set themselves down as "conservatives"—indeed, from the first poll onward conservatives formed the largest single segment of political preference. Combining circumstances and an altered climate of opinion were pushing public opinion toward conservative measures.

The circumstances which worked upon the American public were obvious enough during the past thirty years, and are still more obvious just now. Inflation of the currency, burdensome taxation, oppressive political centralization, sorry confusion in the public schools, disintegration of great cities by social change, violent crime, feebleness and failure in foreign affairs—these are only some of the afflictions concerning which American citizens became uncomfortably aware from the end of the Second World War onward (though particularly during the Johnson administration). I have listed foreign affairs last among these concerns,

incidentally, because the American democracy interests itself in foreign affairs only when disaster is at hand.

Because political administrations professedly liberal were in power while these grim troubles came to pass, and because liberal dogmas dominated the serious press and the universities, quite justly the American public tended to look for some alternative to liberal slogans and policies. Never has any very large proportion of the American electorate embraced a thoroughgoing radicalism; therefore conservative measures slowly were recognized by the public as the alternative to liberal measures. This realization, it seems to me, is about to produce conservative men and measures this autumn—always barring political accidents.

Adverse circumstances alone do not bring on a reformation or a renewal: for a people to take arms against a sea of troubles, there must be provided the catalyst of ideas, for good or ill. About 1950, the emerging conservative thinkers had perceived the character of national adversity long before the general public became aware of the difficulties into which the United States was sliding. Thus a measure of conservative imagination and right reason already existed as the public rather slowly and confusedly began to turn its back upon the politically dominant liberalism. The handful of conservative writers and scholars, and those public men capable of serious reflection, offered an alternative to the exploded dogmas and measures of liberalism. Those fresh or renewed conservative ideas, which can have consequences, worked upon the public's discontent with the circumstances into which liberalism had brought the country: this union of thought and circumstance brought about the present conservative movement.

At this point we require some definition. Any intellectual and political movement, if it is to achieve more than ephemeral popularity and influence, must possess a body of common belief. I do not mean that it must, or should, possess an ideology. As H. Stuart Hughes wrote once, "conservatism is the negation of ideology." Ideology is political fanaticism and illusion; as John Adams defined it, ideology is the art of diving and sinking in politics. Instead, I mean by "a body of common belief" those general convictions and healthy prejudices derived from long consensus and social experience.

Such a body of common belief still exists in the United

States—perhaps more than in any other land. Here are some of its elements: persuasion that there exists a moral order, of more than human contrivance, to which we ought to conform human laws and customs as best we can; confidence in the American constitution, both the written constitution and the underlying unwritten constitution of tested usage and custom; attachment to representative government; suspicion of central direction in most matters; preference for an economy in which work and thrift obtain their just rewards; love of country—a love which extends beyond the present moment to the past and the future of the country. And there are other elements which have not lost their vitality.

These are conservative beliefs and impulses. Their roots are not altogether withered. I have sketched the origins of this body of common beliefs in my book *The Roots of American Order*. This being still the common American patrimony (even though, of course, the average citizen could not express these beliefs very coherently), it is not surprising that in a time of tribulation and discontent, the American public begins to listen to conservative voices.

In short, this present hour is an hour of conservative opportunity. The conservatives of the United States have made large gains already; indeed, it is possible now to speak of a “movement”—even if of a movement still confused and disunited. Thirty years ago, there existed no organizations like The Heritage Foundation and its influential journal, *Policy Review*, or other present organizations and serious journals of a conservative cast. Thirty years ago, it did not seem conceivable that two economists believing in a free economy would be awarded Nobel Prizes. Thirty years ago, nothing was more improbable in politics than that both great national parties would be inclined toward nominating for the presidency those aspirants who seemed the more conservative of the lot.

Order, Justice, and Freedom

Yet the fact remains that this conservative movement does not march in lockstep. In one respect, this lack of unanimity is a virtue: it means that conservatives are no ideologues; they believe in diversity and individuality. Utopianism, oddity, and

extreme positions, nevertheless, are not conservative virtues. Those failings are easily discerned in various aspects and factions of the growing drift rather clumsily labelled "conservative." Permit me to touch briefly upon some of these excesses.

One of them is the continuing obsession, particularly among some people well endowed with the goods of fortune, with economics. I do not mean to denigrate the Dismal Science. A good economic system has produced America's prosperity; and, still more important, it is closely connected with America's private liberty. Those "civil libertarians" who somehow fancy that we can reconcile an extreme of personal freedom with a servile and directed economy simply do not understand the great mysterious incorporation of the human race. And, as Samuel Johnson put it, a man is seldom more innocently occupied than when he is engaged in making money.

But economic activity is no more the whole of the civil social order than wealth is the sole source of happiness. Economic success is a byproduct, not the source, of America's success as a society. The sort of ignorant understanding to which I refer may be illustrated by one of the inimitable anecdotes of Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn. On one occasion, that compulsive traveller was addressing a gathering of Catholic businessmen in Detroit. At the conclusion of his remarks, a gentleman in the audience inquired, "Doc, do you know what history is?"

"Why, no," Kuehnelt-Leddihn replied. "Can you instruct me?"

"Sure. History is just economics, that's all—just economics."

In the mind's eye, one may see the ironic Kuehnelt-Leddihn replying: "Indeed? Tell me, sir, are you a Catholic?"

"Sure. I just made a novena."

"What a pity, sir, what a pity."

"Why is it a pity I'm a Catholic?"—this belligerently.

"Because, sir, if you were not a Catholic, you might be made a professor at the Marx-Lenin Institute."

To embrace Marxist materialism and determinism in the name of another abstraction called "capitalism" is to deliver up one's self bound to the foe. Conservatives do defend a free economy; they defend it, however, as bound up with a complex social structure of order and justice and freedom, founded upon an understanding of man as a moral being. To reduce ourselves to economic determinists offering sacrifices to the great god

Mammon is to ruin the prospects of all of us.

Sometimes allied with this economic obsession is the mode of belief which calls itself "Libertarian." I willingly concede that there exist some very sensible and honorable men and women who allow themselves to be tagged with that label. Both F.A. Hayek and your servant reject the term; and we have our reasons, as men who have learnt considerable from Burke and Tocqueville. Those reasons, as applied to current controversies, have been sufficiently detailed recently in *National Review* by Ernest van den Haag.

Let me say here only a few words by way of general principle. Any good society is endowed with order and justice and freedom. Of these, as Sir Richard Livingstone wrote, order has primacy: for without tolerable order existing, neither justice nor freedom can exist. To try to exalt an abstract "liberty" to a single solitary absolute, as John Stuart Mill attempted, is to undermine order and justice—and, in a short space, to undo freedom itself, the real prescriptive freedom of our civil social order. "License they mean, when they cry liberty," in Milton's phrase.

John Adams and John Taylor of Caroline carried on a correspondence about the nature of liberty. Liberty as an abstraction, Adams said in substance, is either meaningless or baneful: there is the liberty of the wolf, and there is the very different liberty of the civilized human being. We owe our American freedoms to a well-functioning civil social order that requires duties as well as liberties for its survival.

I find it grimly amusing to behold extreme "Libertarians," who proclaim that they would abolish taxes, military defense, and all constraints upon impulse, obtaining massive subsidies from people whose own great affluence has been made possible only by the good laws and superior constitutions of these United States—and by our armies and navies that keep in check the enemies of our order and justice and freedom. There is no freedom in anarchy, even if we call anarchism "Libertarianism." If one demands unlimited liberty, as in the French Revolution, one ends with unlimited despotism. "Men of intemperate mind never can be free," Burke tells us. "Their passions forge their fetters."

Some momentary encounters become images that fix our future thought. When a college freshman, debating in Indianap-

olis, I happened to stroll into the great railroad station in that city, with my freshman colleagues; and we watched from high above the intricate shuttling of long trains in and out of the station. Because my father was a railroad engineman, I understood what care, precision, and complex scheduling necessarily were involved below. The functioning of a railway station, like the functioning of the American economic apparatus generally, like the functioning of the whole American society, was dependent upon a wondrously high degree of duty, discipline, and complex cooperation. I pointed out to my companions that ineluctable truth. The Libertarians still have not grasped that point. It was well for the safety enjoyed by railway passengers that my father and other railwaymen were not Libertarians: they did not permit their private interests, such as a glass of beer, to conflict with their duties. Yet those railwaymen were freemen, not ashamed of the American constitution.

Some of the people who style themselves Libertarians, I repeat, in fact do subscribe to the body of common beliefs I mentioned earlier. What's in a name? Actually, they remain conservative enough. But as for those doctrinaire Libertarians who stand ready to sweep away government and the very moral order—why, that way lies madness. If the American public is given the impression that these fantastic dogmas represent American conservatism, then everything we have gained over the past three decades may be lost. The American people are not about to submit themselves to the utopianism of a tiny band of chirping sectaries, whose prophet (even though they may not have much direct acquaintance with his works) was Jean Jacques Rousseau.

If they are to lead this country, conservatives must appear to be, and in fact must be, imaginative but reasonable people who do not claim that they will turn the world upside down. Genuine conservatives know that man and society are not perfectible; they are realistically aware that Utopia—including the dream-paradise of absolute, unfettered liberty to act just as the individual pleases—means literally Nowhere. It is one of the conservative's principal functions to remind mankind that politics is the art of the *possible*.

The United States is entering upon an epoch, necessarily, of sweeping but prudent reform: a conservative task. Diplomatic and military policies of the liberal era have brought us into

imminent peril; the economy is virtually static, while inflation and taxation consume the seed-corn of capital; the educational structure is decayed and ineffectual; our great cities have become dangerous and dismal; political centralization reduces local and private responsibility and opportunity; the American people generally are disheartened. What the public hopes for, however dimly, is restoration: a renewal of American intelligence, vigor, confidence; a regaining of order, freedom, and justice. If conservatives can deal with these great problems ably and honestly, posterity will bless them.

The Hope for Restoration

It has happened from time to time in the history of civilizations that a period of decadence and discouragement has been followed by a period of renewal and hope. It can be so with our American civilization. Such a restoration requires the joining of right reason with imagination. Do the people in the present conservative movement possess such reason and imagination?

Or are the conservatives generally what John Stuart Mill called them, "the stupid party"? Certainly a good many folk who are "conservative" are dull or apathetic merely. Admittedly a good many folk who call themselves "conservative" seem interested chiefly in conserving their own advantages. "With conservative populations," Brooks Adams wrote, "slaughter is nature's remedy." He meant that mere plodding adherence to old ways will not suffice for survival in an age of fierce and rapid change.

But it is not the conservatism of dullness and short-sighted self-interest merely which has been stirring in this country. Paul Elmer More remarked that in a time of crisis, often the conservative displays powers of imagination which save the day. We need to rouse imagination of that sort—even the poetic imagination. President Nixon once asked me what one book he should read. "T.S. Eliot's *Notes toward the Definition of Culture*," I told him, and later sent him a copy. With Eliot and other great poets, the imaginative conservative takes long views; and he knows, among a good many other things, that "culture" is more than a matter of subsidized art-festivals. It is our culture itself which totters in these concluding twenty

years of the twentieth century, The word "conservative" originally signified "guardian." Today thinking conservatives have to be concerned with more than winning elections, important though that task is; we have to think seriously about our civilization's preservation. Thinking always being painful, liberals and radicals have not troubled themselves much about the shape of things to come.

During those thirty years of growth of the conservative movement, immense mischief has been done to the politics and the economics and the culture of this country. Soon it may be up to the conservatives to repair the damage, if they know how. What commenced as a rearguard action by some of the older generation of men of politics and business, and as a troubled protest against the mindless drift of affairs by a handful of scholars and writers, may find itself invested with national authority. Are conservatives well prepared for this responsibility? No, not altogether; but then, time moves on, and nobody ever is well prepared for great duties, and the longer we delay, the more formidable become the nation's difficulties.

Those of us who began a conservative intellectual renewal about 1950 have grown gray in opposition to liberal dominations and powers. We do not expect ever to be able to doze secure in Lotus-land. We are not yet the passing generation: another twenty years must elapse before my eldest child is as old as I was when I published my first book—and I was then a young writer. So it is not a case of "to you, from failing hands, we throw the torch." The Heritage Foundation, I trust, will be here, or at least somewhere in the District of Columbia, by the first year of the twenty-first century—supposing that conservative men and measures have renewed this Republic. And quite conceivably I may be with you on June 4, *Anno Domini* 2000, reporting on the progress of the conservative movement.

Prudent change is the means of our preservation, and the great statesman is one who combines with a disposition to preserve an ability to improve. That awareness, and that sort of person, the conservative movement has been endeavoring to develop. Our efficacy may be put to the test very soon. If we fail, where else in the modern world will powers of resistance and recuperation be discovered? As Walter Bagehot says, "Conservatism is enjoyment." Life is worth living, the conservative declares. We are not going to march to Zion; yet we may

succeed in planting some trees in the Waste Land. With Burke, I attest the rising generation.

LEWIS LAPHAM RESPONDS

I shall approach Dr. Kirk's lecture as I would go over a text that had been submitted to me at *Harper's*. May I say that I admire the writing and I am delighted with its style and wit. But I have great difficulty in understanding what Dr. Kirk means by the word, conservative. It is usually meant as an insult, and the insult changes depending on its context. Yet I also assume that most people are conservative 99 percent of the time; that is, they like order and regularity and repetition. This is true even of liberals. It's a human trait and not necessarily a political one.

Now to specifics. Is it really true, as Dr. Kirk argues, that serious thought trickles down from the top of the hierarchy to the basement? It seems to me that it works the other way. The most exciting forces of thought and imagination arise out of the common experience and I think I would interpret the works of Homer, Shakespeare, and Socrates as expressing common experience.

Dr. Kirk later paraphrases Lionel Trilling's observation that "until this renewal of conservative thought at the end of the 1940s, liberal dogmas in morals and politics had been everywhere triumphant in the United States since the 1920s." But think what the 1920s were actually like: racial segregation in the South, prohibition, and hardly liberal attitudes that prevailed between men and women. I have never in my life seen liberal dogma in morals and politics prevail anywhere except in the artificial intellectual or governmental circles, certainly not in the streets or the pits of American business.

Further on Dr. Kirk talks of breaching the liberal wall of the press. Yet, to me, the press seems very conservative. Perhaps this is a matter of definitions, but most of the magazines I read—whether *National Review*, *The New Republic*, or *Commentary*—are manned faithfully by people of various kinds of conservative persuasion. So, to my mind, are *The New York Times*

and *The Washington Post*, both, of which are, if anything, reactionary rather than liberal.

Dr. Kirk then tells us (on page six) that "never has any very large proportion of the American electorate embraced a thoroughgoing radicalism." Is that not true of any electorate? As I said before, most people are not radical. Yet I would trace the present disaffection and dissatisfaction with politics, which is clear from the polls, to a repudiation of conservative values. Surely the unhappiness with the choice of Mr. Carter or Mr. Reagan, both more or less conservative figures, is significant. I would also point to the \$20,000,000 that Governor Connally spent for one vote as a repudiation of conservative values.

Let me now examine what Dr. Kirk describes as "a body of common beliefs [which] still exist in the United States," that might serve as the basis of a conservative policy:

"The persuasion that there exists a moral order of more than human contrivance to which we ought to conform human laws and customs as best we can." But are not such claims also made by the Maharishi, about Zen, about the Southern Baptist Evangelical cult? Such a conviction could be a very mindless and dangerous thing indeed.

Dr. Kirk next announces widespread "confidence in the American Constitution, both the written Constitution and the underlying unwritten Constitution of tested usage and custom." I have met very few people in my life who have ever read the Constitution and I have talked to reasonably educated people in what passes for the intellectual community in New York.

Dr. Kirk praises "the attachment to representative government," and yet we see that nobody bothers to go to the polls. The number of voters dwindles every year. Representative government in this country has become more representative in the sense of a stage play. People put on the robes of office and pretend that they actually have control over events. They are hardly representative in the sense of representing their constituents.

Next Dr. Kirk cites "suspicion of central direction" and yet we have a country that worships various religious ideas to which central direction is paramount.

As to the "preference for an economy in which work and thrift obtain their just rewards," I see very little evidence of

that. "Something for nothing" is a predominant point of view. Witness the crowds in the gambling casinos in New Jersey, or the amount of money that goes unrecorded on tax forms, or the number of people that want a dole of some kind or other. We are talking, after all, about an economy which distributes 50 percent of its wealth in transfer payments, not including the dole that goes to the upper middle class through such things as the Public Broadcasting Service.

There is one damning comment on "the love of country which extends beyond the present moment to the past and future of the country"; we have no draft. Even Governor Reagan, that notable conservative, is backing away from the draft. He talks about the love of country but he is not willing to put his chips on that particular table. And we live in an age in which the present moment predominates in people's thinking. That is true, at least, of the American press.

And is it true, as Dr. Kirk asserts quoting Samuel Johnson, "that a man is seldom more innocently occupied than when he is engaged in making money"? The loan sharks in New York are not innocent people. Neither was the Shah of Iran; nor are many of the multinational corporations. Dr. Johnson's view was certainly not acceptable to Jefferson, who said, "Money, not morality, is the principle of commercial nations." Does that perhaps go against the grain of the conservative idea as articulated by Dr. Kirk?

Dr. Kirk worries next that we may "reduce ourselves to economic determinists offering sacrifices to the great god Mammon." The greater danger is that we may underestimate the great pleasure that people take in the exercise of power and the uses of corruption. People actually enjoy doing unpleasant things to other people. It was an American mistake to think that all we had to do was send Henry Cabot Lodge to Southeast Asia and the rulers there would want to be like him simply as a result of seeing him. Alas, Southeast Asia despots enjoy being despots. They like to torture people. To see Henry Cabot Lodge is not to want to be Henry Cabot Lodge.

Let me get to the final point. Is the United States entering on an epoch of reform? My own belief is that America is rather in the middle of a revolutionary period. The revolution is going on in sciences, politics, communications, and many different fields of endeavor. And there is this contradiction in a conservative's

talking of both imagination and reform. If reform is the task, we don't need imagination. We would simply carry on with what we're doing with minor changes at the margins. Very few people, myself included, understand how the world is changing and how it will continue to change over the next twenty years.

So we are not talking about a Paradise Lost. American culture cannot be protected because it doesn't yet exist. To protect, to guard, and to restore American culture, it is first necessary to make it, and to make it almost *ex nihilo*. That is my central disagreement with Dr. Kirk.

PHILIP M. CRANE RESPONDS

Back in the late 1950s I returned to graduate school at Indiana University after a two year hiatus in the Army and two years in the advertising business. Upon completing registration in the Field House, I walked out of the building to be greeted by a number of tables assembled by different campus organizations soliciting membership.

In front of one of these tables was a six foot high, cardboard-backed photograph of Eleanor Roosevelt's head. In black letters above the photograph were the words: "Know Your Enemy!"

Amused, I strolled over to talk to the students at the table. They represented the Indiana University Conservative League. This was a campus affiliate of what was then known as the Intercollegiate Society of Individualists (now known as the Intercollegiate Studies Institute).

I had never heard of the organization. I scanned their literature and was delighted to discover that there were 18,000 student members on campuses throughout the United States and roughly 300 teaching faculty members representing every discipline in the liberal arts.

The greatest immediate lift I received from this information was psychological. "To educate for liberty," was their motto. In the six years I had spent in undergraduate school and graduate school prior to this experience, I had become familiar with

such organizations as the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, the Young Socialists Alliance, and the Young People's Socialist League; but I was unaware of any organization that provided a counterpoise and corrective to these public nuisances on any campus, save perhaps the Young Republicans.

It was through ISI that I first became familiar with Russell Kirk. His book, *The Conservative Mind*, had a profound impact on my thinking. My childhood training made me receptive to such a work, but I had encountered no faculty members up to that time who shared the views of Dr. Kirk.

I proceeded from Dr. Kirk to such mind expanding works as Ludwig von Mises' *Human Action*, Richard Weaver's *Ideas Have Consequences*, F.A. Hayek's *Road To Serfdom*, William F. Buckley's *God and Man at Yale* and *Up From Liberalism*, to Milton Friedman's *Capitalism and Freedom*, Frederic Bastiat's *The Law*, and the concise little text by Henry Hazlitt, *Economics in One Lesson*. It was a treasure trove of works that I had never seen recommended on any outside reading list in any of the courses I had taken up to that time.

Notwithstanding the heavy reading load in graduate school, I immersed myself in this freedom literature. I cannot describe the experience. To find a logical, knowledgeable, systematic expiation of my intuitive biases was reassuring beyond words. Increasingly I felt confident—indeed eager—to join the national debate on critical issues, armed with argument instead of prejudice.

For the student, therefore, to be put in the position of critiquing remarks of the master seems impudent. At the risk of appearing audacious, however, there are a couple of observations I feel are in order based upon subsequent years of teaching history at Indiana University and Bradley University, as well as the eleven years I have spent in the political process; that is, in the art of the possible to which Dr. Kirk alludes.

Renaissance of Conservative Philosophy

In discussing the intellectual renaissance of conservative philosophy in the postwar era, Dr. Kirk suggests that it would have been something more than it was but for a number of "political accidents." Included in these he refers to "the fiasco of Barry

Goldwater's presidential campaign," and adds that: "Despite our protestations, the liberal and radical publicists tarred us conservatives with these alien brushes."

I find it curious that Watergate was omitted from Dr. Kirk's list. It was this, in my estimation, which cost conservatives control of the House of Representatives in the decade of the 1970s; coupled with the fact that the pro-McGovern media kept defining Richard Nixon as a "conservative." Conveniently overlooked was the fact that he was the first Republican president ever to submit deficit budgets to Congress—worse yet, to rationalize them in such absurd terms as "full employment," "expansionary," and "non-inflationary deficits." He was the first Republican president ever to impose wage and price controls (a position totally compatible with our liberal friends' belief in managed economies); the first Republican president ever to promote quotas in hiring with his celebrated Philadelphia plan; and the first Republican president ever to propose a guaranteed income in his Family Assistance Plan.

In contrast to this, the Goldwater campaign (coupled with vast circulation of his paperback, *Conscience of a Conservative*), did more to revitalize the Republican party and energize the national debate by highlighting the historic differences between the parties—since the advent of the New Deal—than any other single political event. While the media endeavored to suggest that Barry Goldwater destroyed the political viability and intellectual credibility of conservatism, that most emphatically has not proven to be the case. Quite the contrary, Barry Goldwater attracted thousands of young, idealistic conservative activists to the political process, and they have stayed active since. He stimulated conservative thought in innumerable ways. Yours truly is one such activist pulled into participation because of the Goldwater campaign, and there are countless others. At last, here was a standard to which wise and honorable men could repair.

Prior to the Goldwater campaign I was as disillusioned with politicians as were many of the young radicals of the late 1960s. It seemed to me that politicians made a practice of breaking the hearts of those of us who really believed in and were willing to work for an alternative. The Eisenhower years had a deadening effect, particularly after his Commission on National Goals essentially embraced the premises of the New Deal approach to

problem-solving: *viz.*, through government intervention at the national level.

I had come to the conclusion that politicians were deserving of their popular image—fork-tongued snake oil salesmen. When at last an honest man appeared on the scene preaching a principled and uncompromising message, his sincerity, courage, and conviction came through so powerfully that I concluded he could not be abandoned regardless of the outcome of the election in the fall of 1964. Moreover, I would argue that had Nelson Rockefeller been the Republican nominee that year, the outcome in that election would have been virtually the same. Ironically, when conservatism is defined as a commitment to preserving the *status quo*, then 1964 represents one of the most conservative expressions in modern times.

Liberty and Freedom

I am also troubled with Dr. Kirk's statement that "To try to exalt an abstract 'liberty' to a single solitary absolute. . . is to undermine order and justice. . ."

Perhaps we have a semantic problem only; and, to be sure, Dr. Kirk has not defined liberty in his presentation. But I get the impression that he is equating the word with "license," a substantially different condition by anyone's terms.

The best definition of liberty I have ever found is contained in II Corinthians: "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty."

Exalting this "Liberty" to a "single solitary absolute" is to seek to establish the world under God's law. Nothing in that condition could possibly undermine order and justice.

The word freedom carries with it the connotation of "an absence of restraint" and, indeed, that is one of the definitions of freedom. No rational man would choose to live in society with an absence of restraint. But "where the Spirit of the Lord is" is not such a condition.

Dr. Kirk says "There is no freedom in anarchy. . ." I agree. But could one not as readily say that there is no anarchy in freedom, because anarchy establishes the rule of the jungle, that might makes right?

Based upon our Judeo-Christian definition of the nature of

man, we would agree that a society where there was a total absence of restraint must necessarily degenerate into lawlessness and brutishness. But, again, that is not the definition of liberty.

Dr. Kirk alters his line of argument later to say that the "demand" for an absence of restraint ends with "despotism." This is a different argument, but not necessarily a correct one. If the demand for an absence of restraint is paired with the demand for one to exercise total responsibility for one's actions and to recognize that my right to swing my arm ends where your nose begins, we have an appeal embracing many of the highest aspirations of Christianity, but without the Christian appeal to help those less fortunate than ourselves as a manifestation of our faith.

I think it is a mistake to dismiss "libertarianism" as readily as Dr. Kirk seems to do. Any conservative would argue that libertarianism is an ideal contradicted by the nature of man. But the perfect Christian is a contradiction in terms as well, man's nature being what it is. The Christian is spared—in eternity—the consequences of his humanity through grace. Libertarianism as an ideal is less forgiving, but nowhere in the Libertarianism of Ayn Rand have I found an apology for trespass.

Further, harking back to my teaching days, I found the pure logic of Libertarianism to be a means of converting many secular, bright, sentimental, statist-collectivist minds to an alternative that, while unattainable, at least removed an authoritarian from the fray. In time, I have found that with the maturation process and experience tempering one's youthful idealism, many of these young people end up conservatives.

The Art of the Possible

Finally, Dr. Kirk explains: "It is one of the conservative's principal functions to remind mankind that politics is the art of the possible."

In rejecting utopian nostrums divorced from reality (which is what contemporary liberal ideology is all about), this is true.

On the other hand, to create the climate where our traditional values are politically possible, one must demonstrate a commitment to ideals other than pure pragmatism, or else all of the tug on the political spectrum will come from the true-

believing ideologues on the Left; and they shall conquer us over the long term, salami-style.

In politics I firmly believe that it is better to stand on your principles and lose than to lose your principles and win. Our system is designed—through the sub-committee, committee, and conference process, through a two-house legislature, through an independent executive and judiciary—to prevent radicalism.

But you cannot expect to create a climate of acceptance of traditional values designed to preserve liberty without a pure commitment to truth, integrity, and courage.

I suspect that much of the appeal of Christianity through the centuries has rested upon such idealism, rather than simply attempting to promote the idea that we will build schools, hospitals, and churches, that we will devote ourselves to serving those less fortunate than ourselves, based upon an appeal to action resting upon the condition that politics is the art of the possible.

The Founding Fathers succeeded in no small measure because of a faith in miracles. The art of the possible would clearly have precluded a Declaration of Independence by those who believed only in the possible in 1776.

Sometimes one must pursue the impossible dream. Occasionally mankind succeeds.

I know Dr. Kirk does not particularly appreciate John Stuart Mill, but a Mill quote summarizes my position:

When the opinions of masses of merely average men everywhere become the dominant power, the counterpoise and corrective to that tendency would be the more and more pronounced individuality of those who stand on the higher eminences of thought.

To me, Dr. Kirk is such a person. For years, he has occupied one of those higher eminences of thought. And in the process, he has played an instrumental role in helping to realize what in 1950 could only have been considered an impossible dream by most people.

RUSSELL KIRK'S REBUTTAL

Mr. Lapham makes a sound point when he remarks that we here in America need to create our culture, or at least to reform and extend it. It may be that America is entering upon a new Augustan Age; that Americans, far from sinking into decline, are about to experience a greater power of understanding than we have known before. There is a passage of Santayana's novel *The Last Puritan* in which Caleb Weatherby, a brilliant recluse, an eccentric genius, hideously crippled, who has turned his house into a sort of monastery, holds a conversation with his nephew, young Peter Alden. He says to this nephew: "I live in the future too, thinking of these who are to come after us in this America of ours, not, fortunately for them, the heirs of my body, but in some sense the vindicators of my mind. I believe that God has vouchsafed to me some vision of his Providence. I thank God for my deformity because, without it, I should have been carried headlong by the running tide of our prosperity and triviality. But I suspect that we in America are dedicated to great expectations. Expectations of what? Nobody knows. Not to some glorious universal domination of our name and manners, but to a new life of humility and charity."

That is very like the vision of the American mission expressed by Orestes Brownson in 1866. It may be that America's greatest hour will prove to be not that immediately following the Civil War; but that a new American culture is to emerge, 120 years later, out of our tribulation and adversity. Perhaps in the remainder of this century America will become what Brownson predicted—the great reconciler of the claims of liberty and authority. Perhaps the best of American culture lies ahead.

Christianity and Civil Liberty

Congressman Crane raises the question of the character of freedom. He rightly joins the Christian understanding of freedom with American liberties since, even in Deists like Jefferson and Rush and in the English tradition of civil liberties, Christian assumptions about human nature ran very strong. You might say that there is a strong but subtle integration of the Christian

idea of Man with a body of civil liberties developed under law.

They are not, however, the same thing. We must be clear about that. Congressman Crane quoted St. Paul's second letter to the Corinthians. But St. Paul was not thinking in that passage about political freedom. He argued that the service of God is perfect freedom. If you serve God, you have *moral* freedom—and the rest doesn't signify. From this standpoint St. Paul enjoins slaves to obey their masters, to accept the dominations and powers of this world, and not to seek to establish a terrestrial paradise.

In short, even though religious ideas powerfully affect political institutions, in the long run, we must not confound the sacred and the secular. Conservative ideas, therefore, will not lead to an earthly paradise, because human nature is irreparably flawed. Indeed, if conservative ideas were to predominate over a long period, they themselves would grow confused and dusty. Radical and liberal doctrines and parties would then emerge in opposition to them. It is a little like the scene in *Alice in Wonderland*: we have to run as best we can simply to stay where we are.

At present we live in an age which needs restoration and the recovery of things, Tory men and Tory measures. If we lived in another age and in other circumstances—in ancient Egypt or Peru, say, where the dead Hand of the past weighed heavily on mankind—we might well become radicals or liberals and work for a different order of things. But these are not the circumstances of our age and, for this foreseeable future, it will be our task and duty to shore up and reinvigorate what Eliot called “the permanent things.”

WHY I AM NOT A CONSERVATIVE

CARL GERSHMAN

It's not every day that a so-called right-wing, anti-Communist, neo-conservative Social Democrat gets a chance to explain why, in fact, he's not a conservative.

I don't think there will be much disagreement with the view that the terms conservative and liberal are hardly adequate to convey the diversity of political positions that exist today. These terms may seek to capture a general political attitude or to describe a position on a particular issue, but only rarely are they meant to denote a clearly identifiable body of ideas. Most Americans would not fit into any neat liberal or conservative framework. On many economic issues they tend in the "liberal" direction, while on many social and foreign policy issues they are more likely to be "conservative." But even here the terms are hardly precise, as I will show. For people with a complex view of the world, no single term is really adequate. Thus Leszek Kolakowski, the exiled Polish philosopher, has called himself a conservative-liberal-socialist, while Michael Novak professes to follow the "creed of a liberal-conservative-socialist-capitalist-democrat." Leopold Labedz, reflecting his own impatience with labels, has called himself a Neo-Neanderthal. I prefer this term to anti-Communist, with which it is synonymous, since it has a fresh ring to it and suggests that one was right from the start.

I suppose that these more original labels, if they are to be taken seriously, more accurately reflect the thinking of people around *Commentary* magazine, the Coalition for a Democratic Majority, Social Democrats, U.S.A. and some other groups than either of the terms liberal or conservative. This may indicate a lack of clarity in their thought, or a certain subtlety. I would prefer to think that it reflects the latter. It shows a recognition that many of the problems we face are very complex and can be resolved only by negotiating compromises between different principles, each of which may be desirable in itself but at the same time inconsistent with another equally desirable principle. I mean, for example, the tension between liberty and equality, or between environmental protection and economic growth, or between job security and technological progress.

In any event, there are many people today who do not feel

comfortable with either the camp of the Right or with that of the Left, partly (but only partly) because each camp is too unheedful of certain inescapable contradictions, or because it is too ready to exploit them for its own narrow purposes. Within each camp, of course, there are shades of difference, sometimes substantial ones. I understand, for example, that the positions of Paul Weyrich and Ernest van den Haag are not identical. But both are "of the Right" in a way that Ben Wattenberg and Norman Podhoretz are not. Similarly, Michael Harrington and George McGovern are "of the Left" in a way that Sidney Hook and Pat Moynihan are not.

It is not enough to say of those I have mentioned who are neither of the Right nor of the Left that they are of the Center. This implies that their position is a kind of compromise between two poles of opinion, a halfway house for those who are not prepared to go all the way in either direction. It is probably more precise, or at least more reflective of their own political assumptions, to say that they are of the Democratic Center. This suggests the rather controversial view, which I at least would be prepared to defend, that neither of the two ideological camps, Left or Right, is sufficiently committed to democracy as a way of life, and that each in its own way has a detrimental effect on the health and vigor of democratic society. Moreover, there is a sense in which each feeds on the other, thriving on ideological confrontation and mass discontent and welcoming the fragmentation of the political culture as a precondition for the rise of a radically dissenting point of view.

Now having said this, let me hasten to add that over the past decade and a half, the principal threat to democratic political culture, in my view, has come from the Left. It began with the movement against the Vietnam war and in support of radical black nationalism, and quickly swept American liberalism. In time it institutionalized an attitude of anti-Americanism that manifested itself in the opposition to the exercise of American power in the world, in the rise of a mass counterculture, in the acceptance of the view that America was an unjust society that owed reparations to its disadvantaged citizens, and in an instinctive opposition to economic growth, in fact, to anything that might suggest American success or make it possible. Calling this tendency "Little America," columnist Joseph Kraft wrote recently that "In 1972, with the nomination of George

McGovern, it conquered the Democratic Party. In 1974, it took over the Congress. In 1976, with the election of Jimmy Carter, it won control of the White House.”

It is possible to exaggerate the influence of this anti-American current in our society, given the fact that most Americans have been distinctly cool toward it and it is now more discredited today than ever before. But it is not possible to write meaningfully about American society today without recognizing that its impact has been considerable, which is why Arthur Schlesinger's recent defense of liberalism in the *New York Times* was so obviously unconvincing. If nothing else, as a result of the erosion of American power and influence over the last decade, the demoralization of the society's elites, and the general loss of a sense of cohesion and direction—all of which can be attributed in one degree or another to impulses that have emerged from the Left—we now find ourselves in a severely crippled position in trying to meet the growing foreign challenge to our security.

It is because I, among others, have spent a good part of my political energies over the last decade opposing this trend that I am now asked to explain why I am not a conservative. There are some who may think that both the question and any conceivable answer are irrelevant at a time when the urgency of the foreign policy crisis calls upon us to rally all of the forces which are opposed to appeasement. But that is essentially a tactical view which doesn't address the substantive question before us. I have already hinted at my response to this question, which is that I don't think conservatism offers a satisfactory answer to the problems we face, and that in some of its manifestations it is very likely to make our problems a good deal worse than they already are. I will try to spell out what I mean by this.

Foreign Policy

Let me deal first with foreign policy. At the last convention of Social Democrats, USA, Eugene Rostow urged that we drop the word “liberal” from a sentence in the draft resolution on foreign policy which criticized President Carter for being too much influenced by “the liberal opposition to the Vietnam war.” What he said by way of motivation is worth repeating here:

Foreign policy is not a matter on which liberals and conservatives divide as such. There is no such thing as a liberal or a conservative foreign policy. Foreign policy can be prudent or reckless, bellicose or pacifist, wise or stupid, realistic or absurd. But it is always wrong, I submit, to characterize positions on foreign policy as liberal or conservative. Churchill had a better sense of the issues of World War II than Roosevelt, not because he was more or less conservative than FDR, but because he had a better feel for history and strategy.

I fully endorse the thrust of this statement. Ideally, there should not be liberal and conservative positions on foreign policy, but rather a consensus on how to manage our country's dealings with the world in a way that promotes our interests, values, and security. At the same time, there can be little doubt that such a consensus does not exist today, above all on the fundamental issue of the nature of the Communist challenge and the best way to meet it. It is not correct to say that the division is between a liberal and a conservative position. The policy of detente emanated from a conservative administration, and the business community, which is the major pillar of American conservatism, has been a key lobby for detente and has probably done more than any single group to materially aid the Soviet bloc. At the same time, Democratic liberal Senators such as Scoop Jackson and Pat Moynihan, along with labor leaders like George Meany and Lane Kirkland, have been among the most vigorous opponents of a policy of appeasement.

But that is said more as a qualification than as a description of general reality, for there can be little doubt that the liberal Left, which includes a good part of the foreign policy establishment, has been the major source of illusion about the nature of the Soviet threat. There are many reasons for this, among which are the tendencies on the Left toward pacifism, the preoccupation with Western guilt, the presence within liberal political alignments on domestic issues of anti-American groups, the tendency to believe that Communism is in some way "progressive" in its ends if not in its means, and so forth. In a similar way, the pressures within the Right have been toward anti-Communism. Communism being viewed as godless, anti-

American, collectivist and, again, progressive.

If it were only a question of appreciating the fact that the Soviet Union poses a mortal threat which cannot be resisted without adequate military capability, there would be no disagreement between conservatives and liberal anti-Communists. Given the utmost importance of this issue today, as well as the need to dispel illusions about the nature of Soviet intentions, there is certainly a large area of agreement between the two groups.

But the Soviet Union poses much more than a military threat which can be counteracted through traditional balance-of-power policies. It is ideological in the sense that the Soviet Union relentlessly pursues the struggle for power through every conceivable political means, seeking the penetration of mass organizations such as political parties and trade unions, and using writers, artists, journalists, scholars, athletes and anyone else available to promote its propaganda and political objectives. As pursued by Moscow, the ideological struggle is not a battle of ideas in the realm of the abstract, but a challenge to the very legitimacy of democratic civilization. As such it is unprecedented and has transformed, as Henry Kissinger noted in *White House Years*, "relations between states into conflicts between philosophies and poses challenges to the balance of power through domestic upheavals."

I hardly have an easy answer to the question of how a democratic society such as ours can meet a threat of this magnitude, but there is no question that we cannot avoid a conflict on this level. And it is here, I believe, that the conservative response has been not just inadequate but frequently counterproductive. As a whole, conservatism has failed to challenge the ideological claims of Communism. It too readily concedes the point that Communism speaks in the name of the working class and seeks to establish an egalitarian order, a radical egalitarian order to be sure, but still one in which all people will be equal. For this reason, conservatives do not challenge the common assertion that people have less freedom under Communism but more equality. But how can there be equality where there is no freedom, in a system where the people are denied participation in power and even the right to compete for such participation, and where they are also denied free access to information, without which there can be no meaningful political or intellectual life?

The working class and the people may be exalted in Communist slogans, but they are enslaved in Communist practice, quite apart from the distribution of income and scarce goods which totalitarian inefficiency ensures will never amount to more than severe rationing.

Conservatives on Communism

From the conservative point of view, the horrors of Communism are seen to flow naturally from the practice of tampering with the market system in the name of promoting the general good. From this point of view, liberalism and social democratic reformism are a halfway house on the road to totalitarianism, not allies or potential allies in the struggle against Communism but the handmaidens of the very evil which even the most anti-Communist among them claim to oppose. This view has no foundation whatsoever in history or contemporary experience, and it totally misreads the nature of Communism which is not a movement that comes to power as a result of the regulation of the market or its destruction, but as a result of the seizure of state power, only after which the economy is subordinated entirely to the dictates of the totalitarian party.

Ironically, conservatism reduces the appeal of anti-Communism by seeming to mitigate its horrors. By posing the issue as a conflict between Communism and untrammelled capitalism, it may suggest to some people that Communism is not really that bad after all, that it is merely an expanded version of the welfare state and not a form of enslavement. Moreover, it can hardly seek to unite the forces of democracy against totalitarianism if it starts by consigning to the enemy camp all those who seek to modify Western capitalism in the interest of greater democracy. Partly because its case is not persuasive, conservative anti-Communism is frequently strident and occasionally paranoid. It makes no appeal to humanity or to generous emotions of human solidarity in the struggle for freedom worldwide, but relies too heavily on scare tactics and negative appeals.

Consistent with this general approach, conservatives do not hesitate to ally themselves uncritically with Rightist dictatorships in the fight against Communism. In addition to compromising their own moral credibility and that of anti-Communism

generally, this approach only plays into the hands of the Communists who have usually found immobile authoritarian regimes to be very useful to their cause. Under such conditions, Communists have been able to pose as democratic oppositionists and form united fronts with non-Communists. In addition, as a conspiratorial movement that adapts well to underground activity, they have been able to achieve hegemony over the democratic oppositionists in clandestine unions and political coalitions. They have also been able to use confrontations with such dictatorships to manipulate Western opinion to the disadvantage of both the authoritarian government, which liberals oppose, and the democratic opposition, which conservatives oppose. And all the while they're fully backed by Moscow or Havana.

Clearly the issue of democracy has been used by many liberals over the last decade to justify withdrawal of all support from authoritarian regimes, even where they are threatened militarily by Communist totalitarians. But the rejection of a soft-headed position doesn't mean that one has to embrace a position that is only superficially hard-headed and realistic. I am fully aware that the first priority of any foreign policy is a well conceived grand strategy with the military power to back it up. What I am arguing for is the view that in order to address the challenge of Communism properly, such a strategy must have a very important ideological dimension. We must seek to compete with Communism ideologically, and defeat it on those grounds, while we contain it militarily.

In this respect, the whole debate over human rights has been terribly skewed, as if the choice facing us was between Wilsonian idealism and military containment. The real challenge is to formulate a policy based on a synthesis of the two, taking into account the need for extensive and sustained work at the non-governmental level to assist the growth of democratic institutions. In response to the charge that this is not realistic, I would point out that this is precisely the kind of approach that has informed the policies of the American labor movement in its efforts to encourage the development of free trade unions abroad. Such an approach, applied more broadly, might help us reach a new consensus in the country concerning the fundamental purposes of American foreign policy that they served American interests. The point is that the New Right showed far more interest in the politics of the issue than the substance. "I'm very

excited about the Panama Canal issue," Richard Viguerie said during the debate over the treaties. He called it "a no-lose situation for conservatives" since even if the treaties were to pass "it would still be a great opportunity for us to organize this silent majority out there."

Substance versus Style in Conservatism

Now the Panama Canal issue is just one of many issues that are addressed in this way by the New Right. "We talk about issues that people care about," Paul Weyrich has said, "like gun control, abortion, taxes, and crime. Yes, they're emotional issues, but that's better than talking about capital formation." Better from what point of view, I would ask. Not from the point of view of promoting the general well-being, solving the energy crisis, controlling inflation, achieving economic growth, protecting the national security, and taking care of other urgent matters. It is only better from the point of view of promoting the political interests of those who choose to organize by "rubbing raw the sores of discontent," as Saul Alinsky once urged the Left to do. It will be said that there is nothing at all conservative about the rule-or-ruin approach of the New Right, a point Mr. Weyrich does not seem to dispute. "We are radicals," he has said, "working to overturn the present power structure in this country." Radical or conservative, "there is little doubt that the conservative movement has been profoundly influenced by the New Right," in much the same way that American liberalism was influenced by the New Left. Just as liberalism's center of gravity shifted to the Left, conservatism has shifted to the Right, with the result that the center of our politics—the place where the inevitable conflicts of a pluralist system are negotiated—has become dangerously attenuated.

Labor Unions

Nowhere has conservatism's shift to the Right been more evident than in the concerted attack that has been waged over the last few years against the American labor movement. Let me say at the outset that I don't agree with the substance of the

conservative position on the various issues that have been in contention. The effect of repealing the minimum wage would not be to encourage young workers to enter the labor force but rather to discourage them from doing so. So-called right to work laws do not protect the rights of workers but rather deny them the right to negotiate with management, through their democratically elected representatives, for a union security agreement. OSHA regulations are not excessive, but are in fact quite moderate compared with the safety and health measures that are common practice in other industrial democracies. Labor Law Reform was not, as was alleged at the time, a union power grab, but merely an attempt to prevent employers from violating the human right of workers to form unions of their own choosing, a right which was already guaranteed by law.

The main reason the conflict over these and other issues has become so nasty of late is that many labor leaders have gotten the distinct impression that their conservative opponents would like to create what the National Association of Manufacturers has called a "union free environment." Conservatives appear not just intent on modifying or repealing this or that law, but doing away with the institution of collective bargaining. Even if one were of the opinion, as I am not, that this would improve productivity and efficiency—which seem to be the main reasons given for the anti-union campaign—I don't see how this justifies denying or sharply curtailing the human right of workers to form unions. Totalitarian systems may be more efficient in certain respects than democracies—in conducting a foreign policy, for example—yet this is hardly a justification for totalitarianism. And the fact that democracies are more efficient in other respects, such as technological advancement, is hardly the only argument in favor of the open society. Indeed, I find it odd that conservatives who have professed such a deep commitment to freedom and have stressed the importance of mediating institutions in moderating the power of the modern state, should turn against one of the most important mediating institutions we have on grounds of economic expediency.

Compounding this error is the absence of any hard evidence that economic benefits would, in fact, flow from a weakening of unions. Recent studies—and I call your attention particularly to an article in *The Public Interest* by Richard Freeman and James Medoff—suggest that unions contribute to more efficient

and better-balanced management, stabilize the work force, and increase productivity to about the same degree that they increase wages. The late Nat Goldfinger, who was the chief economist for the AFL-CIO, explained why this was so in a speech delivered several years ago to the Industrial Relations Research Association. In a decade when virtually every American institution had been badly shaken, he said, the institution of collective bargaining had remained remarkably stable. He attributed this to its "diversity, pragmatism and flexibility," its "vitality as a dynamic system of problem-solving between the differing interests of labor and management at the work place," and its ability to achieve "workable solutions for practical problems."

It is ironic, but very revealing, to note that the Right's hostility to collective bargaining is shared, if for different reasons, by the Left. While Ralph Nader opposes our present system of industrial relations, he doesn't, as one might suspect, want to replace it with a system based on co-determination or workers' control. He prefers a system of community-based cooperatives (which is to say, cooperatives controlled by community activists of the Naderite variety), an idea he picked up from Gar Alperovitz who wrote some years ago that "the social unit at the heart of any proposed new system should, so far as possible, be *inclusive of all the people*—minorities, the elderly, women, youth." Evidently, it appears that the Left—in its ideological hostility to the private corporation and its preference for a balkanized, no-growth economy—knows something that conservatives do not—that workers have a stake in the financial viability of the enterprise and in an economy that can provide for an improving standard of living.

One would think that business leaders would understand this also, and some do. But many are going or being pushed in a different direction, presumably acting on the illusion that it is possible and desirable to return to an earlier period when unions were weak or non-existent. This is a fantasy, and a harmful one from business's own point of view. Efforts to cripple unions will, at a minimum, encourage unions to be more aggressive in collective bargaining since they must compete harder to win new members against employer opposition. They may also, as Quinn Mills of the Harvard Business School has written, turn increasingly to government regulation to ensure the wages, comfort, and security of workers if collective bargaining cannot be

relied on to achieve these goals.

And who can rule out the prospect that the labor movement, under conditions of protracted conflict with business, will abandon its historic commitment to collective bargaining within a free enterprise system? A Leftist labor movement would not serve the best interests of workers or the country, but it is a possible outcome of a class struggle waged against a moderate labor movement by business and its conservative political allies. Why, after all, should labor accept the legitimacy of business if business does not accept the legitimacy of labor? The fact that one can seriously pose such a question in 1980 suggests that the attitude toward our industrial system of people on both the Left and the Right is terribly underdeveloped. Or perhaps it suggests nothing of the sort, but is just one more illustration of the insidious symbiosis of Left and Right, each side strengthening the other and relishing conflict, to the general detriment of those in the middle and the public good.

Government Regulation

Just as I find myself in disagreement with the conservative position on labor, I also cannot share its generalized and over-worked antipathy toward government. In part, this antipathy derives from an ideological conviction, already alluded to, that efforts by government to regulate the market economy necessarily lead to an erosion of political and cultural freedom.

Clearly there are many instances where democratic governments have abused their power through interventions that unnecessarily obstruct freedom of choice and equality of opportunity. When seeking to determine if abuses have occurred, however, the relevant factor is not the degree of intervention but the consequences that flow from it. One may oppose HEW guidelines prescribing racial quotas or preferential treatment as a violation of individual rights, yet one may still support efforts to enlarge the opportunities available for those who are disadvantaged. One may oppose regulations preventing the ordinary use of cyclamates or saccharin, if properly labeled, yet support regulatory controls on the marketing of a dangerous drug like Thalidomide. Moreover, it would be hard to argue, especially in the wake of Afghanistan, that tight controls on trade with the

Soviet Union to prevent the transfer of militarily significant technology would harm the cause of human freedom, even though it would be a restriction of free trade.

As critical as the problem of freedom and the state is in Western society, it is necessary to put it in perspective. Abuses generally come at the behest of some particular group, and an aroused citizenry has recourse to remedies that are not available in non-democratic systems. But to hear some conservatives talk, one would think that America was no longer a democratic society. Common sense should tell us otherwise. When he retired from the Senate in 1974 after 34 years, Senator George Aiken noted that the main change he had witnessed over that period was the growth of the welfare state. "The things we are doing today," he said, "would have been called socialism when I first came down here. But there is this paradox—the whole universe is a paradox—that the movement toward socialism has not reduced individual freedom. The individual is almost freer now than he ever was before. Thirty years ago people would not have dared to get together and knock the hell out of the government as they do now." Those who think that our government has too much power might consider the difficulty the President had just getting American Olympic officials to support a boycott of the Moscow Games—an issue of the highest priority for our foreign policy.

The power of Solzhenitsyn's commencement address at Harvard came from his understanding that the root of the crisis in the West was not an over-bearing government or creeping socialism but the absence of voluntary self-restraint, the almost unlimited freedom of enjoyment, and the loss of conviction, courage, and a sense of spiritual wholeness. This makes us more vulnerable to totalitarianism by undermining our will to resist it, but it is a far different phenomenon than the alleged erosion of personal freedom as a result of government intervention in the economy. Conservatives undoubtedly will argue that the loss of will to sacrifice for freedom can be traced to the rise of the welfare state which undermined a sense of self-reliance. But we will hardly find the answer to our problems in a return to the ideal free market—if it ever existed in the first place—since the market does not dispense values but subordinates them, along with everything else, to calculations of profit and loss. And who is not to say that the steady drum-beat of protest

against government by conservatives does not still further impair the sense of civic responsibility and the readiness to sacrifice for the common good?

It is necessary to attach an important qualification to what has just been said. The evidence is steadily growing that some government agencies, staffed by graduates of the New Left, are presently working to cripple the American economy in the name of consumerism and environmentalism. In a carefully researched paper delivered last month to the Conference of the Southeastern Electric Exchange, H. Peter Metzger shows how these activists are using the federal regulatory bureaucracy to paralyze new federal coal leasing, conventional electric generating plant licensing, new nuclear power plant construction, federal minerals land leasing, and other economic activities. Of particular interest is his documentation of the flow of tax dollars through such federal agencies as ACTION and VISTA to such New Left groups as the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN), the Midwest Academy, the Youth Project, and Ralph Nader's Public Interest Research Groups (PIRG), and to private lawyers and legal groups who intervene against new power plant licensing. A main target of all of these groups is the electric utility business because of what Dr. Metzger calls its "easy vulnerability during public hearings concerning rate-increase requests and power plant and transmission line sitings before regulatory and licensing commissions."

Anyone interested in the industrial strength of America will be concerned about the activities of these groups. The conclusion to be drawn, however, is not that government must inevitably have a deleterious effect on the economy, or that we must now reject out of hand efforts to protect the health and safety of our workforce, to reduce the amounts of carbon monoxide and sulfur dioxide we breathe or the amount of toxic industrial waste in our rivers. It is, rather, that some people associated with the "Small America" tendency in our society are using government to promote their ideological objectives. It is possible that they will end up doing for government what Joseph McCarthy did for anti-Communism, which is to discredit it. If so, they will have accomplished more than the crippling of the nuclear power industry, for I do not see how we will achieve the economic growth we need without a vigorous government commitment to that objective.

Economic Growth

The United States economy is much less regulated than the economies of Germany and Japan. Yet we have not, as a result, achieved higher rates of growth and productivity. A recent study by Chalmers Johnson shows that the areas where Japan has achieved preeminence in technological expertise—in shipbuilding, railroads, steel, electronics, and cameras—were developed by mixed public and private enterprises or under public auspices. Indeed, our firms find that they must compete at a disadvantage with state-owned enterprises which receive preferential access to state financing, hidden subsidies for development, and other benefits.¹ The lesson is that our economy needs more government support—and protection—not less. Indeed, our most successful industries—aerospace and agriculture—are the ones that have received the most government support in research and development and export promotion.

The issue facing us, in short, is not whether government should or should not be involved in the economy—that issue has long since been settled—but whether we have the will as a society to reach a new consensus in favor of economic growth as our chief domestic priority. Amitai Etzioni has estimated that the cost of a decade of redevelopment, involving the modernization of our economic infrastructure and the mass development of capital goods, would cost somewhere on the order of \$650 billion. *The Washington Post* has urged government assistance to the auto industry of \$50-100 billion over 10 years to speed the conversion to American-produced high mileage cars—which is probably the most effective way in the long run to conserve energy.

Clearly investments of this magnitude will require enormous discipline and sacrifice. It is possible that the sense of crisis engendered by the deterioration of America's international position and our economic troubles at home has created a readiness among the population to pull together so that we can reestablish our strength as a nation. But obviously this will not happen spontaneously, by the swing of a pendulum or the direction of an invisible hand. It will require at the very least and at the

¹ "State Owned Business Abroad: New Competitive Threat," by Kenneth D. Walters and R. Joseph Monsen, *Harvard Business Review*, March-April, 1979.

outset an agreement concerning "the equitable sharing of sacrifice," to quote from the National Accord reached last September between the government and the labor movement.

Conservatives would let the market determine how the sacrifice would be shared. This means that no truly national accord will be reached or even attempted; that instead of achieving a new sense of common purpose we would submit ourselves to the inexorable logic of the marketplace, with all the resentment this would lead to and the pain that it would cause the weakest among us. It is an abdication of leadership on the assumption that leadership is not required. Under normal conditions a policy that justifies putting 3 million people out of work in order to control inflation, balance the budget, and strengthen the economy might be considered feckless, heavy-handed and insensitive. At a time of national crisis it is positively reckless. It is just another indication of a failure of nerve and will.

Surely it is not beyond our capacity as a society to order our affairs in a less self-defeating way: to keep the economy in proper balance, to steer investment to areas of critical national need, to achieve wage and price stabilization through agreements based on common restraint and enlightened self-interest, to sustain employment, and to protect individuals from economic misfortune without discouraging the ethic of work.

Milovan Djilas has called such an approach—which is admittedly only roughly sketched but which is not so unexceptional among existing industrial societies—the social democracy of modern capitalism. It is an appropriately oxymoronic phrase, for it is not possible to express a vision of the modern world without words that combine opposites and recognize that there are legitimate conflicts and hard choices that must be made. At a time of renewed ideological exhaustion, it is perhaps possible to affirm the need for a vision that is guided by an awareness of the complexity of things and which recognizes as the only legitimate political passion a commitment to democracy as a way of life.

ERNEST VAN DEN HAAG RESPONDS

Although I didn't quite recognize myself in the caricature Carl Gershman has offered, I think I am a conservative. I do not think that Mr. Gershman is a socialist. I think he is a Carter liberal. I'm not saying that entirely to discredit him, but merely to describe him. I came here prepared to speak against socialism, but since I don't find anything particularly socialistic in Mr. Gershman's speech, I will simply address what he has said.

The social democrat, in my mind, is the person who wishes to combine democracy with socialism. I certainly think that Mr. Gershman is in favor of democracy. However, he says that he is opposed to right to work laws. Right to work laws are meant to guarantee the freedom of individuals not to join labor unions. In other words, they protect individual rights, over the rights of groups. I find it hard to see how anyone, unless he has the interest of the group at heart more than the interest of individuals, could be opposed to such laws.

Take the next point. Mr. Gershman quoted Amitai Etzioni to point out that American industry needs an enormous investment to be modernized and he pointed out that that requires discipline and sacrifice. But he also implied that an enormous investment somehow must come from or through the government. The question arises, where does the money, or if you look behind the money, the resources, come from? Well, obviously, the government takes them from us through inflation or through taxation. The question then arises, why should the discipline and the sacrifice that Mr. Gershman spoke of be imposed on us in a fashion politically determined by the government? The market system has always managed to get people to be disciplined and make sacrifices by holding out profit as a reward. Obviously there are strong socialist remnants in Mr. Gershman that he will outgrow. But we can never be sure.

Mr. Gershman is in favor of gun control, which is a side issue but one that tells us something. Obviously we would all be better off if nobody had guns. But there is no way of achieving that. In New York City, which has strong anti-gun laws, there are about two million existent guns, according to Mayor Koch. There is no way of taking these guns away. Gun control laws can take guns away from law-abiding citizens. If you want a

gun, despite the law, it's as easy to get as it is to get marijuana. Even if you had the national gun control laws, guns could be introduced from abroad, and they could be as easily manufactured at home as liquor was during prohibition. The gun control laws amount to unilateral disarmament, not to universal disarmament and this, it seems to me, is a little characteristic of Mr. Gershman's approach. The aim is wonderful. Universal disarmament—who could be against it? But the practice is unilateral disarmament; disarmament of the law-abiding while leaving the criminals in possession of their guns.

On the subject of foreign policy, Mr. Gershman tells us that we should not ally ourselves to right-wing dictatorships. My reply is very simple—we should ally ourselves to anyone who can be of help to us. A rightist or leftist dictatorship is not an appetizing kind of society. But foreign policy is not a tea party. During World War II we found it useful to ally ourselves to the Soviets because, rightly or wrongly, we thought the Nazis were more dangerous. You accept the help of one gangster against a group of other gangsters.

Decline and Fall of Productivity

Mr. Gershman pointed out that minimum wage laws discourage people from entering the labor market, particularly young people who are now by law supposed to earn more money than they're worth to any employer. Therefore, they are unemployed. Now, Mr. Gershman tells us that if we had no minimum wage laws, these young people still would not enter the labor market. I think he may be right, but he didn't ask the next question, which is, why not? Obviously they don't enter the labor market because they have alternative ways of living. Namely, they engage in illegitimate activities which have no minimum wage laws. They either become criminals—getting away with it fairly easily—or they live on a variety of hand-outs by the government. They don't have to enter the labor market in order to live. As it is, they have a choice of entering the labor market and they can say, "I will not enter unless the wage is what I want and unless the occupation is what I want. The occupation I have chosen is to become president of the United States, if I don't get employment in that job, I will just not be

employed. And I can afford to do that because someone is paying for my living.”

Mr. Gershman also tells us that unions increase wages only to the extent to which they increase productivity. I wish that were so. Even if it were so, it wouldn't be quite enough because if unions increased wages to the extent to which they increased productivity, there would be no reason for employers to increase productivity, since they would get nothing out of it. But be that as it may, productivity is increased mainly by changes in the pattern of investment and by increases in investment. I can't see how unions contribute to investment. As a matter of fact, they tend to increase wages far beyond productivity. And the result of that is twofold. Either we allow the volume of monetary circulation to go up and, as a result, have inflation, or we don't allow it to go up and, as unions increase wages, we get unemployment, as production becomes unprofitable.

Mr. Gershman correctly, I think, pointed out that we probably cannot get rid of unions. I think unions are harmful to workers. They pretend and perhaps believe that they help workers as a group. But in practice they only help particular groups of workers. Workers as a group suffer through unemployment and wages lower than they would otherwise receive. While we can't get fully rid of unions, I see no reason why we should not decrease their power and regulate them as we regulate industries. Curiously enough, Mr. Gershman told us that the regulation of industry is not bad. While some regulations may be bad, others are good. Well, nobody can be opposed to good regulations by definition, but the question is, which regulations are good? I can see very few of those that we have achieved that are either good or helpful. I would certainly not include among the good regulations those that have so greatly increased the power of unions in New York. For instance, a subway sweeper, who incidentally doesn't do much sweeping, gets \$18,000 for the work he doesn't do, plus overtime, plus now 10 percent more in each of the next two years. How is that possible? It is possible because there is a very strong union which simply blackmails the city and threatens to stop work. Surely it would make sense to regulate the power of unions in some respects, say in hospitals, in public employment, and in other things. At the very least, we should be able to stop that sort of blackmail.

Inefficacy of Government Intervention

My central point is very simply this: either we believe in the market or we don't. Mr. Gershman did not speak very much about it, yet I sense in him a certain trust in the government's power to plan our lives for us. But by central planning, planning by the government which is unavoidably central, we mean that there will be two groups: the planners and the planned. If you look at the way the government runs the Post Office, or the New York City government runs the city, I do not see any good reason to be confident in the government's ability to do better than the free market, or indeed to do well at all. Mr. Gershman cited Japan as an example of successful government intervention. Let me point out though, that places with hardly any government intervention, such as Hong Kong or Singapore, have done even better in a shorter time. Mr. Gershman pointed out correctly that we wish to help the disadvantaged. Surely, again, nobody can oppose that goal, but the question is "how are the disadvantaged best helped?" Are they best helped by hand-outs? Are they best helped under the tutelage of the government? Or are they best helped under a free market?

I'm not totally opposed to welfare. I do think that there are people who, for reasons beyond their control, cannot make a decent living. But the great error made by all liberals, including Mr. Gershman, is to assume that if you pay for something, such as poverty, the amount of poverty remains the same. So you just get rid of the poverty there is. Actually, poverty cannot be looked upon as a lake, but rather as a stream. And the more you pay for it, the more poverty will be produced. Poverty is something that can be produced, for instance, by having children, and in many, many other ways. We should limit our welfare to those who can be shown not to be able to help themselves, those who, so to speak, have poverty imposed on them. But we have not done this. As a result, helping the disadvantaged has, in effect, meant that we constantly increase the number of people who can be labeled as disadvantaged. More and more people, with what they can get when they try to make themselves advantaged, prefer to remain or become disadvantaged. This is a major reason our economy is becoming less and less productive.

PAUL WEYRICH RESPONDS

Actually, I am surprised that I, myself, was not invited to deliver the main address tonight, explaining why *I* am not a conservative, since my political critics so often contend that I am not a true representative of the movement. But since Mr. Gershman has already spoken to that point, I shall do my best to reply.

With no disrespect to Mr. Gershman, let me point out that until we assembled here to deliver these remarks, he and I had never met. In fact, frankly, I had never heard of the organization Social Democrats U.S.A. until I received the invitation to respond to Mr. Gershman, and heard his title. Moreover, during his talk Mr. Gershman pronounced my name incorrectly. Now I mention these facts simply because I don't think Mr. Gershman knows us; I don't think he knows what he is talking about. I think he has studied the political theories embodied by Nelson Rockefeller, Henry Ford, and people of that ilk, thrown in a few quotations from myself and from Richard Viguerie, and mixed all these elements together into a critique of the Left and the Right. He has come out with a very unusual product.

Some of Mr. Gershman's points are truly astounding. The political columnist Stan Evans, who is certainly one of the greatest traditional conservatives, argues that the New Right is not sufficiently oriented toward the free market. Yet Mr. Gershman claims that we are so utterly committed to the free market that we would put people out of work and let the poor starve. My friend Ed Feulner, who invited me to address this topic, has (on other occasions) distinguished himself from me by saying that the New Right is not really committed to free trade. Yet again Mr. Gershman excoriates us for being so committed to free trade that we would overlook the best national interests of the United States. In fact, of course, the same Ed Feulner and I, when we were working together as Congressional staff aides in the early 1970s, fought to restrict technology transfers to the Soviet Union. In short, all of Mr. Gershman's charges about conservatives' insensitivity on these points would sound nonsensical to anyone who knows the history of the New Right.

The Struggle with Communism

What particularly astonished me about Mr. Gershman's comments was his contention that conservatives don't appreciate the seriousness of the struggle with communism. He argues that we equate the struggle with communism with the defense of capitalism—that we fail to meet the communists on their ideological front line because we have no appreciation for human rights and freedoms. This shows how ignorant Mr. Gershman is about the goals of the New Right. The very essence of the New Right is a morally based conservatism. As a matter of fact, our view is not based in economics, but in a religious view. So in my opinion the people who are most strongly committed to real freedom are people in the conservative movement.

Let me ask, as one of the many members of the New Right who welcomed Vietnamese refugees into our homes and made them part of our own families, can anyone really think that we did this because we were committed to some form of free market capitalism? Of course not; we did it because we recognized what communism does to people. This is precisely the point I was making when Mr. Gershman saw fit to quote me. Yes, I did say that the New Right talks about the issues that people want to hear discussed. Conservatives have tried to market themselves by talking in Chamber-of-Commerce language, and they haven't been understood. As a result, a lot of people have been elected who shouldn't have been elected. So I don't apologize for talking about busing, and abortion, and quotas, and social issues of that type. As a matter of fact, I'm proud of it.

I did not cause the divisions in this country. It is Mr. Gershman's friends on the far Left—with whom he has been allied, but who he now deigns to criticize—who have brought into effect the policies that caused the divisions. They have caused the conflict. Now if we are marshalling our forces to take advantage of that conflict, what does that mean? It proves precisely that we are committed to our cause; we are committed to a democratic society. If you go out into the country and speak with people—and don't just limit yourself to the East Coast—you will find an absolute discontent with what is happening to our nation. We offer hope to the people who want to change the direction of the country's politics. We offer political candidates who offer a real difference. Yes, we are trying to mobilize

the discontent people feel; we are trying to get those discontented people into the voting booth, to make use of the democratic processes for change. And yes, we talk about the issues that people want to hear discussed, because the political parties have ignored the people's wishes, and ignored those important issues.

Mr. Gershman mentioned the Senator from New York, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, as the embodiment of his political spirit. That, to me, is very significant. You see, I follow voting records very carefully, and I have followed Senator Moynihan's career since he first came to the Capitol. What makes his record interesting is the fact that, like Mr. Gershman, he delivers all the right rhetoric, and all the wrong votes. Only on a couple of occasions (the tuition tax credit is one) do I find him on the side of greater freedom, limited government, and assistance for oppressed nations. Of course his rhetoric is wonderful; I'd like to memorize it and use it myself. But it means nothing, because, as the Bible says, "By their fruits shall ye know them." The fruits of a Senator are his votes, and Senator Moynihan's votes are just as bad as George McGovern's—just as bad as all the radicals Mr. Gershman names.

Take a look at the voting records. There is an 80 or 90 percent correlation between the record of Pat Moynihan and the records of Ted Kennedy and George McGovern. Is there somehow a difference between them? Well, I could try to distinguish between Senator Helms and Senator Hatch—and there are differences—but the differences are irrelevant in comparison with the important areas of agreement. Similarly, I think Senator Moynihan is part and parcel of the problem, alongside Senator Kennedy and Senator McGovern. I have nothing against Senator Moynihan personally—I think he's a fine individual—but he is symptomatic of the whole problem in our political system.

The Panama Canal

Now, as to the Panama Canal treaties, one could argue for a long time about whether or not they were really important to our national interests. I suggest that the ultimate answer to that question will come when we have strategic materials to move from one ocean to another, and we are unable to use the canal

because it is in the hands of a communist dictatorship. But, whatever the merits of the issue, the New Right did not initiate the Panama Canal treaties. We (including Mr. Feulner and myself) worked for ten years to prevent the enactment of that treaty. So the notion that we were wringing our hands with glee, just waiting for the treaty to be brought out so that we could mobilize the political backlash, is sheer and utter nonsense.

I certainly don't apologize for taking advantage of the Panama Canal issue to elect certain Senators and Congressmen who will help change the country. I no more apologize for that than I expect a good Democrat to apologize for taking advantage of Watergate during the 1974 elections.

The Rights of Workers

On the question of unions, the leadership of the New Right is often badly misunderstood. We come, really, from the lower middle class—from blue-collar backgrounds. I belonged to a union, I lived in a neighborhood filled with union members, all my relatives belonged to unions; how can Mr. Gershman suggest that we are anti-union? What we oppose is the unions' grab for power. Mr. Gershman cites our opposition to labor law reform, and says that those reforms were not the union power-grab we advertised them to be. Let me just mention a few provisions of those reforms, and let the audience judge whether or not labor law reform is a union power-grab. These reforms provided (among many other things) that if a company had union organizers on its premises, and those organizers held meetings with other employees, that the company would be required to pay, with its own time and money, for those union organizers. In other words, they would have to subsidize an operation they opposed. Now to my mind, that is a fundamentally un-American idea. It has nothing to do with protecting the rights of workers; it has everything to do with giving union bosses an advantage in organizing.

Unions in this country are in decline today, not because of right to work laws (which are in force in only twenty states), but because they no longer represent the interests of the average worker. They don't stick to the issues that concern the rank-and-file workers. Instead, they concentrate on gun control,

or busing, or the equal rights amendment.

Mr. Gershman might contend that unions have formed a bulwark against communism, and that Lane Kirkland and George Meany have opposed appeasement in foreign policy. But when their friend Senator Jackson was fighting against the approval of SALT II, where was the AFL-CIO then? Where were Lane Kirkland and George Meany and the allies of organized labor? Why weren't they helping Senator Jackson on this critical question of appeasement? The only answer is that organized labor has made an alliance with big government. And this marriage between the union bosses of Big Labor and the bureaucrats of Big Government has made it impossible for the unions to oppose SALT II in a real political showdown. The word comes down to the union bosses that if they don't help—or at least remain silent—then they won't get any help with their own pet interests. So after all the fine rhetoric, when push comes to shove, the unions don't lobby against SALT II. As I know Senator Jackson would agree, the New Right *has* lobbied on this issue. We oppose Big Labor, Big Business, and Big Government.

In summary, I don't think Mr. Gershman is really well acquainted with the New Right. I don't think he understands the sort of people we are. Since I know Mr. Gershman has a fine reputation for intellectual honesty, perhaps it's a good thing we had never discussed these issues previously. Because if we had done so, and if Mr. Gershman really understood our position, he could never have delivered these groundless attacks.

CARL GERSHMAN'S REBUTTAL

Let me begin by saying that the word "socialist," as I use it, implies social democracy—and that social democracy involves commitment to democracy, commitment to the mixed economy, and commitment to the kind of values and policies that I have explained here. It is not so much a specific policy that is at issue, but the fundamental value of democratizing society to give all people equality of opportunity.

Now to address some of the issues that were raised. Concerning investment and planning—I did *not* call for central planning. Social democrats do not support central planning, but rather a mixed economy in which the government and the private sector work together with labor unions to maintain a highly productive economy. Social democrats understand that a centrally planned economy, a command economy, is not only inefficient, but a threat to human freedom. What I do defend, however, is the need for government to play a vigorous role in promoting economic growth. Frankly, I am not fully convinced that we will achieve this growth, just by the pure workings of the market, or that business has the long-range perspective to examine the total problems of society. The example of trade with the Soviet Union (although I understand that the New Right is opposed to this) shows the short-sightedness of business. This total view has to come from the government, because it is the government's responsibility to use its tax dollars in a selective way to encourage investment in critical areas. Take the example of the energy crisis. One can assume that the utility companies are simply not going to transfer from oil to coal without significant government support, because it is a costly operation.

Stabilizing Influence of Labor Unions

The success of our society depends upon the ability of its different sectors to work together. That is a social democratic view. It explains why the attitude of the Right toward the labor movement is totally counterproductive. There is considerable reason to believe that collective bargaining assists management in understanding what problems exist at the workplace. Hence Europeans who have a system of co-determination are amazed at the industrial relations in our society. "Don't you understand," they say, "that the more cooperative the relationship, the more profits and productivity you get? Hasn't America learned?" They look upon our system and its conflicts as somehow primitive and as something which should have been dispensed with in the 1930s.

Dr. van den Haag should be aware that the existence of unions leads to a much greater stability in the work relationship. Where you don't have unions, you have workers who are much

worse off and who, therefore, tend to wildcat strike. Unions can establish a more stable relationship with management to the benefit of society as a whole. The police strike in New Orleans was not carried out by a union that was part of the AFL-CIO. If it had been a union under the kind of leadership that you have in the AFL-CIO, that conflict would have had a greater chance of being resolved quickly and responsibly.

On gun control, I merely said that this was a highly sensitive and explosive issue. To make this a divisive issue is likely to be very dangerous for society. Gun control, I know, cannot accomplish much. What I am against is exploiting such an issue for political purposes. We will not get anywhere that way.

Let me deal with Mr. Weyrich's point about Panama. He was asked on the MacNeil/Lehrer Report if he agreed with Mr. Viguerie's statement that these treaties were a great opportunity and he replied, "Right on." Of course, Mr. Weyrich understood that there was some substance in the issue. But, principally, it was an opportunity to organize the troops.

I will comment very briefly on minimum wage laws. If Dr. van den Haag is for the repeal of the welfare state, then he can take the position he has taken on minimum wage laws. But as long as we have a welfare state, not having a minimum wage is simply going to discourage people from seeking \$3.00 or \$2.65 an hour when they can get more through welfare and food stamps outside of work. In dealing with the problem of youth unemployment, it is going to have little effect one way or the other. What will encourage people to get off welfare is a growing economy.

Finally, this last point. The misunderstanding of the issues at stake within our society is reflected in the comments on Senator Moynihan. Mr. Weyrich says we know nothing about the New Right. But surely he knows nothing about the Left. I only wish he had been there in 1976 during the Senate campaign against Bella Abzug. He might have a much more enlightened view of how fundamental the differences are which separate people within the so-called liberal community. The fundamental issue is commitment to democracy—to Western democracy and to democracy around the world. The policies advocated by the Right will simply pose the issues in such a way that those on the Left who pretend to be friends of democracy, while being its enemies, will gain a crucial advantage.

WHY I AM NOT A NEO-CONSERVATIVE

GEORGE GILDER

Those of you who read the famous issue of *Esquire* on Neo-Conservatism may fear for my life, for I am about to defy the Godfather. If I am shortly found at the bottom of the Potomac with ten bound volumes of *The Public Interest* around my neck—and only *Two Cheers for Capitalism*—you will know who did it. Lesser men have drowned merely from reading that sort of stuff. Nonetheless, I flatter myself I will survive. Having pored over every issue of *The Public Interest* from cover to cover for some twelve years, having swum through the swarms of Daniel Patrick Moynihan, and having even penetrated the deepest thickets of Daniel Bell—I believe I have toughened myself enough to escape the coruscating cage of Irving Kristol and tell my shocking story to the world: how a once obedient and respectful liberal Republican from the Ripon Society could pass through the elegant labyrinth of Neo-Conservatism and end up a captive of the “politics of resentment and hate,” “single-issue fanaticism,” and “know-nothing fundamentalism.”

Lest my attack on Neo-Conservatism be judged an act of arrant ingratitude, let me begin by granting my great debt to Neo-Conservative thinkers—or Neo-Cons, if I may coin the term. I can pay them no higher tribute than to say that I owe to them my conversion to real conservatism.

It was Daniel Patrick Moynihan, for example, who taught me that the key problem of welfare policy is its impact on the family and who introduced me to child allowances as an alternative to AFDC. I suspect that had Senator Moynihan never written his report on the black family, I would not have written *Sexual Suicide*.

It was Norman Podhoretz who taught me, in his marvelous essay, “My Negro Problem—And Ours”—which I read aloud to friends on its publication—that the issues of black and white in America were far more complex than the facile dichotomies I had long upheld. He also showed me the incandescence of blunt truths, whether about race, money, or homosexuality.

It was Midge Decter who first illumined for me the intricate tapestries of social class and feminism—and then edited two of my books.

It was Ben Wattenberg who first revealed to me the wealth of

statistics that belie the morbid liberal version of America. Because of him, I began each of my sociological studies with a trip to Rockville and Bethesda to consult with the men of the Census and the National Bureau of Health Statistics.

And it was Irving Kristol who in luminously clear and trenchant language told me far more than I can even today remember about social and economic policies and their perverse effects. I can only say that even today I cannot read his earlier works without stumbling onto some phrase or idea that I had imagined to be my own—and that indeed I had appropriated as such. I still recall the thrill I felt as a young editor at *The New Leader* magazine in receiving his limpid copy at our frumpy offices off Union Square. Irving Kristol also did me the inestimable service of virtually ordering me to read the *Wall Street Journal*, which was indispensable to writing *Wealth and Poverty*.

Nathan Glazer, James Q. Wilson, and too many others to mention also heavily contributed to the changing pattern of my ideas.

Nonetheless, I have to assert that these splendid thinkers finally failed to make me a Neo-Conservative. Irving Kristol once wrote that the unintended effects of social policy are usually both more important and less appealing than the intended effects. If I may paraphrase him, as I have so often in my career, the unintended effects of Neo-Conservative writings can be more important and less appealing to Neo-Conservatives than they might expect. The accumulated wisdom of this group, gathering to a critical mass in my mind, was finally to ignite a conservative fire that in time consumed even my Neo-Conservatism—and left me, if I may confess it, more of the New Right than the Latinate Neo-Con.

One of the continuing themes of Neo-Conservative thought is the existence of a horrifying spectre on the Right—a terrifying chimera of conservative extremists: nativist, xenophobic, bigoted, anti-Semitic—who would unleash holy war against the tolerant and urbane values of the welfare state, who would allow small children to starve in the street, ban the works of Henry Miller if not Norman Mailer, and launch nuclear missiles into the men's room of the ACLU.

The very embodiment of this grim force, so it turned out in a rather sad anti-climax to Norman Podhoretz's *Breaking Ranks*, was the Buckley brotherhood in *National Review* and the U.S.

Senate. Among the worst of the rabid fringe, I was given to understand at many a gathering of Neo-Conservatives, was Phyllis Schlafly. Since I myself once wrote a book that bitterly denounced the New Right and Phyllis Schlafly as well, I do not claim any precocious wisdom on this point. But I have come to believe that Phyllis Schlafly is the most effective politician in America, and that Neo-Conservatives, in general, for all their brilliance and sophistication, are part of the problem that she is bravely confronting.

Evading Truths

I have come to believe that Neo-Conservatism is to a great extent a strategy of evasion of the great truths and political imperatives that dwell just below the surface of Neo-Conservative thought: an evasion of the very structure of ideas and values which Neo-Conservatives have been laboriously exhuming piece by piece, in scholarly volumes and pithy essays, for nearly two decades. These findings now bulk large and can be seen to assume a distinctive shape. That shape—lo and behold—is not some brilliant novelty. It best resembles, if I may say so—with reference to the joke about the origins of the camel—conservatism designed by a committee. And that Neo-Conservative camel is never going to win a race, or be elected, except perhaps in Neo-York. And even there, it will vote like an old-fashioned donkey.

The problem, though, is not only political. Adding up all the writings of Neo-Conservatives over the years—all the endlessly sophisticated writings of America's most ingenious social thinkers and analysts—I discover that they constitute, in sum, after all is said and done, a body of conclusions, a distillation of wisdom and truth, rather less useful and timely than William F. Buckley's youthful insights in *God and Man at Yale*.

In his earliest works, William Buckley already *knew* almost everything that the Neo-Conservatives have laboriously, ambivalently, and tentatively managed to prove over the subsequent twenty years. As a matter of fact, the Neo-Conservatives in general know infinitely less, because they do not understand the paramount truths of God and Man—truths that their computer regressions, alas, will never teach them, even if cumulatively

they could open the mind of a slow learner like me to the higher luminosities.

The problem is that the Neo-Conservative believes not chiefly in principles but in empirical techniques. He believes that through study and analysis of social questions, one can arrive at reliable conclusions. This approach means that the Neo-Conservative usually cannot tell you what is wrong with social programs until they have already been entrenched and done their damage. Then the Neo-Conservative will tell you that these programs are part of the very fabric of our political culture and cannot be repealed. What use is that?

Moreover, the Neo-Conservative will tell you that past social programs were not so bad, collectively, even if he and his allies acknowledge that each particular one was ineffective. Neo-Conservatives now believe, for example, that this collection of U.S. social programs—every one cogently attacked by at least one of their number—has virtually abolished poverty in America. Only 6 percent of Americans, I believe it is said, are now below the poverty line. We have apparently overcome poverty by redistribution.

This is nonsense in every respect. As Bill Buckley already knew in his teens, redistribution cannot fight poverty, it can only destroy wealth and create dependency. What the War on Poverty in fact achieved was to halt in its tracks an ongoing improvement in the lives of the poor—particularly poor blacks—and create a wreckage of family breakdown and demoralization far worse than the aftermath of slavery.

Poverty is a matter not of income but of prospects. Female-headed families, in general, are doomed to poverty almost regardless of what incomes they receive. Since the launching of the War on Poverty in 1964, nearly all the indices of family breakdown, illegitimacy, and crime in the ghetto have approximately doubled; the problem is twice as bad as it was when Senator Moynihan wrote his alarming study on the black family. At present, six in ten black children are brought up without fathers in the home, compared to less than two in ten whites. But this figure of black broken families includes middle-class blacks. The War on Poverty, combined with steadily rising welfare benefits, has almost completely destroyed the black family in the slums.

This means that the situation of poor blacks is worse than

ever. They are doomed to at least another generation of tragedy, another generation of hopelessness, violence, crime, and addiction, another generation of fatherless families and rudderless communities, with boys pursuing their masculinity in the vicious cycles of street society and spurning jobs and responsibilities in favor of lawless and unproductive lives.

This result was not inevitable. It was a direct consequence of social policies designed by liberals and essentially accepted by Neo-Conservatives. Indeed, Senator Moynihan's Family Assistance Plan would have made the problem far worse by extending it more rapidly to low-benefit states.

Conservatives did not need twenty years of social analysis and computer regressions to determine that the War on Poverty with its Welfare Rights campaign was a sure disaster. The New Right did not need multimillion-dollar income maintenance experiments to discover that hard work, family stability, and faith in God are indispensable to upward mobility. Bill Buckley did not require ten years of stagflation to prove that high taxes were destroying incentives in America, nor did he need elaborate studies from MIT to show that a flat-rate tax structure would raise more revenue than our currently confiscatory progressions. The far Right—the same men I dismissed as extremists in my youth—turned out to know far more than I did, trained at Harvard and at the knee of Neo-Conservatives. At least, the “right-wing extremists,” as I confidently called them, were right on almost every major policy issue—from welfare and Vietnam to Keynesian economics and defense—while I, in my Neo-Conservative sophistication, was nearly always wrong.

Avoiding Moral Issues

Today, the Neo-Conservative believes that the far Right is altogether too extreme and obsessive on the so-called social issues. These matters, the Neo-Conservative maintains, are a distraction, an expression of the politics of resentment, a mindless religiosity “more interested,” as Irving Kristol says, “in repealing the past than in shaping the future.” Neo-Conservatives, in general, are afraid to fight on ERA, abortion, sex education, pornography, school prayer, and gay liberation. Once again, as in the case of poverty, they underrate the importance of stable

families and moral values to a productive and creative society.

Once again, they seem ready to wait while families dissolve. They are willing to palter over quotas while wives and daughters are drafted into the military. They seem prepared to stand aside while feminists and homosexuals evangelize the schools and prayers are banished from them. They stay fastidiously aloof while a flood of pornography—propaganda for degradation and viciousness that must be seen to be believed—engulfs our nation's youth. I have no doubt that at some future date when these trends have reached some climax sufficiently catastrophic, the Neo-Conservatives will provide elegant and scholarly analyses of the problem. They will cogently show its roots in the very social movements which only the New Right and the old conservatives dare to denounce. The Neo-Conservative will finally grant, in essence, that Ernest van den Haag and Billy Graham were right about pornography; that Anita Bryant knows more about homosexuality than does the American Association of Psychiatrists; that Phyllis Schlafly is better at defining national priorities than is Daniel Patrick Moynihan; that the Moral Majority is a more valuable and responsible movement in our politics than is the Coalition for a Democratic Majority.

Until then, though, the Left will maintain the initiative. Millions of American boys will be told in sex education classes that their adolescent lusts may signify a homosexual fixation, that pornography and promiscuity provide a healthy release of tensions, that contraceptives and abortions have removed the constraints of conventional morality, that families are outmoded in an overpopulated world, that religion is a form of bigotry and superstition. All these propositions are flatly false and lead to social anarchy inimical to every professed goal of liberalism. To promote homosexuality, pornography, and atheism among adolescent boys is just as vicious as to sell heroin. But only the New Right understands the urgency and extremity of these issues.

Misunderstanding Capitalism

Perhaps the deepest misconception of the Neo-Conservatives is their attitude toward capitalism. Now I have got more than two cheers for capitalism. I am for capitalism more than 66-2/3 percent. Many Neo-Conservatives believe that capitalism is an

optional system, desirable for its freedom and democratic possibilities, but ultimately flawed and self-contradictory. Capitalism is said to be based on self-interest and consumerism which finally erode the moral preconditions of the system itself. It is said to be founded on forms of technological progress and bureaucracy that finally subvert democracy and enterprise. It is said to regulate itself through broad markets moving toward equilibrium rather than by bold entrepreneurs always in pursuit of transitory positions of monopoly. It is said to function through crude economic incentives rather than through love and altruism. To sum up, it is said to be founded on greed rather than on giving.

The fact is, however, that capitalism thrives on religious faith and decays without it. Capitalist progress is based on risks that cannot be demonstrated to pay off in any one lifetime. Thus it relies on faith in the future and in Providence. Capitalism depends not on greed but on giving, investment without a contracted return. The workers under capitalism are motivated not by crude economic rewards but by love of family. The entrepreneurs succeed to the extent that they are sensitive to the needs of others, to the extent that others succeed. Altruism is the essence of the positive-sum game of capitalism.

Walter Lippmann put it well in 1936 in the midst of the Great Depression when he wrote that our system is based on "an ideal that for the first time in human history" gave men "a way of producing wealth in which the good fortune of others multiplied their own." At long last "the Golden Rule was economically sound. . . .and for the first time men could conceive a social order in which the ancient moral aspiration of liberty, fraternity, and equality was consistent with the abolition of poverty and the increase of wealth." Once "the worldly policy was to be predatory. The claims of the spirit were otherworldly." But with the Industrial Revolution, "the vista was opened at the end of which men could see the possibility of the good society on this earth. At long last the ancient schism between the world and the spirit, between self-interest and disinterestedness, was potentially closed."

To defend capitalism—even to understand it—you have to celebrate and defend business, together with the moral values of trust and faith that make it possible. Most conservatives and New Rightists instinctively understand this. Neo-Conservatives tend to look down on the "money-grubbing" bourgeoisie, the

way British aristocrats disdain people "in trade." They follow too closely the stress of Adam Smith on "self-interest" as the source of the bounties of capitalism. The fact is that self-interest of the sort celebrated in *The Wealth of Nations* leads not as by an invisible hand to growth and progress, but eventually to the dead hand of the welfare state. Without faith and love, self-concern brings an obsession with security, an envy of wealth, and aversion to risk that destroys the gifts of creative capitalism. The old Right and the New Right instinctively know and the Neo-Conservatives shrink from asserting such values. That is why I am no longer a Neo-Conservative.

BEN WATTENBERG RESPONDS

I personally have spent the last fifteen years of my life devoted to combating a pernicious notion on the Left which we might put in the shorthand: "America is terrible." We have heard the litany that it is imperialist, racist, sexist, unfair, and polluted.

We now have the unusual circumstance of Mr. Gilder representing himself first to speak for conservatives and then for the New Right. Mr. Gilder seems to take the position that America is homosexual, pornographic, atheistic, inflationary, and criminal. In the same shorthand: "America is terrible." We were spared only the idea for a moment that there are fluorides in the water, but beyond that it was the same general U-shaped curve that seems to me to characterize American politics. Intellectual politics from the Left to the Right are not in a linear formation, but rather, the Left and the Right come together near the top of the horseshoe. To quote Mr. Gilder about blacks in America: "This means that poor blacks in America are doomed to at least another generation of tragedy and another generation of hopelessness, violence, crime, and addiction, another generation of fatherless families and rudderless communities with boys pursuing their masculinity in the vicious cycles of the street society and spurning jobs and responsibility in favor of lawless and unproductive lives." That is not only a preposterous remark but a remark which could have been delivered by Kenneth Clark

or almost anybody on the far Left about that particular issue and I think it's an interesting coming together of views that I would characterize as increasingly extreme.

My own thought is that, as in jurisprudence where we seek to let the punishment fit the crime, so in the arena of public policy we want the remedy to fit the problem. We might ask ourselves what the problem is these days and how much of a problem it is. Now it seems to me there are, in fact, two major problems that we as free men in free Western societies can deal with. One is that there has been a diminution of real economic growth. The other is that there is a great threat externally by a foreign power, the Soviets, to the basic tenets of Western human liberty.

Diminution of Economic Growth

Now, to deal with the first one. Conservatives and New Rightists tend to say that this diminution of economic growth is serious. In fact, when they lay the blame for our current economic circumstance on the permissive welfare state, there is some merit there and we have to look pragmatically at some of those causes. But they ignore perhaps the most important development in the last third of a century on this planet: that we have created in these Western nations and, indeed, in much of the less-developed world as well, probably the most prosperous, freest, most powerful, most creative assembly of nations in the history of the world and—perhaps by coincidence and perhaps not—this coincided with the rise of the welfare state. Now that is something that we have to consider. We shouldn't automatically say, "Look at this terrible thing the welfare state has bequeathed us." I personally think the welfarists have probably gone too far and I am prepared to examine case by case, pragmatically, as Neo-Conservatives are supposed to do, what went wrong and how we ought to rectify it. But to call down this vision of horror on earth today, it seems to me, is a bizarre notion. It's interesting that while this whole economic growth argument is going on about the decade of the 1970s, real earnings after inflation have gone *up*. Not as fast as we would like them to go up, but—and you can massage these statistics in a number of ways—it seems to me the worst statement you can make about this terrible situation we have gotten into is that at

the highest level of prosperity that human beings have ever achieved, we have hit a plateau. Well, that is something we probably want to deal with, but not, it seems to me, with radical surgery.

Foreign Policy

Now, further, Mr. Gilder in his entire speech did not mention foreign policy and what is happening to the world. Incredible! I would ask you to examine the following formulation, perhaps burlesqued just a trifle: the central notion that Senator Moynihan has been pursuing these many years might be characterized as "the Russians are coming and they are threatening human liberty"; and the central notion that Phyllis Schlafly has been pursuing in recent years is: "unless we stop ERA there will be men in women's rest rooms." Then I would ask you to consider the following statement by Mr. Gilder: "Phyllis Schlafly is better at defining national priorities than is Daniel Patrick Moynihan." If you think ERA is a greater threat to our civilization than the Soviet buildup, then you have your candidate.

I think it is also important to know that the basic credo of us Neo-Conservatives, or whatever you want to call us, is that society moderately and gradually self-corrects. I think that is happening now in this political culture and the public arena. As to the remedy for a weakened America in terms of defense, notwithstanding what you hear from our President, it is not simplistic to suggest that more money yields more defense. But in fact, we have turned the corner on that issue in Congress and surely in the country. The country is well ahead of the Congress on this issue and surely ahead of the President. The menace that faces us is becoming ever more apparent and there is a reordering of priorities going on at this time finally in the proper direction. About the issue of slow economic growth, which is a real problem it seems to me, I will probably agree with Mr. Gilder that the remedy is more incentive, less regulation, more capitalism, if you will. But it seems to me again that we could cite various evidence—reforms of the tax code, for example—to demonstrate that these remedies are surfacing in the public arena now.

A Moral Malaise?

That leaves us only with Mr. Gilder's final, perhaps major point, as I see it, that this society is suffering a moral malaise—an incredible erosion of moral values. These ideas are usually correlated with the work ethic, but the fact is that the percentage in the labor force today is greater than at any time in American history. We talk about an erosion of religion but church attendance in America is up. Look at the public opinion polls and Americans—North, East, South, West, Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish, of every class—say their number one value in life is “the family.” We forget that our illustrious President (when he had that unique self-serving opportunity to paint himself in his own terms when he was an unknown in early 1976) told us he was from a small town, he was a military man, he was a Southerner, he was religious, and he was a small businessman. The idea that that is the profile that would appeal to a dissolute and degenerate society leaves me somewhat cold. Moreover, the obvious fact is that Ronald Reagan is designing his campaign in exactly the same way. Wisely.

Now, is there a moral decline in America? I recently had the occasion to interview one of my heroes, Tom Wolfe, about the “Me Decade” and we came to an interesting conclusion. It is true that the American public is more interested than ever—from whatever indices you choose to use—in terrible things like sex, tennis, and liquor. There is some evidence of sloth, of dope, and of weird clothes. One can make the case that strutting homosexuality and pornography are on the rise. But Tom Wolfe's point was that in this remarkable society of ours, plain, normal people are today doing what aristocrats have always done—sex, tennis, liquor, sloth, dope, you name it. The case can be made that if we have created a society where plain people are doing what aristocrats have done—every man an aristocrat, if you will—then that is bad. I would not make that case. I would make, in fact, the obverse of that—that it is a function of the prosperity of the United States and that it is probably pretty good. This I believe in spite of all its problems, which are many. And this goes to the root of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's criticism of the United States—that it is degenerate, that it is soft, that it won't stand up, and that we have too much freedom and too much license. Perhaps he agrees with Mr. Gilder's

views about this soft, permissive, decadent America and how far it's gone.

I am sure it is true that, as Tom Wolfe has pointed out, in every village in America there are some movie theaters that show movies rated XXX. And it is true that at these movies you will find not just decadent sophisticates that happen to be traveling down from the west side of Manhattan, but you will find good old boys in pick-up trucks out there watching these movies and in the back of the truck you will probably find *Hustler* magazine, alas. But it is also true of these same people that on Sunday morning they will be in church and on the back of their trucks will be bumper stickers that say "Kill Khomeini." Now this is an interesting set of paradoxes that we might explore, but it does not seem to me to be the characteristics of a society that is decadent, immoral, distintegrating, and ready to disappear.

It seems to me that the nature of the American dream that Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, for all his greatness (and I am second to none as an admirer of his), does not understand is the question "Can we have it all?" Can we have prosperity *and* freedom *and* license *and* values *and* the spirit to fight for it all rationally and moderately where centrists fight these things? I believe that we still do have that spirit and I think Neo-Conservatives believe that also.

PAUL JOHNSON RESPONDS

Without actually joining in this contest between Mr. Gilder and Mr. Wattenberg, I would judge that Mr. Gilder is somewhat too apocalyptic and Mr. Wattenberg is a little too complacent. What I should like to discuss now is how far should one go when changing one's general political attitudes. In order to do that, I must state an unpopular truth: namely, that the forming of political beliefs is not a rational activity, but an emotional one. It involves much reasoning but it is primarily an emotional act, with the reasons being subsequently brought in as collateral

arguments. This is very hard for intellectuals to accept; but one appreciates its truth if one approaches politics as a form of religious activity.

All the great religious conversions have taken place, as it were, in a puff of smoke. St. Paul presented his conversion as a kind of miracle on the road to Damascus. Although he was a trained religious thinker, it was not a process of ratiocination, of argument and conviction; it just happened. So he describes it in terms of a miracle. Again, when people like St. Augustine are describing their process of conversion, there is suddenly a gap in the argument and you have to accept it simply as a fact.

This is what happens in politics. There are only two positions in politics and both have an emotional substratum. There is utopianism, which says that the world is and has always been run in a wicked fashion, and that this proceeding must be changed; and secondly, there is the conservative view that admits the world to be a very unsatisfactory place, but also fears that any systematic and radical change is merely going to make matters worse. When one identifies oneself with either of these two views, the process is primarily an emotional one. Indeed, in many cases it may even be hereditary, because people get their politics either from their parents, or by reacting against their parents. It is the same with political conversion. If one decides to leave the Left and join the Right, usually the reason is that a kind of anger or disgust or unhappiness gradually builds up inside oneself. Finally, of course, it comes to a head and you make a decision. Only afterwards do you begin to look around for reasons and to construct an intellectually satisfying and respectable justification.

Now it follows from this that, once the emotional spasm has been undergone, the convert then begins to reconstruct huge chunks of his life. Of course, people do this when they first get interested in politics and take up a specific political position. But the process is still more dramatic if someone changes a long-held political view fundamentally. The convert changes his position on a whole range of current problems; he changes his interpretation and analysis of recent history; he then starts looking back into the past and taking a different attitude on the Peloponnesian War, on the English Civil War, on the American Revolution, on the French Revolution in particular and, needless to say, on the Russian Revolution. But he also finds that he

is thinking again about moral questions, taking different views of society, and almost inevitably taking different views of religion. It seems to me to be almost impossible for somebody to move decisively from the Left to the Right, or vice versa, without forming different views about religion and its importance in life. He also begins to think differently about the aging process, seeing himself *sub specie aeternitatis*, much more sharply than he did before.

The question is: when you are going through this process, how far should you go? Should you repudiate all your previous views or merely some of them? And if you are going to be selective, on what basis should that selection take place? It seems to me that in these speeches we have heard from someone who has been prepared to go the whole hog, broadly speaking, and from someone else who has retained very substantial portions of his previous political philosophy. In both these cases, it is essentially an emotional decision. But some people are inclined to say, "I have decided that I have changed on that; therefore I have got to start anew. I have to be born again and have a *tabula rasa*. So reconstruct everything!" Other people are inclined to think, "Perhaps I was wrong on quite a lot of things. I was wrong, maybe on balance, but an awful lot of what I did was prudent and right and I must hang on to that." This is a decision that everybody ought to think out for himself or herself. In particular, one should not criticize others for deciding differently. Accordingly, the level of abuse should always be kept low in such debates.

In this connection, it is a pity that Americans have to have all these labels: Neo-Conservative, New Right, etc. We don't have such labels in Britain. The French, needless to say, have them. Perhaps it is something to do with circular or semi-circular deliberative chambers. In the British House of Commons, there are just two sides and, if you leave the Labor Party, you become Conservative and that's the end of it. (You can call yourself a Tory if you wish, but nobody knows what that means.)

But we must bear this in mind that, whatever decision is made, the convert is choosing one side of the fence. He is either clinging to the belief that there are utopian solutions, however much he may water them down, or taking the skeptical view that political activity is likely on balance to do more harm than

good. To me it seems that the world improves not through dramatic revolutions or violence, but by an appreciation of the balance of the two sides. Quite often, real progress can be made in improving the general happiness of mankind through a process of fine tuning and careful adjustment of the balance of forces. Yet the big impulses are needed too.

So there is very much a place for both the Gilders and the Wattenbergs in this general movement to reverse the advance of over-eager political activism. But, having said this, I must add that I am more in general sympathy with the attitude of Mr. Gilder. It is my view that the conventional interpretation of the history of the last fifty years is very suspect. I happen to be writing a book about the world between 1920 and 1980 and I have found myself re-examining all the last six decades. We have to look again at what really happened in the 1920s, particularly in the United States, at why it happened and why it stopped happening, at why there was the crash in 1929. Was the Great Depression that followed it inevitable, particularly in duration? Was the New Deal a myth or a reality? What caused, and what terminated, the great post-1945 economic boom? And what conclusions should we draw from these events?

It is an exercise highly relevant to how far one should change one's whole philosophy. But just to give you one indication of the way our philosophies toward capitalism, toward socialism, collectivism, and the welfare state are likely to move over the next ten years, I will predict that the historical figure who is most likely to emerge as a significant mentor, if not exactly a hero, is Calvin Coolidge. And having said that, I don't think Mr. Gilder, or indeed anyone else, can fairly well call me a Neo-Conservative.

GEORGE GILDER'S REBUTTAL

Mr. Wattenberg's amusing comments epitomize the complacency and irrelevance of much Neo-Conservatism: its blindness to the deepening tragedy wreaked by liberalism on the ghetto

family; its bland willingness to allow a similar tragedy to reach the rest of the American poor—and even, increasingly, the middle class; its Panglossian refusal to recognize the distinction between intelligent social policy, largely based on forms of insurance, and a welfare state careening out of control.

Further, Mr. Wattenberg fails to differentiate between the magnificent achievement and potential of American democratic capitalism, with its moral and religious foundations, and the increasingly evident effects of a pernicious attack on these values by a parasitic new class.

And finally, like virtually all upper class intellectuals, Mr. Wattenberg derides and trivializes the monumental achievement of America's greatest political leader of the last decade: Phyllis Schlafly, the woman who dared say "no" to the new class, defying its farcical "science" of public opinion polls and its ridiculous claims for the moral superiority of selfishness. Not only did she mobilize the only effective movement against the anti-family forces, but this prodigious lady had already written no fewer than *seven* books about the decline of U.S. defense and foreign policy before Daniel Patrick Moynihan first turned his formidable eloquence to that subject. (One of Senator Moynihan's current answers to the problems of our national security, however, is drafting women: an example of the willingness of even the most sensible of Neo-Conservatives to succumb to the fashions of the moment, regardless of the consequences for our families and defenses.)

Although I hesitate to disabuse Mr. Wattenberg of his comforting illusions, I feel that a man of his age—and a political movement of the importance of Neo-Conservatism—should learn the facts of life: that the world does not allow you to "have it all." If you fail to tell American boys that they will have to head their families and support them, you cannot have stable marriages or effective poverty programs. If you allow sex education courses to teach highly excitable teenagers that sex is chiefly a matter of public hygiene and personal recreation rather than of moral law, promiscuity becomes inevitable—and social disruption spreads. If you teach confused and impressionable adolescent boys the big lie of gay liberation—that many of them are predetermined homosexuals—you will blight the lives of millions. If you permit the court system to break down in liberal pettifoggery to the extent that violent criminals almost

never go to jail, you will have a national movement of decent citizens buying guns. If you condone the vicious exploitation of sex on the grounds of First Amendment rights—or dismiss it as a triviality of “good old boys”—you will have pornography become what it is today (check your local newsstand), nothing less than the dominant literature of America. If you allow marginal tax rates to rise to real levels of over 50 percent for most citizens (giving them greater incentive to hide income than to earn it), you will have a stagnant private sector, a demoralized work force, and a huge underground economy of tax evasions and shelters.

Finally, it should not be necessary to point out to a sophisticated writer like Mr. Wattenberg that it was the expansion of trade and commerce that made possible the enlargement of welfare—not the other way around, as the experiences of every socialist welfare state in Europe and the Third World will demonstrate. And if like Mr. Wattenberg you accept the view that prosperity in some mysterious way comes from expanded welfareism, you will necessarily lack the iron will needed in fighting the gargantuan excesses of modern government that are rapidly bringing economic growth to a halt in many Western countries—but not in Asia where taxation is less than half as high.

If, on the other hand, you face these facts of life—and recognize that our greatest patrimony as a free people is the religious values and moral laws of the Judeo-Christian tradition—then you will be able to see that the New Right commands a true moral majority of Christians and Jews defending our most precious heritage, and like many one-time Neo-Conservatives today, you will swallow your pride and join them.

WHY I AM NOT A LIBERTARIAN

SHIRLEY ROBIN LETWIN

The name, "Libertarian," has a much more respectable origin than a name like Whig or Tory. "Whig" is a variant of the word, "whey," meaning spoiled or sour milk; because the rural poor drank spoiled milk, "Whig" came to mean a country bumpkin and was used as a term of abuse to signify a party of the bump-tious countryside as opposed to the party of the refined royal court. The name, "Tory," comes from a word meaning "band-its" and was, of course, also given rather than taken. But as "Libertarian" was deliberately adopted to express the conviction that "liberty is the highest political end," it might be thought to reveal what Libertarians stand for. In fact it is more misleading than a name like Whig because "liberty" has turned whore.

Not just the American Revolution, but also the French, the Russian, and many other battles for tyranny have been fought under the banner of liberty. Soviet Russia has "liberated" Czechoslovakia three times—so far they have liberated Hungary and Afghanistan only twice each, and Poland just once. The British Labor Party promises in its latest policy document to realize "freedom" by forcibly nationalizing "the means of production, distribution and exchange," and the Libyan "People's Revolutionary Forces" recently saluted the IRA for sharing its profound devotion to liberty. The new liberty of women has brought them liberation from men, cooking, children, leisure, sex, and tops. In short, when someone promises us liberty, there is no knowing what he is up to.

But Libertarians, and especially their leading spokesman, Murray Rothbard, have taken great trouble to explain their "political theory." Libertarians believe, Dr. Rothbard tell us, in "the absolute immorality of invasions of rights to person and property, regardless of which person or group commits such violence." And therefore they want to do away with all government because it is nothing but "the wielder of organized violence." A state constitutes a "socially legitimized and sanctified channel for theft and tyranny." These words mean that for Libertarians there is no important difference between the government of Mrs. Thatcher and that of Mr. Brezhnev; that Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan are just paler versions of Idi

Amin; and that Cubans are deluded when they run away to find a better life in the United States.

The state should be replaced, Libertarians argue, by the market. Even justice, they say, can be administered on a purely *ad hoc* voluntary basis. In a Libertarian society, only "the victim himself would decide whether to press charges." How the victims of murderers would bring their charges is not easy to see, but perhaps Libertarians can raise the dead. Nor is it obvious how traffic rules can be settled, as Libertarians claim, by private owners of roads. If these rules conflict, Libertarians explain, the private rule-makers could set up a body to co-ordinate the rules. And if this body's rules conflict with those of another such body? They could set up another co-ordinating body, and so on. Such a rule-making hierarchy seems to leave "the market" far behind.

Murray Rothbard himself acknowledges that there would have to be what he calls "an agreed upon cutoff point," in effect, a judicial system, to bring recalcitrant criminals to justice and find a stopping point for appeals. And he admits that this would require a legal code. But when it comes to saying how this legal code would be framed, he concludes that there is no need for one because judges could discover the law in reason just as common law judges discovered property rights in medieval times. This supposition is as historically false as the Socialist discovery in the middle ages of a model socialist community, unsullied by any property rights. What is more important, however, is the Libertarian view of how property rights are known to exist.

A Stilted View of Natural Law

A property right is made "manifest," they say, by labor. Of course, philosophers and economists have long argued about the role of labor in justifying a property right. But Rothbard's position is that the labor that enters into goods makes the right to possess them *manifest*. Does this mean that everyone who works on the Ford production line owns all the automobiles turned out, or that if a burglar works very hard at breaking into a bank vault, that gives him a manifest right to whatever his labor uncovers inside? Property is not the only subject on

which, according to Libertarians, we have manifest, indisputable knowledge. "Murder is murder," they say. They don't trouble to distinguish killing for the sake of destroying someone from killing by accident, killing in self-defense, or killing to save an innocent from a maniac. Needless to say, the elaborate rules of evidence to define what distinguishes manslaughter from self-defense from homicide which developed over hundreds of years are irrelevant for Libertarians.

But something more than carelessness inspires this remarkable Libertarian confidence. It is justified by their belief in "natural rights." And they associate this belief with the doctrine of natural law. Unfortunately that association is entirely spurious. The greatest exponent of natural law, St. Thomas Aquinas, emphasized that what constitutes property rights and murder is not in the least manifest or indisputable. Therefore the abstract requirements of natural law have to be formulated, he emphasized, in positive laws, enacted by an acknowledged ruler, to provide explicit and precise definitions of rights and duties. This is just what Libertarians deny.

Worse still, the appeal of Libertarians to natural law blatantly contradicts their commitment to liberty. Natural law tells us, Dr. Rothbard argues, that men have a natural right to liberty. And the right to liberty is the right of each person to be moral or immoral as he sees fit. That is why Libertarianism "is strongly opposed to enforcing any moral creed." Put all this together and the Libertarian argument runs: "Natural Law ought to be observed; natural law gives every man a right to liberty; the right to liberty is a right to be as immoral as one pleases; therefore natural law gives every man the right to violate natural law"; which plants Libertarianism firmly on a self-contradiction.

Libertarians in a Brutish World

The weakness of Libertarian logic is well matched by the weakness of the Libertarian grasp on the realities of the human world. Once there are no governments, Libertarians assure us, we will be spared the horrors of war because small bodies never get into big fights. It is difficult to reconcile this assurance with the history of the Peloponnesian Wars, the Roman Wars, the Wars of the Roses, the Thirty Years War, gang wars in Chicago,

or James Bond. But far from attempting to meet this difficulty, Dr. Rothbard simply declares that there is no reason to suppose that the Russians have any evil designs against the United States, and that in any case Russia would certainly be defeated by a truly Libertarian United States because a statist power is always defenseless against guerillas—just as the Germans were in Spain in the thirties and the Russians are now in Afghanistan.

Why, in the ideal Libertarian world, a Prof. Oppenheimer should not, with the help of a Col. Qadhafi, set up a private Los Alamos and use the weapons constructed there for less than peaceful purposes, we are not told. Nor are we told why privately hired bodyguards should not get together to establish just such a monopoly of power as Libertarians identify with the state. But even if all bodyguards were loyal rather than self-seeking, even if everyone were willing to let an arbitrator settle differences and there was no need to enforce their decisions, living and working with other people in such a society would require constant attention to minding the shop. There would be no peace in the profound sense of established security for stable expectations. Only such security, however, makes it possible to cultivate individuality through the arts of civilization. Therefore, what Libertarians offer us under the name of liberty is a world where life would certainly be brutish, if not nasty and short.

The fundamental fallacy in Libertarianism is not any faith in the goodness of all men or indifference to evil. It is the belief that Libertarians have discovered a political theory that is independent of any morality and compatible with all. No such thing is possible. What anyone has to say about the nature of the state and government can make sense only if it is part of a coherent view of what men are and should be. That view need not be self-conscious or explicit. But anyone who proposes a political theory and deliberately denies its connection with *any* moral view deliberately refuses to talk sense.

It is hardly surprising therefore that Libertarians have not, as they claim, discovered a way of arranging social life that must be accepted by anyone who respects human individuality. On the contrary, if we think about what individuality means and are committed to respecting it, we are obliged to reject Libertarianism. For something more than the differences produced by the separateness of human bodies and the diversity of wants

constitutes human individuality. It is due to the rationality that makes men capable of understanding and responding to the world each in his own way, and enables each to be a distinctive personality. That is why individuality is of the essence of human beings and why we cannot respect the humanity of men without respecting their individuality. And if we think of human beings in this way, we are obliged to recognize that what men have by nature is only the power to make their nature.

Individuality and Social Arrangements

To believe in the individuality of human beings means believing that they are not programmed automatons—they are what they learn to be. And it follows that in order to do more than eat and grunt, human beings are dependent on the constraints of civilization. To speak a language, they have to learn to shape particular sounds in a particular order. Whatever they do, they have to learn the disciplines developed by those who came before them. Constraints as such are not then, as Libertarians often suggest, an imposition on or a deformation of human “nature.” The constraints of law, tradition, convention, and religion are the materials out of which human beings make themselves.

Such constraints do not, however, determine what anyone becomes. What a person says in the languages that he has learned is what he chooses to say. And this means that everyone can, among other things, choose to entertain a different notion of property, of what gives him the right to anything and what that right entails. Those who wish to establish property rights that others will respect will therefore have to find some way of arriving at a common definition of what constitutes a property right. In short, if we take human individuality seriously, we are obliged to recognize that there can be no stable property rights without some commonly agreed way of defining them. Nor can there be contracts to exchange property if there is no established way of defining what constitutes a contract.

The state is an arrangement made by men to formulate and maintain the definitions in terms of which they can conduct a regular communal life. In the absence of such definitions, people can of course make claims and agreements, but they can

have no ground for obliging others to recognize their claims as rights or to abide by their agreements as contracts. This conclusion follows necessarily from taking individuality seriously.

What gives rise to the illusion that property rights are manifest and indisputable is that a community may be governed by customary definitions so old that no one remembers how they arose, and so simple and unchanging that disagreements about their meaning are rare; and the members of such a community may accept without question the decision of the eldest male. But a society where definitions are so few and fixed cannot allow the wide range of expression for human imagination and the opportunities for change and innovation afforded by the complexity of a high civilization.

The complexity of a high civilization is revealed in many different and intricate distinctions. The most important political distinction developed by Western civilization is that between power and authority.

Raw Power versus Legal Authority

One way of making and enforcing definitions of property rights is to have them imposed by whoever is strong enough, that is, whoever has the power to coerce others into doing what he wants. In such a setup, the only certainty is that it will be difficult to resist the commands of those in power and there is no way of knowing what will be commanded next. People in this condition are subject to the arbitrary will of another; and are therefore slaves. What Libertarians call "government" or "the state" is in fact order based on power. And they are quite right in objecting to it.

The character of an order based on *authority* is radically different. It rests on giving someone the *right* to decide some questions for the rest. The someone may be one, few, or many, or a procedure like a majority decision. But whatever the method for reaching authoritative decisions, there can be no authoritative decision without the existence of a coherent and stable system of rules to define who has the authority to decide what. Those who agree to live by these rules oblige themselves to obey the decisions of those in authority. Power may be used to enforce these decisions, but it does not establish their authority

and it can only be used in accordance with the established rules. Such a system of rules makes it possible to feel secure that what can be done with impunity today will not be punished tomorrow.

It is the blindness of Libertarians to the distinction between power and authority that keeps them from seeing the difference between a gunman and a policeman. The gunman's order is an exercise of arbitrary power because there is no justification for his order other than his desire to give it. But a policeman is subject to punishment if his order does not comply with rules made by people authorized to make them. When a judge sends me to prison, it may be disputed whether his decision rightly interprets the rules, but that does not make it an arbitrary exercise of power because there are authorized grounds and procedures for arriving at a judicial decision and also for disputing it. Certainly there is always an element of arbitrariness in any practical decision, and officials may not always do what they should. But where authority is respected, the arbitrariness is highly circumscribed. Anyone who despises the difference between the vestige of arbitrariness in a legal system and the total arbitrariness that reigns in the absence of law refuses to recognize the limits of a human condition.

Not all rules, however, are equally desirable. And here the fundamental question is: For what purpose is authority being exercised? The rules may be designed either to push all the members of the community into one form of life thought to be good for everyone, or the rules may be designed to maintain an order within which individuals find and manage their own resources and pursue their own projects. In other words, authority may be exercised to run a public enterprise or to govern a civil association.

The Enterprise Fallacy

If the government acts as the manager of an enterprise, its relation to private activities is like that of a general to his army. If the general decides that the army must move forward quickly, he may direct that the wounded be abandoned. In the same way, in any enterprise, the members are treated as means to achieving the objective of the whole. Libertarian denunciations of government sound plausible because many of the activities

to which they object have to do with directing enterprises. But Libertarians fall into the same fallacy as Socialists when they equate governing with managing an enterprise.

The rules for a civil association are not designed to manage the lives of its members. There the government acts as a council of the whole community to decide what rules have to be maintained in order to enable individual members to pursue their projects in a decent fashion. And this conception of government, as the ruler of a civil association, is the precise meaning of "liberty," as it was once understood by Americans and Englishmen. It has never been perfectly realized, but one can certainly distinguish societies where such liberty is the dominant feature. Liberty in this sense is the contrary both of arbitrary power and of authority exercised to run an enterprise. It is inseparable from strict respect for a system of law. And it is inseparable also from a market economy because otherwise the government turns into the manager of an economic enterprise. Such liberty has nothing whatever to do with anarchy. It describes the condition of people living in a particular kind of state, where their subscription to a stable system of rules leaves them secure room in which to arrange their lives as they choose.

The conception of human beings that makes liberty desirable implies that even within a civil association, there will always be disagreement. When, for instance, in order to meet an external threat, a government acts in accordance with established rules to conscript soldiers, it may be disputed whether that measure is necessary, effective, or equitable. But it may not be said that such conscription is slavery because a measure adopted in accordance with established rules is an exercise of authority, not arbitrary power.

A civil association must also guard itself against enemies from within, because a civil association rests on a moral commitment which can be rejected. This moral commitment prohibits turning a civil association into a moral enterprise by running the country like a school, just as it prohibits running the country like a factory. But it does not follow that law should or can be divorced from morality. Whenever we make a public decision, we are making a moral judgment about what constitutes decent conduct. When we consider it reasonable to fine a man for parking his car in the middle of a main road just before Christmas, but to imprison the man who murdered his very obnoxious and

aged mother-in-law, we are deciding what constitutes a more and less serious affront to human personality.

Marxists, Pornographers, and Libertarians

Murder and theft are not, however, as Libertarians would have us believe, the only ways of violating respect for human personality. Marxists and pornographers teach a view of the human condition which is in itself a violation of such respect, quite apart from the behavior that they encourage. Marxists do so by teaching that man is a "species being," which denies that individuality is the essence of humanity; pornographers reduce human beings to instruments or subjects of sensations. It is therefore entirely reasonable to consider whether Marxists and pornographers should be permitted to pursue their projects.

But it may be found too difficult to formulate or enforce rules prohibiting such activities without destroying the character of a civil association or other more essential rules. That is a valid reason for opposing laws against pornography. It is not, however, valid for people who claim to respect individuality to oppose such measures, as Libertarians do, on the ground that everything ought to be tolerated.

Practical political questions admit of no such simple answer. Yet simple answers are the stock in trade of Libertarians because they think in terms of a simple dichotomy between anarchy and tyranny. This makes them oblivious to the intricacy of a civilization in which individuality is truly respected, and also a menace to such a civilization. For when they tell us that a judge or a policeman is a gunman in disguise violating our manifest rights, they are teaching us to despise our only real protection against real violence. By identifying respect for individuality with anarchism, Libertarians promote tyranny.

LESTER HUNT RESPONDS

Dr. Letwin's address places me in a somewhat unpleasant situation, which I shall describe below.

First, I should say that I, myself, am a Libertarian. Further, I find that Dr. Letwin's definition of Libertarianism describes my position very well. As you will recall, in describing the ideas she has set out to attack, she defines Libertarianism as the doctrine that liberty is "the highest political end."

Dr. Letwin's arguments against this political position consist, for the most part, of attributing (by my count) eleven important ideas to what she calls "Libertarianism," and arguing against those eleven ideas. To my astonishment, I find that I personally think ten of these theorems are false, including one or two so patently false as to be laughable. So obviously I agree with Dr. Letwin on those questions. Indeed, I have argued against four of these ideas in print with as much vigor as I could muster: they being the notions that (1) the state ought to be done away with altogether; (2) state's business ought to be conducted by private firms; (3) the decision as to whether or not criminals should be prosecuted should be left up to the victims; and (4) there is no morally significant difference between authority and power. Now as to the eleventh and last point, I am uncertain. That is the idea that our liberties derive from natural rights. I might support that theory, but I would do so only if I could define the term "natural rights" in my own way—a way that might not be pleasing to other people who believe in natural rights.

Someone here, evidently, is confused. And this is the source of the unpleasant situation I mentioned above. Either I am guilty of holding a certain political view, and then recoiling when that view is spelled out in detail, or else Dr. Letwin has presented an argument against something other than Libertarianism.

Defining Libertarianism

Needless to say, I shall now firmly grasp the second horn of that dilemma, and announce that Dr. Letwin's argument is an example of what students of logic call an equivocation. In her conclusion—in which she states that "Libertarianism" is invalid—

she uses that word correctly. But in the rest of her argument, leading up to that conclusion, she uses it simply and solely to refer to the doctrines of one Murray Rothbard. As is fairly obvious from her own analysis of it, Dr. Rothbard's position is a certain form of anarchism. All Dr. Letwin's objections are directed against this version of anarchism, and nothing else. So, since Libertarianism as she defines it is *not* a form of anarchism, none of her objections constitutes a worthwhile argument against the Libertarian position.

In short, Dr. Letwin seems to have mixed up Libertarianism itself with a rather extreme version of that position. And I see no good reason for doing so; when one attacks an idea, one should attack that position itself, not its first cousin.

Dr. Letwin's definition of Libertarianism nicely summarizes a long tradition of political thought which runs back at least as far as the seventeenth century, to John Locke. That same tradition continues right up to the present moment, to the thought (for instance) of a young Harvard professor named Robert Nozick. This definition is not difficult to understand if we keep this tradition in mind. In the context of this tradition it means that what the state does—which is to use force—can only be justified if it is done to protect people from aggressive interference against them by other people. In the Libertarian tradition, anyone who violates this principle, and uses force for any other reason, is committing an act of aggression—he is doing something immoral. This is true of both Locke and Nozick.

Now, clearly, this view is not “independent of any morality and compatible with all.” It *is* compatible with the institution of government. In fact, it offers us a rationale for establishing a form of government, and accepting its authority, since there are good reasons to believe that only a centralized authority such as a state can protect people from interference by other people. More important, it provides us with a rationale for making certain laws (and for not making other laws), and with a means of distinguishing between Jimmy Carter and Idi Amin—as two people who violate this Libertarian principle to different degrees, against different people, for different reasons, and with different results. Finally, this principle gives us a way to distinguish legitimate authorities from thugs.

More interesting still, the Libertarian principle thus described is also perfectly compatible with the main features of Dr. Letwin's

own views as she has set them out for us. It is compatible with the idea that human rights are not self-evident. It is compatible with the doctrine that we need generally accepted rules to specify, in detail, what rights are. It is compatible with the belief that we need authorities to interpret and enforce society's rules.

However, the Libertarian principle also goes one step further, and sketches limits upon what these rules and these authorities may legitimately require of us. Dr. Letwin has pointed out that her position, as she has defined it, might allow the state to bother Marxists and pornographers simply for speaking and writing the way they do, and that it might be consistent with the state's forcing people to work in certain professions, such as the military profession. This is true, but only because she has not placed any moral limits whatsoever on what the state may do, as long as it does not manage society like a school or a business, forcing us all to pursue the same purposes. Why is her theory not compatible with the slavery of ancient Greece and Rome, or of the antebellum South? Indeed, is there any human activity, however private and harmless, that society, acting under Dr. Letwin's theories, could not interfere with? Could the Methodists prohibit us from drinking—again? Could the Californians make jogging mandatory?

The Limits of Public Authority

What are the limits of public authority, as Dr. Letwin sees them? As she has described thus far, her doctrine may be compatible with the massive interferences with the lives of innocent people. Given that, it is not very interesting that, as she says, it may *also* be compatible with censorship and conscriptions.

Actually, I doubt that she *can* place any limits on public authority without changing her position in some important way. Merely saying that society should not be conducted for certain set purposes, like a business or a school, tells us almost nothing about the sort of rules society should establish. John Calvin once governed a city as a joint enterprise, with salvation as its purpose, and toward that purpose he burned people at the stake. Thomas Aquinas justified exactly the same practice on different grounds, arguing that heretics can endanger the souls of others and lead them to eventual damnation. That line

of thought seems identical to the logic Dr. Letwin uses in order to justify limitation on pornography. That same use of government authority can be justified both by Dr. Letwin's civil society, and by the sort of joint collective enterprise to which she is opposed.

TOM PALMER RESPONDS

I might entitle this response, "Why I Am Not In Any Way, Shape, or Form a Conservative." It is tempting to begin by setting the record straight. I shall indulge myself to some extent, but could proceed for many hours. What Dr. Letwin has attacked in her lecture are generally mere caricatures of true Libertarian positions.

She states that we see no distinction between Cuba and the United States, when there are obvious and undeniable distinctions in the degree of liberty enjoyed in the two countries. (Of course, one might have difficulty explaining this to those Cubans languishing in President Carter's camps.) She also claims that Libertarians deny the necessity of basing one's politics upon a world foundation—at the same time that she accuses us of being slavish followers of natural law doctrine. She implies that we believe language, culture, and tradition to be an imposition on, or defamation of, human nature, when no such claim has ever been made by Libertarians. She claims that we believe that everything ought to be tolerated, when the correct statement is that everything that is peaceful ought not be responded to with violence. There are quite a few of these distortions and misunderstandings, but I will leave it at that and will proceed more in the order set by Dr. Letwin's talk.

She fails to understand that the primary focus of justice must be upon the rights of the victim, that is, the right to restitution from the criminal. Under present law, little or no attention is given to the rights of the victim while enormous resources are expended upon punishing the criminal. This set of priorities is improper.

The Right to Property

But a more substantive argument, which goes to the core of some of the disagreements, is to be found in Dr. Letwin's criticism of Libertarian defenses of the right to property. Property is a concept essential to Libertarianism in many, many ways. Her arguments about assembly-line workers mixing their labor with their products and bank thieves mixing their labor with their plunder are merely more simple-minded versions of the criticisms made by Henry George and other critics of the institutions of private property. To begin with, the notion of mixing one's labor with natural resources in order to gain a right to them is clearly applied only to previously unowned resources—not to those resources that have already been appropriated from their natural and untouched state. This is true of the views of John Locke and many other property rights theorists.

As Libertarian philosopher Robert Nozick and many others have pointed out, the question of property is essential to all political theories and perspectives, because no theory can escape the assignment of rights to control physical entities. Now, as is so often the case, a fuller understanding of this issue will be brought about by consultation of the great political thinkers of the past. Specifically I am referring in this case to John Locke and Thomas Hobbes, both of whom perceived (along with Aristotle) that no entity can both have and not have the same attributes at the same time and in the same respect. That is to say, we can't both eat the same morsel of food, drink the same glass of water, or stand in precisely the same place at the same time. But since in order to live, human beings must utilize the object of nature, some criterion or set of criteria must be established in order to allocate these entities to different individuals and avoid those conflicts that are inimical to civilized life.

The solution advanced (after a somewhat complicated and sophisticated argument) by Thomas Hobbes is the all-powerful state, and I mean literally all-powerful, as an arbiter of disputes that rests on the power of the sword. For Hobbes it matters little or not at all what the outcome of any particular arbitration happens to be so long as there is an enforced outcome that all abide by. The alternative is continual fear and life that is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." Interestingly enough, the first edition, as I understand, had a misprint and said "British

and short.”

Locke proceeds quite differently. In his words he “endeavor(s) to show how men might come to have a *property* in several parts of that which God gave mankind in common, and that without any express compact of all the Commoners” [commoners referring to all of those who might otherwise have access to common unknown resources]. His answer is, and I quote again, “every man has a *Property* in his own *Person*. This no Body has any right to but himself. The *Labor* of his body, and the *Work* of his hands, we may say, are properly his. Whatsoever then he removes out of the State that Nature hath provided, and left it in, he hath mixed his *Labor* with and joyned to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his *Property*. It being by him removed from the common state Nature placed it in, hath by this *labor* something annexed to it, that excludes the common right of other men.”

Now, beginning with the person’s very body, Locke declares it to belong to what we might call the occupant and not to anyone else. From this starting point, other property arises. After the initial appropriation, however, acquisition of property must be by voluntary transfer (sale, gift, etc.), and not by violence. Now, Dr. Letwin, if I understand her correctly, opts essentially for the solution outlined by Hobbes, as she states, “In the absence of an institution for enforcing property, one has no claims to property.” You may make them but no one has an obligation—according to Dr. Letwin—to abide by them. Locke is very different. He says that you have the right to property as a human being. Then the political question after that is, what institutions are most appropriate for the protection of liberty and civilization? This represents a fundamentally different perspective.

Natural Rights

I opt very strongly for the general proposition set forth by John Locke. Various things flow from this. Dr. Letwin embraces cultural relativism. I embrace natural rights and natural law. Dr. Letwin states, “The state is an arrangement made by men to formulate and maintain the definitions in terms of which they can conduct a regular communal life” and says that, “In

the absence of such definition, they can have no ground for obliging others to recognize their claims or rights or to abide by their agreements or contracts." I, on the other hand, agree with St. Thomas as he stated in his Treatise on Natural Law in the Ninety-third question that "Human law has the nature of law insofar as it partakes of right reason. But insofar as it deviates from reason, it is called an unjust law and has the nature not of law, but of violence."

Authority or Power

Dr. Letwin's view seems essentially that anything goes, so long as it proceeds along predictable and established rules. Thus, when "a government acts in accordance with established rules to conscript soldiers, it may be disputed whether that measure is necessary, effective or equitable, but it may not be said that such conscription is slavery, because a measure adopted in accordance with established rules is an exercise of authority and not power." Let's substitute the words "human sacrifice" for "conscripted." We will read it once more: "When a government acts in accordance with established rules to sacrifice human beings on the altar, it may be disputed whether that measure is necessary, effective or equitable, but it may not be said that such human sacrifice is murder because a measure adopted in accordance with established rules is an exercise of authority and not power." In the ancient Aztec and Phoenician societies, as well as countless others, human sacrifice was an accepted practice, proceeding along established rules. For example, one had to be a virgin in order to qualify for the sacrifice. Other rules governed the timing, the type of blade to be used and so forth. If I understand Dr. Letwin correctly, from the positions enunciated in her paper, she must acquiesce in this hideous practice because it fulfills her conditions. It is predictable and it follows established rules governing the manner in which the sacrifice is carried out. But I would prohibit this barbaric practice because it is evil and repugnant and because predictability of outcome is not the highest political goal. The highest political goal for me is a free society, which I conceive to be the only framework in which we can pursue human goodness and virtue unmolested by the violence of the state.

ARAM BAKSHIAN, JR., RESPONDS

Libertarianism tonight has been crucified on the cross of Murray Rothbard. A rather generous cross to be sure. It may be unfair, as suggested by my co-respondents, to judge Libertarianism by Murray Rothbard. However, as I am not a Libertarian, I will allow them the role of untangling any injustice they find in Dr. Letwin's interpretation. Instead, I will react to the reactions to Dr. Letwin's address.

I am not a Libertarian for several reasons. First of all, I have had better things to do—I've been rather busy lately. Second, it is a utopian movement, a reflection of deep ignorance of culture and history. The pure Libertarian sometimes comes across as a combination of Atlas, Little Caesar, and Peter Pan, saying if you just believe in freedom, everything will be all right. Everything else can go by the boards.

This conceptual confusion—and the earlier remarks about the misprint in Hobbes—remind me of a statement made recently by Patricia Harris, Secretary of Health and Human Services, in a television interview. She meant to say that future budgets of the Carter administration would amply support both defense and social needs. But she came up with a new variation on the old theme of bread and circuses, when, for the Administration, she endorsed a policy of "buns and gutter."

There is a Libertarian strain that is quite valid, a strain of liberty that rests in the best of conservative thought. But when liberty becomes the end-all, the practical impact, as opposed to its inspired thoughts, is a permissiveness that appeals to the worst in people without moral ties to other groups, those who believe that love is free, and everything else is cash on the barrel head. As Dr. Letwin has observed, Libertarianism implies a natural or moral law imperative; yet Libertarianism has already removed any basis for such a moral law or imperative.

One practical consequence of Libertarianism is an ostrich-like attitude on foreign policy, an appeal to the most backward strain in the American character, at a time when liberty, which Libertarians purport to defend, is so threatened around the world. Phasing out NATO and other foreign commitments, for example, is something that only Libertarians, very extreme left-wingers, friends of the Palestinians, and perhaps a few old

liberals would agree upon. The Libertarian position seems immune to the facts of a brutish world.

Government is a necessary evil. It is an inoculation until we can come up with the proper vaccine. As with smallpox inoculations in the eighteenth century, one may be slightly scarred yet saved from the greater ravages of the disease. Civilization is a long and rather ugly struggle, which has left us with a few benefits and a marginally free life—yet one significantly freer than most people have enjoyed in the past. There has never been a society, especially a society that has reached any level of civilized achievement, which does not have more government than most libertarians would advocate. And revolutionary repudiations of authority have more often than not brought on incredible suffering, barbarism, and further deterioration of the values Libertarians espouse. The distinction between authority and power is a very important one, and one well-articulated here by Dr. Letwin. It is not so well-articulated among many so-called Libertarians who often take a somewhat crude and more caricatured Hobbesian approach.

Another blind spot of Libertarians is not seeing the forest for the trees—seeing individuals but not seeing society. Man is an individual. But he is also a social organism, and man's greatest expression is possible only through a certain level of cooperation. When Libertarians talk about crime and assert that the victim of the crime is the one person who has been harmed, they miss the point of what life is in the civilized society. Society is a victim every time a crime is committed, and mere reparation to the one person who lost an eye, a tooth, a limb, or a wallet does not in itself redress the injustice—not until we can each afford our own island with our own ecosystem, our own burglar alarms and our own tape recordings of Murray Rothbard lectures.

H.L. Mencken, who was in some ways a Libertarian, said that conscience is that inner voice that warns us somebody is watching. That applies to the IRS or the cop around the block or even the neighbors. I believe in social pressures and I believe that beyond the invisible hand are visible and necessary enforcement mechanisms, whether in the economy or in society. All these things are a part of keeping a teeming society such as ours under control. Libertarianism does not come to grips with the basic lessons of history and the basic lessons of everyday life

as we see about us everyday.

Pascal said the heart has its reasons of which the mind knows nothing. Your heart does have its reasons—religious tradition, moral tradition, and cultural values are the real glue of society. They are a force much deeper than property, something from which property, as a legitimate right, has sprung, and without which it means nothing.

SHIRLEY LETWIN'S REBUTTAL

It is interesting that, whenever one attacks something, it turns out never to have existed. So with Libertarianism in this debate. But in the London Library, if not in America, there are at least three books by Murray Rothbard on political philosophy. There was also an exchange on political philosophy in *Modern Age*, between Murray Rothbard, Walter Berns and others, in which Professor Rothbard advanced the same Libertarian arguments that I attributed to him. Perhaps Libertarians should occasionally glance at these texts.

May I now be somewhat pedantic. For, if the so-called Right is not to be intellectually discredited, it must stop abusing the history of political thought as it has been abused in this debate. Thomas Aquinas's theory of natural law, for instance, is very definitely *not* that people have a pipeline to God's thoughts which enables them to know just what they have a right to do. When he says that if human law conflicts with reason, then it is not a law, he does not mean that you have a right to disobey any law that you dislike. If you examine the section on revolution and insurrection in the *Summa Theologica*, you will find that he very specifically denies that. He has also some very unlibertarian things to say about how to deal with enemies.

Use and Abuse of Hobbes and Locke

Poor Thomas Hobbes! He is not, and never was, an advocate of absolute rule. This is a misunderstanding shared by a great

many eminent people. But everybody glosses over the five chapters on law and the large sections on theology in his book. When Hobbes defines the sovereign, he is defining an abstract concept of authority. The argument between Hobbes and Locke is a theological issue that has to do with two different interpretations of Christianity. One view claims that human beings have what Locke calls the candle of the Lord within and can thus read God's thoughts. They therefore know for themselves what their rights are, and proceed from there. Hobbes denied that.

Libertarians would do well to notice such theological issues. It would help them to avoid self-contradiction. Both Lester Hunt and Tom Palmer began by denying that they based Libertarianism on human rights, but ended up by saying, yes, we know what human rights are and we ought to construct society on that basis. The problem here is: How do you know that what *you think* is a right is so in reality? What if someone disagrees with you? Where do you get this knowledge? If you believe you have a pipeline to God, well and good. Set up your theocracy and I will go into exile. That is the important issue. If we stop talking about "freedom" and ask ourselves what human beings are about, what kind of knowledge they have, what their place is in the universe and what their relation to God is, then we might avoid the confusing talk about rights as if they were written in the sky to be discovered by anyone who cares to look.

Let me now return to Locke. He is a thoroughly confused philosopher in whose work almost any position can be found. But the Lockean argument embraced by Libertarians is a particularly iniquitous one and, if rigorously interpreted, leads logically to a Calvinist theocracy. Professor Nozick takes an entirely different position. For him there is no "candle of the Lord" in human beings. He takes the view that human beings are no more than bundles of wants striving for satisfaction. Human life thus consists in maximizing the satisfaction of wants. That is taking Adam Smith seriously in a way that would horrify Smith himself. Smith argued that if we abstract from human life this aspect of striving for satisfaction, then we can reach certain conclusions about it. He did not say—indeed he denied—that such activities represented the whole of human life. But Professor Nozick really thinks that human beings have nothing but a desire for maximizing satisfactions. And he goes on to conclude that the state is nothing but a sort of arbitration board which settles

conflicts over satisfying wants.

(In any case, there is no tradition from Locke to Nozick. They do not speak the same language. Nor does Mill belong clearly to the same tradition as Locke. Mill is a combination of Locke, Hegel, Bentham, Comte, and a few others. Unless we are going to talk seriously about these people, we should leave them out of the discussion.)

Confusion about Individuality

Although in my talk I drew a distinction between authority and power and stressed the importance of law, I also drew another distinction between a civil association and an enterprise. Much confusion could have been avoided if my critics had paid attention to this second distinction. For on this view, the essence of humanity is the individuality of human beings. This implies that no human being should be used as an instrument, and that there is no pattern of the good life to which we must all necessarily agree and which can therefore be imposed on all human beings. It is a denial of the Aristotelian, Thomist, and Lockean positions. If we must not use a human being as an instrument in an enterprise, it follows that we cannot sacrifice human beings in order to save their souls. That can only be done if society is run as an enterprise for saving souls (which is what Calvin's theocracy was). Of course, it is one thing for people to belong to a church and to accept its discipline voluntarily, but quite another to have the government transformed into a church.

The distinction between a civil association and an enterprise is a distinction that itself decides the limits of government. This makes more sense than to talk about "the minimal state" which nobody understands and which simply leads to arguments about whether individuals possess particular rights conferred by no one knows whom. If we recognize an obligation to a coherent moral and political understanding, we must start from understanding what it means to take individuality seriously. A government that is managing society as if it were an enterprise is not respecting the individuality of human beings, whether the enterprise is to save souls, to produce more goods, or to make all its citizens healthy. And although the idea of government as the ruler of civil association is a complicated one, it certainly

implies very clear limits *on the kind of things* that a government can do. It does not lend itself to slogans like the minimal state or to drawing up programs for what states may or may not legitimately do. That kind of thing is a rationalist enterprise. I found it ironic, for instance, that despite the praise lavished on Professor Hayek, nobody quoted him on the subject to which he has devoted his life, namely, warning people against constructivism, that is, making abstract plans for utopia without any regard to actual circumstances. All the talk about a minimal state amounts to a kind of constructivism. But if one thinks in terms of the kind of thing that a state *is*, and the kind of rules that one expects from it, then a great deal is left to be decided at any particular time and place.

Conscription and Human Sacrifice

Let me now turn to conscription and say that to argue that conscription is slavery is a misuse of language. If we think of government as the ruler of a civil association, it follows that there may be enemies of that association. The enemies may be within because some people do not subscribe to the moral understanding of human beings on which a civil association is based—notably Marxists and pornographers. There may also be enemies from outside. If you believe that there are such enemies—and there may be disagreement about whether there are or about how serious a threat they pose—and that action against them is necessary, then it may also be thought necessary to conscript soldiers. It is surely obvious that this has nothing to do with human sacrifice. Neither need soldiers be conscripted to save their souls. Nor is a government that conscripts soldiers necessarily doing so in order to manage people's lives. What a government may be saying when it conscripts soldiers is: "We are committed to a certain understanding of human life; we would like to preserve that kind of community; we are now being threatened; we think that, to counter this threat, we must have an army." There are, of course, different ways to raise an army and perhaps it could be done by paying volunteers. That is a practical question to be decided in a practical context. But it certainly does not follow that, if the government is entitled to conscript soldiers, it must also be entitled to burn

people at the stake. Such an argument is sheer nonsense.

In short, people concerned about liberty and the danger of a state that exceeds its proper bounds ought to direct their main attention to, and be quite precise about, what they think the state is and where they derive their knowledge of what the state ought to do. This is a far more fruitful approach than searching for "natural rights." What if *your* notion of right disagrees with *mine*? Professor Ronald Dworkin seems to think that equality, not liberty, is the primary natural right. His "intuition" tells him that equality is what counts. Oddly enough, Libertarians seem not to have noticed that he is out to destroy what they want to establish, perhaps because they are so pleased with his talk of "rights." That kind of carelessness is a most dangerous thing.

But this carelessness of Libertarians is not just an oversight. It is a natural consequence of holding an incoherent set of convictions. Because they are so confused, Libertarians happily ally themselves with those whom they should recognize as their most dangerous enemies and attack those who really do take individuality seriously. This sort of confusion has always led good men to promote the worst evils, and never more so than in recent years. The strange allies of Libertarians make them so welcome because they recognize, what Libertarians do not, that anarchism is not an alternative to collectivism but the best possible preparation for the nastiest kinds of collectivism.

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The Heritage Lectures

The 1980s have begun with a resurgence of what might broadly be termed conservative politics. Yet within this resurgence flourish many different persuasions. Hence, one man's variety of conservatism is another man's objection to conservatism. Throughout 1980, The Heritage Foundation sponsored a series of lectures to explore these strands of thought.

Reprinted here are the lectures and the responses to the lectures by thirteen distinguished speakers. **Russell Kirk** began the series by addressing the topic "The Conservative Movement: Then and Now." **Lewis Lapham** and **Philip M. Crane** responded to Dr. Kirk. Next **Carl Gershman** spoke on "Why I Am Not A Conservative," and **Ernest van den Haag** and **Paul Weyrich** responded. **George Gilder** addressed the topic "Why I Am Not A Neo-Conservative" with respondents **Ben Wattenberg** and **Paul Johnson**. Finally, **Shirley Robin Letwin** spoke on "Why I Am Not A Libertarian," to which **Lester Hunt**, **Tom Palmer**, and **Aram Bakshian, Jr.** responded.