

I SPENT MY LIFE PRACTICING  
POLITICALLY INCORRECT SOCIOLOGY

Thomas M. Kando, Sacramento  
2007

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## INTRODUCTION

As a child, I wanted to become a writer. I was born in Hungary but moved to France when I was six, soon after the end of World War Two. I promptly forgot Hungarian, and French became my primary language. Growing up in Paris in the 1950s, I became a good and precocious writer who read the French classics voraciously.

Unfortunately, my family moved again when I was fourteen, this time to Holland. Therefore I had to learn a third language, and my French began to atrophy. Finally, at nineteen, I went to America - this time entirely by myself, on an old World War Two Liberty ship. English became my fourth language, and the one in which I ended up doing the vast majority of my communicating for the rest of my life. Can one excel as an author in a foreign language? Some great ones have, for example Vladimir Nabokov, Arthur Koestler, Miriam Darvas, and many others too.

I published my first fiction story at fourteen, in *Podium* magazine, one of the Holland's premier literary journals. The story was in French. A year later a photo book was published for which I wrote the text - in Dutch this time.

I came from an artistic and bohemian family. We were very, very poor. I vowed not to repeat my parents' experience. I understood that becoming a free-lance author was a huge gamble. I compromised and became a university professor, so as to teach, but also to publish.

At nineteen, I wrote a novel. I had just spent a year as a Fulbright exchange student in America, and upon my return to Holland I described that fantastic, adventurous year in a three-hundred-page manuscript. A major publisher - *The Bezige Bij* - signed me up for the project, but in the end they decided not to publish it. I was devastated.

In 1965 I moved to America permanently, and in 1969 I got my Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota. I have been teaching Sociology ever since, at various universities, including Penn State, the University of California and Cal State.

Throughout my life, I have been an inveterate participant in society's political and sociological debates, writing innumerable articles, editorials and letters-to-the-editors, giving scores of speeches and interviews on TV, radio and in newspaper, participating in conferences in dozens of states and in countries in four continents.

Being a sociology professor was my bread and butter. I taught my classes, presented my conference papers and published my scholarly books and articles. However, I had a passion that transcended the narrow confines of conventional sociology. My lifelong interest was in questions such as the following: What is the social health of society and of the world at large? Is the human condition improving or deteriorating? What is America's role in the world? What is good for society, and what is bad? I felt compelled to respond to, criticize, support or combat the opinions I came across in the media. I felt that I had valuable insights, and I worked ceaseless to share them. This book presents many of my insights. Many were previously published, some were not. The material is (sort of) organized by subject matter. You can therefore read the sections in any order you wish.

### The Political Issues which I Debated

I first got my feet wet as a pamphleteer while in grad school at Minnesota. There, I contributed to the *Minnesota Daily's* and to the *Minneapolis Tribune's* editorial pages. I wrote articles opposing the Vietnam war, advocating socialist policies, unmasking the corruption of slum lords, indicting racist behavior and proposing Martin Luther King's presidential candidacy.

After I became an Assistant Professor at Cal State, there was an explosion of professional

publications: Half a dozen books within my first decade in California, plus a dozen refereed scholarly articles. At the same time, I couldn't stay away from political debate and controversy. This was the height of the Counterculture. The Civil Rights movement, Feminism and sexual liberation were on the march.

While still solidly in the liberal camp, I felt compelled to move beyond clichés. Some might say that I began to move to the right. Perhaps. In time, as left-wing orthodoxy and political correctness became entrenched in academia, my relationship with the Left soured.

Until the end of the Cold War, it was the Western academic Marxists with whom I crossed swords most frequently. For one thing, like most Hungarians, I have always had an aversion for Communism and for the Soviet Union - for obvious reasons. It is as if Hungarians had anti-Sovietism in their genes. Many of my American colleagues celebrated the Eastern European people's paradise. This enraged me, and I felt compelled to take on the Marxian Left. This led to years of conflict, accusations of McCarthyism, and worse.

Gradually, other "isms" came to overshadow Communism - each guilty of its own excesses. In the aftermath of the Civil Rights movement (in which I participated vigorously) came affirmative action, various militant black power movements and the increasing adulation of diversity - defined as anything-but-Eurocentric. Feminism (which I also supported in the days of Betty Friedan) became increasingly strident. The environmental movement (which I continue to support) grew stronger. Gay liberation (with which sympathized early on) became increasingly in-your-face. In sum, campus politics became dominated by the holy trinity of class, race and gender (plus sexual preference), and the debate shifted from traditional bread-and-butter issues - economic inequality - to *identity politics*.

Then nine-eleven happened. In 2001, America suddenly had a new enemy. It seems to be the country's curse and destiny to somehow be on a permanent war footing - not unlike ancient Rome. There was an interlude of a decade. These were the idyllic Clinton years, when America prospered, turned around its chronic deficit (the peace dividend), and could finally relax for the first time since it lost its innocence in 1917.

But after nine-eleven, America once again began to assume immense economic and military burdens. In my view, this was perhaps inevitable, but tragic even so. It could only lead to the deterioration of the country's economy and of its quality of life, its gradual impoverishment and decline.

Terrorism and radical Islam have replaced Communism as the threat. Terrorism was not new, and it was not limited to Islam. In the aftermath of the Counterculture, its point of gravity had been in Europe, where groups like Baader-Meinhof, Red Army Fraction, Red Brigades, Action Directe, the IRA, the ETA and a host of other red-this-and-red-that had caused a lot of mayhem. However, the strong relationship between terrorism and radical Islam could already have been predicted in 1979, when the Iranian hostage crisis gave us a foretaste of things to come.

So there were plenty of new political issues after Marxism waned as the lazy intellectuals' favorite refuge. Once again, I raised my voice and my pen whenever I could no longer stand the hyperbole, the clichés, the demagoguery and the *ad hominem* attacks being slung about. Where did these come from, primarily? From the Left. Remember that these were (1) the eighties and nineties, (2) I lived in California and (3) I worked in a university. In that environment, *that* was the direction from which most of the obnoxious, venomous, intolerant behavior came, not the right. The true oppressor was political correctness, not conservatism, and that is why many - by no means all - of my fights were with the Left.

What follows, then, are the pieces I wrote *outside* of my profession, the pieces I had *fun* writing.

A warning: some of the pieces are angry and cynical. Some of you will be turned off by the negativity. But I also joke and play around with words a lot. Being too serious can be deadly. Nevertheless, many of you on the Left will detest some of the non-PC things I say, and many flag-waiving conservatives on the other side will hate me for some of my criticism of American society.

## 1. INTELLIGENCE, STUPIDITY, THE MIND, AND WHAT'S WRONG WITH PSYCHOLOGY

*As a social psychologist, I have had a life-long interest in the mind. These first few pieces include musings about intelligence and stupidity, explanations of what the mind is, an account of a horrendous experience I had in a psychological 'touchy-feely' group encounter, a critique of psychology's claim that it helps people, and a Kafkaesque story about brainwashing.*

### 1. Are People Getting Dumber?

*In 2003, Mary Massaro published a fine little book titled Beyond the Pale (Diogenes publishing). In it, she asked many provocative questions, for example: Are people getting dumber? and: Why do ignorant people far outnumber intellectuals? The book consists of the answers which I, and a few other professors, gave to such questions. Here is how I answered this one:*

I haven't seen any evidence that the average I.Q. of the population is declining. But dumb people have always outnumbered intelligent people. That's the nature of a skewed bell curve. There are always fewer cases at the extreme ends of a distribution, and often fewer at one end than at the other. Think for example of the income curve - same thing.

One thing that is quite shocking are people who *appear* reasonably intelligent and who make such asses of themselves, as seen on Jay Leno's skit "Jay Walk" on *The Tonight Show*. Americans live very well, and we place great value on looks and appearances. Therefore, we expect such well-dressed and well-groomed people to be much smarter than, say, wretched-looking Indian villagers. But why would the average IQ of Americans be higher than that of Indians just because we are better dressed? (Massaro, 2003: 18).

### 2. Do Stupid People Know that they are Stupid?

*Mary also asked whether stupid people know that they are stupid. Here is what I said about that:*

Again, the most appalling thing in Jay Leno's "Jay Walk" is that those unbelievable morons interviewed on national television are *proud* of their stupidity! So, by and large, no: Most stupid people neither care nor know that they are stupid.

Incidentally, this indifference toward stupidity also ties in with the cult of high self-esteem in our society: Psychologists have told us for decades that we *must* feel great about ourselves. In other words, humility (a core Christian value in the past, remember?) is now viewed as a *disorder*. Thus no matter how much of a loser you are, you still have to believe that you are the greatest. Like in *Lake Wobegon* -- where all the children are above average. (Massaro, 2003: 18-19).

### 3. Are Asians in fact the most Intelligent Race?

*This is an even more dangerous question asked by Mary Massaro in her book. After all, race is a minefield we only dare tiptoe around, especially when connected to intelligence. Here is my answer to this politically incorrect question:*

IQ tests, SATs and college enrollments in the sciences all suggest that *some* Asians are quite capable when it comes to quantitative skills. However, this applies much more to Japanese and Chinese Americans than to Southeast Asians. Also, the language skills of Asians are often very poor. What's more, Asian excellence in some scientific fields is a recent trend, since World War Two or so.

The whole I.Q. controversy remains murky. Intelligence is probably not solely due to *nurture*, but to some extent due to *nature* as well. Nonetheless, it isn't clear that there are group (i.e. racial) differences in intelligence that can be attributed to nature. Finally, the population (in the United States and in the world) is becoming so rapidly mongrelized that the question may be increasingly moot (Massaro, 2003: 3).

### 4. Wall Street Journal Contributor is too Dumb to Know the Difference between Sociology and Psychology

*In 1994, Herrnstein and Murray published their controversial book The Bell Curve, in which they raised (again) the possibility that IQ is the product of both nurture and nature. Of course this led to widespread accusations of racism. In turn, dozens of psychologists came to the authors' rescue. In an article in the Wall Street Journal's editorial page, Jude Wannisky discusses this controversy. However, he refers to the group of fifty scholars who defend The Bell Curve as sociologists.*

*Aggravated by this error, I jumped into the fray. I felt the urge to defend my profession. After all, sociology can be accused of many things, but certainly not of racism and elitism, or of attributing too much weight to nature as a cause of human behavior. Any well educated person must know that sociology's excess is in the opposite direction - a radical environmental explanation of human behavior and radical egalitarianism. I sent my letter (December 30, 1994), below, to the Wall Street Journal for publication and I copied it to the American Sociological Association, but it was neither printed by the former nor acknowledged by the latter. Just goes to show. Quality and wit are rarely recognized any more.*

Jude Wannisky is not so smart if he can't distinguish between Sociology and Psychology (December 30 issue). The 50 professors who came to the rescue of the Herrnstein-Murray book in the December 13 issue are *psychologists*, not sociologists. That's as it should be, because I.Q. is a *psychological* subject.

This is not the first time that sociologists have been picked on, in the pages of the *Journal*, in the context of the Bell Curve brouhaha. Earlier letters also criticized sociologists for the elitism and racism allegedly implied by the Herrnstein-Murray work.

Why can't even a respected scholar like Wannisky get it right? Is he more ignorant than college freshmen, most of whom know that the I.Q. controversy is a psychological issue?

Sociology - by definition - does not deal with heredity or with biological causation. It subscribes fundamentally (perhaps excessively) to *environmental* causation. We have nothing to say about I.Q. or what causes it.

Sociology is not the most popular discipline and it doesn't have much clout. This may make it a convenient target, but those who do this merely display their lack of intelligence - be it acquired or inherited.

### 5. The Mind is not a Computer

*As a social psychologist, I always taught my students that most of modern psychology utterly misrepresents what the mind is. It "essentializes" it and fails to understand that it is a process rather than a structure. Only pragmatists like William James and George Herbert Mead understood this. The following essay was first written in 1996, then revised. It is one of many similar statements I have written over the years, some of them incorporated in my book Social Interaction, some published elsewhere. This one has not been previously published:*

The social psychology that flows from George Herbert Mead's pragmatist philosophy established long ago that the mind is a *function*, not a *structure*. The sociologists who adhere to such a social psychology are called Symbolic Interactionists -- Herbert Blumer's term. They have long been clear about the fact that it is more accurate to speak of *minding* (a verb) than of "the" mind (a noun).

The *thing*, or structure, which makes minding -- i.e. thinking -- possible is the *brain*. But the brain and the mind are no more the same thing than are the stomach and eating. Unfortunately, while our language never got into the habit of speaking of "the" eat or "the" walk when referring to action, it has made that mistake when referring to mental activity, i.e. thinking.

This error stems from our religious background. Initially, we posited the existence of an essential *soul*. This is a thing that has a real existence, is stable and permanent -- so permanent as to be immortal. Modern psychology updated the concept of soul, translating it into more scientific sounding nouns which all denote some sort of stable structure: first "spirit," then "psyche," then the "mind", as well as such related concepts as "personality." However, as an empirical description of mental activity, these structural concepts miss the mark.

What has been said so far is standard fare for sociological social psychologists -- old hat, really.

The error of conventional psychology may be clarified through a couple of analogies: Think again for a moment of the digestive system, i.e. the structure and the organs which make the function and activity of eating possible. Various foods, liquids and other substances go through the organs and are digested. They may have a lasting effect on the organs. Some are beneficial, some cause ulcers, too much alcohol causes cirrhosis of the liver, etc. Once the substances have gone through the system, they are gone for ever, although they may have left a (cumulative) mark.

Or consider someone training to run a marathon. The person puts in over a thousand miles of training runs over a six month period of time. Gradually, the leg muscles grow strong enough to run the Boston Marathon. However, no one makes the metaphysical claim that the *activity* of running over a thousand miles somehow remains within that individual. While the running has made a contribution to the structural development of the muscles, the activity itself occurred in the past, and is now over.

It is the same with our experiences. Experiences are mental food which we digest mentally. Like the training runs, they may result in improved performance, as when we become better at math, for

instance. They may produce habits and tendencies, concepts recognized by early Symbolic Interactionists such as George Herbert Mead and William James. We may develop a good sense of

humor, an impatient or ornery disposition, etc. All experiences leave their mark.

However, conventional psychological paradigms such as Behaviorism misunderstand the nature of accumulated experience. Behaviorism tends to view this as a gradual accretion of discrete units. As we grow older, we simply have more and more memories and knowledge stored up in our nervous system.

Cognitive psychologists, who follow the German Gestalt tradition of Heider, Lewin, Kohler and others, take a great step forward. According to Heider, every new experience results in a totally new configuration of who we are. He termed this the *apperceptive mass*. Our mind is an ever changing Gestalt or totality, with -- at best -- certain tendencies or predispositions or, in Mead's word, *attitudes*.

The vast majority of the public and of professional psychologists adheres to a mistaken conception of what the mind is. The model is basically that of a *computer*: The individual has an experience, and this is then stored up somewhere -- *saved* as it were on a hard disk. The hard drive is our central nervous system (CNS), our brain. According to this model we carry our past experiences around with us, like retrievable files and documents within a computer. Our brain, then, is full of images, memories, words, sounds, symbols, past experiences.

According to this model, when a father conjures up his teenage daughter's face in his mind -- or alternatively her face when she was 5 years old -- he merely retrieves a file which is present in his brain at all times, albeit dormant, like the files on a computer disk.

So how many such files, documents and pictures are stored up on the hard drive of your CNS? In other words, how many ideas, images, words, concepts, memories in sum *items of knowledge*, do you possess? The model says: as many as you have observed and acquired through experience, i.e. through *learning*.

Furthermore, the conventional model is elaborated to explain that if some of the things which you came across are *not* retrievable (in the form of memories or knowledge), it is because you have either (1) forgotten them or (2) repressed them into your subconscious.

Thus the conventional paradigm assumes that our CNS, like the hard drive of a computer, is a huge storage bin with God knows how many gigabytes of storage space -- huge *but finite*.

It can be seen quite readily that this model does not work. The reader merely has to ask herself how many possible things she can conjure up, think about, visualize? The answer is obvious: an infinite number. Unlike the computer, you can imagine *anything* you wish. You can close your eyes and imagine yourself floating on a cloud, or riding a one-eyed black unicorn with wings. Obviously, human consciousness is far more than just the retrieval of memories.

One might counter argue that all thinking, including fantasizing, imagining and creative thought, is based on elements experienced and learned in the past. True, one cannot imagine something entirely alien. However, the *creative combination* of ideas is potentially infinite.

The human mind is a creative activity which can produce a potentially infinite number of ideas. Our ideas are not items which we retrieve at will, and then store back up. Like the text or images on a TV or a computer screen, they only exist while we hold on to them. But unlike TV and computers, once the thought disappears from our consciousness, it does not get stored onto a CD, a DVD or a celluloid film. The configuration simply disappears. Again, that this must be so is proven by the fact that if it were otherwise -- in other words, if everything that we are capable of thinking already existed in our CNS in a latent form, only to be retrieved at the desired moment, our brain would have to have to be infinitely large.

It follows from the foregoing that there is *no fundamental psychological difference* between memories of what "really" happened to us on the one hand, and events which we only imagine, on

the other. Currently, brain physiologists try to identify in our brain such things as “memory centers” (as well as the location of emotions, creative thought, etc.). Like the alchemists of yore, they will never discover these “centers.” Why? Because the processes whereby someone remembers a real event and imagines one which did not occur are the same. Functionally, all ideas are identical.

Even thornier is Freud’s central concept -- the subconscious. Neuropsychology has not yet made a serious attempt at locating the subconscious, as it has memory and creativity. Were it to attempt to find the physical location of subconscious material within the nervous system, this would, again, be a nonsensical quest. Subconscious ideas simply do not exist.

By the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, another element of this mistaken metaphor became widely popular: The media, popular culture, the public and psychologists all became enamored with *repressed memories*, again the idea being that memories are located somewhere inside our mind. This, combined with a national frenzy to find a child molester under every bed, has caused some innocent people a great deal of grief: In a number of celebrated cases such as the McMartins in Southern California and the Amiraaults in Massachusetts, entire families have been ruined on the basis of young children’s suddenly recovered memories of molestation. Child-care providers with an impeccable record have been sent to prison for the rest of their lives. Seventy-year old childcare providers without the slightest hint of prior misbehavior, and without any corroborating or witnessed evidence, have been dragged into criminal court and convicted and sentenced to years of imprisonment. The charges of molestation were all based on young children’s sudden recovery of memories that had, until then, been repressed. One of the few psychologists who has courageously questioned this fad is Elizabeth Loftus.

The point, here, is not that these miraculous memory recoveries occurred under highly unethical pressure tactics by psychologists, psychiatrists and other members of the helping professions who submitted the often young and impressionable children to a relentless barrage of suggestions and insinuations. Rather, the point is that the psychiatric profession does not have any evidence for the *a priori* existence of repressed memories. Again: from a functional perspective, true memories and fantasies are undistinguishable. Unlike a computer, the human mind follows exactly the same procedure when remembering a true experience as when it imagines a fantasy. In neither case should one conceptualize thinking and consciousness as the retrieval of stored-up material.

This is not to deny that most of us are capable of distinguishing between dream and reality. However, that ability is a social product and a variable. Depending on culture, situation and individual tendency, one can find many examples of alternative perceptions of reality. If we experience a real memory differently than a fantasy, it is because we have been taught to interpret the two differently. However, there are various circumstances (an LSD experience, some forms of mental illness, certain cultural definitions, early childhood, etc.) under which the ability to distinguish between fantasy and reality evaporates.

Thus, psychiatry is not in the business of memory retrieval -- repressed or otherwise. There are no files. Rather, psychiatry is in the business of *constructing* memories. It is of the utmost ethical importance that the memories that are thus constructed be as much as possible accurate *reconstructions* of what really happened, particularly in those gruesome criminal trials where entire lives are destroyed.

Psychiatry cannot provide empirical proof of the accuracy of its reconstructions. Supportive

or refuting evidence can only be in the same form as it has been in the past: physical forensic evidence when available, compelling eye-witness testimony and plausible arguments.

## 6. The Mind-Body Problem Solved

*On May 28, 1999, I wrote a reaction to a New York Review of Books article, in which I express the very same theory of mind as in the previous essay. The article was titled "Can we Ever Understand Consciousness?" In it, an eminent Berkeley philosophy professor reviewed two books written by three other eminent philosophy professors. Everyone was desperately grappling with the question: "What is consciousness?" Or as I phrase it: "**What is the mind?**" None of the eminent professors had the answer, so I thought I'd come to the rescue. In my letter, reproduced below, I propose that these illustrious professors familiarize themselves with Symbolic Interactionism, i.e. the social psychological perspective of William James and George Herbert Mead, which provides the single most satisfactory answer to their question. I struck out again, proving once more that what matters to their eminences in New York and Berkeley is not the quality of submissions, but the authors' prestige. Here is the previously unpublished letter:*

This is in response to Colin McGinn's article in the June 10, 1999 issue of the NY Review of Books, *Can we Ever Understand Consciousness?* Two books are reviewed, one by John Searle and the other by the Churchlands. The former states, in essence, that consciousness (i.e. "the mind") is irreducible to the physiology of the brain -- consciousness is a reality *sui generis*.

On the other hand, The Churchlands simply aver that consciousness does not exist (this is called "eliminativism"). McGinn explains eloquently why the latter position is absurd. At the same time, McGinn also notes that mind cannot just emerge miraculously into existence from matter like a genie from a lamp. Good. But then, what are we to do?

McGinn's conclusion is that we are (currently, and perhaps for a long time to come) simply not smart enough to resolve the mind-body dualism, i.e. to explain consciousness, to find the underlying unity. McGinn may be right, but then again, he may be overly pessimistic: let me mention at least one attempt made by academicians for over a century, by now -- at grappling with the problem of mind: I refer to the Pragmatism of William James and George Herbert Mead, and the sociological tradition which flows from it, called *Symbolic Interactionism*.

While I do not claim that this paradigm has the definitive answer sought by McGinn and other philosophers, it is worthwhile to examine its contribution to the discussion:

James, Mead and their followers (for example Herbert Blumer at Chicago and Berkeley) effected a radical reconceptualization of the mind from an *entity* to *minding as a process*. A verb, not a noun. Thus mind, thought and consciousness are not viewed as states, but as behavior. The brain is the organ which makes the activity of minding possible, just as the stomach is the organ which makes digesting possible.

Mead and the Symbolic Interactionists go on to explain that minding can only emerge through language, and language, in turn, is a social process. Thus, it is axiomatic to Meadians that society precedes the individual, and not vice-versa. Society is the *sine qua non* for the emergence of the human self, i.e. that uniquely self-conscious and self-reflective organism we call a human being.

This may appear to be close to the Churchlands' eliminativism, but it is not, because it is not an ontological claim, merely an epistemological suggestion. The Meadian conception of consciousness is a pragmatic one; its aim is heuristic; its object is the study, analysis and

understanding of human social and mental activity. Understanding takes many forms, only one of which is causal explanation. Understanding can also be descriptive, interpretive, intuitive (a tradition associated with phenomenology and Max Weber's notion of *verstehen*). The Meadian description of the mind is a behavioral-descriptive one. Mead in fact called himself a behaviorist -- albeit totally at odds with Watson's mindless behaviorism, as he fully recognized the existence of attitudes and other inner processes that must be inferred from overtly observable behavior.

One might also see this as a dangerous precursor of postmodern thinking. That is, as abandoning the quest for ontological certainty in favor of an opportunistic definition of mind.

However, such a conception has served sociologists well. It rejects biological reductionism, refrains from positing an essential spirit/mind/soul, and thus transcends, for practical purposes, the age old mind-body dualism.

McGinn is right in combating reductionism -- the Churchlands' or anyone else's. Sociology is fundamentally on the side of the opposite doctrine -- emergentism. It was Emile Durkheim, more than anyone else, who stressed the *sui generis* nature of each consecutive higher level of reality. Society cannot be reduced to a collection of individuals, individual consciousness cannot be reduced to chemical reactions, etc.

The theory which James and Mead suggested as a way out of the impasse still inspires many of us today.

### 7. Encounter in Palo Alto

*I moved to California in 1969, at the height of the Counterculture. Like everything else, the psychological profession was in the throes of radical experimentation. One popular psychological fad at the time was the Encounter Movement, and like many other fads, it emanated from California. I decided to explore this movement first-hand. It turned out to be one of the most nightmarish experiences I ever had. I described the experience in an article, parts of which were reprinted in the Palo Alto News on April 6, 1970. Much later, I revised it as follows:*

The Encounter of the early seventies was the prototype of many subsequent forms of group therapy, including Synanon, EST, Sensitivity Training, Alanon, Codependents Anonymous, Twelve Steps, Alcoholics Anonymous, Anger Management and many others. Some encounters lasted a couple of hours, some lasted several days. Some had half a dozen participants, some had one hundred. Some were led by qualified psychologists, some by shady countercultural gurus with criminal records. The purpose of an encounter was for participants to take turns at expressing their repressed feelings and at venting their emotions, believing that this purging led to recovery from one's psychological ailments. Unlike the people who join AA or who are ordered to enroll in anger management classes, encounter participants were not as clear about the issues for which they sought a cure.

The emotional venting that occurred at encounters often consisted of brutal interpersonal verbal abuse, and sometimes physical aggression. While some encounters were relatively benign meetings of a dozen professionals discussing their marital problems, other ones were so hard-hitting that people sometimes freaked out and even committed suicide. There were also sexual encounters, where the object and the pay-off were to meet a sex partner within the allotted four, six or eight hour period.

In 1970, encounter groups were proliferating everywhere in California, from Lake Tahoe to Big Sur (the Esalen Institute), from Berkeley to Sacramento. In order to learn more about this phenomenon, I registered for an encounter at Palo Alto's *Human Institute*. I had found their brochure in my office mailbox. The registration fee was \$50 and the encounter was to last 60 hours,

starting on Friday night and ending on Monday morning. Participants were advised to bring sleeping bags.

I persuaded my teaching assistant Jay and a beautiful blonde student by the name of Jane to join me. We drove to Palo Alto together. The Human Institute was housed in a large metal warehouse in the slums of East Palo Alto. There was a shoddy front office and a long hallway leading circuitously to a cavernous hall in the rear of the property. That is where the encounter took place.

By eight p.m., about thirty participants had gathered in the large hall and the encounter was about to begin. The participants ranged in age from eighteen to over forty. The number of males and females was about even and the group was ethnically diverse. Most of the people looked ‘student like,’ although I suspected that many were only marginal students at best, including probably many drop-outs. Most participants had the ‘hippie’ appearance typical of the era. All the women and many of the men wore loose shoulder-length hair, and just about every male had a beard. The females wore long, loose, flowery dresses. Some were young and beautiful, some were old and beginning to look haggard. The group included acid freaks and some heroin users, as I could see from their scarred veins. People were milling around, rolling out their sleeping bags on the floor and settling in.

Shortly after eight, the guru appeared and started the event. He was an average-sized, handsome and clean-cut looking man with deep piercing eyes and a loud, slow, hypnotizing voice. He wore a toga. His first act was to confiscate belts and other potentially harmful possessions, and as if this was not ominous enough, he made the following announcement: “Until midnight, anyone who changes his mind can leave. However, at midnight the front door gets locked, and no one will be permitted to leave until the end of the encounter on Monday morning.”

Then he introduced his credentials, saying, “I am Gary. I am a Vietnam veteran and a marine. I was trained by Master Chein himself (alluding to a known Chinese expert in brainwashing).” He then pointed out his assistants. They were Leon, a large, muscular black man who immediately told the group that he was an ex-con, and two women with loose, long brown hair and wrinkled faces showing them to be either pretty old, or else former heavy drug users.

The atmosphere in the hall was tense, despite soft Bob Dylan music in the background, dimmed lights and the smell of incense. The thirty participants were sitting in a circle in total silence. Gary said, “That’s it. I got nothing else to say. This is you folks’ game. If you want to spend the next sixty hours in silence, that’s groovy.”

Some people snickered nervously, some whispered things to those sitting next to them, some were asking each other ‘why are you here?’ etc.

A very young, short-haired boy named Billie was overheard saying, “shit man, it’s my old man! I could kill him! He always...”

Gary the guru said, “why don’t you tell us about it, Billie. Go sit there in the middle of the circle, okay?”

After Billie complained about his father for a while to the entire group, which was sitting in a big circle around him, Gary told him, “It seems to me that Billie has a problem standing up to his father. I have an idea,” and as he turned towards his big burly assistant Leon, he said, “Hey Leon, go sit down on the floor in front of Billie.”

Leon complied, so now he and Billie both sat on the floor, lotus position, face to face, in the middle of the circle.

“Okay,” said Gary. “Now Billie: Slap Leon’s face once, as hard as you can.

“I can’t do that,” replied Billie, scared shitless. “He’ll kill me.”

“No he wont,” retorted Gary, “will you, Leon?”

“Nah,” said the big black man with a grin.

So Billie gave Leon a soft slap in the face, whereupon Gary interjected, “Okay, now it’s Leon’s turn. Leon, you slap Billie back as hard as you can, just once.”

Leon’s slap was so powerful that Billie keeled over from his lotus position.

Then it was Billie’s turn again to slap Leon back, and so forth. The two went back and forth five or six more times, at which point Billie began to cry.

My teaching assistant Jay and I had been watching this aghast. No longer able to hold myself in, I stood up and said, “This is torture! This is sadistic! Stop it!”

Several people began to shout and shriek at me. A hippie hollered, “Who the fuck are you?” To which a witch-looking woman screamed, “he must be Billie’s mother!”

Jay and I stood there in silence, surrounded by a mob ready to attack. Young Billie had gotten up and run to a dark corner of the hall, where he sat down by himself. Gary the guru and his assistant Leon were smiling. They told everyone to calm down. Jay picked up where I left off and addressed Gary. “What qualifies you to conduct encounters? This isn’t psychology, this is fascism!”

“What qualifies me?” replied Gary with a smirk, “I’ll tell you what qualifies me: I was a marine by the time I was nineteen and a POW in Vietnam by the time I was twenty five. Have you heard of Chinese brainwashing? Have you seen *The Manchurian Candidate*? But enough about me. What about you? Tell you what: you seem to be pretty smart. Why don’t you get in the middle of the circle and replace Leon, and show the group how you would conduct the encounter?”

“Hell no,” Jay replied, “I want no part of this bullshit! I just want to be left alone,” and with that he picked up his sleeping bag and dragged it to the dark edge of the hall, planning to go to sleep. However, no sooner was he lying inside his sleeping bag than a couple of men walked over to him and grabbed him, pulled him out of his bag by the hair and dragged him back to the center of the room. I saw bits of Jay’s hair ripped out of his head, in the men’s hands.

Jay and I began to fear for our lives. We now realized that we had landed in one of those damn cult’s nests - of which Jim Jones’ People’s Temple would become the best-known example a few years later. It dawned on me that maybe the *‘Human Institute’* was something like the Manson family and that Gary was a good-looking version of Charlie Manson. The Encounter was a two-and-a-half day brainwashing session, at the end of which most of the attendees would probably be converted. I asked myself how I would survive another thirty-five hours of this.

Somehow Gary the guru diffused the situation, another young victim got into the hot seat, and Jay and I were permitted to move to the edge of the group. Luckily for her, my friend Jane from Cal State had laid low and observed everything without getting picked on.

During the next few hours, about half the group stayed in the circle and kept up the

'encounter,' ganging up on one person after another, sometimes screaming at each other, sometimes throwing punches (Gary 'discouraged' physical violence, but it happened anyway), sometimes throwing ashtrays in each other's faces. Meanwhile, others meandered around, or sat by themselves in dark corners, or even went to sleep. Jay and I were lying in our sleeping bags away from everybody, while Jane stayed in the circle, observing the action.

Jay whispered to me, "I don't want to stay here for another thirty five hours. Let's break out."

"How?" I asked. "The front doors are locked. If they see us try something, they'll kill us before we have a chance to escape."

"There is a window in the hallway leading to the front door," replied Jay. "Let's break it and jump out."

"And what about Jane?" I asked.

"We'll come back for her, with the police," suggested Jay.

"No," I objected. "I better stay here with her. She isn't safe. You go get the cops and come back for us."

So that's what we did. When the group heard Jay break the window and jump out, they came running and screaming after him, but he hopped into his car and drove off.

Jay came back to the *Human Institute* half an hour later with the Palo Alto Police, to free Jane and me. The cops forced the front door open and entered with guns drawn, saying, "We understand that there are people being held kidnaped here."

To my astonishment, Jane at first didn't want to leave. She had turned native. She had succumbed to the Stockholm Syndrome! There followed a lengthy tug-of-war between the group on the one hand and Jay and me on the other. The group was hysterical, screaming obscenities at us and asking Jane why the hell she would want to leave with the two Cal State faggots/losers, instead of staying with her new loving family at the Human Institute.

The cops and I ran out of patience and I finally told Jane, "look, it's up to you, but we are leaving now. This is your last chance. Are you coming or not?"

Jane did leave with us - barely. Confused and disoriented as she was, after two days of food and sleep deprivation, two days of relentless Chinese-style brainwashing, she managed to make the right decision nevertheless.

On our way back to Cal State, we toyed with the idea of suing the Human Institute for some serious money, but nothing came of it.

*A few noteworthy events occurred in the aftermath. Some weeks later, I saw something interesting on the news: The Palo Alto Human Institute had been firebombed and put out of business. This made me happy. Apparently, there was another disgruntled customer who did not appreciate the Institute's psychological services.*

*Also, the April 6, 1970 issue of the Palo Alto News reproduced some of my story in the article listed below:*

## **The Encounter Scene: Scratching Old Sores**

By Alexander Bodi

*Palo Alto News*, April 6, 1970

*This is important, because in 1971, the psychological profession and much of the entire academic world were jolted by a path breaking experiment carried out by Philip Zimbardo at Stanford - his famous mock prison experiment. Zimbardo locked up a number of volunteer Stanford undergraduates in a simulated prison for a week, and studied the ensuing pathologies. The study would become one of the profession's classics, on a par with Stanley Milgram's electric shock experiment. A few years later a movie, Quiet Rage, would re-enact the experiment.*

*Ever since I became acquainted with Zimbardo's dynamite study, I have believed that it was triggered by the goings on at the Human Institute, and my published description of them. The timing, the location, and the events were uncannily similar. Both the Human Institute and Zimbardo's experiment took place in Palo Alto in 1970-1971. Both consisted of keeping people in captivity against their will, and abusing them. I must assume that Zimbardo got his idea from me and built his fame upon my shoulders. Not plagiarism, perhaps, but an uncanny similarity...*

### 8. Anti-Psychology, or: Please don't Help Me

*The following short article was written on March 15, 1969, and slightly edited in 2007. It was never published. It expresses my critique of psychology, the "helping professions" and meddlers in general.*

In the animal kingdom, there are two possibilities: You eat or you are food. In human society, there are also two possibilities: You label or you are labeled.

Thomas Szasz (paraphrased).

It's the overly solicitous people and the meddlers who make you unhappy and miserable, who make you want to cry and pity yourself: It's their so-called love and concern, their suffocating "help" that nauseate you.

They claim that by discussing your problems with you, they hold up a mirror to your face, so as to enable you to examine and to improve yourself. But what you see in the mirror is not a true reflection; it is a grotesque distortion of who you are; because these so-called "friends" arbitrarily manipulate whatever feedback they choose to render.

So the question should not be "what is the matter with YOU?" but: "who are THEY?" and "why are they behaving that way?"

Their behavior has little to do with love. Quite to the contrary, they often resent, they envy, they are jealous. Deep inside they are miserable themselves. But then, they see that others around them know genuine joy - as well as genuine grief - and they cannot tolerate this. So they delve into other people's psyche, meddle in their privacies, especially as soon as they sense the slightest amount of grief in someone else. Like blood-suckers, they cling onto someone else's mental and emotional life, they inquire and dig into that person's "issues" under the guise of solicitude.

The naive victim of this stratagem opens up willingly and provides material which then

gives the psychological predators renewed energy and sustenance, for other persons' misery is the stuff upon which they thrive.

It is not love which motivates these do-gooders, but the opposite: *schadenfreude* and envy; the pleasure of opening up other people's scars from old battles, the joy in observing others' past suffering. Also the resentment caused by the fear that others may have sealed off their wounds, have refused to be torn down and - unlike the psychological bottom-dwellers - re-entered life, activity and happiness. They warn that sealing off old psychological wounds may cause them to fester. But this is a medical metaphor without validity.

Thus, the do-gooders recognize with perverted pleasure the scars that someone else bears, the pain that someone else has felt, and it is upon this pain that they thrive. The thought that someone else has returned to health spontaneously and organically is unbearable to the do-gooders. Pain is their job, their reason for living, their food on the table. They have to perpetuate it.

Who am I talking about? Just look around. We have such people everywhere. Some are acquaintances of yours. Some belong to the local church and to the local university. But most of them are the so-called professionals in the helping professions - psychologists foremost. They are Ken Kesey's Big Nurses. They are what the ancient Greeks called the "meddlers."

### 9. Guilt

*A better way (in my opinion) to make the same anti-psychiatric point is the following - previously unpublished - piece. I wrote this fiction story in February, 1971, and I edited it in 2006. I think it's pretty good. The relationship to my encounter group experience is clear.*

It was his first invitation since he moved to the new city. The card was formal and anonymous, and he didn't feel much like going. He assumed that the invitation was for a party. He didn't usually enjoy parties - least of all those superficial social events organized by some club, and judging from the invitation they had sent him, it was bound to be one of those boring, non-alcoholic affairs. However he was not in a position to be selective. He had no friends in the new city, and this might be the occasion to meet some new people. Indifferently, he decided to go, just to see what it would be like.

As usual, driving to the party he couldn't prevent himself from building expectations, and soon he was submerged in his usual fantasies, pictures of wild happenings with luscious girls, one of whom would go home with him long before the end of the party.

This trend of thought was dysfunctional, he realized, for not only was it bound to lead to disappointment, but it also caused him to lose his way. Absorbed in his imagery he ended up in a totally unfamiliar section of town. After several errors and a number of consultations with gas station attendants and policemen, he reached the given address.

He was late by several hours and wondered whether the thing might be over by now. Judging from outside - the old wooden building was barely lit up, and there were few cars in front - the party was either over or not very successful.

He went in - the outside door was unlocked - and followed signs with arrows and the words, COME UP; YOU ARE LATE! It occurred to him how badly he had misjudged the size of the building from the outside. He walked past half a dozen such signs, down a number of hallways and up and down several flights of stairs before finally finding himself in front of a closed door, the entrance to the party proper, he assumed. At this point he couldn't remember in what part of the building he was. He hadn't passed any windows and for all he knew, he could well be underground.

He knocked on the door and it was opened immediately by...Mack! This was truly incredible. He hadn't seen Mack in at least eight years, and he had no idea that the guy was in town, in the very same city where he had just moved himself. Frankly, he never liked Mack very much. They had gone to school together, Mack was about four years older. He had introduced him to certain aspects of the big life - women, smoking, drinking - but he had also cheated him on several occasions. No, he certainly wasn't happy to see this so-called friend. Confused and somewhat anxious he asked, "Mack!...why...what the devil are you doing here?"

Mack's physiognomy hadn't changed. His rotund face still seemed ageless and sarcasm was still a permanent feature of his expression. He replied, smiling, "We'll discuss that later, Matt. Right now, let's concentrate on you. Come on in, make yourself comfortable.."

Still baffled by this unexpected encounter, Matt apologized for being late, to which Mack answered, "That's alright, we knew you would be late..."

"We?" Matt asked, "are you giving this party?"

"Yes, me and all these other people. Go meet some of them, you'll find them quite interesting I'm sure."

Matt walked into the next room, which was darker and more crowded. The light was reddish, like in a darkroom, and the background music consisted of a soft drumbeat undergirding a jazzed-up electronic rendition of Chostakovitch's second waltz. He approached a small group gathered in a corner. They turned toward him and one of them - he couldn't see whether it was a he or a she - said, "Ah. Mr. Matthew! We have been waiting for you; you are late."

Surprised and somewhat taken aback, Matt said that he was sorry to arrive so late. Who were these people, anyway? he wondered. They seemed to know him but he didn't recognize them. And why did they say that they had been waiting for him?

"Well," he explained, "I got lost on my way over. I am not very familiar with the city..."

"I see," one of them said, "you are new to the city?"

"Yes, I have only been here for a few months..."

"A few months?" someone else chimed in, "Surely you should be familiar with the city by now..."

Ignoring the somewhat rude remark, Matt countered that some of the neighborhoods still confused him, especially at night.

"He gets confused at night," said the transgendered person who had initiated the conversation. The whole group snickered.

What is this? Matt wondered. Why are these people mocking me? He felt like going back home, but instead he excused himself, walked to the bar and poured himself a glass of Cabernet. (Fortunately the party was not "dry," as he had feared).

As he was pouring the wine into his glass, a woman approached him. She looked and acted like the hostess, or at least as someone important. She wore a shiny embroidered dress and lavish

jewelry. Her graying hair was made up in an elaborate and convoluted chignon. She was middle-aged and middle-weight.

“I see that you are making abundant use of our resources, Mr. Matthew,” she said in a sarcastic and accusatory tone.

Once more Matt was stunned. Does everyone here know who I am? He wondered. And is everyone equally rude? His true desire was to tell her to go to hell, but instead he apologized again and said, “Oh, yes, well... forgive me, I didn’t think of bringing my own. However, I’ll be glad to reimburse you, if this is a no-host bar...”

“Never mind,” she said dismissively, “next time you should request to purchase a drink, and please do not serve yourself...”

“I understand,” Matt replied, trying to smile, “and I thank you for your generosity. I really can use a glass of wine. You know what they say about alcohol being a social lubricant...”

“A WHAT?” the matronly lady said, her face showing. “Are you some sort of pervert? I will not condone such language in this house!”

Jees! Matt thought. Must everything go wrong tonight? Now what did I do wrong?

“Alright,” he admitted, “I am not sure my choice of words was judicious, but listen: I’m terribly sorry about the wine, and I am now returning it to you,” whereupon he replaced his untouched glass on the bar.

This did not placate the hostess. She said, “no point in back-pedaling, sir. The damage is done. Others will suffer the consequences of your thoughtlessness, as they always have. By returning the wine you poured into your glass, you are signaling that you do not like what we serve.”

Confused, Matt replied, “I am sure that this is an exquisite wine, but I don’t wish to abuse your hospitality....”

“Exquisite, you say?” she asked aggressively, “yet you have not even tasted it. Who do you take us for, Mr. Matthew?”

Every word Matt uttered seemed to work against him. He felt more and more confused. Because he was a guest after all, he bit his tongue once more and instead of telling the woman to go fuck herself, he said, “Well, what I mean is.... I am sure that you serve fine wines, however, since you indicated that the supply is limited, I thought...”

“Limited?” she exclaimed in a shrill voice. “Are you accusing us of being limited?”

“No, not at all,” Matt replied nervously, “I merely meant...”

Meanwhile, Matt’s “conversation” with this woman had turned somewhat loud and it had attracted a crowd. Turning to some of the bystanders, the matron said, “hey guys, you know what Matt here thinks of us? he feels that we are limited!”

“Is that so?” somebody said. “We were under the impression that tonight’s focus would be upon *his own* limitations...”

“Yes,” continued the hostess, “and we are certainly aware of your limitations, Mr. Matthew, as well as your *motives*...”

My motives? Matt thought. What on earth are they talking about? What do they know about me?

The growing group surrounding Matt now also included the first people with whom he had tangled, right after his arrival. For a moment there was an ominous silence, and then the metrosexual person who had berated Matt for being late said, “We know much about you, young man. Do not try to deceive us.”

“Yes,” added someone, he has admitted that he gets confused at night - *timor nocturnia!*”

“Confused?” another person shouted. “It may be a case of *malingering*, not confusion!”

“You may be right,” said the group’s ringleader, adding as he turned towards Matt, “Admit what *really* happened, Mr. Matthew. Do not try to evade the issue.”

The group stood around him in silence, with a sinister smile on its collective face. Matt’s embarrassment was turning into fear and anger. Who are these bozos? he wondered. What right do they have to treat him like this? He wanted to leave. However, he didn’t want to create a scene. After all, they had been kind enough to invite him. So he tried to put his best foot forward and to be accommodating.

“Well, it’s true that I was distracted while driving over, which caused me to lose my way...” he admitted...

“Aha!” said the transsexual-looking person, “I knew it!” And then, pressing on the attack, she/he asked: “What were you thinking about?”

“I don’t remember,” Matt replied.

“You’re lying, Mr. Matthew,” she countered. “You are not doing your best. Try harder to remember! We have a pretty good idea of what your thoughts were!”

Matt was getting angry. “What are you insinuating?” He demanded, “what right do you have to treat me like this?”

“What right? You came to us, did you not?” he-she retorted. “We know why you came, and it is too late to turn back.”

Matt’s anger was replaced by fear. What did they know about him? He wondered. And who had told them? How had they found out what they knew about him?

“Yes,” the ringleader continued, “we know the truth. This is your last chance.”

“Last chance for what?” Matt asked, approaching panic.

“The last chance for you to face the truth.”

“I see,” Matt replied. But he saw nothing. What did they mean by the truth? Did they know some deep dark secret in his subconscious? Some skeleton in the closet of which he himself was not even aware? What “truth” did they have in mind? What is *the* truth anyway? Aren’t there many truths?

“The truth, you say.” he equivocated. “But is there an absolute truth? Aren’t there many truths? Have you read Foucault and Derrida? Postmodernists stress the multiplicity of narratives, which you folks seem to equate with truths. Similarly, post-Einsteinian cosmology teaches us that...”

This only made things worse. Someone in the group interrupted him, lashing out forcefully, “Stop your mystifications, Mr. Matthew. We are all aware of your stratagems. Solipsism will not save you! (The others laughed). Truth is in the *mind!*”

This triggered a flood of thoughts in Matt’s mind - *mauvaise foie*, false consciousness, *mental* dishonesty. Was that what they were talking about? He wondered. Was that what angered them? Maybe they had a point, and in a sense he was guilty. He certainly *felt* increasingly guilty. After all, they all appeared to agree about his guilt, and surely they couldn’t all be wrong, could they?

He wanted to convince them that he was not bad. His greatest desire was no longer to leave, but to regain their friendship and their acceptance. If only I could make them like me again, he thought. If I confess, they will be nice to me again.

“Okay,” he admitted, “maybe I have made some mistakes. Maybe we started on the wrong foot, but I am willing to learn....”

The woman who had reprimanded him earlier spoke: “Only Schmul can help him now. He is too far gone!” Whereupon she told Mack to go fetch Schmul - whoever that was.

\* \* \* \* \*

The wait for Schmul was intense. When he arrived, it was in the company of a retinue that included Mack, Matt’s old semi-friend who wore his usual smile, plus a couple of others, indicating that Schmul was the big kahuna. He was a mid-sized middle-aged man with a balding cranium, a mustache and a heavy black beard. He wore a long light-colored mantle. As he approached Matt, he said, solemnly, “I hear that you are in trouble. We will help you.”

“Yes Schmul,” said Mack reverently, “he is *mens improbum*. The curriculum applies.”

Matt felt the last remnant of self-control slipping away from him. His own mind was turning against him. Who was this Schmul? And what was Mack saying? In a supreme effort at rationality, he turned toward Schmul and said, “what are you going to do to me? I only came here because I was invited - I guess by my old friend Mack....”

“I am not his friend,” Mack shouted to the group, “*Men improbum* lies.”

“Yes,” someone added. “And his answers are wrong.”

“His lacks *voluntas*” another explained.

Schmul held up his hand solemnly, and total silence descended on the group. Then, he pronounced his plan of action: “We shall help him.”

Thereupon he grabbed Matt by the arm and pulled him into a large adjacent room which Matt had not yet seen. The group followed. The room was a huge round hall with an extremely high ceiling. It contained a big crowd, more numerous than the rest of the party altogether. After entering this hall, Matt began to recognize some familiar faces, many of which he had not seen in years. However, most people were unknown to him. Everybody looked melancholic, and one only heard occasional whispers, no loud festive talk. But even that little bit of talk stopped once Matt had been forcefully shoved to the middle of the room. The crowd turned toward him and receded silently towards the wall, forming a threatening circle.

Matt had stumbled to the floor and he had difficulty getting up. Looking at the hundred faces surrounding him, he realized that escape was impossible. Schmul walked around him a few times and then broke the silence, addressing the crowd in a loud, commanding voice: “Here he is, my friends. We have all been waiting for him. We forgave him and offered him reconciliation. We warned him and gave him his chances. Yet, as you can see, he has not repented. He is still in *selfstasis*. He cannot fuse....”

“Please, “ Matt interrupted in a final fumbling effort, “I repent, I swear it. I thank you for discovering my guilt, I confess and I apologize. I will leave in shame and I will never return...”

A gasp of indignation rose from the multitude at this remark. “You see, friends, Schmul continued, “Even now the disease progresses. What is your verdict?”

“Help him! Help him! Help him! Help him!” the crowd roared unanimously.

Presently, Schmul turned to Matt and spoke solemnly: “Matt, it is our unanimous decision that we shall help you. Come with me.”

As Schmul and two of his assistants pulled Matt away towards one of the round room’s dark exits, Matt began to feel the horror of what was about to happen. It was the horror of rejection, the terror of being alone. He turned to the crowd and started to beg, to scream and to cry, “Please don’t put me out! Please let me stay! I love you! I want to be your friend, I want to be with you, I want to be like you!”

Schmul ordered his men to stop and to bring Matt back to the middle of the room. There, he ordered Matt to undress. Matt obeyed. As he stood naked and shivering, surrounded by hundred people, the crowd exploded in laughter. Matt looked down, in silence. Finally Schmul tossed some clothes to him and told him to get dressed.

“Oh, thank you!” Matt exclaimed, tears pouring down his cheeks, “Thank you so much! You have saved me!”

Next, Schmul signaled a large hirsute man to walk over to Matt and give him a big bear

hug. Matt accepted this passively. Buried in the huge man's embrace, he could smell the stench of his breath, his sweat and his body. Then a wrinkled and toothless old woman joined them in their embrace and began to kiss Matt all over his face. Soon another ten members joined in, forming a mountain of people hugging and caressing Matt and each other, with Matt buried at the core.

Schmul was sitting away from the human pile, lotus position in his light beige mantle. "Do we love him?" he exclaimed.

The entire group responded in a loud, unison monosyllable: "LOVE! Whereupon everyone began a chant consisting of that single word.

Then, little by little, people began to fall away. Some left the room, and some lied down on a couple of couches or on pillows on the floor. Slowly people began to fall asleep, some in sleeping bags, some just as they were. The chanting had a curiously soporific effect on Matt as well. He could no longer keep his eyes open. Just before he fell asleep, his last thoughts were: "They love me now. They have forgiven me. I am saved. I will never be alone again."

## 2. EDUCATION

### 1. Why is America such an Illiterate Nation?

*The title, above, is one more provocative question which Mary Massaro asked me and a bunch of other professors to answer for her book, Beyond the Pale (2003: Diogenes publishing). Here is the answer I gave:*

The famous historian Richard Hofstadter was among those who have written about America's exceptionally strong tradition of *anti-intellectualism*. Among the various levels of America's educational system, *high school* stands out as especially problematic. Our kids' academic test scores are on a par with those of foreign children in elementary school. Paradoxically, we probably have the best University system in the world. But high school is a disaster; it is dominated by a moronic value system. Peer culture frowns on scholarship and glorifies the cultivation of physical attractiveness (sports, sex, consumption) whereas nerds are ostracized. There is nothing like this even in countries similar to ours, e.g., the Netherlands, England, Scandinavia, Germany and France. There, academic achievement is met with admiration and envy, not ridicule. Add to this the increasingly shoddy quality of teaching provided by highly unionized yet underpaid teachers over the past half century, and the totally unprincipled character of school administrators (Massaro, 2003: 7)

### 2. Facts versus Values?

*Some folks know a lot, except that  
most of what they know ain't so.  
(Mark Twain, paraphrased)*

*Information should precede Opinion  
(T. Kando)*

*The mantra of the 20<sup>th</sup> century education establishment has been, inspired by John Dewey and Maria Montessori, that schools should encourage children's creativity. Education should not*

*just pump students full of facts and force them to memorize and to regurgitate. Even now I rarely come across a college textbook which does not affirm this cliché, insisting that formal education is a bureaucracy which stultifies students and destroys their innate creativity. The consensus among enlightened educationists is that schools should not be in the business of teaching children (just) facts.*

*It did not take me long to rebel against this consensus. Maybe my conservative impulse was already stirring, even when I was still a card-carrying member of the Counterculture. Or perhaps it was my innate tendency to automatically disagree with any reigning orthodoxy, my perennial desire to play devil's advocate.*

*On March 8, 1970, I wrote an article in the Sacramento Bee in which I attacked the anti-intellectual radicalism of some of my students and in which I came to the rescue of Western science and civilization. A student leader had just printed an article arguing, essentially, that "knowledge without value is self-destructive."*

*In my rebuttal, I agreed with that obvious point, but I then went on to make a number of important counterpoints, a few of which are excerpted here:*

"it is misguided to seek the transformation of universities into institutions of normative and ideological indoctrination...Indoctrination and normative guidance are the functions of churches and political parties, not of institutions of higher learning. It is therefore entirely proper that the university is a center for the study of why man behaves the way he does, not a center for how man should behave.

...The increasing tendency of radical youngsters is to dismiss knowledge altogether... Their attitude is one of total contempt for 2,500 years of civilization, as being irrelevant to today's problems. What they fail to realize is that Western Civilization, in spite of nuclear weaponry and ecological destruction, is nevertheless the highest stage in the evolution of consciousness...

We are facing the challenge of making something decent out of our crumbling social system. The substitution of value for knowledge, emotion for intellect is certainly not going to do the trick. Values must be realized through implementation. The good society must be constructed. It will not emerge automatically from the ashes of revolutionary destruction..." (*Sacramento Bee*, March 8, 1970).

### 3. Should we Teach Students Facts?

*Thirty-two years later, I was still addressing the same issue. By then, universities had long been on the 'critical thinking' bandwagon, asserting that students' opinions and critical analyses are more important than their mastery of facts. Here is what I wrote on Sept. 19, 2002, in an effort to rebut that position:*

A conventional wisdom which most educators have espoused for many years is that students need to be taught critical thinking skills, reasoning, the ability to recognize diversity, logic, etc, and that just trying to stamp facts into their brains ("When did the American Revolution occur? - 1776," "Where is the country of Somalia located? - in the horn of Africa," "What is the population of India? - 1 billion people," etc.) is meaningless - the mark of the outdated education that we received in the old days. Well, here is the counter argument:

Educators have known for decades that most American students are embarrassingly ignorant of facts - historical facts, geographical facts, demographic facts, political facts. They are good kids by and large, open-minded, willing and even eager to learn, somewhat able to think

logically and to put two and two together. They are not stupid. But there are astounding gaps in their knowledge. They are shockingly ignorant of many basic facts, and shockingly innumerate. Many don't know the difference between a million and a billion. I ask "How many millions are there in a billion?" and many say "hundred." I ask "what is the population of the world?" and many say "six million." I tell them that there is more crime in Stockton than in New York City and they are unable to comprehend that I am dealing with *rates*. And these are college students!

The problem is not that students have difficulty deriving the logical conclusion(s) from given premises. They are intelligent enough. The difficulty is that they don't have any valid premises. Let me illustrate this:

We begin with the basic format for logical reasoning - the Aristotelian syllogism:

- 1) Minor premise: If Socrates is a human being...
- 2) Major premise: If all humans are mortal...
- 3) Conclusion/Deduction: Then it follows that Socrates will die.

But many of my students would not arrive at the logical conclusion. You know why? Because they don't know who Socrates is. And not knowing whether Socrates is human, they may get bogged down in questioning the minor premise, for example.

Or consider the following example:

- 1) If the US has 300 million people,
- 2) and if one American consumes 30 times as much as one Third World inhabitant
- 3) and if the Third World has 5 billion people
- 4) then it follows that America consumes more than the entire Third World, even though the Third World has nearly 17 times more people.

But most students don't know 1), 2) and 3), and neither do they know how to multiply and divide numbers very well.

*Ergo*: Before we ask students to reason and to analyze facts, we must teach them the facts.

#### 4. The Level of Thinking of some Contemporary College Students

*Ignorance, then, the abysmal ignorance of facts, is what plagues the younger generation. The politically correct culture prefers to focus on students' alleged lack of critical thinking skills, their alleged lack of open-mindedness, and other such shibboleths. The primary purpose of "progressive" education, at least in the humanities and in the social sciences, is to provide students with the communication skills necessary for the expression of their opinions and feelings. However, what is overlooked is the fact that opinion must be preceded by information. Over the years, I have recorded many examples of student "funnies." Below are just a few examples:*

1) During a conversation in my office, a student once said, "You know, prof. Kando, I am in college to learn something, not to read books!"

2) On another occasion a student who came to my office said, "I would like to write a term paper about ideas, or something like that."

3) Once a student came up to me after class and said, "I've got a lot of statistics at home, Dr. K. Do you want me to help you out and bring some to class?"

4) One time I was interrupted in the middle of a lecture as follows: "What are you babbling about, Kando?"

5) And once a student came looking for me and asked the secretary, "Where is the asshole?"

6) One beautiful Fall semester I was walking across campus, and I overheard two students. A pretty blonde said to a fellow walking next to her, "Wow, I didn't realize that 75% of the people in Sacramento are Russian."

I believe that these two students had just been discussing a recent mass murder by a Russian immigrant (maybe the topic had come up in their class).

While I don't usually meddle in strangers' conversations, I couldn't resist turning to the couple and do some "edifying" - after all, I am a teacher. So I said, "Excuse me, I overheard your conversation. Actually, it's 75,000, not 75%. There are about 75,000 Russian immigrants in the Sacramento area."

As I walked away from the couple, I overheard the girl say to her friend, "So, what's the difference?"

After the boy explained to her that 75,000 people represent 1 twentieth of our metropolitan population, she asked him, "So then, are the other 19 out of 20 people in Sacramento all white?"

Unable to control myself, I turned back towards them once more and said, "Russians are white, too, you know..."

Her answer: "Well, you know what I mean, they are not *Americans*..."

I gave up.

\* \* \* \* \*

7). On the second day of my Sociology of Delinquency class, I lectured about the history of delinquency. I briefly described Ancient Rome's patriarchal laws and the prevalence of slavery in that society. Some students expressed surprise. One asked, "so there were blacks in ancient Rome?"

I replied that, "well, yes, there were some Africans, but by and large the slaves were whites enslaved by other whites. Like Spartacus, remember the movie with Kirk Douglas?"

The students remained puzzled. They wondered, "how can there be white slaves? Slaves must be black, no?"

"Well, in the United States, they were," I explained, "but elsewhere, not necessarily."

I saw further puzzlement on their faces, and then indifference and an attitude that seemed to

say, “hey, who cares about other places, especially a place far away and two thousand years ago.”

Conclusion: Modern society is at risk when its schools increasingly teach politicized, value-laden, social-problems oriented subject matter instead of basic skills and facts. Also, when organs are not used, they atrophy. As we stop using our legs and drive to cover even the shortest distances, we become obese. Similarly, we stop adding and subtracting by rote and use calculators instead, we stop reading and we become the electronic iconic culture which Marshall McLuhan predicted, thereby losing the brain muscles and the skills which we exercised in the past. This could be an evolutionary disaster.

#### 5. Ignorance at the Student Daily, too

*Journalism students who run a university daily can be expected to be more knowledgeable than the run of the mill undergraduate. However, this is a risky assumption. The November 11, 1997 issue of the Sacramento State Hornet provided an example of an article full of errors. I thought I'd have myself some fun, so I sent in a few corrections. My letter was printed on November 21. Here it is:*

This is to make a few corrections in Bob Tolle's 11/11/97 front page article dealing with the increase in Cal State student enrollments:

1. The first paragraph states that fall enrollment at the university soared by 340,000. You don't need to know the numbers in order to understand that this is utterly out of the question. Try to imagine what it would mean if the *increase* alone were of such magnitude! What you meant to say is that the total enrollment of the entire California State University system now exceeds 340,000.

2. In the third paragraph, you write that tidal wave II will *add* 500,000 students to our statewide enrollment. Again, you should pause and realize the impossibility of such an increase. What you meant to say is that in ten years, the State University system's total enrollment will exceed half a million.

3. Cal State Sacramento should not be included in the graphic: We are not one of the six campuses which experienced the largest growth. Our campus only grew by 61 students (as you yourself note in the article). The six fastest growing campuses should include San Jose State, (as you recognize in the text) rather than Sacramento. They grew by 3%, whereas we only grew by one fourth of one percent.

Since the article is well written, I am giving you a B- (I am an easy grader) -- but primarily for the verbal part. You still need to work on your math (*Sacramento State Hornet*, Nov. 21, 1997).

#### 6. Ignorance at the American Automobile Association, too

*When education fails, the repercussions occur in the entire society. I came across an example of this in 1996, when I was perusing the American Automobile Club's European Travel Guide, and noticed that it was full of factual errors. Always the educator, I wrote them a letter with some corrections. (They turned down my assistance). Here is a part of my letter to them:*

AAA

Member Comments

This is to offer my assistance in correcting some errors in the 1996 Europe Travel Book.

1. p. 45: Albania should not be included in the map of the former Yugoslavia. While you call the map the "Balkans," that word is not synonymous with Yugoslavia. Your map simply represents the former Yugoslavia, with Albania added. The Balkans, on the other hand, include all sorts of other territories, for instance parts of Bulgaria, former parts of Hungary, Northern Greece, Romania, etc.

2. p. 86: You state that London's population is 6,800,000, and then, two lines down, "nearly 8,000,000".

3. p. 185: The Iron Curtain did not come down in 1919. It came down in 1948. The very term was not coined until then (by Winston Churchill). As far as Hungary is concerned, it was not a communist satellite of the Soviet Union until 1948. Between World Wars I and II and during World War II, Hungary was a right-wing pro-axis country, most assuredly not communist (with the exception of the short-lived Bela Kun period, as you correctly note on page 187).

4. p. 227: Lake Baikal cannot possibly hold one fifth of the world's fresh water: The Great Lakes alone are seven times larger than Lake Baikal (granted, not as deep). Add all the other large lakes of the world, plus small lakes (of which Alaska alone has two million), plus all the rivers of the world, and you can see that even with its 5700 foot depth, Baikal can at best contain one fiftieth of the world's fresh water. You must have gotten your decimals wrong.

5. p. 300: Monaco's area cannot be 1.8 square kilometers, as well as 7 square miles. The latter figure is correct, of course, but that means 18 square kilometers, not 1.8.

### 3. THE CLASSES AND THE CLASSLESS. THEIR CULTURE AND THEIR LEISURE

*More than anything else, Sociology is the study of class, race and gender. We call it the holy trinity. Actually, one should add sexual preference to this list. So our holy trinity actually has four members, like the three musketeers. The sociological discussion of social class is highly politicized. After all, this is the topic which divides all of humanity into two groups - the left and the right, egalitarian socialists on one side and elitists along with libertarians on the other. A later section of this book presents many political pieces about Left-vs-Right, Liberals vs. Conservatives. Here, I offer some of my more harmless statements about social class.*

*When sociologists study social class, they have the option of focusing on the economic and structural aspects of inequality (Marx), or on its cultural dimensions (Weber). I have always preferred the latter focus, if for no other reason because almost everyone else is preoccupied by the former. For example, in my book Leisure and Popular Culture (C.V.Mosby-Times Mirror, 1975; 1980), I discuss the stratification of leisure and culture in non-economic terms, anticipating the later work of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu.*

#### 1. Why is Beer the Favorite Drink of the Underclass?

*I begin with another one of Mary Massaro's funny questions, published in her Beyond the Pale (2003: Diogenes publishing). My answer to this question was as follows:*

In the United States, I would say it's because the underclass has bad taste. It is simply a matter of training, and the underclass is not trained to develop sophisticated tastes. (Remember Eliza Doolittle in *My Fair Lady*?- a member of the underclass *can* be trained to acquire refined tastes). Since American beer is so utterly tasteless, my explanation would work here. However, European beer can be so extremely good, so I don't know about over there...(Massaro, 2003: 21-22).

## 2. Why do Proletarians Prefer Sports like Hunting and Bowling, whereas their well-heeled Counterparts favor Skiing and Golf?

*This was the next provocative question Mary Massaro asked university professors to answer. Here is what I said:*

First, there is the matter of money; Skiing and golf are of course expensive. Beyond that, there is again the stratification of taste. Here, I can adduce some heavy scholarly materials, including my own book *Leisure and Popular Culture*, and French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's amazing book, *Taste*. Sports, like all elements of culture, are stratified. The primary dimension that stratification follows is *complexity* or sophistication. Thus, "high culture" is complex and sophisticated, "popular culture" less so, and "prole culture" the least (Massaro, 2003: 22).

## 3. Social Class is more than just a Matter of Money.

*I have often argued that most people, both lay and professional, are far too hung up on the purely economic dimension of social class. Here is a small part of a lecture I gave in about 2004:*

If social class were purely a matter of money, as most simplistic people believe, we could never understand the various strata's recreational and cultural habits. Tickets to NFL football games and NBA basketball games are more expensive than tickets to the opera, to a ballet, to the theater or to a classical concert - which we call *high culture*. But who goes to these two types of events? Typical of the high-culture audience are, for example, university professors. Typical of the professional sports audience are, among others, business executives. These people make a whole lot more money than professors. Similarly, expensive outdoor recreation, which requires \$100,000 motor homes and \$300,000 boats, is more popular among people who may have impressive incomes but whose lifestyle and habits (a preference for beer over wine or cognac, the popularity of tattoos, rough language, etc.) hardly qualify them as upper class. Conversely books, arguably a more refined pastime, are one of the cheapest forms of recreation.

In sum, while money has something to do with the stratification of leisure and culture, it is by no means the whole story. Society's economic elite is not identical with its cultural elite. Bourdieu documents the same thing in France.

## 4. Are the Rich Happier than the Rest of Us?

*Still, it would be foolish to deny that wealth is the single most important difference between the social classes. So Mary Massaro went on to pose the question in the above title. Here is how I replied:*

Of course they are: Money isn't everything, but it facilitates most other sources of happiness, for example health -- both mental and physical. Money permits one to escape stress and bad experiences in a healthy way (e.g, go skiing or go to Hawaii) rather than an unhealthy way (drinking or drugs). Sure, the suicide rate is at least as high among the rich as it is among the poor, and this suggests that happiness is a subjective state. However, money provides the *objective* conditions which alleviate everything in life, so it has to play a major role (Massaro, 2003: 117).

### 5. Who is Loud and Obnoxious?

*Massaro seemed to agree with my previous point, that "class" is a matter of much more than just money, as evidenced by her next few questions:*

"Why is emotional repression so characteristic of aristocrats and elites?"

*My answer:*

People of these classes simply have a better upbringing: They have been taught that the expression of emotions is a weakness; that self-control is good. This requires moral strength, discipline and practice. It's called "class." (Massaro, 2003: 23).

"Why is it, the lower the social class the louder the person?"

*My answer:*

Lower-class individuals are more primitive, emotional, and extroverted. They are also less adept in social skills, self-control, and self-discipline (Massaro, 2003: 21).

"Why do manners deteriorate with each successive generation?"

*My answer:*

I agree that there is long-term deterioration. But this is a historical cycle. It has not always been that way. From the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries manners probably improved, as we became more "civilized." This culminated during the Victorian era, when manners mattered to an almost ridiculous degree. (Of course, there was enormous variation by social class, even then). Then we became increasingly democratized and liberated. Taboos fell by the wayside, and the guiding principle became "if it feels good, do it." One word for this is called decadence. In a sense, we are all becoming more lower-class (Massaro, 2003:20).

### 6. Why is a Kind and Intelligent Person so Rare in Society? Have People Simply Lost the Desire to be Respectable?

*One more excellent "character" question by Mary, to which I replied:*

"Kind," "intelligent," "respectable - these are all loaded words. Are these qualities waning

among the population? Kindness of the primitive and emotional type is. At the same time, the horrible cruelties ancient people inflicted upon each other are also rarer now - at least in the Western World.

Intelligence? There are many problems with our educational system, and I see many young people who are clueless about the things that are important to me. Then again, when it comes to electronic technology and such, *I am the moron*, so I don't think intelligence is necessarily in decline.

Respectability? Right. That's an archaic value. However, it's the *kind* of respectability which has changed, not the quality itself. What I mean is that people still desperately seek the approval of their peers, but this approval is often gained through attire, sexual prowess, daring to commit deviant acts, physical features (e.g. things that old-timers find weird, like body-piercings), and so on. People are more likely to win admiration of others through these means than through academic achievement or courageous and virtuous behavior. In other words, it's the (new) *values* that are wrong (Massaro, 2003: 20).

### 7. Why do Attractive People so Often Appear Shallow and Unintelligent?

*And another:*

I am not aware that they do. But come to think of it, there may be something to this question. I am reminded of the type of people I see at the health club where I work out. Yuppies and "the beautiful people" are constantly working on their bodies and their looks. Many of them are extremely narcissistic and quite superficial in their interests and in their conversations. They are very materialistic and they are always reading books about stock options, self-improvement, and the like (as they pedal the Life cycle). So in response to the question, their shallowness and unintelligence may just be their materialistic values (Massaro, 2003: 24).

### 8. Are Mean People more Competent?

*While I am at it, I might as well mention a somewhat related idea I had for a research project in 1992. The research question is this: Is there a relationship between competence and meanness? Now you are supposed to laugh. This is called humor, although I have seen a lot more nonsensical sociological projects!*

A simple model to test the relationship between meanness and competence is a two-by-two format, as below:

### I .The relationship between Meanness and Competence

		Meanness	
		yes (mean)	no (kind)
Compe- Tence	Yes	1 (e.g. Hitler)	2 (e.g. Gandhi)
	No	3 (e.g. most criminals)	4 (e.g. Aver- age Joe)

Table I contains four categories of people:

- 1) People who are both mean and competent - many leaders, captains of industry, generals, etc.
- 2) People who are competent and kind - many leaders, e.g. Jesus, Gandhi, Martin Luther King.
- 3) People who are mean and incompetent -for example stupid criminals who get caught.
- 4) People who are kind and incompetent - many people I know.

Let the *hypothesis* be that ***there is a positive correlation between meanness and competence***. That is, there are more mean people who are competent than kind people who are competent, and vice-versa. Many questions arise. Among them the following:

A) What is the reason for coming up with this hypothesis? Is it *inductive*, i.e .Have we observed anecdotal evidence which suggests this relationship? or is it *deductive*, i.e. Do we have good theoretical reasons to believe this?

B) Which is the dependent variable and which one is the independent variable? In other words, are people competent because they are mean, or is it the other way around? or, thirdly, is it a *spurious* relationship, caused by a third variable? For example, living in cold climates causes many people to be(come) both competent and mean?

C) How do we operationalize and measure Meanness and Competence?

I will not try to answer these questions. I will only present two hypothetical results:

Table II. Null Hypothesis supported

		Meanness		
		yes (mean)	no (kind)	Total
Compe- Tence	yes	25%	25%	50%
	no	25%	25%	50%
	total	50%	50%	100%

Table III. Hypothesis confirmed

		Meanness		
		yes (mean)	no (kind)	total
Compe- Tence	yes	35%	15%	50%
	no	15%	35%	50%
	total	50%	50%	100%

### 9. Are Mean Sociologists More Competent?

*I then wrote a variant of the above idea, applying it to my own profession:*

Most of us in the academic world are familiar with the peer review process. We submit a manuscript for a paper or a book for publication, or for conference presentation. It is reviewed and either rejected, or accepted, or accepted provisionally. In any of these three scenarios, the author usually receives feedback from the referees. During the late 1990s, I peddled a manuscript for a new textbook in Social Psychology (a re-write of my *Social Interaction*, which was first published in 1977, St. Louis: Times-Mosby). The various publishers obtained a total of 17 reviews over three rounds of reviews. Incidentally, I did finally get a contract and a modest advance payment, from Holt-Rinehart.

After studiously reading all the reviews, I came to the conclusion that they can be classified along two dimensions, or axes: (1) from courteous to mean-spirited and (2) from good to incompetent. Now I realize that I am violating all the canons of validity and reliability when I propose to use this sample of reviews for any test. But this is only *exploratory*. I just want to conceptualize *types* of reviews and reviewers, and formulate some hypotheses about the review process. Table One shows the four categories generated by the combination of the two dimensions.

Table I. Types of Reviews

		Review is Mean-spirited	
		yes	no
Review is Competent	yes	1	2
	no	3	4

Definition and Operationalization of Terms: By “mean-spirited,” I mean a review by someone who would be colloquially called an *asshole*. Some reviews exude the negative qualities of their writers. There are four prominent negative qualities: (1) mean-spiritedness, (2) prejudice and bigotry, (3) self-serving parochialism, and (4) temporary bad mood.

A few examples: (1): “this author needs to go back to high school and learn how to spell.” (Use of insult). “This author is merely trying to cash in on the current humanistic fad.” (Imputation of evil motives).

(2): “Clearly, this author is a xenophobic redneck who has never experienced foreign cultures.” Or, “These Symbolic Interactionists are all the same - they theorize and prove nothing.”

(3): “This book will never fly. Symbolic Interactionism is passé. Certainly most psychologists are now aware of that” (this reviewer is no doubt a psychologist, not a sociologist). Or, “The author fails to recognize that the fundamental condition underlying all human relationships consists of power and class-conflict.” (Reviewer is obviously a Marxist).

(4): “I have no time for this nonsense right now.”

Now for a the operational definition of what constitutes a good or a bad review (and it isn’t clear which of the two dimensions in table One is the independent variable and which one is the dependent variable - a point to which I shall return in a moment): A good review has three characteristics: (1) it makes *specific* criticisms; (2) it makes *valid* criticisms; (3) it makes *important* criticisms.

Some examples: (1): Good criticism: “Chapter Two, section 3, should also cover Ethnomethodology.”(Specific and helpful). Bad criticism: “The manuscript should be re-organized.” (Vague and unhelpful).

(2): Good criticism: “You are mis-reading Howard Becker’s article.” (Could be true). Bad criticism: George Herbert Mead coined the term “Symbolic Interactionism.” (False).

(3): Good criticism: “The labeling theory of emotions overlooks the importance of hormonal chemistry.” (Good point). Bad criticism: “you misspelled *definatly*,” or “*pain* means bread in French.”

(Petty and unimportant).

#### The Four Types:

Type 1: A well-done but mean review

Type 2: A well-done and nice review

Type 3: A poorly done and mean review

Type 4: A poorly done but nice review

The question is whether there is a correlation between the two variables, or are the cell frequencies distributed randomly? Table Two gives the null hypothesis - no correlation. Table Three provides numbers which would support the hypothesis that mean reviews tend to be more competent reviews.

Table Two: No Relationship between Reviewer's Competence and his/her Meanness

		Review is Mean-spirited	
		yes	no
Review is Competent	yes	25%	25%
	no	25%	25%

Table Three: Mean Reviews Tend to be Done more Competently

		Review is Mean-spirited	
		yes	no
Review is Competent	yes	35%	15%
	no	15%	35%

So the research question is whether there is a correlation between the meanness of reviews, and how competently they are done. The hypothesis is that there is one, namely a *positive* one. Why?

Well, one rationale could be this: The more knowledgeable, or simply the *better* a scholar is, the more difficulty he/she probably has in reading flawed material. Unlike the mediocre academician (say, one who teaches at a community college), the excellent professional (e.g. the Berkeley professor) does not have patience with the many inevitable flaws found in any manuscript. So his/her review is not only correct, but it also expresses his/her displeasure. So you see, I end up treating *competence* as the *independent variable*.

Now remember, this research question leaves entirely aside the quality of the “stimulus,” i.e. the manuscript under review. Obviously, good work can be expected to receive kinder feedback than bad work. But that is a different question.

My rather grim hypothesis is inspired by personal experience, common-sense and popular culture: We can all remember the frightening teachers we had in junior high school, the witch-like old ladies who still give us an occasional nightmare. They were a menace, but they sure taught us something, didn't they? They certainly taught us more than those “cool” permissive teachers who just wanted to be our friends. The frightening teachers taught us more, because they were both mean and competent. Same with coaches. Would Bobby Knight have won more basketball games, NCAA championships and Olympic Gold than any other man in history with love, rather than with the fierce discipline and outright meanness for which he is famous?

But this is an empirical question. I would be delighted to see my hypothesis disproved. What could be better than a world in which quality performance is associated with love and kindness, rather than the opposite?

#### 4: RACE, CULTURE, RACE RELATIONS, AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

*The topic of race has become a minefield, particularly in academia. I often wrote and published short opinions and diatribes about this or that ethnic issue. Some of these could be construed as ‘conservative.’ More to the point, they tend to be iconoclastic and contrarian - always my favorite role.*

##### 1. Which is the most Alcoholic Culture?

*I begin, again, with an answer I gave to one of Mary Massaro's questions in her book Beyond the Pale (Diogenes publishing).*

Currently, Russians (and some other Eastern Europeans such as the Hungarians, of whom I am one) are no doubt the people who are committing the highest rate of mass suicide by alcohol abuse. Other nationalities that have had high rates of alcoholism historically include the Irish and the French.

It is interesting to note that cultures that tolerate some alcohol use tend to “inoculate” their members against serious alcoholism, so to speak. For example, Jews engage in ritualistic alcohol consumption at Bar-Mitzvah, and Italian families have a relaxed attitude toward minor wine drinking with a meal. Thus, these ethnic groups have low rates of alcoholism. (This is known as the “escape valve” theory of alcoholism.) (Massaro, 2003: 6-7).

## 2. Why are most Mobsters Italian?

*Another question Mary Massaro asked from me and from other professors in Beyond the Pale. Here is the answer I gave:*

Are they? I suppose they were at one time, and due to Francis Ford Copola and Martin Scorsese, we continue to stereotype Italians in this fashion. Insofar as Italian-Americans were at one time more criminal than some other ethnic groups, this probably had to do with historical coincidence, and maybe some traits of Sicilian (not all Italian) culture. But remember that various ethnic groups take their turn at being the most criminal in America: Before the Italians it was the Irish. Recently, blacks became the most criminal ethnic group, but already Russians may be moving to the top position (Massaro, 2003: 6).

## 3. Does a Nation really Benefit from Ethnic Diversity? Aren't Homogeneous Societies more Stable than Mixed ones?

*...And here is another answer to a Massaro question:*

It is probably true that a diverse society has more conflict than a homogeneous one. Consider India before it broke up into a Muslim part (Pakistan) and a Hindu part, or today's Israel today torn between Jews and Palestinians. In a multiethnic and multi cultural society like the United States, there is plenty of crime, conflict, drugs and deviant behavior. Now Consider homogeneous societies such as Japan, Switzerland, and Austria - pretty peaceful. Contrast also the diverse city vs. the homogeneous small town. Always more crime, deviance, drugs and conflict in the city, right?

No question about it, diversity brings about tension, discord and deviance. However, diversity also begets with it excitement, freedom, progress and cultural innovation, whereas the homogeneous environment suffers from stagnation and boredom (Massaro, 2003: 12).

## 4. Will Racism and Sexism ever Subside?

*...and this one as well. (This question is particularly illustrative of the sharp, profound, no-nonsense questions Mary asked from her academic panelists).*

I like to separate the two. As I said earlier, xenophobia is universal and maybe part of human nature. Certain criteria for bigotry are becoming taboo in the United States, as per governmental edicts. It is becoming dangerous and even illegal to be a racist.

We live in a precariously diverse society, one that cannot tolerate ethnic strife, as that would cause society to disintegrate. Thus, whenever a new situation arises, the authorities promptly tell us what is forbidden. Since September 11, for instance, there has been a concerted campaign to re-rank anti-Arab bigotry to the top of the list of taboos.

But here is what is likely to happen in the long run: People will always find *new* criteria upon which to base their bigotry. If racism becomes a crime, we may well turn our bigotry toward people who appear very intelligent (e.g., wear glasses), or people who dress a certain way (e.g., wear a tie), or people who have an accent, and so on.

There is an infinite number of factors we can use for bigotry. Whenever the authorities declare some of these to be taboo -- in recent years race, sexual preference, etc -- we can turn to new ones. Just one example: it's perfectly acceptable today -- as Jay Leno frequently does on

national television -- to ridicule Frenchmen, to say that they are mean and dirty, that they never shower, that their women don't shave their legs and arm pits.

I don't know about sexism. In the U.S., I don't see much of it any more. But don't get me going about the Taliban, India, Africa and the rest.. Many parts of the Third World are NOWHERE yet when it comes to gender equality (Massaro, 2003: 14).

#### 5. Aren't Blacks as Guilty of Racism as Whites? On that Note, aren't Women as Guilty of Sexism as Men?

*...As is this one, a politically incorrect question which many liberals will not like.*

Yes, but *which* whites/blacks/women? The people who are obsessed by, and cannot stop thinking about, race and gender are white liberals (i.e. most sociologists), many blacks, and radically feminist women (Massaro, 2003: 2).

#### 6. This Joke is Politically Incorrect

*Sometimes it's good to goof off, as I did in the following brief moment of levity, in 1992. Hopefully the innocent banter will not get me in trouble. I long for the days when political sensibilities did not run as high as they do today, and harmless ethnic jokes were permissible:*

The store proudly sold products reflecting advanced Mexican technology. Its management followed the latest organizational practices developed by the Hungarian government. The company used the sophisticated practices typical of American advertising. It operated with the honesty and integrity only found in post-Communist Russia. The employees' work ethic was as vibrant as that of the unionized French worker. Customers were met with the subtle Teutonic humor of the Germans and the warmth and spontaneity typical of the British, while, at the same time, being treated to the calm equanimity of Jews. Finally, clients' inquiries were approached with the straightforward and direct approach of the Japanese, and untoward behavior was handled with the courage which one sees among Italians under fire.

#### 7. Race: Nature or Nurture? Disturbing Thoughts in the Aftermath of the '92 Los Angeles Riot

*On a more serious note, on April 30, 1992, Los Angeles erupted in the largest race riot in the history of California. This was triggered by the acquittal of the policemen who had beaten up Rodney King. The riot killed 58 people. As I saw it, the riot was another symptom of the approaching collapse of civilization. The barbarians were at the gates. I was upset. I published various letters and articles(see below). I also wrote the following disturbing analysis of race, which was never published:*

The time has come to be truthful about the race problem in America. The April 30 Los Angeles riot once again raises, starkly, the question as to "what makes blacks tick." When the violence takes on such monstrous proportions, the usual sociological pieties no longer suffice. Past discrimination, suffering, racism, poverty, all these now *feel* utterly inadequate for an explanation of the savagery which just occurred in South Central L.A.

Our worst racist impulses have been re-awakened. “They do behave like animals,” many of us thought, ashamed of the thought, but thinking it anyway. Some of us once again resurrected the nature-nurture question about race. Perhaps blacks *are* inherently different after all - more violent, for one thing.

What about the millions of fine, law-abiding, civil, well-spoken blacks, the brilliant and eloquent black intellectuals like W.E.B. DuBois, James Baldwin, Tom Sowell, Clarence Thomas, Bill Cosby, the hosts and guests of National Public Radio, etc. etc.?

Still, the racist in us replies: black excellence is most noticeable in sports, and most lacking in the quantitative sciences which, in turn, are dominated by Asians. This *could* be confirmation that the racial differences in aptitudes are *inherent*, with blacks being on average physically superior, but *only* physically so. One could, for example, put the issue in terms of left-brain vs. right-brain aptitudes. This would explain black excellence in arts, music, jazz, and lack of it in the physical and biological sciences. The numerous exceptions to this generalization could be accounted for by centuries of miscegenation. Although a counter-trend is also under way: There is a greater degree of natural selection going on in the black ghetto, due to higher rates of mortality at all ages, including infant mortality. This would increase black physical superiority in the long run. There already seems to be evidence of black-white chemical and physiological differences. Blacks are able to restore glucose depletion more rapidly than whites. They may have a different ratio of fast-twitch to slow-twitch muscles. Surely black athletic performance demands some such explanations. Is it a wonder that all Western countries utilize their black athletes to the maximum, be in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom or France?

Still, bringing physiology (“nature”) into any discussion of race always leaves one with a bad taste. Worse, it is suicidally dangerous, witness the descent into pariah status of Jimmy the Greek, Richard Herrnstein, Charles Murray and anyone else who has ever dared to do this.

The most important question about race may not be whether differences are caused by nature or by nurture, but: Why is this question *itself* so utterly taboo? The answer to *this* question can be given in one word: Nazis. Because of the history of eugenics, western society seems to have decided once and for all to *never* again discuss race biologically. This makes sense.

But a clarification is in order: what we are afraid of, or better, what we *should* be afraid of is *not* a scientific finding (God forbid) of innate racial differences in aptitudes, but a possible nefarious *societal response* to that finding, e.g. eugenics, genocide, racial discrimination, malignant neglect and second-class status.

However, scientific findings do not dictate specific societal policies. Society is already made up of many different groups with different innate capabilities - children, the elderly, men and women, the physically and mentally handicapped, the obese, the sick, the mentally ill, etc. A civilized society treats all groups with respect and dignity, and provides each group with the opportunities it requires for a fulfilled life.

\* \* \* \* \*

Whether the causes of black violence (which, by the way, victimizes primarily other blacks) are sociological or biological, the violence has paid off. It is tragic that Western society’s response to violence is often appeasement. Michael Moore, in his film *Bowling for Columbine*, argues that white Americans have lived in fear of blacks ever since pre-colonial days. This should be generalized to the following statement: When middle-class white people are confronted with violence or the threat of violence, they are generally tempted by weakness and a desire to

accommodate their aggressors. In addition, they have an inordinate amount of guilt, because the intellectual establishment has told them relentlessly that they are privileged and that their privilege is at the expense of the downtrodden.

Thus whenever African-Americans misbehave, as they did on April 30, 1992, the chattering academic and media elites compare them to such groups as the Jews in Nazi Germany. But this is ridiculous. There are no similarities between American blacks now and European Jews in the 1930s - none. The latter were meek, non-violent, hard-working over-achievers victimized by the brutality of Aryan thugs. On April 30, 1992, the blacks were the thugs, and the Korean shop owners whom they keynoted and targeted were the Jews of Los Angeles.

The Los Angeles riot reminded me of Kristall Nacht: On November 9, 1938, a similar riot occurred in Germany, except that there the looters and murderers were Nazi thugs, not blacks, and the stores which were burnt to the ground belonged to Jews, not Koreans.

But there is a vast difference, you'll say: The Hitler Youth and brown shirts who were murdering Jews in Germany on Kristall Nacht had the full support of the German authorities.

Well, this is where the analogy with Kristall Nacht becomes even more alarming than you think: Actually, there *is* complicity on the part of the American ruling class. It is not overt, blatant and formal of course, but it exists: Nowhere in the media could one find sympathy for the Korean shopkeepers during and in the aftermath of the Los Angeles riot. On the other hand, one editorial after another pontificated about the travesty of justice which took place when Rodney King's abusers were acquitted (even though they were later convicted in a second trial, arguably in violation of the 5<sup>th</sup> Amendment's prohibition against Double Jeopardy). No editorial failed to mention the poverty and high unemployment in South Central L.A. and all the other excuses/justifications for the murderous mass riot. The only people one could see on television being arrested were Koreans, attempting to defend themselves with their own guns.

Our elite is responsible for the collapse of authority witnessed in Los Angeles on April 30. We saw on television policemen standing by passively while the barbarians were destroying the city. I blame our elite for this - the media, the academe, liberal politicians, the entire "consciousness industry," i.e. the people who control our minds and our culture. For two generations they have been telling us that authority is bad, policemen are bad, law and order is bad, restraining suspects is bad, America is evil and racist, all the problems of the blacks are the fault of whites, there is a free lunch, immediate gratification is good, every crime committed stems from injustice, all criminals and aggressors are somehow victims, and aggression therefore deserves to be rewarded.

\* \* \* \* \*

So where does this leave us with respect to race and blacks? Earlier I brought up the incendiary question of whether or not blacks are innately different (from whites). My personal hunch is that they are probably *not*.

Even after witnessing the 1992 Los Angeles riot, I feel that sociology, not biology, offers the most plausible explanations of black violence - including a crime rate that is two to seven times higher than that of whites or Asians, depending on the crime. Why do I feel this way?

Simple: Many other ethnic groups have held the number one position in crime and violence at different times in history. Within the United States, there was a time when Irish immigrants were number one. Later, Italian-Americans took over that spot. Overseas, there is Russia, which is far more violent and criminal than any segment of the United States. There is Latin America, which has always had the highest rate of private criminal violence in the world. For example, between 2002

and 2006, Columbia's murder rate was higher than Iraq's, and that was without a civil war. In Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, normal middle class life is no longer possible. There are the favellas, and there is an upper class consisting of bankers and businessmen who can only commute to work by helicopter so as to avoid being kidnaped for ransom.

For organized violence, the record still belongs to Europe, with Japan a close second. More than seventy million people died violent deaths during World Wars One and Two. Nearly one million men died in the battle of Verdun alone.

And then there is the Middle East: While the world has been focusing on the intractable problems of Iraq, Israel and Palestine, it is less well known that there are roughly fifty murders *a day* in Algiers - more than in the entire United States!

Clearly, the causes of violence in all these disparate places at different times are social and political, not racial.

Why, then, even raise the nature-nurture question regarding race (again)? In the end, the question is not very important. Even if science one day were to discover certain innate racial differences in behavior and aptitudes, they would be minimal at the most, and becoming more so every day as a result of progressive miscegenation.

In the end, there is neither a compelling reason to research this question in great depth, nor to fear it as much as we do, and to make it a taboo subject, as we have done. There is of course always the danger that minor observed racial differences could be used as an *excuse* for racist policies. But there is no reason why a liberal democratic society could not handle these in a humane and respectful way, as it already handles gender differences, for example. A very similar point was made some years ago by the eminent Harvard sociologist Nathan Glaser.

#### 8 . Los Angeles Riot Reminiscent of Kristall Nacht.

*As stated in the previous article, the 1992 Los Angeles race riot reminded me of Kristall Nacht. One of the rioters' favorite targets were the Korean shopkeepers in South Central L.A. Once again, in my view, the media got it wrong. Many of them tended to whitewash the keynoting of Korean businesses by rioters, buying into the argument that those businesses deserved to be burnt to the ground because they exploited the local (black) population. Muddle-headed liberals called the riot an "insurrection" or a "revolution." In the letter below, printed in the Sacramento Bee on May 2, 1992, I strongly disagree with this and I compare the rioters' behavior with that of Nazis who similarly keynoted Jewish businesses in Germany during Kristall Nacht over half a century earlier.*

I must disagree with the tenor of your May 1 article regarding black-Korean confrontations during the Los Angeles riot. The article verges on racism. To term the rampage against the Koreans a "settlement of scores" is to imply that it was deserved. *Bee* writers Sanders, Hecht and Wagner are blaming the victims. This is reminiscent of the way Jews were blamed for their plight in Nazi Germany.

Over one hundred Korean businesses were destroyed, dozens of Koreans were hurt, some were *murdered*, hundreds saw their lives' work go up in smoke. You appear to justify all of this on the grounds of the 1991 killing of a black shoplifter by a Korean business woman after she had been punched in the face by the shoplifter. Although the killing was therefore arguably in self-defense, the Korean was sentenced to probation and lost her business.

On April 30, the looters and the terrorists deliberately picked on Koreans and bluntly stated

that their aim was to rid the neighborhood of all Koreans. At the same time, they accused the Koreans of racism. It would be difficult to find more crass case of the pot calling the kettle black.

The Koreans are guilty of the same crimes as the Jews were sixty years ago: they work harder and are more entrepreneurial than the surrounding population, they succeed under adverse conditions and they provide services to the inner city which no one else is willing or able to provide. And look what it gets them!

The mobs of April 30 were a visual reminder of Kristal Nacht. To sympathize with the thugs in 1992 is as misguided as it was to support the Aryan thugs sixty years ago. (*Sacramento Bee*, May 2, 1992)

### 9 . Reversed Racism in Criminal Justice System

*After being acquitted in their first trial, the policemen who beat up Rodney King were retried and convicted. Even though this constituted double jeopardy and the sentences were severe (two-and-a-half years non-reducible prison time), many in the liberal media clamored that this was another expression of white racism and of the old double standard in criminal justice, which tends to punish blacks more severely than whites. While the double standard generally exists, and whereas it is true that the criminal justice system and law enforcement discriminate against African-Americans, the outcome of this particular trial was most definitely not a case in point. If anything, it was another example of jury nullification: The politicization of criminal trials which sometimes hand down verdicts that are not just, but expedient. The best known example of jury nullification is the O.J. Simpson case, in which acquittal was granted in order to redress past injustice against other blacks. Similarly, officers Koon and Powell were re-tried and sentenced severely because there was a political need to satisfy a large black population, to avoid another riot, to make a harsh example of cops who engage in police brutality against minorities, etc. Justice was no more served here than it was in the O.J. Simpson case. My letter printed in the Thin Blue Line on August 5, 1993, points these things out.*

There is indeed a racial double standard in our criminal justice system, but not the kind liberals believe to exist. The Koon-Powell verdict may be shocking, but not in the way blacks assume it to be.

After being exposed to double jeopardy, the two officers now receive two-and-a-half-year non-reducible sentences for committing aggravated assault against a suspect resisting arrest. Compare this with the average sentence of *under three years* served for *criminal homicide* in this country, and tell me again that Koon and Powell were treated leniently. Remember, too, that the officers' careers are in ruin, that they will have to be held in protective custody throughout their sentences lest they be murdered on the main line, and they face endless prosecutorial appeals for stiffer sentences.

Contrast this, too, with the blatantly racist murder of a totally innocent Jew in New York's Crown-Heights district last year. During that racist rampage, blacks ran amuck screaming "kill the Jews," which they then proceeded to do. The outcome? *Acquittal* of the murderer, who then went to a cocktail party to be personally congratulated by New York Mayor Dinkins!

An isolated aberration, perhaps? Not really. After the Koon-Powell verdict, blacks professed to be in "shock" and in tears about the injustice of it all. But at least one comment by a black spokesman was on the mark, albeit not in the sense he meant it: "This is about symbols," said the Reverend Cecil Murray of South Central Los Angeles. Damn right it is. Koon and Powell had to be sacrificed on the altar of our increasingly precarious race relations. Try as hard as it may to avoid it, America is devolving into a new tribalism whereby juries and judges protect their own

kind.

It will be interesting to see the outcome of the Reggie Denny case. One thing is certain: The outcome of such cases is increasingly determined by political exigencies rather than by the actual severity of the crimes committed (*Thin Blue Line*, August 5, 1993).

#### 10. The Smugness and Intellectual Laziness of White Liberals

*Much later, on December 19, 2006, I wrote down another thought about American race relations. By then, minorities had made even more progress, to the point where in some cases it was becoming questionable to even view some minorities as minorities. This is the theme I broach in the next two sections.*

American Indians and blacks are (hopefully) making economic progress. But this presents upper-class white liberal do-gooders with a problem - you know, sociology professors, editorialists, etc. It threatens their agenda. This agenda consists of (1) bemoaning traditional racial injustices and (2) trying to remedy them.

But what if it came to pass that the problem no longer existed? Then, two things would have to happen: One, these folks would have to find a new line of work, which would not be so terrible. But secondly, they would also have to change their *mind set*, and this would be a much greater challenge.

I see it over and over again, the laziness of the mind, the reluctance to change and to admit new thoughts. For example, is it possible for these people to even entertain the possibility that many native Americans may no longer need our pity? In California, for one, they are raking in the dough through their casinos, and in Alaska, oil royalties have made millionaires out of many Eskimos.

Why is it so threatening to many white patricians to realize that some minorities might actually be in the process of arriving? Because they have always assumed that whites are above people of color. This belief includes the pleasant, comfortable and smug feeling that they are the helpers, the group with the means, the goodness and the competence to help the less fortunates. God forbid that these groups should no longer require their help, having reached parity with them. The white patrician's benevolent paternalism would then be out of place.

#### 11. Sociologists don't Understand Race Relations

*I broached the same theme in the following unpublished article written in October 1997. My point, here again, was this: The prevailing paradigm to describe American race relations has been a hierarchical one - with whites on top. My discipline, Sociology, is not only in the forefront of those who subscribe to this paradigm. It can safely be held responsible for having invented it. However, I argued that this hierarchical paradigm is becoming obsolete.*

The most aggravating aspect of contemporary American Sociology is its inability or refusal to distinguish between fact and value, objective study and advocacy, science and ideology, description and propaganda, objectivity and subjectivity. This flaw pervades all of Sociology, but it is most pronounced in the area of class, race and gender, i.e. in the study of Social Inequality. Any sociological writing will document this, but good examples can be found in most issues of our national book review journal -- *Contemporary Sociology*. Let me just briefly focus on one of the afore-mentioned areas -- race relations, and use an example from the September 1997 issue of

*Contemporary Sociology:*

In the *Social Hierarchies* section of this issue, Johnny Williams reviews two books about white survivalist groups (*Contemporary Sociology*, Sept. 1997: 580-581). Predictably, he agrees with the books' authors that American racism is not limited to wacky survivalist groups, but it is pandemic to our entire "racist society" (p. 580). "White supremacist groups are (not) different from (but) rather similar to the rest of white Americans" (loc. cit.). "All whites benefit from white supremacy (and) the ideas of these (white supremacist) groups reinforce systems of privilege" (loc. cit.). To believe that such groups are deviant and different from the rest of us is a "fiction" (loc. cit.).

The review goes on with the oxymorons typical of so much of our discipline: White supremacy is, on the one hand, intractable in America (p. 581), but at the same time traditional white male privilege is eroding. So which is it?

Later, the author speaks of "...traditional *working-class* privilege and status" (loc. cit.). What on earth is that? Marx must be turning in his grave at this contradiction. Isn't the working class the exploited class? So what is wrong with the way American sociologists discuss race relations?

American sociologists are of course in the forefront of political correctness: The Sociology of Race Relations is built upon the following theorems: (1) American society is racist through and through; (2) this racism is largely limited to the white majority. (1) + (2) add up to this: *All* white Americans are racists, and *only* white Americans are racists. Being white, then, is both a sufficient and a necessary condition for being a racist.

There are two further or corollary theorems: (3) whites are privileged, and (4) assault upon them and their privileges remains justified. And as with the first two theorems, numbers (3) and (4) apply to *all* whites and *only* to whites.

Among western countries, America is the first one to move on to a new demographic stage, namely that of a multi-ethnic society. Most European countries are still more homogeneous. Although France, Germany, England, Belgium, Holland and most other European countries have growing third-world and other ethnic minorities, most of those countries are still dominated by large autochthonous majorities of white Europeans. But in America, the old Anglo-conformity model no longer describes reality. We increasingly resembles, say, Brazil rather than America hundred years ago. Aware of the change, the federal government introduced on October 30, 1997 a new category on its personnel forms: *mixed descent*.

It is becoming increasingly untenable to see our society as made up of a majority ruling over some minorities. California now has fewer whites than non-whites, a situation soon to be followed by other states. Of course, one can argue that this merely reduces whites from a numerical majority to a sociological one -- a status that can be maintained indefinitely, as happened for example in South Africa. But that, too, is debatable. Already, white per capita income is exceeded by that of Asians, among others. And certainly white advantage, even if still in effect, is declining.

So, whether imminent or already a fact, America should be viewed less and less as a one-dimensional *vertical* ethnic hierarchy with whites on top, and more and more as a *horizontal* multi-ethnic system.

Of course whites will maintain first position as a power block for a long time. However, there is nothing profound about this, nothing requiring inflammatory terms like "white supremacy" and the Postmodernists' favorite word -- "hegemony." There simply *are* a lot of white folks left, and many of them are still wealthy and powerful. They are comparable to, say, the Serbs in the former Yugoslavia. Put simply, whites are moving from *majority* status to *plurality* status. And, as in all politics, when there is no single majority, *coalition* politics render *every* group vulnerable,

even the largest one.

For several decades now, there has been a tendency among progressives to bunch together blacks, Hispanics, Asians, immigrants, homosexuals, women, *everyone but white heterosexual males* in their statements and in their political efforts. A perfect example of this is found precisely in the *Contemporary Sociology* book review under discussion (p. 581). This must be seen for what it is, namely *coalition politics*.

For years, the liberal establishment has been promoting "pluralism" and "diversity." Taken literally, such language implies the pursuit of ethnic equality. However, more often than not, it has meant the promotion of minority interests. To truly apprehend the emerging reality, a third term comes to mind - *tribalism*. This describes more accurately the evolving situation, viz. a pluralistic society in which different tribes at best co-exist, at worst fight each other, but always compete for finite resources and always feel threatened by each other. Above all, they all *resemble each other!* America is becoming similar to countries like Canada, Belgium, Switzerland, Iraq, the former Yugoslavia and all other countries where competing tribes are either coexisting or fighting.

American sociologists are desperately hanging on to a *vertical* or *hierarchical* paradigm for their understanding of race relations in their country. However, that paradigm is becoming obsolete. It must be replaced with a *horizontal* conflict/competition/pluralism paradigm.

Increasingly, whites are becoming just one more minority, fending for their interests, like the other tribes surrounding it. Sociologists may persist in labeling things like opposition to affirmative action "racist." However, they need to understand that there will be more and more "racism" in that incorrect sense of the word. After all whites, like everyone else, operate on the basis of rational self-interest, and as their advantage reaches the vanishing point, they can be expected to resist their relative decline. The pursuit of life, liberty and material happiness is universal. To call it "racism" in some cases but something else in others is absurd.

The four theorems I described above are deeply ingrained among American sociologists. Empirical facts will not dislodge them. In absolute numbers, there are more poor whites than any other group; more white men in prison than any other group; more homeless white males than any other group. But none of this causes the profession to question its foundational theorems.

Abandoning the old paradigm will be difficult for most of the chattering class, because it provides the psychological comfort of feeling privileged, i.e. superior. Of course, it has always required obligatory expressions of guilt, but it is always nicer to feel superior-with-guilt than to come to the realization that one is merely the same as everyone else.

## 5. SEX, GENDER, TRANSSEXUALISM

*The third element in Sociology's holy trinity is Gender. In the present section, I only reproduce some interesting tidbits about a few esoteric topics such as transsexualism, sex research and pedophilia. My many articles about feminism and sexual politics come later, in the political parts of this book.*

### 1. Sex Changes

*I began my academic publishing career by writing about an unusual topic - transsexualism. This was not because I had any special interest or knowledge of this topic, but simply because I was in search of something interesting to do my doctoral dissertation on. So to that end, I interviewed a bunch of transsexuals (no more often called trans-gendered people) (post-operatively). I was able to do that because just when I was searching for a dissertation topic at the University of Minnesota in 1968, that University's medical school was beginning to perform sex-change*

*operations (It was one of the first to do so). So I figured what the heck, this is a titillating topic, the U of M is an eminent institution, I might come up with some interesting findings, and this research could put me on the map. And sure enough, within a couple of years I had published my first book and half a dozen refereed articles on this subject. However, I am not sure that this was the best possible career decision. Due to the stigma attached to this condition and this topic, being a specialist on transsexualism does not ingratiate you with everyone. Be that as it may, in retrospect I value the work I have done in this field, and I continue to support the LGBT movement and its quest with equality and acceptance. Much progress has been made since my research in the late 1960s.*

*So that's what happened. I haven't dealt with this topic in half a century. The best way to summarize some of my long-ago work in this area is the letter I published in the August 1975 issue of Playboy, which follows:*

During the past few years, I've conducted extensive interviews with 17 people who underwent male-to-female sex-change operations at the University of Minnesota, and I've gotten more data from a number of other transsexuals. I wanted to learn about their social adjustment to their new gender identity. Clinical, medical and psychiatric material about transsexuals abounds, but my study, which is reported in my book *Sex Change: The Achievement of Gender Identity by Feminized Transsexuals*, is the only in-depth description of the social lives and inner feelings of feminized transsexuals.

Sex-change technology has now been perfected to the point where a majority of postoperative patients have well functioning vaginas or penises. These people range from slightly odd-looking to superb specimens who can go totally undetected; and in all but a few cases, they claim to be far happier now than before their sex change. At the time of the interviews, the subjects, who ranged in age from 21 to 55, had been feminized from two weeks to two years. By then, four were married, including one whose husband did not know she had once been a man.

I found four basic ways of adjusting to being female:

The housewife type. She is the most typical transsexual. She desires respectability above all else and views marriage, motherhood and housewifely roles as the true fulfillment of femininity. She will attempt to pass for a natural-born female to avoid stigmatization.

The stripper type. She is at the opposite end of the continuum. Unlike the housewife, the stripper does not conceal herself, her *body*, her identity. Stigma becomes asset, as when the stripper appears in downtown shows, advertising herself as a sex change, flaunting what the housewife tries to conceal.

The aspiring housewife. This transsexual also subscribes to traditional cultural sex definitions, but, for a variety of reasons (less-than-successful sex surgery, older age, extreme masculine features to begin with), she isn't attractive enough to land a husband and fulfill her dreams.

The career woman. A few transsexuals are attuned to the winds of ideological fashion. They exhibit a healthy indifference to respectability and bourgeois lifestyle yet remain aloof from the underworld subculture of the stripper type. They don't try to pass, nor do they call unnecessary attention to their sex change. The career woman's educational level is high; her work is her central life interest and it is frequently of a creative, scientific or executive nature.

I found that unlike feminists, gay liberation and other branches of that revolution, transsexuals are often sexually conservative. I constructed a masculinity-femininity scale and found significant differences between the patients and matched groups of natural-born females. Many transsexuals feel that women belong in the home, in the kitchen, with the children. This is understandable. Transsexual conversion, like any other major change in status, entails an

irretrievable investment of one's life. It is a basic law of social psychology that when all bridges to a former status or identity have been burned, the new status must be embraced with unconditional loyalty and commitment. Those transsexuals whom I found to be this way wanted nothing to do with women's lib, which they saw as a movement to masculinize women. (*Playboy*, August, 1975).

## 2. Transsexual Conundrums

This section has been deleted.

## 3. Sexual Propaganda Passed off as Sex Research

*During the seventies and eighties, the sexual revolution was still in full swing. AIDS had not yet arrived. "Progressive" people and much of popular culture - heirs to the counterculture - were still advocating all-out sex in all its forms. One person who got a lot of mileage out of the sexual bandwagon was Shere Hite, who published widely publicized books on Female and Male Sexuality, allegedly based on empirical findings. This became the best known sex research since Kinsey and Masters and Johnson. However, the work was shoddy. As I saw it, it was propaganda for the promotion of sexual liberation, not scientific research. This is what I wrote in the following letter to Time Magazine in June of 1981:*

Letter to the Editor, Time:

You do a disservice with your elaborate review of Hite's *Report on Male Sexuality*. There is a great deal of serious and painstaking sex research going on in this country, but you ignore it, while giving prominent coverage to Hite's distorted, sensational and completely unfounded "findings." Her sample consists of the readership of very liberal magazines like *The Village Voice* in very liberal environments like Manhattan. Such a sample is utterly unrepresentative! It vastly exaggerates rates of infidelity, masturbation and other departures from traditional heterosexual, monogamous sex. But her work is widely publicized whereas valid information about sexuality, which is available, goes largely unnoticed. Her work perpetuates, with your helping hand, the myths that have been disorienting this society since the beginnings of the sexual revolution.

My own work in human sexuality spans twelve years of research and publications, including *Sexual Behavior and Family Life in Transition* (Elsevier, 1978), in which I discuss some of the flaws on Hite's previous "research." Hite's new book is, like her previous book on female sexuality, a piece of advocacy, not a "report."

## 4. Dutch Pedophile Party

*But even a quarter of a century later, the sexual revolution had not yet completed its course, at least not in the always oh-so-liberal Netherlands. On September 2, 2006, I came across a news item on the Internet reporting the creation of a new pedophile party in that country. In the following e-mail, I share this news with a few of my colleagues:*

Hey Brian and Tom:

More news from the Dutch front: There is a new political party called *De Partij voor Naastenliefde, Vrijheid en Diversiteit* (PNVD), which means *Party for the Love of Your Fellow Man, Freedom and Diversity*: It's the pedophile party. Its platform for the upcoming November

election is to lower the age for legal consensual sex to twelve. However, their ultimate goal is to lower it to zero. They consider themselves evolutionary, not revolutionary. Hence, they want to reach their ultimate goal (of eliminating any age limitation) gradually, not all at once. That's nice, isn't it?

### 5. Why are there an Inordinate Number of Child Molesters in the Clergy?

*For another take about the same topic, I return briefly to Mary Massaro's fun book Beyond the Pale (Diogenes publishing, 2003), where she asks a bunch of professors, including me, provocative questions about current social issues. Here is the answer I gave in that book to the above question:*

I don't know whether there are more child molesters among the catholic clergy than in other groups. I'm sure that scout leaders, Little League coaches and even teachers have their share of pedophiles, because (1) they have easier access to youngsters and (2) people with such tendencies may gravitate towards such professions (self-selection).

As far as the Catholic clergy I concerned, it must observe celibacy, and this adds to the "pressure." So there may be a slightly higher proportion of pedophiles among priests than among the general population. But this would also be true for the Greek Orthodox church, which is also committed to celibacy and has many young choir boys, altar boys, etc. What is deplorable is the attempted cover-up by the higher church administration.

In general, catholic priests commit a sin whenever they engage in any form of sexual behavior -- be it heterosexual, homosexual, or pedophilia -- since they are required to observe celibacy. In addition, when they engage in pedophilia (which I would define as sexual activities with pre-pubescent children), they are committing crimes. There is nothing wrong with catholic priests who have sexual desires, whether heterosexual or homosexual, as long as they don't act on them. The Catholic priests who have pedophile desires are mentally ill; those who act on them are both mentally ill and criminals.

(Massaro, 2003: 78).

### 6. Sex and Sexual Preference

*I have always been struck by the polarization of American public opinion about sex and sexual preference. This was once again apparent in 2005, when the movie Brokeback Mountain came out. The film, which is a story about homosexual love between two Wyoming cowboys, was received with raving reviews by the intelligentsia and with loathing on the other side. This prompted me to write down the following thoughts:*

Marlene Dietrich once said that in most of the world, sex is a fact, but in America it is an obsession. Presumably, by obsession she did not mean that Americans were the most promiscuous people, but that they fret and fight a great deal about sex. There is some truth to this, although America is by no means unique or the most extreme in this regard. Sex becomes a problem when it is viewed too much as a forbidden fruit, when it becomes tabooed in many of its forms, when it becomes a political battle ground. This is what religious societies tend to do, whereas secular societies are more laid back about sex. Because America remains the most religious country in the Western World, it is indeed more obsessed by sex than are Europeans and Canadians, for example. But of course, the Middle Eastern theocracies are far worse.

Take homosexuality for example. I like to think of it the same way as I think of vegetarianism. It's just a different taste. As Crassus, played by Lawrence Olivier, puts it to his handsome young slave Antoninus (played by Tony Curtis) in *Spartacus*, 'Some men prefer to eat snails, some prefer oysters, and some like both.'

Such trivialization of sexual preference is healthy and desirable, but few people are willing to do this. There is a war over homosexuality because our culture is frantic and hysterical about anything having to do with sex. Vegetarians don't get lynched, but gays have. On the other side, vegetarians are not rudely in your face, but some gay groups (Dykes on Bikes, ACTUP, NAMBLA, etc.) are.

To be sure, you could argue that the analogy between eating habits and sexual habits breaks down because gays have been persecuted, and vegetarians hardly. True.

But I would reply that the analogy does have merit, if you remember the aggravating in your face intolerance of macro-biotic extremists in the post-sixties, who would sometimes almost treat meat eaters as criminals.

Or you could counter by saying "ah, but how can you equate sex and eating? After all, sex is vastly more pregnant with explosive meaning than eating,"

I would respond as follows: That's exactly my point. That is exactly the problem. Fundamentally, eating and sex should be seen as entirely equivalent. They are both basic biological imperatives, channeled into complex cultural regulations. There is no way that anyone could make a logical case for the greater importance of sex over eating (or vice-versa).

But we are far more obsessed with sex than with eating. Sex is subject to endless taboos, in many forms it is criminalized, wars are fought over sex, people are burnt, executed, imprisoned, there are thousands of laws for the regulation of sex, no other area of life is subject to more censorship.

Society's preoccupation with food does not even begin to approach the intensity, complexity and irrationality with which it approaches sex. Are there any food crimes? Cannibalism is taboo, and each society proscribes the consumption of certain species (dogs and cats in the US, cows in India), but that's about it. Is there censorship? Are there X-rated food shows? None (although, come to think of it, it might not be a bad idea to give McDonald adds and X-rating).

Many societies, ours more than most, have tabooed many forms of sexuality, because sex is often viewed as something dangerous and problematic, viewed as something bordering on pathology. This is rooted in our religious traditions. In the West, the problem is two-thousand years old. It is the legacy of Christianity. In the emerging Muslim theocracies, the horrible treatment of sex by the culture and by the authorities is also religion-based.

Northwest Europe approaches sex more healthily these days. Not coincidentally, they have also become much less religious. And then there are the Polynesians, whose culture proves that there *are* people in the world who know how to do things right, when it comes to sex.

## 6. CRIME

\_\_\_\_\_ *One area in which I taught and did research for many years was criminology. For example, I co-authored a book, Readings in Criminology, with Jud Landis (Kendall Hunt, 1995). In addition, I often published letters and articles commenting on criminological issues and criticizing what I perceived to be wrong (and God knows there is plenty wrong with America's criminal justice system) - for example in the Wall Street Journal. I also spoke a lot on television and on radio.*

*Like everything else, criminology is politicized. My discussions of the more political questions in this field - gun control, our awful prison system, etc. - are found in a later section. The two pieces in this section are critical, but neither "conservative" nor "liberal."*

### 1. An Eighty Million Dollar Research Grant to Study Delinquency

*In 1992, I read in the Wall Street Journal about an eighty-million grant given to Harvard researchers to study juvenile delinquency. Outraged by this boondoggle, I fired off a letter to the Journal's editors. I also copied my letter to Footnotes, the journal of the American Sociological Association. Neither journal printed the letter, proving again that really good, hard-hitting and truthful material is rarely recognized. Here is the letter:*

To the Editor:

A June 5 article in the *Wall Street Journal* describes a huge study of the causes of crime and delinquency to be carried out by the Harvard School of Public Health. One of the study's co-directors is Yale sociologist Albert Reiss. From the journal's description, this appears to be a monumental boondoggle and a waste of money. Why on earth spend *eighty million dollars* on a one-city longitudinal study? Already, a mind-boggling *ten million* dollars have been spent to merely *design* the study since 1986.

Earlier longitudinal studies like Wolfgang and Sellin's famous research in Philadelphia have greatly helped our understanding of delinquency for less than *one-five hundredth* of the cost of the proposed Harvard study! The new research may increase our knowledge marginally, but for eighty million?

No such study should cost more than a couple of hundred thousand dollars. There is no statistical justification to study entire populations, or huge samples. Professor Travis Hirshi, quoted in the *Wall Street Journal* article, rightly notes that the funding of this longitudinal study is extravagant.

More importantly, the study appears to employ a bankrupt medical and deterministic paradigm which sheds light on nothing and perpetuates myths about the "determinants of human behavior." It asserts that the "causes of anti-social behavior" and "the characteristics that predispose or lead children to crime" can be discovered with the same precision as the causes of heart disease. It aims to "map the developmental pathways to criminal conduct."

All this is poppycock. It is obvious that prenatal substance abuse and exposure to lead paint are bad for you, but science will never be able to demonstrate a cause-and-effect relationship between such health hazards and criminal behavior.

Preventive treatment of anti-social behavior is both immoral and impossible. John Monahan (1980) has reviewed attempts at predicting violent behavior in juveniles. His conclusion is that such attempts have failed and will continue to fail, quoting William James' admonition that we cannot hope to write biographies in advance. Similarly, Richard Lundman's (1984) review of pre-delinquent intervention strategies reveals that attempts at predicting future delinquency fail miserably, especially attempts that employ diagnostic psychological tests. Helping people to deal with the *medical* consequences of prenatal substance abuse (one of the Harvard study's foci, according to the *Wall Street Journal* article) has nothing to do with crime control.

There are many well-known factors that contribute to America's high rate of crime and delinquency. They include socioeconomic conditions, the growing number of dysfunctional families, the spread of drugs, firearms and gangs and, on the other side, society's often ill-advised

response to deviant behavior, which often aggravates rather than alleviates the problem. Most importantly, the culture increasingly encourages or at least tolerates anti-social behavior. Within this culture, each of us reacts somewhat unpredictably, depending on our own individual interpretations and moral decisions, aided or hindered by others around us.

The grandiose attempt to "determine the causes of anti-social behavior" for eighty million dollars sounds like an attempt to determine the causes of human evil.

It is amazing that intelligent social scientists believe that more money means greater discoveries. This may be the case in medical and other scientific research, but not in the behavioral disciplines, whose subject matter is *moral*. If it were so, then by all means let the National Science Foundation spend five hundred million dollars to determine, once and for all, whether or not God exists.

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## 2. How Polly Klaas Could have Been Saved.

*The crime which made the single greatest contribution to the astronomical increase in punishment which began in America during the early 1990s was the kidnap and murder of Polly Klaas. California was the first state to introduce Three Strike laws, in direct response to Polly Klaas. This was subsequently mimicked by most other states, and politicians have continued to pile on law upon law (Megan's laws, Jessica Laws, etc.) to punish all criminals ever more severely, be they sex offenders, violent criminals, or non-violent thieves and drug users.*

*At the time, I thought that there was perhaps a more efficient way to handle cases such as Polly Klaas. Here is what I sent to the Wall Street Journal in December of 1993 (They didn't publish it):*

The Polly Klaas case has once again brought to the fore some of the irrationalities of the American criminal justice system. As always with celebrated cases, the immediate reaction from the media, the public and politicians is a spate of emotional and largely ineffective measures. It is also a fickle response, because after a brief period of fevered activism, we will return to the callous apathy typical of a society inured to violent crime. Or conversely, laws will be passed which will put us on autopilot, and which will make us unable to adapt to new emerging realities in the future.

The girl's murder is leading for example to the redundant and ritualistic three-strikes-and-you-are-out legislative proposals. Redundant, because we already have all the laws we need - we just don't enforce or implement them. Ritualistic, because crime has nothing to do with baseball. Why not four strikes, or two, or six?

But there *are* things that can be done. Common sense would go a long way, although it is the scarcest ingredient in our criminal justice system.

What distinguishes American crime from crime in other comparable countries is its *lethality*. At roughly 10 per 100,000, our rate of criminal homicide is only exceeded by that of some Third-World countries such as Guatemala and Mexico. The homicide rates of other advanced countries range between 0.1 (e.g. Japan) and 2 or 3 (for instance Scotland, France in some years, etc.). In general, America's murder rate is 10 to 100 times higher than that of comparable countries.

But we *can* do something about this: When I think about what happened to Polly Klaas and about the *thousands* of other kidnappings, rapes and molestations which occur in this country every year, I am struck by a basic difference between this situation and the one which I experienced growing up in Europe during the nineteen fifties.

Paris, where I lived, was then a big, mean city, not unlike urban America today. Political strife, ethnic conflict, poverty, derelicts, muggings, assaults, innumerable perverts, pederasts and rapists preying on the innocents. The subways, streets and parks were full of muggers, rapists and child molesters. Priests and boy scout leaders contributed their share of pederasty. However, *rarely if ever did cases of perversion, assault or muggings end up in murder*.

What gives American crime today its uniquely macabre character is its *lethal* nature. American rates of property crime and assault are not exceptionally high, and neither are our rates of rape, child molesting and kidnaping. The one terrible puzzle is: Why do so many crimes in America have to end in *death*?

The usual knee-jerk answer is: *guns*. Without getting into the gun control debate, let us remember that Polly Klaas was strangled, and that the correlation between crime and gun control is approximately zero.

Perhaps a better explanation is the muddle-headedness of our criminal justice system: Today, the average sentence *served* for criminal homicide is under three years. This is probably less, and certainly no more, than time served for rape, child molesting, kidnaping and some other crimes.

How many times have we heard of a rapist, molester or kidnaper killing his victim in order to reduce the chance of detection? Destroying the evidence and the victim-witness seems like a rational decision when that action is likely to reduce the chance of apprehension and, even if discovered, will increase punishment only marginally. Many will object that criminals are not always rational. True, but they often are, and the decision to first rape *and then kill* is gruesomely rational given the above calculus.

There is today an insufficient realization on everyone's part - particularly the authorities - that murder represents a *quantum* jump from all other crimes. After all, life is *all* there is. We blur things with such categories as "violent crime" and by forgetting how much, much worse it is to be raped *and killed* than it is to be raped and to live.

This error is due to a large extent to the psychiatrization of life, i.e. to the notion that negative experiences, unless dwelled upon at length by the subject with the help of professionals, will leave indelible scars for ever. Thus, many now believe that since rape and molestation are often such insurmountable experiences, being dead may not be worse. This is stupid and dishonest. Many people say that "some people" would be better off dead than raped or molested, but nobody feels that way about oneself!

While Europe in the 1950s had its share of perverts and criminals, it hardly ever occurred to these people to cross that final line, to snuff out a human life for ever. Whatever other unspeakable things they did to their victims, they let them live. To take a human life was beyond the conceptual and moral boundary of even a majority of criminals.

That is the situation which no longer exists in America today, and to which we must return. This can easily be accomplished. Quite simply make the penalty for murder *factorially* more

severe than for any other crime. For example, make it clear to the offenders that as long as they harm their victims without killing them, their punishment will consist of incarceration and psychiatric treatment, but if they cross the line and kill, they can expect the worst, including probable execution (accompanied by torture, as far as I concerned).

We must remove the incentive to kill your victim, and increase the incentive to keep him/her alive. We must remember that death is the *only irreversible* form of victimization, and therefore in a category apart. All other experiences, however heinous, can be transcended. We lump together more and more crimes - murder, molestation, rape, some forms of D.U.I., etc. - in terms of severity of punishment. No wonder criminals no longer distinguish between murdering their victims and harming them in other ways that are, let's be truthful about this, less severe.

### 3. The O.J. Simpson Verdict: To the Winner belong the Spoils

*The O.J. Simpson case was truly the trial of the century. The verdict of acquittal was pronounced on September 9, 1995. I was as aghast as a majority of the public, and promptly wrote the following analysis:*

If I were the jury foreman, here is what I would have told judge Ito:

“Your honor, we have a verdict and a comment:

1) Our verdict: By law, we must find the defendant not guilty, since the evidence based on the *admissible facts* is too circumstantial and too controversial, in view of officer Fuhrman’s behavior during the investigation, and other factors.

However, if we were to rely on *other* facts, we would find defendant guilty. For example: Throughout the trial, there were non-verbal cues of great significance. Many of the statements by defendant and his attorneys were obvious lies, judging from their tone and from their delivery. The posturing of this “dream defense team” was obvious for all to see, as was the lack of remorse, sorrow or agitation by Mr. Simpson. And there was his attempted flight. At no time did the defense team address any of the moral issues involved, or the pain and suffering experienced by the murder victims and their relatives. This contrasts sharply with Ron Goldman’s father’s emotional outburst on September 28, which was an expression of honest pain and outrage. Here, then, the evidence is clear: On one side there was nothing but mystification and dishonesty, while on the other side there was raw, palpable honesty - in sum, truth.

2) Comment: More clearly than any previous trial, this one has once again demonstrated that the goal in American criminal court is not to discover the truth, but to *win*. In that effort, the defense team did a brilliant con job on the entire watching world: It *changed the topic* of the trial. No longer was the trial about who murdered Nicole Simpson and Ron Goldman, but it was about *racism and the behavior of the Los Angeles Police Department*.

Why did you - the Court - allow this to happen? It is as if a student came to take a final exam in, say a chemistry class, and his response were, “well, professor, I don’t know much about chemistry, but I know a lot about psychology. So let me tell you about the theories of Freud and B.F. Skinner...” And then, after the student wrote an excellent paper about the superego and about operant conditioning, the professor rewarded him with an A for his chemistry final. What happened

at the O. J. Simpson trial is similar. The defendant changed the subject, and he got away with it.

In the end, there will be an accounting. If O. J. did commit the double murder, which is almost certain, he will pay for his crime one way or another. If he was framed by racist cops, which is highly improbable, they will pay.

But the previous paragraph is about truth and justice. A criminal trial such as O. J. Simpson's is different: it is a contest, not unlike a football game, or a trial by ordeal in the Middle Ages, or even a final exam in college. Here, the aim is to win or to pass, and the requirement is *skill*. Victory, of course, requires reward, be it a trophy for winning the football game, acquittal in a trial, or a graduation diploma for passing the final exam. If we come to accept the fact that a criminal trial is a contest of skills, effort and resources - like most human endeavors - then we can also accept the outcome. We do not ask which side spoke the truth, any more than we ask this of the two teams which compete in the Super Bowl. The winner deserves the reward."

#### 4. Steve Ellis: A Case of Trial by the Press and Media Bias

*In the summer of 1992, I was witness to another case involving violent death and race. This time, my experience was first-hand, as the event involved one of my students, a 27-year old man by the name of Steve Ellis. Steve was white and his victim was black. Two perspectives on the incident became available to me - one provided by the media, which wrote several articles about it, and the other coming from Steve's first-hand account, given to me in my office and in my class. From reading the news articles, you would have been convinced that this was an ugly hate crime perpetrated by a white racist against an innocent black victim. However, Steve's own version showed him to be innocent and to have acted in self-defense.*

*But why believe Steve, you may say? Naturally he claimed self-defense, as would any murderer who wants to avoid the gallows. Well, I ended up accepting Steve's version for three reasons: 1) I had known him for some time, and he was a decent, peaceful and progressive college student, not a racist hoodlum. 2) I dug into the case and spoke with some of the witnesses. 3) In the end, the authorities agreed with his version of events and he was acquitted.*

*But before this happened, the media had a party prejudging the case, stacking the cards against Steve, and influencing community opinion by spreading the impression that, once again, an innocent black man had been murdered by a white racist. I decided to document some of the biases I came across in the "progressive" media at the time. Here is how the event was reported in the Sacramento Bee on July 4, 1992, the day after Steve Ellis killed a black man:*

*"A racial squabble between elementary-school age children led to a violent clash between adults that left one man dead and a young South Natomas father arrested on murder charges....(the incident began when) a group of white children between 6 and 9 years old told a group of similarly aged black children that the blacks weren't allowed to play there. Both groups went home to complain to their parents and a short time later two adult black men confronted Steven Ellis,...the father of two of the white children...The discussion escalated into a fistfight...Then Ellis grabbed his gun and started shooting at people. A friend of the two black men was shot in the head (and died)...After the shooting, Ellis was attacked by a group of men and severely beaten...Ellis reportedly had been involved in a previous dispute...(A neighbor said) that three weeks ago he heard Ellis complain that black children were playing around his car." (Sacramento Bee, July 4, 1992:B1).*

A subsequent article about the case in the *Sacramento Bee* is titled, "*Shooting Victim was a*

*Marine*” (July 5, 1992: A3). The article also mentions that “the white children made racially derogatory comments,” that “Ellis stands 6-foot-5,” that “the victim was visiting relatives while on leave from Camp Pendleton,” that “he was married” and that “Ellis told neighbors that he attends computer classes.”(P.B1)

In fact, Steve shot and fatally wounded one of his opponents purely in *self-defense*. The homicide was not racially motivated, it was not a hate crime, as the *Sacramento Bee* articles insinuated. The article falsely states that Steve was beaten up *after* the shooting. In fact, he was severely beaten and dragged away from his apartment *before* the shooting started. Luckily for him, his wife came to his rescue with a gun, whereupon they both fired off shots, first in the air as a warning, later in self-defense. This may well have saved their lives. Furthermore, Steve’s attackers consisted not of two neighbors, but of a gang of *eight* men that included out-of-towners.

Notice also, the articles’ efforts at crucifying Steve by innuendo: He stands 6-foot-5, so he must be an intimidator, right? He “attends computer classes,” so he is pretty flaky, right? Certainly so compared to the victim, who was a marine, a married man, a solid citizen, right? The article also stated that Steve had a record of altercations with his black neighbors, and that the white children had made racially derogatory comments, so Steve must be a racist, right? In fact, Steve was a soft-spoken, lanky fellow, and he was a straight A, full-time student at Cal State, majoring in Management Information Systems. Furthermore, he was on very good terms with most of his black neighbors, who were among his best friends.

In the end, I didn’t have to take Steve’s words for all of this. It all came out during the trial and the police investigation.

## 7. TERRORISM

*And then came terrorism. After 9-11, that word (if not the phenomenon) penetrated our world the same way as “Communism” had been the bogey man for much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. But of course terrorism preceded 9-11, and there was already a substantial literature on this topic before the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In fact, I taught a course on Violence and Terrorism at the University from 1980 to 1990. I also occasionally wrote a piece on this topic, a few of which are reproduced here:*

### 1. Terrorism Defined

(By Judson and Landis and Tom Kando, in: Judson R. Landis, *Sociology, Concepts and Characteristics*, 1988 Ed.)

Terrorism has been defined as the premeditated, deliberate, systematic murder, mayhem, and threatening of the innocent to create fear and intimidation in order to gain a political or tactical advantage. Terrorism differs from common crime in that it is politically motivated. Examples of terrorism exist throughout history. A religious sect called the Sicarii were active terrorists in the Roman Empire from AD 66-73. The 19th century was marked by many political crimes throughout Europe, Russia, and America. However, it is only in the 1970s and 1980s that the world has really become aware of terrorism. In part this is because technological changes have made terrorism seemingly more serious. These changes include the advent of the jet airliner and its accompanying increase in travel, of modern weapons of mass destruction, and of a global media network that quickly broadcasts the events around the world. All of these work to provide small terrorist groups with remarkable leverage.

The U. S. State department reports that 928 people were killed by terrorists in 1985. There were 800 terrorist incidents in 1986, and 840 in 1987. While five years ago nearly half of all terrorist incidents occurred in Western Europe, by 1987 that proportion had declined to 20 percent. The Middle East and Latin America had about 25 percent each and North America was relatively terrorism-free, having about 3 percent of the incidents. Americans, while relatively safe at home, are at greater risk when traveling abroad -- in 1987, 9 of 28 hostages known to be held in Moslem West Beirut were Americans. Terrorism takes many forms -- assassinations, highjackings of airplanes and cruise ships, bombings in train stations and airports, hostage dramas -- and appears in many places, for example in Northern Ireland, Western Europe, Latin America, Asia, the Middle East. The bombing in a Bologna railway station in 1980 killed 83 civilians. A ransom of \$60 million was paid during the 1970s by a corporation in Argentina for the release of three executives. The future of terrorism is difficult to assess. Some believe that given the current international political climate, terrorism as a low-intensity conflict (a type of unconventional war) will continue to be a popular means to achieve political goals. (Landis, 1988)

## 2. International Terrorism

*In 1988, I gave the following speech at an international conference, summarizing this topic. As you read this, you may find it interesting to note what has changed since then, especially since nine-eleven, as well as the remarkable number of facts which remain valid.*

Although international political terrorism has become a topical issue in recent years, it is not a new phenomenon. It has become a prominent issue both as a result of the activities of small groups of violent, politically motivated and publicity seeking revolutionaries, and as a result of the media eagerly cooperating in drawing public attention to these violent activities.

What actually constitutes terrorism, whether or not it is on the rise, and whether or not it is a greater threat than in the past, all this depends on how the term is defined. This is a difficult task because terrorism is ultimately a moral problem and because the term is often used selectively and pejoratively. In an attempt to shrug off these problems, many analysts simply conclude that "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter or that "terrorism to some is heroism to others," (Poland:3).

Despite these difficulties, most of the professional literature on terrorism has come to agree on the following elements of an emerging definition: (1)while terrorism, like crime, consists of illegal and often violent acts, it differs from common crime in that it is *politically* motivated; (2)terrorism is political violence or the threat of violence against *non-combatants*; (3)terrorism is violence *from below*, i.e. by disparate groups of rebels who do not have access to the State's means of violence such as armed forces, prisons or concentration camps. This is why conflict between a states and a terrorist group is sometimes called *asymmetric warfare*.

It is the third element of this definition which is the most controversial. Many analysts feel that by limiting the term "terrorism" to the activities of the underdogs, one implicitly condones State violence and repression. Nevertheless, it is useful to distinguish between terrorism pure and simple - as just defined - and those other forms of violence sponsored or perpetrated by the State. These can then be called *State terrorism* and *State-sponsored terrorism*.

One finds examples of terrorism throughout history. For instance the *Sicarii* were a religious sect active in the Roman Empire from AD 66 to 73. Their activities would have qualified them as terrorists. The term "terrorism" itself was coined during the French Revolution. The 19th century was marked by a great many political crimes throughout Europe, Russia and America (more

US presidents were assassinated in the 19th century than in the 20th). However, it is since the late 1960s that world public opinion has become keenly aware of the problem.

One reason for this may be that contemporary terrorism is qualitatively different and potentially more serious than in the past. This is due to technological change. The advent of the jet airliner, of modern weapons of mass destruction and of a global media network gives to small terrorist groups a leverage which they did not possess in the past.

In the 1980s, the annual number of international terrorist incidents has stabilized between eight and nine hundred. According to State Department sources, terrorists killed 928 people worldwide in 1985 (*Sacramento Bee*, Sept.7, 1986). In 1986, the global number of terrorist incidents was estimated at 800 (*Sacramento Bee*, Dec. 25, 1986: A12). According to British terrorism expert Paul Wilkinson, the 1987 figure was approximately 840 incidents (Echikson).

While five years ago nearly half of all terrorist incidents occurred in Western Europe, by last year that proportion had declined to 20%. The Middle East and Latin America's shares were roughly one quarter each and North America was relatively terrorism-free, i.e. under 3%. Although Americans are safe at home, they are at risk when traveling abroad: In 1987, 28 foreign hostages were known to be held in Moslem West Beirut; of these, 9 were Americans, i.e. the largest single contingent (*Sacramento Bee*, Feb. 1, 1987: A14). The bloodiest contemporary terrorist incident was the bombing of Bologna's railway station by the Italian neo-fascists in 1980, killing 83 civilians. The highest ransom paid in recent years was \$60 million paid during the 1970s by a corporation in Argentina for the release of three executives (Laqueur:107). The principal terrorist groups currently active include, by region:

Middle East: The Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and its affiliates, including the Palestinian Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), Al Fatah and Abu Nidal. Shi'ite Muslim groups such as Islamic Amal and Hetzbollah (Poland, 108; 223-224).

Northern Ireland: The Official Irish Liberation Army (OIRA) and the Provisional Irish Liberation Army (PIRA) on the Irish Catholic side, and various Protestant paramilitary groups on the other, including the Ulster Defense League (UDL), the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) and the Ulster Freedom Fighters (UFF), (Poland:115-116).

Spain: Freedom for the Basque Homeland (ETA).

France: Direct Action (DA), the Breton Liberation Front (FLB) and Corsican Revolutionary Action (ARC).

Italy: the Red Brigades (RB).

Belgium: The Communist Combatant Cells (CCC).

West Germany: the Red Army Faction (RAF), an outgrowth of the Baader-Meinhof Gang of the 1970s (Poland: 120).

Japan: the Japanese Red Army.

Latin America: Columbia's M-19 guerrillas, Peru's Shining Path and death squads in El Salvador and elsewhere.

US: Puerto-Rican groups such as the Armed Forces for National Liberation (FALN) and the Macheteros. Armenian nationalists including the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA) and the Justice Commandos for the Armenian Genocide (JSCAG). Croatian groups such as the Croatian Revolutionary Brotherhood (HRB). Anti-Castro Cubans including Omega 7 and Alpha 66. Jewish groups such as the Jewish Defense League (JDL). Left-wing extremist groups such as the Weather Underground Organization (WUO), the Black Liberation Army (BLA) and the Revolutionary Armed Task Force (RAFF), many of which are outgrowths of sixties New Left groups such as Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), Black Panthers and Black Muslims. Right-wing extremists such as the Aryan Nations, the Sheriff's Posse Comitatus (SPC) and the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) (Poland, Chapter 4).

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### 3. Is one Man's Terrorist another Man's Freedom Fighter?

*As mentioned in the previous essay, a key issue in the sociology of terrorism is that of moral relativism and equivalency. It is important to counter the rampant and mistaken notion that who is a terrorist and who is a freedom fighter is a matter of perspective. Contrary to the relativism of our liberated age, I maintain that there are good guys and bad guys in the world. You have to distinguish between them, and you must explain to the many confused people in the West who they are. In the summer of 2004, I had an interesting conversation with my wife about this topic. Here are some of our conclusions:*

"Asymmetrical Warfare" is the new term for conflicts between an established state/regime and a rebellious underclass. The latter are called "terrorists" by their enemies and "resistance" or freedom fighters by their supporters. So the question remains: Is one man's terrorist another man's freedom fighter? For example, today's muddle-headed moral relativists might say that Paul Revere can just as well be labeled a terrorist as Osama Bin Laden, depending on who does the labeling.

Or take the Nazis when they ruled Europe: the people who killed German soldiers in occupied countries were called the resistance. But when America occupies Iraq, we call those who kill American soldiers terrorists. So, again, many people are confused and don't know who the good guys and the bad guys are.

When American soldiers fight overseas, like in Vietnam and in Iraq, the situation is especially *visually* confusing. The televised news shows big heavily armed and uniformed American soldiers fighting little native people dressed in pyjamas or in assorted ragged clothes, and our boys look an awful lot like the German armies did in World War Two (or Darth Vader's white robot-like troops, for that matter).

But the truth is that the American soldiers are *not* the bad guys, appearances notwithstanding. How can this be demonstrated? In other words, how can it be shown that one

man's terrorist is *not* another man's freedom fighter? Remember that in any conflict between an established authority/regime/state and a rebellious underclass, either side can be the good guy or the bad guy. No all rebels are good, and not all rulers are bad. So the problem is: How do you determine which is which?

In the past, we did what every country has always done: We simply defined whoever was on our side as the good guy. Rebels fighting against the Nazis, against the Soviets, against Saddam Hussein, etc., were called freedom fighters, and rebels fighting against us were called terrorists.

This has worked well for us because (1) we usually won and it's always the winner who does the labeling (or to quote Lenin: writes history), and (2) we *are* generally morally superior to our opponents. It is a waste of time to argue with people who see moral equivalency between America and Nazis, Soviets, Saddam Hussein, etc.

However, simply defining rebels on our side as freedom fighters and rebels on the other side as terrorists has become iffy. For one thing, we do not *always* maintain the moral edge. We lost it in Vietnam, and we may be losing it in Iraq.

So I propose the following more objective criterion for distinguishing between good guy and bad guy - be he the established power trying to pacify a region, or the underclass rebel trying to topple what he views as an oppressor:

The key question must not be what a party's *goal* is, but what its *means* are, its *methods*: To paraphrase Max Weber, violence is unfortunately the *sine qua non* backup for both good and evil objectives. Without the threat of it, legitimate authority doesn't have a chance. So the question is not whether or not violence is used, but the *type* of violence that is being used. By this reasoning, whoever employs terror, torture, mutilation and the deliberate assassination of innocent bystanders, including women and children, is a bad guy by definition, regardless of his justifications.

Let's apply this measure to various parties - be they a regime that inflicts violence from above, or a group doing so from below:

1) The Nazis? They used terror, torture, mutilation, experimentation and vivisection on live prisoners, extermination of women, children, collective reprisals against entire towns, genocide and ethnic cleansing.

2) World War Two Resistance: They killed German soldiers. Did not torture or deliberately mutilate.

3) Stalin and the KGB: same as the Nazis.

4) IRA and assorted other "Red this" and "Red that" groups in the last part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Red Army Fraction, Red Brigades, etc.): same as the Nazis: they used kneecapping, Achilles tendon cutting, mutilation, torture, kidnap for ransom, and the deliberate killing of innocent civilians because of their religion, ethnicity or profession.

5) US forces in Vietnam and in Iraq: No genocidal practices, no deliberate reprisals against civilians. Most civilian deaths due to "collateral damage." The rare use of torture and murder of civilians. Most importantly, when these come to light (My Lai, Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo, etc.), Americans are outraged and the guilty parties are punished.

6) Israel and the Israel Defense Force: Exactly as the US.

7) The insurgents in Iraq, the Intifadah in Palestine and in Israel, Hetzbollah, etc.: suicide bombings, bombs built with nails and shards of glass so as to cause maximum pain *in addition* to death, kidnappings for ransom, torture prior to execution, beheadings with blunt saws, deliberate bombings of market places, schools and hospitals, the use of children as bait, etc.

Thus, if we look at the *methods* a group uses, we may be able to avoid moral relativism. We should focus on their *means*, not on their *ends* or on their *causes* and their *justifications*. This is a pragmatic criterion. Ends, causes and justifications are always ideological and they can be

endlessly debated. But the evil which people *do* to each other cannot. Judging the world this way, my wife and I have no difficulty distinguishing between good and evil, and placing America squarely on the good side.

#### 4. Why do a Considerable Number of Terrorists and Deranged Leaders Hail from the Middle East?

*Finally, here is one more of Mary Massaro's provocative questions, and my answer to it, published in her book, Beyond the Pale.*

Now that's the million dollar question since September 11. Let's first dispose of the pious politically correct clichés: "We shouldn't harbor racist attitudes toward Middle Easterners, most Middle Easterners are upstanding citizens, racial profiling is wrong, etc.

With that said, there is unquestionably a growing tension between the West and the Islamic world. It is fashionable to attribute this to the West's imperialistic behavior (we are there just for the oil, the U.S. supports Israel, which oppresses Palestine, etc.). In my view, however, we could toss Israel to the Arabs just so as to appease them, and yet the hatred would persist. Why? Because there is a hateful militancy that manifests itself not only in increasing terrorism, but also in the widespread popularity of the likes of Osama Bin Laden among hundreds of millions of Muslims. There are profound cultural and religious differences between the West and the Islamic world, and there is much more conflict to come. Xenophobia (the dislike of foreign cultures) is a universal tendency. Nonetheless, in places like Iran, among the Taliban, and in many other parts of the Muslim world, it has become feverish. This is (1) a reaction to the growing westernization of the world, which is threatening to those cultures, and (2) the product of decades of propaganda by some of the media and the intellectual and cultural elites in those countries, not unlike the job done on the German people by Hitler's propaganda machine. In other words, many Arab minds have been poisoned - especially among the lowest strata, where the resentment is greatest and easiest to exploit (Massaro, 2003: 4).

## 8. CITIES, ESPECIALLY NEW YORK

### 1. Should West Bank be Developed?

*While in grad school at the University of Minnesota in 1967, I worked as a rent collector for a Minneapolis slum lord. My boss owned most of the "West Bank," which was the city's equivalent of Haight-Ashbury. Located on the West Bank of the Mississippi, this was a hippie neighborhood with great music and nightlife and lots of drugs. The housing was somewhat dilapidated but it had great character. The population consisted mostly of college students. My job was eventful (I was beaten up a few times and shot at once), and it was a great learning experience. I saw first-hand the exploitation of tenants by large slum lords, including the one for whom I worked. In the following brief article, I denounce my boss' exploitation of his starving student tenants and I accuse him of entertaining nefarious plans for the neighborhood. Of course he fired me as soon as he saw my article.*

*In addition, I express my opposition to whole-scale urban renewal, at a time when that wrong-headed policy was still popular. The article appeared in the Minnesota Daily on December 4, 1967.*

### The real West Bank issue

Jon Greer's front page article in a recent issue of the Daily concerning the west bank businessmen's opposition to public (urban) renewal is factual and relevant, yet misleading.

One gets the impression that the west bank *must* be developed, and that this will have to be done either privately by small local business, or publicly. If these proposals were sound, then students should indeed be in favor of public renewal.

*But this is not the issue. The real issue is (1) whether the area should be developed at all and (2) whether this should be done publicly or privately.*

For one thing, the Cedar-Riverside area is one of the best examples in the nation of the mixed type of urban community advocated by Jane Jacobs and the increasing number of people similarly oriented. Apart from an above-average consumption of narcotics, the area has low rates of crime and other social problems. And whether pot is a "social problem" is of course debatable. Thus, apart from the perhaps necessary refurbishing of some individual structures, it is not at all clear why the west bank calls for large-scale renewal.

*Secondly, it should be realized that the greatest threat to student interests does not come from small local businessmen, but from the large private development groups which are rapidly buying up most of the area. As Jon Greer correctly points out, the Minneapolis Housing and Redevelopment Authority could well turn over the land it appropriates to these local giants. Thus, although the Medvic group calls itself "profit-minded" and only conditionally in favor of "progress," the alternative to their plans could be much more disastrous. The local giants are just as profit-minded and to them progress probably means total student removal.*

If the RSDA's plans are not really compatible with student interests, those of the larger real-estate owners would be much more thoroughly methodical in their destruction of the burgeoning student community.

In sum, if drastic renewal must come, let it be public. But it is questionable whether it is necessary at all. Most modern urban sociologists would probably say that it isn't. If they are right, then the job that needs to be done on the West Bank is relatively small and it can be taken care of by small businessmen (*Minnesota Daily*, Dec. 4, 1967).

## 2. Why are New Yorkers and Parisians Exceptionally Rude

*This is another one of those fun questions I answer in Mary Massaro's book:*

Social scientists Tonnies, Simmel, Wirth, Milgram, and many others have written a great deal about "urban stimulus overload," the "Genovese syndrome," etc.: Urbanites simply cannot afford to be as nice as small-town dwellers, due to the ecological situation in the big city (population density, cultural diversity, etc.) So, it's not just New Yorkers and Parisians who are rude, but also Londoners, Athenians, Venetians, and so on.

Incidentally, Americans and the French have a unique relationship since Americans are by and large unilingual, while the French insist foreigners speak the language when they visit their country. It's an irreconcilable difference (Massaro, 2003: 10).

## 3. New York City: 'The Shortest Visit is a Pain'

*In 1978, I was teaching at Penn State. My wife and my two children, aged 1 and 3, had moved there by U-Haul truck from California. New to the area, we spent every opportunity to visit famous places in the East. In March, we spent a week-end in New York City. It was a bad*

*experience. People were rude, the weather was bad, our car got scratched up, hotels and restaurants charged us too much, etc. This was my wife's first visit to the Big Apple, whereas I had spent more than a year there in the sixties. We were both very disappointed. When I got back to Penn State, I fired off an angry letter to the New York Times, prefacing it by saying that "arrogant snobs as they are, they'll probably toss my letter into the wastebasket, but here goes anyway."*

*My letter was a vehement critique of the Big Apple, and it appeared in the New York Times on March 28, 1978.*

*Then, all hell broke loose. New Yorkers were furious. I received hundreds of hate letters, the Times printed many hostile reactions, and it printed my rebuttals. A veritable circus show.*

*I suppose I payed a price. Some of the hate mail was painful. My wife was called a whore, I was told that I was psychotic. Also, people asked Penn State to fire me and I was called on the carpet and reprimanded by the Dean, who felt that my letter was intemperate, unprofessional and too provocative.*

*But hey, I am proud of it. I stirred the pot, my forceful metaphors riled people up. Maybe it even helped a bit to turn the city around and to clean up its act, as it did later, under mayor Giuliani. Judge for yourself.*

To the Editor:

We recently revisited New York City. I had lived there for over a year during the early 1960's and spent many visits since then. My wife, on the other hand, a native Californian, had not seen the world's capital before, and neither had my children. We feel unanimously that only one word adequately describes what we just saw: a nightmare.

Entering the city through the Bronx, upper Manhattan or the George Washington Bridge, one drives by mile upon mile of burnt-out buildings, some still smoldering, smoking, many still inhabited by rats, insects and humans. A worse desolation, in my recollection, than was Budapest after the Allied bombings of 1944.

Being charged \$45 for a mediocre hotel room, \$8 for three pieces of toast, \$5 for half an hour parking and other outrageous rip-offs may have been par for the course. But can New York be worthwhile given *unlimited* money? No way. No amount of money, no \$1,500-a-month, 35th-floor Park Avenue or Fifth Avenue apartment can sweeten life in New York City. Even the affluent jet-setter must come down to the street, step into the garbage, the squalor, the filth, breathe the poisonous air, fight for a taxi, brave the surrealistic traffic and the 24-hour-a-day jams.

The old homily "nice place to visit but wouldn't want to live there" is not true. The shortest visit to New York is a pain. There are no redeeming qualities left in New York City. Nothing makes up for the squalor, the expense, the filth, the crowds, nothing, no amount of culture, French restaurants, Broadway shows or nightlife.

Even the short-term deterioration is marked, say, since my last visit in 1976. Even the Central Park horse carriages are pathetic, with gaping holes in them, driven by wino-looking men and pulled by bony horses seemingly on the verge of collapse. The city's bankruptcy and the cutbacks of recent years are no doubt accelerating the decay.

One impression keeps cropping up: Why the unbelievable contrast between the platinum-plated 70-story skyscrapers - each costing a billion dollars - and the garbage and vomit upon which they are founded? What kind of sick maldistribution is this? Human beings do not need jewel-studded skyscrapers, of which one - only one! - might cost more than the cleaning costs of Manhattan.

On the way back home, I asked my wife to rank the various cities she has visited. Her serious reply was that she would rather live in the filthy, whore-infested and drug-smuggling bordertowns of Juarez and Tijuana than New York City.

As a sociologist, my personal experience leads me to the following question: Is the disease that New York is not symptomatic of what might threaten larger segments of our society? Once Rome fell, could the empire stand?

By the way, another stereotype needs correction: New Yorkers are not necessarily unfriendly. The earlier arrogance has softened. Cause and effect (*New York Times*, March 28, 1978).

#### 4. Reactions to my Inflammatory New York Times Letter

*There was a slew of attacks upon me after my critique of New York City, many of them printed in the New York Times. Penn State's Daily Collegian reported the case in a more neutral fashion. Under the title Trading punches with the big boys, it wrote, among other things,*

“Remember the old fable about the city mouse and the country mouse? Associate Professor of Sociology Thomas M. Kando, on a recent visit to New York, was so dismayed by the appearance of the city that he wrote a letter to *The New York Times* to vent his frustrations. Kando's main point seemed to be, in his words, that "the shortest visit to New York is a pain."...But, after all, Kando is just a country mouse. Some of the New York City mice, angered at the attack on their civic pride, responded with several (outraged) letters. Neither side seems to be viewing the problem objectively. One fact that is apparent, however, is for Kando's one letter, *The New York Times* we saw had (many) rebuttals. We're obviously outnumbered. It might be to our advantage to keep quiet.”(*Daily Collegian*, March, 1978).

*A sample of the rage expressed by New York Citizens in their flagship newspaper follows:*

*On April 4, 1978, Seymour Levine wrote, among other things, that*  
 “the limitations of the professor’s wife’s vision aside,...if he paid \$8 dollars for three pieces of toast, I wonder if he should be allowed out alone at breakfast time...(Luckily), his distinctive approach to sociology are the expense of our neighboring state.”(*New York Times*, April 4, 1978).

*Kenneth Schmidt wrote, inter alia:*  
 “I seem to detect just a teensy-weensy bit of animosity toward New York City in Professor Kando's letter. The city he describes and the one I live in are two completely different places. Is he sure he didn't get lost and wind up in Pittsburgh? Most perplexing.” (*New York Times*, April 4, 1978).

*One of the things Ira Contente wrote was this:*  
 “As a sociologist who lives in the Bronx... I take issue with my "colleague's" incompetent piece of research. He is not, I assume, an urban(e) sociologist. I don't know what makes Professor Kando's wife prefer " the filthy, whore-infested and drug-smuggling" bordertowns of Juarez and Tijuana, but my wife prefers to live in New York, London, Paris and Rome.” (*New York Times*, April 4, 1978).

*Steve Handman wrote, among other things:*  
 “It is sad that Kando drove all the way to New York and missed some of our better points -- such as the most beautiful building in the world (Empire State), and if he found a treasure with mud on it, he would' throw it away. And his wife would, agree.” (*New York Times*, April 4, 1978).

*Even Robert Moses, New York City's famous Developer and Commissioner, chimed in. Here are a few of the things he wrote in the Times on April 29 in a piece titled New York's, 'Overadvertised Plight:*

All our visitors don't love us. A letter from...Thomas M Kando was published recently by the Times. This professor said New York had absolutely no redeeming qualities, and his wife added she would rather live in the filth of the whore-infested, drug-smuggling border towns of Juarez and Tijuana than in Gotham....

The Kandos did not mention the numerous (positive features of New York City).... It is hard to be tolerant about this Penn State sub prof and his sharp-tongued wife. Socrates had a sharp-tongued bride called Xanthippe, who did little to increase his popularity....

What about the overadvertised plight of New York? I don't believe that situation is as bad as such visiting critics, and visiting smarties mouthing platitudes and slinging swil,. hope it is.

Can the average New Yorker. stand cool, objective, scientific analysis by a qualified visitor? **Yes**, but not by Kandos. Travel statistics show that we are getting to be the world=s biggest travelers and that we are not always scrupulously polite and fair judges of other civilizations. I think we can take advice but only from genuine experts.

Let the Kandos stay at Penn State. Them=s my sentiments. (*New York Times*, April 29, 1978)

#### 5. Final Reply to my New York City Detractors

*As the reader can see, New York's reaction to my insulting letter was venomous. Par for the course, I suppose. But the one, ugly, common thread was that almost every single letter was taking it out on my wife. What is that? On April 29, the Times published my final reply to my numerous detractors:*

This is in response not only to the several printed letters reacting to my criticism of New York City in the March 28 issue of the *Times*, but also to the vast number of personal communications that have resulted from it. The readers must forgive the format, but I could not possibly answer each letter separately:

Approximately 25 percent of you found some merit in what I wrote. Roughly 70 percent expressed vitriolic rage, often taking the form of threats and obscenities directed at me, my family, my community and other conceivable targets. Some of you were even mad at my unfavorable reference to Tijuana. one can't win...

Knowing little about the author of the attack upon New York, most of you groped in the dark, trying to define the enemy. Some of you figured that I must be one of those upper-middle-class WASP's who don't care about urban minorities; many thought that I must be a typical liberal, arm-chair professor, sheltered life-long in safe but boring rural America; many defined me as an uncultured and inexperienced hick who has yet to see the world, its great cultural cities as well as its urban slums everywhere. In fact, I was born in Eastern Europe, spent the first part of my life dodging aerial bombings, wars and revolutions, then lived for many years in Paris and Amsterdam, attending the conservatory.

Your first stereotyping having failed, you may now want to try; another one (e.g. damned foreigner, or whatever else might suit your needs).

The exchange has been illuminating. New York chauvinism is alive and well. This is, to be sure, not altogether unwholesome. My criticism of your city was motivated in part by a desire to see it restored to its former greatness and a profound sadness at witnessing its decay. But your city is, I'll repeat it, in terrible trouble. Your very bad reaction - insofar as you belong to the majority that sent me obscene hate mail - confirms that (*New York Times*, April 29, 1978).

## 9. POPULATION, DEMOGRAPHY, THE ENVIRONMENT

*An important part of Sociology is demography. I have always had a fascination for this subject. This section reproduces some of the things I have said and written about problems of overpopulation and related topics, beginning, again with my answer to one of the questions Massaro asked from a bunch of professors in her book:*

### 1. How Worried should we be about Overpopulation? How many more People can the World Accommodate before its Natural Resources are Depleted?

In terms of numbers, we are going to go from the present 6.5 billion to about twice that (13 billion) by 2040. When I was a kid in the 1950s, there were 2 billion people in the world.

Things are already bad, and with the doubling of the world population, they'll get much worse.

Due to these numbers, global warming is here. London has had to build huge sluices at the estuary of the Thames in order to prevent the city from flooding. In the Netherlands, where I used to skate to school every winter in the 1950s, the canals haven't frozen over in 20 years. We are reducing the world to a desert.

Optimal numbers would be as follows: The world's population should go back to about 3 billion, and the US population should return to about 200 million (America has the fastest growing population in the western world - about 1% per year). Those would be good, sustainable numbers. But The Malthusian population checks are already in effect: (1) War (all over Africa, the Balkans, the Middle East, etc.); (2) Pestilence (Africans is dying of AIDS) and (3) starvation (again, Africa, plus Afghanistan and others). So, as Malthus said, either we check population growth the smart way (through voluntary birth control), or nature and circumstances will do it for us the painful way. One way or another, the problem will solve itself (Massaro, 2003: 94).

### 2. Five Questions about the Population Problem

*In 2005, one of my students was writing a perm paper about the population problem and she e-mailed me five questions about it. I responded in some detail because this is a topic close to my heart. This was the interview:*

Dear Alyssa:

My answers are inside the message:

1. What do you think of the U.S. compared to other countries in terms of overpopulation? Is there a difference?

The US has about 300 million people. For a country of this size (three and a half million

square miles) that's not too much. It's about 85 people per square mile. Most countries of the world have far greater densities - e.g. Holland with 1240, Japan with 840, etc - and many of those countries are doing quite well. Of course, the US wastes more energy and consumes more than anyone else, and its growing population is taking a toll. Ideally, we would stop growing and stabilize our population. But all in all, we cannot say that the US is overpopulated. If we make a mess of our domestic environment, it's because of bad policies, not because we have too many people.

## 2. Is overpopulation a worldwide problem?

Worldwide, the problem is very different: The Third World's population is growing way too much (from 2% to 4% per year, depending on the country, compared to 1% for the US and 0% in much of Europe). So the world's population is growing by 80 million a year. This is happening precisely in the poorest countries of the world, which can afford it the least. This is a disaster.

3. Do you think that overpopulation is a serious (you mean serious, not series) problem that needs to be fixed or cured? If so, is there any way to fix it?

Yes, overpopulation is probably *the* most serious problem the world is facing (but again, remember, the US is not part of the problem. In fact, it's part of the solution, since we absorb over a million immigrants from poor, overpopulated countries every year).

Obviously, birth control is one of the two solutions. The other one is economic development, so that the Third World can go through the so-called Demographic Transition, as the Western World did earlier. China is making a good dent in the problem, through both of these methods.

## 4. What kinds of problems accompany overpopulation?

They are the Malthusian problems - war, starvation and disease. Look at the world today: war and violence in the Middle East, starvation in Africa and disease in Africa and Asia. These are the Malthusian checks which will drastically reduce the population if we continue to have far too many babies.

## 5. Is anything being done to help control overpopulation?

We try to foster birth control upon Third World Countries, but without economic development, it doesn't work (very well). As to economic development, that's not going too well in many places.

All in all, though, the world's rate of population growth has already slowed down significantly (from 3% to 1.7%), so there is hope for the future.

## 3. Why does the Lower Class have more Babies (and more Dogs)?

*The previous sections make the obvious point that too many babies are being born. But fertility varies among groups. It varies by social class, by nationality, by race, etc. Once again it was Mary Massaro who asked some provocative questions on this subject:*

Are the lower social classes becoming the most populous and thus the most powerful?

*My answer:*

The upper strata have never been able to replace themselves, just as urban populations have always relied on the high rural birth rate to replenish themselves. But there is also upward mobility. Most people who are now members of the middle and upper classes have lower-class ancestors. Therefore, by co-opting much of the lower class, the middle classes can perpetuate themselves.

Nevertheless, I do see the implicit point of the question. There does seem to be an increasing coarseness and vulgarity about, so lower class tastes may be gaining ground. But this is probably because the middle class is joining in (Massaro, 2003: 21).

Next, Mary asked: Why do the poor have more children (and more dogs)?

*My answer:*

The lower class has more old-fashioned pronatalist, familistic values; it is more primitive. The middle class is more materialistic; it values quality of life more than having a whole bunch of babies. This is called the *Theory of Demographic Transition*. For example, as Mexico's standard of living improves, its population becomes more middle-class, and its birth rate declines.

As to dogs, I don't know. Maybe for self-protection, crime rates being higher in lower-class neighborhoods? (Massaro, 2003: 17).

4. Are Whites and Hungarians Becoming Extinct?

*America's population passed the 300 million mark in 2006. At that time, I jotted down the following observation:*

America has the fastest growing population in the Western world. In our country, a baby is born every 8 seconds, someone dies every 12 seconds, and a new immigrant arrives every 14 seconds (*New York Times*, Jan. 6, 2006). Thus, the country's population reached 300 million in October, 2006. Only China and India have more people at this time. However, most Third World countries are growing more rapidly than America. Those that already have a large population base - for example Brazil, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Mexico - will eventually overtake the United States.

*Both domestically and internationally, populations of color are growing far more rapidly than the whites are. Mary Massaro asked me this:*

Will whites soon be a minority?

*My answer:*

In California and in the world they already are. In the United States, whites will not be a minority for quite some time, if at all. Is this important? Only to racists (i.e. fearful whites and jubilant minorities). (Massaro, 2003: 4).

Will Hungary Disappear?

*Internationally, the situation is different. Due to the Demographic Transition, the population of the (poor) Third World is growing the fastest and that of the (affluent) West the slowest, if at all. The populations in several of the richest countries of the world - for example, Japan, Germany, Switzerland and Scandinavian countries - are now in incipient decline. In addition, Eastern Europe, Russia and the former Communist block, are losing population while struggling economically. Thus, some countries are now facing a problem which is the opposite of the traditional worry about overpopulation - not enough babies. Hungary is a case in point. In 1997, I had an exchange about this with Hungarian President Arpad Goncz, who was a good friend of our family. Here is the letter I wrote to him on December 1997:*

His Excellency Arpad Goncz, President  
Republic of Hungary

Dear President Goncz:

Please allow me to resume contact with you at this time. I remember fondly the gracious reception you accorded me in your offices in 1994. My mother Ata frequently reminds me of her contacts with you. We are both so delighted to know you -- the respected head of state of our country of birth.

As a sociologist, I dabble in all sorts of statistics, and I was recently reminded again of some sad demographic facts of which I was already aware, as I leafed through my latest edition of the *Statistical Abstracts'* International section (of which I enclose a few pages):

The population decline currently under way in Hungary and other Eastern European countries is worrisome: of 193 countries in the world, 11 have a declining population, and 10 of these are in Eastern Europe. They include the Baltic States, war-torn Bosnia and Hungary. In only 4 countries *on earth* is the population declining more rapidly than in Hungary (-.6% per year). Between 1980 and 2000, Hungary will have lost almost 10% of its population -- not a large population to begin with.

There is no question that a stable population is far preferable to the uncontrolled explosion still occurring in most of the poorest third-world countries. The planet's future demands that mankind heed Malthus' warnings. However, very slow growth or a near-replacement-level fertility, as in Western Europe and Japan, is best.

We have to worry about the possible extinction of a people with a rich history, a unique language and a brilliant civilization. Will Hungarian soon join Latin as a dead language? Meanwhile, countries that barely existed a couple of centuries ago like Mexico, Brazil and Indonesia become 10, 20 or 30 times more populous than Hungary.

If anyone can do anything to avert such national suicide, surely you, the head of state, would be the one. Why not foster pro-natalist policies, such as those pursued by France throughout the first half of the 20th century? Why not vigorous incentives to promote greater immigration *from anywhere*? "Familial allocations," i.e. more generous government support for families with more children seems to be a policy which is becoming imperative, if Hungary is to continue to exist. This is not jingoistic or racist rhetoric. The composition of the population is of secondary importance. It does not matter that the proportion of Gypsies may increase, if that group happens to be the most fertile at the present time. Similarly, opening your doors wide to immigrants may also help solve the problem.

I do not presume that you have not pondered this issue. I merely wish to communicate these thoughts to you -- as a Hungarian-born sociologist looking at the country from the outside and concerned about its future. I am also aware of the economic context of these demographic trends. Here, I merely want to urge you to think of possible solutions before demographic decline becomes catastrophic.

It is a privilege to have the opportunity to be able to share my concerns with the President himself.

Please accept my best wishes for a happy New Year and the greatest felicity to you, your beloved ones, and the marvelous but harried people you are leading through this period of history.

##### 5. What is the Likely Fate of Social Security as the Elderly Population Booms and Funds Dwindle?

*Getting back to the domestic situation, the U.S. has a similar problem, albeit not as severe. What we have here is the greying of the population, not its evanescence. This is, as I explain in an answer to one of Mary Massaro's questions, a fiscal problem rather than a demographic one:*

We all know that as the population pyramid becomes increasingly inverted, it becomes more and more difficult for the shrinking base of young, tax-paying workers to support the growing number of retirees. True.

However, I worry much more about unending population and economic growth. Indefinite economic growth and indefinite population growth through a continued high birth rate and immigration (America receives half of the world's displaced persons) are not sustainable. These problems are already occurring and are devastating the country and the world. There is *no* resemblance between the California of today and the California I moved to forty years ago. The deforestation, the erosion, the drying of our rivers and water tables, the paving of our farmland - the deterioration is palpable and visible, even within one or two generations.

So: We *must* reduce population growth. This may create a temporary social security jam, but that has to be resolved through other means than the continuation of what has been, in essence, a pyramid scheme (Massaro, 2003: 93-94).

## 6. Wars, Including the Chronic Middle-Eastern Violence, are Basically a Population Problem

*This is something I jotted down during the 2006 summer war between Israel and the Lebanese Hetzbollah:*

It's quite simple, really: In Lebanon, the Christian birthrate is 2 per 10, that of the Sunis is 4.5 and the Shiites' is 11. Lebanon is a microcosm of the Middle East and even of the entire Third World. There is also the strong correlation between religious denomination and socioeconomic status and, as a result, radicalism. Basically, then, the world's political problems are population problems. When the "wretched of the earth" (to use Frantz Fanon's term) inherit the earth, it will be because they have *numerically* wiped out the middle class.

The battle which Israel, the United States and the Western World are losing in the Middle East is a *demographic* battle. The wretched of the earth will always be far more prolific than the middle class.

Let me remind you that despite AIDS' toll, Africa still has the fastest growing population of any continent. Despite the mayhem and the exodus of thousands, Iraq's population continues to grow. Remember the dialogue between the actor Eric Bana and one of the PLO terrorists in the 2005 movie *Munich*? The terrorist sums up the situation by saying, "We have all the time in the world." Quite.

What is to be done?

One theoretical solution would be for the middle class to start having 10 or 12 babies per household. An absurdity.

The only other way to world peace is to raise the standard of living of the 2 billion wretched of the earth. Many parts of the Western World are just as multi-ethnic and multi-cultural as Lebanon, Iraq and the former Yugoslavia. Look at Belgium, Switzerland, Canada, not to mention an average American city like Sacramento, where I live. The people who live in these affluent places speak different languages, have different religions and are of different races, and yet they co-exist more or less harmoniously. However, economic development is a daunting task, particularly one which does not leave too many people behind.

## 7. Nuclear Energy is Great! - or Not?

*The population problem is closely linked to the energy problem. That problem, in turn, can be summed up in a few words: Humanity is causing global warming, and much of it is because of the use of fossil fuels. Furthermore, our growing dependence on oil is causing wars. I*

*The Sacramento Region already has about 2 million people, and it is still growing rapidly. It needs all the energy it can have. Until 1989, much of that was provided by the Rancho Seco nuclear power plant. Sometimes the reactor had to be shut down for repairs. After a while, the "greens" succeeded in holding a referendum on whether or not to close it permanently, and lo and behold, they won!*

*I was fuming. Here was a power plant which we - the community - had spent a couple of billion dollars to build, and now the people simply decided to junk it. What monumental waste! In the following article, I advocate nuclear energy. By the 21<sup>st</sup> century, our dependence on oil had become so problematic that nuclear energy was poised for a come-back. I wrote this on June 7, 1989, the day after Sacramentans voted, by a thin majority, to permanently close down their two-billion dollar power plant.*

*After you read this emotional plea for nuclear power, see my postscript at the end, written in 2007, in which I argue the opposite.*

I should have written this before the loss of Rancho Seco, perhaps swaying just enough votes to carry the day on June 6. Even though this is like closing the barn after the horse is gone, I am writing to you anyway. While Sacramento has done itself irreparable damage, there still remains a national nuclear industry to be saved. So let me tell you what's happening:

Americans are making a big mistake. The nation that invented nuclear energy is deliberately turning its back on modern technology.

The June 6 decision by Sacramentans to junk a perfectly safe, clean and functional \$2 billion piece of capital equipment will be remembered as a blunder of historical proportion. We are the 7th most polluted city in America, but at least we had our own nuclear power plant. This was our ace in the hole. We could have handled economic and demographic growth with a minimum of pain. Instead, we turn our back on the cleanest, safest and cheapest source of energy known to mankind. I'll repeat: *cleanest, safest and cheapest*. Despite all your arguments about risk, radioactivity, waste disposal problems, etc, my assessment of nuclear energy is incontestable. The record speaks for itself. It is cleaner, safer and cheaper *by far* than *any* other technology, including coal, hydroelectric, oil, etc. The difference is factorial, like 1:1000. In other words, other technologies kill *one thousand times* more people than does nuclear energy. I am sorry, but that's how it is.

Nevertheless, the Luddites' hysteria caught on and a hoodwinked community decided to commit economic suicide. Remember this article when your electricity bill begins to approach your mortgage payment! If we decide to burn coal, today's air quality will be remembered like the Garden of Eden. There will be black-outs. There will be mandatory cut-backs, laws against peak-hour use.

The shortsightedness and cynicism of latter-day "liberal" opinion leaders in this country are appalling. These ideological bigots pursue their true beliefs with mindless disregard for the well-being of the community, lying as they see fit and inflicting costs on the rest of us - innocent bystanders like myself and my children, who have not yet lost our senses but are trampled under in the mass flight from modernity. Keep in mind that those most vocal against nuclear energy are almost invariably the pampered rich, the Marin County quiche and brie set. They can afford to see their utility bill go up to \$6000 next year. The rest of us can't.

You, the people of Sacramento, have been had. You are throwing away your future and that of your children. You have thrown out Sacramento's greatest energy asset. You didn't see through the quackery of the ideologues.

Do you know the ins and outs of nuclear technology? Do Connelly, Smeloff, Hayden, Remy and all the other zealots know anything? Of course not. Only nuclear physicists know, and they did not contribute to your suicidal decision. The \$2 billion decision was made by a mob, based on ignorance and lies.

The record of the nuclear industry was never considered. It was not mentioned that nuclear energy has *never killed one single person* in this country. That's right, zero, zilch! Three Mile Island? *Nobody* died at TMI, no one! That's why it is such a fraud to call it an accident or a "disaster." It wasn't an accident, must less a disaster. It was a breakdown. And it merely proved that the nuclear industry's failsafe mechanisms work. But who is willing to listen? By now, the entire culture has defined it as one of the major catastrophes of our age. It is routinely referred to by the media, and I quote, as the "greatest nuclear disaster in the history of the US."

Meanwhile, France, Japan, the United Kingdom, Korea and other rational countries derive every year a larger percentage of their electricity from nuclear power plants. It takes two and a half times longer to complete a nuclear power plant in the US than in France, with absolutely no gain in safety or quality. Why? Because the Luddites, who are out to dismantle our technological society, litigate, obstruct and raise the cost of nuclear power artificially. Then they claim that nuclear energy is too expensive! Of course it is: They *make it so* - by holding things up in court for five, ten, fifteen years, so that plants can't go on line, but just sit there, idle capital going to waste. In France, Japan and elsewhere, nuclear energy is not only safe and clean, but also competitively cheap.

Does America prefer going to war over Middle Eastern oil, sending its boys to die in foreign deserts? Does it want its quality of life to decline? And have you heard of global warming?

When I arrived in this country in 1961 as a refugee and immigrant from overseas, America towered over the world. Not only materially, but more importantly, *morally*: America exuded self-confidence, compassion for the downtrodden, optimism and the will and ability to help others and itself solve any problem. John Kennedy had just been elected. He embodied these attitudes.

Eight years later, America reached its apogee, landing men on the moon. Since then, it has been going downhill. And do you know why the country is slipping? Not because of economics, not because of the budget deficit, not due to technical problems, not due to overpopulation. America's eventual collapse will be due to one thing only, namely the *failure of nerve* of its opinion elite, the cowardice of those who should know better - the politicians, the media, the intellectuals, the educators.

They have been lying to you. They have been telling you that our society can be risk free, 100% safe. This elusive quest for absolute guarantees is slowly suffocating the country and stifling its creativity, energy and drive for progress. It is a siren song and a drug, seductive but destructive. It makes me sad to see a society engaging in such self-destructive tendencies.

\* \* \* \* \*

Post-Script: 2007: A wag once said that "consistency is the mark of a small mind." Sometimes one has to change one's mind - for example when new evidence surfaces. There is accumulated evidence about the lethality of nuclear power - even its peaceful application. For example, Eduardo Goncalves' article *The Secret Nuclear War (Annual Editions: Sociology, McGraw-Hill, 2007: 190-196)* is a well-researched documentation of the **hundreds of millions of deaths** which nuclear technology may have caused - more than the deaths from all the wars in history combined. These deaths are not the sensational violent deaths caused by nuclear warfare (except Hiroshima and Nagasaki), but they consist of millions of cases of leukemia, other forms of cancer, diabetes and other fatal illnesses. These deaths are caused by (1) the thousands of open-air nuclear tests taken during the 1950s before the test-ban treaty, (2) accidents such as Chernobyl and TMI, (3) nuclear power plant leakage into the environment (e.g. streams and watertables), (4) radioactive nuclear waste products and (5) other miscellaneous non-military aspects of nuclear energy. Some of Goncalves' allegations must be taken with a grain of salt (e.g. his conspiratorial stories about coverups and experiments involving the injection of radioactive materials into live human subjects). Nevertheless, it is true that nuclear energy is only viable if (1) power plants can be made entirely safe and if (2) radioactive waste products can be disposed of safely. These two ifs are so big that they make the promise of nuclear energy questionable.

## 8. Malthus, Death and Tsunamis

*Population, Energy, Global Warming, War. In one word: Death. Malthus warned us that unless we curtail our fertility and our population voluntarily, nature will do it for. Here are some thoughts and a brief letter on that subject. The letter was published in the Sacramento Bee on December 31, 2004.*

Death is really “in,” these days. “News” only means *bad news* any more. The vast majority of the news, printed or electronic, is about death. A homeless man in Chicago is eaten up by rats. A seven-year old boy in New Jersey tosses his baby sister from the balcony. Wars in the Middle East, genocide, starvation, the AIDS epidemic in Africa, the murder rate in America, etc. There are three Malthusian checks to excess population: 1) war, 2) starvation and 3) pestilence. All three are now in progress around the world.

A shrewd author or social scientist would specialize in Thanatology - the study of death. Here are a few ideas for projects dealing with death:

A) death statistics around the world, classified by place and cause - war, genocide, torture, starvation, AIDS, other diseases, by country. Grizzly and boring.

B) The psychology of dying - for hospice-like help. Been done. For example Elizabeth Kubla-Ross' famous typology of the five stages of dying: Anger, denial, bargaining, depression and acceptance.

C) Can there be a good death? Maybe. John Wayne died happily. There can be death with dignity, with minimum physical pain, with love, with satisfaction about having lived a good life.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Finally, there are natural disasters. Are they one of the Malthusian checks? You might say that volcano eruptions and earthquakes are independent of human activity, biblical beliefs notwithstanding.*

*On the other hand, we now hear that global warming contributes to the fury of hurricanes like Katrina, so maybe we are to blame for some disasters as well. Here is something I published in the Sacramento Bee after the 2004 Tsunami in the Indian Ocean:*

I am devastated by the suffering caused by the Indian Ocean Tsunami. The death toll has reached 127,000 so far. How does this cataclysm rank historically? *The World Almanac* lists 17 other disasters that killed 100,000 or more people. Here they are, ranked and followed by the number of deaths:

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Country</u>	<u>Death toll</u>
1)	1931:	China Flood:	3,700,000
2)	1887:	China Flood:	900,000
3)	1556:	China Earthquake:	830,000
4)	1970:	Bangladesh Cyclone:	300,000
5)	1642:	China Flood:	300,000
6)	1737:	India Earthquake:	300,000
7)	1976:	China Earthquake:	255,000
8)	1920:	China Earthquake:	200,000
9)	1927:	China Earthquake:	200,000
10)	1923:	Japan Earthquake:	143,000
11)	1991:	Bangladesh Cyclone:	139,000
12)	526:	Syria Earthquake:	250,000
13)	1939:	China Flood	200,000
14)	1730:	Japan Earthquake:	137,000
15)	1228:	Holland Flood:	100,000
16)	1911:	China Flood:	100,000
17)	1290:	China Earthquake:	100,000
18)	2004:	Indian Ocean Tsunami:	100,000?

The Indian Ocean Tsunami ranks # 15 right now. 56% of the disasters occurred in China, 94% in Asia. Why? Because that's where most people live, and because of more primitive conditions there than in the West. It is worth remembering that none of the "man made" disasters (aircraft disasters, the Titanic, Chernobyl, etc.) approaches the magnitude of natural disasters. Earth's awesome power still dwarfs that of man (*Sacramento Bee*, December 31, 2004).

## 10. IMMIGRATION

*I am an immigrant. I spent the first half of my life migrating from one country to another. I first fled from Hungary when I was six, leaving war, the holocaust, fascism and communism behind. After eight years in France, I moved again, this time to the Netherlands, leaving abject poverty and discrimination behind. Ten years later, at 25, I moved to a fourth country, the United States. All my life, until my naturalization as an American citizen at 28, I was a stateless refugee, without a passport, without a homeland, without the right to cross borders, without many rights, period.*

*America is the haven for half of the world's displaced persons such as I myself. I share this with millions of others. My saga is described in my autobiography, which you can access on the Internet by clicking on [www.csus.edu/indiv/k/kandot](http://www.csus.edu/indiv/k/kandot) or by Googleing me and then clicking on "A slightly embellished Autobiography."*

*My point, here, is merely to indicate that immigration is of tremendous personal significance to me and that I am not only a friend of all immigrants and displaced persons in the world, but also one of them. Furthermore, my love for and gratitude to America is forever, because this is the country which gave me, as it does for millions of others, the opportunity to live a free, productive and happy life.*

## 1. A Texas Bigot Wants me to Leave America

*In 1981, I printed a pro-gun-control letter in the Wall Street Journal. I wrote that in countries like France and Holland, where I grew up, people didn't own guns, and therefore didn't murder each other as much as we do in the United States. I got both supportive and hostile feedback. On April 13, 1981, a Texas bigot wrote me the following letter:*

Tom:

I'm afraid that you don't understand freedom either. If things are so good in the Netherlands or in France, why don't you go back to where you came from? We don't need you here."

*To which I mailed back the following angry reply on April 21:*

Glen Ball,  
P.O. Box 416 Strawn, Texas 76475

Who are you to tell me that "we don't need you here," you intolerant bigot? The US is *my* country as much as yours. I paid my dues, I was drafted, I waited nine years for my citizenship, I vote, I pay my taxes and I am no doubt a more responsible citizen than you. You are the one who knows nothing about freedom, notably freedom of speech, which is what this country is all about. People like you should stop misinterpreting the Second Amendment and start learning about the First. Read your Constitution already, and learn about the essence of Americanism: tolerance, freedom of expression and good sportsmanship.

Unlike your insulting letter, most of the responses I got to my *Wall Street Journal* publication were supportive. They include letters from dedicated policemen and law-abiding citizens who are more interested in restoring *our* country to its former greatness than in lashing out at foreign-born scape-goats.

## 2. Why be Ashamed of being a First-generation American?

*The following anecdote is about another somewhat stressful experience which had to do with immigrant status:*

On Thanksgiving 2000, we had a reunion with the extended family, including my in-laws, who are quintessentially American. That is, they are handsome, blond, fourth-generation Southern Californians, living an exemplary suburban upper-middle-class life.

As we were carving up the turkey and bantering around the dinner table, I mention casually that part of my daughters' identity is the fact that they are first-generation Americans (on my side). I stressed that this was not something negative, not a judgment, just a fact - perhaps a positive fact.

However my daughters, along with their in-laws, gently ganged up on me, saying, "Nah, Tom, that's irrelevant. That's only important in your own mind." I replied that in America, people are generally *aware* of such *identity* issues. Look at the Kennedy clan; look at my wife Anita, who is often complimented on her great Italian cooking skills; look at the politics of ethnic identity everywhere; look at presidential candidates (like Dukakis) who proudly announce that they are the children of immigrants; look at people always talking about (and searching for) their roots. These are facts, not judgments. *Good* facts, too. It is good to be aware of your identity and of who you are. This enriches you. But my interlocutors weren't listening. They simply *willed* the topic to be bullshit. They kept telling me that my daughters were Californians, period. In their opinion, being

the first-generation daughter of a Hungarian immigrant was irrelevant, and talking about this was nonsense.

### 3. Why does the Government not want Immigrants to Assimilate?

*Although I am an immigrant and highly cosmopolitan, I loathe the artificial and dysfunctional cult of diversity which started in the 1980s. When I was young, immigrants were supposed to assimilate to their host country. This was both the right thing to do, and it benefitted the immigrants. Now, the celebration of diversity and pluralism encourages immigrants to hold on to their native tongues and to their native cultures. This is terrible. Had this been the policy throughout our history, America would never have become the mighty and cohesive society which has repeatedly saved the world from itself. On June 23, 1991, I wrote the following article about this for the Wall Street Journal, but they didn't print it.*

Northwest Sacramento is a largely lower class area with many dilapidated housing projects and subsidized low rent apartment buildings. Predictably, a large proportion of the population is black and Hispanic. There are many welfare recipients, Section 8 tenants, AFDC single mothers, etc. It is a heavily patrolled high-crime area, with more than its share of drugs and prostitution.

One of the most fascinating elements in this colorful mosaic is a contingent of hundreds of newly arrived Russian immigrants and refugees. Under an agreement between the US and Russian governments, thousands of Russians have been permitted to emigrate to the United States from areas such as Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia and Uzbekistan. These people are ethnic Slavs and they are Christians.

A recent incident reveals the dishonesty of the politically correct media: The new Russians have been moved into low-income housing by the government. There, they coexist with other residents, many of whom are American blacks. There is an occasional flare-up of ethnic strife. Some months ago a few of the blacks assaulted some of the Russians. Here is how the media reported that incident: "Americans beat up foreign refugees." The obvious and fraudulent implication was that, once again, American bigots and red necks were persecuting foreign minorities, KKK-style, always a popular theme among the liberal media. Only as a result of some sparse television coverage did it become apparent that in this racial incident, the "Americans" were local blacks and the victims were newly arrived Russian immigrants.

I have visited and spoken with several of these Russians. As an immigrant myself, I speak four European languages, but Russian is not one of them. On the other hand, most of these people hardly speak any English, even though some have been here for two years.

I saw and chatted with young children, teenagers and older parents. The women often wear beautiful old-world floral dresses. They smile bashfully, wear crosses and religious necklaces. The men are tinkering with beat-up old cars. These people are the salt of the earth.

The scandal is that hardly anyone speaks any English whatsoever. Some have been here for less than five months, but some for two years. What is going on?

I learned that many of them are enrolled in ESL (English as a Second Language) classes in a special school, and that most of the teenagers are enrolled in the local high school. I wonder whether the high school will graduate them - as it does many other lower class and minority kids - even though they will be essentially illiterate, at least in English.

When I moved from Hungary to France at age seven, it took me three months to learn

French *fluently* and without a trace of an accent. At age fourteen, I moved again, to Holland. This time it took me one year to become fluent in Dutch. When I finally moved to America at twenty five, it took me less than a year to become fluent in English. While I still have a very slight accent, I was publishing articles in the college newspaper within two years of my arrival in this country.

I am not a genius. My relatives have learned new languages just as rapidly as I have. My mother moved to Sacramento from Europe a few years ago. Before that, she knew no English at all. Within two years she became fluent in English, even though she retains a heavy foreign accent. In other words, she learned a brand new language at age *sixty-seven!*

There may be various factors contributing to the Russians' failure to learn our language so far. For one thing, they stick together and don't interact enough with Americans.

But the main reason is that they are coming to America at a time and in the context of a political culture vastly different from what I faced thirty years earlier, and millions of others before me: Today, we celebrate diversity. We encourage subgroups to differ and to resist Anglo-conformity. We not only tolerate different cultural backgrounds, but we coddle those who do not assimilate, to the point of rewarding malingering and artificially cultivating pluralism. California ballots are needlessly printed in half a dozen languages, ATM machines and automated telephone systems needlessly address everyone in multiple languages.

The system claims to do the right thing by having these Russian kids take special ESL classes. But these classes teach nothing. When I and my sisters made a 100% switch from Hungarian to French within three months, it was not in special language classes taught and administered by people of a bureaucratic mind set, and who know little about real-life language acquisition. It was because our parents dumped us on a French farm where *nothing* but French was spoken. You either sank or swam - and we did the latter, as did the first eighty million immigrants to America.

But these Russian kids have been taking ESL classes for a year and they have absolutely nothing to show for it, nothing. Once again, we see a public educational program which costs millions to the taxpayers, benefits bureaucrats and pays ESL teachers' salaries, but teaches and accomplishes practically nothing. One week on the street or playground surrounded by American kids, or one month working at McDonald's or Home Depot would teach these kids more English than two years of ESL. Proof is that the few who spoke good English were those who had jobs - manual work requiring no English but submerging them in an American environment. When they started on these jobs, they spoke no English either.

It is almost as if our new social policies deliberately and intentionally force people into dependency and debility. For these Russians, fluency in English is the ticket out of the slums and to freedom from dependency on Big Brother. The more enterprising, motivated and perceptive individuals among them realize this. Some, having learned English, move out and get increasingly better jobs. Within a few years they will be productive taxpayers, own cars, clothes and homes they wouldn't have dreamed of in Uzbekistan.

But for now, most of them are kept on the leash of the Nannie state. The government supports them, pays their rent, their food and their ESL classes. One wonders whether the instructors in those classes were told *not* to teach them too quickly....

## 11. BUREAUCRACY

### 1. Too many Laws - Part One

*I have always been against bureaucracy, because I have a strong libertarian streak. This section contains a few funny things I have written about this over the years, plus a very morose article at the end. I wrote this first piece in 1976, reread it in 2006 and added a few comments. By then, many of the laws had become accepted parts of our life.*

The number and the kinds of laws that are passed every year are becoming absurd. Of the 30,000 new laws and ordinances passed in the U.S. every year, here are a few examples of the more ridiculous ones:

1. Student privacy laws now prevent instructors from posting their grades on their office doors or electronically, and using the students' social security numbers.

2. The Agriculture Labor Relations Board's access rule is supposed to make unionization of agricultural workers easier, but it has achieved no such thing.

3. The law forbids (prospective) employers to ask (female) job applicants their marital status. Besides being discriminatory against men, the law should not exist for either gender. Oh sure, the intent is to combat potential discrimination against women. But discrimination against whom? married women? single women? Married women might have children and quit their job, but single women might be perceived as less reliable. The law is a crock.

4. Bussing is the policy of transporting kids from one neighborhood school to another to make the schools racially diverse. By 2006, this policy was hardly being discussed any more. It was widely practiced and accepted as the law of the land, as was the disruption it caused. It also led to some idiotic situations: For example, schools which were initially mostly white were forced to integrate through bussing. However over the years, white flight rendered many of these schools nearly 100% black, and this was then considered acceptable by the authorities. Thus bussing often did not achieve diversity, but merely aggravated the invasion-and-succession process in American neighborhoods..

5. Medical privacy laws. These came up much later. Such laws have only caused aggravation and hundreds of millions of wasted hours, as medical personnel are no longer able to use common-sense, give vital information to spouses, etc. Huge mischief has been created by such laws, while benefitting no one, all because of the litigation explosion.

6. Affirmative action - don't get me going on this! See my many other writings, in section 23, about this nefarious policy.

7. Anti-smoking laws. Of course some of this legislation has benefitted public health. I can still remember the nightmare of smoke-filled airplanes. But what about forcing smokers to go stand out in the rain, in front of their office buildings, often specifying that they must stand 25 feet away from the entrance, reducing them to pariahs in various other ways? Terrible.

8. Megan's laws and Jessica laws for "sex offenders," like California's Proposition 83. These laws require offenders to register *for life*, to have their exact addresses posted on the Internet for all their neighbors to see, and they may not live within 2000 feet from schools, parks, playgrounds and other places where children congregate. This applies to anyone who has *ever* been convicted of a sex offense, even if he has been rehabilitated for decades. The residency restrictions force some sex offenders and former sex offenders to sell or lose their homes and to live in the rural outback.

Of course pedophilia is an abomination. But what about an 18-year old boy who makes love to his 17-year old girlfriend? By law, he has committed rape and he is labeled a sex offender -

*forever*. What about someone who has downloaded prurient material from the Internet, but has never harmed anyone? The average American loses his/her virginity at 16. We can assume that this is often at the hand of someone who might be a couple of years older, and that it is generally consensual. Thus, millions upon millions of Americans are sex offenders. Megan's laws and Jessica laws are two more ways in which our criminal justice system is widening its nets, stigmatizing people for life, and feeding a prison system whose population is already the largest on earth, and continues to skyrocket.

9. All sorts of July 4<sup>th</sup> firecrackers are now banned, even though many are fun and present little hazard.

10. All sorts of playground facilities, jungle Jims and concrete surfaces are illegal, even though many are fun and present little hazard.

11. Saturday night cruising has been outlawed, even though it was a fun, harmless and quintessentially American tradition.

12. There is a curfew for teenagers, which is unnecessary and oppressive.

13. "Campaign Reform Act" tries to regulate campaign financing, but it is an utter failure, in addition to being a violation of the Constitution.

14. Ballots are multi-lingual. They are printed at great cost in a dozen languages which hardly anyone speaks and in some languages spoken by many. They merely retard the integration of immigrants into American culture. People who don't understand English and therefore have no clue about the political issues at hand shouldn't be able to vote, anyway.

15. Some states have outlawed *all* spanking.

16. Some school districts have banned playing tag, arguing that it harms children's self-esteem.

17. It started with seatbelt and motorcycle helmet requirements. These were reasonable. However, such legislation is now out of control: It is no longer enough to put your toddlers into car seats; they may only ride in the back of the car. Helmets are not only required for motorcyclists, but also for bicyclers, skiers, soon pedestrians too maybe?

So what we have is a Nannie State. Big Brother is legislating *everything*. This is driven by three things: A) Politicians' need to play popularity games with the electorate. B) The litigation explosion. C)

Society's inability to accept any risk whatsoever. If a new law saves ONE life - but inconveniences millions - we pass the law. We are going to choke on our laws.

## 2. Too many Laws - Part Two

*Thirty years later, I was still at it. This was printed in the Sacramento Bee on Oct. 8, 2005:*

It says in the Bee on Oct. 8 that Governor Schwarzenegger signed 729 new bills into law. Here is my question: Does anyone ever wonder about the fact that there are hundreds of new laws added every year (and not just at the State level)? Sure, that's what legislatures do - they make new laws. But I mean, how does it work, in the long run, with thousands and thousands of laws being added all the time? Can even lawyers know most of the laws? Shouldn't an equal number of laws be repealed? Aren't we going to be asphyxiated in laws? Just wondering (*Sacramento Bee, Oct. 8, 2005*).

### 3. Memo to Administrators

*When it comes to exposing bureaucracy, humor works best. In May 1977 I printed this in the Sacramento State Hornet, our University daily:*

#### **MEMO TO ADMINISTRATORS**

We are incessantly bombarded with memos, directives and briefs from administrators, officials, authorities, registrars, bursars, parking administrators, committees, commissions in charge of this or that, directing us to comply with statutory or *ad hoc* regulations, to do or not to do something, *ad nauseam*. Here, then, is my own directive. May we all drown together in a sea of triplicate memos:

PURSUANT TO ARTICLE IA ITEM BS1 OF THE 1976TMK PERSONAL PRIVACY CODE, TITLE MCMLXXVII, LET IT BE KNOWN THAT IT WILL BE HENCEFORTH INADMISSIBLE TO MAIL TO (1) OUR OFFICE(S), (2) OUR RESIDENCE, (3) OUR VACATION LOCATION(S), (4) ANYWHERE ELSE WHERE WE MIGHT BE HIDING, DOCUMENTS DIRECTING US TO COMPLY WITH COMMITTEE, DEPARTMENTAL, SCHOOL, UNIVERSITY, CITY, COUNTY, STATE OR FEDERAL DIRECTIVES, UNLESS SUCH DOCUMENTS ARE ACCOMPANIED BY A STAMPED SELF-ADDRESSED ENVELOPE IN WHICH WE MAY CONVEY TO THE ORIGINATOR OF THE CORRESPONDENCE OUR FEELINGS ABOUT SAID CORRESPONDENCE AND OUR OPINION ABOUT SAID ORIGINATOR.

Anyone with questions about the above may contact Dr. Thomas Kando, person in charge of various things, at ext.010101010, Monday through Tuesday -:27 through 8:29, Tuesday through Tuesday 13:11 through 11:13, Sunday after November the second, noon to later, or by appointment with the chief delegate. (*Sacramento State Hornet*, May 1977).

Thank you for your cooperation.

### 4. Memo about too many Memos

*On September 10, 1991, fifteen years later, I was still at it with my pranks. Here is a memo I circulated at my University:*

Date: September 10, 1991

To: Chair, Departments of Environmental Studies,  
Biological Sciences,  
Academic Senate,  
President Donald Gerth,  
Dean David Wagner

From: Dr. Thomas M. Kando  
Very Important Professor

Date: Sept. 10, 1991

Subject: Memos and Trees

This is nothing personal against Dean Wagner – I’m sure he likes trees as much as I do. But his August 15 memo about sexual harassment (along with many other memos we receive so generously every day from various administrators) made me wonder:

Dean Wagner’s memo is an 8 pp. (single spaced) document distributed to the University Community. Assuming that the “University Community” includes 2000 or 3000 people, that each of us gets about half a dozen times this amount of unsolicited mail every day (primarily from publishers and administrators), and that we receive mail 200 times per year, this adds up to 19 to 29 million pages of unsolicited mail per year for our campus alone.

Here, my calculations break down, and perhaps one of the environmentalists in your departments can help me out: How many trees does it take to produce 20 to 30 million pages?

I have three more arguments against too many long memos: (1) reading all my unsolicited mail, I don’t have enough time left to do my job. (2) My first-class mail gets lost in the huge piles of unsolicited mail I find in my mailbox every morning. (3) There is a budget crisis, and we can no longer afford to write as many long memos.

### 5. Mediocracy Rules

*The following piece was written on March 18, 1974. I sent it to the New York Review of Books, but they didn’t print it. Now I can see why. It’s quite depressed. I must have had a bad time at the office. Still, there is truth in the article. My point here is basically the same as the Peter Principle: Everyone gets promoted up to their level of incompetence.*

Frustration, conflict, inflation, stagnation. These are becoming the typical features of our lives. We seem to have reached a point where whatever we do ensures further deterioration in our social conditions. A downward spiral, a quicksand in which we sink deeper with every move. In all major institutions of society today, mediocrity, stagnation and deadweight are the only things rewarded, while excellence and honesty are penalized. To this rule there are few exceptions. In addition, corruption and graft are also part and parcel of every man’s survival kit in the Great American Bureaucracy.

Things used to be different. As a nation, we achieved economic, political and even cultural greatness because of a unique freedom which rewarded courage, honesty and excellence. Then, the hardening of the arteries set in: social structure, class system and massive bureaucracies became the hallmarks of a society which is becoming as rigid and as incapable of adaptation as its European parents. Countless sociologists have described the advent of Organization Man, other-directedness, the cheerful robot. Now, American know-how turns into American inefficiency, as other countries pass us by. Rewards, acceptance, leadership and responsibility accrue to the nice guy, the jovial guy, not to the competent guy. We are becoming a nation of nice, blundering bureaucrats. American bureaucracy is assuming monstrous proportions. We have over 100,000 governments, but that does not even begin to accurately describe the nightmare of laws, rules and regulations and the attendant frame of mind.

We have just about reached a total Orwellian reversal. Good is bad and bad is good. It’s that simple. Whatever a bureaucrat tells you, from the president of the United States to the local county clerk, a reasonably safe bet is that something like its opposite is probably true. We know, when a politician or a corporate executive tells us that we are to trust him, that this is the moment to become suspicious. We know, when a policeman says that he is merely doing his job, that the citation gives him inner satisfaction. We know, when an organization claims that its membership gets

along just fine, that latent hostilities are on the verge of explosion. Tell the truth and you'll have nothing but trouble; work hard and excel, and you will be ostracized or worse; be kind and you will be trampled under; be an idealist and you will have a short life. Old virtues are handicaps. Who is most likely to succeed in the modern world, the man possessing those qualities, or their opposite? An easy guess.

I work in a microcosm of the corrupt mediocracy. The leadership is dishonest, lazy and incompetent for the most part. It is all verbiage (the standard colloquialism for that condition is unprintable), all lies, no inspiration, no joy. Huddling in the power structure are essentially the old, lazy, selfish and unproductive members. The young and hard-working ones are on the outside, often ostracized, always belittled. A glance at the list of professors who have recently experienced problems getting tenure or promotion reveals that more often than not, they have been the superior performers, those who have worked the hardest, published the most, been perhaps demanding but also the most inspiring to students. Their sin was to lack mediocrity. They evoked the wrath of their jealous, petty, envious, vicious, spiteful and crooked colleagues.

It is inescapable in academia, and in the society at large: to succeed you must be accepted; to be accepted you must be mediocre; reward for mediocrity is bureaucratic power. Excel therefore at your own peril, for you will be ostracized, undermined, perhaps destroyed if you persist.

Thus the whole sordid show is run by small men with many small friends. Deeply entrenched in their obsolete and counterproductive habits, they would rather see the ship go under than change course. They elect corrupt mediocrities to the helm of departments, as Americans elected Richard Nixon to the helm of state. Universities crumble and so does the economy and the society itself. Was Thomas Jefferson right? Do we deserve this affliction?

## 12. THE FAMILY

*One of my areas of expertise in Sociology has been the Family. In 1978, I published a textbook titled Sexual Behavior and Family Life in Transition (New York: Elsevier). At the time, it was perhaps the only book in this field which was sympathetic to "family values," because the vast majority of sociologists were celebrating "alternative lifestyles." Over the years, I have had dozens of newspaper, television and radio interviews on this subject, and I have published dozens of book reviews, anthology chapters, and articles in newspapers and in refereed journals all over the United States. I have presented dozens of papers at conferences from Washington to Vienna and from New York to Japan. In 1995, I co-authored a book named Readings in Criminology (Kendal-Hunt) in which I also touch upon the family and child-rearing practices, as I have done for many years in my courses in Juvenile Delinquency.*

*This section reproduces a few passages from some of papers which I have written and presented over the years in various parts of the world, plus passages from some of my book reviews, and a couple of short essays about miscellaneous family-related matters.*

### 1. Is the Family Important?

*This first excerpt is from a paper I presented at a family conference in New York City in 1997:*

Humankind's most important and only universal primary group is the family. There are many distorted uses of the term "family." It is fashionable to apply the label to all sorts of other

primary and even secondary groups -- ranging from criminal gangs ("we're all brothers; we love each other") to a whole society ("America is one big happy family") and even to all of mankind (as in Edward Steichen's famous photo book *The Family of Man*).... Such groups are pseudo-families (e.g. gangs), or they can only be called families metaphorically. Nevertheless, revisionist sociologists and utopian ideologues continue to call communes and various other primary groups "families."

Their error is simple: A group is not a family unless it is a *kinship* group. There are only two ways in which people can be relatives of one another, i.e. members of the same family: *affinity* and *consanguinity*. That is, people can only be related through marriage or through blood. Being good friends, sharing a culture, living under one roof, engaging in sexual intercourse, having frequent interaction -- none of these things makes a family. Those who argue otherwise are simply redefining the term. Of course, one can always decide that henceforth "chair" means a furniture on which meals are served, and "table" is something used to sit on, but it *is* important to agree upon the meaning of words if one is to avoid chaos and cacophony.

This brings up one of the major fronts on which the *war over the family* (see Peter and Brigitte Berger, 1984) has been fought: Because marriage is the only non-consanguineous way to establish a family, redefinitions of marriage are proposed by those who want to water down the meaning of the concept of family to denote anything their political agenda dictates. For example, if two people of the same sex can be married, they become a family. Similarly, if a dozen fraternity brothers were to become legally married to each other, they would then constitute a family.

However, such revisionism has not been very successful, because societies remain aware of the inseparable link between the family and biology. Human beings are both social and biological creatures. As functionalist social scientists from Murdock (1949) to Parsons (1968) have demonstrated, the family is an irreplaceable institution because it performs *both* social *and* biological functions. Humans are *both* cultural *and* biological creatures. The error of utopian reformers has always been to ignore the latter and to assume that our species is entirely free to construct its institutions as it chooses.

\* \* \* \* \*

A major front in the late-twentieth century culture war is that of *sexuality*, *sex roles* and *family life*. The Postmodernists' position is simple: *the status quo has to go*. And the status quo is embodied, most of all, by the *bourgeois family*, i.e. the traditional life-long, monogamous, heterosexual couple raising its own biological offspring (See for example Stacey's *In the Name of the Family: Rethinking Family Values in the Postmodern Age* (1996)). The reason that the bourgeois family should be abolished is that it has been oppressive to women and to children, i.e. it is *patriarchal*.

Alternatives to the bourgeois family are to be accepted or encouraged, including divorce, working mothers, childlessness, singlehood, single parenthood (which generally means single motherhood), unwed motherhood, adoption, abortion, homosexual marriage and various forms of polygamy. The promotion of alternative lifestyles takes place under the banner of freedom of choice and diversity.

The most direct consequence of this change is often financial: When there is no male breadwinner in the picture, single mothers and their children often descend into severe poverty (see Weitzman, 1985). More generally and perhaps more importantly, one parent's time, energy and resources are always more limited than those of two parents, especially for the task of *socializing* the children. Large amounts of empirical data show that the rates of delinquency, maladjustment,

mental and emotional instability and other pathologies are significantly higher among the children of divorced parents and single parents than among those raised in dual-parent families (for a review of the literature, see Bynum and Thompson, 1998).

The solution? Enter the *Nanny State*, i.e. the State as substitute father, *parens patriae*, *in loco parentis*.

Thus, the attack on the bourgeois family is carried out by a diverse alliance. The first component of this alliance consists of *postmodernist* theorists. These are academicians who are busy elaborating a new paradigm based on the writings of such authors as Foucault (1978), a paradigm which puts into question such traditional dichotomies as male-female, heterosexual-homosexual, parent-child, mental health-mental illness and normal-deviant.

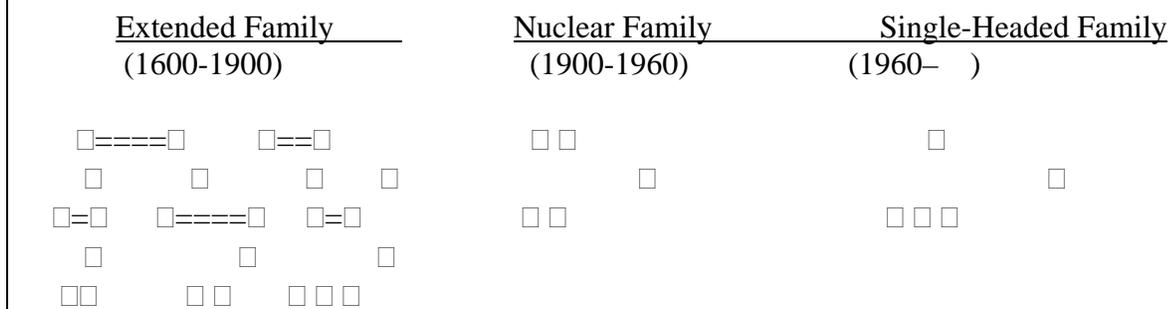
A second element of the alliance consists of the helping professions, i.e. social workers, family counselors, sex counselors, psychologists, school counselors and assorted other such professionals, many of whom are public employees. It also includes elements of the juvenile justice system, such as group home managers and probation officers. These groups tend to magnify the family's pathological tendencies; they exaggerate the frequency of family dysfunction; they see themselves as the solution to these problems; they are eager to intervene or even to replace natural parents at the first signs of trouble. Such "benevolent pastoral" intervention (Foucault's term) occurs most often in lower class families, which are least able to protect their autonomy.

A final force arrayed against the traditional family is the dominant media culture, which misses no opportunity to document family dysfunction. The news is replete with stories about family violence, spousal abuse, child abuse, child molestation, rape and delinquency. While the increased public attention to these issues is a mark of progress, it would be illogical to assert that they now occur more often than in the past. Surely there is now a lot less murder, rape, beating and abuse within families than fifty years ago. Therefore, the agenda is *political*: the traditional private family is *perceived* as an oppressive, sexist and patriarchal institution, dysfunctional and traumatic to its members, especially to women and children. Its dissolution is often the best remedy, coupled with government intervention and assistance.

Blankenhorn's *Fatherless America: Confronting our Most Urgent Social Problem* (1995) is one recent example of the growing body of literature which attempts to alert us to this growing problem. The facts are clear: A generation ago, fatherlessness and illegitimacy were rare in America. Only in the black community was it significant, i.e. affecting between one-fourth and one-third of all families. Moynihan (1965) was one of the first to sound the alarm about this, linking black "matriarchy" to the growing rate of pathology among blacks. However, his report was controversial, judged by many to be racist (see Ryan, quoted in Pearlstein, 1997). Today, the marriage rate among white parents is about the same as what it was among blacks a generation ago. Meanwhile, black parents have largely ceased to marry, i.e. only about one fourth of black children are born to two married parents. The curve for the rest of the population points in the same direction, only a generation later. At this rate, most American children will, within a generation, be born out of wedlock.

The evolution of the American family can be depicted as in Figure One:

Figure One: Evolution of the American Family



The question is whether or not the trend in Figure One is *good news* or *bad news*. To Postmodernists, it is *good news*. These optimists can point to Iceland, Sweden and several other European countries where illegitimacy rates have been higher and marriage rates lower than in the US for a long time, without dire consequences.

Those who see Figure One as *bad news* include the always illuminating Irving Kristol. In an article titled *The Welfare State's Spiritual Crisis* (1997), the author makes the following point: The Welfare State is *not the solution* to family dysfunction, but its *cause*: "Fifty years ago, no advocate of the welfare state could imagine that it might be destructive of that most fundamental social institution, the family. But it has been, with a poisonous flowering of those very social pathologies -- crime, illegitimacy, drugs, divorce, sexual promiscuity -- that it was assumed the welfare state would curb if not eliminate."

Kristol's point can be summarized under the concept of *iatrogenic* pathology: That is, disease *caused* by (medical) intervention; a cure that is worse than the illness it aims to cure.

This is a central theme in the Sociology of Deviance, which has long emphasized that the *medicalization* of deviance can lead to its magnification. Social scientists ever since Foucault have noted the enormously increased attention which modern society devotes to such areas of human behavior as sexuality. Furthermore, this attention takes a pseudo-scientific form, replacing a former *moral* vocabulary with a *medical* one. It engages in an elaborate *labeling* process by devising an ever richer taxonomy of *disease* entities. The American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic Statistical Manual* is the best example of this. In fact, the diagnostic labels and concepts developed by psychologists do not represent existing diseases, but rather *create* issues which then warrant control and intervention under a medical guise. Think of such DSM entries as *Oppositional Defiant Syndrome*, *Attention Deficit Syndrome* or *Nicotine Dependence Syndrome*.

In conclusion, the family is at a crossroads. Its traditional form is under attack and criticism, deemed by its critics to be *patriarchal*. Those who welcome the changes claim that the family is evolving into new forms that are more equitable and less oppressive to its members. Others are concerned that the changes lead to the marginalization of men, who are increasingly excluded from the socialization of the next generation.

But it is not only on practical grounds that I deplore the collapse of the traditional nuclear family: At its best, it has been a *partnership* between (1)*man*, and (2)*woman* for the benefit of (3) *the children*. When this *team* is dissolved, all three parties become the victims:

The single mother descends into poverty and welfare dependency, at best tenuously making ends meet and raising her children with great difficulty. The children raised by single parents are far more often delinquent, abused, neglected and otherwise the victims of social pathologies. The single male, finally, also does poorly: far from enjoying his freedom and added buying power, he

tends to drift, to become less healthy, less productive and less successful. All statistics show that marriage benefits men. Married men live longer and healthier lives than single men, they earn more money, commit fewer crimes, use fewer drugs, drink less, commit less suicide.

Thus, the nuclear family has been a team that has benefitted all three of its members -- father, mother and children. The dissolution of the partnership will harm all three parties and pit them against each other as three distinct political interest groups.

## 2. Why has the Family Changed? Is this Good or Bad?

*One of many other similar presentations I made about the family took place at a conference in Vienna in 2001. Here are a few excerpts:*

The post-modern era extends and exacerbates the changes that were triggered by the industrial revolution. This is true of trends in economic life, culture, and family life:

While it is the age of industrialism which ushered the tyranny of the clock, the time problem has become even more acute in recent decades. Sociologists note that modern and post-modern man increasingly suffer from time famine or from a *time bind* (see Hochschild, 1997). The requirements of capitalism and of work become progressively more demanding, and occur at the expense of other spheres of life, including leisure, spiritual life and the family. Culturally, western man becomes *hyper-individualistic*, making individual self-fulfillment his life-long quest and priority. During this period, the down-sizing of the family proceeds further and the norm becomes increasingly that of the *single-headed household*. With regard to marriage, *unwed parenthood* becomes increasingly normative. In practical terms, unwed parenthood almost invariably means *unwed motherhood*.

I classify causes of family change in the post-modern era under the following four headings: 1) technological and economic factors, 2) demographic changes, 3) cultural shifts and 4) social and behavioral causes:

1) Under technology and the economy, the following factors can be discerned: A) The virtual revolution: From Marshall McLuhan to Bill Gates, America and other post-industrial societies have undergone an electronic transformation whereby *information* -- and *misinformation* -- are transmitted with increasing speed to increasing numbers of people, and where the nature of human communication assumes qualitatively new dimensions. B) The level of affluence already reached in industrial society is surpassed factorially during the next phase of history -- in the sense that people now acquire gadgets, objects and artifacts vastly in excess of their needs.

2) Demographically, the trends under way in industrial society are accentuated to the point of incipient population decline in a growing number of countries, including Japan, Italy, Germany, several Northern European and Scandinavian countries, and most of Eastern Europe (although the latter region can hardly be called post-modern, and its demographics are not driven by the same dynamics as those of the affluent West).

3) In the realm of values, the following transformations occur: A) The cultural and ideological elite of the post-modern world shifts its attention from old-fashioned economic politics to the new *identity politics*: Union membership languishes and declines, and socialism -- both bread-and-butter labor unions in the West and militant Marxism in the East -- withers. Instead,

social movements pursue psychological and cultural objectives such as gay pride and politically correct language. Feminism's goals increasingly combine economic equality and cultural equality. Post-modernists celebrate *cultural diversity* and *the other*, i.e. people of color, women, gays, and all those who pursue alternative, non-traditional lifestyles, including singlehood, childlessness, group marriage, unwed parenthood, etc. Inspired by Foucault (1978), post-modernism *deconstructs* the traditional, bourgeois, heterosexual, monogamous family as *Eurocentric*, *heterosexist* and oppressive to women.

B) *Anti-natalism* remains the dominant demographic value, continuing a trend set under way in industrial society. However, there is now a new twist: For its ideological justification, anti-natalism reaches out to the *environmental* movement, pointing to the increasing devastation of the planet caused by over-population.

C). The search for self-fulfillment now assumes the forms of New Age religious, environmental and communal movements. Here, we see perhaps the first *renaissance* of a quest for spirituality and transcendence (Margolis, 1998) - the *cosmic self*.

4) Behavior: An important transformation in the post-modern era is the *reversal of home and work* in people's lives and priorities (Hochschild, 1997): The time bind in which people find themselves causes the demands of work and those of parenting to clash. What happens next is that the *home becomes the arena of stress, and work becomes the haven* to which parents escape so as to socialize with friends and colleagues: Work -- historically a survival necessity -- is now turned into a good. Vice becomes virtue, negative turns into positive. This is not a reiteration of the work ethic, which first arose four centuries ago in conjunction with the rise of Capitalism and the (Protestant) bourgeoisie. The early Calvinists were masochists. To them, pain was good. Today's attitude is different: unlike the Protestant work ethic, the new attitude loves the work place because it is fun, relaxing, sociable, stress free, the opposite of home.

It is the modern woman who has fallen into this trap the most. To her, a job is not something to put up with, but something desired -- a mark of liberation, a source of identity, meaning and self-esteem. Pay is a secondary consideration. Young mothers can't wait to complete their short (2-3 month) maternity leaves and return to the office and to their friends. Being cooped up at home with babies and diapers is viewed as torture and oppression. This is the final phase and ultimate victory of corporate Capitalism. The corporation has now gained over the allegiance of the working class, and triumphed finally over the family, the home, and the private sphere.

Coontz (2001) typifies this attitude. Taking on those of us who worry about the changing family, she claims that families in the past were in worse shape than they are now. Most of her diatribe is aimed at preserving what so many women cherish as a hard-won victory, i.e. the opportunity to have a job outside the home, regardless of financial need.

### 3. Is the Family Dying?

*One of the many book reviews I published was about Gordon Anderson's anthology The Family in Global Transition (1997). Here are a few passages from that review (which was published in a 1998 issue of the International Journal of World Peace).*

Gordon Anderson (University of Minnesota Ph.D.) has edited a timely reader titled *The Family in Global Transition*. Timely indeed, and relevant, as the Western family continues its 20th century trajectory of change, diversification, shrinkage and -- in the view of a majority of observers by now -- decline.

Decline? No word has been more central and controversial in family sociology during the past two generations. There are ultimately two possible positions regarding the condition of the Western family: it is in decline, or it is not. The former position is of course conservative, the latter liberal. What unites the two camps is that they both assume their position to be *empirical*. What divides them is that conservatives view many of the changes affecting the family as destructive, whereas liberals welcome them. Whether or not the family is in decline or worse, dying, should not be an a priori assumption. Yet both liberals and conservatives tend to put the cart before the horse. They both tend to *start* with an assertion -- yes, the family is collapsing or, no, it is merely changing -- to which they attribute empirical validity. The present anthology performs a valuable service by examining the *facts* first, and *then* arriving at conclusions.

The only empirical generalization about which all observers can and should agree is that the family has been undergoing massive change. After that, liberals invariably tell conservatives that, yes, the family is changing but, no, this doesn't mean that it is in decline. Or more sneakily, they put words in their opponents' mouth, saying: no, the family is not dying, even though most of those who subscribe to the "decline thesis" are aware that the family is not dying but merely wish to alert the public to its questionable health.

Anderson's reader gives us an excellent overview of this debate, and much more. The book has balance. Some of the contributing authors are on the "left," -- favoring homosexual marriages (Pfluger), or viewing the traditional bourgeois family as oppressive, racist and sexist (Perry), or questioning the decline thesis and expressing a more optimistic view (Garrett). Other articles assume a more conservative stance -- critical of gender feminism (Lanca), viewing the late 20th century western family with great concern (Elshtain; Davies and Dennis), deploring the rapid rise in fatherlessness (Pearlstein). Others travel a middle road, seeing both perils and promise for the future (Pournelle).

*After reviewing chapters which are by and large about the same topics as my two previous essays, above, I discuss the following, more controversial topics:*

Two additional aspects of the great debate must be touched upon: (1)homosexuality and (2)feminism:

As mentioned earlier, Pfluger's chapter is a defense of homosexual lifestyle, including homosexual marriage. One argument is demographic: Since the world is overpopulating, sterile same-sex marriages should be welcomed. There is some logic to this, but Pfluger forgets that homosexuality occurs mostly in the West, i.e. precisely where population is already stagnant. In order for his form of population control to work, one would have to promote the massive spread of homosexuality in the Third World -- a daunting task.

Pfluger also claims that homophobia is on the rise in the United States. Nothing could be further from the truth. A recent California Field Poll (see *Sacramento Bee*, March 5, 1997) reveals that 56% of the population now favors legalizing gay marriage. Surely this is an immense increase from any previous point in time!

What about the central issue of feminism -- the relative social position of women and men? Lanca's chapter is a vehement attack on *gender feminism* as well as a defense of *equity feminism*. (see pp. 376 a f.). On the other hand, Rutgers Professor Perry's chapter is an expression of precisely the kind of gender feminism despised by Ms. Lanca. So the book has something for everybody.

Anyone who received a University education some decades ago should be able to relate to Lanca's article: In America at least, it is *not* clear that men enjoy an overall advantage over women.

The British anthropologist Geoffrey Gorer once described America as a matriarchy -- ruled by the *cult of momism*. Gorer had good reasons for his position. Many arguments can be adduced for the claim that it is men rather than women who are at a disadvantage. These include the fact that women outlive men by nearly a decade -- a gap which is *widening*, rather than narrowing; the fact that 80% of all the money is spent by women; the double standard in criminal justice, which leads to far more severe punishment of men than women and boys than girls, even while holding offenses constant; the chivalry complex embedded in our culture, which demands from men greater courage, a greater ability to withstand pain, greater willingness to self-sacrifice, including death. By one criterion, and one criterion *only*, are American women to some extent second-class citizens: their earnings average 80% of that of men. Otherwise, calling America a patriarchy is debatable -- to say the least. Many of Lanca's observations, as she traces the history (and necessity) of sexual inequality, suggest such a conclusion.

But even more devastating to the gender feminists should be the realization that their movement has truly shot itself in the foot: Today, it is becoming unquestionably true that millions of single mothers are descending into poverty. True, the fastest growing segment of the poverty class consists of (single) women and (their) children. But this is a recent trend. Back in the 1950s, Geoffrey Gorer was right: America was a matriarchy; husbands brought home the money but were otherwise uninvolved in designing the family's lifestyle and the children's upbringing. The mother was the queen bee. Indeed, the cult of momism.

What happened? Liberation, no-fault divorce, equality, the massive entry of women into the labor force. The latter was actually a necessity -- the next stage in the evolution of American capitalism. Good Marxists should have interpreted it as an abomination, but no, women's entry into the labor force was redefined as a blessing, a liberation, a step toward equality -- no matter that most of the jobs were (and remain) stultifying, underpaid, secretarial desk jobs. By this logic, the next phase should also be seen as a great step forward: Johnny and Susie, still in high school, now must also make an increasing contribution to family income. Next, grandma will have to come out of retirement and get a part-time job as well. Such progress!

We have moved from an era in which a middle-class family could live comfortably on the single income of the male breadwinner, to one in which two incomes are a minimum requirement. It would not be difficult to demonstrate that American women have, on balance, lost a great deal since the 1950s. So much for the progress brought on by feminism and liberation.

As to some authors' assertion that there was once, in a distant and happy past, primitive matriarchy accompanied by primitive communism, this is a myth, a wishful illusion first formulated

by Bachofen in *Das Mutterrecht* (1861) and then eagerly adopted by Engels, Marx, the Marxists and now the feminists (see Knappert, p. 29 a. f.). Bachofen claimed that patriarchy was inaugurated by the ancient Greeks (Knappert, p. 30). The truth is that, while pre-agricultural societies may have been somewhat more egalitarian than subsequent systems, nothing coming even close to matriarchy or primitive communism ever existed (*International Review of World Peace*, 1998).

#### 4. Once again: Is the Family in Decline?

*Another book review (published in a 2000 issue of the International Journal of World Peace) touches upon the same issues:*

Dr. Lopez-Garay has written an incisive essay about what he perceives to be the reason behind the debate regarding the current state of the family. That debate is, of course, whether or not

the family is in decline and in disarray.

Taylor and Lopez-Garay are undoubtedly right in locating some of the roots of the present *perverted* ideal of authenticity in Romanticism, and other ones in the Industrial Revolution. The contemporary excesses of individualism can clearly be traced to one or the other of those movements, as can disenchantment with the sacred, the thrust toward rational instrumentality, the loss of community and its replacement by the State. I quote some of the ample literature (from De Tocqueville to Kornhauser) on that topic in my own writings (see Kando, 1997; 1998). Lopez-Garay is correct in pointing out that the romantic ideal of self-fulfillment in time became an end in itself (p. 58) -- a perversion of the original ideal.

From the Industrial Revolution onward, modern society became increasingly schizoid -- split between the rational-instrumental, individualistic and competitive sphere of work on the one hand, and the sphere of *affect* and self-transcendence, now relegated to the family, on the other. This was not the original intent. To Luther, work -- one's *Beruf* -- was self-fulfillment, a calling and an avocation. However, from the Industrial Revolution on, work became, as Marx saw more clearly than anyone else, alienating. This continues *a fortiori* today, albeit in non-industrial form: The overriding criterion for choice of major and career among my students is not how fulfilling or inspiring a given choice might be, but how lucrative. The most popular majors in college are accounting, business, criminal justice and pre-law, while philosophy and the humanities languish. No more powerful motive exists in the world today than \$\$\$.

According to Lopez-Garay, conservatives accept the schizoid world as it is, split between the ruthless, social-Darwinistic and instrumental world of work on one side, and the haven for affect and love provided by the family on the other. Conservatives agree to compartmentalize life in such a manner, or even to make the world of affect and faith subservient to work, as when London bankers and stock brokers attend lunchtime religious services in a quest for more profits (pp. 61-62). However, such vulgar Norman Vincent Pealeism represents the country-club wing of the Republican Party, not populist cultural conservatism. The author limits the meaning of conservatism to economic conservatism -- the ideology of the corporate world.

The situation described in footnote 5 (p. 72) reminds me of Edward Banfield's classic *Moral Basis of a Backward Society*, where the Harvard social scientist describes the *amoral familism* characteristic of portions of Calabria. Illustrative of the same situation are vignettes derived from popular culture such as Mario Puzo's *Godfather*: Here, we have a grotesque juxtaposition of extreme "family values" along with murderous *anomie* directed to the outside world. But again, one can hardly identify this with "conservatism."

Thus, it is possible to offer a different conceptualization. For example, one could contrast those of us who are *pro-modern*, and those who are *post-modern* (and *against* modernity). The former believe in the bourgeois family, rationality, progress through science and technology, and the heritage of Western Civilization. The latter reject those values, advocating moral relativism, alternative lifestyles, homosexuality, feminism and countercultural values. To them, the growth in single motherhood, illegitimacy and the marginalization of fathers are either not serious problems, or they are to be remedied by substituting the State as the *parens patriae*, not by turning the clock back to earlier kinship structures. Here, conservatives are the "boosters" of an endangered modernity, while liberals are the ones who wish to junk it altogether.

Related is the oft posed Roman analogy (see p. 64). The author maintains that we are not going through a period of decline analogous to that of the Roman Empire. I am perfectly open to the notion that the future is indeterminate and that the outcome of the struggle is not foreordained, since the struggle goes on forever. However, whether temporary or not, it is easy to show that as of late, western culture has undergone significant deterioration: The author himself notes the validity of the efforts of many romantic poets, rooted as they were in a *transcendental* search for self-

actualization rather than the narcissistic nihilism of contemporary popular culture.

Something happened at mid-twentieth century. Before, we had the artistic rebellion of the *poetes maudits*, impressionism in music and art, cubism, Picasso, and such American writers as Faulkner, Fitzgerald, Frost and E.E. Cummings. Today, we have Hollywood, television and mass culture. The production of transcendent beauty is at a standstill.

Perhaps the above illustration of decline is too capricious. Decline, though, is a very real phenomenon -- whether or not we judge it to apply to our current condition. It is easy to show through objective criteria that the Western world was in far worse shape in, say, the seventh century than it was in the second: the population had declined by 50%, as had life expectancy; literacy had been replaced by universal illiteracy; Europe had become entirely de-urbanized; law and order ceased to exist; Science and technology had atrophied; the quality of life had deteriorated. Decline, when it occurs, is not a value judgment but a fact. Nor is contemporaneous consciousness of decline a necessary part of it. Fourth and Fifth-century Romans were not aware of being on a long-term downward trajectory.

But Lopez-Garay agrees that (1) our post-modern culture has reached an unhealthy level of narcissistic individualism. (2) "Being true to ourselves implies some form of connection to a wider whole" (p. 60); One cannot define one's identity in any way one wants, independent from wider horizons of significance. (3) The schizoid split between the instrumental and the affective spheres of life -- work and family -- is detrimental. (4) Liberals view the (bourgeois) family as an impediment to fulfilling self-centered economic goals, and are inclined to transform it further, or even scrap it altogether. To them, family breakdown is not the problem but the solution (p. 69). (5) The quest for individual self-fulfillment has "hypertrophied at the expense of" openness to horizons of significance (p. 68), i.e. the world of work and instrumentality has eclipsed that of family, affect and self-transcendence.

Equally important is the author's characterization of the work-family tension: because we attempt to remedy the alienative nature of work in the sphere of family life, the solution eludes us. Lopez-Garay blames conservatives for this misguided effort, but they are hardly alone. Be that as it may, the author is correct in asserting that it is precisely this segregation and compartmentalization which create the problem.

The issue is not work *per se*, but the *meaning* of work: Berkeley sociologist Arlie Hochschild has recently documented an interesting trend in *The Time Bind: When Work Becomes Home and Home Becomes Work* (1997): "People are increasingly abandoning the home and dedicating themselves to the workplace," (Hays: 29), which has become more "homey" while home life has become more like work. Although this tendency could bring about the re-integration of work and home which both Lopez-Garay and I favor, it also points to something more negative, namely the further spread of monetary-instrumental values to all areas of life, including the family. Careerism and money-making become the sole and overriding preoccupation for an increasing number of people.

In the final analysis, it seems to me that Lopez-Garay is on our side, i.e. on the side of those of us who do see family breakdown, and who deplore it. We may be labeled conservative or something else. I suppose our side does include some Wall Street Republicans, but trust me: we have no more sympathy for the shallow, materialistic and greedy BMW-driving yuppie stockbroker than Lopez-Garay does.

The author calls us detractors of modernity but, as I have shown, we are actually the defenders of an endangered modernity, including a belief in progress through rational science and technology, the value of Western Civilization and the bourgeois family. Those whom Lopez-Garay calls boosters of modernity are Postmodernists who are in fact hostile to all those "modern" things. We agree that family breakdown is a problem and not a solution, as is narcissistic individualism. Liberals do *not* view family breakdown as a problem. On this score, the author contradicts himself. In his misguided quest for even-handedness, he first claims that both liberals and conservatives "distinguish family breakdown as a problem" (p. 68), but he is later forced to admit that, to liberals, family breakdown is actually a solution (p. 69). Thus, I welcome Dr. Lopez-Garay to the ranks of conservatives (*International Journal of World Peace*, 2000).

### 5. Two Sides to the Family Decline Debate

*Here is one more book review (International Journal on World Peace, Fall 2002). This one sums up the two sides of the argument.*

This is an excellent little book. It is unabashedly advocative, yet it is grounded in thorough factual research. Tony Guerra is a Harvard Ph.D. and it shows: his writing style is superb and his scholarship is of the highest level.

#### THE THESIS

Guerra's thesis includes the following points: (1) The American family has deteriorated during the (second half of the ) 20th century, and this has resulted in a variety of social problems such as a great increase in juvenile delinquency, drug addiction and suicide. (2) A major cause of this deterioration has been the secularization of society, i.e. the waning influence of Religion in family life. (3) The media make an important contribution to the decadence, as they portray and push materialism, sexual permissiveness and other bad values (4) Religion, especially Christianity, has been a major positive force in the health of the Western family, including its insistence on life-long heterosexual monogamy as the marital norm. (5) A resurgence of the role of Christianity/Religion is our best hope for salvaging the Western family and, thus, society itself. (6) Other institutions, especially the government, have tried to play that role, but to no avail. The government is inherently unsuited for that role, since there is a fundamentally spiritual dimension to family life. (7) Religiosity explains much more of the variation in the quality of family life than do socioeconomic factors such as the Industrial Revolution or the income level of the couple.

#### THE ANTITHESIS

I have been teaching Family Sociology and doing family research for several decades. In my field, the majority position (some might say dogma) is that the changes that have occurred in the American family in the 20th century are not necessarily bad - that they are in fact by and large positive. The vast majority of academic sociologists likes to point to the gains made by women and gays, the beneficial role played by the government in assisting the family, the added freedom from oppressive and abusive marriages provided by (no-fault) divorce, the increasing diversity and sexual freedom resulting from 20th century changes in family life. To be sure, there is a small (and growing) minority of Sociologists and Social Scientists who question this conventional wisdom. This group includes such authors as David Blankenhorn, David Popenoe, Linda Waite and Judith Wallerstein (the latter mentioned by Guerra).

I, too, belong to this minority. Nevertheless, I conform in my classes to the well-known

practice of “looking at the issue from both sides.” That is, I also present some “facts” that collectively can be viewed as the antithesis to Guerra’s thesis.

Here is some of what I say, in fairness to the “liberal” side: (1) Several Northern European countries (in Scandinavia, for example) have rates of divorce, out-of-wedlock births and single parenthood that are higher than those in the U.S. Yet, those are not associated with high rates of delinquency, infant mortality and child poverty, as they are in the U.S. The reason? Those governments are far more generous in providing for needy families and single parents, offering for example practically free child care and lengthy parental leaves to whomever needs them. In general, the social safety net in those countries is far more generous than it is in the US, including free medical services, education, unemployment benefits and the like. At the same time, the (Northern) and Western) Europeans are much more secular and agnostic than the Americans. This demonstrates, then, that the government *can* be a *parens patriae* and function *in loco parentis*. The father may, after all, be superfluous, as some of the more extreme feminists like to argue. Socioeconomic factors explain how well a family does, not religiosity.

I also point out that the Northern and Western European culture and media are more permissive, showing and advocating more permissive sex, legalized drugs and prostitution, etc. Yet, their rates of crime and delinquency remain considerably lower than ours.

## THE GOVERNMENT

When it comes to the role of the government in family policy, Guerra distinguishes between three positions: (1) the instrumentalist perspective, which advocates governmental intervention, (2) the traditionalist perspective, which sees the welfare state as the *cause* of family dysfunction rather than its remedy, and (3) the pragmatist perspective, which is also skeptical about the possibility of government helping out (pp. XVIII-XX). Not to quibble, but I would have preferred a simple dichotomy - between those who favor government intervention and those who don’t. I am not sure Guerra’s last two positions are very distinct. Also, the terminology is confusing, as Pragmatism and Instrumentalism have usually been associated with each other (What William James called Pragmatism, John Dewey called Instrumentalism).

As to the domestication of males (p.XXIV), which Guerra attributes to religion, it should be noted that this is equally attributable to women, as George Gilder argued so persuasively in his advocacy of marriage.

## SEX

An unavoidably central topic throughout the book is Christianity’s attitude towards sex. Guerra’s treatment of this subject is brilliant. He shows that neither Jesus, nor the early Catholics, nor Thomas Aquinas, nor the early American Puritans, are anti-sex - contrary to stereotypes. Saint Paul, yes, to some extent (with extenuating circumstances). And most of all Saint Augustine, who considered both sexual desire and death as “unnatural” - as well as denying human free will (p. 14), and positing natural infant depravity (p.61-2) - four rather untenable propositions in our day and age (!).

Sex remains problematic for one Church - the Catholics. True, that Church now agrees with the rest of mankind that sex is not merely for procreation, but is also to be enjoyed. However, the Catholic clergy’s celibacy remains. Guerra explains well the positive functions which this requirement performed in the past (e.g. combating child abandonment), and he even discusses the possibility of reconsideration of the requirement. Only at the very end (p.137) does Guerra allude, just once, to the current massive pedophilia scandal. Granted that the media frenzy about this scandal may have ulterior motives. Yet, in view of the ever greater cost of celibacy, it is to be hoped that the Catholic Church will soon jettison an anachronism which, even in the past, was of dubious

benefit.

## CHILDREN

Chapter III traces the treatment of children through the ages. One thing should be re-emphasized here: We know that the weakening of the family as an institution victimizes children a great deal. One thing seems to be very clear to me, as I peruse our culture and the news on a daily basis: Our society simply does not like children very much any more. We have moved from a pro-natalist culture in the 1950s to an anti-natalist one today. Legislatures pass laws attesting to this every day: We are lowering the age at which children may be tried as adults; we are calling for the execution of minors; juvenile delinquents are sent to boot camps, not to rehabilitative programs; we ask, increasingly, that children bear the same responsibilities as adults; we don't like teen-age culture - their attire, hair styles, music, rambunctuous behavior; we discriminate against teen-agers. In sum, we don't like young people. These changing attitudes among adults are no doubt exacerbated by the fact that, ever since the industrial revolution, children have become a financial burden rather than a resource, as they were in a farming economy. The current preoccupation with child abductions, rape and murder signifies guilt, perhaps, but not a true determination by adults to stay with parenting for the long haul.

## WORK

Two factors not sufficiently elucidated are (1) the massive entry of women into the labor force during the past 40 years, and (2) ideological feminism. As to the former, I don't think that much is going to change in this regard. The dual-income household is here to stay, and how religiosity is going to help in alleviating the time constraints and child-rearing issues associated with this is unclear. As to the second factor, there can be no doubt that it has made a great contribution to the decline of the traditional family. It is to be hoped that the blind, irrational and extremist views incorporated in this ideology will be gradually toned down. Insofar as religion is attempting to reverse the feminization of the family, one can anticipate resistance to it from the feminist movement, which is likely to deliberately mis-interpret that attempt as a return to patriarchy (*International Journal of World Peace*, Fall, 2002).

## 6. Is the American Family Getting Better or Worse?

By I. Lovitt

*In 2006, I wrote a prompt for the university's Writing Proficiency Exam, which all students must pass before they may graduate. These prompts usually present a social issue and discuss at least two conflicting sides to it. Students are asked to evaluate the pros and cons of each side and draw their own conclusions.*

Since the 1950s, the traditional American family has undergone profound change. The changes publicized by the media and studied by sociologists include no-fault-divorce and rising rates of divorce, singlehood and single parenthood, gay coupling, a declining birthrate, teenage pregnancies, changing sex roles, the massive influx of women into the labor force and other departures from the traditional middle-class family. Many people welcome some of these changes. After all, the one-form-fits-all family of the fifties was experienced as stifling by many, not least of all by women. This has also been accompanied by greater diversity, and greater acceptance of homosexuality and alternative lifestyles.

On the other hand, there are those who fear that the American family is in decline, leading

to serious social problems such as a great increase in juvenile delinquency. Some social critics go so far as to say that “the family is dying.” They point out for example that the number of children born to single mothers and raised by single parents has been rising for years, reaching one third by 2004 and continuing to rise. The vast majority of single parents are women, and as sociologist Lenore Weitzman showed in her landmark study *The Feminization of Poverty*, single mothers (and their children) are the fastest-growing group within the poverty class. Yet others argue that the family, rather than being in decline or dying, is merely evolving towards new forms of adaptation.

The question is, does the changing American family have adverse consequences, especially for children, or is society merely changing and adapting to new ways of doing things?

Anthropology teaches us that the family - in one form or another - is a universal institution required for procreation and for the socialization of children. Can a single parent socialize children as effectively as two parents? Can the various other emerging non-traditional patterns do as good a job as the heterosexual two-parent monogamous nuclear family did in the past?

Statistics on juvenile delinquency in the United States suggest that they cannot: Rates of delinquency, school failure, drop-outs and other dysfunctional behavior are significantly higher for children raised by a single parent than they are for comparable groups of children raised by two parents.

But is turning back the clock the solution? Most Americans will agree that the divorce revolution and the other post-sixties changes in family values have provided more freedom and equality for the female half of the population. No one wants to go back to the dark old days when divorce was taboo and stigmatizing, and when people, especially women, suffered through life-long miserable marriages merely to avoid social stigma, and for the sake of their children.

Penn State sociologist Jesse Bernard noted in 1972 that marriage was a great deal for most men, but of questionable benefit to the psychological well-being of women. Stephanie Coontz also counters the “dying American family” thesis, by pointing out that the American family of the past was not blissful and idyllic, but in fact rife with pathology, physical violence and dysfunction.

Neither was the traditional “leave-it-to-beaver” family ever the norm for the entire population. For example, the black family has long anticipated the changes currently underway among whites. Among African-Americans, grandparents, aunts, uncles and other members of the extended family have long played preponderant roles in the socialization of children.

However, revisionists such as University of Chicago family sociologist Linda Waite have done research which indicates that, while men benefit the most from marriage, married women also do better than single women. By any measurement of “happiness,” well-being and family satisfaction - rates of suicide and crime, life expectancy, income, drug and alcohol consumption, physical and mental health - married men of course fare much better than single men, but most interestingly according to recent data, so do married women compared to single women.

And what about the kids? According to most experts, divorce can be a traumatic experience for children, and statistics indicate that American children born and raised out of wedlock have higher rates of pathology than those born to and raised by two parents.

But does this mean that parents should stay together for the sake of their children, even when their relationship is bad? Aren't children also harmed when witnessing fighting and bickering parents day in and day out - not to mention verbal and physical spousal abuse in the home?

The most interesting findings come from Scandinavia and from other parts of Europe. There, marriage is even closer to being defunct than it is in America. In countries such as Sweden, even fewer people bother to marry before having children, and even larger numbers of women are having children and raising them out of wedlock. Yet, rates of delinquency are very low in Sweden, as they are in many other Western European countries. Why?

One plausible explanation for this is that many European welfare states are far more generous when it comes to providing single parents, unwed parents and gay parents with child support, parental leave, unemployment and health benefits and spousal benefits. It may not be single parenthood *per se*, but lack of resources, which drives many children of single mothers into crime, delinquency and other social problems. The children of single parents may not necessarily be headed for trouble in disproportionate numbers, as long as they do not grow up in poverty. After all, Princess Diana was a single mom, and her children turned out perfectly fine.

Write an essay in which you discuss whether the evolving American family has greater social costs or benefits for society. Analyze some of the consequences of the changes. Mention examples of both positive and negative and state your own position. Your essay should reflect your reading of the passage above, but you may also use examples from your personal experience and reading

### 7. How Should Children be Raised? Should they be Spanked?

*Here is a short essay never before published, asking whether it is okay to spank children or not. I first wrote it in 1996, and I edited it in 2007.*

The physical punishment of children - spanking for example - is an issue that is frequently joined by politicians and social scientists. Most forms of physical punishment of children are already illegal in some countries (e.g. Sweden) and in some states. In California, politician Mickey Conroy proposed a new law in 1996 to further regulate the parental punishment of children, and a decade later, another State representative proposed to outlaw *all* spanking.

Can the social sciences shed light on this issue? Most sociologists and criminologists are fairly ignorant about child rearing, and there is no scientific consensus as to the best forms of parenting. A few scholars, however, have done solid empirical research. For example, Murray Strauss at the University of New Hampshire has documented the negative effect of most forms of physical punishment.

Also, there is consensus that the *consistency* of discipline is more important than its *kind* (See for example UCLA'S Travis Hirschi's article in the *Journal of Contemporary Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 1, the books *Origins of Crime* by W. McCord, J. McCord and I. Zola, and *The Marriage and Family Experience* by B. Strong and C. De Vault, 1986). In other words, parents can raise their children in an (1) *authoritarian*, (2) *permissive* or (3) *authoritative* fashion. The first style demands strict obedience, and it is associated with lower-class and working-class culture. The second style emphasizes freedom and autonomy, and it is more typical of the middle class. The last style is based on positive reinforcement and infrequent punishment, and it is found more frequently in the upper and upper middle classes. While it is said that the authoritative approach is the most effective one, the more important point is that whichever style parents use, they should be more or less *consistent*.

Experts also agree that "harsh treatment is less damaging to children and to their self-esteem than lack of interest and lack of consistency" (See Tommie Hamner and Pauline Turner in *Parenting in Contemporary Society*, 1985). Jack Bynum and William Thompson also point out that "while parental violence is linked to delinquency, strict discipline by parents is not" (*Juvenile Delinquency*, 1996: 233). Similarly, Travis Hirschi stresses the importance of parental discipline for the socialization of children into decent human beings (*The Causes of Delinquency*, in *Families*

*and Crime, Current*, July-Aug. 1983: 14-19).

There is absolutely no consensus among experts on the issue of (mild) corporal punishment. As Strong and De Vault note, a permissive upbringing style fits the values of the elite, while an authoritarian approach fits working-class culture. This divide is also a clash between old-fashioned values and modern values, which are held by professors, the media, social workers, psychologists and other opinion leaders. Predictably, the states which still permit corporal punishment are the more traditional states of the South and the Midwest.

According to Murray Strauss, the less physical punishment, the better. The optimal amount is zero. On the other hand, there is no proof that mild corporal punishment, a rare, mild “symbolic” spanking causes low self-esteem, psychological maladjustment, delinquency and suicidal tendencies. There is even some research which suggests that at least in one group, namely African-Americans, mild occasional spanking is associated with improved behavior.

I conclude that the question of whether to spank or not to spank is a *cultural* question, not a scientific question: Most social scientists still do not understand that the impact of interventions depends on the *meaning* attached to those interventions. It may be that spanking has a positive impact among African-Americans *because they believe* that it will!

Nothing here is meant as an encouragement or the trivialization of child abuse. I am merely saying that we will never understand how discipline works, whether mild forms of corporal punishment are beneficial or not, until we recognize the unique and distinctive nature of the human experience. All human experience is interpreted. It is never a given. The impact of a stimulus is in large part what is expected from it. When social scientists share with us their conclusions, they are in fact urging us to accept their interpretations, not their scientific facts. When they discourage us from using physical punishment, they are campaigning against child abuse, campaigning to change our culture, which is a lofty and commendable political goal.

#### 8. Sacramento Bee's Movie Review Shows Bad Taste

*On Dec. 12, 1993 the Sacramento Bee printed this angry letter of mine. In it, I crossed swords with the paper's film critic. The issue was related to “Family Values.”*

The only think I disliked more than the new “Addams Family Values” movie is Joe Baltake's review of it. The movie is tasteless and racist, and yet the Bee gives it four stars. True, the inversion of middle-class values is humorous at times, as are the good-natured Vincent Price-like macabre jokes. But, like most people in Hollywood these days, the sequel's makers couldn't resist politicizing what would otherwise have been good old-fashioned fun. Consequently, the movie becomes vulgar, offensive and racist exhortation to the lynching mobs. The entire side-plot at Camp Chippewa is nothing but an ideological attack on the middle class, on Anglos and - in blunt racist form - on blond, white children.

If you think I am imagining or over-dramatizing this, consider the scary audience reaction. Most people hardly snickered at some of the film's truly funny passages. For example, the nannie at one point complains that she had to murder her parents because they gave her the wrong Barbie doll for Christmas. Also, she appeals to our compassion by stating that she is, after all, a human being with normal human needs such as love, shopping and credit cards. The audience saw nothing funny in this. But then came the Thanksgiving play at Camp Chippewa. Here, American Indians ran around on stage killing some of the upper-class children and their counselors by *roasting* them on a spit over a fire. In addition, the portrayal of children killing children was particularly alarming (and

the audience was clapping at this point). This brought down the movie audience in pandemonic roaring laughter. The sadistic lynch mob was undeniable.

Over the years, Baltake has often praised ugly, stupid and vulgar movies, while dismissing subtle, sensitive and beautiful films. That's called bad taste, something in ample supply these days (*Sacramento Bee*, Dec. 12, 1993).

### 13. MEDICINE

#### 1. A Night in the Emergency Room

*In 1999, I did a night shift in the University of California, Davis, emergency department. This fascinating experience is described in the article below, published September 27, 1999 in the Gold River Scene.*

The University of California Davis Medical Center at Sacramento is one of the country's pre-eminent medical facilities. For 1998, *US News and World Report* (July 27, 1998) ranked it among the country's *top fifty hospitals* -- and in some instances *among the top 20* -- in the following areas: *Endocrinology, Neurology/Neurosurgery, Orthopedics, Otolaryngology, Pulmonary Disease, and Urology*. This awesome facility serves as our region's primary hospital, medical school and emergency facility all bunched into one.

Perhaps best known to the public is the UCDMC's emergency department, which handles much of the violence and trauma caused by crime, as well as the other spectacular cases so thoroughly covered by the media. It has the region's only burn center and its only life flight facility.

I recently had the privilege of witnessing a night shift at this magnificent facility -- sort of like a ride-along. I arrived at the Center at 7:30 p.m., noticing the enormous recent capital expansion of the campus, including a brand-new 30-story hospital-office complex with state-of-the-art helipad on top.

My host was Dr. John Richards, a brilliant young Assistant Professor of Emergency Medicine. Dr. Richards' meteoric career has already landed him a position of emergency medicine specialist. He is in charge, during his shifts, of the department's critical care division. There, half a dozen other physicians report to Dr. Richards, residents in training under him.

The emergency department consists of four sections, including critical care, pediatrics, area three and fast track. Pediatrics is where one would, for example, take abused children. Critical care, the section of which Dr. Richards is in charge and which I am visiting, is where the most urgent (and, admittedly, most sensational) cases are handled -- gunshot wounds, gang violence, serious accidents, drug overdoses, burn fatalities, severe heart attacks, you name it.

*Critical Care* is area #1, i.e. the point of entry: This is where incoming patients are triaged. The most urgent cases remain in area #1, the remaining ones are sent on for care to other departments. At any given time, as many as twenty different specialties are available within UCDMC -- day or night. That is what's great about a University hospital.

Early on, Dr. Richards shows me around. He demonstrates an ultrasound machine. By rubbing on various areas of the body, the pulsating heart, the liver, the gallbladder and other organs become visible on the screen.

We ambulate into the pediatrics ward. A tiny blond boy, perhaps 6 years old, is waiting for placement somewhere by Child Protective Services: His parents are separated and his dad has just kidnaped him from his mother.

Then, the serious work begins: Dr. Richards and the residents-in-training gather in front of the main board, where a dozen patients are listed, described and each assigned to one of the physicians (so far, a slow night, I am told). There is Dr. Murphy, Dr. T. Smith, Dr. J. Deacon, an Air Force Physician visiting from Travis AFB, etc. These young and appealing men and women make a stunning impression; they look like my own children, or like the college students I teach. How can they already be M.D.s? They represent the future, a fine new generation of Americans. In addition, the place bustles with many nurses, assistants, receptionists, paramedics who just brought in a patient or two, etc.

Each of the residents briefs Dr. Richards on one or more of the dozen cases listed on the big board and currently in the ward. Dr. Richards asks questions, suggests procedures, tests and drugs. I listen attentively to the rapid succession of medical, code, technical, Latin and abbreviated terminology. (Example: Did you know that *S.O.B.* means “shortness of breath”?). My Ph.D. doesn't help; the six years of Latin I had in school do, a little, as does my training in the metric system.

After the briefing session, Dr. Richards begins to walk from bed to bed, examining one patient after another. A gentle touch here, a few words there; sometimes a question, sometimes a few comforting words (“we are going to give you something for the pain”), sometimes an admonition (“promise me you'll never take that stuff again, please?”); sometimes directions to the attending physician (to give a patient a certain quantity of morphine, or, when necessary, an even more potent cocktail of painkillers).

Among the patients, many are repeat visitors, especially those who are here due to drug overdoses (The Doctor recognizes the familiar face of a young girl -- back for the third time this week). The drugs vary: heroin, coke, etc. Some of the patients barely escape with their lives. Several have AIDS as well. Some have diabetes, chronic, or just diagnosed.

We stop by the bed of 46-year old black woman. She is here because her “heart is acting up.” We find out she also contracted AIDS from her husband in 1995, plus she has Tuberculosis and she is a major drug abuser (!)

Next to her lies a 29-year old Hispanic man. Tonight, he nearly died from an overdose of Mexican black tar heroin. He says he is not addicted and that he has learned his lesson -- “I'll never do this again, that's for sure.” (Dr. Richards had just informed him that he was lucky to be alive). The man has a family to support, he wants to be discharged right away. For his own good, we find a way to delay his departure: He is given *narcan*, a substance which counteracts the effect of heroin and induces vomiting. As a result, he is forced to spend several more hours in the hospital and thus recover more fully before being released.

We arrive at the bed of a tall Caucasian fellow in his 40s. He broke his ribs falling down; he was drunk. X-ray shows no collapsed lung; Spleen seems to be okay, too. Still, the man seems to be in great pain.

The next bed contains a very large, middle-aged fellow writhing in pain and vomiting. We find out that is also diabetic. There is also an 80-year old woman with arrhythmia who needs a pace maker installed, plus another very elderly lady who broke a leg and who seems, in addition, to suffer from dementia.

An 83-year old white male is brought in, in the middle of a massive heart attack. He turns

out to be a retired doctor. In addition, he is suffering from pneumonia. Later, his wife arrives and sits at his bedside. She tells us that they have been married 50 years. She smiles sadly, hoping against hope. But he has had previous strokes and he will probably not make it, I am told. Still, for now, the man is lucid enough to discuss his diagnosis professionally with Dr. Richards.

One of the heart-breakers of the night: a 13-year old black boy who just tried to kill himself. He had been on prozac plus some other medication.

“So what happened?”, Dr. Richards asks.

“I heard voices,” the boy says

“What did they say?”

“They told me to take all the pills.”

“Why?”

“They said: To see what happens...”

Suddenly Dr. Richards’ pager goes off. The way it works, he doesn’t have to acknowledge the message. It simply tells him of an incoming case and estimated time of arrival (usually between 7 and 15 minutes). As soon as he receives such a message, Dr. Richards prepares the entire team for the arrival. This time, we are being notified of a multiple car crash resulting in five injured individuals, all to be delivered simultaneously in a few minutes. Shortly thereafter three ambulances drop off five diminutive Southeast Asian boys ranging in age from 13 to 17. Now things begin to resemble E.R (the TV show). Five gurneys are rolled in simultaneously from outside, down hallways, up elevators. Medical staff rush about madly, exchange information with police and paramedics, hook up a blood transfusion and intravenous solutions. Luckily, we find out later, none of the injuries were fatal.

The most tragic and memorable case occurs around 11:00 p.m.: Dr. Richards’ pager goes off again. A burn victim is being flown in from out of town. This gives us a chance to go up to the helipad on the roof of the magnificent new 30-story building. ETA for the chopper is 7 minutes. We wait, on top of the world, in the warm, dark, windy night. The view of the city is spectacular, lights radiating out in all directions, the downtown skyline to the West, Highway 50 to the East. Just to show me, a technician briefly turns on the flood lights. I am standing on the edge of the helipad, looking down 30 stories. Now, a tiny speck of light becomes visible in the West. Flood lights must go off, so as not to hinder the helicopter’s landing.

Finally the chopper approaches, hovers, lowers itself and lands, causing the usual major turbulence. After a warm-down period, a helmeted air-borne Life Flight nurse comes out and begins to brief Dr. Richards: the patient is an elderly man in his 80s. His apartment went up in flames. The man was burnt over 30% of his body. What’s worse: he “fried” much of his lungs, already weakened by a lifetime of smoking. It seems to me that he doesn’t have much of a chance.

Photos are taken, we transfer the man to a rolling gurney (I am honored to help), and proceed across the roof and into the elevator. The man’s face -- the only visible body part at this time -- looks like a grotesquely fried chicken. I’ll never forget the smell of burnt flesh filling the elevator. The man tries to say something. It comes out as nothing but a gurgle. Dr. Richards, who

is closer to him, makes it out: The man is saying “help me.”

By the time we reach the trauma center, the trauma team is there, ready to go. At the head of the patient is Dr. Richards, who immediately injects the drug needed to put the man into a coma, assisted by Dr. Murphy, who intubates the man through his nostril with what seems to be a mile of tube, all the way down to the stomach. In addition, someone is hooking the man up to the intravenous solution (he is enormously dehydrated, of course), plus a variety of other hook-ups (monitors for blood pressure, heart rate, etc.)

So there is the trauma team of seven or eight physicians, all working feverishly to save the man’s life. But altogether, there are probably over twenty people in the trauma room at this time, including nurses, orderlies, paramedics, etc. It looks like controlled chaos, but it is, in fact, a display of one of the most efficient endeavors so far achieved by the human race, i.e. the scientific attempt to save a human life.

Dr. Richards is in charge, but he is so calm and collected that you can hardly tell. One hears orders and instructions being shouted out loudly by a variety of voices, but not his. Why? Because this is a University Hospital and these are residents in training. Dr. Richards is their teacher. The residents must learn and do the job themselves. Dr. Richards will only intervene if necessary.

I notice that the patient’s heart rate is over 140, his blood pressure 50 over 35, i.e. catastrophically low. When they turn him around, his body shows 3rd degree burns all over the front and back of his body.

“The worst problem is not his external burns,” Dr. Richards points out: “it’s the damage sustained by his lungs.”

“But he seems to be breathing vigorously,” I counter.

“Oh no, that’s done mechanically; he is hooked up to a machine,” he explains.

As we walk out of the trauma center, I hear a nurse say:

“I hope he goes quickly; it’s not worth the pain.”

And indeed, the man died at 10:00 a.m. the morning after he was flown in.

There were several more cases that night -- death does not take a holiday. One fellow was returning for treatment of complications of an earlier gunshot wound in his arm. Another was transferred from Methodist Hospital, his face beaten to a pulp.. He had gotten into a drunken bar brawl. Claimed that he had been assaulted. When we saw him, he couldn’t open his eyes.. I found out later that he recovered, though, without permanent injury.

There were a few additional drug overdoses, all females. One was a cocaine shooter on kidney dialysis (a bad combination). Another one was at UCDMD for the third night in a row. Dr. Richards’ comment: “She has nine lives.”

There was also a pregnant woman with a broken pelvis (domestic violence?). The hospital was reluctant to take an X-ray because of the (slight) possibility of fetal damage and the (greater) possibility of a law suit.

My night shift at UCDCMC was as worthwhile an experience as I can remember ever having. I saw a combination of Hollywood-like excitement and tragedy, of suffering and hope, of heroic

efforts at saving human life and failure to do so. People such as these residents in training, the trauma team, the Life Flight nurse and above all Dr. John Richards -- these are the giants among us. These bright, young, gifted, dedicated, beautiful people are privileged. They are the best among us, and they do glorious work (*Gold River Scene*, Sept. 27, 1999).

## 2. Torturing Terri Schiavo

*A widely publicized media event occurred in 2005: The tortured death of Terri Schiavo. Once again, I couldn't help myself, and I fired off the following letter, printed in the Sacramento Bee in March of 2005.*

On March 18, they pulled the plug on Terri Schiavo so as to enable her to die a slow painful, two-week death through starvation and dehydration.

However, the lunatics continue to battle over the poor woman's fate: some congressmen are moving to force her to be re-intubated before she dies during the next two weeks.

This is the third time that Schiavo's food tube has been removed, only to be put back when the opposite side prevailed in court.

Does anyone see what our political system has become? Is there a better definition of *torture* than what it is being inflicted on Terri Schiavo? Have we taken leave of our senses? In the name of abstract concepts ("the sanctity of life") and as a result of political posturing, we are yanking a woman in and out of death, over and over again! Should she not (1) either be left to live out her natural life in her vegetative state, or (2) be granted a swift and painless death through a lethal dose of morphine? Is she not entitled to a death as swift and as painless as the likes of Scott Peterson? (*Sacramento Bee*, March, 2005)

## 3. Why are People Fat ?

*Another "medical" issue is obesity: Modern society desperately seeks magic medical formulas for all ailments. It medicalizes all problems. Whenever there is something wrong with us, it is labeled an illness. This is what I criticize in the following article, with specific reference to obesity. I submitted it to the Sacramento Bee in November of 1999. I don't remember whether they published it or not.*

Ellen Shell's article on obesity (November 13) illustrates the worst features of contemporary pop science: The issue is America's obesity epidemic -- what causes it, and what can be done about it? Her magic-bullet-of-the-day is the hormone *leptin*.

In the old nature-nurture argument, the *nurture* side has been losing a lot of ground lately. We desperately want to find a bio-chemical/genetic explanation not only for physical conditions, but also for a growing list of *behavioral and mental* phenomena -- obesity, criminality, intelligence, mental illness, alcoholism, sexual preference, addictiveness, etc. But nothing justifies this growing tendency towards *bio-chemical reductionism*.

Ms. Shell's article is drenched in pseudo-scientific rhetoric: "people act on biologically *wired* drives....*pathways* in the brains...the brain's *weight control center*, ...scientists are *decoding*....*leptin signals*..." etc

However, such language is metaphorical, inspired by computers and the other gadgets with which we are so enamored. It makes little contribution to our understanding of human motivation, consciousness, social life, or misbehavior.

Let's be Aristotelian: Americans have become overweight. The other 96 % of the

world's people do not have this problem (yet), and neither did America until a few decades ago. So how could this new and uniquely American problem be caused by (insufficient) leptin or some other genetic trait? This would only make sense under the absurd assumption that Americans are genetically different from (1) everyone else and from (2) their ancestors a few decades ago. For A to be the cause of B, there must be *concomitant variation* between the two, no?

Isn't it obvious that the obesity epidemic is caused largely by *sociological* trends? Two things distinguish Americans: (1) we are the least ambulatory people in the world, and (2) we eat more than anyone else. The culprits are our *diet* and our relentless *quest for comfort* -- in sum: lifestyle changes!

Shell's article is symptomatic of today's culture, of the decline of common sense and of the death of a meaningful science of psychology which aims to understand human behavior. Instead, we have the mumbo-jumbo of chemical reductionism, which increasingly attributes all behaviors to genes and biology. Next we'll be told that one is born a racist, or born divorce-prone, or born with Republican tendencies!

The underlying message: We don't have to lift a finger to help ourselves, because biology has the solution to all of our problems. So there is no need to clean up our act (exercise, quit smoking, stop pigging out, etc.), or for social policies such as less reliance on cars and more governmental monitoring of the junk food.

This is highly irresponsible. It reminds me of those chain-smoking patients milling around in front of Kaiser Hospital, waiting for the doctors to fix them up. Good luck!

#### 4. Is Being Evil also a Medical Illness?

*The next piece addresses the exact same issue, in this case with respect to moral behavior. The tendency towards physical reductionism is even more reprehensible when trying to explain our moral decisions. I call it the "medicalization of behavior," particularly that of deviant behavior. Psychology is more and more guilty of this. As I argue in several other sections as well, the tendency to see more and more behaviors in bio-medical terms is wrong. But we do this because of the public's blind faith in "science" and the use of a positivist rather than a humanist model to understand human conduct. I came across another example of this on March 22, 2007. Here are my comments.*

Here we go again. The neuro-psychological reductionists are at it again. According to an article in the *Sacramento Bee* (March 22, 2007), "part of our moral behavior is grounded in a specific part of our brains... It is hard-wired." Dr. Antonio Damasio, director of the Brain and Creativity Institute at the University of Southern California, recently researched this. He concluded that moral behavior is controlled by the *ventromedial prefrontal cortex*, which is a small region in the forehead. His findings are based on submitting a number of moral questions to 6 subjects whose *ventromedial prefrontal cortex* was damaged, to 12 people without brain damage, and to 12 patients with other forms of brain damage. The subjects with damage to the *ventromedial prefrontal cortex* were found to be more willing to sacrifice one person for the greater good of many, than the comparison groups. The *ventromedial prefrontal cortex* is said to house "feelings of empathy, shame, compassion and guilt."

I will not quibble about the study's ridiculously small sample - 6 experimental subjects. What bothers me much more is the ever stronger belief of psychologists that human decisions and behavior are rooted in specific locations in our nervous system. The psychologists' holy grail is a map of the human brain which will indicate the precise physical locations of all our emotions. This

is as futile and idiotic as the pseudo-science of alchemy was, during the Dark Ages. Why?

Because our responses to stimuli (our decisions) are the result of our perceptions and our interpretations of the stimuli, and these interpretations are socially arrived at. Of course we already know that some areas of the brain play a major role in *cognition*, and that other areas experience certain chemical states under certain stimuli, states to which we then apply such socio-cultural labels as “fear,” “anger,” “love,” “happiness,” “pride,” etc. In and of themselves, without the labels, these are only chemical states.

It is obvious that many forms of brain damage reduce cognitive ability, i.e. the ability to understand, i.e. *intelligence*. Similarly obvious is the fact that various forms of brain damage alter the chemical reaction triggered by stimuli.

However, words such as “fear,” “shame,” “guilt,” “empathy,” and “compassion” are cultural *concepts*, similar to “love” or “pride.” They are *not* physiological *states* or *processes*. These neuroscientists are committing the cardinal sin of *reification*. They endow *words* with physical reality. They should hear themselves talk! They are looking to *find* - under a microscope perhaps - “shame” or “pride” in a patient’s brain. Please tell me, doctor: What are the size and color of the patient’s “shame,” which you have just located. Is it one centimeter in size? Is it green? The Japanese are known to experience more shame than Americans do. Is this because their brains are different? In wars and disasters, the decision is sometimes made to sacrifice one or a few for the greater good of many. This is sometimes called leadership or heroism. These people presumably suffer from a damaged *ventromedial prefrontal cortex*?

#### 14. THE ICONOCLAST, THE JOKESTER, THE PROVOCATEUR

*So far, most of my articles are serious - some people might even say that they are grim. However, social criticism can sometimes be more effective through humor. I have often enjoyed playing the role of the joker, the buffoon, deliberately writing nonsense so as to deflate a professional world that is turning increasingly humorless and is often taking itself too seriously. This applies to my own profession - Sociology. Here are some examples.*

##### 1. Sociology as Bullshit: Reply to Kozrow

*I began to take potshots at my pompous academic colleagues early in my career. In February of 1971, I sent the following letter to the editor of American Sociologist, our national review journal. When you read this, keep in mind that the letter is utter nonsense, meaningless gibberish. It mimics the verbosity of academicians and says absolutely nothing. Hilariously, I received serious replies and serious attempts at discussing my letter from the editors!*

As a footnote to Dr. Kozrow’s article in your recent issue, I would like to make the following comments: According to Ralph Kandinsky's study of social adjustment among migrant workers, the level of adjustment is not only determined by the individual's symbolic representations, but also - as an intervening variable - by the reactive effect of his social aggregate upon his G spot's interactive boundary. Now this seems a clear anticipation of modern dynamic theory. One can hardly escape the impression that Kandinsky, as most modern dynamicists, derived much of his intellectual orientation from philosophical relationism. If one keeps in mind that the author's early contributions to the field were mainly in the area of organizational therapy (we are thinking at this point of *The Role-framing of the Social Virus*, published for the first time in 1938 and translated for

Arnold Chekauwsky's anthology in social ontology in 1948, and his unpublished study of structural ethnicity among the Serbo-Moravian Iconoclasts), it becomes clear that his philosophical paradigm was tempered by a strong dose of structural realism.

## 2. Sociology as Bullshit: Guilt and Innocence: How Do Sociologists Deconstruct the O. J. Simpson Case?

*The next piece (written on August 28, 1994) is also total nonsense, a string of meaningless words, not unlike some of the things sociologists write. This time, I sent my spoof to the International Journal on World Peace, but I warned them that it was a joke. They didn't print it.*

The subtext of celebrated criminal cases is a social construction as well as an intersubjective symbolic reproduction. The bureaucratization (or even bureaucretinization) of the judicial system must be deconstructed along gender, ethnic and other diversity motives rather than through a Weberian, Parsonian or even Perrowian perspective. A corporate culture grounded in post-modern chaos theory reveals that both the defense and the prosecution are sublimating gender-specific and race-specific heterosexist motives into the larger text of a constructivist throwback to value rationality. Kohlberg's moral stages drive the social reproduction of interpretive schemes used as legal categories denoting or even connoting guilt and innocence as a labeling process. Thus, sociologists' interpretations are *not*, as Irving Louis Horowitz recently argued, in a state of decomposition but they represent, rather, a fertile and aromatic compost.

## 3. Sociology as Bullshit: :Postmodernism

*The previous piece already uses postmodern lingo. Postmodernism can be a generous target for ridicule, although I also find it a creative and in many ways positive departure.*

*Here, I make fun of it. This is another spoof - total nonsense, mimicking even more directly the postmodern vocabulary. Here is what I wrote to the editors of Contemporary Sociology, Sociology's premier review journal (Sent on May 30, 1996, not published):*

Dear Editor:

Few issues of *Contemporary Sociology* fail to touch upon postmodernism, and the May '96 issue is no exception. The only problem with the Crisis of Western Sociology (topic in Charles Lemert's and Donald Levine's reviewed books) is this: The collective difference of the "other" was already noted more than a century ago by the pre-Durkheimian Belgian sociologist Pied de Chaussure. In his classic study of Flemish shoe workers (inspired by Le Play's work), de Chaussure wrote that "la plus grande difference est la moindre." Clearly, de Chaussure's concepts of "difference" and "otherness" are closer to Baudrillard's than to those of contemporary American feminists. In de Chaussure's case, the shoe was on the *other* foot. In the grand 19th century narrative of dead white European males, the (other) woman could only have been a mistress (at best!).

Thus, the hermeneutic deconstruction of 19th century cultural studies leads to an inescapable alternative *and* universal truth based on the critical implications of quantum mechanics (see Alan Sokal, *Social Text*, 1996). The crisis of Western Sociology was signaled by Alvin Gouldner in the 1970s, it exploded in the post-modern era, and thence traveled back in time to its resolution. By the middle of the 19th century, seven wave-like (cyclical) theories had collapsed, like Schrodinger's kittens, into a myriad of photon-like particles with mass but without weight.

To paraphrase Irving Louis Horowitz, sociology is not in a state of decomposition, but rapidly moving back to its future.

Tom Kando

P.S. No, I haven't been smoking anything. This is just a brief attempt at debunking some aspects of current social theory, including pomo, and to do this through levity.

#### 4) Sociology as bullshit: More Nonsense

*A few years later (July 17, 1998) I wrote the following equally nonsensical piece:*

Contemporary Social Science must negotiate an arduous passage between the Scylla of bankrupt political correctness and the Charybdis of Millsian abstract empiricism. Far from being *depassé*, this challenge remains as *a propos* as it was during the infancy of today's reigning orthodoxies, i.e. the 1960s. The seemingly ephemeral cultural styles of that period mask a substratum of abiding influence upon the further development of disciplined thought.

Paradigm is the ruling *episteme* recognized both at the conscious level, and subconsciously as alienative as well as proactive machineries, especially in the absence of a power nexus or affective affiliation. There is, therefore, evidence of a binary psychic and cultural stratification at the intersubjective level; the texts are narrated overtly as sources of acquiescence, and covertly as didactic, andragogic and dialectical realities.

An abbreviated and indexical expression of a problem might reveal various levels of comfort, depending on the sensibilities of the physio-social *ambience* or subjective common denominator within the dialogue. One hears reverberations of Foucault, while Durkheimian texts remain *uberhaupt* external and all-embracing, a collective consciousness which becomes a collective *unconsciousness* from the moment identified by Freud and his followers...

#### 5. Sociology as Bullshit: A Typical Master's Thesis

*If you think I am exaggerating, when I say that a lot of Sociology is bullshit, here is an example of a recent Master's Thesis in my department. On November 8, 2005, I was invited to attend a student's defense hearing of the thesis with the following title:*

THE EFFECT OF SCHOOL-BASED MENTORING AND PERCEIVED PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT ON ACADEMIC CULTURAL CAPITAL AND ROLE-SPECIFIC SELF-ESTEEM OF THE STUDENT-BASED IDENTITY.

*I suppose I could translate this for you, but why bother? It would be a waste of time, as is the kind of "scholarship" exemplified by this awful thesis title.*

#### 6. Some Thoughts I had, at one Time or Another

*From time to time, I have come up with a humorous saying or two pertaining to various aspects of (my) life. After my second divorce, I had a severe attack of misogyny. The following thoughts sum up my feelings then:*

“Man needs woman because he is basically a masochist”

*And:*

“There are only two kinds of women - those who need help and those who cannot be helped”

*But to be fair and balanced, I also jotted down some of the quotes from my ardently feminist colleagues:*

- 1) All married women are whores
- 2) Men are rabid dogs. They should be either muzzled or destroyed
- 3) Parenthood is torture
- 4) All heterosexual sex is rape

*Later, I became happily married, and also a happy parent. However, raising children was somewhat turbulent during their teen years, and here is how I felt about that at the time:*

“Frankenstein is a metaphor for having children: You create life, but it grows into a monster and turns against you.”

*And going back to Sociology - I have always felt that social scientists should practice social science and that popular culture should entertain. The two should stay separate. When I turn on my television, I don't want a sociology lecture. That's why I once made the following remark:*

“The tabloid TV talk shows - Phil Donahue, Geraldo, Ricky Lake, Jenny Jones, Montel Williams, Sally Jessie Raphael, Oprah, Dr. Phil, etc - are all practicing Sociology without a license, as are most of the media most of the time.”

*At other times, I have resented the discipline of Sociology itself, for all its fads, its biases and its false pretenses. Once I said:*

“Et ceterum censeo Sociologum delendum est”

*This means, “and for the rest, I feel that Sociology should be deleted.” It mimics the sentence with which Cato always concluded his speeches in the Roman Senate, to alert his peers to the danger posed by Carthage, Rome's mortal enemy : “Et ceterum censeo Cartaginem delendam est.”*

*And here is another pointed thought I once jotted down:*

“The ability to do what one dislikes doing is what distinguishes the successful person from the failure.”

## 7. Provocations

*And then there are the many inflammatory remarks I have made over the years. Sometimes it's fun to be a provocateur. Comedian Lenny Bruce was a provocateur. So is my hippie sister Juliette. So was the 19<sup>th</sup>-century French socialist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, and so are some sociologists. They say outlandish things, but they are on to something. The French sociologist Jean*

*Baudrillard was a provocateur. He was often wrong, sometimes terribly wrong. But at the same time, some of his insights and concepts (e.g. the “simulacra”) were eye openers.*

*The key to understanding a provocative statement without getting angry is to realize that it represents a perspective. While we may not share the provocateur’s perspective, the reason he says what he says - outlandish as it may be - is that to him, based on his experience, that is how things look. Here are some provocations I thought of in 2002. I don’t really believe these things, but each is worth pondering, because each probably contains some truth. So try to laugh instead of getting angry:*

- 1) The result of Psychiatry is mental illness, which requires more psychiatric services.
- 2) The result of medical intervention is illness - thus necessitating further medical intervention. (This is what my hippie sister Juliette, sociology professor Howard Becker and radical believers in holistic medicine believe).
- 3) The result of social services (e.g. Child Protective Services, Social Work, Probation, Parole, Counseling, Juvenile Reformatories, Rehabilitative services, etc.) is an increase in family dysfunction, delinquency and maladjustment, which further increases the need for those services.
- 4) The result of Marriage Counseling is Divorce.
- 5) The function of the law is to protect criminals, especially white-collar criminals, and to protect the elite’s privileges (This is the radical/Marxian criminological perspective).
- 6) The result of prisons is to increase criminality (This is an empirical fact).
- 7) The role of the police is to brutalize and intimidate harmless citizens (this is the perspective of many African Americans)
- 8) The result of formal education is to subtract from understanding (paraphrasing a 5/21/02 syndicated column by George Will) especially in such higher education programs as Women’s Studies, Ethnic Studies and other so-called Social Sciences.  
Or:
- 9) Schools destroy students’ minds. (Paraphrasing sociologist Howard Becker).
- 10) Pierre-Joseph Proudhon said “Property is Theft.” (The socialist perspective).  
Or:
- 11) The function of Business is to steal.  
Or:
- 12) The function of industry is to manufacture products which will break down and need to be replaced.
- 13) The function of bureaucracies is to create meaningless work so as to fill employees’ time (Parkinson’s law).
- 14) The goal of bureaucracies is to fail, for only then will their budgets be augmented.  
Or:
- 15) Failure leads to reward and success leads to punishment, for failure is interpreted as the

result of under funding.

16) Bureaucracies maximize inefficiency and incompetence: employees who excel are promoted, while those who do not are maintained in their positions. Thus, everyone is promoted until they reach their level of mediocrity/incompetence (The Peter Principle)

17) The goal of budgets is to waste money: Unless you spend the maximum budgeted for a given year, the next year's base-line budget gets reduced.

18) Computers and cigarettes have much in common: They are both addictive, bad for your health, and they both make for a docile population which accepts more and more work and more and more stress.

19) You can either surf the Internet trying to find references and "do research," or you can read (articles, professional literature, newspapers, books). But you cannot do both.

### 8. Pessimism

*Towards the end of 2006, I had an e-mail exchange with a Hungarian colleague about the situation in that country. It had just been commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its bloody failed uprising against Soviet occupation in 1956. By now, Hungary was free and democratic. Yet its economy was still in shambles and its people were restless, rioting against the government and migrating to the West whenever they could.*

*In an e-mail to my Hungarian colleague on October 24 2006, I summed up my perspective as follows. Pretty grim, perhaps, but still somewhat humorous, as in "gallows humor."*

Dear Zita:

We saw the news about the riots in Budapest. Things seem to be getting worse. I don't know how far this is going, but Francois Fejto, the famous Hungarian writer who lives in Paris, says that this may result in a new reactionary regime in Hungary. I don't know anything about internal Hungarian politics but here is my take not just on Hungary, but on the world as a whole. These are the basic philosophical principles to which I subscribe:

1) I say, along with the French, "*le plus ca change, le plus c'est la meme chose*" (the more things change, the more they are the same).

2) Things should be as they were.

3) The second law of thermodynamics proves it: all things move towards terminal chaos and entropy.

4) Things are worse today than they were yesterday, but not as bad as they will be tomorrow.

Viszontlátásra!

Tom

## 15. POST-MODERNISM AND OTHER HEAVY SOCIOLOGY

### 1. Comments on a Book by Dennis Wrong

*Some of my potshots were serious. In the mid 90s, Contemporary Sociology reviewed Dennis Wrong's The Modern Condition. The reviewer's central point was that today, all great contributions to social thought and action are fleeting and ephemeral - nothing is permanent any more. Here is how I disagreed with that.*

Just a quick reaction to Alan Sica's review of Dennis Wrong's *The Modern Condition* (*Contemporary Sociology* 28:3: 356-357): Sica's main point might be summarized as *sic transit gloria mundi*. Nothing endures any more. Social thought and action are no longer viable for the longue duree.

Let's not quite bet on this yet. The particular topics assembled by Dennis Wrong may or may not be ephemeral. However, last I checked, hundreds of dead theoreticians (white male Europeans or otherwise) endure -- from Plato to Marx, from Adam Smith to Sorokin. In all likelihood, the contemporary Platos and Marxes have been as hard at work as ever, but we may be too myopic to identify them. Whether they include Milovan Djilas, Hanna Arendt, Michel Foucault or any other particular individual is open to debate. However, the sweeping generalization that all social thought has become time-bound (because this is the postmodern era, because the rate of change is accelerating, and so forth.) is an error. Let's just see what happens (*Contemporary Sociology*, 1995).

## 2. Sociology in a Postmodern World

*I also speculated about the kind of Sociology that might be required to study the postmodern world. This piece was written on March 17, 1991, and it was never printed:*

Traditional sociology from Emile Durkheim to Peter Berger describes society as a self-imposed and self-created prison (Weber's iron cage) in which we live more or less orderly and predictable lives. But what are sociologists to make of the increasing chaos of the modern world? Domestic crime, racism, breakdown of authority and pluralistic competition for allegiances are all rising. Internationally, the situation is even worse. From the Balkan to the Middle East, from Africa to the former Soviet Union to Latin America, entire continents are sliding into the abyss of civil war and disintegration.

President Bush's New World Order is in fact a new international fluidity. It reminds me of the Hellenistic era. As that era succeeded the relative order of ancient Greece's Golden Age, so today's chaos follows a century and a half of Western-dominated colonial and post-colonial order. It is called Globalism, but it is chaos.

The Western media have provided all five and a half billion earthlings with an awareness of competing cultures and perspectives. Consequently, there is now a myriad of groupings everywhere, both domestically and internationally, which are (1) aware of many alternative lifestyles and (2) pushing for their own agenda. All these groups are also aware that *other* groups' aspirations are the same as their own, namely to grow their power and their share of resources.

Power determines the outcome of all social conflict. But power, too, has become more diffused. To be sure, the West still plays the largest role in influencing the outcome of conflicts around the world, but it is in no way as powerful as it was from 1815 (the Congress of Vienna) to World War Two. With its two World Wars, Europe committed harakiri and ensured the loss of its hegemony over the rest of the world.

Now, America likes to think of itself as the only superpower left, and its military budget is larger than that of the rest of the world combined. However, American hegemony may yet turn out to be a house of cards, notwithstanding the *trillions* of dollars we spend on military gadgetry.

The future is likely to see more conflict, more competing definitions of reality. And less ability by one culture (western modernity) to dominate others. Until the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the world was bi-polar. However, both Capitalism and Socialism were *modern, rational, economic* systems. Both assumed that man was basically a *Homo Economicus*. Most sociologists made a similar assumption, the assumption of *modernity*.

But today, all traditional sociological paradigms have become obsolete. Structural-functionalism, Marxian Conflict Theory and Symbolic Interactionism are all *modern* theories. But the world is increasingly *postmodern*. It is now less *rational*, less driven by *economic* incentives. Both in the West and elsewhere, *identity politics* are supplanting class warfare. Even where poverty reigns, as in much of the Third World, straight Marxism can no longer explain conflict. Religion, nationalism and ethnic identity have become the most powerful motives. In the U.S. - and increasingly elsewhere, too - gender politics come to the fore.

All this calls for a new sociology, a “Sociology of Chaos.” This sociology would focus on the multiplicity of competing groups and definitions of reality. It would not be a mere cross-cultural sociology, a rehash of what anthropology has been doing for over a century. The very concept of Culture is part of Sociology’s traditional conceptual apparatus. It assumes the existence of “cultures,” i.e. bodies of values shared by distinct collectivities of people. However, today, the world is more complicated: Conflict is not between cultures, but between groups of people with conflicting *animus*. It is the rapidly changing ebb and flow of *animus* in the world which requires our utmost attention.

### 3. A Glimpse of Postmodernity before its Advent

*It was 1968 and I was still in grad school. There was no awareness yet of postmodernity, either as a condition or as a sociological perspective. But as I was walking through my suburban neighborhood in Minneapolis, I saw a vignette of postmodern behavior avant la lettre:*

I walk by a playground and I see a group of kids playing at war. One group has just captured a number of enemies, and it is leading them into captivity. The captors are telling their captives to hold their hands above their heads, pointing their forefinger/guns at them, and making “pow, pow” sounds, as kids have been doing for a century in playgrounds around the world.

And then, something extremely revealing happens: while enacting the war scene, some of the children sing menacing Hollywood-like background melody!

What a great example of life imitating art! Children now believe that real battles - in Vietnam or in World War Two - are accompanied by background music. We are moving into a world where phantasy and reality merge.

### 4. Paradox Means Justice

*While still in graduate school and searching for research topics, I jotted down the following idea. Nothing came of it, but it was an interesting thought:*

Much of life is typified by the paradox, the dialectic, the challenge-and-response dynamics that ultimately give the earth to the meek, puts the loser in the drivers seat, turns the last into the first, ultimately invalidates all predictions, and ensures that every experience has value, no matter how disastrous it may seem at first. The paradoxical nature of ultimate reality explains why

suffering is good, why nothing can be gained free of charges and why, in the end, all is as it should be...

This is, in essence, the quietism of all religious thought, of the fundamental belief in justice which is the ultimate anchor of those who suffer or who see suffering around them. This is the belief and the certainty found in Hinduism, Zen Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and Judaism. It is the most fundamental psychological mechanism provided by the organism in the face of unexplainable events, i.e. in most cases unexplainable suffering.

I see confirmation of this principle in daily life around me: I see people every day who are marginal, rejected, people in minority positions, people who barely get by, and they almost always seem to be the ones who try the hardest. It seems very clear that - at this everyday level - challenge and response operate precisely as described by Weber among the Calvinists and Huguenots, by Sombart among the Jews, by Van Heek among the Dutch Catholics and by Toynbee among all marginalized minorities.

So this is actually an empirically testable hypothesis. The hypothesis can be summed up in a number of synonymous ways: The "paradox," the "dialectic," "challenge and response," "motivation by negative stimulation," the "self-defeating prophecy," and so forth. When framed as a universal principle, it becomes metaphysical, like the principles of human nature posited by Locke and other natural philosophers, or to principles of history posited by Hegel and Marx.

As an empirical hypothesis, it could be researched. The theoretical underpinning of such a project would consist of the speculative philosophical and religious sources I just mentioned, philosophical statements about such things as "ultimate justice," "historical necessity," and "yin and yang." It would also include the work of cognitive psychologists, who argue that man, like nature itself, has a built-in mechanism for balance, dissonance reduction and equity. The empirical test could be a study of the effect of relative deprivation upon achievement.

## 5. Life and the Pursuit of Happiness

*In January 1982, I jotted down the following critique of materialism in the modern world, just as a personal note:*

I'll write about the third leg of Jefferson's triad - liberty - elsewhere. For now, I just want to jot down some thoughts about the relationship between the other two: Life and the Pursuit of Happiness.

Sometimes, when we want to say that something has great value, we call it sacred and we say that it is "more sacred than life itself." But if you think about it, life is a poor choice to exemplify a sacred value, even though linguistic convention often puts the words "life" and "sacred" together.

Actually, life has never been sacred. In the laws of nature, the destruction of life in the service of other ends (if only to sustain or save other lives) has been the prime directive. Life has always been a means to other ends.

Furthermore, the *volume* of life being destroyed has increased dramatically over the centuries, to the point where industrial civilization destroys more plant, animal and human life in one day than the tribal world did in thousand years. Even two hundred years ago, the major historical battle of Yorktown took twenty-seven American lives - about half as many as were lost to "free" the freighter Mayaguez from the Cambodians at the end of the Vietnam war. The entire Napoleonic wars, which lasted fifteen years, cost the British Empire 6000 lives, which is about one day's fatalities in the Indo-Pakistani conflict of the 1940s.

Even more important has been the *attitude* change towards life. In this respect, two opposite trends have characterized modern society: On the one hand, modern medicine, scientific progress and the improvement of the human condition have in many cases admirably improved and lengthened human life. On the other hand, life has also been treated with increasing disrespect and inhumanity. Modern society creates bureaucracy, metropolises, mechanized warfare, crime, anonymity. The callousness with which life is treated in the modern world often exceeds the way it was treated in the past.

So, life is a bad example of a sacred value. Modern society holds other things more sacred. Unlike earlier civilizations, the most sacred realm today is not religion either. No. The true ends in themselves which most of us have learned never to question are material well-being, including wealth and pleasure, and power and prestige. We call this happiness, a euphemism for money coined by the Founding Fathers.

Today, the vast majority of mankind “pursues happiness,” meaning \$, or £, or Fr, or Fl, or some other denomination. To this end, all other values become means, including life itself. In their pursuit of happiness, corporations sacrifice other people’s lives by polluting the world, causing cancer and black lung. Gangs, drug dealers and organized criminals also sacrifice other people’s lives in their pursuit of happiness. In Communist regimes, the pursuit of happiness takes other people’s lives through different means, including militarism and police state totalitarianism. And then there is the Third World, which is now also engaged head over heels in the pursuit of happiness. There it takes the form of urbanization, industrialization, militarization, chronic war, revolution, terrorism, bloodshed, sometimes in the name of liberation of the oppressed, sometimes in the name of law and order.

So everyone pursues happiness. The assumption is that the current inhabitants of Calcutta or the South Bronx, because they pursue happiness, are therefore closer to it than were, say, the Pueblo or Sioux Indian hundred years ago, who were *not* pursuing happiness.

Are there any other sacred values which compete with money as today’s *ultima ratio*? Sex and love perhaps? How about science and technology? Or art and beauty? Freedom? For a few minorities here and there - artists, intellectuals, deviants - one of these may occasionally be the ultimate value.

As far as sex and love are concerned, society has pretty much separated these from each other. Sex is often a means to economic ends. I am not speaking of prostitution. I mean that marriage is largely an economic arrangement. Similarly, science and technology are rarely motivated by a pure thirst for knowledge. They, too, are generally motivated by a desire to come up with a more efficient solution to a practical problem, in other words by economic incentives. As to freedom, most people now understand this to mean the freedom to take and to exploit, without accountability. To most people, freedom means a free lunch, getting without giving.

But there is one value which modern civilization has raised to a sacred entity. This is the idea of *equality*. And this is a value in whose name more people have been killed than any other one.

## 6. The Myth of Social Science

*My rebellion against my own profession began early. I soon became critical of all the dominant social scientific paradigms. Here is an example, written in 1979:*

I would like to do for Sociology what Thomas Szasz did for Psychiatry. In *The Myth of*

*Mental Illness*, Szasz effectively disposes of Psychiatry as a science, and redefines that discipline's character and purpose along humanist lines.

Szasz writes that the business of Psychiatry has been to apply *labels* to various behaviors. To some extent, therefore, psychiatry has *created* (mental) illness, rather than *removed* it. By now, most of us are aware of the effects of labeling, the self-fulfilling prophecy and the definition of the situation. Like Foucault, Szasz is also a good historian. He traces the origins of labeling to Charcot and Freud.

But Szasz is not proposing to abolish Psychiatry, only to redefine it. According to Szasz, the psychiatrist should not be viewed as a doctor and a scientist who has the truth, but as a wise helper, a counselor, a friend who might assist people in moving towards a goal, who might help people in *defining* salutatory goals for themselves.

Similarly, my book would show that Sociology is not a science. The business of Sociology is to apply *labels* to social phenomena, to propose perspectives and to create forms of consciousness about social issues. Thus Sociology, too, at times *creates* social problems and self-fulfilling prophecies.

Like Psychiatry, Sociology shouldn't be abolished. It should be redefined as a humanity and a philosophy, a discipline which assists groups in placing their condition in a certain perspective.

The philosophy of Pragmatism teaches us that situations are best evaluated in terms of their *consequences* rather than their *causes*. If Sociology were pragmatic, it would evaluate situations and their consequences, rather than try to determine whether the hypothesized cause of a situation is *true* or *false*. It would not devote itself largely, as it does now, to *causal analysis*, modeling itself after the physical sciences. It would heed William James and abandon its prevailing model, which is based on the true-vs.-false dichotomy.

## 7. The Folly of Social Science

*On June 12, 1991, I wrote a critique of the Social Sciences, somewhat similar to the previous one.*

I would like to write a book about some of the foolish ideas going on in the world today. It is about some of the silly and false theories accepted by the public and propagated by the elites. It is about the superstitions, errors and lies taught at all levels - from kindergarten and early child rearing within families, to universities and mass media indoctrination. It is about the superstitions and falsehoods held in my own area of expertise, namely the behavioral disciplines.

One of the institutions most responsible for the spread of massive disinformation in modern society is the University. While the public sees the University as the repository of knowledge, it is in fact often the source of great mystification. The University enjoys enormous prestige. In most people's mind it represents the highest level of truth and knowledge. Most people believe that, while no one has all the answers, the University knows more than anyone else. Through such labels as "Ph.D.," "Dr.," "Research" and "Science," the University conveys to the public the claim that, even though it is perhaps not omniscient, it knows more than anyone else. Furthermore, it pretends to be in the *vanguard* of knowledge.

\* \* \* \* \*

There are two broad areas of knowledge: *physical* and *human*. The physical sciences deal

with stars, rocks, plants, animals, biology and the body, including the human body. The human disciplines deal with human behavior, thoughts, emotions, relationships, conflict, motivations, good and evil, beauty and ugliness, freedom and oppression, justice and injustice, and the soul.

I have no quarrel with the natural sciences. They will undoubtedly continue to make enormous contributions to scientific knowledge and to progress. MIT, Caltech, the medical schools, the Harvards, Berkeleys, Stanfords, and all the wannabe “universities” such as Cal. State are probably turning out competent M.D.s, Engineers, nurses and biologists, and many of these people are helping to find a cure for cancer, to explore the planets and to make better computers.

But I have spent my life in the so-called Social Sciences. I say so-called, because I do not believe that Sociology, Psychology, Political Science and their relatives are sciences, despite their claim to that status. Whatever we may call the study of human behavior - the behavioral disciplines, the social disciplines, the human disciplines - it is not a science. And in the human disciplines, the University has supplanted the Church as the greatest source of disinformation.

The analogy with the Christian Church is compelling: For centuries, the Catholic Church had been the repository of valuable knowledge - for example the wisdom of Aristotle. Had it not been for the Church, the Dark Ages would have been even darker. However, by the time of the Renaissance, the Church had become the main obstacle to progress.

I will not ask whether the human disciplines are the greatest source of error and disinformation, or whether they vie for that distinction with the media, organized religion, political ideologies, the government, even the arts. Each is guilty. Suffice it to say that the University is at least *one* of the worst offenders. My reason for focusing on that institution is obvious: That is where I have spent my life.

When I chose to major in Sociology, what attracted me to that discipline was the *Sociological Perspective*. My introduction to basic sociological concepts was a revelation. All of a sudden a light went on. Basic concepts like social structure, norm, role and the entire *reified* sociological vocabulary helped me to suddenly see life in a fascinating new way. Regularities in human behavior emerged before my eyes.

However, my sociological imagination turned out to be different from that of C. Wright Mills. I view society as in a state of progressive deterioration, and I attribute this in part to the social “sciences.”

Comte, the father of Sociology, envisioned a new discipline which would combine the best of two possible worlds, namely (1) the subject matter of the humanities, and (2) the methods of the natural sciences. This was the *Positivist* project. Positivism is the belief that human behavior is subject to the same scientific laws as is physical matter. The paradigm is an *error*, because it leaves no room for freedom. With positivism, the behavioral disciplines took the wrong turn.

However, because of science’s phenomenal prestige in the Western world, the human disciplines were able to foster their definition of their enterprise upon the entire society, which accepted it lock stock and barrel, albeit in vulgarized form.

The goal of science, at least in its applied form, is to improve the human condition. When the behavioral disciplines advanced their claim to scientific status, society welcomed them with open arms, believing that they would replicate the success of biology and medicine. Just as those sciences had scored great victories in the fight against disease, so the social “sciences” would cure *society’s* illnesses. Thus arose the *medicalization* of human behavior, particularly *deviant* behavior. For example, crime was no longer a moral issue; it became an illness.

Positivism led to a second and ever greater fraud: The so-called social “sciences” were now

able to pass off *values* as *facts*.

An example: Some decades ago, social scientists discovered “*self-esteem*.” As they see it, this discovery is no different from other scientific discoveries, for example the discovery of the AIDS virus, or the discovery of the planet Pluto. Then, social scientists told us that a high level of self-esteem is necessary for mental health, that a low level of self-esteem is responsible for criminality, and so forth. Finally, they proposed specific social interventions, for example policies to reduce the crime rate by increasing juveniles’ self-esteem.

But since the basis for the policies and interventions recommended by social scientists does *not* consist of facts, those interventions have been largely ineffective and at times disastrous.

The situation is analogous with the pre-medical interventions of shamans and witch doctors before the advent of modern medicine, and the pseudo-science of the medieval alchemist. To cure a patient’s ailment, a 14<sup>th</sup> century physician might prescribe bloodletting so as to purify him of his dirty blood. Of course, this would only aggravate the condition. Until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, medicine probably killed more people that it saved. Just *wanting* something to work does not make it so, any more than the alchemist wanting stone to turn into gold will make it so. Luckily for us, medicine then became an empirical science and went on to score great victories against disease.

On the other hand, the behavioral disciplines are not fact-based sciences. The interventions which they recommend do not work. No amount of self-esteem boosting psychological therapy is going to reduce the crime rate. In fact, there is not *one single* social intervention which has *ever* been shown to reduce rates of crime and delinquency (as Richard Lundman, Robert Martinson, and others have shown).

Since the advent of the social “sciences,” all the dysfunctional behaviors which they attempt to treat have only increased. Rates of crime, delinquency, mental illness, drug addiction, suicide and family breakdown are far higher today than they were a century ago. When medical intervention causes the patient to deteriorate, we call it “iatrogenic pathology” - disease *caused* by the treatment, either as a side-effect, as an unintended consequence, or simply because the treatment is altogether wrong. Could it be that the social “sciences” contribute to the problems they are trying to treat, rather than to their solution? Could it be that this is not only a matter of side-effects or unintended consequences, but that social scientific interventions into social problems are fuel to the fire? Like bloodletting as a medical cure?

\* \* \* \* \*

America and the Western World are progressing through three stages - (1) the traditional, (2) the modern and (3) the postmodern. The three stages are the rear-guard, the center, and the vanguard. They coexist and they compete. Values and beliefs typical of (1) traditional, pre-modern culture include such things as religious fundamentalism, pro-life attitudes, support for capital punishment (justice means an “eye-for-an-eye”), opposition to homosexuality, etc. Their adherents live in places like Iowa. (2) Modern culture is characterized by a belief in science, technology, progress, materialism and secularism (Sorokin’s *sensate* civilization). (3) Postmodern culture is relativistic and politically correct. There are no absolute values, no absolute truths, apart from the fact that traditional values are bad. Traditional values must be reversed and the groups which were previously the “outsiders” (the “other”) must be admitted to the table, perhaps at the expense of the former insiders (for revenge). So postmodernism is revolutionary.

The social sciences play an interesting role in the competition of the three cultures for the people’s allegiance: They subscribe, by and large, to postmodern values (3), they claim to be a scientific enterprise (2) and they vehemently oppose traditional values (1). Thus, they claim that their agenda (values) has scientific validity. In truth, the agenda is political and not scientific.

## 16. THE ECONOMY: ON THE LEFT

*I now move on to a selection of (even more) politicized pieces: During most of my life, my greatest battles have been on the political front. I will now share with you some of the many encounters I have had when dealing with various socioeconomic issues, including Sociology's holy trinity of class, race and gender. I begin with the Economy.*

*First, a brief glossary:*

*The basic economic question: What to do about poverty and inequality?*

*The Left's answer: Socialism.*

*The Right's answer: Capitalism.*

*The Left: Advocates high taxes, income redistribution and Big Government.*

*The Right: Advocates low taxes, high productivity and Small Government.*

*The Left's goal: Equality.*

*The Right's goal: Freedom.*

*America: On the Right*

*Republicans: On the Right.*

*Europeans: On the Left*

*Democrats: On the Left.*

*Liberals: In America, this means Left.*

*Liberals: In Europe, it means Right.*

### 1. On the Left: Marching against Poverty on Solidarity Day

*I have often been on the Left, especially when I was young. On June, 19, 1968, while still in graduate school, I went to Washington D.C. to participate in Solidarity Day. This was one of the mass demonstrations organized by a coalition of the Peace Movement, the Civil Rights Movement and the Poverty Movement. I wrote an article about it in Dutch and sent it to De Groene Amsterdammer, which did not publish it. Below is a translation of some of it. Note the admirable youthful idealism:*

One more mass demonstration in the capital of the United States, probably one of the last peaceful ones. Once again, hundreds of thousands of people are gathering to protest the fact that in the richest country on earth, there are still literally several thousand people each year who die of starvation, and millions more who do not have enough to eat...

...The American people are increasingly compelled to choose direct political action, action which takes on an increasingly revolutionary character. The two-party system, the federal system, with its high level of local autonomy coupled to the growing power of the central government, the checks and balances, the enormous weight of the Constitution, which is the ultimate legal arbiter, the complicated electoral policies, with their primaries, district delegates, state and national conventions, all of this has not enabled America to solve problems which in several other countries already belong to the past...

...That the Vietnam War, which now costs 30 billion dollars a year, is the greatest obstacle to economic equality for the underfed, the ill-housed, the literally under-developed masses living in the ghettos, in the work camps, on the reservations, in Appalachia and elsewhere, this is a self-

evident truth which only the New Left and some black leaders understand...

...But the relationships between Vietnam, the racial question, poverty and domestic violence - the four great problems which now dominate America and which threaten to tear down the country in the near future - this relationship is being recognized by more and more people. Among the twenty speakers at the demonstration, not one failed to establish the link between the Vietnam war and domestic poverty. Martin Luther King's widow, in a sharp and eloquent plea to Congress, called the Vietnam war the most cruel and evil war in history...

...The vast majority of the participants were poor blacks, Mexicans, Indians, Puerto-Ricans and poor whites, and not radical students, those intellectual children of the well-to-do who have hitherto powered the Peace Movement and Eugene McCarthy's campaign.

No, these were primarily the poor, illiterate inhabitants of the ghettos and of the cotton fields of the Mississippi delta, of the reservations and of the deserts of Arizona and New Mexico, The inhabitants of Resurrection City and the thousands who came to Washington for a day by bus, on foot or by mule, who spent weeks trekking to spend to be there for one, symbolic day, all these people were definitely not the ones who have been criticizing the government's foreign policy for the past few years.

In brief, race and class vanish in such a mass manifestation. There is but one group - the oppressed, the dissatisfied., the rebels and the radicals, and this includes university students, illiterates, proletarians, the middle class, cotton pickers, professors, Hollywood celebrities and the unemployed.

But this does not mean that this last demonstration will have any significant impact upon Congress and the Government. President Johnson is spending *less* on poverty programs every year, because the war is his top priority.

Although Solidarity Day was a great symbolic success, there is no cause for optimism as far as long term results are concerned. It is unfortunate that there is no central charismatic figure. After all, Ralph Abernathy is no Martin Luther King...

...The day before the march, I walked through Resurrection City and I approached a group of blacks to ask what their agenda was for the following day. Their answer was, "Well, tomorrow, we shall overcome!" This typifies the euphoric, enthusiastic atmosphere of the movement, as well as the total absence of practical and political acumen of both leaders and followers.

All in all, everything went well, apart from a few minor encounters between demonstrators and the armed authorities. But one had the distinct feeling that this was the last large and peaceful demonstration, that it would not elicit any congressional action, and that the struggle will now move, in a more violent form, to the ghettos.

## 2. On the Left: Against Excessive Tax Cuts

*Twelve years later, I had become a tax-paying, propertied professor. Nevertheless, while more subdued, I was still economically liberal. I still felt that the government must be well-funded through taxes, so as to provide society with necessary services, an equitable re-distribution of wealth, and a safety net for the lower class and for the unfortunates. In sum I was a Social Democrat. I cringed at the increasing popularity of tax-cutting efforts, such as those of Howard Jarvis in California. Here is what I wrote about that on February 20, 1980, a letter submitted to the Sacramento Bee but not printed:*

Passage of Jarvis II (Proposition 9 on the forthcoming ballot) is likely to be harmful an counterproductive in a number of ways.

To be sure, we all resent the burden of excessive taxation, now aggravated by inflation. Big Bureaucratic Government undeniably wastes a great deal of the taxpayer's money. However, Proposition 9 is ill-conceived, offering a cure worse than the illness. It proposes to cut the state income tax in half. This proportion is neither reasonable nor based on sound economic theory; it is a random figure that makes no more sense than, say, three quarters, or 69%. By such reasoning, it might be plausibly suggested that the State of California be dismantled altogether, or that at least one half of the schools, highways, prisons, highway patrol and other services be abolished.

Many individuals may not be cognizant of the fact that whereas the State Government spends approximately 21 billion of our dollars annually, Uncle Sam spends *620 billion*. Yet the benefits derived from the much smaller state tax - from unemployment compensation to education, from police, legal and other forms of protection to super-highways and various forms of health care - far exceed the dubious rewards bestowed upon us by distant Washington. To amputate the State Government as Jarvis proposes to do is an irrational and self-defeating response to a frustration stemming from the heavy burden of *overall* taxation.

The family of four that now pays a total of, say, \$4,200.00 in taxes (federal, state, local, social security, sales, property all included) may experience a saving of \$150 per year or enough for two new tires. Yet as a result they may well be forced to bus their children to distant schools, abandon all hopes of sending them to college, experience a higher rate of crime and vandalism, no longer be able to picnic in a safe and clean municipal park and suffer all sorts of other inconveniences. Also, much business is likely to be lost by restaurants, department stores and other establishments when thousands of public employees are laid off, and this will contribute significantly to the cost of public welfare.

The proponents of Jarvis II maintain that reduction of the state income tax is at least a start toward reduction of the overall tax burden. However, this argument lacks merit, as Proposition 9 is more likely to lead to the federalization of many programs and the substitution of the more distant and wasteful federal bureaucracy for that of California. If any portion of the admittedly ever more painful tax bite is well spent money, it is the state tax. Proposition 9 appears to be a case of cutting off one's nose to spite one's face. It aims at reducing the tax burden, which it will hardly achieve, while it will most assuredly devastate many essential human services, inflicting disproportionate suffering upon the lower and the working strata while primarily benefitting the upper income brackets. The measure would without a doubt be counterproductive and some of its unanticipated consequences might well be mind-boggling. As many have pointed out, its impact and that of Proposition 13 are likely to hit all at once, as the former State surplus is only now approaching depletion.

I sympathize with the electorate's current state of mind. However, I also hope that a sufficient number of voters will realize that Proposition 9 is not the answer.

### 3. On the Left: Against Lunatic Tax Cuts

*Some people don't just want to cut taxes; they want to practically re-privatize the entire economy. They are lunatics. On October 2, 2003, I was listening to National Public Radio, where Terry Gross was interviewing Grover Norquist on her program Fresh Air. He is the President of the American Tax Reform Association. Here was my reaction to this, as I jotted it down later that day*

This guy is a catastrophe. He is the spokesman for the wholesale dismantlement of the welfare state that has evolved since the 1930s. He advocates nothing short of a return to total and

absolute private enterprise. He feels that the income tax is unconstitutional. He wants to privatize Social Security, all schools (through “vouchers”), medicare, prisons, law enforcement, everything except national defense!

Norquist claims that America is 1) the richest country in the world, 2) enjoys the highest quality of life in the world, 3) is the freest country in the world, and that it owes all these advantages to the fact that it is 4) the most capitalistic country in the world.

He is wrong on all four counts: 1) As far as per capita income is concerned, we are not number one: There are several countries ahead of us, including Japan, Switzerland, the Scandinavian countries and several other countries in Europe and elsewhere. 2) This is equally false. Again, the Japanese, most Western Europeans, plus the Canadians, the Australians and some others, live longer than we do, they work fewer hours, they have longer paid vacations, better retirement benefits, lower rates of crime, pollution and other social problems, and they enjoy an overall higher quality of life than we do. 3) We are by no means the freest country. While we are solidly democratic, so are dozens of other countries. Furthermore, in many other countries, law enforcement and the government are actually *less* intrusive than they are here. They lock up far fewer people, punish far less, discriminate less against ethnic minorities and dissenters. 4) True, America is quite “capitalistic,” although no more so than a slew of other countries, both in the developed and in the developing worlds. Furthermore, the high standard of living, the freedom and the material comfort enjoyed by most Americans is not caused by the fact that we are more capitalistic, since the welfare states of Western Europe, Canada and elsewhere, where tax rates are higher and the economies are more socialized, enjoy all of the same advantages. It may be that most Americans live relatively well despite their excessive reliance on the free enterprise system and their government’s inadequate provision of public services such as public medicine and transportation. Norquist and his ilk are wrong on all counts.

#### 4. The Federal Deficit

*One of the long-term threats to America’s future is the government’s perennial inability to balance its budget. For fifty years or more, the federal government has been spending more than it has been taking in through taxes. To anyone of us, this would have meant bankruptcy a long time ago. Sooner or later, there will be a day of reckoning. I have long worried about this problem. Here is what I wrote about it on January 21, 1984:*

By 1982, the Federal government had accumulated a total debt of about \$2 trillion, because for many years it had spent more than it had taken in through taxes.

Thus in 1983, it had to spend 120 billion - 8% of its annual budget of 1.5 trillion - on interest payment. And on the income side of the ledger, it had to borrow 100 billion dollars in order to meet all of its obligations i.e. in order to make up the *deficit*. So in 1983, the accumulated debt rose to 2.1 trillion. This is shown in Table I.

Table I. Federal Budget and Deficit - 1982;1983

year	Income		Expenses		Total budget	accumulated debt
	Tax Receipts	Borrowing (Deficit)	Programs	Interest payment		
1982						2 trillion
1983	1400 billion	100	1380 billion	120 billion	1500 billion	2.1 trillion

In 1983, the accumulated debt had risen to 2.1 trillion. In 1984, in order to maintain the same level of services *and* in order to be able to finance a larger debt than the previous year, the government now had to borrow 106 billion instead of only 100 billion. In other words, its deficit had grown by 6 billion.

As Table II shows, this process repeats itself every year. The following year (1985), the government must spend 132 billion on interest and the deficit has grown to 112 billion. A year later, the deficit has increased to 119 billion, then to 126 billion, etc. Worse: Not only is the deficit growing every year, but it is growing *exponentially*. That is, each year it grows by a larger amount than the previous year: Notice that from 1983 to 1984, the deficit grows by 6 billion. However, from 1985 to 1986, it grows by 7 billion.

Table II. Growth of the Federal Deficit

year	Income		Expenses		Total budget	accumulated debt
	Tax Receipts	Borrowing (Deficit)	Programs	Interest payment		
1983						2.1 trillion
1984	1400	106	1380	126	1506	2.206 tr.
1985	1400	112	1380	132	1512	2318
1986	1400	119	1380	139	1519	2437
1987	1400	126	1380	146	1526	2563

This vicious cycle of indebtedness is the same as when you are deeply indebted to your bank through your credit cards. Because you have to spend so much of your money to finance your debt, you have little left to buy things with. It's the same with the government: Imagine all the great social, educational, space, scientific, medical, cultural and recreational programs the government could fund if it didn't have to spend all that money on interest!

Whether it's you or the government, there are three possible scenarios: (1) the scenario in Table II: Each year the government keeps spending the same amount on social programs, while tax receipts stay the same and the debt grows. In time, it goes bankrupt. (2) Each year the government sticks to the same size budget and tax receipts stay the same. In time, the government spends its entire income on finance charges, and there is nothing left for social programs. This is what

happened to bankrupt states such as the governments of Spain in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and France in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a prelude to revolution. (3) The government raises taxes, so as to maintain social programs at an adequate level *and* pay down the debt. In time, it returns to financial solvency.

Scenario #3 is the only way out. However, it is becoming increasingly difficult to enact. Each year the amount of additional taxes required to reach that goal goes up. If Congress and the President are unable to make a dent in the debt in 1983, how could they conceivably do it ten years later? By then, the deficit would be utterly out of control!

#### 5. The Federal Deficit - Redux: The Vicious Cycle of Indebtedness

*And indeed, by 2007 the federal deficit had grown to 9.5 trillion, costing the government 400 billion a year in finance charges. I was of course as concerned about this as ever. On February 10, 2007, I published the following letter in the Sacramento Bee:*

Your discussion of the federal deficit fails to emphasize the following aspect: Having to finance a 9.5 trillion dollar debt, the government spends over \$400 billion a year on interest. That's roughly the same amount as the annual deficit itself. This is the vicious cycle which any debtor gets into. Were the government not forced to spend an increasing amount on interest, it would not have to borrow additional funds. Were it not already atrociously indebted, it could balance its budget. It is very difficult to get out of such a hole. Over the past half century, only Clinton succeeded. The solution is a no-brainer: the government *has* to raise taxes. This could be temporary, until interest payments decline. Remember, the annual deficit is roughly the same as the interest payment.

But the greatest threat to America's future is not the federal deficit, but the *other* one - our trade imbalance: For fifty years, this country has been spending more than it has been making. If each year my wife and I made \$100,000 but spent \$120,000, we would soon be bankrupt. America is going bankrupt. The dollar's international value is already a fraction of what it was a generation ago, and things are likely to become much worse in the future (*Sacramento Bee*, Feb. 10, 2007).

*P.S.: On March 15, it was announced that the 2006 trade deficit was again, for the sixth year in a row, an all-time record. And for the first time, the U.S. not only sold far fewer goods than it purchased overseas, but it also earned less on investment returns than it paid out to foreign countries. This was because foreigners were now buying up more and more U.S. assets, as they had to, in order to get rid of their excess dollars. This was precisely the development which I had predicted and feared. The chickens were coming home to roost. The U.S. was being colonized.*

#### 6. On the left: Rush Limbaugh is Wrong

*There were other economic issues on which I was also liberal. Here is a letter I submitted to the Wall Street Journal on September 8, 1994 - unsuccessfully.*

Edward Lomas' defense of Rush Limbaugh (letters, September 8) regarding the comparative standard of living of Europe and the U.S. is of no help at all. Limbaugh had argued earlier that the American poor are better off than the European mainstream. For this, he was rightly rebuked by the people at *Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting*.

I am somewhat of a Limbaugh fan. He is entertaining, and his critique of liberal hypocrisy

is to the point. However, he is sometimes factually wrong. It is ludicrous to suggest that the American poor come even *close* to the average European standard of living. And as to *which* countries are most representative of Europe, it is certainly *far more* reasonable to compare the U.S. with Germany, France, the U.K. and Italy than to compare it with Romania, Albania, Bulgaria, Russia, Slovakia, Bosnia and the like, as Limbaugh's defender proposes.

Many of the latter countries are a group of under-developed and war-torn nations living in third world conditions. We might as well congratulate ourselves for doing better than Cuba, or Rwanda, or Somalia!

So how does America compare with Europe? 1) Several European countries (Switzerland, Benelux, Scandinavia, Germany, Austria, etc.) are overall *better off* than we are. They live richer, healthier, cleaner, longer and less arduous lives. 2) Eastern Europe is indeed in much worse economic shape than we are. 3) The American poor are *far* worse off than a majority of Europeans. 4) The *overall* standard of living in America is probably about the same as that of the combined average for Western Europe, including the rich.

Rush Limbaugh and his supporters perform an invaluable service in unmasking the absurdities of the Left. They should avoid becoming absurd themselves.

## 17. THE ECONOMY: ON THE RIGHT

### 1. America is a High-Tax country

*However, I was also aware of the pitfalls of excessive taxation, which can kill an economy. The main argument which capitalists make in defense of the Free Enterprise system is that Socialism kills productivity and incentives. True. Here is something I printed about that in the Wall Street Journal on January 24, 1985:*

Multiple Bites: While Keith Marsden's conclusion linking low taxes to greater productivity (editorial page, Dec.18) is no doubt correct, inclusion of the U.S. federal tax in the tax table is meaningless, as total tax revenue as percentage of American GDP is not 18.5%, but closer to 50% when including Social Security and local, state, sales and property taxes. To be sure, Marsden's figures for the other countries are not all-inclusive either, but there the discrepancy is smaller: Only in the U.S. does the federal tax by itself constitute but a minority of total taxation. Elsewhere, the central government's levy represents the bulk - certainly well over half - of total taxation. Thus the U.S. should clearly be included among high-tax countries rather than listed as a (some-what) low-tax one (*Wall Street Journal*, Jan. 24, 1985).

### 2. U.S. Is not a Low-Tax Country

*In 1991, I made the same argument in greater detail, this time taking on Nobel laureate economist Robert Heilbroner. A shorter version of this appeared in the Sacramento Bee on November 11, 1991:*

This is in response to Robert Heilbroner's article in the October 20 Sunday Forum of the *Sacramento Bee*. While Heilbroner is correct in pointing out the need to repair our nation's infrastructure, he is wrong in describing America as a low-tax country.

It is known to anyone who bothers to check the sources that Americans are taxed every bit as heavily as many Europeans and more heavily than some Europeans and the Japanese. For one

thing, our country has more governmental levels than most other industrial nations: Whereas others only have local and national governments, we have the state, local *and* federal levels (not to mention cities as well as counties and special utilities and other districts).

I just checked some of the sources again, including Heilbroner's own source - the *US Statistical Abstract*. Heilbroner's figures are for 1987, so I'll stick to that year: In 1987, all state and local taxes (including property, sales, income, utility, liquor, etc.) produced receipts of \$873 billion. Federal tax receipts totaled \$854. Thus, total government receipts amounted to \$1,727 billion. This is 39% of the 1989 Gross Domestic Product of \$4,473 billion.

Furthermore, if we look at government activity from the *spending* side rather than the receipt side, the government's share of all economic activity goes up: In 1987, the federal budget was \$1,004 billion, including a \$150 billion deficit. That's nearly 23% of the GNP. When looking at *outlays*, all governments combined spent 42% of the Gross Domestic Product - *excluding off-budget spending*.

Off-budget spending is an increasingly popular gimmick in Washington. It takes care of items such as the \$2 billion Postal Service subsidy, loan defaults and write-offs of \$14 billion and insurance losses (the Savings and Loan bail-out) of \$67 billion in 1989 alone. All such expenses are picked up by the tax payer. According to a recent *Reader's Digest* article, our total liability for off-budget items is \$6 trillion, or \$67,000 for every U.S. household.

Even if we agree, for a moment, that Americans only handed over 39% of their money to the government, we see that many other countries have *lower* levels of taxation. These include Japan, Germany, Switzerland, Britain, Ireland, Italy, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Finland, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Turkey and many other countries that do not appear on the list used by Heilbroner. Notice that the list includes the richest and economically soundest countries in the world - Japan, Germany, Switzerland, etc.

Why did Heilbroner choose *his* list so selectively? Because he deliberately set out to show that Americans are taxed more lightly than others - choosing only countries with a relatively heavy tax burden. This is rather shoddy.

But this isn't the whole story: Heilbroner's (and my foregoing) figures are for 1987 - the *one* and *brief* time in recent history when taxes had finally become a bit less burdensome, thanks to the Reagan tax cuts whose final phase had just gone into effect in 1986. Since then, those tax cuts have been gradually repealed. Both the federal and state governments suffer from chronic deficits and budget shortfalls, and year after year government grasps for additional revenues, as when California just raised taxes by \$7 billion this past summer.

The federal budget for 1992 is *\$1.4 trillion*, up from \$1 trillion in 1987. The annual deficit has ballooned to well over \$350 billion. While I don't have exact figures for current tax receipts, it is safe to assume that they now represent much more than the 39% of GDP which I estimated conservatively a moment ago for 1987 - the best year in recent history. This simply means that we are moving ever higher into the ranks of the most heavily taxed societies.

The correlation between high taxes and economic stagnation is obvious. The most vigorous economies - Japan, Germany, Switzerland, etc - have the lowest tax rates. The recent \$7 billion Wilson tax increase is devastating the California economy. We are failing to come out of the recession because taxes are too high and businesses are fleeing the state, so we'll increase taxes by another \$3 billion next year, when we have another budget shortfall. This is how we kill the golden goose of capitalism through a vicious cycle of ever increasing taxation. Pro-tax liberals never learn from their past mistakes. They now hope to overturn Proposition 13, adding untold billions of taxes to the California economy.

A final myth propagated by the likes of Heilbroner is that military cutbacks are the solution to our economic problems: Once the latest round of cutbacks proposed by President Bush

are in effect, our military budget will represent between 4% and 5% of our Gross National Product, lower than ever since World War Two. Further cutbacks, although surely unwise, are possible. But no one should delude themselves into believing that this would help straighten out the federal budget. Even the abolition of the *entire* military budget would not wipe out our annual deficit!

Of course, when President Kennedy pushed for tax cuts in the 1960s, this was viewed as progressive and enlightened. So why not abandon party politics and guilt by association? Does it matter whether lower taxes are sponsored by Democrats or Republicans, by Reagan, Kennedy or Bush? It doesn't. What matters is that Americans are taxed too heavily and that this is the fundamental source of our sluggish economy. Before wealth can be distributed, it must be *created*, and this is something the government cannot do (*Sacramento Bee*, Nov. 11, 1991).

### 3. The Perils of Clintonomics

*In the spring of 1993, I published the following article in the International Journal on World Peace. In retrospect, I could not have been more wrong, in some ways: It is only Clinton, among the last dozen Presidents, who managed to balance the federal budget and who began to whittle away at the monstrous deficit, doing so by raising taxes, cutting spending (e.g. welfare reform) and maintaining a roaring economy! The 90s - the Clinton presidency - were a golden era! Boy, were my predictions wrong!*

*However: (1) The government benefitted greatly from the Peace Dividend. The end of the Cold War enabled Clinton to slash the military budget. (2) This was the decade of the dot.com boom. The economy was fabulous and tax receipts were abundant. Clinton cannot be given credit for either of these two facts.*

*Subsequently, the economy floundered again and the war on terrorism imposed staggering costs on our country. Of course, the government's deficits were compounded by George W. Bush's tax cuts. On the other hand, the fact that the alternative minimum tax is not indexed for inflation means that all of the Bush tax cuts will soon be wiped out by bracket creep, anyway.*

*Be that as it may, my dire prediction about the government's imminent insolvency remains valid, even though Clinton is not the culprit. See for yourself.*

In 1942, Joseph Schumpeter envisioned the decline of capitalism. President Clinton's economic plans for our country fit neatly into Schumpeter's scenario. The President's February 17 speech was entirely predictable. In order to cut the deficit, he is requesting vast increases in various taxes, without promising significant cuts in spending. A majority of businessmen and economists - not just Rush Limbaugh and other Republicans - agree that this will not solve the deficit problem. It will merely increase federal spending.

It has become clear that neither a Republican nor a Democratic government (I say government, as opposed to administration, to include the Congress) can or will solve the deficit problem. What are the long-term consequences?

1. There is, for all practical purposes, no solution to the deficit problem. We will soon be like Italy, whose government spends 70% of tax receipts on interest payment, and is essentially an agent for the transfer of tax money from the pockets of citizens to the banks and to other creditors (who may also be citizens). Like the Italian government, ours will also gradually move out of the business of being a government, i.e. of providing for the welfare and safety of its citizens.

2. Meanwhile, the perennial attempts to cut the deficit will lead to the further socialization of the economy and to the further decline of free enterprise. There will be periodic tax increases (as there have been every three or four years under all presidents, including Reagan, Bush and Clinton),

which will do increasing damage to the economy and will fail, each time, to reduce the deficit.

3. Like lemmings, a majority of Americans will continue to support the tax increases and the socialization of the economy (as they are doing right now, according to polls by *CNN*, *USA Today* and others), for two reasons: A) Most people will probably never learn that a tax increase means an increase in their own tax, forever believing that it means increasing *the other guy's* taxes. B) A growing proportion of Americans have become socialists; that is, the traditional ethic of self-reliance has been replaced by a dependency mentality. We now believe that it is the government's responsibility to *give us* things. We don't understand that the government has nothing to give, because the government creates nothing.

4. There will be further polarization and class conflict. The poor will continue to believe that socialism will benefit them. For the poor, equality is more important than relative prosperity. They would rather see everyone poor than some making less than others.

5. For the entrepreneurial souls, there will be a ballooning underground economy - as there is in Italy and in such Third World countries as Peru today.

6. Because of the government's increasing impotence and irrelevance, because of its inability to deliver necessary services, and because of the growing polarization and economic inequality, the level of frustration and social conflict will increase. There will be eruptions such as the 1992 Los Angeles riot, the crime rate will continue to soar and crime will at times assume a political and revolutionary character, as in Latin America and elsewhere today. These will be the additional forces that destroy property, wealth and the American standard of living.

In *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, the great Austrian economist Schumpeter foresaw these trends. Both his time-table and his explanations were uncannily on target. Capitalism, Schumpeter said, would be undermined and destroyed not by internal weaknesses and contradictions, as Marx thought, but by non-economic forces, namely a culture and a psychology hostile to business and to free enterprise. The killing of the golden goose by its very beneficiaries!

What makes America's self-destructive behavior tragic is not that it is unique - historically, societal self-destruction is not uncommon, witness all the countries that have opted for fascism, communism, revolution, civil war, etc. No, what makes our economic decline so sad is that we have not been able to learn from the experience of others: Just when the Russians and almost all other Europeans are realizing the bankruptcy of socialism, we increasingly embrace it. Similarly, we fail to recognize that the number one cause of Third World poverty is socialism.

If all this sounds like chicken little, let me hasten to add that I am talking about a protracted process. Societies can hobble along for a very long time. Rome, Spain, Italy, Third-World countries have muddled through for centuries. But there is no doubt that our economy will continue to decline, and that Clintonomics are neither the answer to the deficit problem, nor to poverty and unemployment.

In time, America will make a fresh start. After we have destroyed our wealth, we will, out of sheer necessity, return to a cultural environment like that in, say, 1800. Having grown used to a lower standard of living, to hard work for little money and to harsher overall conditions, we might once again praise such virtues as courage, self-reliance, risk, austerity, strength and the work ethic. I have no idea what kind of technology we will have in hundred years from now. But culturally and morally, we will surely go back to square one, and we will do so only after the present house of cards collapses (*International Journal on World*, Spring 1993).

## 18. THE ECONOMY: OTHER RELATED ISSUES

### 1. Honey, I Shrunk the Dollar

*As a result of our dual deficit - the government's, and the trade imbalance - the dollar keeps losing ground year after year. For example, by 2007 the Euro was worth \$1.33 and the British pound was worth \$2.05. On February 24, 2005, the well-known syndicated columnist Thomas Friedman wrote an article about this, which included the following passages:*

*"The dollar is falling! The dollar is falling! But the Bush team has basically told the world that... it is not going to raise taxes, cut spending or reduce oil consumption in ways that could really shrink our budget and trade deficits and reverse the dollar's slide...."*

*The global markets are realizing that we have two major vulnerabilities that this administration doesn't want to address: We are importing too much oil, so the dollar's strength is being sapped as oil prices continue to rise. And we are importing too much capital, because we are saving too little and spending too much, as both a society and a government. There is no energy policy and no real effort to reduce our voracious demand of foreign capital. The U.S. pulled in 80 percent of total world savings last year [largely to finance our consumption]. That's a big reason why some 43 percent of all U.S. Treasury bills, notes and bonds are now held by foreigners...*

*Our country... is refusing to raise taxes, and the administration is talking about borrowing an additional \$2 trillion. The country lives on borrowed time, borrowed money and borrowed energy."*

*This led me to send the following comment to a friend:*

Don,

I totally agree with this Thomas Friedman column. I have long maintained that the fall of the dollar is disastrous for Americans - not just for those of us who go to Europe a lot and notice it first hand, but for everyone, in the long run. No country has maintained its wealth and power while its currency was becoming worthless. When Britain was on top, the Pound Sterling was the envy of the world, and so was it with America and the dollar in the fifties. I have heard the worn-out argument a million times, that a lower dollar is good for our exports. By this logic, we should be real happy when the dollar becomes like the Peso, or the Indian Rupee, or the Hungarian Forint. Thomas Friedman is always right.

Tom

## 2. High Gas Prices Hurt America every bit as much as they hurt Europe and Asia

*Some people still refuse to accept the gravity of our dependence on foreign oil. On May 7, 2006, an article in the Sacramento Bee claimed that Americans are still relatively better off than Europeans and Asians, who pay twice as much as we for gas. A few days later, I printed the following rebuttal to that argument in the Bee:*

In your Forum article "Mixed Signals Confuse Economists" published on May 7, 2006, Paul Adams states, as others also often do, that at \$3.15 or \$3.50 a gallon we are still doing a lot better than the Europeans and the Asians, who pay up to \$5.50 or \$6.00.

This is misleading. Consider the following: (1) Out of the \$6.00 Europeans pay for a gallon of gas, the portion made up of government tax is much higher than it is here. In return for that, they get a far better infrastructure, public transportation system and other services. (2) They drive fewer cars (Americans own about one car per capita, Europeans and Japanese only about one for every two people), their cars are smaller, and they drive fewer miles. Therefore, they spend a much smaller part of their income on gas than we do. Don't be mistaken about it: Americans are being

gouged by the oil companies and by the oil exporting nations more than anyone else. The energy crisis is hitting us harder than anyone else (*Sacramento Bee*, May 2006).

### 3. How do the First, Second and Third World Stack up?

*And then, there is always the matter of the worldwide distribution of wealth. Here is a very informative article I wrote about that in May, 1983. I believe that it was published either in the Sacramento Bee or in the International Journal on World Peace, I forget. Note that, while the population and economic numbers have changed since then, the proportions probably haven't.*

The last weekend in May was the annual seven-nation economic summit meeting. As has been the practice over the last three years, the President of the United States met again with his counterparts from Japan, Canada, France, West Germany, the United Kingdom and Italy. This year's meeting was held in Williamsburg, Virginia.

The Williamsburg summit meeting has been hyped up for weeks in the media. According to many pundits, it may have ritual significance, but it is economically and politically irrelevant. Be that as it may, since most of us were not permitted to escape this bit of dubiously important news, I began to let my mind meander over the countries involved and their relative economic importance in the world. As always, I reached for the statistics books to nail down some hard facts. What exactly are the economic size and power of these Big Seven? How do they compare with the other blocks of the world? A few hours of research produced some straight-forward information that may be of interest to the readers. What follows is a timely economic comparison of the major areas of the world, using 1980 figures (give or take one year in either direction).

The world is conventionally divided into three parts, the First World, the Second World and the Third World. The First World refers essentially to the West, i.e. North America, Western and Central Europe, Japan and some outlying countries such as Australia and New Zealand. This is more or less synonymous with the Free World, the Capitalist World, the wealthiest and most advanced part of the world. Just how prosperous are we, in contrast to the Second and Third Worlds?

One indication is to look at the joint GNP (Gross National Products) of the Big Seven that just met at Williamsburg: Together, the U.S., Japan, Canada, France, West Germany, the United Kingdom and Italy had, in 1980, a GNP of 4.6 trillion dollars. Since the world's total GNP was roughly 10.6 trillion, the Big Seven jointly accounted for 47% of the world's total.

Now let us add to the Big Seven the "rest of the west," i.e. the remaining 14 Western democracies (Scandinavia, Australia, Benelux, etc). Their joint GNP was approximately 1.1 trillion. Thus altogether the Western world's (the "First World's") economy makes up \$5.7 trillion out of the world's total economy of \$10.6 trillion, or 54%.

This is remarkable, in view of the fact that the West's population only makes up 16% of that of the world, namely 719 million out of 4.6 billion. Consider this: In 1980 the world's annual per capita income was \$2,314. That of the West was \$7,943.

The U.S., by the way, had 225 million people, and a GNP of \$2.12 trillion. This means that Americans only made up 4.9% of the world's population, but 20% of its GNP, for an annual per capita income of \$9,413.

The question uppermost in many people's mind is of course how this compares with the

other super-power - the Soviet Union. Or a related question: How does the West's aggregate economy compare with that of the Eastern Block -- the so-called Second World. The Second World consists of the seven Warsaw Pact countries: the USSR plus its six Eastern European satellites, namely Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria. The Second World is not quite to be equated with the Communist World, as that block also includes many Third World countries such as China and Cuba, plus some independent communist states such as Yugoslavia and Albania.

So let us just look at the seven Warsaw countries: Together, they have a population of 404 million and a GNP of \$1.6 trillion. This translates to 9% of the world's population, 16% of its total economy, and an annual per capita income of \$4,064. Thus we see that the Western world's per capita income is approximately twice as high as that of the Second World, and that our aggregate economies are three and a half times larger than theirs.

As to the Soviet Union itself, it had in 1980 a population of 268 million (6% of the world's) and a GNP of 1.26 trillion (12% of the world's and slightly over half that of the United States). Its per capita income was \$4,700, or less than half that of the U.S.

While the Soviet block appears poor compared to the West, it is far better off than the Third World. The Third World consists of essentially all the remaining parts of the Globe, mostly to be found in Africa, Latin America and Asia. It comprises three and a half billion people, or 75% of the world's total. However, its combined economy amounts only to \$3.2 trillion, or 30% of that of the world. Put differently, the 3.5 billion people of the Third World live on only slightly more annual income than do 225 million Americans.

The contrast is most visible in our own backyard: North America has 250 million people and an economy of \$2.3 trillion, or a per capita income of \$9,400. Latin America, on the other hand, has 362 million people and a GNP of \$478 billion, which translates to \$1,300 per capita.

Let us examine some of the currently topical parts of Latin America: There are some very large countries, for example, Brazil and Mexico. Brazil has 125 million people, but a GNP lower than Canada's or California's. Its per capita income is \$1,496. Our neighbor Mexico is just as poor, with 70 million people and a per capita income of \$1,157. And, of course, such averages do not reveal the great internal inequalities in those countries.

Then there are those trouble spots -- El Salvador, Nicaragua. El Salvador's 5 million people have a per capita income of about \$1,200. Nicaragua's standard of living is even lower. And most noteworthy is Nicaragua's population: two million, i.e. equal to that of Baltimore. The country appears to be more of a mouse than a lion.

Thus, a look at some simple statistics puts things in perspective. Fundamentally, the world's economic map consists of three parts. The First World, while only making up 16% of the population, is overwhelmingly dominant, with 54% of the wealth. The Second World makes up only 9% of the population and 16% of the wealth. Finally there is the Third World, with a teeming 75% of the people, but only 30% of the income.

These are the facts, summed up in Table I. It is up to you to interpret them. It is true that the profound inequities in the world's living standards are intolerable. They threaten to engulf us all in war, chaos, revolution. However, it is important to understand the proper role of the West in this matter.

I, for one, find it useful to distinguish between fault and responsibility. The vulgar cliché attributing the Third World's poverty to American exploitation is a fallacy. There is simply no

evidence of that. In fact, whatever economic development has occurred in the Third World is largely due to Western capital. Without it, the Third World would be even worse off than it already is. And certainly the Socialist model for economic development has proven to be totally bankrupt, witness the ever larger gap between the First and Second Worlds.

But this is not to say that the West should turn its back on the misery of the tropics. While that misery is not our fault, it is our responsibility. It is the duty of civilized men to care for their fellow human beings. We must be good Samaritans; we must be our brothers' keepers. Are we not all Christians in that basic sense? (*Sacramento Bee*, May 1983).

Table I: World Population and Income, 1980

	Population	GDP	Per Capita Income	% of World Population	% of World Economy
World	4.577 billion	10.59 trillion	\$2,314		
US	225 million	2.12 trillion	\$9,413	4.9%	20%
USSR	268	1.26 trillion	\$4,688	5.9%	11.9%
Western World(First World)	719 million	5.711 trillion	\$7,943	16%	54%
Warsaw Pact(Second World)	404 million	1.642 trillion	\$4,064	8.8%	16%
Third World	3.454 billion	3.237 trillion	\$937	75.2%	30%

#### 4. Ultimately, it is the Culture which Matters, not the Economic System

*So the eternal economic question is: why are there haves and why are there have-nots in the world? This is the question which was posed and answered so brilliantly by Jared Diamond in Guns, Germs and Steel in 1997. Diamond's entire work is an effort to answer the question which*

*his New Guinean assistant asked: Why do Westerners have so much cargo?*

*In the previous dozen essays, I have straddled the Right-Left fence. That is, I have asked what economic system is best - Capitalism, Socialism, a mixed system? Here, finally, in a brief statement jotted down in 2006, I suggest a totally different possibility.*

Long before Adam Smith and Karl Marx, other social philosophers had already begun to ask the basic question of inequality - why do some societies thrive while other ones languish? Since Smith and Marx, most of the answers to this question have been political: The general assumption has been that the wealth of nations is determined by their economic systems. The only issue being forever debated is: which economic system works best? Is it Socialism? Is it the Free Enterprise system? Is it a mixed economy? There are some recent exceptions to this - for example Jared Diamond and Thomas Sowell. These authors' contributions are refreshing, because they do not fit into the dichotomous Socialism-vs-Capitalism debate.

Similarly, I am beginning to feel that this debate misses the point: In the end, it is perhaps not so important whether a country is run socialistically, capitalistically, in a mixed way, or otherwise. Maybe what really matters is the mental and moral fiber of the people, in other words their *culture*. The culture is the collective mind of a people. If it is sound, then the society will thrive, whether its economy is highly or not very highly socialized.

Here are a few examples of the cultural habits which I have in mind: A vigorous work ethic, a reasonable deferred gratification pattern, rationality, punctuality, a modern attitude, honesty, a natural aversion to corruption, a belief that contracts are binding, a sober and Apollonian temperament rather than a Dionysian one, a willingness to use violence only as a last resort, a low emphasis upon honor. Yes, much of this is associated with the middle class.

When we look at places around the world which are doing well, we see a prevalence of such cultural traits. Think of Scandinavia for example. Or Canada, as opposed to Mexico. Or within the United States, New England and the upper Midwest, as opposed to the Deep South. On the other hand, take Russia: Its Communist experiment was a fiasco, and now it flounders under extreme "Capitalism."

Or take Columbia and other Latin American countries: They have been ruled by right-wing dictators like Peron and Pinochet, military juntas, communist dictators like Castro, capitalists, you name it. No matter the regime, many of those countries continue to flounder. Could it be that their real problem, as Russia's, is a dysfunctional culture and psychology? That such countries will *always* be a mess, as long as they do not adopt the attitudes I have suggested?

So in the end, it may not matter very much whether a state is Democratic or Republican, and whether a country is ruled by a socialist government or a capitalist one. What matters is whether the people are solid or not. That is, whether their "collective consciousness" - in Durkheim's sense - is sound or not. If it is, then things will go well. If it isn't, no amount of social engineering will help.

You may think that these ideas are racist and chauvinistic. Far from it. While it is difficult to change a culture, it is not impossible. People can be educated. There is nothing inherent in any group's nature which makes it incapable of learning the attitudes necessary for success.

## 19. TAKING ON THE LEFT: POLITICAL CORRECTNESS

### 1. New Fascism's Pernicious Power

*If there is one political label I am prepared to accept, it is libertarian. As you may already*

have noted, I despise political correctness. This is because I hate group think, and political correctness is a virulent form of group think. And because political correctness is so strongly associated with the liberal, left-of-center party line, I have often been accused of conservatism. Whatever.

*I published my first shot across the bow of the Left in the Sacramento State Hornet on May 24, 1974. That is when hostilities between my university colleagues and me started, and they have never abated since then. I dared to question the party line, and I was never forgiven. The following piece is, granted, hot-headed, but what can I say? I was angry...*

This has been a rough semester (semesters tend to become rougher as we move along). Student-teacher relations have been abrasive, particularly for one who has expressed opinionated unliberated attitudes in his lectures. I have been harassed by students, both my own and unsolicited visitors, trouble-makers possibly steered to my classes by radical hearsay from radical colleagues. Colleagues have been hostile or indifferent. Let's face it, the vociferous spokesmen of the new radical dogma have reduced academe to an environment as totalitarian and intolerant as the most bigoted Old Southern community. Consider the sad fact that many a reader will make an issue in *its* (!) mind of the fact that I use the word spokesmen rather than spokespersons! The liberation bandwagon has been jumped on by all those militants, know-nothings and nihilists for whom the term is merely a rationalization for laziness, indolence, ignorance, hostility and violence. I call this the new fascism.

Rarely, this semester, have I been able to conclude one full lecture without offensive interruptions, mindless accusations of racism and sexism by people who should know better, nihilistic rejection of facts and theories, a priori rejection of knowledge itself.

The new fascism is found everywhere, regardless of race, creed, color or sex. It cloaks itself in the rhetoric of feminism, socialism and third-world liberation, thus seducing many (young) women and ethnics, but it also counts many white males among its adherents, both among students and the faculty. In fact, it has no social vision whatsoever, unless that of a monstrous society based on anarchy, greed, illiteracy and ignorance. It thrives, as the famous sociologist Robert Nisbet showed, because of a nemesis of authority. It is a minority that is permitted to exert its pernicious power because it, like the Hitler youth and Mussolini's balilas, scares the majority of decent people into silence and apathy. It is slowly taking over the campus community, poisoning the learning process and in the end destroying the society, destroying everything and building nothing (Sacramento State Hornet, May 24, 1974).

## 2. Arthur Schlesinger is Wrong: The Nature of Government is to Oppress

*On June 2, 1981, I sent the following letter to the Wall Street Journal, criticizing the famous historian Arthur Schlesinger. They didn't publish it. Note the strong libertarianism.*

In his June 2 critique of neo-conservatism, Arthur Schlesinger writes that contemporary neo-conservatives are "sworn to the proposition that government is the root of all evil." Since the eminent historian chooses to thus simplify the issue, an equally simplistic counterpoint may be in order:

In all human history, the overwhelming majority of governments have functioned first and foremost to exploit and oppress their subjects rather than as benevolent redistributors of wealth and guardians of justice. That was the case under the Pharaohs, most Roman Emperors, Aztec Kings, and that is the way in Russia and in most of the world today. Yet American liberals are confident

that for some reason the US government is an exception to this rule. Why?

While there are differences of degree, the natural tendency of government is to be unresponsive, oppressive and exploitative. That is in the nature of things, as the Founding Fathers - better historians than Schlesinger - knew.

### 3. In the Newspeak of our Age, Good is Bad and Bad is Good

*The following essay is a book review of Entropy: A New World View, by Jeremy Rifkin with Ted Howard, and The Third Wave, by Alvin Toffler. I wrote it on November 16, 1981, shortly after those best-selling works in Pop Sociology came out. I strongly lambast both books. Upon re-reading several decades later, I now find myself in much greater agreement with some of the policies (no-growth, "small-is-beautiful," etc.) advocated by these authors. However, I maintain my earlier point that they are taking unwarranted cheap shots at Western Civilization, and that they are unduly imposing their social values upon us. All in all, still a pretty good review. It was rejected by the mainstream media, no doubt because it threatened political correctness. I also submitted it to the conservative weekly Human Events, but nothing came of that, either.*

Topics like ecology and alternative lifestyles have been a bandwagon for over a decade. People advocating solar energy or communal living can hardly be classified as avant-garde any more. Indeed, books like Alvin Toffler's *Future Shock*, Charles Reich's *The Greening of America*, Tom Wolfe's *Electric Kool-aid Acid Test* or Marshall McLuhan's *The Medium is the Message* now appear faded, as does the entire counterculture of the 1960s to which they belong. Nothing becomes as hopelessly passé as yesterday's fad.

Nevertheless, such pop sociology retains widespread appeal in a liberated, anti-nuclear and anti-nuclear--family society. Recent examples of the genre include *Entropy: A New World View* (Bantam Books, 302pp.) and *The Third Wave* (Bantam Books, 531 pp.). What we have here is a persisting fad, and authors like Toffler are singularly adept at exploiting it.

A joint review of these two books seems a good idea, because they have so much in common. Both boldly proclaim an new and superior world view which must eventually replace industrial civilization. Jeremy Rifkin's *Entropy* (co-authored by Ted Howard) argues that mankind abandon its belief in economic growth, the use of fossil fuels, corporate capitalism, specialized education, etc., and move on to a new order (small is beautiful, zero population growth, solar energy, more equitable distribution of wealth, more grass-roots democracy, etc.).

Why is the book titled "Entropy"? The *Law of Entropy* is the Second Law of Thermodynamics. It states that energy can only be dissipated, never created out of thin air. In the end, the universe will be in a state of total degradation, death, i.e. entropy. Using physics in a roundabout way, Rifkin and Howard simply tell us that there is no free lunch.

Toffler's *The Third Wave* is also a plea for a new civilization, to be built out of the ashes of our current social system. The First Wave was agricultural civilization; the Second Wave is industrial civilization; the Third Wave is the new world view and society advocated by Toffler. This new civilization will rely more on solar energy, people will work more at home and less in the factory, the nuclear family will no longer be dominant, minorities will have more power, businesses will be less motivated by profit, etc.

The two books share many parallels. Both are a mixture of pop sociology and pop science. Both advocate the same fashionable things - from solar energy to non-reproductive sex, from small cars to small businesses. Both books are retreads in new packaging. *Entropy* says nothing that the Club of Rome's *Limits to Growth* or Paul Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb* did not say long ago. The

*Third Wave* employs the very same scheme used by Reich in *The Greening of America* (Substitute First Wave for Consciousness One, Second Wave for Consciousness Two, etc.).

The formula is predictable. One can fill in the blanks: America is invariably singled out as the chief culprit in the exhaustion of world supplies. This is done through obsolete statistics, as when the authors of *Entropy* still claim that we consume one third of the world's energy and thus are the equivalent of 22 billion Chinese or Indians. In fact, we are closer to one fifth and fading fast. Our per capita GNP and energy consumption is already exceeded by half a dozen countries and equaled by a dozen more. No other industrial nation has been more successful in curtailing its appetite for energy, its birthrate and its standard of living than the US over the past decade. Although Americans have lost more ground in recent years than Europeans, Japanese, Arabs and many others relative to their prior standard of living, we remain the whipping boy of people like Rifkin and Howard.

The authors' other predictable scapegoats include large corporations (Rifkin and Howard), the nuclear family (Toffler), nuclear energy, and the following list of bad guys: Francis Bacon, Rene Descartes, John Locke, Adam Smith, Isaac Newton and Jacques Turgot. These are the great 17th and 18th century rationalists who formulated our basic ideas of progress through science, technology and specialization. In the revisionism of authors like Toffler, Rifkin and Howard, this great heritage now becomes a liability.

Liberals like Toffler and Rifkin are singularly dogmatic. In their view there is only one right way - their way. Toffler writes that "millions are already attuning their lives to the rhythms of tomorrow. Others... are engaged in a desperate, futile (attempt) to restore the dying world that gave them birth." Rifkin and Howard state that there are only three kinds of people, those who "will continue to uphold the existing world paradigm (, those who) will be without a world view (and those who) will be the harbingers of the new age." They add that those who insist that "attempts to apply (the entropy process) more broadly to society is to engage in the use of metaphor ...are quite simply wrong."

In the final analysis, the greatest disservice done by such works lies in their rejection of the notion of progress. . The modern doomsday prophets, with sleight of hand, tell us that we must turn our back on the spirit of the European Renaissance, the Declaration of Independence and other foundations of modern western civilization.

There is something terribly shallow about such books. People like Toffler and Rifkin a deplorable sense of history. Perhaps a young society like America produces many such individuals. Thus, Toffler argues for the "revolutionary premise," rejecting the notion that past, present and future are continuous. Rifkin and Howard assume that the laws of physics provide the key to social problems. From the correct premise that the earth is running low on fossil fuels, they draw the incorrect conclusion that we must abandon our belief in progress through science and technology.

It is not clear whether the earth's material resources are approaching depletion. It is not clear whether we are in this respect closer to dawn or nearer to dusk. Certainly the law of entropy applies in its generality to the universe, and in that sense we still have some time left - 4 to 40 billion years, depending on which theory of the universe one subscribes to. One can also point to the possibility of the exploitation of extra-terrestrial mineral resources and the quantum **leap in energy** made possible by nuclear power (invariably the black sheep in the energy family).

But let us grant these authors the need for population control and wiser energy utilization. Must we then also follow them into their sociological and philosophical forays? I think not. People like Toffler and Rifkin play on the rampant anxieties of our age - an apocalyptic mentality that sees doom and gloom everywhere, be it nuclear Armageddon, ecological collapse, moral decay or some other imminent disaster. To be sure, there is a thin disguise of optimism wrapped around these books. Toffler and Rifkin try to make virtues out of vices. For example, if more and more people

get divorces or become homosexual, it may all be for the better, signifying greater tolerance, diversity and freedom; if we ride bicycles to work instead of cars, it is healthier and better for the environment anyway; etc.

Insofar as these books are part of the ritualistic restatement of a necessary cultural corrective - consume, reproduce and use the earth more wisely - they perform a useful function. That point, however, does not require 3 or 6 hundred pages. As literary works, these books are worthless; all package and banal content. And what is definitely not required is the wholesale accompanying rejection of core Western values. Insofar as these authors urge their readers to abandon the most profound verities for which Western society has stood, they may give temporary relief to those among **us** who have not lived by those verities - absolving us of sin and guilt perhaps - but their ultimate impact is psychologically and sociologically destructive. We are, for better or worse, Western Civilization. To tell us that what we have accomplished over the past 3 or 4 hundred years has been misguided and evil profoundly undermines and disorients us. Like the Romans, we have no choice but to carry on. We must, in an enlightened fashion, remain true to ourselves. Like in Rome, a growing segment of elite opinion leaders are losing their nerves. Nothing explains better the fall of Rome than a failure of nerves. Insofar as these authors contribute to the same process today, they are part of the problem, not the solution.

#### 4. Vive la Difference

*One of the tenets of political correctness is that, while it prays at the altar of diversity, it simultaneously denies that there are major differences between people - or if there are any, they must be eradicated.*

*So here is what I said about that in January 1982, in oppositional defiance of it:*

The French political philosopher Georges Sorel noted the important role played by *myths* in molding and guiding societies. To the cynic, Sorel's discovery could be that history has been a blind succession of one collective error after another (Didn't Hemingway define history as "one damn thing after another"? Or maybe it was Henry Miller...)

At any rate, the guiding myth of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has been *equality*. How can one be against democracy? Equality is modern man's gospel - more sacred than religion and certainly more so than life. On that score, there is no disagreement between the Socialist World, the Western World and the Third World. And it is also in the name of equality that the largest number of people have been killed. Almost all crimes against humanity - from World Wars to revolutions, from dictatorships to individual acts of terrorism - have been carried out in the name of equality, most so in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

\* \* \* \* \*

In America, egalitarianism takes on more benign forms. For instance, there is grade inflation, which threatens to make a straight-A student out of everyone. The NFL strives to establish parity, so that two of last year's worst teams are Super Bowl contenders this year. There are no more Indians, only Chiefs. Everyone is a beautiful person. As Garrison Keillor says on his Radio show *Prairie Home Companion*, all children are above average.

All children must be admitted to the GATE program. No youngster must fail. (Failure and criticism hurt the self-esteem).

In sports, new games must replace the old competitive contests. For example, the object of a

game of basketball must be to achieve the maximum *collective* score by the two teams *combined*. This way, everyone is a winner. There are no more losers. Everyone gets first prize.

Men and women must become similar, androgynous. Old people and young people, too. An octogenarian is one of the “boys,” wearing shorts.

At the U.N. the Seychelles and Grenada, with populations of a few thousand, have one vote, just like China and India, with over a billion.

The working class must pick up golf and bridge, and the upper class must learn to bowl.

\* \* \* \* \*

Contrast this with the outlook of some Eastern philosophies. Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism, Confucianism and Zen have a different scheme: According to those perspectives, everything in the cosmos has its right place. Everything is as it should be. Hierarchy is part of the natural order. Do not strive to be what you are not. The ditch digger’s contribution is as vital as the kings’s. Every leaf of grass is important in the overall design.

### 5. Who Deserves the Most Love?

*On September 1, 1994, I playfully put together the following list. It is a politically correct ranking of things and people in terms of their rights, their importance and their moral value. In other words, according to the politically correct culture, who should we love the most, and who should we love the least?*

*Re-reading this years later: I still think that it is witty and that it makes a point. What point? Well, the knee-jerk categorizations and predispositions of many liberals, that is the point. Are they right in terms of the implied policies? In many ways, yes. I agree with them that the devastation of plant and animal life is a genuine threat and that racism and xenophobia persist. I am also pro-choice. But liberals are often on a very aggravating autopilot, and they are as biased as conservatives are. That is what the list makes fun of.*

1. Trees are the most important. They must be loved and saved above all else.
2. Animals are next. If you must choose between human needs and animal needs, animals come first. Animals cannot be evil. Humans often are. Within the animal kingdom, the sub-rankings are as follows:
  1. Endangered species, e.g. the spotted owl, the snail darter.
  2. Some species deserve special love, for example dolphins and whales.
  3. All other animals, including dogs, cat, other pets, even rats deserve love.
  4. Humans deserve the least amount of love.
3. Among humans, categories which need special compassion and protection include:
  1. The homeless. For example, they must never be kept out of public libraries
  2. Lesbians
  3. Male homosexuals
  4. Other women also deserve some love, but less.
  5. Heterosexual men deserve the least amount of love and protection.
4. Ethnic Categories: Here, the ranking is somewhat inversely related to the group’s economic advantage, although not perfectly so:

1. Blacks deserve our greatest compassion. Because of the double victimization of race and gender, black women are on the very top of the list, ahead of black males. Never mind to the politically correct crowd that black males are far worse off than black females.

2. Black children

3. Black men

4. American Indians (similarly subdivided as blacks - men *of all groups* deserve less love than women.

5. Hispanics (same as blacks and Native Americans)

6. Asian-Americans. (same). Here is another problem for the P.C. people: Several Asian-American groups are now better off than whites (for example Japanese-Americans). Also, in black-vs.-Korean confrontations like in the 1992 Los Angeles riot, the Koreans were seen as the exploiters and the blacks as the exploited. So both groups are vying for the position of victim, and this must drive the politically correct crowd crazy!

7. Jews. This, again, is a thorny issue for the Left: Anti-Semitism is something that Jews can milk for a while longer. Fortunately, most of the sane world is not yet ready to deny the Holocaust. However, the forces of anti-Zionism are powerful. These forces are trying to separate anti-Semitism from anti-Zionism. This makes it possible to say "I am not against Jews, I'm just against Israel." At any rate, while many people hate Jews, there are still many people for whom they remain a preferred category.

8. Foreigners are good, too, and we must love them all, especially if they are from a Third World country. To the politically correct, foreigners are better than Americans. I have found that being a foreigner is often advantageous to me. For example, when I express conservative views and people think that I am an American, they hate me much more than when they find out that I am not. Once they find out that I am a foreigner, they forgive my conservativeness and attribute it to cultural handicap.

Best of all of course, is to be a foreigner from a Third World Country. Such a person can do no wrong, no matter what inane medieval sexist, homophobic, fundamentalist religious ideas he/she spouts off. He/she can express cultural superstitions and beliefs which are more misogynist, more homophobic and more racist than those of the KKK, and yet the politically correct American egghead bows his head in deep respect for such a person's "native culture."

9. Europeans are not as good as foreigners of color. However, they are better than Americans, especially such nationalities as the Scandinavians and the Dutch, because those countries are very liberal and very socialistic. They accept many different forms of sex, they legalize drugs, they hate guns, etc.

10. All other Anglo women. They also deserve a lot of love, because they have been discriminated in the past.

11. All Anglo children: They deserve a little bit of love.

12. Adult, heterosexual Anglo men: They do not deserve any love at all...

13. ... and neither do unborn babies.

## 6. A Nation of Victims

*The list, above, is related to the "victimization syndrome." Because of political correctness and the influence of trial lawyers, the list of victims keeps growing. In fact, just about any group can now claim victimhood. In the 1990s, I gave speeches to local groups in which I deplored this trend. Also, the Sacramento Union published an interview with me about this subject on August 8, 1993. Here are some of the things I said, plus a few revisions made in 2007.*

First, let me give you some information about myself which might shed light on my perspective about the victimization syndrome: I was born in Budapest during World War Two, while the bombs were pulverizing our city. I spent the next seventeen years trekking across Europe as a refugee, raised by a single mother whom I rarely saw. As a teenager, I hopped on an old World War Two Liberty ship and moved to America - with \$25 in my pocket and not knowing a soul in the New World. My first night in New York, I slept on a bench in Central Park. Somehow, I ended up with a Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota, I became a university professor and my lifestyle now includes, among other things, taking my wife and my children to Europe and to Hawaii every year. So I know something about victimhood, and about pulling yourself up by your bootstraps. I am politically very *incorrect*.

When I came to America, President Kennedy was running for President. This country towered above the rest of the world like a benevolent giant. At great cost to itself, it had rebuilt its former enemies. Never before in history had a victorious power spent lavishly to rebuild the economy of its former foes. The pattern had always been the opposite - *to the victors belong the spoils*.

The American people were intelligent, self-confident, strong, brave, generous and unprejudiced. During my first year in this country, my abject poverty forced me to hitch-hike a lot. Sometimes I paired up with a dark-skinned Algerian friend by the name of Ahmed.. We experienced fabulous kindness and hospitality, not racism and prejudice. Texas ranchers not only gave us rides, but they also took us to their homes and offered us dinner and overnight accommodation - repeatedly. New Jersey cops drove us to a motel and paid for our room and for our meals - out of their own pockets. I could tell you many other such stories.

\* \* \* \* \*

Three decades later, things have changed. Today, practically everyone feels that he is a victim. Petty jealousy and envy rule. They are becoming part of our national character. We are encouraged to use any reason whatsoever to sue the other guy.

A few days ago, some high-school kids were teasing a Mormon girl by asking her whether she had ten mothers, haha (you know, Mormons are supposed to be polygamous). Upset, the poor girl replied, "that's so *gay*!" As you know, the word "gay" now means "homosexual," but teenagers also use it generically in reference to anything they don't like. In the mind of most teenagers, the two meanings of the word are entirely unrelated. Nevertheless, guess what happened? The Mormon girl got suspended from school! Of course, her parents are suing the school. And now, the Gay Alliance is countersuing. The girl's intolerable transgression was to use the word "gay" in a denigrating sense, even though the teenage use of that word has absolutely nothing to do with homosexuality. Notice also the politically correct double standard. It is okay to harass a Mormon and to insinuate that her parents are polygamous.

\* \* \* \* \*

So what has happened? Are Americans worse off now than they were when I came to this country? Of course not. Everyone is *vastly* better off, including blacks, single women, gays, and all the other groups which were at the forefront of the victimization revolution. What has happened is called a *cultural revolution*. The 1960s began with a *Civil Rights Movement*. The first "-ism" which progressive Americans took on was *racism*. This was a worthy cause by any objective standard, no doubt about it.

Then came the second "-ism," *feminism* (or let's say, "*sexism*," to be consistent and to name

the disease, not the cure). This movement was modeled after the Civil Rights Movement. Then, additional “-isms” began to mushroom: *Agism* (age discrimination), *Speciesm* (cruelty to animals), *classism* (social class discrimination), *heterosexism* (discrimination against gays), etc. The list goes on: The generic category of “racism” can be subdivided into a myriad sub-categories. In addition to the groups which have suffered from obvious and true discrimination - African-Americans, Native Americans and Hispanics - other groups which also claim victim status include Japanese-Americans (victims of World War Two internment), Jews (victims of Anti-Semitism), Italian-Americans (victims of stereotyping in the movies of Francis Ford Coppola and Martin Scorsese), plus just about any other ethnic group, and anyone born in a foreign country.

University departments of Ethnic Studies, Women’s Studies, Gender Studies and Sociology, and the textbooks used by those instructors (see for example the book *Social Interaction*, Candace Clark and Howard Robboy, eds., St. Martin Press), devote themselves to the study of such additional discriminated groups as the *overweight*, *college students*, *divorced people*, *alcoholics*, *night workers*, the *physically ill* (especially those who suffer from AIDS), the *mentally ill*, *lower-class whites*, *teenagers*, and *housewives*.

There remain two or three unprotected categories: Middle-class, white, heterosexual males, of course. Plus religious people - no, I should say Christians. Among people of faith, Muslims, Jews and other denominations are protected, because they have succeeded in negotiating victim status for themselves. Thus, only Christians remain unprotected. Christians cannot be victims.

\* \* \* \* \*

When I discuss this subject with my students, I tell them this: You people are in big trouble. You know why? Because you are in danger of *succeeding*. If you get a B.A. in the next couple of years and a fine job shortly thereafter, you may lose the right to call yourself a victim and to cash in on the compassion (and the pity) of the media and of those who are politically correct. You Asians, I say (a very large proportion of my students are Asian-Americans), are especially at risk. Your per capita income is already higher than that of whites. Soon you will be seen as the oppressor. Same with Jews.

As to me, I add jokingly, I am okay: Even though I make good money, I am in a pretty low category - Hungarian-born Jewish immigrant refugee. I even have a foreign accent. I’m safe. I’ll always be seen as a victim. Plus remember - when I was your age, I walked ten miles in the snow every day. Me and my sisters, we only ate once a week, and even when we ate, we only ate water.

Am I trivializing the suffering of minorities, the poor, and others who are not treated fairly by American society? Not at all. For one thing, I am only poking fun at my own background, even though I can, in truth, outvictimize just about anybody: When I was a kid during and shortly after World War Two, my mother and her children traveled *on the roofs* of railroad cars, we slept on the floor of railroad stations, I didn’t know what an orange was until I was 12, we didn’t own a radio until I was 16, I saw my aunt blown to pieces as she stepped on a landmine, I was buggered by a Greek orthodox priest, you name it. So yes, my suffering trumps your suffering, if you insist on comparing.

\* \* \* \* \*

But my point is a different one. My point is that the whining has to stop. People have to stop seeing themselves as victims. They have to take responsibility for themselves. The decline in individual responsibility, the sense of general entitlement and the litigation explosion are killing

society. They are undermining the work ethic and business productivity, they are raising the cost of medicine exorbitantly, they contribute to street crime and to white collar crime. Worst of all, they are changing the American national character from the noble self-reliant individualist who made this country great to a whiner and chiseler who expects a free lunch.

However, let me end on a positive note: The old-fashioned ethos is still deeply ingrained in the American character. Furthermore, the millions of immigrants who remain this country's lifeblood also share that mentality. It is primarily the effete elite which preaches the politics of victimization - the media, the lawyers, the professors, the highly paid public employees. They haven't won yet, and it is not clear that they ever will, because the people have healthy instincts (*Sacramento Union*, Aug. 8, 1993).

### 7. The Popularity of Politicians: Flavor of the Month

*There is a certain regularity with which a sudden new-comer to the American political scene becomes extremely popular, becomes the media's darling baby. Because the media are by and large politically correct, these new kids on the block often belong to a minority. That is what is so refreshing about them, and why they become so popular, at least temporarily. In 1995, it was Colin Powell with whom the media had a love affair. In 2007, it was Barack Obama. Irritated by the irrationality of this phenomenon, I jotted down my thoughts about this in September 1995, and I updated them in February 2007.*

At the risk of been called a racist, I must question the sudden love affair between Colin Powell and the national media. It's not that I have anything against the general. I'm sure he is a fine and upstanding gentleman, and a competent head of the joint chiefs of staff. However, I fail to understand why everyone is so enamored with him and why so many people - both Democrats and Republicans - view him as Presidential potential. What has he done or said that qualifies him more for the ultimate job than, say, his immediate successor, John Shalikasvili, or anyone among many others?

Recently Jay Leno - who typifies so much the group think of our culture, always treading a safe, politically correct but not too liberal line - was contrasting this allegedly "excellent man" and "that idiot

Sony Bono," whom Leno called a "clown who wants to play politics." There is no evidence that Powell would make a better president than "clown" Sony Bono, or Jay Leno himself, or David Letterman, or another hundred thousand Americans.

Twenty years later, it's Senator Barack Obama's turn to benefit in a similar way. The media view his presidential candidacy with the greatest enthusiasm. So far, he can do no wrong. Again, as far as I am concerned, the man seems fine. He is handsome, he is a good speaker and he has an impressive Harvard and University of Chicago pedigree. But what qualifies him so much more than others? Some of the silliest things have been said on his behalf: He is from Illinois, just like Abraham Lincoln, so therefore he may become a great President, too. What?

Okay, so here is my explanation. It may feel like a cold shower to some of you. I see four factors which account for these sudden and temporary effusions on behalf of a new and often minority politician: (1) American white middle class guilt: Expressing enthusiasm for a black candidate assuages the guilt which most liberal white Americans feel towards blacks. (2) Tokenism: Political parties, corporations and other entities like to hire token minorities to prove that they are not racist. The higher circles do this a lot. The Republicans are the masters of

tokenism, as are elite universities such as Harvard, corporations, etc. (3) Fickleness. A friend of mine calls this the flavor-of-the-month-syndrome: The new kid on the block is often temporarily popular, especially if he is different and kind of cool, for example black. (4) Finally, there is plain racism: Senator Joe Biden illustrated this perfectly in an early presidential campaign speech in 2007. He referred to his rival democratic candidate Obama as exceptionally *clean* and *articulate*, something which is presumably rare among blacks. Ouch! No amount of backpedaling could hide the fact that Biden, like many other whites, was basically expressing his *surprise* at the fact that a black politician could be so.... clean and articulate, like so many white politicians.

Which reminds me, incidentally, how racist the expression *white trash* is. This struck me the moment I learned the expression decades ago. How is the expression “white trash” racist? Not the way you might think, i.e. against whites. No, it is racist against blacks. Why? Well, think about it for a moment: The fact that there is a category of people we identify as *white trash* means that most whites are *not* trash. But there is no category of black trash, because the implication is that most blacks are trash.

But let me make myself perfectly clear: I would be delighted to elect a black president. I would also be delighted to elect a woman president. In fact, I am going to vote for Hillary Clinton, enthusiastically. What I object to are tokenism and double standards which unwittingly elevate *fairly* competent politicians to geniuses because of their race (or some other demographic characteristic).

#### 8. Let's Have a Group, the “Plumbers for Social Responsibility”

*In the Fall of 2006, Dr. Helen Caldicott - of the organization “Physicians for Social Responsibility” - gave another speech at our university. She is that aggravating woman who has been moralizing the world for years about peace, the environment and other issues, while never letting us forget that she a Doctorr, as if being a physician somehow gives you special moral privilege. This is the issue I addressed in an interview with the Fort Wayne (Indiana) Journal Gazette in October 2005:*

Reporter Steve Penhollow sent me the following e-mail:

*I am writing a column instigated by a pair of stories. Setting aside for the moment the possibility that Madonna is yanking our chain, this has to be one of the worst examples of celebrity hypocrisy (or one of the worst examples of irony deficiency) I have ever heard. Madonna is denouncing a world she has led us to. She is about to release another album that depends on lots of people ignoring her advice. This whole thing started me thinking about celebrity opinions. Why is it that smug millionaires like Oprah or Tom Cruise, for example, feel comfortable dispensing advice on every conceivable subject. Why do we want them to? Do we want them to? Isn't a celebrity generally someone who is more removed from common problems and realistic ways of perceiving the world than non-celebs? I am just trying to get to the heart of this recent epidemic of celebrity advise and disbursement. I'd love to quote your thoughts.*

*Here is my reply:*

The topic you raise is interesting. Coincidentally, I was recently thinking about something related: As you correctly point out, it is terribly aggravating that many people (ab)use their celebrity status or their prestige to pontificate about things they know nothing about, basically

spewing off propaganda. This occurred to me again recently when I saw a notice of an upcoming meeting of the group calling itself "Physicians for Social Responsibility." As you know, this group has, for years, been a platform for a lot of ideological propaganda and moralizing disguised as "expert opinion." And I thought, (again), what on earth qualifies physicians more than other occupations to impose their moral and political judgments on the rest of us? For example, why isn't there an organization called "Plumbers for Social Responsibility," or "Garage Mechanics for Social Responsibility"? Would such groups' moral expertise necessarily be inferior to that of physicians? (*Fort Wayne (Indiana) Journal Gazett*, Oct. 2005).

9. Mathematical Proof that Tradition Makes the Culture Perfect

*Continuing to rub the politically correct crowd’s noses into it, I wrote the following “conservative” essay in November 1989. Warning: It is weird, and maybe mathematically flawed. But surely you will agree that it is original!*

Yesterday, my 14-year old daughter Danielle said something so brilliant that I am now writing it down for posterity: “Things which don’t work out peter out.”

This nutshell summary of evolutionary theory made me realize in a flash why conservatives are right and liberals are wrong: The new is always partially good and partially bad, right? it is partially true and partially false, partially adaptive and functional, partially harmful. Partially beautiful and partially ugly. This is universal and applies to the physical universe and to biology, as well as to ideas, politics and art, i.e. to *culture*.

I am going to prove to you mathematically that it is the accumulation of tradition which gradually makes a culture perfect. In order to do this, I must begin with four assumptions:

- 1) Assumption #1: At any given time, 50% of everything is new and 50% of everything is old.
- 2) Assumption #2 : 50% of everything new is good and 50% of everything new is bad (This is a very generous and optimistic assumption).
- 3) Assumption #3: 50% of everything new survives, 50% does not.
- 4) Assumption #4: As Darwin and my daughter pointed out, (most of) the 50% that is bad eventually disappears. Dinosaurs disappeared because they are unwieldy and stupid (not because of a giant meteor). The Edsel disappeared, music by Salieri and Lawrence Welk will eventually be forgotten. Most of the 50% that is good survives, for example Mozart, the Beatles, the movie *Casablanca*.

Furthermore: although time is a great purifier, it is not perfect. Therefore, the 50% of everything which survives is not all good, and the 50% of things which disappear is not all bad. However, *most* of what survives is good and *most* of what disappears is bad. This is a safe assumption, because we know from history that the *good* withstands the test of time, much more so than the *bad*.

Now let us call our baseline Year One, when a given amount of new things occur. See Table I.

Table I: Distribution of Culture in Year One

Good Culture	Bad Culture	Total
50%	50%	100%

Then, let us move to Year Two. According to assumption #3, out of all the new culture that existed in Year One, 50% has survived, and of this, 40% is good and 10% is bad (assumption #4). By Year Two, this is now the “old”(that which has survived), and most of it is good. See table II.

Table II: Percentages of Culture Surviving from Year One to Year Two

Good Culture	Bad Culture	Total
40%	10%	50%

Now, by Year Two, new culture has been added. In accordance with assumption #1, the new and the old each make up 50% of the total. According to assumption #2, half of the new is good and half is bad. Therefore, of all the culture that exists in Year Two (Old and New combined), 65% is good and 35 % is bad. See Table III.

Table III: Distribution of Culture in Year Two

	Good Culture	Bad Culture	Total
Old Culture	40%	10%	50%
New Culture	25%	25%	50%
Total	65%	35%	100%

If we now move on to Year Three, once again 50% of all the culture which existed in Year Two has survived to Year Three (Assumption #3). What proportion of this is good and bad? It cannot be 4/5 and 1/5, as it was in Year Two, because back then nearly 2/3 of all culture was already good and only 1/3 was bad.

At this point, assumption #4 cannot mean that 4/5 of what was good in Year Two and 1/5 of what was bad survives to Year Three, because that would produce a total that is larger than what is allowed by assumption #3. See the numbers crossed out in table IV. Instead, we reduce those numbers proportionally and get the correct values. See table IV.

Table IV: Percentages of Culture Surviving from Year Two to Year Three

Good Culture	Bad Culture	Total
<del>52%</del>	<del>7%</del>	<del>59%</del>
44%	6%	50%

So what is the total distribution of culture in Year Three, after we add the new culture which has emerged by then? Table V shows this: The percentage of *good* culture has now risen to 69%.

Table V: Distribution of all Culture in Year Three

	Good Culture	Bad Culture	Total
Old Culture	44%	6%	50%
New Culture	25%	25%	50%
Total	69%	31%	100%

This process repeats itself, and every time, the proportion of all culture that is good increases. The curve is not a straight line curve. It is asymptotic. While each year the overall quality of the culture improves, the rate of improvement slows down. Only in infinity will the culture be 100% perfect. Nevertheless, I believe that I have demonstrated, through this mathematical game, that it is the gradual build-up of tradition which improves culture.

### 10. The Right to be Left Alone

*Freedom. Ah, that word! Sometimes overused. Often used as a slogan, for example by politicians. But the thing which it represents is essential and simple. It is also controversial, because it goes against values which some people hold dearer than freedom. Here is what I wrote about this on March 9, 2007:*

We still pay lip service to freedom. We still recite the patriotic clichés about the “land of the free and the home of the brave,” because that is indeed what America means in world history. But let’s face it, freedom is no longer a politically correct value. Why, the word comes mostly from the mouths of unpopular people like George W. Bush, these days.

Today, everything must be “social.” Social responsibility, social consciousness. “Community” is also a very important thing, we are told. A few years ago, the sociologist Amitai Etzioni launched a new political movement, “communitarianism.” Indeed, the problems of your neighborhood, your city, your country and ultimately the planet can only be solved if we all band together, or as Hillary Clinton said, “it takes a village.” Makes sense.

Nor is this an earth-shattering revelation. Since time immemorial, man has bettered his lot and that of his fellow-man through solidarity, mutual help, cooperation, love, in sum - the *social*. The early Christians knew it, the pioneers on the frontier knew it, groups such as the Mormons knew it. All religion is based upon these values.

So then, how can I argue against this? How do I dare to suggest that there is “another side” to this? What am I, the anti-Christ? Am I going to argue *against* community, *against* love, and *for* selfishness, anomie, individuation, mutual alienation? Well, no. I am no more going to argue against love than I would argue that the earth is flat. BUT...

Yes, there is a “but.” And you can count on me for highlighting it. I am the contrarian, remember? If there is a way to find another side, I’ll find it. So what is the other side?

Well, first, let’s start with the assumption that human nature is *selfish*. True, it is also altruistic, as Kropotkin and others have shown. But an awfully large component of human nature is made up of selfishness, especially the urge to *power*, particularly in men. Maybe men are poorly constructed. Who knows. Biologists will have to sort this out.

It follows from this premise that more often than not, when one person approaches another, it is probably to get something out of the relationship. This can be crude, as in the case of robbery and rape, or subtle, as in the case of marriage and friendship. These truisms are the basic principles underlying sociological *exchange theory*, one of the discipline’s major approaches today.

So then, one type of human relationship which can benefit the participants is the *exchange* relationship - in commerce and in all other social interaction. But exchange is only *one* possible outcome. Other possible outcomes include conflict and exploitation.

Therefore, we must at all times *also* be ready to say, “leave me alone.” When the lion approaches the antelope, the antelope knows that nothing good can come from that relationship, and its only appropriate response is to get away and to say, “leave me alone.” So *the impulse to be left alone is a good one*. This is the central thesis of this essay.

This was the impulse which drove millions of Europeans to leave their homes and to emigrate to the wilderness of America. It was the impulse which made me hop on a boat in Rotterdam at eighteen and come to America by myself, without a soul waiting for me on this side of the ocean. It is the impulse which continues to bring millions to these shores every year. To the Old West pioneer, if he could see his neighbor’s smokestack on the horizon, this meant that they lived too close to each other. What awful individualism and selfishness, you say. How terribly anti-social!

Perhaps, but there is also another word for this, and it is *freedom*. If there is one value which America has embodied in world history, it is the value of freedom. And don’t underestimate our uniqueness in this regard. Take for example Canada and Australia. Those two countries resemble us in many ways. Like America, they are almost entirely immigrant societies. Even more striking, they are both far more sparsely populated than we are. So you might expect them to be more imbued with the hyper-individualism of the 19<sup>th</sup> century American frontier. But you know what? They are much more socialistic than we are.

And here is something else that’s pretty revealing: Think of proxemics - the science of personal space. You know how we all carry sort of an invisible bubble around us when we go about public places, a space which others should not violate. The amount of personal space people require to feel comfortable varies from culture to culture. Well, guess in which culture people carry around the largest such invisible bubble? It’s us, right here in the United States. Even though this country’s population density is getting up there, and is already considerably higher than that of Canada, Australia, Russia a many other countries. This is another indication that freedom and individualism are quintessentially *American*.

So does this make us the most selfish people? You’ll have to answer that for yourself. What I do know is that it makes us a very *free* people. Nowhere in the world do people respect your *right to be left alone* as much as here. And personally, I like it that way. When I go to my club to work out on the tread mill, I like to be left alone. In Holland, someone might step on the exercise machine next to me and make remarks about my running style or my weird running shoes. This rarely happens in Sacramento. Here, I don’t even have to engage in a conversation about the latest NBA or NFL game if I don’t want to. And that’s just fine, because when I exercise I want a strenuous aerobic experience, not a chit-chat. I am not interested in hearing about the other guy’s latest cruise to Alaska, or why he prefers a straight 6 to a V6 engine.

And I certainly don’t want to answer inquisitive questions from anybody. And the good news is that by and large, Americans do not approach one another with inquisitive questions. Europeans haven’t learned yet that it is rude to grill people with questions; that this makes for poor conversation.

The Ancient Greeks knew these things. Their word for the busy-body was “*meddler*.” The meddler was the man who didn’t know how to mind his own business.

When Alexander the Great came upon Diogenes in one of the streets of Athens, he approached the old philosopher, who was meditating in the afternoon sun. The emperor asked the wise man, “Oh great wizard, is there is anything I can do for you? You only have to ask for it, and

it is yours.”

Diogenes answered, “Great King, I only request that you move out of my sunlight.” (In other words - buzz off).

Recently radical Muslims were demonstrating in London. Some of their picket signs said, “To Hell with your Freedom!”

Let us cherish our right to be left alone. Let us realize what the world would be like if it were run by meddlers - and worse. Obviously we have to strike a balance between freedom and community. This goes without saying. Personally, though, I rather err on the side of freedom. Call me anti-social, call me a misanthrope. I just don't like to suffocate.

### 11. We Live in an Age of Moral Relativism

*In 1985, I embarked on a book which I tentatively titled The Age of Value Neutrality. I completed about 200 pages of it, and I peddled sample chapters and a prospectus to various publishers. It was well received, but my teaching duties prevented me from completing the book, so it never got published. The partial table of contents, below, shows some of the topics the book covers:*

#### 1. Some Characteristics of Contemporary Moral Relativism.

#### 3. Why has the Culture eagerly embraced Value Neutrality?

- A. Moral Relativism is functional in the modern World.
- B. Moral Relativism is functional for Pluralistic Societies
- C. Moral Relativism may stem from true Humanitarianism.
- D. Moral Relativism is good for your Self-esteem.
- E. Moral Relativists have their Cake and eat it too.
- F. Moral Relativists can evade Responsibility.
- G. Moral Relativism allows you to reject your Heritage.

#### 5.Science is A-moral.

#### 6. Why is Moral Relativism Important to Social Science?

#### 7. Why Can Culture and Sociology not be Value Free?

- A. Culture and Sociology must moralize.
- E. To act is to judge.
- F. The Error of Marxism.
- G. The Myth of Academic Expertise.
- H. The Moral Relativists.
- I. The Moralists: Natural Law; Natural Rights; Kant, Phenomenology, Existentialism..

#### 10.Why can Culture not be value-free?

- B. Is America becoming normless?
- C. The West is the Best.
- D. The Need to judge.

#### 11.Science and Sociology.

- A. Sociological Concepts are based on Values.
- B. The Sociologist is a moralist.

C. Sociology is neither scientific nor nihilistic.

12. Four Types of Judgment

- A. Good and Evil.
- B. Beauty.
- C. Competence.
- D. Truth.

13. How to Judge

- A.. The Humanistic Criterion.
- B. Natural Law and Natural Rights.
- C..The Pragmatic Criterion.
- D. Reason.
- F. The Empirical Criterion.
- G. Excellence.
- H. Progress.
- I. Power.

14. Judgment in Specific Area

- A. Politics
- B. Conformity, Deviance and Crime.
- C. Lifestyle and Sexuality.
- D. (Social) Science.
- E. Arts, Esthetics and Music.
- F. Leisure and Sports.
- G. Cultures and World views.

12. Brokeback Mountain and Letters from Iwo-Jima

*Nowhere else is political correctness more virulent than in Hollywood. The two best received movies in memory are Brokeback Mountain (2005) and Letters from Iwo- Jima (2007). This prompted me to write the following insight in February of 2007:*

In many scoring systems, reviewers give four stars to the best movies, three to the next best, and so on down to zero stars for the worst films. The *Sacramento Bee* reproduces the scores given to movies by a sample of critics nationwide - Ebert and Roper, the *New York Times*, etc. Every week we can see how the latest movies have been scored by half a dozen "experts" around the country. There is hardly ever total consensus. A great movie might get four stars from half of the experts, but only three from others, etc.

In all the years that I have followed these ratings, I can only remember two movies which received a perfect score, i.e. four stars from every single reviewer: *Brokeback Mountain* (2005) and *Letters from Iwo-Jima* (2007). The first of these movies is about a gay love story between two Wyoming cowboys, filmed beautifully in the grandeur of the Rocky Mountains. The other one is about the battle of Iwo-Jima viewed from the Japanese perspective. It is spoken entirely in Japanese, with English subtitles. Its director is Clint Eastwood.

These two pictures received the greatest adulation of any movie, ever. *Brokeback Mountain* also swept the Golden Globes and was nominated for and won numerous Oscars, as did *Letters from Iwo-Jima*.

The unanimity of the nation's reviewers is astounding. Were these same experts to rate today such classics as *Citizen Kane*, *Singing in the Rain*, *Casablanca*, *Spartacus*, *Gone with the*

*Wind*, foreign gems like *Les Enfants du Paradis*, more recent masterpieces like *Schindler's List*, and spectacularly entertaining movies like *Titanic* or *Amadeus*, they would not give them a *unanimously* perfect score.

What could account for these two movies' stunning popularity among the opinion leaders? I am convinced that this can only be explained politically. That is, the intelligentsia saw no alternative but to unanimously declare these two movies to be the best ever - ahead of all other films ever made. Political correctness demanded this. In the case of *Brokeback Mountain*, giving it a perfect score was the only way to avoid the risk of being called homophobic. In the case of *Letters from Iwo-Jima*, the risk was being called xenophobic. So much for free and independent thought.

As for my own rating, I give *Brokeback Mountain* three and a half stars. It is a beautiful movie and a courageous movie. The plot is somewhat convoluted. It is good, but not the best ever

I give *Letters from Iwo-Jima* three stars. It is riveting, well acted, and it renders the gruesome and bloody battle accurately.

However, in the end, it is a fairy tale, because nearly every Japanese soldier and officer is depicted as a man of courage, honor and integrity, a hero who can do no wrong. It is possible to make a balanced movie that shows the enemy's perspective and grants him dignity while remaining realistic. *Tora Tora Tora* was such a movie. So was *Young Lions*. And there are many more.

But as I said, *Letters from Iwo-Jima* is a fairy tale. It is not courageous. It is opportunistic. It rides the wave of political correctness, knowing that this will produce great rewards in ultra-liberal Hollywood.

Eastwood must know that most men are flawed and that the Japanese are no exception, to put it generously. Yet the only truly beastly deed in the entire movie is committed by two American marines, when they shoot two innocent Japanese POWs. This is a cheap shot. We know from war statistics that Americans have always treated enemy POWs far more humanely than others have: When the Russians defeated the German Third Army in Stalingrad, they captured about 100,000 German prisoners. Five percent (!) of these survived Russian captivity. The survival rate of Russian prisoners captured by Germans was about the same. And what about the Japanese? Thousands of American POWs died in the Bataan death march. The Nanking massacre was pure and simple genocide. Throughout World War Two, Japanese soldiers raped and enslaved thousands of women in China, Korea, and throughout the rest of Asia.

Unlike the Germans, the Japanese have rarely shown contrition about their war crimes, and we rarely hold them accountable. Instead, the American media love to bring up the unfortunate internment of Japanese-Americans during the war. Could this double standard be because the Japanese are not white, and because anyone "of color" is the darling of the intelligentsia?

Should someone make a movie about World War Two from the German perspective? Should Hitler be mentioned in it with the same equanimity as Tojo is mentioned in *Letters from Iwo-Jima*?

Clint Eastwood is now getting rave reviews, perhaps an Oscar, and universal adulation from Hollywood and from the intelligentsia. However, nothing becomes as dated as a fad. Remember *Billy Jack*? Popular at the time, a bad joke now. Or *Easy Rider*? Still revered by aging hippies, but embarrassing to the rest of us. The same fate may befall the latest faddish movies as well.

As an immigrant and therefore somewhat of an outsider, I am always puzzled by the unrelenting sense of *guilt* which plagues American liberals. They cannot, for a moment, stop flagellating themselves and entertaining the thought that their country is wrong. *Letters from Iwo-Jima* is one more manifestation of this unhealthy habit.

## 20. TAKING ON THE LEFT: COMMUNISM, MARXISM, RUSSIA

### 1. America Must Continue to Fight Communism.

*After the Vietnam debacle, America was demoralized, disoriented. Carter's disastrous presidency reflected the national spirit. Meanwhile, the bad guys were still at it, now more than ever, as they took advantage of America's weakness to make trouble all over the world. There was vigorous Soviet Communist expansion everywhere, all the way to our doorsteps. The dominoes were falling - Afghanistan, Angola, Nicaragua, Grenada, El Salvador. Finally President Reagan began to turn the tide of American defeatism and to re-assert our national self-interest again. First timidly, as when he invaded Grenada and bombed Kadhafi.*

*Meanwhile, the domestic Left continued to advocate its pacifist, defeatist ways, forever arguing that the lesson of the Vietnam defeat should be to never again engage in military action overseas, never again assert our interests forcefully.*

*In February 1982, the Wall Street Journal printed an article by David Halberstam - the famous author of The Best and the Brightest, a man who had made a career of attacking American foreign policy and who was among those most responsible for getting us out of Vietnam. In this article, he equated our current involvement in fighting Communist insurrection in El Salvador, with our disastrous involvement in Vietnam. On February 24, 1982, I fired off a furious critique of Halberstam's article to the Wall Street Journal. They never printed it. Here it is.*

David Halberstam's equation of El Salvador and Vietnam (February 23) is a distasteful rehash of the worn-out errors made by his likes over the past few decades. Time after time we are told by such people that these conflicts merely pit agrarian reformers against a corrupt American-supported feudal regime. That was the liberal appeaser's view of Mao Tse Tung in the 40s, Fidel Castro in the 50s, Ho Chi Min in the 60s, the Sandinistas in the 70s and the El Salvador rebels in the 80s. Time and again the revolution turns into a genocidal and imperialistic monstrosity, exporting the revolution and crushing all domestic dissent.

Has Halberstam learned nothing? Has he not heard of the Vietnamese and Cuban boat people, of Vietnam's continued aggression against its neighbors, of Fidel's mercenaries in Africa, of the incipient genocide of Nicaraguan Indians, not to mention the permanent occupation of Eastern Europe? At least Joan Baez had the courage to make an about-face, and Jane Fonda has the grace to remain silent. But Halberstam persists in his arrogant aberration.

What alternative foreign policy does Halberstam suggest? First there was the Monroe Doctrine, then there was the Castro exception, then Nicaragua, soon to be followed by El Salvador, maybe Guatemala, and so on, country after country. One can argue over ways and means, but there can be no doubt that the dominoes are falling. 80 % of the world is non-free, most of it in the left-wing sense. Vietnam may have been the wrong place for a test of force, but I live closer to El Salvador than to my country's capital.

Have the likes of Halberstam no sense of history? Don't they understand that there is a slow, long-term onslaught against all the values and institutions that make up our free, capitalist civilization? It is comfortable to believe, as liberals do, that there is an alternative to resisting the onslaught; that somehow the problem will vanish if it is ignored. Unfortunately, history tells us that there is no substitute for strength. The Vietnam debacle, far from leading to the sort of paralysis and appeasement proposed by the likes of Halberstam, should teach us greater sophistication in fending for our worldwide interests and greater determination to protect our vanishing way of life.

In and of itself, El Salvador may not be worth the trouble. But when does something like this become our business? When Panama goes communist? or Quebec? or Puerto Rico? Or California?

## 2. Arthur Schlesinger is Wrong Again: America was Right in Liberating Grenada

*The following year, I did the same thing in response to another anti-American, pacifist and defeatist Wall Street Journal article, this one by Arthur Schlesinger. The famous historian lambasted Ronald Reagan for liberating the tiny island of Grenada from Communism, echoing Halberstam on El Salvador. I sent the letter in on December 14, 1983, shortly after the Grenada operation. Once again I struck out at the Journal. Here is the letter:*

Arthur Schlesinger's December 14 article regarding Grenada makes a plea for sympathy, so one first reads it with a wide-open mind. Alas, it is impossible to remain sympathetic to the author. The article, as many of his other writings, is replete with irritating slants and dubious analogies. To name just a few: Grenada was not invaded, it was rescued. The action cannot be compared with the bombing of Pearl harbor, where thousands were killed. Grenada was liberated, as its entire population will attest.

Then there is Schlesinger's dishonest use of code labels: Nixon, Halderman, the madman theory, Hitler, Stalin! Why, any action evoking such epithets has got to be evil, right?

But let us not be taken in by such associative gimmickry: The Grenada action reminds one only of those of other benign democracies such as Britain in the Falklands, France in Chad and yes, John Kennedy's far more dangerous interventions in Cuba, Southeast Asia and elsewhere.

But of course when Kennedy comes closer to nuclear Armageddon than any other president ever, this is called wise (after all, Schlesinger was part of that decision), whereas the much more minor and judicious Grenada intervention is condemned.

To the dogmatic liberal and to the Reagan-hater, there are two standards: for the US government, especially the present Republican administration, nothing short of absolute sainthood will do. For others, realism, self-preservation, national aspirations, pragmatism, social reform and liberation are all valid motives to commit violence. Thus our government, already among the least assertive ones (our response to terrorism in Lebanon and elsewhere is so restrained as to border on impotence), is branded as the most imperialist.

From Schlesinger's standpoint, all societies have the moral right to fight for their values and self-interest, except the United States.

## 3. Professor is Wrong about Soviet and U.S. Military Strength

*A little earlier, In December 1982, the Sacramento Bee published an article by a colleague of mine, Richard Hughes. I had crossed swords with this man many times in the past, most prominently during the Iranian hostage crisis. Now he was at it again, printing slanted anti-American propaganda attempting to show that America was the guilty militaristic party in the Cold War, and that the Soviet Union was innocent and militarily vastly overmatched. I wrote an article for the Bee disputing Hughes' facts, and the paper published it on January 24, 1982.*

*In retrospect, I'm not sure I was right. Some might say that I vastly overrated the Soviet Union's military strength, witness its collapse less than a decade later, and its subsequent weakness. Today, it would be laughable to view Russia as a world power. Its GNP is lower than that of the Netherlands (!).*

*However, in my defense: it was precisely the harangues of the likes of me, Edward Teller and neo-conservatives, which prompted President Reagan to rebuild the U.S. military and to win*

*the Cold War in the end. Back then, I was correct in asserting that our military was in sad shape. I taught at many Air Force Bases - Travis, Mather, Norton, among others - and saw the dilapidated conditions, the underpaid soldiers who needed food stamps and other assistance to get by, the aging B52s which the North Vietnamese had been able to shoot down with ease. In the aftermath of Vietnam, the Carter administration had neglected the military for years, and we were indeed weak, as I assert in this article.*

On December 13, 1982, the *Sacramento Bee* published an article by my colleague Richard Hughes about the relative military strength of the United States and the Soviet Union. The gist of Hughes' article was that the U.S. is militarily still stronger and spends more money than the USSR, all the current talk about strengthening our military posture is war-mongering nonsense and the Soviet Union is basically peace-loving and trustworthy. (Mr. Hughes is a history professor and coordinator of the Soviet Studies Program at Cal State).

In my view, Hughes' article is grossly biased and misleading. It is based on distorted facts and slanted arguments. The present article attempts to present the opposite point of view and to refute most of Hughes' arguments.

First, I should perhaps also state some of my credentials: I hold a B.S. from the University of Amsterdam and an M.A. and a Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota, all in sociology with concentrations in history and political science. Additionally, I grew up in Hungary and I have traveled extensively in the Soviet Union, Poland and Czechoslovakia as well as many other countries.

I share Hughes' desire to put an end to the tragic arms race under way at the present time. My disagreement is not about the madness of the cold war but about the allocation of blame.

In the picture presented to us by Hughes, America comes off as the aggressor and the war-monger, while the Soviet Union is depicted as a peaceful regime that merely wishes to defend itself against our aggressive acts. In order to arrive at his conclusion that America is militarily superior to the Soviet Union, Hughes includes in his calculations our allies' military capabilities and he also counts China on our side. He even includes Iran as a plus on the American side of the ledger.

Apart from such absurd ways of calculating American military superiority, what about our allies or China? Our "allies" include countries that have left NATO (e.g. France) or are in the process of doing so (e.g. Greece); countries that deny us landing privileges when the chips are down (as Spain did during the 1973 Yom Kippur war), and countries where the populace is more often anti-American than either anti-Russian or truly neutralist, as in the recent mass demonstrations all over Europe. Some allies!

And what about China? Are we so sure that the Asian giant is on our side? After all, it still shares far more with the Soviet Union than it does with us, including the fundamental ideology underlying both societies. China is still a Marxist state.

Hughes makes the irrelevant observation that since 1950 NATO has outspent the Warsaw Pact. Of course it has, starting at a time when NATO was vastly richer and more powerful, and including our 10-year involvement in Vietnam at the cost of \$30 billion per year. What counts is not what happened in 1950 but what is happening today. Today, the Soviet Union outnumbers us 370 submarines to 121, 2,384 strategic nuclear launchers to 1,628, 268 large warships to 223, 48,000 tanks to 11,560, 19,300 pieces of artillery to 5,140, 4,885 combat aircraft to 3,988, 4.84 million men to 2.09 million, while the two countries are roughly equivalent in strategic nuclear warheads. Only five years ago, we had a 2 1/2 to 1 superiority in the latter category.

Similarly, Hughes is wrong when he claims that we have sold more arms to foreign countries than the Soviet Union has. According to the Congressional Research Service, Soviet arms

shipments to foreign countries had consistently outstripped ours until 1979, while today the two countries are neck and neck.

Hughes claims that half of our fleet is on station, vs. only one seventh of that of Russia. He maintains that one U.S. submarine can destroy all Soviet cities. He claims that our B52s are modern and effective. All of this is nonsense. Sure one Trident submarine could do a great deal of damage (although no more than one Soviet nuclear sub) but only under the unwarranted assumption of absolute accuracy. And how effective our B52s are was demonstrated during the latter part of the Vietnam War when they were being shot down at the rate of three or four per week -- not by the USSR mind you, but by the Vietnamese. Yes, let us put our confidence in those 35-year-old decrepit bombers, by all means.

The fact that our government openly discusses the possibility of pre-emptive and limited nuclear wars does not mean that we are more likely to engage in them than is the Soviet government. It means that we bark and threaten more openly, realizing that it is this *threat* which has worked as a deterrent for the past 36 years. This is not to imply that the present system of deterrence through nuclear annihilation is rational or desirable. I merely wish to remind the readers that it is the Soviet Union, not the United States, which is most likely to initiate preventive or limited nuclear warfare, their silence notwithstanding. Actions like their first-strike capability and their blitz into Afghanistan speak louder than their sanctimonious propaganda.

The difference between the democratic world and the communist world is this: When a NATO country elects to leave the alliance, as Greece is now doing, no one expects American marines to land in Piraeus in order to prevent that from happening. When the leaders of Poland's Solidarity movement suggest that a similar referendum be held there in order to determine whether the country should remain within the Warsaw Pact or not, martial law ensues, to be followed by Russian invasion if it doesn't work. A peace-loving nation indeed! (*Sacramento Bee*, Jan. 24, 1982).

#### 4. The Cacophony of Democracy

*In October 1983, the Russians downed Korean Airline Flight 007, killing several hundred passengers, many of them Americans, and causing an international crisis. The incident was probably the result of a combination of Soviet paranoia and ineptitude, not of deliberate intent to murder a few hundred innocent travelers.*

*To me, the most appalling aspect of this incident was the flood of nonsense which followed it, as Americans both high and low ran around like a bunch of cackling geese, expressing their feelings and their opinions about the incident, and about the Cold War, which was of course the context in which it happened. Here is what I wrote about that. This was subsequently published in the Sacramento Forum.*

Our society is deeply confused about the cold war and the arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union: The other night a so-called "expert" was being interviewed by Ted Koppel about the downing of KAL 007. He said, among other things, that this "proved that the Russians are highly incompetent and no threat to us. It took them two hours to track down the 747 Jumbo jet."

At the same time, the *Progressive Alliance*, a Trotskyist organization at Cal State, printed a flyer saying, "obviously the USSR knew exactly what it was doing: It only shot down KAL 007 after it had carefully established that it was a spy plane."

A student in my class remarked that "we have much more sophisticated anti-ballistic missiles and other offensive and defensive systems than the the Russians do. I know this because my

father was in the

Air Force and he had access to all the classified information which nobody knows about.”

So what we have, then, is cacophony at all levels. Essentially, people seem to be expressing *wishes*, while couching them as facts. They do this in order to protect their peace of mind.

Our democracy claims to have a well-informed population. But this is not the case. There is a progressive democratization of knowledge and of opinion. America’s foundational belief that everyone is entitled to both *having* and *expressing* an opinion is laudable. However, we have moved to a belief that everyone’s opinion is *equally plausible*. This is a big mistake. Because of this new belief, there is a deterioration of the level of discourse and knowledge. In the past, there were at least guidelines to determine which theories were *reasonable* and which ones were *absurd*, guidelines to *evaluate ideas*. These included expertise, experience, logic, research, education, authority, and above all common-sense.

Today, anything goes. Everyone gets his fifteen minutes of expertise. Junior high-school kids are interviewed on national television about their views on the President’s foreign policy. A wacko receives national attention for an insane conspiracy theory (e.g. the CIA invented AIDS). In this sense, democracy has run amok (*Sacramento Forum*, Fall 1983).

#### 5. Downing of KAL 007 was Linked to Sinking of Titanic

*A few days later, I published a longer article about the downing of KAL 007 in the Sacramento Forum (See next article for more details about this newspaper). Here, I take on the ridiculous conspiracy theories of the Left, and my weapon is humor.*

One of the saddest aspects of the KAL 007 incident is the sizeable number of Americans entertaining the idea that this was a spy plane cynically sent to its death by our government, including 269 men, women and babies.

I am not going to rehash the innumerable reasons why this hypothesis is preposterous. The fatal flaw of this theory is that it confuses *consequences* and *reasons*. The latter occur after the fact, the former take place beforehand, and they are deliberate. And because the downing of KAL 007 has resulted in greater support for Reagan's rearmament plans, the conspiracy theorists assume that it was therefore planned. The conspiracy theorists attribute far greater skill, power and cunning to the U.S. government than it in fact has. This is an extension of the earlier megalomania which saw America as God's Own Country, the Savior of the world, endowed with a Manifest Destiny, etc. It proudly proclaims, in effect, that we are still Number One, albeit number one in badness and cunning. All world events are *willed* by the almighty U.S. government, which is a puppet of U.S. capital.

#### U. S. Government seen as Diabolical by many Americans

The truth is more humbling. Europeans, for example, know that this country is neither capable nor willing to singlehandedly steer world history. It merely pursues its national objectives as best as it can, often clumsily, as do other nations. I was in Europe at the time of the incident. I spoke with Frenchmen, Hungarians and Austrians within days of the occurrence. The hotel concierge, cab drivers, people like that. I guarantee you that neither *they*, nor the newspapers I read, *at any time* mentioned such a sick conspiratorial idea. Indeed, the Soviet Government itself has reluctantly admitted that the whole thing was an error.

So we have reached the point where domestic anti-Americanism in some instances exceeds its overseas variant. Some Americans flatter themselves into believing that their government is

almighty, the Devil on earth. A good example of such reversed megalomania is a recent flyer of our local “*Progressive*” Alliance. It flaunts the title: *The Murder of 269 Bystanders: Or the US Government does it Again*. This may not come as a surprise, since the group is considerably to the left of the Moscow government. Indeed, it is willing to out-anti-Americanize Moscow, as it claims that Reagan deliberately sent 269 men, women and children to their death on a provocative spying mission, something upon which even the Soviets no longer insist.

A more disturbing symptom of this mental illness is the fact that formerly all-American types like housewives on the Phil Donahue show now also toy with the same idea. While most Americans don't buy it, quite a few of them hate the Reagan Administration so much that they are mouthing off about the serious possibility that our government would deliberately sacrifice 269 lives for political expediency.

#### President Kennedy went to Berlin to appoint the first Catholic Pope in order to protect his Family's Investments in Chile

A recent Leonard Nimoy TV show revived the *Lusitania* controversy, reminding us that it carried not only thousands of passengers but also military contraband. The point was that our government deliberately had the Germans sink the vessel so as to drag us into World War One. The timing of the show was obviously meant to interpret flight KAL 007 the same way.

Pamphlets like that of the “*Progressive*” Alliance” go on with lists of alleged US government atrocities, for example the torture and murder of millions of South Americans, the deliberate murder of San Franciscans by experimental poisoning, the frequent and deliberate injection of LSD into unsuspecting US citizens, the deliberate helping of Hitler to invade the Soviet Union, all this to protect the investments of J.P. Morgan and other US bankers (!) Wow! Aren't these people creative? Why doesn't the *Sacramento State Hornet* ever discuss them and their theories? Surely their imagination rivals the best in Science Fiction (think of exciting themes like *The Invasion of the Body Snatchers*)

#### Secret Nixon-Hitler Axis revealed

But wait, the “*Progressive*” Alliance” has got it all wrong. I, too, have studied history. Actually, you see, it all goes back to the *Titanic*. Ever since 1912, when the huge steam liner sank, we have all been duped by the CIA into believing that it was a natural disaster. In fact, the *Titanic* was an amphibious assault ship carrying mercenaries to invade China. Since President Nixon had a secret agreement with Hitler to sink all non-combatants, he ordered Israel to sink the ship (*Annals of Military History*, Vol. XXXVIII:258-789).

The Pentagon tried to cover up, but it nevertheless led to the Crimean War and to World War Two. The Pope wholeheartedly approved of Pearl Harbor and President Kennedy went to Berlin to appoint the first Catholic Pope in order to protect his family's investments in Chile (see Walt R. Krankheit, *Political Hallucination Quarterly*, 1903, pp. 198-17).

The CIA put Fidel Castro in power, but this backfired when KGB agents Lee Harvey Oswald and James Bond (later a Cal State University President) convinced him to switch allegiance. According to reliable sources (See *Le Matin a Geneve*, February 29, 1979) Korean Airlines Flight 007 never occurred. It was a fiction concocted by Radio Marti (Note the similarity between the flight number and that of the aforementioned secret agent). The purpose of this charade was to conceal a second flight which carried a contingent of Cuban pumpkins from Havana to Osnabruck in order to undermine the European peace movement and kill people for profit. (This article is not meant to poke fun at the airline tragedy, but rather to show how absurd the conspiratorial theories of the Marxists and fellow-travelers are) (*Sacramento Forum*, Fall 1983).

## 6. Communism Today is the same as Fascism was in the Thirties

*By the early 1980s, I was so involved in political conflict with my colleagues at the University that I created my own monthly newspaper - the Sacramento Forum. This had become necessary to ward off the many attack to which I was subjected in articles and letters-to-the-editor by various professors. There is much more information about this below.*

*Here, I reproduce the first of many articles I wrote for the Sacramento Forum, of which I was also Editor-in-Chief. The article appeared on April 15, 1983. In it, I write a review of the TV miniseries The Winds of War as a vehicle to point out similarities between Fascism in the 1930s and Communism in the 1980s, a not-so-oblique attack upon my many fellow-traveling colleagues.*

*So now, decades after the end of the Cold War, what can I say? That I was wrong? Not at the time I wasn't.*

Most of us spent the week of February 6-13 watching the longest monster show ever put together for television. Those of us old enough to remember saw a bit of our own lives replayed. For the younger generation, the series was mostly history and entertainment. All in all, not a bad show, at least when considering the available alternatives. The film was fairly well put together and not too shallow. Also, it offered straightforward and wholesome values. It was devoid of the moral equivocation typical of our age. It did not relativize good and evil.

For example, the movie had refreshingly little trouble identifying the good man and the qualities that make him good - Pug Henry. Captain Henry was not quite John Wayne, but almost. His virtues, of course, had to include those that are most fashionable today - tolerance, broad-mindedness, a permissive attitude toward his son, etc. But more importantly, he was also brave; totally involved in his work, and faithful to his wife, resisting carnal temptation even as she did not. This is straightforward puritanism, and it was a pleasure to see it acclaimed rather than ridiculed. Similarly, the show exuded patriotism, Americanism and democratic values - all useful values to stress to a younger generation which did not experience the war first-hand.

Most of the series' flaws can be subsumed under the problem of historical distortion. Some of these flaws were superficial. For example, throughout the movie people move about either by private car or by airplane. Only an American movie made in the 1980s could make such a mistake. Even in war-torn Poland and Russia we see our heroes, refugees and friends driving around in private cars. This is quite unrealistic. The vast majority of Europeans have, until well into the 1950s, moved around by public modes of transportation - trains, tramways, busses - or by bicycle and horse-drawn carriage. The latter was certainly the case in Eastern, Central and South-ern Europe. And, of course, the airplane hopping of Ali McGraw and company throughout the show is total fiction.

Another silliness is one that is shared by nearly all works about World War II: Far too much time is spent dancing, drinking, partying and having sex. The resulting impression is that war is fun; World War II was the good old days. Actually, most of the War consisted of dying in the mud, starving to death on icy streets, rotting in prison, perishing in camps, suffocating under the rubble, running for cover, mourning one's parents or children, scavenging in garbage dumps.

More serious is the caricature-like personification of evil in Hitler and his underlings. The Fuhrer is shown as a raving maniac. He is ugly, mean and without a sense of humor. He lacks any attractive human quality whatsoever, and so do Goering, Ribbentrop, Himmler, etc. But think about it for a moment: how could such a repulsive gang led by such a repugnant character have come to be loved and admired by eighty million Germans and millions of other European sympathizers? Actually, the real mask of fascism was far more deceptive. Hitler and his acolytes were often seen as cultured men, listening to Beethoven and Wagner, discussing Nietzsche by the

fireside. The Fuhrer was known to love animals, children, sports, the arts and poetry. His charisma consisted not only of violent outbursts but also of charm.

It is important to remember these things at a time when we are told that Brezhnev's successor Andropov has got to be a good man, because after all, he likes jazz music and cognac.

Perhaps *The Winds of War* is less guilty of this than most other treatments of World War II. But all such works convey the naive and misleading implication that (1) the face of evil is easily recognizable, that (2) it is usually more or less the same, namely that of a raving Nazi buffoon, or something like that, and (3) that it is, thank goodness, behind us. Actually, none of these assumptions is correct: Tyranny has many faces, and it often threatens when you least expect it.

When this is realized, *The Winds of War* has considerable relevance for the 1980s. It is instructive to watch, as I did, this long saga through a contemporary lense and to translate the film's events and statements into their contemporary equivalents. The 1980's resemble the 1930's in many ways.

Many of the world's contemporary problems are similar to those of half a century ago, only on an even larger scale. Internationally, the role-players, the actions and the strategies are often the same, only the labels and the rhetoric have changed. Evil has been repackaged, but the content is the same. As in the 1930s, totalitarianism is on the march. As then, there is one extremely powerful militaristic aggressor ever expanding its empire. Substitute the Soviet Union for the Third Reich. The Third Reich based its imperialism on a revolutionary ideology stressing some kind of socialism, nationalism, and it was exceedingly violent. The Soviet Union's imperialism also uses a revolutionary ideology, it is also socialistic and it is also exceedingly violent. Instead of being avowedly nationalistic it professes to be internationalist, but that is a myth, of course, as the country is very much in the pursuit of its national self-interest.

During the 1930's Germany was surrounded by satrapies. Some were blatantly annexed, like Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland. Other ones were allies like Hungary, Italy, Spain and Japan. Today the phenomenon repeats itself on a far larger scale. The Soviet Union has annexed a dozen countries, including the entire Warsaw Pact and Afghanistan. And then it has its allies all over the World, including Cuba, Nicaragua, Vietnam, North Yemen, Syria, Libya and a dozen or so other countries plus one or two more every year.

But the really important parallel is that both the fascist rampage of the 30's and the Marxist one today are 'multi-centered' worldwide phenomena that cannot be reduced to the responsibility of one central conspirator. Fascism was a disease that spread throughout the world during the 1930's. Germany and Japan became its most virulent carriers, but most other western nations became contaminated as well. Every European country had a fascist party that grew in strength and won more votes and parliament seats in each consecutive election. Some countries keeled over altogether - for example, Hungary, Italy, Austria. Elsewhere, the fascists became very strong, but did not quite take over, as for example in France. Indeed, there were in 1939 nearly as many Frenchmen ready to join Germany, or at least willing to remain neutral, as those siding with Britain. And so it was in Scandinavia, Belgium, Holland, etc. Each of these countries had vigorous Nazi parties supported by millions of voters, millions of individuals who felt that the political system emerging in Germany was more promising than the decrepit liberal democracy of the Anglo-Saxon world. Fascism was a worldwide popular movement that affected all countries.

Today, history repeats itself under a different cloak. Again, a disease has spread over the planet, but it now calls itself something else - international communism, socialism, or Marxism. Basically the label must indicate that the ideology is (1) collectivistic and (2) on the left. Somehow, the left is claimed to be good, while the right is bad. In reality, of course, the two are mirror images of one another, except that today the only catastrophic threat to mankind comes from the left, since

the right was trounced in the 1940s. After all, that is what World War II was all about, and it is precisely because of that defeat that no sane totalitarian is likely to assume a rightist label.

Just as fascism was a worldwide disease, so too it would be a mistake to entirely assign responsibility for the current outbreak to the Soviet Union. That country simply happens to be the most powerful carrier of the disease. But the world's problems go deeper than that, and the world is, in fact, in worse shape today than it was in the 1930's. Today, 75% to 80% of the world is unfree. This includes the vast majority of the Third World. There are, of course, a number of right-wing authoritarian regimes left (the Philippines, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, etc.). But by and large mankind is joining by the millions the left-wing revolutionary bandwagon. Each year the number of countries that somehow define them-selves as socialist and anti-capitalist increases. Cuba, Surinam, Granada, Nicaragua, North Yemen, soon El Salvador, Vietnam, Angola, etc. The vast majority of the Third World, even when considering itself non-aligned, is far more hostile to the Capitalist democracies than it is to the East. This applies to nearly all of Africa, India, and different types of totalitarianisms such as Iran. The vast majority of mankind now shares some sort of belief in some form of revolutionary socialism, and therefore the vast majority shares a basic hostility to the West, meaning first and foremost the United States. This much is quite clear from the vote tallies at the United Nations.

Furthermore, just as fascism was a worldwide and multi-centered disease, so the current wave from the left also contaminates the Western democracies *internally*. In Western Europe, there are large communist parties. They often participate in government, as is currently the case in France. . Everywhere in Europe 99% of the intelligentsia is Marxist in orientation. American academicians have also moved significantly in that direction. Then, too, the media are carrying on a relentless propaganda campaign trying to convince the American people that the worldwide tide from the left is a good thing - as for example in El Salvador.

Although the rise of contemporary international totalitarianism is no more monolithic than was the rise of fascism in the 1930's, the new wave does have a rallying point - in fact, the same one used by the fascists half a century ago: whether it be the Ayatollah Khomeini's Iran, or Libya, or the Sandinistas, or Syria, or Vietnam, or the French communists, or the German "Green" party or the Dutch pacifist-socialists, or terrorist groups such as the IRA or the PLO, or any fellow-traveler in any Western country, on one thing *all* totalitarians agree: the culprit of the world, the public enemy number one, is Anglo-Saxon style liberal bourgeois democracy and its economic system: Capitalism.

This is quite reminiscent of the 1930's. Then, too, the various fascist factions around the world agreed on one thing above all: their hatred of and contempt for bourgeois democracy. Then too, Mussolini, Hitler, Tojo and millions in the streets agreed that the West was decadent and corrupt; that the new revolutionary wave represented the inevitable march of progress. Fascism, too, claimed to be a gallant struggle against a corrupt world order dominated by Franco-British Imperialism and Jewish plutocracy. Then, too, parties such as the National Socialistic Bond in Holland (the Dutch Nazi Party, which gained up to 30% of the vote during the 1930's) sloganeered that it represented true democracy and that it wished to destroy the corrupt western capitalist power structure.

Even anti-Semitism remains an important element of the new totalitarianism, as it was, of course, central to the of the 1930's. While anti-Semitism can no longer be professed as openly as in the past, it has taken new forms. Now it is called anti-Zionism and the fight is allegedly against Israeli imperialism. In fact, the thing itself is the same. The Soviet government is confiscating jobs and property from Jews. Germans and Arab terrorists kill Jews, and many bystanders dislike Israel (translate: Jews).

Another striking parallel that came to mind when viewing *The Winds of War* is the

Orwellian newspeak used both by the totalitarians of the 1930s and those of today. Hitler, too, was invading Poland "in self-defense," waging war "to preserve the peace," enslaving the peoples of Europe in order to "liberate" them. Then, too, the British and the Americans were the "imperialists who stood in the way of national self-determination." Then, too, everything, including the most atrocious acts of violence, was committed in the name of the people (the "Folk").

Things have not changed very much. In one respect, the potential for totalitarianism is now even greater. After all, Goebbels' propaganda methods were fairly rudimentary compared to the far more efficient means of mass indoctrination available today. And this, too, is often misinterpreted: we see 100,000 people listening to the Fuhrer in a stadium and we say to ourselves that we, thank goodness, do not participate in such mass indoctrination rallies. However, Hitler did it that way precisely because he did not have the far more insidious and effective means available today - television first and foremost. So today the masses do not need to be physically corralled into stadiums by the hundreds of thousands. Big Brother has far more effective ways of reaching us.

Finally, there is another role-set that has not changed very much since the 1930's: That of the appeaser. Then, as now, the western democracies were so desperate to avoid war at any cost that they gave in to the totalitarian demands time after time, thereby postponing and aggravating the day of reckoning. Today, again, we have a pacifist and isolationist public opinion leadership - the media, primarily - suggesting that our own president is a warmonger (as FDR and Wilson were, right?) and that all we need to do is come to some accommodation with our protagonists. Today, the West's will to defend itself and its way of life is probably even weaker than it was in the 1930's. This is the truly depressing conclusion I was left with after watching *The Winds of War*. (*Sacramento Forum*, April 15, 1983).

### 7. Why Marxism will Never Prevail

*A few months later, in December 1983, I wrote the following anti-Marxist essay, which was never printed anywhere. I had no idea how fast things were going to move from the late 80s on. However, the collapse of the Soviet Union does not mean the collapse of Marxism. It must be remembered that Marxism remains, at least officially - the doctrine of a billion and a half people in the world. Furthermore, it can be expected to make a come-back, as it is already doing in South America, in Russia, in Eastern Europe and elsewhere. One reason for this is that Capitalism, which now dominates the global marketplace, is causing immense problems for everyone.*

*In any event, the essay shows my concern about the rapid expansion of Marxism and of Soviet influence in the world at the time. That concern was justified, because the expansion was very real.*

The only reason why Marxism will never prevail is that domination of the world by one unitary gospel is contrary to human nature. The quest for a universal doctrine is infinite. It is man's nature to seek, to question, to reject and to reformulate. No truth is final. Acceptance of a final, static truth is equivalent to death. At the very moment that a truth system triumphs, it is already in decline. While the quest for higher truths must go on, the end point is reached only in infinity. To claim (or to fear, or to hope, or to expect) that Marxism is the ultimate universal truth, is tantamount to saying that we have reached the end of history, the end of time. This is absurd.

No matter how dominant a system may become - think of the quasi-monopoly of Christianity until the Renaissance, at least until Mohammed's birth in A.D. 571) - there will always be pluralism, opposition, dialectic. Marxism (some call it "Scientific Socialism") is likely to spread further during the coming generations, gaining ascendancy as the most widespread doctrine.

Marxism is most definitely a doctrine for our time. This is evident from its enormous appeal to billions of people. This appeal will probably spread for the foreseeable future, making Marxism

and its variants the overwhelming world theology. Why?

Because it combines the two foundations of human *experiential* truth: an apparent *rational* objective world, combined with an *emotional* subjective response to it. *Inequality* is an objective and natural fact. It is subjectively perceived as *injustice* and the emotional response to it is *resentment*, jealousy, hate. Marxism reconciles the two aspects of the human experience in an unbeatable one-two punch. It claims that its analysis of society and history is *scientific*, and this makes it eminently suited for our scientific century. At the same time, it has the emotional appeal which is provided by *religion*.

It is materialistic, as all science must be, and it is also moral, which is the realm of religion. What more can be expected from a 20<sup>th</sup> century religion? It will be long before the basic contradiction between fact and value inherent in Marxism comes to the fore. This doctrine is likely to remain humanity's dominant gospel for some time. But there will always be those people who don't buy it. And then, in time, it will join the trash heap of history, as did for example Greco - Roman mythology.

### 8. The 1956 Hungarian Revolution was a Stalinist Plot

*The 1956 uprising in my country of birth was perhaps the single most heroic rebellion against Soviet imperialism. Yet, there have been idiots both East and West - Lenin called them useful idiots - who have belittled those courageous freedom fighters as reactionary henchmen of American Imperialism, and dismissed the bloody revolution as a Stalinist plot. That's what someone wrote in a November 3, 1986 article in U.S. News and World Report. Here is how I reacted to this in a letter submitted a few days later, which they refused to print:*

The 1956 Hungarian Revolt a Stalinist plot (*At Large* column, Nov.3)? I have heard of everything! What a stupid theory. So, a couple of Hungarian tanks managed to retain some ammo, and some ex-Stalinists turned anti-Soviet. That's no evidence. Surely no one in the Kremlin could have wanted, or been able, to mastermind such a bloody anti-Soviet uprising, one that caused thousands of Hungarian deaths, 150,000 deportations to Siberia and nearly 300,000 refugees worldwide. Let's face the facts, sad as they are, rather than concocting far-fetched conspiracy theories. What utter nonsense!

### 9. Did the Communists Kill my Grandmother?

*My grandmother lived in Budapest until her death in the Fall of 1988. The circumstances of her death prompted me to jot down the following thought at the time - paranoia?*

My grand-mother was 99 when she died recently. She had been living in the large mansion which her father had built at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century on a beautiful wooded hill overlooking Budapest. That is where she had spent most of her life. When Hungary became a Communist country after World War Two, the State confiscated our family house and moved in half a dozen families. After all, there was a severe housing shortage, and what right did our family have to own and live in a huge mansion all by ourselves?

In its generosity, the government permitted my grandparents to continue to occupy *one* room, and to use the now communal kitchen and bathroom.

After a while, my grand-father died and my grandmother became increasingly incapacitated, as most old people inevitably do. When she was in her nineties, the Government moved a young

couple in to live with my grandmother in her tiny apartment and to take care of her. Two birds with one stone, right? A young couple gets housing, and an old woman receives elder care.

And there was one additional bonus: According to the deal and the law, once my grandmother died, the young couple would get the apartment.

The trouble was, my grandmother wouldn't die. Four years later she was still going strong. And then, the young girl became pregnant. With a baby, the couple would have to move.

One night in 1988, my grand-mother went to bed with a splitting headache. (She had a history of headaches going back decades). An official "state" doctor was called, to give my grandmother a "headache shot." She never woke up.

Did the authorities "help" my grand-mother die? Is this called euthanasia? Or was it Senicide, as was practiced by Eskimos and other subsistence societies? Was it murder? Were the authorities thinking of the good of the many, which outweighs the good of one (quoting Star Trek's Spock)? After all, my grandmother was nearly a hundred years old, the housing shortage in the Hungarian "socialist paradise" was dreadful, and here was a young couple waiting for permanent housing...

But I am probably being paranoid, right?

## 10. Paranoia

*Speaking of paranoia. In 1985, I was still publishing my monthly, the Sacramento Forum. In April of that year, I printed the following article in my own newspaper, ridiculing Left-wing conspiracy theories, and using humor again against people who see everything in the world as the result of CIA plots.*

We recently received a letter describing alleged torture and brainwashing methods used by "commies" and KGB moles in the U.S. to subvert and contaminate good red-blooded Americans. The author of the letter- a former Caltrans employee - starts out by claiming that the commies "tortured me out of my assistant highway engineer's job." He then goes on to describe how the communists are "microwave crippling" him. Furthermore, he guesses that "twenty-five commie cells are torturing 25 Americans in the L.A. basin." The rambling 8-page letter becomes increasingly demented - a clever parody of right-wing paranoia.

Forum agrees that some of the old-fashioned right-wing paranoia (e.g. John Birch-type theories suggesting that rock and roll was a communist conspiracy, or Joe McCarthy calling President Eisenhower a communist stooge) has been pretty funny. Frankly, we are also a bit bored with "communism. " Although communism is indeed an abomination, the problems society faces are far more complex and varied. But let us turn the table on the smug fellow-travelers who so often ridicule the conservatives: Today, the real paranoia is on the left, which for decades has thrived on conspiracy mythologies not even worthy of the National Enquirer.

What follows is a caricature - inspired by the aforementioned letter- of the mind of the left-liberal, which means many of you: Ronald Reagan is itching for a war. Any war will do fine, but one in Nicaragua would be best. He wants to overthrow the Sandinistas, who are the peace-loving and democratic government that overthrew the fascist Somoza. He has instructed the Pentagon to draw up an invasion plan, which will probably occur on the third Thursday of a month in the fall (see Ula Bodek's *The Imperialists Strike Back*, p. 878). According to this revolutionary fighter-philosopher, the invasion of Central America by imperialist U.S. forces will occur during the full moon of the rainy season, possibly in 1998, but more probably after preliminary infiltration by the

underground College Republicans has been completed, i.e. in the first decade of the 22nd century.

Ronald Reagan wants to eliminate domestic social programs for the poor, the minorities, women, children, the elderly, the unemployed, the handicapped, teachers, state employees, the blind, the disabled, the veterans, the homosexuals, the mentally ill, the unskilled, swim coaches, the illiterate, the aphasics and the dislexics. He wants to do this so as to spend billions on nuclear weapons for profit and to bully the Soviet Union into subservience.

The CIA teaches torture and brainwashing techniques to fascist dictators like Pinochet, Somoza, Marcos, Hitler (who is living in the CIA complex in Paraguay) and the Shah of Iran, so as to exploit those countries and protect the profits of the American capitalist power structure.

Ronald Reagan and American corporations support apartheid because they are racists and because apartheid is good for the profits of McDonald, Wendy's and Taco Bell.

The oil shortages of the 1970's were contrived artificially by the oil companies so as to maximize their profits, and in order to force America to build more nuclear power plants (especially on top of earth faults) and nuclear bombs, both of which benefit the American capitalist power structure.

Not only does the CIA teach brainwashing and torture techniques to fascist foreign governments (see *The Melbourne Age*, January 21, 1981:20), but it also collaborates with the FBI and with local police forces to torture and brainwash domestic victims. The CIA secretly beams microwave radiation at subversives, radicals, liberals, feminists, students, professors, intellectuals, environmentalists, nuclear freeze advocates, civil rights activists, Democrats, sociology majors and left-handed people. The radiation is aimed at the neo-cortex and the left cerebral hemisphere. This results in a softening of the moral center of the brain and increased right-wing tendencies. Former left-wingers who have been brainwashed by the CIA in this manner include Eldridge Cleaver, Joan Baez, professors Victor Comerchero, Kirsten Amundsen, Tom Kando, and Jay Andre, David Stockman, Susan Sontag, many of the former acid freaks now turned Moonies and all the college students who have turned religious or conservative.

The most impervious subjects are unwittingly exposed to long distance X-ray radiation aimed at their genitals. This reduces the hormonal flow to their brain, resulting in apathy and retreatism from political activism. Consequently, we see in recent years more and more students spending Easter recess in Fort Lauderdale instead of marching in front of the White House for such causes as poverty, nuclear freeze or the liberation of whales and laboratory rats. This also accounts for the resurgence of fraternities and sororities, as well as football's renewed popularity at Berkeley.

At the same time, subliminal messages are beamed over the radio waves at ultra high frequencies. These messages are pro-business, pro-Republican and pro-American, resulting in pro-Reagan voting behavior in subsequent elections. These secret torture and brainwashing techniques account for the resurgence of fundamentalist religion, pro-capital-punishment sentiment, the popularity of William Buckley, Jerry Falwell and Bernhard Goetz. Without the help of the CIA, Ronald Reagan would not have been re-elected in 1984. After all, he was clearly opposed by the vast majority of intelligent Americans who could all see that he merely represented the special interests of Big Business and the Hearst Castle/Disneyland Corporation.

With the help of the CIA, the Reagan administration has been able to secretly embark on a program labeled, in a classified White House memorandum, "How to Profit from Nuclear War." (see William Dumkopf, *How Can I Rule America?*, 1956: 97).

It is in light of this secret memorandum that Reagan's recent statement regarding "shipping American farmers out" (see *Sacramento Bee*, March 15:A15) must be viewed: The plan calls for shipping Midwestern farmers to countries with food shortages, shortages that have been induced by the CIA to create an artificial demand for American food exports and thus increase the ability of the American capitalist power structure to wage war. The CIA poisoned the food supply of many Third

World countries through the use of a radioactive substance called agent magenta. In return for our farmers, the receiving governments (Basutoland, Ugro-Moravia, South Irgun, etc.) will purchase American nuclear power plants and nuclear bombs.

The sale of nuclear bombs to Third World (and even fifth world) countries by General Electric is meant to speed up the onset of World War Three. According to a classified research project of the Rand Corporation, the US counts on making a profit of \$1.67 trillion out of World War Three (based on the profits made from World War Two and accounting for inflation). This will then easily erase the Federal budget deficit (see Pierre Lefou's article in *La Farce du Matin*, July 8, 1964:25). The administration is able to carry out these plans without the same massive protests as during the Vietnam war because it is using the aforementioned subliminal torture, surveillance and indoctrination techniques on the American people.

What can be done? It is important to be alert to potential exposure to the CIA's brainwashing beams. Symptoms include frequent headaches, nausea, vomiting, a reduced sex drive and an occasional urge to eat Chinese food or to have an homosexual affair in the morning. The prime source of radiation consists of electronic media - TV, radio, records, tapes - and especially the home computer. The best remedy is therefore to get rid of those appliances altogether. It must be understood that the so-called computer revolution of the past decade has been the military-industrial complex's way to establish - 1984 style - the final surveillance and brainwashing of the American people. Therefore, the safest thing to do is to disconnect one's Apple IIe, Atari, Commodore or Wang and to go back to paper and pencil for one's computational needs. But make sure you reconnect it before opening your door to strangers, who might be government spies! ((*Sacramento Forum*, April 15, 1985).

### 11. Russophobia

*After the collapse of the Soviet Union, NATO expanded eastward, taking in Hungary and all the other former satellites of Russia. I thought that this was a pretty good idea, since NATO is the only organization in the world which fights for good things and also has some teeth. However, many Western liberals opposed the expansion, fearing that it antagonized Russia. A syndicated article by Charles Krauthammer in the Sacramento Bee on April 21, 1998 expressed this view. A few days later, I submitted the following reaction to Krauthammer's article. They didn't print it.*

As a Hungarian-American, I am deeply interested in both NATO's proposed expansion to include Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic, and in Russia's situation. However, while I agree with Krauthammer that this expansion of NATO is good, I disagree with his assessment of the danger posed by Russia.

Krauthammer suffers from a fairly common condition, one which might be termed *Russophobia*, i.e. an undue fear of Russia. The author reiterates, as do many others, that Russia is "the largest country on the planet." But this is meaningless. Canada is the second largest, area-wise. So what? Krauthammer also notes that historically, Russia "expanded at the rate of one Belgium every two years." So? Throughout the 19th century, the US expanded at the rate of two Belgioms a year! True, Russia's military arsenal remains large, but it is, in Patrick Robinson's words, moribund.

Actually, Russia is today "the sick man of Europe," in a position similar to the Ottoman Empire a century ago.

It is not clear whether or not Russia is terminally ill, but the country is near collapse -- economically, politically and demographically. Its population is now *half* that of the US, and declining. Life expectancy has gone down by six or seven years since the fall of Communism. The

economy is run by criminals and unable to make headway. Russian technology is falling steadily further behind that of other countries. The military are unable to put down the Chechnian insurrection. The country is in serious trouble, and will remain so in the foreseeable future.

There are many good reasons to keep NATO strong. In Bosnia for example, it has proven to be a much more able organization than the UN. But let's not exaggerate the magnitude of the Russian threat.

## 12. Is Europe just the Edge of Asia?

*This was not the first time that I warned against exaggerating the strength of the enemy. At the height of the Cold War, many Western liberals also had the urge to appease the Soviet Union, out of an undue fear and an exaggeration of its relative power. The Europeans were particularly prone to this.*

*In September 1982, the Wall Street Journal printed an article by a Dutchman arguing that Europe should accept being subservient to Russia because, after all, Europe has always been a mere appendage of Asia. In my view, this is historical revisionism of the worst sort. It expressed current European cowardice, not the way Europe thought about itself in the past. I sent the following rebuttal to the Journal, which printed it on September 20, 1982:*

Andre Spoor's Sept 1 "Europe" column claims that "there is a historically deep-rooted feeling that Europeans . . . live on the Cape of Asia that is called Europe." This is sheer nonsense. Western Europeans have always felt themselves to be at the geopolitical center of the world - as they indeed were - and both European Russia and all of Asia were viewed as peripheral hinterlands of little consequence. The notion that Western Europe is merely the Cape of Asia is precisely a recent manifestation of the Finlandization mentality. It is not deeply rooted in history, but to the contrary part of the defeatist revisionism which revels in Europe's diminished stature.

Spoor also errs when attributing to "Gaullist tradition" a lack of fear of Soviet expansionism. It was precisely the general who understood the Soviet threat better than other French and European leaders and thus erected France's quite credible *Force de Frappe*. It is in the tradition of Mitterrand's Socialist Party to cozy up to the Soviets, of course.

The Dutch editor concludes that the Americans, by objecting to the Finlandization of Europe (of which the pipeline is one form), provide wind for Moscow's sails and make Finlandization that much more likely. What is America to do? Assist in the rapprochement between its allies and its foe so as to prevent that very thing from occurring? Must the cuckold refrain from criticizing his spouse from fear of further alienating her?

Many Europeans wish to be internationally promiscuous and to have their cake and eat it too. The defense of their freedom and high affluence is viewed as America's sole responsibility, as are all attendant sacrifices, while Europe goes its merry way doing business as usual with freedom's most implacable foe.

There is one deep-rooted European tradition to which Spoor did not allude in his article - the unprincipled cozying up to a powerful enemy. Forty years ago this was called collaboration (*Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 20, 1982).

## 21. TAKING ON THE LEFT: MEDIA BIAS

### 1. Why is National Public Radio so Slanted to the Left?

*I have been listening to Public Radio for decades, because it provides the best classical music and jazz, and because its political programs are intelligent. However, it is extremely biased towards the Left. On November 6, 1982, after listening to one more virulently pro-feminist program, I fired off the following letter to Human Events, which did not print it.*

Congratulations on your exposé of National Public Radio's anti-Reagan bias (October 30). I have long wanted to write to *Human Events* about NPR. My misfortune is that I love classical music. Unfortunately, there is in this country a strong and inexplicable relationship between good cultural programming and left-wing bias, as for example with most educational television and classical FM stations. So, in order to enjoy Bach, Mozart and Beethoven on the local classical station, one must swallow the daily propaganda of the likes of Cokie Roberts on All Things Considered (although I have learned to switch stations shortly before 5:00pm).

But my main point is this: "Women in Politics" was merely the tip of the iceberg. Actually, anti-Reaganism is NPR's consistent *policy*, day in day out, year around. It is incomprehensible that NPR is permitted to ceaselessly badger and malign the very two entities that make its existence possible - the Administration, which gives it \$10 million a year, and Business, which picks up the remainder of the tab in the form of grants. The media are known to bite the hands that feed them. I am not sure why the administration and corporations permit this so often to occur. Perhaps it is simple stupidity. Whatever the cause may be, the situation seems contrary to any basic sense of justice. Sooner or later one would expect that NPR, like other left-wing media, either clean up its act or be cut loose by those it so relentlessly attacks.

## 2. Same with Time Magazine: Why is it so Liberal?

*A month later, on December 5, 1982, I wrote a longer letter to Henry Anatole Grunwald, Time's Editor-in-Chief, accusing his magazine of being too liberal. Of course, the rambling piece was never printed. Still, it makes some points that were pretty valid at that time.*

I write to you as a long-time reader of *Time*, a concerned educator, and from the perspective of someone who moved to the United States nearly 20 years ago and who has become increasingly appalled by the erosion of the goodness, the health, the superiority, the assets and the qualities that made me come to the United States in the early sixties.

Some years ago I switched from *Newsweek* to *Time* due to *Newsweek's* liberal bias. I identify the *Washington Post* gang principally as responsible for that most destructive, harmful and needless pseudo-crisis - Watergate.

Unfortunately, *Time* now also appears to be in a leftward drift. It is now at least as frequently anti-Reagan as it was anti-Kennedy in 1960. It is far too sympathetic to the pacifism of Western Europeans, Americans and the upper Catholic clergy. It is far too sympathetic with the Salvadorean rebels, the Sandinista government and other forces hostile to this country, to its interests and to its institutions. You are far too lenient with the Soviets, especially Andropov. You favor detente the way Chamberlain favored appeasement. You make James Watts look like a devil, Israel like an aggressor and the PLO like a legitimate group. You often favor Democratic policies, as you generally favored Republican ones in the 50s, and like everyone else in this country, you refuse to call the Democratic party what it is, namely the *socialist* party.

Time after time you are on the wrong side of issues: You predicted that the US would come out the big loser from supporting Britain in the Falklands, that Israel's invasion of Lebanon would

hurt the cause of Middle-Eastern peace and American interests, that CIA efforts to destabilize the Sandinista regime would be counterproductive. You were wrong in your predictions. We should be doing more such things, not be more cautious, as you advocate.

*Time's* liberalization may be under the guise of evenhandedness. But that is no excuse. You used to be a sound and solid conservative week, superior in depth and quality to your yellow competitors. You were the best mass weekly magazine. Your editorial values were clear, up-front and correct. When it came to core American values such as freedom from excessive government, you did not equivocate. But you are now becoming part of that bland, mediocre, left-liberal and biased public opinion elite that is suffocating us.

*Time* may have had to become liberal in order to retain market share. Business opportunism is a understandable motive. But I am also convinced that much of the leftward drift has been inadvertent. It is primarily due to the fact that the hundreds of writers and reporters working far below you are by and large left-wing liberals at heart, basically socialists and Marxists without the label. I believe that the American media are in a state of anarchy, expressing the views of left-wing reporters and journalists rather than those of responsible publishers, editors and station owners.

By abdicating control over editorial policy, by giving in to the leftward push from below, by taking the easy way out instead of being leaders, you are doing irreparable damage to country.

The media are disorienting and confusing Americans, relentlessly making them feel bad, bad about themselves, their country, the world, their government, their leaders, their traditions and their institutions. How can you justify this when in fact, as you must agree, our lives are in all objective ways far better than they were 10, 25 or 50 years ago? Surely most Americans today are richer, healthier, better fed, better educated, better integrated, freer, safer and live longer than their parents. And surely the *Pax Americana* of the past 37 years has, at great and selfless cost to America, been the period of greatest global progress and prosperity ever.

But, as Herb Stein notes in his *Wall Street Journal* editorial of December 3, and as Richard Nixon noted earlier, we are losing World War Three. The responsible conservatism which was your hallmark a couple of decades ago is far more needed today, as it is in such terribly short supply.

I for one will continue to point out to my small audiences that the media are by and large a left-wing indoctrinatory caste, with dogma, party line, taboos, etc. Of course, it is in the nature of subcultures to view the world from a single angle - be it university professors, the police, the artistic community or the Amish. The trouble is that the fourth estate has become a practically monolithic subculture with a unified ideological bias, and that it has developed an unjustified amount of power and influence, power to indoctrinate the entire society into its ideology, to swing elections and to unseat governments. Given the fact that the ideology does not have the interests of the American people at heart, or the long-term survival of our society and institutions as we know them, we are headed toward disaster.

I urge you to keep my ramblings in mind. My perceptions are shared by a tiny but growing number of intellectuals who did their internship in the miscellaneous liberal causes of the sixties, as I have, and who are now labeled "neo-conservative." I refer to celebrities like Irving Louis Horowitz, Sidney Hook, Irving Kristol, Peter Berger, Paul Wolfowitz, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Susan Sontag, Betty Friedan and many lesser-known others like myself.

To label our perception conservative is merely the left-leaning elite's strategy to neutralize us. In reality, we are the ones who part ways with current dogma and are the true innovators. Significantly, I commune much better these days with my 18-to-22 year old students than with the older carry-overs from the counterculture. The younger generation is becoming aware that the media consistently distort the truth and contribute to our society's decline. In sum, your magazine is in the wrong place, not only morally and politically, but also pragmatically.

### 3. Why does the Sacramento Bee hate America?

*Continuing my campaign against left-wing media bias, I sent the following letter to the Sacramento Bee in 1985, and surprisingly, they printed it (on April 1):*

The main reason we still subscribe to your irritating newspaper is that it has better grocery coupons than the competition. Your editorial section is particularly biased - entirely predictable in its compulsive hatred of Reagan, conservatism, Republicans, supply-side economics, rearmament, etc.

While no day goes by without at least one stupid, unfounded anti-Reagan or anti-American cartoon on one of those pages, let me just once call you on one of your daily distortions: I refer to the March 22 guest cartoon blaming all Middle Eastern violence on American weapons. Come off it. Iraq's entire arsenal consists of Soviet weapons, with some French Mirages and Exocet missiles mixed in. Syria's SAMs and MIGs, are of course also of Soviet origin, as are all their other weapons. So are the Kalashnikovs and other weapons of the PLO and of the Shiite factions. The only reason Iran still uses U.S. weapons is that they were delivered while it was still an ally (*Sacramento Bee*, April 1, 1985).

### 4. Another critique of Left-Wing Media Bias

*I spared no one from my criticism. The other Sacramento newspaper, the Union, was a relatively conservative Republican paper. Nevertheless, I saw them slipping towards liberal "me-tooism" as well, so on April 23, 1986, I sent the following letter to editor-in-chief.*

*What can I say? I was really worried about Soviet expansion at that time. Communism was swallowing up one country after another - Vietnam, Afghanistan, Nicaragua, Grenada, etc. After the Vietnam debacle, America was weak. This was no doubt one reason why the Soviets were able to do so much mischief around the world. The Carter administration had been a disaster. President Reagan was just beginning to turn things around. No one could have predicted that within five years America would become the sole remaining superpower. I believe that at this time, my jeremiads were justified. Today, of course, my anti-communist drumbeat may appear somewhat tedious. See for yourself.*

The *Sacramento Union's* editorial policy has traditionally been sound. Unlike the *Bee*, it has displayed integrity and a refusal to join the bandwagon of sleazy and chic anti-Americanism in a quest for popularity and \$.

Recently, though, your editorial pages have reproduced some putrid material. On April 19, you devoted an inordinate amount of space to the lies and communist propaganda of a Siegfried Centerwall. Why did you reprint so prominently such obvious falsehood? As an official guest of Nicaragua's communist government, this Centerwall character had no choice but to lie about the situation in that country. Why do you not, instead, listen to and print the words of the thousands of refugees from the latest Marxist paradise? Why do you not publicize the Sandinista's atrocities, their death squads, their repression of press and religion, their genocidal Indian policies, their anti-Semitism, their fascist militarization of their own country, their destabilization of Central America, their colonization by the Soviet Union and Cuba? Why don't you tell the readers that the Ortega government is full of ex-Somocistas, including the current mayor of Managua?

On April 22, you reprinted a nauseating column by Nicholas von Hoffman, in which he

takes a cheap shot at SDI and otherwise attacks every conceivable American interest in his discussion of the recent raid on Libya.

What people like Centerwall and von Hoffman do - along with much of what appears in the *Bee*, the *Washington Post* and most other media - is the moral equivalent of collaboration with the Nazis during the 1930s. Such articles are examples of blaming the victim. As when some wacko blames women for being raped, so many modern-day Marxist-liberals like Centerwall and von Hoffman blame our government, our democracy, our institutions, our selfless military for the savagery directed *against* Americans.

By printing such poison, the American media do more harm than Khadafi's terrorists. While the latter kill some people, the media poison the minds of the American people.

You have no obligation to "show the other side" so prominently. Some token liberal representation on your op-ed page, perhaps. But to fill nearly half of your editorial section with such garbage is destructive and opportunistic. You may argue that the First Amendment obligates you to give expression to all sides of an issue. Don't tell me your cross-town Democratic rival would practice it blindly if it received large amounts of conservative materials. They preface their token conservative columnist as a *right winger*, thus cleverly neutralizing any impact James Kilpatrick might have.

We expect non-stop sleaze from the *Sacramento Bee*, but we were hoping that our city's second paper, at least, would remain solidly on the side of honesty and integrity. Apparently, none of the media can be expected to be guided by such standards.

#### 5. Why are Right-wing Conspiracies Crazier than Left-wing Conspiracies?

*Not even the Wall Street Journal, that bastion of Capitalism, escapes political correctness. On October 2 1991, it published an article about the John Birch Society, ridiculing it, of course. Without trying to defend the John Birch Society - an organization which I find both silly and harmless - I nevertheless sent the following letter decrying the media's double standard when it comes to the Right's and the Left's equally absurd conspiracy theories. I don't remember whether they printed it. I doubt it, even though it is a fine letter, if I say so myself.*

Robert Rose's front page article about the John Birch Society (October 2) is informative, but it makes one wonder: Why are right-wing conspiracy theories recognized as lunatic, whereas their mirror images on the left enjoy widespread acceptance? Why is the idea of communist conspiracy crazier than that of capitalist conspiracy? Many people have long believed that the trilateral commission rules the world. Its members allegedly include Zbigniew Brezinsky, Henry Kissinger and the late Nelson Rockefeller. Millions - among them vast segments of the academic and media elite - believe that the CIA has a hand in every power grab in the world, always to further American hegemony. Most people in the Third World and in Europe also believe this.

Just a few days ago, the Haitian demonstrators in front of the U.N. building were blaming the CIA for the overthrow of President Aristide. The CIA and the Mossad conspire to promote the international capitalist-Zionist takeover of the world. The CIA invented AIDS and is spreading it around the world. In the movie *Network*, actor Ned Beatty brilliantly convinces the audience that communism is merely a side show for the main event - the international capitalist conspiracy. A plurality of political scientists and sociologists follow C. Wright Mills and William Domhoff in their belief that we are ruled by a conspiratorial power elite and a monolithic military-industrial complex. According to Domhoff, they meet secretly in Mendocino, Calif., where they concoct their nefarious schemes to exploit us. This is the kind of stuff that is taught social science majors, and

many of them lap it up with great enthusiasm.

My point is obvious: It is cheap and easy to dismiss those 20,000 John Birchers as the buffoons that they are - poor souls lost in the 1950s. But what about their contemporary counterpart on the left? Must we take their lunacy less seriously because they are so numerous and so powerful?

The empirical evidence supporting left-wing conspiracy theories is as weak as that in support of the John Birchers' views. I am eagerly awaiting exposes ridiculing those theories, showing the quaint irrationality and paranoia of Marxist professors, students and intellectuals, Third World activists, New York Times and National Public Radio editorialists, radical congressmen, etc.

#### 6. Are Liberal Values Better than Conservative Values?

*Here is a short and incisive analysis written on December 6, 1992. Once again, it is about the media's liberal values. What is really good about this short piece is its perceptive unmasking of the double standard used by liberals, and a sound sociological explanation of why the media (as well as intellectuals) are liberal. I sent it to the Sacramento Bee but they didn't print it. It was simply too good.*

This is not a complaint, merely a point of view. I hope that you will print some of my comments, or perhaps pass them on to the editor of the editorial page:

On December 6, you wondered whether or not the media are liberally biased. How can you equivocate on such an obvious fact? Is the Pope catholic? Surely the question is not whether, but how much!

You then propose a familiar theory to explain the bias: journalists are motivated by a sense of social concern, altruism, and they are also above average in education.

I often discuss the liberal bias of both the media and academics in my sociology classes, and my students generally come up with the same explanation as you. However, that explanation is unfair to conservatism, since it implicitly equates liberalism with *good* values (altruism and knowledge) and conservatism with *bad* ones (selfishness and ignorance).

There is an alternative explanation: The natural tendency for people is to *conform*. We all tend to conform to the values of our peers and of the (sub)culture in which we live. Professors and journalists are no exception. And since we live in a liberal environment, each of us has to conform, in order not to be ostracized, ridiculed and rejected. After all, we all want to be invited to lunch and to the Christmas office party by our peers.

Your theory is itself an expression of liberal bias. It defines the essence of liberalism as consisting of altruism and social concern, and by implication that of conservatism as consisting of selfishness. Can't it also be said that essential conservative values are hard work, thrift, self-reliance, individualism, self-denial and deferred gratification, whereas liberalism stands for indolence, free-loading, immediate pleasure and irresponsibility? Admittedly a biased list, but no more so than yours.

My definition of conservatism also goes a long way toward explaining its unpopularity. Who are people more likely to vote for - the politician who asks them to work hard, or the one who promises them a free lunch?

#### 7. Who Controls Society?

*In 1983, I created my own newspaper, the Sacramento Forum. This became the greatest effusion of political texts I ever produced. I was finally my own man. I could print whatever I wanted - within legal limits. Here is an article I wrote in the September 1983 issue of our paper. Remember that the Sacramento Forum was an educational vehicle. We produced six to eight thousand copies each month and distributed them to the students and to the faculty. It is for such an audience that this article was written. It is a lesson in Political Science.*

The title of this piece is nothing but the eternal political question. Marxism is a current and fashionable answer to it. But in one form or another, this has been *the* political question since man first learned to live in groups. Who has the power and who does not? Who controls whom? Who is the chief, who are the Indians?

The twentieth century is the age of materialism, a tendency epitomized by Marxism. Marxism answers the political question as follows: power and control derive from material wealth (capital). Those who are wealthy (own the means of production) are *ipso facto* in control of the power structure and of the behavior and the ideas of the rest of us.

Actually, the model is just plain wrong. I am desperate to show that it is wrong, because this belief has become so widespread that it can no longer be viewed as the hallmark of Marxism alone. It is now the average Cal State student, the average American housewife and the average worker who also agree with the materialistic premise that the moneyed business class controls society. To this extent, we have all become Marxists, or let us say, philosophical materialists.

In fact, the materialistic power model is as incorrect today as it was in the past. In tribal society, the most powerful member was often the war chief, the priest or the shaman. His power derived not from great material wealth but from bravery, physical prowess, a monopoly on ritualistic and sacred knowledge, etc.

In peasant and feudal societies, power was concentrated in the hands of the nobility. In India, the ruling elite consisted of Brahmins (priests; cooks) and Kshatriyas (warriors). In China they were mandarins - scholars and bureaucrats. In Japan they were the Samurai warriors. Hardly ever has material wealth been the *sine qua non* for elite membership. Throughout the history of western civilization, the moneyed Jew, and later the gentile bourgeoisie, were in fact *excluded* from power.

As a historical generalization, it would be more accurate to say that power brings money than the reverse - Marxian - axiom. Indeed, insofar as the nobility, the Brahmins and the war chiefs throughout history end up with considerable wealth, it is because they accumulate it *through* their military conquests, power and influence.

And so it is today. Perhaps for a brief period of time in the history of this country the "business of America was business," and "what was good for General Motors was good for America." but this has been a short historical exception. As a rule, merchants have generally had low prestige and low influence. They have been the working bees of society, not its glamor types.

#### America is not Ruled by Capitalists

Shortly after World War Two, the Austrian economist Joseph Shumpeter wrote *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*. In this seminal work, the author noted precisely this sort of thing: Capitalists are ill-suited to be a ruling class and to motivate the populace to do anything, for they are inherently unglamorous and uncharismatic. They make money and produce goods. As a species, they simply do not mesmerize and turn people on the way high priests, war chiefs and knights did in the past, and the way athletes, movie stars and rock musicians do today. They exist to be used, ridiculed, and sometimes blamed. This is particularly so with those capitalists still struggling in the

productive process - the *nouveau riche*. Ridiculing the bourgeoisie and the *parvenu* has been popular ever since the beginnings of Capitalism arose. Moliere wrote his comedy *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* 350 years ago.

However, the same fate does not befall second and third-generation capitalists. The latter-day Rockefellers and Kennedys having inherited their wealth, can afford to relax, to become suave and charismatic. They then go into politics and become liberal.

Today there is a myth that the capitalist business class controls society. This is false. It is true that this class - the political right - still frequently controls the means of production, the government and the armed forces. But these institutions are no longer where the power is!

#### Advent of the Consciousness Industry

Power today means primarily control of the *means of communication and socialization*. This means first and foremost the schools, the universities, the mass media and the popular culture.

Since the days of the counterculture, the left has learned a lesson which still eludes conservatives: that the cultural revolution begins with the takeover of the *Consciousness Industry*. Then, in time, economic, political and military institutions will follow. And this sort of Marxism in reverse is precisely what has been going on ever since the 1960s on both sides of the Atlantic.

Conservatives and businessmen may feel somewhat comfortable noting that the Republicans control the White House, the Conservatives control Downing Street, and Helmut Kohl has replaced Helmut Schmidt. However, control of many Western governments by the right is deceptive. For the true locus of power in post-industrial society is the same as what it was in pre-industrial society: it is the consciousness business. And that sector is ever more firmly controlled by the left.

Thus it does not matter very much that Ronald Reagan accidentally takes over the White House. Had it not been for Iran, Carter would still be President. Or that Dukemejian accidentally takes over in Sacramento. Had it not been for the anti-gun initiative, the governor would still be a Democrat. Temporary setbacks for the left do not matter, for it continues to effectively dominate public opinion. It is the consciousness industry which dictates our values, our concerns, our perceptions and our priorities.

The Dutch author Van Houten was quoted precisely in this context in our very first issue. As he states, the media of indoctrination have now successfully convinced a majority of us that "equality is more important than freedom, capitalism is a system based on greed and gross inequality and hence, morally inferior to socialism; the poverty of the so-called Third World is the result of Western exploitation..."

Van Houten goes on to note that "if the media constantly play down the Soviet military threat or depict guerillas in El Salvador as freedom fighters against a fascist regime, then it can only be expected that even dyed-in-the-wool conservatives will start wondering whether the deployment of new missiles in Europe is necessary and whether America is backing the right side in Central America." As to politicians, they are not ignorant of the dishonesty of our age. But since their first priority is political survival, they must go along with the *Zeitgeist* - the spirit of the time.

#### The Need for Freedom of Thought

As Van Houten concludes, the battle for the preservation of freedom will not be won or lost in congress, but in the schools, in the universities and in the newspapers. "Only a strong conservative presence in these institutions can make sure that, to borrow a phrase from George Orwell, the smelly orthodoxies of the left can be exposed for what they are. For only then can it be made clear to the people that the system of democratic capitalism is worth defending at all costs because it provides more freedom, prosperity and, yes, equality than any other system ever tried;

that the West is not guilty of the poverty of the Third World - on the contrary; and that the greatest threat to world peace comes from a totalitarian dictatorship that has already enslaved hundreds of millions of people..."

Who controls society? Not the capitalists, that's for sure. It is not the businessman who controls you. He is having enough difficulty fighting off a relentless assault upon his function, his morality, his place in society, his interests, let alone trying to do his job, which is to *produce*.

You are being controlled alright, but by those who control your *mind*! That includes the phony propagandists at the *Sacramento State Hornet* and their advisers among the faculty. If you don't agree that you are being indoctrinated, just take stock for a moment of the cliches you accept without question, the truisms that you and most people you know agree about. Where do they come from? Where do you read and hear them day in and day out? If that is not indoctrination. what is? (*Sacramento Forum*, Sept. 1983).

### 8. An Incredibly Mean Feminazi

*Starting with Rush Limbaugh in the 1980s, talk radio became the great conservative counterattack against the media's pervasive Left-leaning bias. Still, many radio commentators remained rabidly liberal. A prime example of someone like that was Christine Craft, who moved from station to station around the country, suing and fighting, gradually descending into obscurity. For a while she worked at Sacramento's KFBK, the same station where Rush Limbaugh launched his career.*

*Being eclectic, I listened both to her - on the rabid Left - and to Rush Limbaugh, on the far Right.*

*What characterized Christine Craft the most were not her political views, but her meanness. So on December 5 1991, I wrote a letter to Rush Limbaugh, urging him to take her on. Of course my letter was ignored. Too bad. Rush and Christine could have offered us a very entertaining debate. Here is part of my letter:*

Dear Rush:

Why don't you take on Christine Craft of Sacramento's KFBK radio station - the station which launched your career ? She recently invited you on the air to do that. She is truly a mean person, and she lies a lot, too. Just the other day, there was a caller who disagreed with her on the air. The issue was eating meat. She of course, being modern, is against eating meat. On the other hand, the caller was a red neck who likes to eat meat. And you know what she said to him, on the air? She wished colon cancer on him! She also refers to you as a flatulent tub of goo. And once when she was talking about Judge Robert Bork - you know, the conservative guy nominated to the Supreme Court by Reagan but voted down by Congress - she said that he advocated the sterilization of women. Surely that has got to be a lie, no?

So I recommend that you have a debate with her. And this time, don't tie your hand behind your back, but come out swinging, alright?

## 22. TAKING ON THE LEFT: PRESIDENTS AND ELECTIONS

### 1. Epitaph for Richard Nixon

*When the Watergate scandal unfolded , from 1972 onwards, my wife and I followed it with great interest, mesmerized by the daily Sam Irvin-Howard Baker show on national television.*

*However, unlike most of our friends and colleagues, we did not relish Nixon's downfall.*

*There was no doubt that the man had done wrong, but we felt that the situation was sad and tragic, not fun. We did not share our friends' sadistic joy and the wolf pack mentality around us. We saw Watergate as one third pseudo-event, one third party politics by other means, and one third justified outrage at a President who had behaved in a manner unbefitting his position.*

*Most people overseas never understood what the big deal was. Many foreign heads of state said that much. They saw it as a palace revolution, perhaps rightly so.*

*Many of us also deplored the damage done to America by the protracted struggle between two elites. While the effort to bring down Nixon went on - and it took three years to accomplish that - no one was managing the store. America paid dearly for this media circus and for the fun-and-games way in which it fires its President. Finally, in 1974, Nixon left the White House. While watching his ignominious departure on television, I jotted down the following observation:*

His worst sin was that he was a 19<sup>th</sup> century man who lived in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He was David Riesman's inner-directed man, Charles Reich's "Consciousness One" individual. He never became William Whyte's Organization Man or C. Wright Mills' smooth White Collar role player - those mid-twentieth century effete, pliable and decent mediocrities who came to typify our national character. Like Michael Corleone, his allegiance was to himself and to his family, not to American society, which must have appeared like a meaningless abstraction to him. His ego was too large for a late 20<sup>th</sup> century politician. He used the word "I" too often:

"I am not a crook"

"I am not a quitter"

He therefore never fully became a public figure. He never became the *role* he wished so much to occupy - that of "the President." He had the enormous but obsolete strength of the dinosaur. He was one of Wilfredo Pareto's *lions*, and the *foxes* got him. He will be more difficult to forget than many of his predecessors, and certainly more so than his immediate successors. For better or worse, he will remain a larger historical figure than Lyndon Johnson and Gerald Ford, or Jimmy Carter for that matter.

## 2. Are Republican Hecklers Nazi Storm Troopers?

*Ten years later, President Reagan had revived the country, conservatives were back in the saddle, and I was publishing my campus monthly, the Sacramento Forum. The 1984 presidential campaign was heated, and we, at Forum, did our best to influence the outcome. When Democrats and Republicans accused each other of using disruptive tactics against each other, I wrote the following commentary about that. The article appeared in the October 1984 issue of our paper.*

Young Americans for Freedom disrupted a Mondale appearance at the University of Southern California. Elsewhere, both he and Ferraro have experienced sporadic heckling. The Left's reaction was predictable. The *Sacramento Bee* termed the pranksters *brown shirts*. Mondale himself called on Reagan to call off his *storm troopers*. My, my, what hyperbole! At least the *Sacramento Bee* had the presence of mind to recall the "similar" treatment of Jeane Kirkpatrick by the Left.

But are we talking about similar incidents? Or is this a case of the pot calling the kettle black? Over the past twenty years, who has had a virtual monopoly on the vicious and unfair use of insult, disruption, violence and ridicule in the political arena? The Left, of course. Now the chickens

are coming home to roost.

In fact, Kirkpatrick's treatment on college campuses was far worse than what the U.S.C. kids did to Mondale, and it was shamelessly condoned by faculty and administration: She was repeatedly prevented from delivering her addresses (Berkeley, Columbia). At Minnesota, the Left unfurled large swastika bearing flags from the balcony of the auditorium. Now *that* is something I wouldn't hesitate to call fascist! Other conservatives have received an equally barbaric treatment. At the University of Wisconsin, Eldridge Cleaver was violently shoved off stage. At Cal State, picket signs read: "Go Back To Where You Belong, You Mormon Racist." (Did the "progressives" carrying those signs mean Africa or Utah?). Compare this with what the YAF youngsters did at U.S.C.: They called Mondale Boring! Brown shirts? Come on!

Then too, when Kirkpatrick is faced with the barbarism from the Left, she does not call on the Democratic Party (to which she belongs) to rein in its troops. It is the Mondale camp which stoops to such a cheap attempt to squeeze political mileage out of an unfortunate incident.

The truth of the matter is that there is no concerted conspiracy to engage in dirty tricks in either the Democratic or the Republican Party. Such unfortunate outburst are spontaneous and extremist expressions at the grassroots level. The fact that the Left has finally lost its monopoly on them was to be expected. The Left is beginning to reap what it has sown. After twenty years of "countercultural" politics, the Left must inevitably evoke its own mirror image on the Right. Surely any good dialectician must know that. But the Left doesn't believe that what is good for the goose is good for the gander. Its motto (had it a classical education) would read: *quod licet lovi, non licet bovi* or, freely translated: It's all right if I do it, but not if you do (*Sacramento Forum*, Oct. 1984).

### 3. Media don't Understand why Bush lost to Clinton

*Eight years later, it was the Democrats' turn to be jubilant - their man won the presidency back. I found all the pundits' post-mortem explanations for Clinton's victory ad hoc and unsatisfactory. I offered my own, reproduced below. I wrote it on November 2, 1992, the day after the election. I never got published.*

All the analyses and post-mortems of the 1992 presidential election are wrong. People on the right (Rush Limbaugh) and on the left (everyone else) both try to determine how the Republican campaign blundered and how clever the Democrats were.

Actually, campaign strategies and candidates had little to do with the outcome. The Democrats didn't win because of their clever game plan or because of the quality of their standard bearer, or because they articulated the real issues affecting the American people. The Republicans didn't lose because of the ineptitude of Bush, Baker, Darman and their presidential campaign. The outcome of the election would have been the same even if the Republican candidate and his team had been geniuses. It is a natural tendency to blame the victim, to see cause and effect when failure occurs, to assume that the loser lost because he performed poorly or because he was the lesser man. Actually, the Republicans fought as well as can be expected. As men, they are of a caliber that is at least equal to that of Clinton and his entourage. *Who they are* and *what they did* has very little to do with the outcome of the election.

What, then, explains the election's outcome? There are at least five ingredients that make this outcome almost pre-ordained: One is the fickle character of the electorate in any mass society. A second one is the corrupt, manipulative, dishonest and power-hungry fourth estate - the *de facto* ruling class in America today. And of course, the media are 85% democratic. A third factor is the

coincidental convergence of a mild recession, twelve years of continuous one-party executive dominance and the ascendancy of a liberal generation - the sixties children or yuppies. Under such circumstances the facile and meaningless slogan of “change” has ready appeal, no matter who utters it. There is nothing profound about the fact that people tend to get antsy after a while, no matter what. Fourthly, Ross Perrot siphoned off far more votes from Bush than from Clinton. Finally, there is the progressive degeneration of the American mentality. This is a long-term cultural problem. The classic spirit of self-reliance and autonomy is being replaced by the free-lunch mentality. It isn’t hard to understand why politicians who promise lots of goodies win over those who don’t.

Given this mix of ingredients, it was high time for Americans to elect the wrong candidate. Where is it written that people will leave well enough alone, or act rationally? People *do* often vote the wrong way. Democracy is no panacea. Aristotle knew it 2500 years ago. Widening the franchise does not guarantee a better government. Universal suffrage can degenerate into mob rule or tyranny. The demagogic cry for “change” has been uttered by countless dictators and charlatans. Hitler was elected democratically. So were the communist governments of Hungary, Czechoslovakia and the other so-called People’s Republics of Eastern Europe.

Even in the Western democracies, the people have the periodic self-destructive urge to ruin things. In 1946 the British rewarded Winston Churchill’s super-human leadership by replacing him with a nobody named Clement Atlee. The French, to whom Gaullist leadership has brought peace and prosperity, had to go and spoil everything a decade ago by electing the socialist Mitterrand.

The truth is that most voters don’t know who or what they are voting for. I just asked my students - University students, that is! - what the difference is between a liberal and a conservative. Half of them had no idea.

We survived the Carter years, so we’ll survive Clinton too. But let’s be clear about one thing: Thomas Jefferson was right; the people get the government they deserve. George Bush did not lose because he did anything particularly wrong. In order to claim that, one would have to argue that he only began to do everything wrong a year ago, because before that he enjoyed an 80% popularity rating! No, Clinton won because the American people lost their nerve. They were made neurotic by the media, plus they have become somewhat frustrated by toughening world economic conditions (due to growing Asian competition, among other things). Consequently, they have begun to panic and to opt for “change,” unaware that change can be either for the better or for the worse, and that often the cure is worse than the disease.

#### 4. Is Clinton a Psychopath?

*By 1997, public opinion around President Clinton was polarized. For one thing, his sexual trysts and his slick, evasive answers to questions were driving conservatives (and others) up the wall. In June, the Wall Street Journal published an article by the Finkelsteins suggesting that Clinton might have psychopathic tendencies.*

*In and of itself, this was neither here nor there. I have no idea whether Clinton is a psychopath, I don’t really know what the true clinical meaning of that term is, and I have no idea how the President’s psychopathy could be assessed. However, the venomous response to the Finkelstein’s article prompted me to come to their assistance. On June 13, I submitted the following letter to the Wall Street Journal. They didn’t print it.*

Your June 13 editorial page features several hysterical attacks on Dr. Irwin and Linda Finkelstein, due to their speculations about President Clinton’s (and other Presidents’) sociopathic characteristics. The Finkelsteins’ critics call them “unprofessional” (Gordon Maguire), “in violation

of the Ethical Code” Peter Gruenberg) and “pseudo-scientific” (Kaminer). All of these accusers are psychiatrists and/or psychoanalysts.

What a laugh! Psychoanalysts calling someone else pseudo-scientific! Since when is psychoanalytic psychology - or *all* psychology for that matter - a science? The Finkelsteins’ speculations are no more pseudo-scientific than half the diagnostic labels in the DSM. What psychologists and psychiatrists consider to be a disease varies with the winds of culture, politics and ideology. Just take a look at the DSM, where diseases come and go - from homosexuality to Attention Deficit Syndrome, to Oppositional Defiance Syndrome.

Psychologists of Freudian and other persuasions have analyzed and diagnosed historical figures, including Da Vinci, Columbus, Napoleon and Hitler, and that’s alright. But we should all understand what motivates the furious holier-than-thou psychiatrists criticizing the Finkelsteins: They are Clintonites who don’t like their man being psyched out. They are the ones who are truly unprofessional, cloaking their arguments in pseudo-scientific and pseudo-legalistic rhetoric.

### 5. The Electoral College System is Fine. Let’s Keep it

*America elects its President through an electoral college system. It has been argued for a long time that this is not truly democratic. Those who favor direct democracy clamor for the abolition of the electoral college system. In the letter reprinted below, I explain why I disagree with them. The letter was printed in the Sacramento Bee on September 6, 2006.*

This is in response to your September 6 editorial *Another Chance to Lead*, which advocates abolishing the electoral college and having direct presidential elections. At the risk of being seen as a retrograde elitist conservative, let me be the devil’s advocate and argue for maintaining the electoral college system:

This system gives small states disproportionate power and violates the one-man-one-vote rule. It is undemocratic, and that is why the *Bee* and many others oppose it. It shares this feature with the US Senate, and with all bi-cameral systems around the world. Wherever there is a lower house and an upper house, the latter gives disproportionate power to some groups - usually the upper strata. By the *Bee*’s logic, we should also abolish the US Senate. That way we would have direct democracy and we would abide fully by the one-man-one-vote role.

However, I have no problem giving small states like Iowa disproportionate power compared to mega-states like California. Iowa has more common sense and better values than we do in California. It is not politically dysfunctional, as California is. Aristotle warned that democracy can degenerate into mob rule. California’s government-by-initiative is a form of mob rule. It is against such degeneration that the Founding Fathers established a bi-cameral system in America, as well as the electoral college. Direct democracy is overrated. We saw what happened in the Soviet “people’s democracies” in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. I’m okay with the electoral college (*Sacramento Bee*, Sept. 6, 2006).

## 23, AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

### 1. Sociology Prof Slams Affirmative Action.

*When Affirmative Action first raised its head, I opposed it vehemently. I saw it as extremely divisive and as reverse discrimination. I felt that two wrongs don’t make a right, and that hiring*

and school admissions should be merit-based, not race-based. By now the issue is old and America has learned to live with affirmative action in its various, often softened, forms. Proponents and opponents have reached a *modus vivendi*, which is good.

How do I feel about affirmative action thirty years later? Well, my dire predictions did not come to pass. The policy did not do as much harm as I thought it would. Why? Because America is not a revolutionary country. When innovations occur, even misguided ones, they are generally mitigated. So affirmative action has not gone bezerk.

But has it helped? Some individuals perhaps. Blacks? Who knows. One thing is clear, above all: The groups which have made the greatest strides - Asians for example - have done so *without* the help of affirmative action, and those whom the policy was meant to help the most, blacks, are still struggling. This would suggest that affirmative action was at best unnecessary, and at worst counterproductive.

I first spoke out in public against affirmative action in an article published in the *State Hornet* on October 2, 1973. This was one of my first publications to challenge the liberal orthodoxy that reigns in academe. It began a decades-long process which eventually led to my total alienation from most of my peers in Sociology, a field more wedded to political correctness than any other discipline. Here are some parts of this article:

Let's talk about Affirmative Action. No doubt my critical remarks will earn me the epithets of reactionary, racist and sexist.

...Affirmative Action is just a new vocabulary to justify injustice. It merely provides employers, bureaucrats and those with goodies to hand out, with a convenient new discriminatory tool. Meanwhile, the plight of the downtrodden is not helped a bit. Whereas a few years ago, applicants had to be rejected on the basis of genuine reasons, e.g. ugly legs, bad breath or acne, today the hirer has the convenient rhetoric of affirmative action on which to fall back. Since the vast majority of applicants are white (males)<sup>1</sup> the vocabulary can be used in, say, 80% of all cases. No need, anymore, to examine the applicant's credentials and qualifications, if you don't like the guy just say, "Sorry, hiring you wouldn't be in the spirit of affirmative action."

It would be funny, if it weren't so sad to hear the new rhetoric from the mouths of lily-white little conservatives who obviously never had a feel for true racial equality, yet now jump on the bandwagon... This latest experiment in social engineering requires the creation of a whole new class of bureaucrats - affirmative action officers, ad hoc hiring committees, etc. - all suddenly endowed with a new and temporary power given to them by current political winds.

But let me get back to the rhetoric, and how it works. Since minority status is so flexible, the vocabulary can be conveniently shifted to suit the employer's whim. If the applicant is a black male, he can be rejected on the basis of sex; if she is a white female, she may of course be turned down because of race. These possibilities are far from hypothetical. They can be documented time and again locally and nationally. A personnel officer on our campus recently opposed hiring a female for a clerical position because there are *too many women* in such positions. And so on and on, we are being bombarded with *ad hoc* arguments...

Affirmative Action may now be operationally defined as *that hiring policy which discriminates against whites and males*. It is therefore in breach of the Constitution of the United States, the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment and the Civil Rights Act of 1964. *It is illegal*. If we feel that it was

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<sup>1</sup>. Remember that the article was written in 1973.

wrong for Nixon's "Waterbuggers" to break the law in defense of law and order, then it is equally wrong to break it in the name of some abstract demographic principle.

But how do we account for the total indifference to the unconstitutionality of affirmative action? Why have the reversed racial and sexual discrimination not been fought in the courts? ....

To answer this question, we must ask *cui bono*? Who benefits? The beneficiaries of current affirmative action are rarely the victims of past injustice. Affirmative Action is the autocratic imposition of a political device by bureaucrats upon the working population. By pitting blacks against Jews and other whites, men against women, Chicanos against Asian-Americans, the center divides and rules. The real choice positions are no more shared today than they were yesterday. At the real center of power in our society, in executive board rooms, affirmative action is at best paid lip service to in the form of tokenism. Just as with interracial bussing, it is the great American working class which becomes Washington's experimental guinea pig.

It has been said before, and it must be said again, emphatically: two wrongs do not make a right!...As to the university faculty, they stand safely and smugly behind the lofty principles of affirmative action, blind to its realities.

So let's face it. Affirmative action has in practice violated the civil rights of thousands of individuals; it has a strong anti-Semitic undertone (since Jews are "over represented" in many professions); it is illegal; it is a boondoggle for the increased manipulation of human beings; it is discriminatory and unjust. It is an inept revolutionary attempt which is turning into highhanded bureaucratic arbitrariness - the very thing it was meant to combat... (*Sacramento State Hornet*, Oct. 2, 1973).

## 2. Sociology is out of Touch

*A few years later, I expressed my opposition to affirmative action in a national publication - the American Sociological Association's Footnotes. The article appeared Spring 1976 issue:*

The March 1976 issue of *Footnotes* presents 49 candidates for election to American Sociological Association office. 36% of them are women; 19.2% of those whose race I could ascertain are black. 51% of the same are white males. I don't have the racial and sexual breakdown of the ASA membership, but I am sure that these demographic proportions are *not* representative of those in the ASA population. That is, *fewer* than 36% of the members are women, *fewer* than 19.2% are black and more than 51% are white males. Yet we are incessantly told to strive for representative sexual and racial quotas, right? That's what affirmative action is all about, right? And the ASA membership is the *population* which must be represented, right?

The above percentages can be defended on two grounds. (a) ASA candidates should represent the demographic proportions of the American population at large and (b) we should make up for past discrimination (or current discrimination in other sectors of society) by over-selecting and over-electing women and minorities to ASA office.

The first argument is as absurd as the claim that we should fire 40-80% of the athletes in various professional sports and replace them with whites. The second argument, no doubt made by the misguided liberals who dominate our profession, was effectively refuted in these columns by Paul Riedesel in the December issue: you do not redress injustice inflicted upon group A by group B, by treating group C preferentially at the expense of group D! More simply, two wrongs don't make a right.

And a wrong it is indeed! What sociologists now call progress had become reversed discrimination against white males and the abandon of the profession to the implementation of ill-conceived

theories, with an emphasis, *ad nauseam*, on two variables and two variables only: race and sex. No wonder sociology is floundering, its image nationwide deteriorating and its membership and market position eroding, even as adjacent disciplines such as psychology - less lunatically out of touch with reality - are booming (*American Sociological Association's Footnotes*, Spring 1976).

### 3. Supporting Bakke's Law Suit against the University of California

*Then came the landmark Bakke case against affirmative action. Allan Bakke was a white male who was denied admission to the medical school of the University of California in Davis, even though his credentials were superior to those of some admitted minority applicants. The case went all the way to the US Supreme Court and ended in a compromise which bans quotas while allowing affirmative action.*

*I strongly supported Bakke and published several articles on his behalf. My voice may have had an impact, as I was President of the American Association of University Professors in California at the time. The following article was printed in the Sacramento Union on October 2, 1977 and in Human Events in October 1977:*

It is difficult to believe how flawed and misguided the arguments in favor of reverse discrimination are. With the imminent Supreme Court Bakke decision, the local and national press features many articles dealing with the issue. For example, *Newsweek*, Sept. 26 cover story, *Sacramento Union*, Sept. 25, articles by Richard Carelli and Father James Murphy. Under the guise of neutrality, commentators such as the above ones attempt to see two sides to the quota-affirmative action-reverse discrimination issue.

Well, there are no two sides to the issue - there is only one: reverse discrimination aimed at redressing past injustice against minorities is merely the latest version of the age-old revolutionary theorem stating that evil is abolished through counter-evil, that two wrongs make a right. Don't you see? Don't you see that (1) the victims of past discrimination, (2) the perpetrators of past discrimination, (3) the beneficiaries of current reverse discrimination and (4) the victims of current reverse discrimination are four different categories of people? Don't you see that affirmative action makes no sense whatsoever when the concrete human being is your unit of analysis? Bakke, Defunis, Rita Clancy and all the other victims of reverse discrimination are not guilty of discrimination, are they? And the minorities who receive preferential treatment today were never slaves, were they?

America has traditionally been one of the few countries where human rights inhered in individuals, not in collectivities such as class or caste. Today, we are sliding toward the latter concept, determining individual rights on the basis of history, demography, etc. What baloney!

To deny individuals such as Bakke their 14th amendment rights is to make sacrifices out of them for the greater cause - precisely what all revolutionary collectivist ideologies have advocated throughout history - elevating abstract principles over people and telling us that concrete individuals are dispensable, that some ends justify any means.

Affirmative action is an abomination (as is busing, and, I am afraid, many other asinine schemes concocted by my fellow-sociologists). Those of us who work in mass public institutions such as the California State University system and who - unlike our elitist government in Washington - are still in touch with the populace, know that the people will not take it. Let us pray that the Supreme Court renders the decision that is attuned to the common sense of the land. If it does not, it will make one more contribution to the eventual explosion through which the silent majority will reassume control over its destiny (*Sacramento Union*, Oct. 2, 1977; *Human Events*,

Oct. 1977).

Dr. Thomas M. Kando,  
Committee on Academic Non-Discrimination and Integrity,  
President, California State Universities and Colleges,  
American Association of University Professors

#### 4. Some Asinine Comments about Affirmative Action

*As people debated the Bakke case on campus, in the media and elsewhere, in 1977, I picked up many silly comments. Here are a few:*

1) Source unknown: “Bakke is double-dipping. As an educated and qualified engineer, he has no right to go to medical school.”

2) Calif. assemblyman Art Torres: “Children must have the constitutional right to see doctors, lawyers and businessmen of their own race.”

3) Rev. Keith Kenney, California Catholic Conference: “If the Court rules in favor of Bakke, it will mean the Second American Revolution.”

4) Mayor Phil Isenberg of Sacramento: “The most difficult fight will be in the neighborhoods. That’s where we must work against people who don’t believe that everyone is entitled to...be treated decently.”

5) Assemblyman Art Torres: “The Bakke decision is the most important Supreme Court decision ever.”

#### 5. University of California Admission Policy is Racist

*And so the debate raged on. Universities were in the forefront of the Affirmative Action revolution. As so often, they exaggerated the experiment, claiming to be society’s conscience and its most progressive institution. In 1995, several newspapers published articles about the University of California’s admission policies - for example the Wall Street Journal on May 21 and the Sacramento Bee shortly thereafter. I wrote a brief letter sharply criticizing those policies. However, I did not send it off. Why? By then, I chaired a number of important committees, and I was afraid that the university would retaliate and take away my positions. Now that I am retired, I can divulge what I wrote:*

The University of California’s admission policies are totally unfair. Consider the following facts: California’s population (of 33 million people) is divided as follows: 52% of the people are white, 28% are Hispanic, 12% are Asian and 8 % are black. As your article states, of all the undergraduates admitted through regular academic criteria by UCLA, 48% are Asian and 40% are white. So this does not represent the California population.

Under the principles of Affirmative Action, one would then expect UCLA to remedy the gross under-representation of white students through special admission programs for whites, right?

But of course, there is no chance in hell of this ever happening. Quite the opposite. University administrators are exacerbating the problem by giving *Asian applicants preferential treatment even in special admission programs, where Asians make up 28% of the admissions and whites less than 5%*.

Here you see the true face of affirmative action: although it masquerades as an equity program, its guiding principle is *reverse discrimination no matter what the circumstances are*. Even after whites have become an *under-represented* category, the bureaucracy is unable to adjust to the new reality, but instead it continues its traditional practice of reverse discrimination directed *solely at whites*.

Neither does your article do justice to reality. It lumps Asians and whites together as the privileged group, because that suits affirmative action's political agenda. On the other hand, Asians are often lumped together with other minorities whenever someone wishes to argue that non-whites will soon become more numerous than whites.

What we have here is the contradictory and inconsistent manipulation of racial categories and statistics for political ends. The bureaucrats who are implementing affirmative action are probably well-intentioned. They probably truly believe that their policies achieve more good than bad. But this only confirms my view that most of the harm that is inflicted on society comes from stupidity, not necessarily from ill-will.

#### 6. Keep Affirmative Action for only one Group: African-Americans

*In time, I came to chill out a little bit about affirmative action. By October 1996, I was able to scribble down my support for the following compromise:*

Maybe there is a compromise and a solution for affirmative action. How about keeping it, but for only one ethnic group - blacks? As to everyone else, scratch affirmative action and go back to merit-based admission and hiring policies.

Why am I proposing this?

Well, it seems that African-Americans are the only group which would demonstrably continue to lag behind the rest of society, in the absence of special consideration. The reasons for this are immaterial. They may be cultural and historical. They may be the result of persistent racism. For whatever reason or reasons, it seems that *all* groups are able to make rapid economic progress except blacks. Jews and Asians now surpass the income level of Anglos. Hispanics, while still behind, are making the same kind progress as Italian-Americans were making during the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In other words, the only group which America has difficulty assimilating are African-Americans. Another indication of this are the rates of interracial marriage: While all inter-group marriages have increased, black-white dating and marrying remains far rarer than those between any other groups.

In sum, affirmative action can benefit blacks, and it probably benefits *only* blacks. The policy has been contentious ever since its inception thirty years ago. The solution may be, as with all contentious political issues, to compromise. Proliferating the policy might create a monstrosity. India has done that, to the point where quotas exist for thousands of castes and the government bureaucracy is in charge of a grotesque and utterly ineffective program. On the other hand, abolishing affirmative action altogether could hurt some of the policy's beneficiaries. So why not compromise and retain it for the one group which is almost sure to benefit from it, but *only* for that group?

## 24. FEMINISM

### 1. Feminists are Right about Sex Roles

*One of three elements of Sociology's holy trinity is Gender. It is also one of the three fronts on which the socioeconomic wars and the culture wars have been waged for the past half century. As with class and race, I began my career fighting on the progressive side. On May 10, 17 and 24, 1973, I published a series of articles in the University of California Highlander. Here is a brief selection of some of the things I wrote.*

Sexism begins at home, and not in the formal educational system...By the time the child first enters school, she/he has generally already learned to distinguish what is 'normal' and what is merely 'permissible' in the culture... Nursery school effectively (reinforces) these cultural norms...Then, as the child moves up to elementary and secondary school level, further reinforcement of sex-role behavior takes place...

When it comes to higher education, the problem assumes a different character: The more fundamental way in which higher education discriminates between the sexes is simply that it is far more of an opportunity structure for men than it is for women.... Women's under representation increases as one moves up the academic ladder. In 1969, women received 41.1% of college B.A.'s, but only 13.1 % of all Ph.D.'s. This is further accentuated as one looks at the composition of the faculty. In Sociology, for example, in 1969 women made up 31% of Teaching Assistants, 14% of full-time assistant professors, 4% of full professors and 0% of professors at elite universities.

...Under the impact of women's lib and affirmative action, we should expect recent improvement. And indeed, between 1970 and 1972, the percentage of sociology doctorates granted to women went up from 21% to 36% and the percentage of women faculty went up from 9% to 12%.

*After a detailed scholarly discussion of the origins and causes of sex-role differentiation, I went on to express the following opinions:*

...I have always felt ambivalent toward the women's liberation movement in America. On the one hand...the discrimination of which the feminists complain is so blatant that only the most perverted male chauvinist can be at ease with his conscience. On the other hand, it is also a fact that American women enjoy privileges, both over women elsewhere and over men in America, that have led some anthropologists to characterize our entire culture as matriarchal.

From the vantage point of an immigrant who arrived to these shores at age 25, and who therefore can claim some cross-cultural expertise, I maintain that typical middle-class American women are more outgoing, aggressive, active, bossy, pushy, friendly, responsive, responsible, emancipated, goal-oriented, materialist, pragmatic and privileged than their foreign counterparts, including the allegedly liberated women of Scandinavia and other northern European areas.

In America, women are extremely privileged in many ways, yet sexism thrives...It is not that the plight of men is inevitably more desirable - who wants to fight wars, pay child support for children never seen, have a seven or eight year cut in life-span? It is simply that men and women are *separate*, and therefore unequal. Our culture will simply not cease to *discriminate* between the two sexes!

*I then discussed the history of job discrimination and gender socialization in the Western*

*world, after which I suggested some educational remedies:*

...Sex education courses must be liberated from all assumptions of double standards of morality. Teachers should...treat their male and female students entirely alike: boys and girls should not be expected to use different language, to behave differently, to excel in different areas, to have different manners, or different interests. They should be addressed in the same fashion (e.g. by their first name),and both boys and girls should be given the same amount of freedom in dressing, expressing themselves, playing, working and socializing. Psychodrama and sociodrama should be used to teach boys and girls sex-role reversal and ultimately blur traditional sex-roles altogether...Have the boys put on make-up and discuss how it affects their self-perception...

*After suggesting many additional strategies to make society “gender-blind,” my conclusion was as follows:*

...Current liberation movements - black, women, gay, etc. - still tend to dichotomize society into two classes, viz. the victims and the oppressors. The movement’s goals are therefore similar to those of the dominant society. They include power. Thus the movements reflect the predatory character of the culture at large. However, for a movement to be truly progressive, it must differentiate itself not only from society’s conventional means, but from its values as well, i.e. from its dominant culture...

It is the culture, then, and not the structure, where change is most urgently needed. Indeed, our structure works fairly well. It combines better opportunities toward greater affluence for more people than any other society, with democracy. Although there is growing centralization of power and increasing governmental effort to suppress freedom, the real disease is the massive attitudinal intolerance of the population.

Demands for new legislation, structural reorganization at any governmental level or any other attempt at altering the system will fail as long as attitudes are what they are. Most Americans are greedy and selfish. They do not lack an adequate social system, what they lack is an adequate value-system. As demography, ecology and international trade become increasingly unfavorable for the United States, life is going to become more difficult for each of us, not easier. How can nihilistic materialism - which is our core culture - provide a promising belief-system under such prospects? (*University of California Highlander*, May 10, 17 and 24, 1973).

## 2. Is Captain America a Sexist Pig?

*In the 1970s, I agreed with many of the claims of “women’s lib”, as it was called. But I already saw the potential for feminist excess. In January 1970, the New York Review of Books published Ellen Willis’ review of the movie Easy Rider. In her review, Ms. Willis accused countercultural men of being just as sexist as traditional males. For example, Captain America (Peter Fonda) was accused of being contemptuous of women, because he preferred to talk to a prostitute rather than to have sex with her right away. Ellen Willis wrote that “buying a woman’s companionship is (no less) exploitative than buying her body.”*

*I printed a rebuttal in the February 26, 1970 issue of the New York Review, saying the following, among other things.*

(Men) can’t win...If they show eagerness to sleep with a woman without delay (as Dennis Hopper does) they are called frivolous (and sexist). If they seek good friendship, show interest and sensitivity (Peter Fonda), they are accused of haughtiness.”

*Further into my article, I added that*

“Feminists want to have their cake and eat it too... For decades American culture has been one that has been characterized as ‘momism,’ reducing the male to a ... buffoon, to a Dagwood Bumstead, and still expecting him to be a chivalrous hero when the need and occasion arises (*New York Review*, Feb. 26, 1970).

*The next issue of the New York Review contained a repartee by Ellen Willis which began as follows:*

“The sexist attitudes expressed in Kando’s letter are too typical and a sad commentary on where most men are these days. It is also sad that the *New York Review* should find it necessary to publish such outpourings instead of throwing them in the wastebasket with the rest of the crank mail.”

*She then moved on to more substantive critique of my letter, pointing out for example that “it is not Blondie who is really taking it out on Dagwood, but his boss....Men’s real enemies aren’t women, but the few men at the top who control us all.”*

*Touché!*

### 3. Sexist Drivel?

*In the following decades, the women’s movement did much that was good and necessary, but it also waged war angrily and irrationally against many perceived and trivial or imaginary slights. There was often a ridiculous hyper-sensitivity and a rage similar to that of Muslims later . (In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Muslims would go ballistic at every perceived insult - from Danish cartoons, to Papal pronouncements and novels by Salman Rushdie). Of course, “feminazis” (Rush Limbaugh’s term) did not resort to bombings. On April 4, 1988, I fired off the following letter to the Wall Street Journal, arguing that some feminist anger borders on paranoia:*

The (female) readers' April 4 reaction to Bo Brown's cartoon is feminist drivel. As editor, you really didn't have to apologize; you weren't asleep. If you failed to see sexism in the cartoon, it's because none was there. As to Bo Brown's explanation of the cartoon, it was equally unnecessary, since the point was obvious to everyone except the most stupid people. But it is clear that more than mere stupidity was at play in the negative reaction to the cartoon. It is what Nietzsche called the *will to misunderstand*. This is a political ploy aimed at increasing one's power - an act of aggression - at the expense of innocent people of perfectly good will - such as Mr. Brown.

The readers *want* to see sexism everywhere, just like John Birchers and McCarthyites used to look for communists under every bed. There is a simple clinical term for that - *paranoia*.

Contemporary feminists are digging themselves into a hole: Their pathological hypersensitivity, their bitter and humorless mentality, all this labels them and becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, namely that women are often hyper, neurotic, troublesome, insecure and a pain or - alternatively - that they are not full-weight and that they are always in need of pity. How does it feel to be lumped together with the handicapped (as in Mr. Brown's reply?) Do women truly want that kind of a social identity? Is this what they consider progress for their gender?

Surely it is nicer for women to subscribe to a philosophy of "I'm okay, you're okay;" to be happy, secure, self-confident and sufficiently aware of their self-worth not to constantly feel

threatened by chimeras. That is, in my experience, how most post-war American women have been, and how most of them still are, thank God.

#### 4. How are Women Doing?

*In the October 10, 2003 issue of the New York Review of Books, Ruth Praver Jhabvala reviewed Andrew Hacker's book How Are Women Doing?. I tried to write a rebuttal to the review, which I saw as very strident and slanted. However, realizing that the snobbish and politically always correct magazine would probably not publish my piece, I never sent it in.*

*Re-reading this now, I admit that it is a bit hot-headed. Also, I am in denial of the fact that in most of the world and during most of history, women have indeed been second-class citizens, and they have been hurt by men an awful lot. However, I plead extenuating circumstances for two reasons: (1) I experienced the feminist onslaught in America, and in this country, women really don't have much to complain about. (2) Extreme feminists have taken over many academic departments, which is where I work. So I experienced the most abrasive type of feminism, often in the form of personal attacks aimed at me for no other reason than the fact that I was a male. Here is some of what I wrote on this occasion.*

My main problem with Ms. Praver-Jhabvala and other elite feminists like her is this: Their entire identity consists of being one thing and one thing only - "Woman." We, men, are generally multi-faceted. One of the things I am is a "man." But I am also a "human being," a "sociologist," an "athlete," a "father," a "Hungarian immigrant," etc. And I am able to discuss my plight as an immigrant without incessantly mixing up those problems with my gender identity.

But to modern female feminists, *everything* about their identity evolves around their gender. They are never, ever, able to forget for one moment that they are women - to think of themselves as "humans." There is one simple word for this: it gets *boring!* Praver-Jhabvala's review is flawed in other ways as well. The common denominator for most of those flaws is, again, that the points being made are so repetitive that they become boring. For example, the reviewer writes that "no one likes to mop the floor" and that it's usually been women who mopped the floor. No duh!

Hacker suggests that in order to improve the deteriorating male-female relationship, women ought perhaps to try to do a few more nice things for men, such as oral sex. The reviewer objects to this. She feels that women are already doing plenty enough to please men. Again, this is platitudinous. It is also a *non sequitur*: Why does Praver-Jhabvala have to reiterate that women have been pleasing men throughout history? This means nothing, because men have also been trying to please women throughout history. So the reviewer's argument has no value.

As to the "no one likes to mop the floor" argument: Life consists of many unpleasant things, and arguably more so for men than for women. There is work, for starters. Dying, for another. And there is fighting. Men have always done all three of these things much more than women. (1) Throughout history, earning a living (now redefined as a privilege traditionally denied to women) was a man's burden. (2) Women outlive men by many years. (3) Men do most of the fighting, killing and dying - in war and in crime. When James Brown sings "it's a man's world," what he means is: It's a *painful* world. So welcome to the club. Things are tough, and I know it, because I am a man..

Andrew Hacker's point is much more interesting, and true: Things aren't getting any better between men and women. This is true and it is a serious problem. I have no idea how to remedy it. All I know is that I am glad that I am old.

Praver-Jhabvala's only slightly valid point is this: The less macho cultures of advanced

North-Western European countries have less of a problem than we do. There, men are less manly, which helps. But the writer forgets that the other part of the European equation is the female contribution: European women are less castrating, less compulsively feminist, less simplistic, less driven, less obsessed, less hateful.

### 5. Railing Against Feminism

*As I just said, the feminazis in my classes were making my life miserable, as were some female colleagues. Sometimes I got very angry, because these people were very bad. On October 28, 1976, I wrote the following diatribe for the Sacramento State Hornet. Luckily I did not submit it, or I would have been lynched.*

As I begin to jot down these observations, I assume that the *Sacramento State Hornet* will print them. I assume that the left-wing fascism sweeping across our universities and increasingly popular in other sectors of society has not yet made a total mockery of academic freedom and the first amendment. But I fear that the damage is considerable.

No reasonable person could, at the outset, reject the objectives of feminism and other forms of liberation. After all, who wants to oppose equality? But let us look at the reality of contemporary liberationism: in my classes, the feminists, the Marxists, the radical sociologists and the other varieties of extremists are on a vicious rampage that tolerates nothing but the irrational newspeak, rendering rational discourse totally impossible. There is a double standard. that permits the grossest form of classroom politicization as long as it is the advocacy of left-wing causes, but censors all efforts at redressing the balance in favor of a more two-sided perspective.

The recent Proposition 14 hassle on this campus is a case in point (*Prop. 14 was a pro-Labor Union measure. I was not against it. What I was against was the use of classroom time to recruit picketers for it; TK*). Recruiting picketers for that initiative is viewed by most professors and students as a *bona fide* use of classroom time. But beware the instructor who might advocate an opposite stance, or who expresses any kind of dissent from the current radical dogma. He'll have nothing but trouble.

Feminism, has become a *disease*. It justifies reverse discrimination against males. It complains, *ad nauseam*, about such things as sex stereotypes in children's books and on television and about sexist expressions in language. It works, in Nazi and Maoist fashion, to censor the books and articles we publish and assign in the schools. We are told that watching the Flintstones and Walt Disney is harmful to our children. Feminism is changing our language, insisting on a ridiculous newspeak (chairperson, herstory, personkind, etc.) anticipated long ago by George Orwell. At the same time, it is oblivious to the fact that men live almost a decade shorter than women, that men's roles are by and large more demanding and brutalizing than those of women, that laws, criminal justice, divorce outcomes and a myriad of other practices in America favor women, not men.

Foreign anthropologists like Geoffrey Gore observed long ago that America is a matriarchy. American women are by and large a privileged group. To my knowledge, the women's liberation movement in this country is the first revolution undertaken by a group that seems to wish to abandon a plush and privileged social position in favor of some dubious equality with the majority of hard-working poor male slobs.

### 6. Should Companies Discriminate Between Men and Women? Only When it Benefits Women

*On January 21, 1983, I had an interesting letter exchange with the national office of the American Association of University Professors. This is the oldest and most important professional association of University professors, the equivalent of the American Medical Association and the American Bar Association. I was statewide head of the AAUP in California. The exchange was triggered by a Wall Street Journal article. This was the issue and these were my arguments:*

According to a recent *Wall Street Journal* article, Insurance Companies - for example TIAA- CREF - have been using different actuarial tables for life insurance for men and for women. The AAUP maintains that this is unconstitutional, and that insurance companies must use identical actuarial tables to calculate the benefits of men and women. In other words, the AAUP argues that men's and women's contributions and benefits must be identical.

In my view, the AAUP's position is wrong. The insurance companies' policy is not dictated by sexism, but by demographics. Women outlive men by six or seven years. Obviously women have to either pay higher premiums, or they and their survivors must receive lower benefits than men, or else they are prohibitively expensive to insure.

The AAUP's position on this issue is inconsistent with its views on other social issues: In the present situation, it claims that it is immoral to treat individuals on the basis of a characteristics attached to their group - in this case women's higher longevity.

Yet on other issues the AAUP, like the ACLU and other "progressive" and collectivist organizations, is found exactly on the *other* side of the divide. For example, it is a fervid supporter of affirmative action. If you are a woman or an ethnic minority, you deserve preferential treatment by sheer membership in a group, even if you are Oprah Winfrey. So which is it? Do human rights inhere in groups or in individuals?

### 7. Women Rule and Divide Men

*Continuing to speak out for "male liberation," I sent the following letter to Playboy on March 3, 1985. They did not print it.*

I found John Gordon's essay on What women Want (March 1985) so eloquent that I passed it out to one of my sociology classes. This was a mistake. They jumped all over me - first a wealthy 19-year old pampered beautiful bitch leading the charge, then half a dozen other assorted feminists, finally many of the fellows too, assholes who felt that they had to rescue the damsels from the fascist professor, reminding me moronically that many women earn less than men.

Recently, a feminist speaker at neighboring U.C. Davis caused a near riot when, after her speech, students proceeded to ransack the campus bookstore and tear up copies of Playboy (you know, degrading to women and all that). There too, the vandals were both male and female.

This leads me to a conclusion perhaps overlooked by Gordon: in human society, like in the animal kingdom, the male-female relationship is organized so as to promote male competition for female favors. Hence, most of the guys in my class were happy to see me lynched by the feminist mob, abetting it and waiting in the wings to pick up the (sexual) rewards, as were the shrewd "feminist" males tearing up Playboy at the Davis bookstore. That's how it is with men. They'll always end up holding the short end of the stick (a pun and a paradox) because they need women far more than they need each other. That's power, and women got it!

8. When People Commit Suicide, it is Because they are Unhappy.  
Except that when Men Commit Suicide, it's their own damn Fault.

One of my final exam questions in Sociology 168 was about comparative suicide rates. I gave the students some tables to interpret. One table showed the well-known discrepancy between male and female suicide rates - men kill themselves more than women do. I asked my students to come up with several hypotheses to explain the difference. The answers illustrate the politically correct group think into which people have been socialized. Whatever explanations were offered by the students, they *all* pointed to male shortcomings, male "fault." No one proposed the commonsensical explanation that men might be more unhappy than women.

Here were some of the answers to the question "why do men kill themselves more often than women":

- 1) "Men are more violent" (i.e more bad)
- 2) "Women are psychologically stronger and more stable" (again, men are more bad)
- 3) "Women try to commit suicide more often than men, but it's less often fatal."

Note the contradiction between explanations #2 and #3: If women try to kill themselves more often than men, then doesn't that suggest that they are more unstable?

- 4) Men are more insensitive than women, so they don't mind dying as much ( no comment!)
- 5) Women are more responsible than men. They realize that they have responsibilities to their children and to others. Men simply don't care.

*Not one* student - male or female - dared to suggest such hypotheses as:

- 1) Men are more unhappy than women
- 2) Men's lives suck more than women's. They have more stress.

Yet when it comes to other high-suicide groups, unhappiness and victimization are the *first* explanations that come to people's mind - rightly or wrongly. For example, slaves often committed suicide and everyone agrees why. Same with countries with high suicide rates such as Hungary, Sweden and Japan. People always speculate about why people in those countries must be so unhappy.

But don't misunderstand me: I am not arguing for or against specific explanations of variations in suicide rates. As a matter of fact, "unhappiness" is usually a bad explanation. Many of the groups that commit suicide the most are also some of the most affluent and privileged groups - Scandinavia, the upper class, whites commit suicide more than blacks, etc.

No, what I am appalled by is the fact that for all other high-suicide categories, my students immediately come up with the most commonsensical (if often wrong) explanation, namely unhappiness - *except* when it comes to the category "men." In this case, it's got to be our own damn fault or inadequacy, or something. It cannot be unhappiness because, as everyone knows, men enjoy all the privileges. Surely this consensus shows the extent to which feminism has succeeded in brainwashing our society.

9. How to Reduce Rape

*Rape is the second worst thing a person can do to another, and all of it is done by men. No*

wonder that the fight against rape has been so important to feminists. Although nothing has contributed more to the progress we have made on this front than the women's movement, I was never totally satisfied with the feminist analysis of rape. On August 8, 1991, I jotted down the following thoughts:

Rape is the second most evil thing a person can do - next to murder. Only men rape. How can we improve the situation, in addition to continuing to punish rape as severely as possible?

There has been progress. Rape is no longer as under-reported as it used to be. We now have the concept of date rape. The media help publicize the evil of rape, although they sometimes play fast and loose with the facts. For example, I recently read an allegation that one out of three women is "affected" by date rape. Not likely.

Also, feminists have been insisting that *all* rape is an expression of *power*, i.e. i.e., that it stems from a man's desire to *dominate* a woman. This is not true. Much rape is caused by *horniness*, i.e. by uncontrollably strong sexual urge resulting from sexual deprivation, for example when men have been away from women for a long time due to imprisonment, the army, travel, etc.

The feminist expression "what part of no don't you understand?" is familiar to everyone by now. It is an excellent expression. Anyone who is not a Neanderthal has long abandoned the view that "sometimes a woman is asking for it" by being too seductive, flirtatious, etc. This is called *blaming the victim*. The 1988 movie *The Accused*, which earned Jodie Foster an Oscar for best actress, is an excellent treatment of this issue. It shows clearly why blaming a woman for her own rape is such a terrible injustice.

So what is there to say about women's seductive behavior, their provocative attire, the luring, teasing and flirting which make women so difficult to resist? The fooling around, but then refusing to go "all the way"? Feminists say that anyone who objects to women running around skimpily clad, anyone who objects to women dressed provocatively and wearing very little, to women behaving seductively (as Jodie Foster does in *The Accused*) is infringing on women's rights and freedoms.

So how is a man to react, when he is being treated like a yo-yo? Ideally, of course, men are expected to control their animal urges. But this is sometimes easier said than done, especially because the "saying" is by women and the "doing" is by men. In other words, women assume that men can turn it on and off as easily as women can. Feminists do not recognize that the male sex drive is stronger than that of the female, more difficult to control. They have a single standard for the genders.

But the slogan "what part of no don't you understand?" implies a double standard. It expresses the traditional and correct notion that the *male proposes* and the *female disposes*. There could never be an expression "what part of no don't you understand?" addressed to women. By and large, men don't turn down women's sexual advances. For four million years among humans and longer among animals, sex has been something *males want* and something *females grant*, at their *discretion*. This is biological and it is forever. Males don't become pregnant. That is the heavy price of sex, and it is the female who pays it. There are no male gigolos serving the insatiable appetites of women - aberrations granted.

All this is obvious, but the implications are not: If it is admitted that "women say no" and that men must abide by that, then it must also be granted that men are naturally more vulnerable to the urges awakened in them by seductive female behavior, more than vice-versa. It is therefore unreasonable that women should have unlimited freedom to flirt, tease, play and manipulate men

sexually, and then place the entire onus of responsibility upon the man for the control of the ensuing frustration, when in the end it's a no-go. In short, women are playing with fire.

Now there is no doubt that in civilized society men *must* and *can* control their sexual frustrations when "cock teasing" occurs. Rape and the weakness and lack of self-control which lead to rape are unjustifiable. But the feminist position about rape remains incomplete as long as it does not view rape in the context of male-female interaction.

My advice to men is this: When flirting, necking, or engaging in foreplay, remain non-committal. In time, ask her what she wants to do. If she says that she is not ready to go "all the way," tell her that you have had enough unconsummated foreplay and that you will be waiting for her to make up her mind. If and when she says that she is ready to make love to you, you can then accept, *at your discretion*. At this point, you can still both enjoy considerable foreplay. After all, *wham bam thank you mam* is no fun. But now foreplay is truly foreplay, not the prelude to frustration. And there is a mutual agreement about the outcome. If she changes her mind and turns you down even after she has agreed to make love to you, then this reveals a character flaw which you can take into account in your future dealings with her.

This is a scenario of full equality. But I don't believe that it is the scenario most feminists have in mind. I believe that many of them are thinking more of the medieval model which views sex as a reward which woman bestows upon man at her discretion, and which he gratefully accepts.

### 9. What Causes Rape?

*As to the "etiology" of rape - this has long been a matter of great dogmatism for feminists: They insist that it represents one thing and one thing only: the male's desire for power and domination over the female. The following exchange took place in 2000 or so, between myself and a male colleague who obviously didn't want to part with the P.C. party line on rape.*

Rodney had dinner at our house. He was his usual jovial and witty British self, as likeable as ever. However, his very rigid adherence to political correctness came to the fore again during dinner conversation. At one point, the topic happened to be rape - a subject which sociologists discuss frequently. I mentioned that, true, *much* of rape - perhaps *most* rape - is a matter of power and control, as the conventional feminist position insists.

However, I added, *some* percentage of rape is probably caused by simple horniness, for example when men have been deprived of female companionship for a long time. I gave the examples of prison and the military. Throughout history, conquering armies have engaged in massive rape. In my own life, I witnessed the Red Army's march into Hungary in 1945. No woman was safe from rape. The Russians behaved like a bunch of banshees, grabbing every woman in sight. My mother, my aunt and all my other female relatives were in grave peril, having to fight off soldiers incessantly. Surely some of this had to do with the fact that the Russian invaders had suffered great deprivation, including sexual deprivation, for a long time, no? (I am not addressing the question of why the Russians behaved differently than the American or the German conquerors).

However, my good friend and colleague Rodney wouldn't hear of it. There is no place for the simple physiology of horniness in the feminist vocabulary. I don't quite understand why. Explaining rape this way doesn't make it more excusable. Perhaps feminists dislike this explanation because it is not political, i.e. it is not about *power*, which is the central concept of those who would politicize everything.

## 11. Women Have Many Advantages

*Playboy Magazine has been one of the few major publications which has occasionally dared to challenge the feminist party line, and to engage in "male liberation." In fact, it has had a monthly column by Asa Baber speaking out regularly for male rights. On November 29, 1982, I sent Playboy the following letter in support of that effort. They did not publish it.*

I have continued to subscribe to *Playboy* for many years despite its extreme liberal bias. To reverse a phrase, I no longer read the articles, I merely enjoy the pictures. However, Asa Baber's column on Men restores my faith in the soundness of some of your editorial values. Here are some additional examples of female advantage:

1) Women live nearly a decade longer than men. Feminists have made it fashionable to say that this cannot be helped, because females are inherently better built. So society should not see this as a case of male victimization, but an inevitable natural fact. I don't buy it. Until the 20<sup>th</sup> century everywhere and still today in many parts of the Third World, men outlive women. There, it is because so many women die in child delivery. So feminists say that once Western medicine solved that problem, women's natural biological superiority came to the fore, and that is that. But again, I don't buy it: All this means is that Western society has found a way to remove a major source of female mortality, whereas it has not found it equally important to deal with male mortality.

2) There are hundreds of exclusive female schools and universities, but most all-male institutions have been forced to integrate a long time ago.

3) The criminal justice system grossly favors women (the old judicial chivalry complex): Although females commit at least a third of all felonies, they make up one thirtieth of the juvenile and adult inmate population.

The list could go on. Such facts are well known and easily documented, but of course truth rarely has anything to do with politics and public opinion.

There is also the paradox that feminism is most vociferous in the country where women enjoy the most equal (dare I say pampered?) position, namely the United States. There is little feminism in, say, Iran or Saudi Arabia.

Another contradiction is that shrill feminism is mostly an elite affair - Marin County housewives holding consciousness-raising sessions in their split-level mansions, blaming men for their failure to achieve orgasm, or bitter female professors teaching their gullible 18-year old female students to hate men. While there are many Jane Fonda-type feminists (the poor oppressed creatures), one looks in vain

for such militant rhetoric among lower-class black women or among the millions of other courageous and dedicated women who live somewhere below the upper crust and are often indeed brutalized by work, life and other people of both sexes.

And the most universal paradox is that feminism, like most other -isms, causes as much harm as the illness it claims to cure. Revolutionaries always play what is called the "History Game." In this game, one singles out past events, however remote, to justify current aggression. Examples of this abound in the feminist literature: Contemporary American males are somehow to blame for the practice of cliterectomy in tribal Africa and the witch burnings of Salem and Medieval Europe. Thus revolutionary change is a never-ending cycle of mutual aggression committed in the name of prior victimization. Feminism has fallen into this trap and is therefore part of the problem, not the solution.

## 25. HOMOSEXUALITY

### 1. Sociologists are too Preoccupied with Homosexuality

*One of my early research topics was weird - transsexualism (nowadays called transgender identity). My doctoral dissertation was on this subject, and in 1973 I published a book titled Sex Change (Charles Thomas). I did not study this subject because I had transsexual tendencies, but because (1) the University of Minnesota was beginning to surgically feminize several dozen transsexuals just as I was finishing my Ph.D. there, and I was searching for a dissertation topic; (2) I thought that this research would be a lot more interesting than the typical esoteric, highly specialized and boring sociological dissertation, which nobody reads; (3) Producing a somewhat sensational dissertation would help my career. But this did not happen, despite a spate of publications on this subject in scientific as well as popular venues (including Playboy Magazine). Transsexualism is a rare and unimportant phenomenon. But homosexuality - which is related - is not.*

*My discussions of homosexuality have been similar to what I have written about feminism. It is not that I am homophobic. To the contrary, I favor gay rights and I like homosexuals. I really mean this. I find that the many gay people I know are often nicer, smarter and more pleasant than others. However, I detest political militancy, and I detest the fact that it has taken over my profession. So when the major sociological organizations and journals devote inordinate attention to gay rights - as they do - I protest. That is what the following article does. I sent it to Footnotes, the American Sociological Association's national journal, after it printed a heavily biased report on homosexuality. To its credit, Footnotes published it uncensored. It appeared in the April 1983 issue.*

The December 1982 issue of *Footnotes* gives prominent coverage to the Task Group on Homosexuality Report. There are many problems with the report, as well as with the American Sociological Association's excessive preoccupation with this subject.

While it is true that all minorities, including homosexuals, are the victims of discrimination, the report and *Footnotes'* coverage of it once again reveal our discipline's biases. In the first place, there is the matter of priority and relevance: The world economic order is collapsing, totalitarianism is on the march, nuclear holocaust is around the corner, international terrorism and domestic crime are out of control, to mention but a few issues which out-rank the plight of homosexuals, in my view. But of course none of those problems are represented by a special interest lobby.

So sociology is hopelessly guilty of what Becker noted years ago - a knee-jerk siding with the deviant, the minority, the underdog, the esoteric, the rare, and a concomitant disregard for the majority, no matter how profound and widespread the majority's turmoil might be. Sociology tends to champion minority issues such as gay rights (is transsexual rights next? pedophiles now have their organization clamoring discrimination) and it is rarely in the forefront of the attack upon problems plaguing the middle class, such as inflation, unemployment, the tax burden, criminal victimization. God forbid that sociology would display a preoccupation and compassion for the bourgeoisie! But is this pragmatically wise? Is it wise to be forever associated with waning causes? Is this not one of the main reasons for our declining enrollments? Today's students gravitate toward business and engineering because they want decent jobs and decent lives. They are not turned on by courses on homosexuality.

Second, how real is the plight of homosexuals? Much of the task group's research is based on faulty methodology, as its chief source of information consists of a compendium of gossip. We

are told that a majority of sociology heads *perceive* discrimination against homosexuals and that they *feel* that this discrimination emanates from the administration and from the professional schools. This only tells us that sociology heads think that administrators and business faculty members are bigots. We already knew that most sociologists are prejudiced this way. Why didn't the task group interview administrators?

I am not denying that there is probably some residual discrimination against homosexuals. But this is surely a mixed bag. Activists of *all stripes* have many strikes against them, not just homosexuals. In fact, in the University's liberated ambience, those on the opposite end of the spectrum are likely to have a much worse time than gays, feminists and otherwise liberated individuals. Imagine a sociologist taking, say, a pro-life stance on abortion, or even acknowledging being a Republican. Is there a sociology department anywhere that wouldn't give him a hard time? (Look at what happened to Anita Bryant who dared to take on the gay community - she vanished into obscurity, her career destroyed.)

It is absurd to claim, as the report does, that there is restraint on homosexuality and related research. The opposite is the truth. A disproportionate amount of research is devoted to alternative lifestyles, including homosexuality. And it is not true that such research is penalized. Quite to the contrary, it is precisely the sociologist who researches titillating topics like homosexuality and other sexual alternative, who often guarantees himself widespread media coverage, fame and other rewards. I know what am talking about: My first book and articles dealt with transsexualism and appeared in places like the *Journal of Homosexuality*. I got a lot of mileage and recognition out of that among my peers. Later, I published a conservative sexuality and marriage textbook, and that led to vicious condemnation, ostracism, malicious reviews and devastating attacks. After all, I was taking on the radlib sex establishment! (*Footnotes*, April 1983).

## 2. Is Sexual Preference caused by Nature or by Nurture?

*Thus, Sociology talks a great deal about homosexuality. It is also one of the topics I touch upon in some of my classes. The following is an exchange I had about this subject with a student in one of my classes in 2002.*

In a recent graduate seminar in Social Psychology, part of the evening's discussion was devoted to homosexuality, including its possible "etiology." I noted that it had become increasingly fashionable to attribute homosexuality to inborn biological causes, for example to brain chemistry. I also reminded the students that earlier theories included the now discarded Freudian explanation (unresolved Oedipal complex), and the Behavioristic hypothesis (learning through conditioning). However, over the past two decades, there has been a growing preference for a "nature" type of explanation of sexual preference over a "nurture" one.

I told the class that I remain skeptical. There is no systematic evidence that homosexuality is biologically caused. I pointed out that it may be *politics* rather than science which leads people - including the gay community - to opt for a biological explanation. Their reasoning is that if it can be shown that one is born gay, then homosexuality is not chosen and it is therefore not immoral.

However, the choice-vs.-biology antithesis is a false one: The behavioristic explanation of homosexuality in no way implies that gays *choose* their lifestyle. It merely argues that sexual preference, like many other aspects of personality, could be deep-seated and very resistant to change, being the product of early life experiences. You are not born with a sense of humor, or with narcissistic or psychopathic tendencies, or with a generous heart, or with mathematical

aptitude, yet once you develop those features, they are indelible parts of your personality.

I concluded that it might be the same with homosexuality, and as far as I am concerned, the verdict is not in, on whether homosexuality is caused by nature or by nurture. That homosexuality is an acquired taste is also suggested by the fact that sometimes a man enters prison as a heterosexual, becomes involved in homosexual relationships behind bars, and maintains that lifestyle after he is paroled.

Some of my students didn't like my arguments. Being politically correct, they blindly believe what they have been told, i.e. that 'science has proven that one is born gay or hetero.' One of my students challenged me and said, "Hey Kando, how come you are such a homophobe? You're just using a defense mechanism to overcompensate for your latent homosexuality, which you are desperately trying to repress."

"You must be right," I answered. "Just like when I express my opposition to affirmative action, it must be because I am a closet African-American."

### 3. An Alternative to Dear Abby's Homosexuality Questionnaire

*On December 6, 1988, the Sacramento Bee published one of Dear Abby's syndicated articles. In it, the famous columnist was once again on the warpath against the presumed horror of homophobia. To that end, she reproduced a highly loaded 'homosexuality questionnaire' which was supposed to show the readers how terribly mistaken we are about gays. Typical of the questionnaire were True - False items similar to the following ones:*

- |  |              |
|--|--------------|
| <i>1. Gays choose to be gay. If they wanted to, they could become heterosexual</i> | <i>T - F</i> |
| <i>2. Many gays suffer from certain types of chronic alcoholism</i>                | <i>T - F</i> |
| <i>3. Gays have a tendency to lie and deceive</i>                                  | <i>T - F</i> |
| <i>4. Gay men tend to have broad hips</i>  | <i>T - F</i> |
| <i>5. Gay men have a delicate physique, or they are overly muscular</i>            | <i>T - F</i> |
| <i>6. Gays have a compulsion to move around, to walk a lot</i>                     | <i>T - F</i> |

*Of course, all these statements are FALSE - as were the ones carefully chosen by Abby. At the end of the questionnaire, she explained: If you marked all statements "false", you are very well informed. If you marked half "false", you are somewhat informed. If you marked most "true", you have a great deal to learn about homosexuality, because ALL of the statements are false! Abby was simply setting up a straw man, a red herring, a pseudo-issue. She was committing the cardinal error against which every sociology major is warned - she was deliberately stacking the cards to make a point.*

*It absolutely drives me up the wall when media people do this in order to further their political agenda. I wrote a Letter to the Editor suggesting the alternative questionnaire about homosexuals reproduced below. I considered sending this to the Sacramento Bee. It would have been nice to show how Abby's questionnaire is an excellent example of how not to conduct social research. However, I realized that I would be severely punished for such a politically incorrect publication. I could even be fired. At most universities, academic freedom was now a thing of the past. And newspapers don't accept anonymous submissions. So this was never printed.*

- |  |              |
|--|--------------|
| <i>1. On the average, homosexuals are richer than heterosexuals.</i> | <i>T - F</i> |
|--|--------------|

2. It is possible for a person to become gay because he or she has been seduced by a gay person early in life. T - F
3. You can often tell homosexuals and lesbians by the way they act and talk. T - F
4. With the proper therapy and motivation, a gay person can become straight. T - F
5. Boys raised by domineering mothers and weak (or absent) fathers may become homosexual. T - F
6. Gay people are disproportionately powerful and influential in the arts, the media and in politics. T - F
7. If a person has some sexual experiences with someone of the same sex, this may increase his or her chances of becoming gay. T - F
8. The American Psychiatric Association classified homosexuality as a disease until 1977 when, under pressure from the gay lobby, it changed its mind. T - F
9. Until the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, no society permitted homosexuals to legally marry. This universality suggests that homosexuality is as unnatural as incest and other practices which are taboo in all cultures. In most societies, homosexuals comprise between 1% and 2% of the population. In highly developed urban cultures such as ancient Athens, Rome, and now Europe and the US, the percentage rises. T - F
10. Homosexuality and pederasty sometimes overlap, as in the case of some boy scout leaders, priests, and teachers. These pedophiles have seduced young people and caused some of them to become gay or to develop life-long psychological problems. T - F
11. Children raised by gay parents (or gay people) can become homosexuals themselves. T - F

If you marked all 11 statements "true", you are very well informed. If you marked nine statements "true", you are fairly well informed. If you marked four or more statements "false", you have a great deal to learn about homosexuality, because *all* of the above statements are true!

## 26. ABORTION

### 1. Why Limit Infanticide to Pre-natal Abortion?

*Abortion is another issue on which the Left and the Right confront each other in the culture war. This one maybe the most contentious of all. By now, you are probably thinking, "I know this Kando; he is a right-winger. He is probably pro-life." But let me straighten you out: I am pro-choice.*

*So what's my problem? Well, my problem is always the same, whatever the issue: it is the*

*mendacity, the hypocrisy and the inconsistency with which “progressives” attack their targets. Two examples:*

*(1) reducing smoking is a commendable goal. But in the pursuit of that goal, America has resorted to criminalizing tobacco companies. That is a subterfuge, and it stinks. The manufacture and sale of cigarettes has always been legal. In order to find Philip Morris et. al. criminal, our legal system has had to go through all sorts of contortions, e.g. find that tobacco executives conspired to hide tobacco’s addictive properties, etc.*

*(2) reducing D.U.I. is also an excellent goal. But again, to that end, the criminal justice system has had to create legal fictions. For example, some people who have accidentally killed someone while D.U.I. have been charged with first-degree murder. But murder requires intent. So the charge should be involuntary or negligent manslaughter, not murder.*

*So essentially the problem is that in the pursuit of political goals, truth is always the first casualty. Of course, everyone agrees that the forces of reaction and oppression have always developed fraudulent ideologies to justify their nefarious practices. Think of Social Darwinism for example. But what is not recognized is that the Left - the forces of “progress” - do precisely the same. Even when the goal is commendable, it is pursued through lies and fictions.*

*Case in point: Abortion. On September 20, 1976, I read a column by George Will in Newsweek about the contortions of the courts and of the experts, as they strive to arrive at a “scientific” definition of what constitutes a “human.” A few days later, I wrote a letter to the Editor of Newsweek commenting on George Will’s column. My letter’s devastating logic went over the magazine’s head and they didn’t print it. On the other hand, George Will did appreciate my sarcasm, as evidenced by his nice reply.*

*My letter, reproduced below, proves that scientific and legal experts will never be able to tell us what is and what is not a human being. Abortion will never be a scientific question. The letter makes clear the horror to which such a scientific approach opens the door.*

I have an afterthought about George Will’s September 20 column and about the abortion issue in general:

The courts and scientific experts have proposed various ways to define “human,” i.e. to draw the line between a foetus which may be killed, and one which may not. Should it be three months? Six Months? Some other term? Should it vary, depending on the type of foetus?

Perhaps Social Psychology can help: Research with toddlers and infants has shown that the *self* begins to emerge at about 18 months. Social psychologists define the self as “the capacity for reflexive thought and self-consciousness.” This capacity is uniquely human. Although the higher primates and

some other species have a rudimentary aware of self (they can recognize themselves in mirrors for example), the difference between them and us is so large that it is *qualitative*.

However, until about eighteen months, this difference between humans and animals is only a *potential* difference. Prior to that age, there is *no qualitative psychological difference between humans and infra-humans*. My six-months old daughter’s I.Q. is lower than that of my ten-year old dog.

Therefore, the abortion debate - or that about infanticide - should be expanded to include the post-natal stage.

## 27. AIDS

### 1. Did the CIA Cause AIDS?

*In 1990, AIDS was new and it affected the US more than any other country. The April 1, 1990 issue of the National Review contained one of those letters which have always driven me up the wall: Someone named Satish Chandra expressed the insane view - not uncommon then - that AIDS was a conspiracy spread by such malevolent forces as the CIA and President Reagan. Here is my rebuttal. It was written on March 27, 1990. The National Review did not print it.*

I agree with Satish Chandra (April 1 letter) that the spread of AIDS is the result of a conspiracy. Mr. (or is it Ms. ?) Chandra is also correct in recognizing the importance of *motives* and of the *cui bono* principle: *Why* would a government deliberately spread AIDS among other nations, and *who* benefits?

Well, the US has by far the largest number of AIDS victims of any industrial nation, so it's obvious that America is the *target* of the conspiracy, not its source. Furthermore, which country adds each year the largest number of people to the world? India. This proves that the Indian government plans to take over the world by populating it with Indians. In order to achieve this, it must *depopulate* the world of other nationalities, especially Americans. This proves that AIDS was deliberately introduced into the US by Indian scientists.

Sincerely.

P.S. AIDS is no joking matter. Paranoid conspiracy theories *are*.

### 2. Does President Reagan Cause the Spread of AIDS?

*A few months later, on June 15, 1990, something very similar happened again. This time it was US News and World Report's chief political correspondent Michael Kramer who published a revolting article which insinuated that President Regan should be blamed for the spread of AIDS. I sent the following angry letter, which was not printed:*

Regarding your enclosed AIDS article on June 15. You really go too far, you unspeakable bigot.

Of all the gall of the knee-jerk Reagan-haters, this is the most tendentious page I have ever seen. It is cowardly, dishonest, cheap, hate-mongering, and scape-goating.

The picture and the insinuations are clear. As if the beleaguered President had anything to do with the spread of this disease! As if he could single-handedly reverse the spread - when even his courageous call for routine testing results in mass ridicule and cat-calls from the Reagan-haters. You should know that what is putting us all at risk is the refusal by the gay-civil-libertarian-media-inspired left to bite the bullet, i.e. to accept testing and to view AIDS as a *disease*, and not as a political propaganda vehicle. You blame the president for doing precisely what you are doing *yourself*, namely politicizing the issue.

## 28. CRIME AND POLITICS

### 1. L.A. Debate - Police Are Also Victims

*For many years I taught, did research, and worked in criminology. For example, I co-*

authored a book, *Readings in Criminology*, with Jud Landis (Kendall Hunt, 1995). I worked at the California State Prison in Vacaville. I also published many letters and articles commenting on criminological issues and criticizing the many flaws of America's criminal justice system.

*The central issue in criminology is punishment: How much should society punish deviant behavior? Conservatives favor much punishment, and liberals want as little of it as possible. My position has evolved. In the aftermath of the Counterculture, I felt that America had become a very liberal society, and that it condoned far too much deviant behavior. By the late 1980s, our crime rate had reached a record level that exceeded the rates of previous disorderly eras such as the 1890s (the "Wild West") and the "roaring" 1920s. The murder rate was over 10 per 100,000, ten to twenty times higher than in Europe, Japan, Canada and other "civilized" places. I felt that our society was losing control over its deviants, and that harsher punishment was necessary.*

*This section begins with a conservative, pro-punishment article I published in the Wall Street Journal on March 19, 1991. I wrote it a few days before the Rodney King beating by L.A.P.D., and it did not address that issue. However, the Journal edited and tweaked my manuscript, and it used it as ammunition in the debate raging around the Rodney King incident at the time, ammunition to show that there were at least extenuating circumstances in favor of the police.*

Friedrich Nietzsche once wrote that the gravest threat to a society's survival is its unwillingness to control its criminals. To paraphrase a figure more widely known in our world, Michael Corleone, history teaches us that it is possible to murder anyone with impunity.

Both these sets of words are relevant in the current discussion and investigation of police brutality in Los Angeles. There, a videotape of a beating of a black motorist by a group of police officers has touched off a Justice Department investigation. The beating itself was outrageous. The Justice Department is correct in perceiving this event as a "national" or "civil rights" issue. But not, perhaps, a national civil rights issue in the sense that many are describing it.

To understand what is happening in Los Angeles, it is worthwhile to look at what is happening in the rest of the U.S. Take, for example, another California city - Sacramento. Sacramento has seen more than its share of crime. The early part of 1991 has been particularly disgraceful. A so-called thrill killer has murdered half a dozen people, and the total number of murders so far this year exceeds 23. The discovery of unidentifiable bodies is becoming commonplace, often reported only on the back page of the local newspapers. The murders are happening everywhere, including the most affluent neighborhoods.

### **Police Lost Will**

The national clearance rate for murder has declined steadily since the 1950s: Three decades ago, more than 95% of all murders led to an arrest. Today, the figure is less than 70% and going down. In Sacramento so far this year, fewer than 40% of all murders have led to an arrest.

Part of the reason for the increasing inability of law enforcement to solve murder cases is that the proportion of stranger-on-stranger murder is going up. Cases involving relatives, neighbors or acquaintances are easier to solve, of course.

However, the primary cause of our society's increasing lawlessness is the one to which Nietzsche alluded: Our correctional, criminal justice and political systems have simply lost the will to combat crime. In fact they implement at every opportunity the policies most likely to encourage crime.

Thus, the Sacramento thrill killer's mass-murderous spree has led to immediate calls in the State legislature for stricter gun control laws. It is useless to remind those folks that the two jurisdictions with the strictest gun control laws in the country - New York and Washington D.C. - are also among those with the highest rates of murder and other violent crimes. Policy is

increasingly dictated by ideological commitment rather than empirical facts.

The thrill killer executed all his victims in fast food and convenience stores located in middle-class neighborhoods. The victims were employees and an occasional customer. An obvious and pragmatic response would be for every clerk, cashier and cook in such businesses to have ready access to a hand gun underneath the counter. But enabling citizens to protect themselves is not part of the professional criminological ideology.

Another way in which crime is encouraged is through the exclusionary rule. The definition and implementation of criminal justice policy is in the hands of politicians, judges, criminologists,

*The typical policeman has long lost the motivation really to “go after” murderers and violent criminals.*

academicians, Hollywood and media people, lawyers, parole agents and probation officers. With a few exceptions such as Harvard criminologist James Q. Wilson, a large majority among these professionals has, for many years, been much more occupied with the legal rights of defendants than with the plight of victims or the security of society. As a result, the typical policeman has long lost the motivation to really go after murderers and other violent criminals.

When my friends on the local police force stop a vehicle for a minor moving violation or a defective light, they routinely check the driver's license, his identity, whether the car is stolen and whether there is a warrant out for him. That's about it. They rarely try to find out where the individual is from, how long he has been in Sacramento, where he lives, works, etc. Yet it is through such inquisitiveness that most serious criminals are eventually apprehended. It is such inquisitiveness that was typical of citizen-police encounters in the past, and still is in Japan for example today. But most of my policemen friends no longer bother, since such fact finding is unlikely to lead to arrest or conviction, but instead more likely to their own punishment, reprimand or a law suit.

Another factor is the matter of reward and punishment, or simply put: justice. Every year, murderers such as the Sacramento thrill killer put a premature end to the lives of thousands upon thousands of innocent, hard working, law abiding citizens, often putting them first through excruciating torture. One of this criminal's recent victims was a beautiful, promising, hard-working college girl. A few years ago, also in Sacramento, authorities discovered in another killer's apartment the remnants of the bodies of victims who had been partially eaten by the murderer!

### **Establishment Overruled Voters**

It would be understandable if, in the face of such unspeakable evil, many would find slow torture a more appropriate punishment than swift and painless execution. But since the people of California are civilized, they simply voted to reinstate capital punishment in San Quentin's gas chamber. Yet, although capital punishment was approved twice by an overwhelming majority of the voters a decade ago, the criminal justice elite refuses to permit the State to execute anyone. Instead, each capital case is tried, appealed and suspended *ad infinitum* at an average cost of \$8 million per case to the taxpayers.

During that endless process, every mass murderer becomes a celebrity, enjoying year after year free room and board, media coverage and the best legal services that the public can pay for. From Juan Corona to Salcido, from Charles Manson to Dorothy Puente, from David Chase to Dan White, and the dozens upon dozens of other killers and mass murderers, they have all learned the

lesson that their crimes assured them of a spotlight on national television, a permanent place in history and the lasting attention of society. If this is not reward, what is?

The L.A. videotape case is still unfolding. The issues seem to be quite different from the ones discussed above. But they share the same surreal context, a context that will cage if and when the citizenry wrestles back from the criminal justice professions and from opinion makers the means to protect itself. Until then, the system will continue to reward criminals, endanger our lives and emasculate the police. An important principle which is supposed to guide criminal justice is that of proportionality, or just deserts, by which is meant a correspondence between the seriousness of a crime committed and the severity of the ensuing punishment. This principle is operative today, in a very perverted sense: the more serious an offender's crime is, the more lavish are the resources and the attention which society bestows upon him (*Wall Street Journal*, March 19, 1991).

## 2. Hateful Reaction to my Article Supporting the Police

*My Wall Street Journal article was reprinted in many other venues, including college anthologies and the L.A.P.D. monthly Blue Line (May 1991). I was interviewed by radio and TV stations, including a telephone interview with Good Morning America. I gave many speeches. I also received dozens of personal letters, most of them supportive, many written by hoi polloi, working-class Americans, little old ladies in Iowa, etc.*

*But I also got slimed, and - predictably - the greatest nastiness came from the academic and professional elites. For example Chet Dettlinger, editorial columnist for the Glendale News-Press, published a scathing attack on me in his paper on April 23, 1991. His arguments were, among others that: (1) America is no more lawless today than it was in the past; (2) It is primarily reported crime which has gone up, not true crime; (3) Execution is not a deterrent; (4) The exclusionary rule must be observed at all times. (5) The alternative is to be like Iran. (6) Foreign solutions to the crime problem are not applicable to America. Dettlinger also slung many personal as *hominem* insults at me: I was a brown shirt, I was a snob, I was wrong about Vito Corleone and Nietzsche, etc.*

*My defense against all of this was printed in the Glendale News-Press on May 13, 1991. Here is what I wrote:*

I am honored to be singled out for a full-length editorial attack by Chet Dettlinger, even though the article is a massive cheap shot. It is hard to decide where to begin, since Dettlinger's article is so rich in errors, red herrings and demagogic rhetoric.

Just for the record, I wrote my *Wall Street Journal* article *before* the Rodney King beating. The *Journal* then added a couple of sentences to update the article (including the part about Michael Corleone being better known to most Americans than Nietzsche, which is undoubtedly true, be that as it may). But I am basically not addressing the Rodney King incident or police brutality. So the first of many stupidities in Dettlinger's article is his failure to even understand the subject of my editorial.

Dettlinger is appallingly ignorant about criminal justice facts. He denies that there has been a long-term increase in crime. Any college freshman knows that all index crimes have increased factorially over the past 30 or 40 years. The murder rate alone is more than twice what it was in the 1950s. Anecdotes about Al Capone are meaningless, and it is absurd to attribute most of the increase to a change in reporting techniques.

Dettlinger also asserts that execution is not a deterrent. We don't know that. Some research (e.g. Philips, 1981 *American Journal of Sociology*) indicates that it is; other studies suggest that it

isn't. Then, Dettlinger quibbles about my clearance statistics. He should know that when it comes to criminal homicide, the difference between reported and committed cases is marginal. No wonder that Dettlinger is a former consultant and police chief assistant. God help us if this is the level of competence found among such professionals!

With regard to the exclusionary rule, Dettlinger clings to the idiotic practice of excluding perfectly good evidence on technicalities. Observers have long noted that a better way would be to use all good evidence, but to deter police misbehavior by punishing cops who break the law (including Miranda). That's how it is done in England, for example. In the U.S., we operate on the assumption that two wrongs make a right: we throw out good evidence, and policemen violate the rights of suspects with relative impunity. Why not correct both?

Dettlinger asks us to choose between the current situation in the U.S. and life in Iran. Setting up such phony straw men is typical of ideological zealots. As if no better alternatives existed - say law enforcement in Norway, or in Japan, or in any other place that is *neither* lawless *nor* dictatorial. As if our country couldn't improve on its dismal criminal record. Not that America and its admirable pluralism and freedom should be trivialized. Merely that we have a terrible problem *when it comes to crime*, a problem that is aggravated by the denial and the rigidity of the likes of Dettlinger.

Dettlinger's article is drenched in rhetorical slogans and adjectives: My statements are "snobbish," "specious" and "brown shirt-" like. As a Jew born in Eastern Europe during World War Two, who lost relatives during the Holocaust, I find the latter insinuation especially insulting.

But the bottom line about Dettlinger is that he is simply not very perceptive. Although he seems to have honest and strongly felt convictions, he just doesn't have the intellectual capacity to grasp complex issues and to analyze them intelligently. He doesn't understand simple ideas such as what a paraphrase means, or the "impunity" implication of Michael Corleone's statement.

He is also xenophobic - dismissing anything that is "some other society's way" as un-American and therefore bad. America owes its greatness to the fact that it always replenishes itself and absorbs foreigners and foreign ideas. But Dettlinger is an ideological bigot who argues through emotions rather than ideas, and whose fuses go haywire when a statement threatens his deeply held pre-conceptions.

It is difficult to argue with ignorance. My Wall Street Journal editorial has had an overwhelmingly positive response. Exceptions are inevitable (*Glendale News-Press*, May 13, 1991).

### 3. My Colleague Attacks me for my pro-Police Stance

*One of the fiercest attacks triggered by my Wall Street Journal article was one by Robert Keldgord, Sacramento's chief probation officer. This man was also a faculty member in my department at the university. He convened an official meeting of his Executive Council to denounce me and my article. He then sent a formal memo to my boss, charging me with (1) inappropriate criticism of the probation department, (2) not knowing anything about police work, because I don't ride along, and (3) accusing probation officers of not having interest in victims' rights. His memo went on to threaten personnel action. Here was another example of a professor's contempt for academic freedom and for the 1<sup>st</sup> amendment.*

*I had no choice but to defend myself. Here is my reply, written on April 17, 1991:*

While it is flattering to be the subject of a California Corrections Executive Council meeting, I must object to Keldgord's distortions, failure to understand and bizarre methods:

1. The article is not, as he claims, an attack on probation officers and parole agents. Keldgord is too self-absorbed. The article contains a brief passing reference to his profession, but it is silly for Keldgord to single out three words and to totally ignore or deliberately misunderstand the main point of the piece.

That main point is obvious: There are many professionals who deal with or talk about crime and who are, in my view, simply too liberal in the short-hand sense of that word, i.e. in terms of what to do about crime. This is obviously a gross generalization, and it clearly applies much more to some professionals (e.g. sociologists) than to others, and least of all to policemen, whom I conspicuously excluded from my list. Were Keldgord familiar with even a fraction of the vast criminological, sociological and journalistic literature which so often dwells on the victimization of criminals rather than that of their victims, he might see that my characterization is well founded.

2. Keldgord also degenerates into ad hominem - I don't know anything about "real" police work, I am an academic egghead, etc. That's the pot calling the kettle black. I count among my friends a dozen police officers both in Sacramento and elsewhere. Many of them are my former students. I ride along with them many times each year. I have also worked at the Vacaville Medical Facility, and I spend many days each year at local juvenile institutions.

3. While one can never please everybody, the response to my article has been overwhelmingly positive, especially from law enforcement. In addition to being reprinted in various newspapers around the country, it is also being published in the LAPD bulletin. My friends with the Sac P.D. and the sheriff's department confirm that my characterization of their work and of their frustrations is accurate.

4. I don't know what other problems Keldgord has with the CSUS Department of Criminal Justice. He says that his relationship has been bad for a number of years. That can't have anything to do with me, as I had never heard of the man until his memo.

5. All in all, it is Keldgord's right to disagree with my views, but his outburst reveals an intolerance for my right to disagree with him. Memos widely circulated to higher administrators, containing threats of various sorts and personally offensive language reveal contempt for free speech and for intelligent dialogue - the mark of a petty mentality.

#### 4. America Locks up Far too Many People

*By the late 1990s, the situation had changed: America was no longer plagued by a crime wave, but instead it was going through a punishment wave. I, too, changed. Two things had turned into their opposite: (1) crime was being brought under control, and (2) America's incarceration rate was skyrocketing to an unacceptable level. We were in danger of becoming a police state. At this point, my commentaries about our criminal justice system became "liberal." An example of this is the following speech, which I gave to a group of California State professionals on September 22, 1998:*

There have been two opposite trends during the 1990s: (1) a sharp decline in crime and (2) an astronomical rise in incarceration. Conservatives may rightly attribute the former to the latter. However, we are reaching a point of diminishing returns, if not outright counter productivity. What are the facts?

Table I shows the deep decline in *all* eight index categories.

#### Crime:

Table I. Trends in Eight Index Crimes - 1991 to 1996

Year	Murder	Rape	Robbery	Aggr. Assault	Burglary	Theft	Auto Theft	Arson
1991	9.8*	42.3	273	433	1252	3229	659	43
1996	7.4	36.1	202	388	943	2976	526	38
decline	25%	15%	26%	10%	255	8	205	115

\* All rates are per 100,000 population, per year

Source: Uniform Crime Reports, 1991; 1996

**Incarceration:** At the same time, The U.S. prison population has been growing by 6 % per year. It reached 1.2 million in 1997. The California prison population grew by 8% in 1997, to nearly 160,000. the total prison population of the United States has risen by 42% in the last five years and by 114% in the past ten years. Since 1980, the country's prison population has risen 19 times faster than the general population. The fastest growth has occurred in the West - almost 7% in 1997. Hawaii ranked number one among all states, with a growth of 23%. The Northeast grew the least, namely by less than 2%. Oregon's prison population declined by nearly 8%. (See *Sacramento Bee* August 3, 1998).

This translates to an incarceration rate of 445 per 100,000, i.e. the highest in the world. In the past, we have often been told that we were, at least, behind those two awful countries - the Soviet Union and Apartheid-ruled South Africa. But no longer: We are now the world champion.

Actually, the news is even worse: America has not 1.2 million prisoners, but 2 million, if we include the 550,000 jail inmates, plus about 100,000 juveniles locked up in institutions, and about 50,000 involuntarily confined mental patients (See *Sacramento Bee*, August 30, 1998). This brings our incarceration rate up to 700 people per 100,000. This is 10 to 20 times higher than in Europe, Japan, Australia, Canada, and the rest of the "free world." Add to this 3 million probationers and parolees, and you get a total of about 5 million Americans under the jurisdiction of the criminal court, i.e. nearly 2% of the population!

**Race:** Fifty-five percent of all prisoners are African-American, a group which only makes up 12.5% of the total population. A black man's chance of going to prison is ten times higher than that of a white man. In California, blacks make up 7% of the population, but 33% of all prisoners. Another 33% is made up of Hispanics.

So America's prison population is growing by 6% per year. When something grows exponentially at 6% per year, it doubles in twelve years. Check it out on your pocket calculator. A 6% return on investment is pretty good. A 6% inflation rate is bad. A 6% deficit accumulation is bad. A 6% population growth is catastrophic. Etc. In California the number of inmates rose by almost 8% last year. This curves is even steeper, doubling in 9 years.

What happens if the prison population increases by 6% or 8% each year? What happens, under this surrealistic scenario, is that *Within your lifetime all Americans would be behind bars!* Everyone - you, the cops, the judges, your grandmother, your babies, everyone! (By the year 2048 or 2063, depending on the percentage).

**Why is the prison population growing at such a insane rate?** I suppose the initial reason, back in the mid eighties, was society's response to the unacceptably high crime rate. The kidnap

and murder of children such Polly Klaas led to the passage of Three-Strikes Laws, Megan Laws and other tough measures. Sentences became mandatory and longer. Police forces were expanded, as when Clinton funded an additional 100,000 peace officers nationwide, increasing the total national police force to nearly 600,000. Many more prisons were built.

In time, this vast expansion of the criminal justice system became a self-sustaining job program. In time, crime declined to unprecedented low levels. However, the system was incapable of adjusting to the new reality. It had become immensely powerful. Its unions, such as the CPOA (California Peace Officers Association) and the CCOA (California Correctional Officers Association) are among the most powerful lobbies. The economies of entire regions now depended on the continued influx of prisoners into the system, and continued prison construction. Without its prisons, upstate New York would be as economically depressed as it once was. The unwitting principle became “if you build them, they will come.”

**What causes rises and falls in crime rates?** Are conservatives right when they claim that it is precisely because of the great increase in punishment that America is now so much safer, and that this increase has therefore been necessary?

To some extent, they are. However, there are other factors which account for fluctuations in crime, some of them at least as important as punishment. The most popular explanations always come down to economics. You ask Joe Blow in the street why there is so much crime and what should be done about it, and chances are he'll tell you that the problem is poverty and unemployment. That's because he has heard this innumerable times from liberal media and other opinion leaders. This sounds nice, but it isn't necessarily true.

A better explanation is demographics. Sociologists have long known that changes in the crime rate closely mirror changes in birthrates and the age distribution of the population. Most crimes are committed by young adults, so when a population ages, the crime rate declines.

**The Prison-Industrial Complex:** In the fifties we used to worry about the military-industrial complex. It has now been replaced by the military-prison complex. We have become the world's most punitive society. Only three other countries execute more people than we do - Iran, China and Saudi-Arabia. I am not very proud to be in this company. We have lowered the level at which we try juveniles, to 14 and below in many jurisdictions. Politicians try to outdo each other in passing more and more punitive legislation.

The hidden agenda behind all of this is economic: The criminal justice system has become an indispensable element of a full-employment economy. Don't forget the hundreds of thousands of lawyers, social workers, probation officers, psychologists, criminologists and other bureaucrats, all the people involved on both sides of the punishment-rehabilitation debate. Those who want to punish criminals and those who want to coddle them are *both* deeply vested in the system. Their livelihoods depend on it. They need criminals far more than criminals need them.

## 5. America Locks up Far too Many People - Redux

*On August 3, 1998, I had published a letter in the Sacramento Bee which basically made the same argument as the previous speech:*

This is to support and amplify your August 3 article regarding rates of incarceration. While your Dept. of Justice numbers are informative, they do not fully express the staggering magnitude of our state's and country's criminalization practices:

To the 1,244,554 prisoners in America in 1997, we should add the jail population of approximately 550,000, plus roughly 100,000 locked up juveniles and another 50,000 miscellaneous (e.g. institutionalized mental patients). The total confined population comes to nearly 2 million (1,945,000). This is a rate of nearly 700 per 100,000 residents, not 445. It is *ten times* higher than the rates in most other advanced countries, and *by far* the highest in the world.

Furthermore, we have nearly 3 million probationers and parolees. Thus, nearly 5 million Americans are under the jurisdiction of the criminal court, i.e. 2000 per 100,000 residents!

In California, the total number of people locked up is about 246,000 -- when adding jails, juveniles and mental facilities. If one includes probationers and parolees, the number goes up to 630,000.

Everyone agrees that our prison population cannot possibly continue to grow at the present annual rate of 7.9%. If it did, the entire state population would be either locked up or on parole/probation by the year 2051! Imagine: one big happy family of prisoners -- including judges, cops, prison guards and everyone else, and no one left to man the gates! (*Sacramento Bee*, Aug. 3, 1998).

## 6. Foucault's Work on Punishment Applies to Contemporary America: The Randomization of Punishment

*In my campaign against excessive punishment, I came to see value in post-modern texts, for example Foucault's Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison. In February 1999, I began work on an article about this subject. It begins with a discussion of Foucault's seminal book, along with Eric Schlosser's The Prison-Industrial Complex published in the Dec. 1998 issue of the Atlantic Monthly. I attempt to apply Foucault's concepts to the current situation in the United States. I then develop my own provocative theory of where we are going with our punishment mania.*

**1. Does Foucault's Analysis Apply to Contemporary America?** In *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Foucault traces the evolution of punishment in Western society from physical torture to *correction* and *coercion*. His thesis, in essence, is that punishment moves from exclusive control over the body to controlling the *soul*, as a further means to power and continued body control.

Prior to the 18th century, the trial was hidden and the punishment -- torture, execution, for example -- was public. Today, it is the reverse. Foucault sums up his central insight as follows: "the success of power is proportional to its ability to mask its mechanisms." And, according to the Frenchman, the social sciences are the major accomplice in the transformation which he describes. "Another power, another knowledge," Foucault writes.

Does Foucault's work shed light on what is going on in America at the end of the millennium?

The Frenchman has been the great guru of the postmodern left. One's attitude towards him can be enthusiastically supportive, as found among radical Postmodernists, or dismissive, as is typical of the scientific academic establishment. It is easy to view him as a product of the 1960s Counterculture, a passé hippie-philosopher. His work in criminology can be written off as philosophy, history, already a quarter of a century old and, besides, mostly about France. It would be easy to say that Foucault's work is irrelevant to contemporary American criminology.

Most of the students in my sociology classes are relatively unsophisticated working-class people. I never get too fancy with them. However, I do hammer away ceaselessly at the

enormous amount of punishment that goes on in our society. The facts are plain to see: Each year for the past decade, the crime rate has declined in nearly every category of the Uniform Crime Report, yet each year we lock up 6% or 7% more people; each year we execute a dozen more people than the previous year; over half of all the prisoners in America are black; about 5 million Americans are under the jurisdiction of the criminal justice system, i.e. 2% of the population; we lock up 700 people per 100,000, i.e. 10 to 20 times as high a proportion as the Europeans; there is not a country on earth that locks up as many people as we do on either a proportional or an absolute basis; not China, not Russia, not Third World dictatorships. A bad joke I tell my students every term: at the present rate of growth, by the year 2050, every single American will be behind bars -- babies, grand-mothers, cops, judges, correctional officers, everyone. There will be no one left outside the gates to guard the prisoners.

All of this is well-known, even to undergraduate sociology and criminal justice majors. Typically, they remain indifferent to my litany of facts, satisfied that America punishes just the right amount, because there are so many bad people who need punishment.

Foucault provides a history and a deconstruction of punishment in Western society. Most of the historical data are from France. However, the author displays a broad panoply of the history of international criminology. For example, ample attention is devoted to the pivotal roles of Beccaria and Bentham. The latter's *panopticon* is especially central to our understanding of modern penology. That concept refers -- both architecturally and sociologically -- to the structure of modern punishment and surveillance: Power, control and surveillance emanate from a central "hub," or control center, from where the population can be viewed, examined, controlled, separated, isolated. The model applies to all institutions -- schools, hospitals, factories, prisons. "Is it surprising," Foucault asks rhetorically, that prisons [in modern society] resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospitals, which all resemble prisons?" (p. 228). The model represents an economy of power: few are needed to exercise it in such a socio-architectural structure.

Is there a central thesis to Foucault's analysis? One way to summarize his historical analysis is to say that society has moved from controlling bodies to the control of the soul. Herein lies the relevance of the extensive and vivid descriptions of past torture practices that fill the book's first hundred pages.

But Foucault's more important contribution is his explanation of why the prison has been so popular in modern society, and why it, therefore, continues to mushroom. The modern prison system has been in existence for over 150 years. Its avowed aim is to reduce crime, and in that, it has failed miserably. Foucault reiterates some of the things which have become banalities by now, for example the facts that prisons *cause* crime and recidivism, and that prisons are *schools* for crime. Any college freshman exposed to labeling theory and other criminological ideas knows this by now.

What, then, do prisons accomplish? In a veritable *tour de force*, Foucault shows in which respect the modern prisons has been eminently successful: It has succeeded in *creating delinquency*, and delinquency, distinct from common criminality, is a form of illegality that is *useful*. With the advent of the concept of delinquency, it is the entire *human being* that becomes the subject of control, examination, knowledge and power, not merely his (criminal) action (This is reminiscent of Durkheim)

Central to all of Foucault's work is the knowledge-power nexus. It is clearly so in this work. With the advent of modern psychology, psychiatry, criminology (i.o.w., the behavioral "sciences"), the human being joins the ranks of the animals, plants, the earth, as the subjects of "the terrible power of investigation; another power, another knowledge." (p. 226).

A third central thesis -- or perhaps a third way to summarize Foucault's central thesis -- is

this:

18th century reformers such as Cesare Beccaria had advocated the abolition (1) physical *punishment* (in the form of torture). The logical sequence -- and what the reformers were advocating -- would have been for punishment to be replaced by (2) *reform, rehabilitation, correction*. However, that second phase was skipped, and we moved directly to phase three, namely (3) *coercion* and control. This is the modern prison system.

Does Foucault's analysis apply to America at this time? I believe that it does. In fact, he was prophetic. Even during the 1970s, the existence of a prison-industrial complex of the current magnitude would have probably seemed Science Fiction-like. As recently as the 1950s, the drug problem was considered a *public health* issue, not a crime issue. Today, hundreds of thousands of mental patients are in prison, no longer in mental institutions. We increasingly treat, try and punish children as adults. Our greatest efforts at control, coercion and punishment are directed at *lifestyle* deviance (drugs; sex), not violent crimes.

And the domination of this prison-industrial complex by the social-scientific paradigm is now total. Sociology is verging on becoming synonymous with Criminology. No other field is researched more lavishly than crime. The governmental and private research agencies fund more research on crime, delinquency and deviant behavior than any other sociological subdiscipline. This is an added aspect of the prison-industrial complex overlooked by Eric Schlosser, whose article by title *The Prison-Industrial Complex* (*Atlantic Monthly*, Dec.1998) is otherwise excellent.

America, then, is the most punishment-oriented society in the world. It represents the vanguard of a new type of society. Its prison gulag is as extensive as that of the Soviet Union was, and it continues to expand rapidly. Yet, unlike the USSR, the society is not governed by a centralized, totalitarian State.

How is this possible? What are the distinguishing features of our society which account for this? America is the prototype of the postmodern society. It was the first modern society, and it magnified all the modern tendencies of other advanced industrial nations. It then moved ahead -- faster and farther than anyone else -- into the postmodern era. Is there a relationship between such advanced postmodern conditions and this society's uniquely high level of punishment?

Granted, there are the standard explanations for the exceptional level of punishment in this country: Capitalism and inequality, our ethnic diversity, our culture and our national character, among others. But I have a different idea:

Foucault tells us that with modern technologies of punishment, the pain inflicted goes underground so to speak, and the real deterrence becomes the *certainty* of punishment, not its grotesque and visible physical pain (as in public torture). Punishment moves from exclusive control over the body to controlling the soul as a further means to power and continued body control.

However, isn't the certainty of punishment precisely what is lacking in American criminal justice? Think of O.J. Simpson; Robert Blake, Michael Jackson and others. If there is anything we all agree on, it is the system's deplorable unpredictability. Is Foucault wrong?

Not necessarily: The familiar complaint that punishment is too slow and unpredictable in order to be a deterrent is misleading. While the amount and the nature of punishment are unpredictable and even arrest isn't a sure thing at all, there is something horrifyingly scary about that very *uncertainty*: Like cancer, punishment may strike anyone at any time -- guilty or innocent. Under such conditions, citizens live increasingly in a regime of daily and universal terror.

Now, few people would admit this. But the terror is not conscious. Most "law-abiding"

citizens proclaim, on the surface, that they have nothing to worry about, since they are on the right side of the law. It's the *others*, those 2% of the population, who have everything to fear. So, even if that percentage were to rise to 5%, or 10%, or 25% -- stratospheric heights which have never existed anywhere but which, in the mind of many lay people, would still be acceptable -- most members of the general public would still profess not to be worried, since they would feel secure that they belong to the 75% who will not be punished.

At a deeper level, though, there are the seeds of a vague and incipient sense of terror. This is not due to the growing size of the punished population, but due to the unpredictability of *who* gets punished, *when* one might be punished, and *how* one will be punished.

**2. The Democratization of Punishment:** Increasingly, the social control system snatches individuals who, earlier, could in no way have conceived of themselves as candidates for punishment. Some people now ask "how on earth is this happening to me?" Or they say, "I don't belong here; there has been some mistake." This is the *democratization* and the *randomization* of punishment.

Until recently, race, sex, class and age have been powerful predictors of punishment, i.e. of *who* is likely to be punished as well as the *types* and *amounts* of punishment. However, while these factors still play a role, their importance is waning.

You might object that there continues to be immense discrimination in punishment on the basis of race and social class. This is the current conventional wisdom, and to subscribe to it is the mark of the self-respecting, politically correct, progressive citizen, demonstrating compassion and concern for social justice.

And insofar as these factors count for less today than in the past, this is viewed as a mark of progress, i.e. the gradual substitution of achievement for ascription in modern society. After all, true justice must be color-blind, gender-blind, and the like. The problem, according to most, is precisely that we have not yet reached a state of total color, class, gender and age neutrality, i.e. that the criminal justice system is still guilty of racial, sexual class and age discrimination. For example, the clamor to punish those rich "white-collar" criminals more harshly has been heard loud and clear for many years.

But the very existence of this pervasive complaint indicates that racial, gender, socio-economic and age discrimination in punishment is becoming less acceptable. And, sure enough, such discrimination is declining by any available measure. There is no question that, today, punishment is given out to many members of *all* classes, *all* races., *both* sexes and *all* ages. Like cancer, punishment begins to transcend all social boundaries.

The democratization of punishment in the areas of race, sex, class and age can be documented: Of course race lingers as a source of discrimination. Blacks are murdered 3 times more often than whites by peace officers using deadly force at the point of arrest (Walker: 1998). Blacks make up over half of the prison population, while only representing 12.5% of the national population. Blacks are arrested more often than whites for the same offenses, or for no offense at all (DWB means driving while black). The race of the *victims* of crime is also a factor: Blacks who murder whites are often executed, but whites who kill blacks never are. These and other statistics documenting the society's racism are familiar to criminologists and lay persons alike.

However, there are countervailing tendencies: black defendants' cases are thrown out of criminal court more frequently than white cases, and black death row inmates manage to sustain their appeal process -- and thus stay alive -- longer than white inmates. Of course, these black advantages are often the result of the fact that the cases against them are weaker in the first place.

But in general, punishment is moving in the direction of color-blindness. For example, blacks are *not* executed in disproportionate numbers, when compared to their numbers on death row. While law enforcement still picks on blacks disproportionately, it does so less than in the past: For example, use of deadly force occurred six times more against black suspects than against whites in the past, and it had declined to “just” three times more. Police excesses against minorities are now often redressed once a case reaches the criminal court.

The trend with regard to sex is also toward equalization: While females remain a small fraction of the total population of prisoners, juvenile wards, death row inmates and other punished groups, their share is rising. It would be wrong to attribute this rise to increased female participation in crime. In fact, the female contribution to violent crime and to other index felonies is *lower* today than 50 years ago.

It is symptomatic that we are now executing some females. The disappearance of this taboo is significant.

Neither is punishment primarily reserved for the lower class any more. You might object and remind me that upper-class offenders tend to receive less punishment than lower-class defendants; that a rich man can buy himself a good defense and thus escape punishment, even when obviously guilty; that white-collar crimes -- usually committed by the upper class -- are punished less severely than street crimes, commonly committed by the lower class; that law violation by the lower class -- such as the use of crack cocaine among lower-class blacks -- fetches more severe sentences than equally deviant actions by others, such as the use of powder cocaine, methamphetamines, heroin and hallucinogens, which are used more often by middle-class whites.

However, there is a trend away from such double standards, both at the ideological level and in practice: The clamor to make justice “class blind” has emanated from academia for many years, and it has found widespread public support. This, in turn, has led to a growing number of convictions of middle and upper-class defendants, ranging from peace officers, politicians and corporate executives caught in corruption scandals, to respectable citizens convicted of drunk driving, to celebrities incarcerated for domestic violence. It is especially in the area of “new” crimes such as DUI, domestic violence and sex offenses such as sexual harassment that the democratization of punishment is progressing most rapidly. In sum, while many still feel that the socio-economic democratization of punishment is not proceeding fast enough, there is no doubt that it is under way.

Age, too, now declines as a source of penal discrimination: The 20th century was the culmination of a trend to increase the protection of juveniles against punishment. This was formalized by the creation, in 1899, of the first American juvenile court in Cook County, Illinois. Nowhere else have we seen more clearly the substitution of a rehabilitation philosophy for a punishment philosophy than in the juvenile justice system. Nowhere else was the transition from a moral vocabulary to a medical one clearer. However, this trend has now been reversed: We are now lowering the age at which juveniles can be tried as adults. So there is less special protection for juveniles than before.

**3. The Randomization of Punishment:** There comes a time when the prison population can no longer grow. This is a practical issue. There is simply no more room (*California reached this crisis point in 2007, TK*). At this point, the system has to begin a triage process. But on what basis?

Several methods come to mind: (1) Use the severity of crime as your criterion - lock up only

the most serious offenders. This is the method used by medicine, when it only has the resources to treat those most seriously ill or wounded. (2) Use random selection. This is used by the military to draft soldiers. (3) Use a quota system, so that no demographic group is unfairly over-represented. This is affirmative action in punishment, already favored by many today. (4) Use labeling.

It is this fourth method which may become the most widely used. Let me explain: Labeling is what sociologists call “societal reaction.” According to this analysis, a person is not necessarily *a priori* more deviant than anyone else. No, the way a person becomes a deviant is by being labeled one after the fact, almost randomly. In other words, whether or not you are a deviant is a matter of (bad) luck. Some people are picked on, others aren’t.

Think of who gets speeding tickets: 99% of motorists exceed the speed limit, and only a very few are tagged. This is almost entirely a matter of (bad) luck.

Once you have been singled out (through sheer bad luck), *then* labeling follows. That is, the criminal justice system must *justify* your selection. To achieve this, it manufactures an appropriate narrative. Thus, in the future punishment will befall people increasingly randomly. But it will not happen via a blatant random selection. No, first the individual must experience the bad luck of having been selected for punishment - randomly. Then, the labeling process will be applied, so as to justify that person’s selection for punishment, and this process will complete his destruction. The analogy with cancer may, again, be helpful: Cancer can strike anyone at any time, regardless of precautions. And who recovers from cancer is similarly unpredictable.

**4. The Social Psychology of Randomized Punishment:** Conventional psychologists have used such terms as *cognitive dissonance*, and they have even appealed to human nature, to suggest the existence of a mental health-maintenance mechanism. According to this view, most of us would continue to feel relatively unthreatened, even in the face of (1) dramatic increases in the proportion of the punished population and (2) the randomization and democratization of punishment.

But this theory is not realistic. It assumes that humans are one-dimensional. At deeper levels, the evolution of punishment as currently under way, particularly in the United States, must have a profound effect. Psychologically, it can be expected to result in various psycho-pathologies, including reaction formation, transference, paranoia and mass psychosis. Sociologically, it paves the road for new forms of fascism.

There are two classes of people in society -- those who *punish* and those who *are punished*. Psychologically, the first thing most of us probably do is to identify with the *punishers*. We put ourselves mentally in that category, for two reasons: (1) because it is comfortably larger, and thus a matter of statistical odds, and (2) because we have, as everyone can attest, not done anything deserving of punishment. We are law-abiding citizens.

But this effort may not always succeed. As with cancer, reality often ends up violating wishful self-definition and self-classification. Nowadays, more and more people find themselves suddenly cast among the ranks of the punished. Think of middle-class professionals and millionaire celebrities suddenly locked up for DUI. Think of the random way in which most people get away with traffic infractions, tax cheating, lying, slander, office theft, while some unlucky ones get in legal trouble over such things. Most people feel that they are safe, because they are perfectly average and normal, just like their neighbors.

But being a perfectly average, normal person is no guarantee that you won’t be punished, any more than eating the proper diet, living healthily and not smoking is a guarantee that you won’t catch cancer.

Meanwhile, the shrinking majority of the not-yet-punished redoubles its efforts to maintain a deep moat between itself and the swelling rank of the punished. They support better and harsher

forms of punishment. They pass initiatives and legislation to increase penalties for smaller and smaller crimes. Make adultery a felony. Failure to recycle too. Mandate the death penalty for more crimes. Why three-strikes? Why not two-strikes and you are out? Or one strike, for that matter. This is well under way. Crime keeps declining, but worry about crime remains high and penalties grow harsher. This is the security blanket used by the law-abiding majority to assure itself that it is safely on the side of the punishers.

In reality, however, the roles of punisher and punished become interchangeable. Increasingly, the prison population includes police officers, judges, correctional officers, corporate CEOs, college students, housewives, evangelists and assorted others who earlier had felt safely on the other side of the great divide. People who suddenly ask themselves, like Michael Douglas in the film *Falling Down*: "Am I the bad Guy?"

**5. Structural Aspects of Randomized Punishment:** So the (slinking) majority of people who have never been punished, in an increasingly strained effort to remain on their side of the fence, raise the ante by becoming more and more punitive. In time, the totality of the population, while desperately hoping to stay on one side, becomes potential members of the *other* side. This is what happens in all societies that travel down this road - from ancient Rome to the totalitarian systems of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Had Nazi Germany not been defeated, Moloch would not have stopped at Jews, Gypsies, homosexuals and communists. Those would have been followed by Catholics, intellectuals, capitalists, the poor, women, non-party members and so on, until there was no one left.

Under Stalin, the Rubachovs (Arthur Koestler's unforgettable figure) exemplify the growing number of apparachiks and others who are on one side today, the other side tomorrow. George Orwell reminded us eloquently that it is the highly active punisher who is the most likely to become the punished, at some later time. There is a very clear logic to Robespierre's career. The expression "the revolution devours its children" stems from the 1792 *Terreur*.

To be sure, America today shows little resemblance with those tectonic regimes. I merely note a trend, and the fact that our country is moving towards *new* forms of social control. The trend is energized by the fact that it is economically functional. Not only is the criminal justice system a source of jobs for millions, but it is also increasingly *privatized*. This brings the profit motive into the equation, vastly increasing the incentive to grow the punishment industry. And in order to do that, legislatures pass vast new quantities of laws every session. The legal system becomes utterly incomprehensible. There is a potential law against *everything*. This makes the random process of criminalization and labeling described above that much easier.

There are several new frontiers with great promise for the legal entrepreneur. They include sex, drugs, Internet crimes and victimless crimes. Pornography and sexual harassment can yield a large crop of "criminals." So can the rigid definition of rape and pedophilia, as when an 18-year old has sexual intercourse with his 17-year old girlfriend. Similarly, the vast majority of recent incarcerated are non-violent drug consumers. In addition, law enforcement can redouble its struggle against prostitution, locking up both prostitutes and johns, confiscating the latter's car, then perhaps his house, or why not execute him? The Internet, finally, is full of promise: Already, a student of mine who was caught viewing lurid pictures of an underage girl was charged with rape and burglary. The legal fiction of applying the concepts of rape and burglary to acts that were committed while sitting at one's own computer at home has much potential.

## 7. Is US becoming a Police State?

*My position has remained the same into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, for the simple reason that our rates of incarceration continue to grow while our crime rates remain low. The problem remains excessive punishment, not excessive permissiveness, as was the case in the aftermath of the counterculture. Here is one more example of my “liberal” stance, a letter printed in the Sacramento Bee on March 5, 2000 and criticizing a column by Orlando Patterson which had failed to note the extent to which the country was turning into a police state:*

Orlando Patterson’s article about police operations sounds the alarm about the increasing power of the police in America. Yet, he maintains that we remain “the land most passionately committed to the cause of liberty” and “the nation best qualified to lead the world into a century of global freedom.”

There are many people overseas who might contest this claim. Patterson’s ethnocentrism is misplaced. While he identifies some of the punitive ways of our country, he does not go far enough:

1. *We do not have the 2nd highest rate of incarceration in the world after Russia, but in fact occupy the Number One position, locking up nearly 700 persons per 100,000.*

2. *We are not only the “only prominent western democracy” with the death penalty, but we are also in contrast with many “non-western,” “non-prominent” and until recently “non-democratic” countries such as Hungary, the Czech Republic, Poland and just about all of Europe, both East and West. Furthermore, we execute nearly 100 people per year -- probably one of largest absolute numbers in the world, competing with China for the number one spot.*

3. *Yet, contrary to public perception, ours is not one of highest rates of criminal activity and violence in the world: Our murder rate is about 6 per 100,000, still higher than in many other industrialized nations, which range from under 1 to close to 4 (Japan, United Kingdom, Canada, France), but lower than those of Russia and most of Latin America, which range from 10 to 50. As to other crimes, including assault and property crimes: We are *unexceptional* and in fact lower than many European countries, including Italy and Eastern Europe. The only crime in which we rank high is murder, and that’s because of our guns.*

Patterson is correct in his assessment that we tend to *criminalize* our social issues, and thus relegate responsibility for their management to law enforcement rather than to the helping professions. The prime case in point is our war on drugs. Whereas (western) Europeans treat drugs as a public health issue, like alcohol and tobacco, we treat it as a crime -- with disastrous consequences. This is the single major cause of our astronomic rate of incarceration.

We may have a stronger anti-paternalistic streak than other liberal Western countries. However, due to the trends identified by Patterson, we are certainly not more *liberal* than places like England, Holland, Scandinavia, or even former communist countries such as Hungary and the Czech Republic.

I recently did research on crime and crime control in Eastern Europe. I had many discussions with police administrators and cabinet members. Hungarian Press Secretary Laszlo Garamvolgyi quoted a study documenting the fact that, among several countries compared, *the US ranked number one in terms of police intervention*. All one has to do to agree with this is to juxtapose Patterson’s article with another one in the same issue of the *Bee* – the arrest of Mrs. Lisa Elias-Berg for being drunk *in her own home!* (*Sacramento Bee*, March 5, 2000).

## 8. Too Many Guns in America

*Whatever the crime rate may be, a separate question is whether guns make a major contribution to it or not. The relationship between rates of gun ownership and homicide rates has been a hot topic both in the professional literature and in popular culture. For example, Michael Moore addresses it in his movie Bowling for Columbine.*

*Coming from Europe, where the population is largely unarmed, I initially subscribed to the “liberal” position: Americans own far too many guns, and if this could somehow be reduced, our rate of homicide would be a lot lower. This is what I expressed in the following letter printed in the Wall Street Journal on April 13, 1981. (It is also the letter which got me a rude xenophobic letter from a Texas red neck, see Immigration section, above).*

Your April 2 issue prints on opposite pages Hodding Carter's plea for gun control and your editorial opposing it. Mr. Carter is right in stating that a rehash of the old arguments on both sides of the debate is sterile.

What is this blind spot causing American conservatives to view gun control and law enforcement as two antithetical solutions? Is it not obvious that both are necessary? Must the lines invariably be drawn between liberals like Kennedy and The New York Times who advocate gun control and are soft on crime, and conservatives like Reagan and the *Journal* who favor stricter law enforcement but support free gun ownership?

I was 25 when I moved to these shores. I grew up in France and the Netherlands and spent considerable time in other civilized countries. It is the kind of perspective which such a background produces that is so sorely lacking in editorials such as yours. I am unable to understand the disgraceful tolerance for crime, violence and gun ownership in this country. We are in this respect the laughing stock of the world (*Wall Street Journal*, April 13, 1981).

## 9. Violent Death in America: Are Guns the Culprit?

*In June 2000, I co-authored an article with Dr. John Richards in Emergency Medicine News (pp. 2, 36, 38). This piece put us squarely among the ranks of the gun control advocates. Here are some passages from our the article.*

Guns, and deaths by guns, remain one of America's most distinguishing features. Our murder rate peaked in the late eighties, during the crack cocaine epidemic. The combination of youth, testosterone, drugs, cash, and handguns often resulted in fatalities. Sadly, many innocent citizens, especially children playing on the street, were struck by wayward bullets from these street skirmishes. The number of illegal handguns increased dramatically during this period, as kids began carrying these weapons all the time. Soon, minor disputes over sports, money, or girlfriends often resulted in the exchange of bullets rather than threats or fists. During this period, the murder rate increased steadily, but not murders committed by adults. Virtually the entire increase could be accounted for by young people with guns. The number of firearms in the United States is estimated to be around 200 million. Sheley et. al.(1995) and Sheley and Wright (1993; 1995; 1998) have documented the strong correlation between the violent death rates of inner city youth and the spread of handguns (“Saturday Night specials”) – a correlation which has spilled over into the suburbs and produced a series of widely publicized “Jonesborough” type juvenile murder sprees.

There is a misconception about crime in America: This country's rates of non-lethal crime and property crimes are not exceptionally high. That is, *America does not have an exceptionally*

*high crime rate, nor is the American national character more violent than that of, say, most Europeans.* As Newman (1979) argues, a national character, history and culture of violence may be typical of the South, but not of America as a whole. Rates of assault, domestic violence and theft are as high or higher in various European countries, for example Austria (assault), Italy (theft) and most of Eastern Europe. What distinguishes the United States is its exceptionally high rate of *criminal homicide*, and that is clearly caused by our high rate of gun ownership.

Each year, the percentage of murders using a firearm has grown by 2%. Currently, about 74% of all murders are committed through a firearm. In 1996, 19,645 Americans were murdered, of whom 10,744 with firearms (Uniform Crime Report, 1997). In addition, (in 1995) 3,700 people used a handgun to commit suicide, 14,803 committed suicide through “other and unspecified firearms” means, and firearm accidents killed 1,225 people (Statistical Abstract, 1998: 108-109). Thus, firearms kill between 20,000 and 30,000 Americans each year (*Emergency Medicine News*, June 2000: 2, 36, 38).

## 10. Second Thoughts about Gun Control

or

### Why I Changed from Academically Correct Gun Control Advocate to NRA Sympathizer

*However, I have often waffled on the issue of gun control (as does Michael Moore). The reason for this is that the research is ambiguous: While there has often been a strong statistical correlation between rates of gun ownership and rates of homicide, it is not clear that this correlation is also causal. For example, per capita gun ownership in Switzerland, Israel and Canada is also very high, yet those countries have very low rates of homicide. Thus, I have sometimes contradicted myself and argued that America's high rate of homicide is NOT due to its high rate of gun ownership, and that gun control is NOT the answer. An example of this is the next piece, which is a speech I gave at a conference of the Pacific Legal Foundation in San Francisco in January 1991.*

Let me begin with the obligatory disclaimer that I don't like guns. A predictable prejudice for someone born and raised in Europe. Like other Europeans, I used to believe that Joe citizen has no business owning a gun. Only policemen should have guns, I thought, and this should make everybody safe and happy.

When I came to America, my attitude fit perfectly in my new environment, the Ivory Tower. Even if I had wanted it, I would have found few colleagues willing to join me on hunting trips or target practice. So I have always been at the cultural antipode of gunowners.

Like my colleagues and my compatriots, I did not question the proposition that America's high rate of gun ownership is a major cause of her high crime rate. We always agreed about this seemingly obvious fact, as we agreed about the rest of the politically correct catechism.

But conformity makes me suspicious. Since everyone agreed about the need for gun control, maybe this belief deserved to be questioned. My skepticism was also reinforced by the fact that gun control became part of a larger agenda - the ever more oppressive leftwing agenda suffocating the University. If nothing else, gun control became increasingly suspect by sheer association with other totalitarian causes such as ethnic and gender studies requirements, infringements of First Amendment and academic freedom rights, discrimination against white males, Christians, smokers, the banning of ROTC, etc. It occurred to me that gun control is

advocated most aggressively by the same bigots who push these other issues, and that it may therefore not be such a good idea after all.

Gun control means many different things. It ranges from the outright *banning* of all firearms to mild *registration* requirements. It includes rigid legislation such as New York's 1911 Sullivan Law and Washington D.C.'s Firearms Control Act of 1975, as well as the selective prohibition of some weapons such as small handguns ("Saturday Night Specials"), automatic and semi-automatic weapons, assault weapons, etc. In general, gun control means somehow curtailing people's access to firearms.

As a criminologist, I read some of the empirical literature on guns and crime. Excellent reviews of the issues and data include *Under the Gun* by James Wright et. al. (1983), *Point Blank* by Gary Kleck (1991), *Firearms and Violence* edited by Don Kates (1984) and *The Issue of Gun Control* edited by Thomas Draper (1981).

To my surprise, the data and the conclusions found in the literature do not support the guns-cause-crime hypothesis. I am speaking here of serious scientific research, not polemics and NRA slogans. Much of the research is by liberal sociologists (to use a redundancy). These include James Wright, Peter Rossi, Marvin Wolfgang and David Bordua. It was interesting to discover that people who publish in the *American Sociological Review* and the *American Journal of Sociology* arrive at the same conclusion regarding gun control as does the NRA, namely that *there is no empirical evidence supporting the proposition that America's high crime rate is caused by her high rate of gun ownership or that "the problem of criminal violence is likely to be ameliorated through stricter controls over the civilian ownership, or use of firearms.* (Wright et. al.:22). These are the conclusions of sociologists who, before studying the problem, had shared "the progressive's indictment of American firearms policy." (Wright et. al.: 319).

When a reasonable person observes facts that contradict a preconception, hopefully he changes his mind. This is the first although not the only reason why I have come to oppose demands for stricter gun laws. Here are a dozen facts which refute the guns-cause-crime hypothesis:

1. Gun control advocates never cease to remind us of the large number of crimes committed with firearms - over 600,000 annually. What they fail to report is that each year an even larger number of crimes - between 600,000 and a million - are deterred by civilians using firearms. Thus, guns make a greater contribution to crime control than to crime.

2. Another reiteration by gun opponents is that most homicide victims are relatives of the murderer (and that most homicides of course occur with firearms). What does this argument prove? Don't criminals have relatives, like everyone else, and don't they spend most of their time with their relatives, like other people? How would gun control alter the fact that most crimes are against one's relatives, whatever the crime rate is and whatever weapons are used?

In any event, half of all "shootings of one spouse or the other are defensive - killings of homicidal husbands by victimized wives." (Kates and Terrell Harris, 1991:31).

3. We often hear that guns are responsible for a large number of accidental deaths and injuries - another reason to ban them. In fact, only about 2% of all accidental deaths are caused by firearms. Nearly half of these are hunting accidents. Even the remaining 1% is inflated, because many suicides are incorrectly classified as accidents in order to save the family embarrassment.

4. But would a ban on guns reduce suicide (assuming that it's the government's business to prevent you from killing yourself)? Not at all. People would - and do - simply use other means.

The suicide rate is higher in Europe and in Japan than in the United States, despite those countries' much lower rates of gun ownership. A comparison of 18 countries shows that the U.S. rate of 12.2 per 100,000 is among the very lowest. When combining the total number of deaths from homicide and suicide, the American rate is less than half the rate in Rumania and Hungary, lower than the rate in nearly every other European country as well as Japan, and about the same as the Canadian rate. The two countries that have considerably lower than ours are New Zealand and Israel, both countries with much higher rates of gun ownership (Kates, 1990:41-42). One is almost compelled to conclude that there is a negative correlation between guns and violence! One must at least admit that rates of gun ownership do not raise either the suicide rate or the homicide rate.

5. What about self-defense? What about resisting with guns? Those who favor disarming the population cite statistics showing that a victim is more likely to be hurt or killed if he/she resists than if not. Handgun Control Inc., an anti-gun organization, advises us to submit: "The best way to keep you alive (is to) put up no defense - give them what they want or run." (quoted in Kates and Terrell Harris, 1991: 31). In fact, this is only goof advice if you plan to defend yourself with a club, a knife, your hands or some other non-lethal means. If you use a gun to defend yourself, you are only half as likely to be injured than if you don't.

6. However, the gun-control lobby argues that when a criminal uses a gun, the victim is more likely to die than when the criminal uses a knife or some other non-lethal weapon. This is only a half truth. The other half is that when a criminal uses a gun, there is less chance of any violence occurring because the victim is less likely to resist. It is therefore fair to say that the law-abiding majority is safer being armed, and that victims are also safer if their aggressors wield a firearm than a knife. That is, a crime-with-gun is less likely to result in violence (although if violence occurs, it is more likely to be fatal).

7. What about burglaries? Thanks to the fact that we are armed, burglars prefer to visit our homes when we are gone. In Canada, Holland and elsewhere, far more burglaries occur when the residents are home. This results in more injuries (although, again, when violence occurs, it tends to be more lethal in America). In this country, burglars have a pretty good idea of which particular households are armed. Those houses tend to be less burglarized than their neighbors.

8. The gun-control lobby always brandishes comparisons with Europe and Japan to show that guns cause crime. However, international comparisons support the opposite hypothesis. Switzerland and Israel, as everyone knows, have higher rates of gun ownership than we do. Evidence of this is striking and visual in Israel, where the streets are full of visibly armed civilians and soldiers reporting for duty.

Think of the October 1991 murder of 23 people at Luby's cafeteria in Killeen, Texas. A similar situation arose in Jerusalem a few years earlier. Three terrorists attacked a crowd of civilians at a busy intersection with automatic weapons and grenades. Because Israeli civilians quickly used their personal handguns against the attackers, only one person was killed. Had some of the customers at Luby's café carried a handgun, many lives might have been saved. The streets of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem are safer than those of Sacramento or Washington.

9. In any event, Europe's crime rate declined *before* tough gun control laws were passed. Therefore, the European ban on guns cannot explain the Continent's low crime rate.

10. The zero or even negative correlation between crime and gun ownership is also evident from domestic comparisons. Some of the jurisdictions with the toughest gun laws also have the highest crime rates. New York City is a case in point, as is Washington D.C.: In February 1977, "the District of Columbia implemented the strictest gun control ordinance in the nation....In effect banning the acquisition or transfer of a handgun by any District resident..." (Cook, 1982: 283). Since then, the capital's murder rate has increased more rapidly than the nations' making

Washington the murder capital of the United States.

11. Unfortunately, Americans must increasingly rely on self-defense. Our country has 500,000 police officers. Of them, only 75,000 are on patrol at any given time, on any given shift (Kates and Terrell Harris, 1991: 31). Police protection may or may not have been a reality in the past, but it certainly is no longer one today. 75,000 cops cannot protect 250 million people in thousands of towns and cities spread over 3.5 million square miles.

\* \* \* \* \*

This very partial list of empirical arguments should make it clear that gun control is a bad idea. But is it even *feasible*?

As a nation, we now own 200 million guns. Fewer than one million of these are used in a crime annually. There is no way on earth to reduce the total number of guns so significantly that it would affect the amount of criminal gun use -- less than one half of one percent of all gun use! The NRA bumper sticker "if guns are outlawed only outlaws will have guns" is true. Were we to cut the total number of guns say in half, thereafter the percentage of criminal gun use would simply be one percent of the total rather than the current half percent.

But even cutting gun ownership in half is a practical impossibility, let alone eliminating most guns. There are now 25,000 gun laws in the United States. For example, Massachusetts mandates a minimum jail term of one year for possession of an unlicensed weapon. As Thomas Draper comments, "this reflects an interesting set of social values, because there are no such mandated sentences for burglary, armed robbery, rape, or even murder in Massachusetts. Every hunter who passes through the state on the way to Maine is risking a year in prison. What is happening is predictable: The law is not enforced" (1981:17).

No jurisdiction can prevent guns from pouring in from outside, and an outright nationwide ban is both practically and constitutionally inconceivable. Meanwhile, the proliferation of unenforced and unenforceable laws breeds cynicism and contempt for the law. A positive step would be to start enforcing existing laws, and passing additional laws is surely not going to make up for the lack of willpower to enforce current laws.

This is not to say that no improvement is possible. Handguns can be fitted with lockers to reduce the risk of accidents. Owners' I.D. combinations could prevent gun use by anyone but the owner, just like a credit card. Everyone agrees that juveniles, felons and the mentally ill shouldn't have or use guns. Registration and waiting periods are already on the books everywhere, thanks to the Brady bill. Gun owners should also be trained and educated, analogous with driving a car (*Pacific Legal Foundation*, San Francisco, January 1991).

## 29. IMMIGRATION AND POLITICS

### 1. Harvard Law Professor would Grant U.S. Citizenship to all 6 Billion People on Earth

*Immigration is of tremendous personal significance to me. I am not only a friend of all immigrants and displaced persons in the world; I am one of them. Yet, I have crossed swords with my ultra-liberal colleagues, who deny that there should be a distinction between legal and illegal immigrants. Because I favor such a distinction, I have been called a xenophobe and a racist. In answer to this, I ask, "how can I be a xenophobe when I am a xeno myself?"*

*On April 24, 1980, I published the following letter in the Wall Street Journal. It is a critique*

of a television show reviewed by the Journal. That show was a law seminar given weekly to an audience by Harvard Law Professor Miller. Topics included the Constitution, civil rights and immigrants' rights. In my view the professor was spouting off his own values and brainwashing the public. This was the gist of my letter.

Regarding your front-page article (April 7) of the television program "Miller's Court": The pseudo-legal arguments of "Professor" Miller are blatantly biased and full of holes so large that they should be obvious to anyone not yet contaminated by the American disease - self-deprecation. Case in point #1: foreigners do not have constitutional rights. The Constitution is an American document, written by and for Americans.

Item #2: Iranians who demonstrate in support of Khomeini are not engaging in actions "offensive to American policy," as the lawyer states, but aiding and abetting terrorism and kidnappings (and of course, any expression of free speech by foreigners in the U.S., be they Nigerians or Iranians, is at the discretion of their American hosts, and never a constitutional guarantee).

Item #3: The show does not leave the audience with profound questions to think about. "Aren't all humans the same?" is not a profound question. The answer is a simple and evident no. Some are strong and gifted, others are not; some U.S. citizens have the right to vote, others (children, inmates) do not; some may receive various sorts of public assistance such as Social Security, others may not. And certainly American law, including the Constitution, applies to no one but to Americans. Or do five billion individuals all have the legal right to such things as U.S. residency? One could go on. Suffice it to add that it may not be a coincidence that the TV show in question comes from the only state in the Union that invariably supports such aberrations as McGovern and Kennedy (*Wall Street Journal*, April 24, 1980).

## 2. Do U.S. Citizens have Rights which Foreigners don't Have?

*My Wall Street Journal letter about immigrant rights earned me both support and attacks, as always. I was invited to write an article about this by the Los Angeles Herald Examiner. They published it on May 27, 1980 and is reproduced here. Note that the entire piece is utterly commonsensical and correct, and that it requires no legal expertise (which I do not have). But it is too difficult to comprehend for the muddle-headed Harvard Law School experts who work for the American Civil Liberties Union and who criticized me in the letter which follows. The Herald Examiner gave my article the following title:*

### Don't U.S. citizens have at least some rights aliens don't? A naturalized professor says 'No' 'Yes.'

*That last word - No - was exactly the wrong word! Apparently the editors didn't understand anything I said, either. I didn't have a chance to correct it in print. So I do it here.*

If nothing else, the Iranian crisis has brought one fact to glaring light: the far-gone erosion of American national self-identity. For now the destructive self-contempt in which many Americans hold their own sense of nationality has come to light in the current discussion about the rights of aliens - including demonstrating Iranian students - on American soil.

Three things stand out in that discussion: one, the tendency to bend over backward so as *not*

to offend foreigners, *not* to step on their constitutional toes (a pathology for which I have coined the term "xenophilia"); two, a taboo on any expression of nationalism; and three, general muddled thinking.

As a participant in this discussion (see my letter in the Wall Street Journal, April 24, 1980), I have received letters both from irate immigrants who damn me for suggesting that their legal rights differ from those of U.S. citizens and from lawyers who laud my views and request case-law information about this matter

I am not a lawyer but a sociologist. It is from that perspective that I wish to shed some light on the issue. While sociology has acquired an awfully bad reputation in recent years, it is because *bad sociology has driven out good sociology*. It must be remembered that sociology actually began as the antithesis of what it symbolizes today. When Auguste Comte and other Europeans founded the new science, it represented precisely the refreshing and common-sensical new perspective that viewed society as a living and breathing organism. Far from translating common sense into incomprehensible jargon and providing mystifications for bureaucracy and incompetence, sociology at one time represented the only perspective that could bring to all of us a clear, coherent and relatively simple understanding of our society, of what ails it, and of how to cure it.

Today, as America flounders on the verge of chaos, it is in sore need of *good* sociology. It is with the help of sociology that I shall deal with the matter of legal rights in the United States.

My irate immigrant correspondent reminded me that he, too, feels that he is protected by the law against such things as the police breaking down his door or the government arbitrarily seizing his property. This is something to be *hoped* for, but not taken for granted. If it were true, as this individual writes, that "it is a fundamental principle of constitutional law that it applies to and, protects all persons within the U.S., not just citizens," then the seizure of Iranian assets, the deportation of Iranian diplomats, restricting Iran's UN representatives to a mile radius - indeed the deportation of any foreign criminals would be criminal.

The truth of the matter is that the Constitution and American law in general do *not* apply uniformly to all individuals who are physically in the U.S. Even nationalized citizens are to a degree second-class citizens. Henry Kissinger, for example, does not have the constitutional right to become president the United States.

There has been altogether much taken for granted - much American good will and hospitality. It is good to remember that there is a whole *gradation* of legal persons - from illegal aliens to legal aliens to naturalized citizens to born Americans. Each has more rights than the preceding one. If the citizen misbehaves, he is subject to American laws. Insofar as the foreigner can *in addition* also be deported, he is in a sense more obligated to be on his best behavior.

The fact that people are deported and extradited from country to country points to an inherent conflict between two principles: an individual's territorial location at a given time and his national origin. The radicals who wish to apply American legal rights uniformly to all persons physically within the boundaries of the U.S. appear to be using only the territorial criterion, to the total exclusion of national origin.

This is wrong. In actuality, until a person becomes naturalized into a new citizenship, the nation-state of which he is a citizen retains to a great extent jurisdiction and indeed also protection over him. When a U.S. citizen travels overseas, he is to a large extent protected by his citizenship against arbitrary actions by foreign authorities (and this is what makes the Iranian exception so outrageous). The same cannot be said for a stateless person. In sum, it is ludicrous to argue that the jurisdiction of a nation-state (a legal concept) coincides with its boundaries (a geographical

concept).

But there are additional difficulties, especially in the United States. More than in any other society, the status of "American" has frequently been *achieved* rather than *ascribed*. Millions upon millions came to these shores, spent many years abiding by the specific rules and regulations of the immigration game and ultimately acquired citizenship. To achieve American citizenship meant new rights and responsibilities, a new pride and a new commitment to one's new country. Surely there must be a difference between being a citizen and not being one. Otherwise, what would be the point of it all? Merely added burdens such as military service? While much of this remains to be sorted out from a legal standpoint (I realize that some aliens used to be drafted), there should be no doubt whatsoever that the status of citizen is both legally and sociologically fundamentally different from that of the alien.

The devaluation of American citizenship is one of the regrettable trends of recent years. Fortunately, the millions of refugees and immigrants who continue to pour into the nation that remains the symbol of freedom in the world - witness the Vietnamese and now the Cuban boat people - *do* retain a cherished conception of what it signifies to become a citizen of the new land.

While my remarks are in no way meant to suggest discrimination or hostility towards non-citizens, I aim to remind the public of the value and privilege of being an American.

To argue, as do muddle-headed liberals, that any visitor to these shores has the same rights as a citizen is both untrue and undesirable. Were all legal distinctions to vanish (which is a utopian impossibility) this would further damage the already sorely tested social fabric of our society. To be an American does not have to entail a haughty chauvinism. But it should mean a healthy dose of self-love and a distinct social identity. In the absence of any such self-love and identity, American society will continue to degenerate into chaos and privatism, identifying only with their narrow ethnic, sexual, demographic or regional memberships, each working for private or special interests rather than for the well-being of society.

For years Americans have been on a quest for their "roots," apparently not satisfied to be plain Americans, even though in the eyes of the world that is a clear and unambiguous identity. I have seen third- and fourth-generation American kids travel through Poland, Germany or Italy, telling the natives with a Texas slur or a Chicago twang that they, too, are Poles, Germans or Italians. Of course the natives laughed, and so did I.

Thus the citizenship issue ultimately boils down to one of *social membership*. To claim, as my critics have done, that there is no legal difference between the citizen and the alien is to abolish the concept of societal membership. If that succeeds, society itself falls apart at the seams. This is the fundamental lesson of sociology (*Los Angeles Herald Examiner*, May 27, 1980).

### 3. ACLU Lawyers don't Know the Constitution

*Of course, it was the American Civil Liberties Union which attacked me the most ferociously, for my contention that U.S. citizens have more rights (in the U.S.) than aliens. It still amazes me, when I re-read our exchanges today, how unintelligent some of these fancy Harvard-trained legal experts are. Their values and their high-fallutin' training are simply in the way of simplicity, clarity and common-sense.*

*In May 1980 Charles Sims, National Legal Counsel to the ACLU, published a letter in the Wall Street Journal, accusing me of (1) xenophobia, of (2) denying foreign residents constitutional*

*rights, and of (3) claiming that foreigners are not protected against arbitrary discrimination, cruel and unusual punishment, etc. I sent the following reply to the Journal on June 18, 1980, but they didn't print it.*

A recent issue of the *Wall Street Journal* contained a rebuttal by Charles Sims, National Legal Counsel to the American Civil Liberties Union, to my earlier letter regarding citizens' rights. Since Mr. Sims' letter is both offensive and misinformed, it is only fair that you permit me to reply:

Mr. Sims claims that the Constitution does not distinguish between US citizens and aliens, granting equal rights to all. He also calls me a xenophobe. It is sad that a *xeno* such as myself (indeed, I was born in Budapest, arrived in the US in 1965 and became naturalized in 1969) must teach Americans how to read their laws: Article II, section 2.1 of the Constitution states that "the *citizens* of each state shall be entitled to all privileges and immunities of *citizens* in the several states (of the Union)." Throughout the Constitution one finds clear distinction made between citizens and non-citizens.

Of course, the hidden but more fundamental issue in the exchange has to do with our diametrically opposed sympathies: I have never advocated the discriminatory treatment of any population, be they Iranian students, Cuban refugees, or Hungarian refugees such as myself - indeed, I welcome Carter's open-door policy toward all refugees and view such a policy as part and parcel of the American heritage. However, American society presently seems incapable of any healthy self-protective response to foreign or domestic assaults upon its legitimate institutions by the radical left and the radical right. Other governments - Russia, France and Sweden alike - do not hesitate to expel foreign troublemakers. Whereas I favor the same kind of return to common-sense in the US, people such as Mr. Sims suffer from a knee-jerk tendency to defend primarily the human rights of the lunatic fringe, including the KKK, Nazis and Communists. Increasingly, the ACLU has devoted its resources to misguided crusades for idiotic causes (such as the attempt last year to prevent the expenditure of even minimal public funds on the papal visit), and thereby lost its claim to moral leadership.

#### 4. Is there a Difference between Legal and Illegal Immigrants?

*On April 29, 2006, America held a Day Without Immigrants. Hundreds of thousands of people marched in support of (illegal) immigrants. The feel-good demonstrations were basically a campaign for amnesty for all illegal immigrants, for granting illegal immigrants drivers licenses, medical, welfare and educational benefits - some not even enjoyed by Americans, such as in-state college tuition for out-of-state students - in sum for the total abolition of any distinction between legal and illegal immigrants. As an immigrant who had played by the rules, I couldn't stand it. I wrote the following letter, which was printed in the Sacramento Bee on May 8, 2006.*

What utter confusion surrounding this "day without immigrants"! Can anyone see the issue with *clarity*? The cacophony includes comments about immigrants having to learn English, immigrants doing the work which native Anglos don't want, racism, etc. However, there is *only one* relevant question: Is there still a difference between *legal* and *illegal*?

I immigrated to America in 1965. I waited a year to get a student visa, five years to get a green card, and then another five years to become a citizen. It took me *eleven years* to acquire the same rights as Americans. By the book. Had I failed to obtain the required papers, I would not be living in America.

I know several people who were in the US on temporary work permits and who had to leave

after their permits expired. So they returned to their home countries, even though they wanted to stay here. One of these was an a professor at NYU. Another one worked for a multinational company. I also know many people who are allowed to visit, but not to stay here permanently. *So they don't.*

Someone please explain to me to whom the law applies, and to whom it does not? (*Sacramento Bee*, May 8, 2006).

### 5. If America Restricts Illegal Immigration, is it Becoming just like Nazi Germany?

*The nonsense never seems to stop. On May 1, 2006, I was talking about this “ Day Without Immigrants” with a group of acquaintances. I made the point again that in my view, everyone should obey the law, even immigrants (such as myself). A fellow named Steve retorted:*

“I only have one word for you: Bergen-Belsen.”

“Say what?” I inquired, not quite understanding what he meant.

“Well, it’s obvious,” he replied, “first we arrest illegal immigrants, and that starts the slippery slope. Soon we’ll be gassing millions of Hispanics. Remember what Pastor Niemoller wrote? First they came for the Jews and I did not speak out because I was not a Jew. Then they came for the Communists and I did not speak out because I was not a Communist. Then they came for the trade unionists and I did not speak out because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for me and there was no one left to speak out for me.”

All I could do was to guffaw and walk away, saying, “I can’t talk to you.”

## 30. EDUCATION: THE UNIVERSITY

### 1. “Liberal” Education has become a Travesty

*The Cultural Revolution of the sixties led to America’s permanent liberalization. Things did not calm down in the seventies because most of us returned to the fold. They calmed down because the Left won the cultural revolution. As Tom Hayden said, “the radicalism of the sixties became the common-sense of the seventies.” Nowhere else was this clearer than on university campuses. The effect on the quality of higher education was devastating. On October 10, 1974, I published the following article in the Sacramento Union. In it, I indict the whole gamut of politicized fads which had come to dominate the university.*

As we all know, our society has become liberated and the campuses have led the trend. The new education has meant (1) a nationwide rise in grade-point average even as writing and reading skills are deteriorating; (2) the substitution of feely-touchy classes for conventional courses; (3) student course evaluations whereby the instructor’s personality and permissive grading count for everything, his expertise for nothing and, (4) the packaging and advertising of courses that must be groovy, easy, relevant and radical in order to sell. My efforts at maintaining some professional standards have led to (1) repeated grievances over grades. (2) two physical assaults. (3) innumerable verbal insults and (4) job loss.

A hassle over a well-deserved D cost me my job at the University of California. Vicious letters were sent to high places, including the governor's office and university chancellors. The students' parents and influential friends did me in. I was on somebody's enemies' list.

THE FOOLS made a mistake, both morally and politically, for I have, for years, argued in print and otherwise for such things as a return to sanity in education, against the radicalization of the curriculum, for academic freedom in cases like Shockley's, against the reversed discrimination euphemized as "affirmative action."

I merely epitomize all teachers at this time. For a national average salary of \$8,000 we have the right to be physically assaulted, insulted, abused, prevented from freely lecturing on our areas of expertise, arbitrarily manipulated by an administration that, at times, seems as lawless as the student body, and fired for no cause.

There is no academic freedom. neither for Angela Davis nor for William Shockley. To raise unpopular issues is physically dangerous, and unpopular means mostly unliberated.

In the state of Washington. they are considering including students in the collective bargaining process as part of management! Historical precedents of student-power structure coalitions include the Hitler Youth and Mao's Red Guards. A violent, anti-intellectual and valueless - in sum, fascist - youth serves such a purpose well.

A PERVERTED VALUE system is emerging, equating crime with heroism (cf the "Symbionese Liberation Army"), slandering vulnerable professors (as when a woman student goes public with an "A for a lay" story ) and rebelling against professors who, imagine, assign books!

The course some rooms down the hall from me has rock music, strobe lights, etc. Recently, they were dancing wildly, little 18-year-old nymphs, the fortyish instructor too.

In my class, I still try, foolishly perhaps, to transmit knowledge and skills rather than to entertain.

The gangrening of America (to amend Reich) is also contributed to by media irresponsibility, as when the local press makes the slanderous "A for a lay" allegation into front-page news. Whatever sells copy, right?

OF COURSE, it is the entire society that is being liberated. For years now we have been so concerned with love, pleasure, down with authority, down with Nixon, up with nude swimming, up with minorities, with women, with gays, down with marriage, up with marijuana, down with babies (let's all get abortions and vasectomies), *ad nauseam* that we have stopped tending to business, solving our problems and running society in any semblance of order. Our shoddy goods can no longer compete on the world market, our standard of living is back to what it was in 1965. We are collapsing (*Sacramento Union*, Oct. 10, 1974).

## 2. An Educator who is Fed up with the Left-wing Fascists

*Because of my growing and often publically expressed opposition to the prevailing campus culture, which was monolithically on the (far) Left, I became a lightning rod. My lectures were often rudely disrupted. Some of the vandals who slung insults, four-letter words and even physical threats at me were registered students, some were not. But almost all of them were radicals still imbued with the spirit of the sixties gone wrong.*

*While the Counterculture possessed many humanistic elements which I supported, what followed in its wake was a much meaner, dogmatic, violent, revolutionary mentality. When I began to oppose this, I paid dearly for it. Enraged by the harassment to which I was frequently subjected*

*at work, I wrote the following statement on March 16, 1975. It was never published.*

I have, in recent years, taken some controversial stances and this was done in the form of editorials in various student and community papers. Perhaps as a result of this, some students enrolling in my classes have done so not for curricular reasons but, as I believe, in order to test me.

The issues on which I have taken a controversial if not downright unpopular position include affirmative action, the liberated education and a variety of other current trends. I continue to firmly stand behind the convictions I have expressed. I view affirmative action - the racial quota, system now in vigor in the employment policies of universities and other institutions - as a bureaucratic monstrosity. Much of what has been passed off as liberated education is in fact, I feel, destructive of the civilization, progress and moral values which have in the past made America a relatively benign society. Movements like sensitivity training and encounters are, according to me, symptoms of our growing social ills, not a cure for them.

Having written these things, I must emphatically assert my belief in the absolute equality of all humans regardless of race, ethnicity, sex or nationality, my total commitment to freedom of expression and to the welfare of all people, including students, as well as my belief in humane, understanding and compassionate human relationships - in sum a humanistic and civil libertarian position. It is precisely because of these values that I indict, for example, affirmative action. I do not believe that two wrongs make a right. We cannot abolish past discrimination by creating a new reversed discrimination. I do not believe the people's rights are determined by their demographic characteristics.

Nevertheless, a pattern has developed whereby students come to my classes, often unenrolled, perceiving me, apparently on the basis of hearsay, as the enemy and testing me in all kinds of rather painful ways. I have been accused of racism, sexism, fascism and related charges. I am now threatened with a grievance. Semester upon semester there is that handful managing to poison my classes, despite the fact that a majority of my students like me, both as a person and as a professor.

I must stress that the personal opinions I have expressed editorially are *not* the topic in my courses. Obviously I do, as a sociologist, when appropriate, deal with some of these controversial issues. For example in my course in the Sociology of Work and Leisure, I may touch upon affirmative action, an eminently relevant issue relating to employment. Similarly, I would be remiss in my courses in social psychology if I did not provide a critical sociological analysis of the encounter movement. However, at no time do I attempt to impose my personal opinions on the students. I merely delineate for them *all sides* of the issues. Again, as a professional educator I would be remiss if I for example pointed to the possible benefits of affirmative action without indicating its costs. And, no one, I hope, will deny that this matter is well within the scope of sociology.

Although I therefore do not preach any political doctrine (unlike, I might add, some other, more radical and opinionated professors on this campus) I am frequently perceived as an enemy and consequently periodically harassed. Although I only preach one value - the absolute necessity to state all points of view, including those currently unpopular, I am labeled doctrinaire, intolerant, racist and sexist, when in fact I am a civil libertarian.

I have not declared war on anyone, or any group. Only on ignorance and prejudice, including the prejudices of the radicals. Nevertheless, every semester there are those students who enrol in my classes in order to face, test and destroy the enemy - me. There are those who come in unsolicitedly to disrupt and to insult. There are even those not listed on my class rosters, taping my lectures - Why?

To all these people, and those mistakenly contemplating such actions in the future, I wish I could say: my classes deal with sociology, examined in absolute freedom, and the totally free exchange of all opinions. Indeed, I *require* that all participants state where "they are at," existentially and epistemologically. Those who come in search of dogma or with the purpose of confronting the enemy are making a mistake. I do not give satisfaction to such students, for the only thing I attack, and attack with all my power, are these individuals' own prejudices.

### 3. Should Scientific Research be Politically Censored?

*The media were part of the problem. In January 1976, Newsweek published an article asking whether or not scientific research on politically sensitive matters should be censored. For example, what about research into the possible genetic determinants of aptitude and intelligence? Could such research be prelude to a return to eugenics? The article asked, ponderously and idiotically, what the two sides of the issue were. I sent Newsweek the following scathing commentary on January 12, but they did not print it.*

The fundamental issue raised in your article, "politics and genes" (Jan. 12) is as old as history, and actually quite simple, *n'en déplaise* your staff writers: Should scientific truth be pursued freely, or did the Inquisition, the Nazis and Stalin perhaps have a valid point?

The censorship of scientific truth - whether crude, as experienced by Socrates and Copernicus, or "civilized" as proposed by Senator Ted Kennedy - has always been in the name of the protection of "society." An organization such as *Science for the People* reminds me of Luddites. Adoption of its agenda would speed up our return to the Dark Ages.

Scientific research must *always* remain free, no matter what truths it may lead us to. *Policies* are a different matter: *That* is where moral decisions are imperative. Should we have censored/shut down the Manhattan project? No. Should we abolish nuclear bombs? Absolutely.

### 4. Is Cal. State a Bad University Because it is too Cheap and its Faculty is too Unionized?

*What impedes quality education? Why are some universities excellent and other ones mediocre? The cliché answer is: Money. Stanford and Harvard are great because they are rich, whereas Cal State is bad because it is poor. Many years ago, I came up with a different hypothesis, one that would have infuriated my colleagues, the education establishment and just about everyone else, had I published it. Although I never printed this idea, here it is, written on July 21, 1977 and updated in 2007:*

The question I pose is why the California State University sucks, even compared to other State University systems such as Michigan State, Penn State, Minnesota and SUNY. I propose a (triple) hypothesis, and a methodology to test this:

#### Hypothesis:

**The CSU is a much worse university than comparable state universities elsewhere because (1) CSU students pay a lower tuition, (2) the CSU faculty is militantly unionized, and (3) California has a master plan for higher education.**

Comments:

(1) Indeed, historically, Cal State students have paid much lower tuition than students at comparable institutions elsewhere. There have been various “fees,” but the bottom line has been that the CSU has been one of the cheapest colleges to attend. (See various articles about this, for instance in *US News and World Report* going all the way back to the 1980s). As an example tuition at the Big Ten has typically been twice as high as at the CSU.

(2) The CSU faculty has been represented by a highly militant organization - the CFA - which models itself after industrial labor unions. Other faculties are more often represented by professional organizations such as the AAUP, which model themselves after the American Medical Association and the American Bar Association. Thus, there is no collegiality in California higher education, as there is elsewhere, and unlike elsewhere, the concept of merit pay is anathema. The CSU faculty is like the civil service system, where everyone gets payed in lock step according to rank, not on the basis of individual performance.

(3) Finally, the California Master Plan for Higher Education puts a stranglehold on the CSU, forever limiting practically all doctoral education and advanced research to the University of California. Recently the CSU has been permitted to offer a doctorate in education, plus a few joint doctoral programs with the UC. However, the latter “elite” university will continue to protect its turf and make sure to keep the CSU down.

Methodology:

The methodology is based on John Stuart Mills’ canons of causality and the classical experimental design:

You conduct a comparison of two groups, the (1) *experimental group* and (2) *the control group*. At the outset, there is an *observed difference* between the two groups. This is what you seek to explain, i.e. it is *the dependent variable*, or *the effect*. Let’s call this *B*. Otherwise, the two groups are identical - or at least similar.

Furthermore, you suspect that there may be at least one additional difference between the two groups, and you *hypothesize* that this second difference may be *the cause* of the first observed difference, i.e. *the independent variable*. Let’s call this *A*. Table One shows our research model.

Table I: Model for Research Design

	Variable A		Variable B
Group 1	Independent Variable A≡ (Cause present)	Experimental Group	Dependent Variable B (Effect present)
Group 2	No Independent Variable A (Cause absent)	Control Group	No Dependent Variable B (Effect absent)

Who are the experimental group and the control group?

Let group 1 (experimental) be Cal State and group 2 (control) be comparable universities, such as Michigan, Penn State, SUNY and Minnesota.

Let Variable B (effect) be “badness.” That is, inferior education, low pay and conflict between faculty and administration.

Let Variable A (cause) be low tuition, a unionized faculty and the California Master Plan. Table Two shows the research hypothesis.

Table II: The Causes of a Bad University

	Variable A		Variable B
CSU	Low tuition, Unionized Faculty, Master plan≡	Experimental Group	Bad education, low pay, conflict
Michigan St. Penn State, SUNY, Minnesota, etc	higher tuition, faculty not unionized no master plan	Control Group	No Bad education, higher pay, less conflict

This is how you set out to prove or disprove a hypothesis. I would be happy to disprove my hypothesis. Most of my colleagues probably find it outrageous that I even formulate it. That is what’s wrong with so many of them. Censoring hypotheses and questions is the definition of bigotry.

5. Should the Faculty and the Administration Fight with Each Other?

*From the 1970s onward, the faculty and the administration became increasingly polarized. The old collegial model of the academe was gradually replaced by a Marxian conflict model, pitting professors against administrators, labor against management. There were several competing faculty organizations. I was president of the only moderate, centrist faculty group - the American Association of University Professors. I deplored the decline in collegiality and professionalism. Our competitors favored it, aiming to forge the faculty into a radical labor union. In time, they won.*

*But in 1977, my organization still played a vital role in defusing faculty-administration conflict. Here is a short letter I published in the Sacramento Union on July 23 of that year. Note that my chief intent here is to protect the faculty against the wrath of conservative politicians and tax payers.*

Once again the media are treating Sacramentans to the "Sac State Hassles" show. It is important that your newspaper not mislead public opinion about the character of our University. I write to you as statewide and local President of the American Association of University Professors - representing 600 faculty members statewide and 70 locally.

The Special Commission appointed by Chancellor Dumke has delivered its final report, and it is substantially correct: We have significant non-compliance in the realm of retention, promotion and tenure. We have frequent turmoil and agitation which is largely the work of a militant minority.

However, this is precisely where the media frequently err in their reporting; the fact of the matter is that most faculty members at the University desire nothing but to do their job calmly and

competently and to cooperate with the administration for the benefit of students, the community and higher education. This is where most of us are at, and that is why collective retaliation in the form of suspension of personnel actions (contemplated by the Chancellor) or general hostility and resulting budget cuts (the typical attitude towards higher education in many quarters, these days) constitute an unfair victimization of hundreds of serious, dedicated and hard-working professors.

The media do a disservice when they label us categorically and when they equate all of us with a vocal and militant minority. Teachers certainly have their share of problems at this time. However, we are, by and large, the same kind of moderate, hard-working, tax-paying people who constitute the bulk of The Union readership. Most of us are fed up with the confrontations and political games played for so many years on this campus by a minority of powerful professors. Make no mistake about that (*Sacramento Union*, July 23, 1977).

Tom Kando

President, American Association of University Professors

### 6. Which Teachers' Union is the Worst?

*By 1982, the faculty of the California State University, the largest University in the world, was unionized. The bad guys won. By then, I was publishing my monthly Sacramento Forum. In the September 1983, issue, I published the following article. In it, I blast the victorious Teachers' Union in ways which remain highly valid to this day.*

For the first time in its history, the faculty of the world's largest university enters the academic year under the provisions of a Collective Bargaining agreement. The 21,000 faculty members of the California State University are finally unionized.

The struggle was long and arduous. For over ten years, two rival national teachers' unions fought each other, the administration, the legislature, students and the public at large for the right to unionize the faculty. One of these unions is the AFL-CIO-affiliated *American Federation of Teachers*. The other one is the *National Education Association*. Finally in the fall of 1982 the latter union won the election (by a margin of 19 out of 12,000 votes cast).

I participated in the struggle from its very inception to its final conclusion. I was President of one of the segments of the victorious union. My motive in helping the NEA beat the AFT was as follows: The AFT is a branch of the AFL-CIO and could be expected to model a professors' union after those of industrial workers. On the other hand the NEA seemed to be a more "professional" organization, one more suited to the requirements of white-collar employees, one that would recognize the continued need for flexibility, autonomy, academic freedom and other features central to the teaching profession. The AFT always seemed more radical. For example, it advocated the strike as a bargaining weapon, whereas my organization did not. Those of us who were ambivalent towards collective bargaining and yet realized that it was inevitable opted for the NEA as the lesser evil.

But today the NEA is emerging as perhaps the single most destructive force in American education. This would certainly appear to be the case at the national level, K through 12.

The 500,000-member AFT and the 1.5 million-member NEA continue to vie for teacher membership and representation. The two unions differ significantly in their ideologies and in their educational priorities. Which prevails may determine the quality of American life into the 21st century, and whether American education continues to deteriorate or not.

True, a 1979 Rand report reveals that NEA and AFT agreements with school boards are

nearly identical in terms of salary, working conditions and other benefits. However, as Gilbert Sewall, former education editor at *Newsweek* notes, over the years the NEA has become a radical left-wing movement, far more politicized than the AFT.

**NEA Responsible for Educational Decline:**

The NEA's image is deceptive. It projects, in Sewall's words, "the image of a genteel confederation of professionals." Back in the early 1970s, much of the "innovative" work of the NEA could be attributed to well-intentioned albeit misguided educators with zeal and new ideas.

However, the Union grew in size and influence. It sent more members to the 1976 Democratic Convention than any other interest group. It elected Jimmy Carter and thus received as a spoil a cabinet-level Department of Education. It became an entrenched power structure embodying New Left ideologies and deliberately persisting in earlier errors to which it was now committed as a special interest group.

The NEA continues to advocate disastrous educational policies. It remains, in Sewall's words, "a self-righteous champion of 'innovative' curricula and reduced adult authority in schools." It adheres to its revisionist theories of American history and culture, indoctrinating youngsters into the new dogmas of pervasive white, western, American historical guilt. It continues to call for the abolition of all standardized testing, claiming that tests are "similar to narcotics" for "maiming children. It supports divisive, non-educational issues such as nuclear disarmament, gun control, abortion rights, affirmative action and ban on all public school prayers. It advocates channeling more scarce resources towards bilingual education instead of more bonehead English and other basics.

Then there is the matter of increasing teacher incompetence. We note elsewhere in this issue several recent examples of teachers failing the tests which their very own students pass. Indeed, there is a growing number of instances whereby a higher proportion of students are capable of passing the very same tests taken by teachers

Teachers are the product of university schools of education. That is precisely where most of the blame for teacher incompetence must be located. For decades schools of education have emphasized method over substance, and the trend is not abating. As a result, a disproportionate part of a teacher's training focuses not on his substantive knowledge of the fields he is supposed to teach, but on teaching technique, rapport, leadership, relationships with students, etc. One could arguably abolish most university schools of education and do relatively little damage to the already low quality of K through 12 teaching, as long as teachers continue to have to have a B.S. in their substantive fields.

However, the nation's schools of education and the NEA work hand in hand to perpetuate the bloated special interest which university schools of education are, requiring teachers to take more and more useless education credits in order to be hired and promoted.

**AFT Less Ideological:**

The other major union, the AFT, represents a more traditional bread- and-butter type of unionism. True, the California Professors affiliated with the AFT are often Marxist extremists, using union funds to support Marxism in El Salvador, Nicaragua and elsewhere.

However, the national AFT and its President Albert Shanker are far more seriously interested

in improving education than is the NEA. A Sewall points out, Al Shanker has repeatedly called for old-fashioned academic standards and no-nonsense disciplinary reform. They favor -- lo and behold -- requiring courses, assigning home work and enforcing rules.

Neither is the AFT as side-tracked into ideological and educationally irrelevant battles as the

NEA. One good example of this is the two unions positions with respect to layoff policy: In 1981 Boston Judge Garrity slapped a layoff formula on the Boston public school system requiring a strict system of racial quotas. The order negates the union's collective bargaining contract, which calls for layoffs to be color-blind and to occur strictly on the basis of seniority. Instead, since the court order was issued, more than 1,100 white tenured teachers (some with as much as 18 years of seniority) have lost their jobs while no tenured black teachers have been laid off. At the same time new black teachers have been hired.

The AFT has opposed such reverse racial discrimination. Al Shanker has protested that "the AFT continues to believe that the U.S. Constitution does not allow people to lose their jobs on the basis of the color of their skin." The NEA has not opposed such reverse discrimination.

Thus, there are important differences between the two national teachers' unions, i.e between the two groups that have been vying for the membership and support of California professors. If the present analysis is correct, we cannot find much comfort in the fact that the more "professional" appearing union won the collective bargaining election at the California State University. One thing is certain: it is imperative to retain an AFT presence at the University, even as the opposition party. Without a two-party system one can never kick out the rascals (*Sacramento Forum*, Sept.1983).

### 31. DEFENDING HIGHER EDUCATION AND MY DEPARTMENT

#### 1. Does Governor Reagan Want to Destroy Higher Education?

*Although I became very critical of the academe, I wrote innumerable tracts defending the faculty and the university. When I first moved to California in 1969, I was pretty radical. And when things weren't going well for the University (budget shortfalls, no cost-of-living adjustments, etc.), I was ready to blame "conservative" politicians such as then Governor Ronald Reagan. Here are parts of an early letter I published in the Sacramento Bee on November 7, 1969:*

...You quote a number of students making blatantly false allegations concerning reduced faculty teaching loads. Another story raises the possibility of "bootlegging" by some professors...Facts will be sorted out soon enough. For example, President Butz has disclosed statistics about faculty teaching loads. And facts, not gossip, will ultimately determine policy.

Much more serious and deplorable is what is happening to this state's educational system, and the apparent failure of Californians to resist the governor's efforts at wrecking it. Until recently it was realized by students, faculty and all enlightened parties concerned that it was one's common interest to fight for the preservation of quality education in California.

Now, however, frustration leads the victims to turn upon one another. What greater victory could the governor have expected that to pit students against faculty, to isolate the faculty, to break up the opposition into isolated segments? (*Sacramento Bee*, Nov. 7, 1969).

#### 2. Does the Public Hate Professors Because they are Left-wingers?

*A few months later, in the Spring of 1970, when protest against the Vietnam war reached a fevered pitch, there were those who blamed university professors for inciting civil disorder - the Cambodia-Kent State violence, etc. Conservatives urged governor Ronald Reagan and legislators to punish the professors by withholding their pay raises. I published a letter in the Sacramento Bee*

*at that time in defense of my colleagues.*

The general assumption is that the California public is now unsympathetic to higher education and that the assault upon the colleges and universities led by governor Reagan and conservative state representatives expresses the will of the people. Presumably campus activism is what turned everybody off, and now professors as well as students are looked upon with suspicion. Such was the justification for depriving professors of a 5 per cent cost-of-living raise last year. It is the justification for the current amputation of the university and state college systems.

The assumption that academia is in a bad spot is shared by the pro-education liberals. For instance on March 8 Phil Eisenberg, consultant to Assembly Ways and Means Chairman Willie Brown, talked to a group of Sacramento State professors. While he sympathized with the professors he argued that the prevailing political climate precludes them from driving a hard bargain, perhaps from bargaining at all.

Yet how well founded is this assumption? While it may be true that the master plan for higher education is no longer sacrosanct, it would be wrong to conclude that the people have turned anti-education.

In November, the black liberal Riles defeated conservative Republican Rafferty for the position of superintendent of higher education. Reagan's margin over Jesse Unruh for the governorship was much smaller than expected; the number of school bond issues defeated was smaller than expected. Consider also a recent Newsweek opinion poll: Only 16 per cent of the respondents found the professors to be responsible for the increasing violence. This was next to the lowest percent age, nearly as low as the 13 per cent who blamed the police.

My point is this: Academia may not have to worry that much about its public image. Academia's allegedly tarnished public image may be somewhat of a pseudo-issue created by the conservative right and hastily believed by those whom it concerns (*Sacramento Bee*, Spring, 1970).

### 3. Why does the *Sacramento Bee* Hate the University?

*More than a quarter century later, I was still coming to the university's rescue, when I felt that it was being treated unfairly - in this case by the media. This letter appeared in the Bee on October 17, 1996.*

It is clear that the *Sacramento Bee* misses no opportunity to badmouth our University. Recent examples include your sensationalist front-page article on October 4 and a *Forum* piece on October 6. The former article deals with a flap between a group of faculty members and the president, and the latter is about a case of malfunctioning affirmative action.

My purpose is not to discuss the substance of these various issues, except to note that the first one does not warrant *National Enquirer* type coverage, and the latter is hypocritical, since the *Bee* has always been *in favor* of affirmative action.

What is truly appalling, though, is the *Bee's* consistent hostility to our University, its ceaseless efforts to tarnish our reputation and its double standard when dealing with us as compared to University of California campuses such as Davis and Berkeley. You can't say that I am merely blaming the messenger. The bias has been apparent in many ways for many years, including your sports coverage, your misrepresentation of our work load, etc.

Fifty years ago the McLatchy family, which founded and owns the *Sacramento Bee*, had an interest in seeing the local junior college become a four-year institution. Your newspaper can't get over the fact that this did not happen and that, instead, Ca. State, Sacramento was created. Hence your ever-lasting vindictiveness.

But keep in mind that your biased and selective coverage of us is essentially an attack on the city itself, since we are, and will remain, the only major University in town. You are befouling your own nest and thereby harming the larger community whose interests you should in fact be promoting (*Sacramento Bee*, Oct. 17, 1996).

#### 4. Cal. State is a Wonderful University

*In my efforts to raise my university's stature, I went further. For example, in 1996 I published an article in the Summer issue of the Gold River Scene singing the praise of Cal. State. Here are a few of the things I said*

As Cal State approaches its 50th birthday, Sacramentans should pause for a moment to appreciate the great public university they have in their midst. The fact that our University is often taken for granted, sometimes maligned and rarely appreciated, is probably rooted in the same low self-esteem which renders many Sacramentans apologetic about their community as a whole, forever wallowing in their feeling of inferiority vis-a-vis our neighbor San Francisco. After all, many of us feel subconsciously (and erroneously) that we live in a second-rate cow town and that we cannot *possibly* have a first-rate University (any more than a first-rate NBA team, right?)

Well, this is all nonsense of course -- take it from me, a sophisticate who grew up in Paris, France but has been happily settled in River City for nearly thirty years. While this is not the place to dwell on the very real and considerable appeal of Sacramento, let's consider our city's major institution of higher learning.

<p><b>Cal State was founded in 1947, with a \$100,000 legislative appropriation for its first academic year. Most of the 235 students making up the first year's class were ex-GIs and part-time students. The 265 acre site -- mostly hop fields at the time -- was acquired for \$385,000.</b></p>
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We possess a large and excellent University which educates thousands of graduate and undergraduate students, provides the community with a great and diverse number of cultural, athletic, recreational and other public services, and is increasingly recognized, respected and sought out far beyond the borders of our immediate region.

As a four-year institution, Cal State was founded in 1947, with a \$100,000 legislative appropriation for its first academic year. Most of the 235 students making up the first year's class were ex-GIs and part-time students.

During its first five years, Cal State had to share the facilities of Sacramento Junior College (later renamed City College). For a while, the legislature considered making the State Fairgrounds into the new campus. However, in 1953 Sac State moved to its present location along the American River. The 265 acre site -- mostly hop fields at the time -- was acquired for a total of \$385,000.

Today, the University enrolls 23,000 students, of whom 5,000 are graduate students and 2,000 are international students from 100 different nations. We offer 65 different majors in 55 undergraduate and 40 graduate programs, along with many minors and some joint doctoral programs with UC campuses.

**Sac State students are taught by their professors and not by their teaching assistants. Average class size is 24. Compare this with the monstrous Psych.1 or Chem.1A classes of 700 to 1,600 students that are regularly offered at well-known universities around the country, where some professors pretape the entire semester's lectures and aren't even in town while the class is being taught.**

The University has graduated 45,000 students in the past 10 years alone. There are 125,000 Cal. State Sacramento alumni living in the United States. These include celebrities like actor Tom Hanks and NFL star John Gesek who earned two Super Bowl rings with the Dallas Cowboys, along with thousands of other successful professionals, corporate executives, public employees, legislators, professors, artists, authors, teachers and others in all walks of life. We also send thousands of students on to achieve doctorates, law degrees, medical degrees and other advanced professional degrees.

But it is not only the growth and the size of the University -- impressive as they are -- which give it its importance. While Sac State's size dwarfs many elite institutions such as Harvard and Stanford, it also distinguishes itself by the *quality* of its education. Before anything else, and *unlike* many of the more famous universities, we are first and foremost a *teaching institution*.

Although there is a very respectable and fast growing funded research component on our campus, our mission is and remains the *education of students*. That is what the faculty does during the overwhelming majority of its time.

Unlike at Harvard, Cal, Columbia or Michigan, Cal State students are taught by their *professors* and not by their teaching assistants. Furthermore, the vast majority of the classes are small, interactive and personalized. Although the dwindling State appropriation for higher education has had the system wide effect of increasing class size somewhat in recent years, *average class size at CSUS is still 24*, which is truly a blessing for students! Compare this with the monstrous Psych.1 or Chem.1A classes of 700 to 1,600 students that are regularly offered at well-known universities around the country. Those of us who received our advanced training at places like Berkeley, Penn State, UCLA, Wisconsin, Chicago, etc. (and that's most of the faculty), remember all too well these immense undergraduate classes. Many of us were T.A.s taking care of a section or two of these classes. These poor students saw the professor rarely or never. Sometimes the professor had pre-taped the entire semester's lectures during the summer, so that he wasn't even in town while the class was being taught. Such conditions do not exist at Cal State. Classes are small, professors teach, and they are available.

**We now broadcast over 30 televised courses every semester to a large section of Northern California. Classes can be taken from the comfort of your home, or you can tape them while at work and view them when you get home.**

Everything is geared towards the benefit of students. The University innovates ceaselessly in order to remain in the forefront of educational technology. The state of the arts library has a million books, but no card catalog. You look up your sources through a Eureka search from one of the ubiquitous computer terminals. The library was expanded in 1990 by the addition of a 165,000 square feet South Wing. This houses not only a majority of the book collections, but also the new media center. The center is responsible for the distribution and the broadcasting of films and videos. It also houses TV studios where professors teach a growing number of classes televised to distant learners on Sacramento Cable Channel 21. We now broadcast over 30 televised courses every semester to a large section of Northern California. Classes can be taken from the comfort of your home, or you can tape the lectures while at work and view them when you get home.

Cal State has nine major computer systems ("mainframes"), many thousands of personal computers and work stations, many labs of both the Apple and PC variety. Every student gets an e-mail account (as do staff and faculty, of course).

Our international program enables students to study at 36 foreign universities in 16 different countries, including Australia, Brazil, France, Germany, Israel, Italy, Japan, Sweden, Taiwan, Zimbabwe and others. The cost of a year's study program overseas is not much higher than on the home campus, and the units apply toward graduation too, of course. I often tell my students: why not have a fantastically exciting year in an exotic place, while continuing to make progress towards your degree, and all this at little extra cost?

**The University is in the midst of a \$214 million Dollar master construction plan. Between 1987 and 1997, fourteen new buildings have been or are being completed and remodeled, adding nearly a million square feet of classroom and office space and nearly half a million square feet of multi-level parking.**

While educating students is our primary mission, the University is also involved in a great deal of research, and more so every year. Of the 22 campuses in the State University System, Cal State, Sacramento is *second* in attracting sponsored (funded) research. Also, every year many professors receive Fulbright positions to teach or do empirical research overseas, publish hundreds of books and scientific articles, and run more than a dozen research institutes located on our campus.

The dynamic growth of the University is palpable. It is in the midst of a \$214 million master construction plan. Between 1987 and 1997, fourteen new buildings have been or are being completed and remodeled, adding nearly a million square feet of classroom and office space and nearly half a million square feet of multi-level parking. The latest fast-rising project is Placer Hall, a five-story building jointly run by Sac State and the US Geological Survey. It will house the geology department, USGS personnel and several laboratories. A key ingredient in Sac State's flourishing during the past decade has been the stability and collegiality which it has enjoyed since President Gerth's appointment. Under his predecessors, campus life was marked by turmoil and faculty-administration conflict.

Perhaps most exciting for the surrounding community is what is happening at Cal State in the areas of *Student Life* and *Cultural Life*: Students can join any one of more than 300 clubs -- affinity groups, political, cultural, recreational, etc. There are 18 sororities and 20 fraternities.

The University has moved up to Division One level in nearly all major sports. It is competitive in some (e.g. baseball and football) and not yet in others (e.g. basketball). However, in 1995 the student body approved a referendum to fund sports more generously through a small additional student fee. This indicates that students have the foresight to understand that sports provide a University with major intangible benefits such as pride, identity and community. Thus, there is now funding for more athletic scholarships, and our teams are *definitely* going to move up in the ranks, I guarantee it! Also, while the stadium remains a somewhat temporary structure, it now seats nearly 30,000 -- a far cry from a decade ago when it was more primitive than most high school stadia. Of course, the University has other fine sports and recreational facilities such as the Aquatic Center on Lake Natoma.

While we may not be able to vie with Nebraska and Notre Dame athletically, our University's *cultural* life is, in my view, definitely big league: Our classical radio station KXPR and our jazz station KXJZ are as fine as any radio station *in the United States*. Sac State's cultural events and celebrity guest speakers follow each other in rapid succession. This past term included such events as the Festival of the Arts, featuring speaker Amy Tan, and the Asian Film Festival. Famous guest speakers have included Nobel Prize winning scientists, celebrated poets like Maya Angelou, major public figures like Jesse Jackson, even controversial personalities like Gordon Liddy and Eldridge Cleaver -- in sum a diverse and exciting succession of appearances that inspire, at times shock, but never bore.

My own recent sampling of Cal State's vibrant cultural offerings include an superb concert of Middle Eastern music a few months ago and two classical performances: Last year, Mozart's *Magic Flute* and just a few days ago Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*. The latter concert, conducted at the Community Center by Donald Kendrick, was truly a professional performance on a par with something one might attend in San Francisco or New York. Kendrick has, in fact, conducted at Carnegie Hall. What is astonishing about such events -- even the more amateurish but totally enjoyable *Magic Flute* last year -- is that these are *totally* Sac State productions, Sac State students, Sac State choirs and musicians, Sac State faculty and staff. Can Harvard present a *Carmina Burana* like Sac State did last week? I doubt it!

<p><b><i>US News and World Report</i> has recognized and ranked Cal State, Sacramento as one of the nation's best "buys" -- meaning best combination of relatively low cost and high quality</b></p>
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Finally, I should note Cal State Sacramento's special relationship to the world of government and politics. Due to its unique location, the *Capital Campus* has a special expertise in government, political science, public policy, planning, administration, survey research, data analysis, social research, etc. The faculty includes former legislators such as Gary Hart, Barry Keene and mayor Joe Serna. Thus, Sac State students enjoy some unique educational and occupational advantages in these fields.

Recently, there was a minor flap on campus, expressed in the form of an article and an ensuing exchange of letters in our University newspaper, the *State Hornet*: One student complained that he had trouble getting admitted to a quality graduate program with his Cal State B.A. Subsequently, some readers agreed that our institution indeed commands little respect at places like, say, U.S.C. and Stanford, while others didn't.

Well, by and large the complainers are wrong. There is ample evidence that our University is in good shape and that it enjoys the respect of the community, the media, the legislature, the public, and other institutions. For example, *US News and World Report* has recognized and ranked Sac State as one of the *nation's* best "buys" -- meaning best combination of relatively low cost and high quality.

Cognitive Dissonance theory teaches us, as the psychologist Leon Festinger said, that people learn to appreciate the things for which they must pay a lot. Well, maybe *that's* the problem with Cal State: We don't charge enough! (just kidding). Still, there is something to this, maybe. Is it because we charge less than \$2,000 a year (less than half of the UC and a seventh of Stanford) that we have an inferiority complex? Do students and others think: if it's so inexpensive, it can't be that good? Is cognitive dissonance theory at work here?

If so, people should snap out of it. If you can't get into a Ph.D. program after graduating from Cal State Sacramento, maybe it has something to do with your level of performance. But *US News* is damn right: Cal State is one of the best buys anywhere -- and *not* because it's so cheap, but because it's inexpensive *and good*. Remember: what we do at Cal State is *teach*, not jet around the country to fancy conferences. *President Gerth teaches! Sacramento Mayor Joe Serna teaches!* We teach to groups of 25 to 30 students, not 500. You can find us in our offices, without an appointment three months in advance. Cal State: a good place to work, a good place to study, a good place to be, a good place to graduate from. (*Gold River Scene*, Summer 1996).

### 5. Who Wants to Shut Down the Sociology Department?

*There were periodic threats to my department - Sociology. Like other bureaucracies, the university had turf battles. Sometimes it was important to protect one's interests and ward off attacks from other sectors of the University. Such attacks could threaten your job, your very livelihood. In the fall of 1977, there were rumblings that some high-fallutin' committee members were out to get the Sociology department. On October 5, I fired off the following forceful letter to the university President, using my position and my influence as President of the American Association of University Professors. It must have done some good, because our department was left unharmed.*

This is a preliminary reaction to the administration's renewed pressure upon the Cal State Sociology Department:

While such pressure has been exerted for several years now, its latest form appears particularly unprofessional and ominous: We are now told that the Sociology Department has a "bad reputation," that we need "public relations improvement" and that we should seriously consider "improving our image" by teaching courses in other - allegedly more impacted - departments.

It is incredible that we may be on the threshold of policy decisions based on a "bad reputation," hearsay and gossip. Administrators who shall for now remain unnamed have stated, and I quote, that "lots of people... shouldn't have been paid," allegedly because they failed to put in a full workload.

We object, and shall resist, threats and intimidation based on some collective impression. An

attempt seems under way to locate some scape-goat on this campus. We are confident that policy decisions will not succeed unless they are based on facts, and that the facts do not support the above-mentioned attempts.

The facts are that Sociology's student enrollments are holding up nicely, that our student-faculty ration is above that of many other departments on this campus, that our average class size is the second highest at this University, and that the members of this department carry their full workload in all respects.

Our curriculum committee is in the process of collecting additional data, comparing this department carefully with other departments. We shall, apparently, need to be prepared with such data in order to combat the nebulous "bad reputation" charge now entering the decision-making process.

We also intend to pursue with special vigor a development which has done much damage to this department for some time, viz. the proliferation of courses which duplicate our curriculum in other departments. For example, Business 117 and 151; Communication Studies 160; PE 110, 137, 138; Education 144, 146. Our curriculum committee is in the process of compiling the full list of literally dozens of such courses.

We shall argue and document, that the sociology department has been unfairly singled out for a variety of pressures and we shall demand that certain curricular trends be reversed. Thomas M. Kando, President, American Association of University Professors.

#### 6. A Fight for the Very Survival of my Department

*In 1992, a similar threat to my department cropped up again, this time a much more serious one. The university was experiencing a major budget crisis. Deep cuts were needed. Heads had to roll, but whose heads? The administration attempted to prioritize programs as a prelude to cuts and even to the possible elimination of entire programs. My department, Sociology, was one of the departments under the gun. Why? Because it had no representation on the faculty committee in charge of ranking the departments. This was pure and simple cannibalism. Those departments which were represented on the committee - say, history, chemistry or anthropology - were safe, and those which were not, faced shut-down.*

*On February 2, I fired off a memo to the President, to the Dean and to the entire university faculty, denouncing this process in forceful and eloquent words. Apparently it worked, because my department was spared. Here are a few of the things I wrote:*

This is to protest the unreasonable and capricious ranking of University departments, for the purpose of possible cut-backs: The rankings leave 5% of the departments in the low-priority category, i.e. programs that are at risk of elimination.

The sheer lopsidedness of this classification suggests the politics of expediency rather than fairness, or the true evaluation of program merit: In response to the budget crisis, the decision appears to be to appease the vast majority at the expense of a very few. Only Voltaire's Pangloss could believe that professors are incapable of cannibalism.

The Strategic Planning Committee includes *not one single social scientist*. It is the same *non-elected* committee which first formulated the ranking criteria, and then did the ranking itself. As an example, because the committee included a geologist but no geographer, geology ends up in high priority but geography in low priority. *It is an insult to expect us to believe that these and many other similar outcomes are coincidences.*

Some committee members argued that Since Yale University is cutting back its Sociology program by 40%, it makes sense to cut back our Sociology department as well! We seem to have reached the level of policy-by-hearsay.

Please understand that this memo is a hastily drawn up response to the shocking ranking of January 29. My department has not yet had time to gather all the pertinent data to prove the strength of its enrollments and other pertinent facts. However, even this preliminary response should make it amply clear that *we have been ranked improperly, no matter what criterion or combination of criteria were used.* Enrollments? Number of majors? Student-Faculty Ratio? Cost-effectiveness of the program? Centrality to the mission of the university? Job prospects? The test singling Sociology out for low-priority status fails on all counts. If it is permitted to arbitrarily place a couple of departments in grave jeopardy this time, the campus community should seriously ponder whose turn it will be next time. Pending further appeal, we demand that the priority rankings be rescinded immediately.

### 7. Higher Education in California: Myths and Reality

*A few years later, I wrote a piece about higher education in general. The article, published in the Gold River Scene in November 1998, is an analysis of some of the strengths and some of the weaknesses of the world in which I work. While it does not directly contradict some of the fiery statements I had published earlier about teachers unions, schools of education, the quality of education, etc. (see above), it is more balanced.*

According to polls, education is said to have been the voters' primary concern during the recent election. In the past, issues like crime and the economy loomed larger.

I am not convinced. The fact that education topped the list, this time around, may have to do with the robust economy, the sharply declining crime rate, and the need of politicians and of the media to spin issues. I certainly don't detect a great ground-swell of support for education. If funding is better now than it was in the early nineties, it's because the State has a heck of a lot more money to spend.

In relation to other sectors, notably corrections and law enforcement, education continues to suffer. Furthermore, the public remains fairly ignorant of the true conditions in education, basing both its sympathies and antipathies on myths and unrepresentative anecdotes.

It is an unfortunate fact that much of the discussion of (higher) education is informed by myths rather than facts. To some extent, this may be inevitable, as the tension between "town" and "gown" dates back to the country's very origins. Currently, for example, we see frequent misrepresentations about California State University, Sacramento, in the *Sacramento Bee*.

The main question, of course, is whether or not there is a problem with our society's educational system – including the Universities. I am not sure there is. The challenges we face are certainly no more daunting than, say, those affecting the evolving (some might say, disintegrating) American family, or those faced by the byzantine criminal justice system, or trends in health care, or the increasing concentration of wealth in society, or the deplorable quality of television, or problems found in any other sector of society.

But of course, none of this is to say that we couldn't do a better job -- as could all those other institutions. Let me briefly touch upon seven myths or half-truths that we have all heard many times.

Some of these apply to education in general, some primarily in my own neck of the woods -- higher ed.:

**Myth or Half-Truth Number One:** The first and biggest assertion is that *the American educational system is doing an (increasingly) lousy job*. Periodic international comparisons of test scores are often said to reveal the inferiority of American students, compared to their foreign counterparts. There is some media sensationalism and simplification in these reports. I have seen reports suggesting that American high-schoolers rank among the lowest in comparison to 20 other countries that include not just Western Europe and Japan, but also countries like Jordan, Korea and Hungary. I have also come across reports that rank us considerably higher, especially in the math-science-quantitative area.

The only area in which American kids are consistently less knowledgeable than those in other industrialized countries is international knowledge, i.e. geography and foreign languages. Also, while it may be true that secondary schools in Europe educate their children better than American high schools do, the story is different in higher education: Overall, American universities remain the best in the world. True, their quality varies a great deal, but remember that far more Americans (nearly half) participate in higher education than in any other country in the world.

If there is one area that I would select for improvement it's *teacher education*: If our secondary (and primary) schools are weak, it's because we don't provide quality teacher education. Schools of Education have for far too long focused on methods over substance. A bureaucracy has emerged, based on a philosophy which views medium as more important than message, form more important than content. What teachers need, above all else, is solid knowledge of their field.

**Myth or Half-Truth Number Two:** *The reason that education is doing a lousy job is the teachers' unions, liberal democrats and all the others who think that you solve problems by simply throwing more money at it.* The claim, here, is that education is already funded generously, receiving the lion's share of public expenditures. More money isn't what is needed. Accountability is.

This belief is held by people on the right, Republicans, business owners, and all others who question the use to which their taxes are put, including those who don't (or no longer) have kids in school.

Much of the belief is quite wrong: True, Proposition 98, passed nearly a decade ago, directs the State to spend 40% of its budget on education K through 14. Another education-friendly step was the class size reduction legislation signed by Governor Wilson a couple of years ago. Also helpful is the recent passage of Proposition 1A, a bond issue to pay for capital improvement in education. And of course, there have been many other bond issues and appropriations over the years to help education.

However, Proposition 98 only covers K through 14, leaving the Universities out in the cold. The exposure of the UC and the CSU has become very apparent throughout the nineties. Year after year, the percentage of State funds allocated to the Universities has declined -- from 6% a generation ago to 3.5% and declining in the nineties.

From the mid-eighties to the mid-nineties, the budget of the Department of Corrections grew annually by 14%, while money spent on education increased by 4.5% and real spending on *higher* education in fact declined. Spending on education grew more slowly than for *any* other state function, including health, welfare and transportation (Legislative Analyst report). Clearly, Californians saw the building of prisons as a higher priority than paying for education.

California ranks 41st among the states in terms of per capita expenditure on education: We

spend \$4,977 per pupil per year; the national average is \$6,103 (*Stat. Abstracts of the US, 1977: 170*).

**Myth or Half-Truth Number Three:** *American education is starving for funds.* The only reason that we aren't educating our kids as well as other countries are, is that we are too selfish and short-sighted to be willing to spend enough money on them.

This is the opposite of the previous myth, and it is also an error. Obviously, this belief is held by the opposite group from the one embracing Myth Number Two, i.e. teachers themselves and their largely liberal Democratic supporters.

However, international comparisons quickly dispel the notion that American education is starved for funds: A 1990 comparison reveals that, during the late eighties, only one country spent more on education per student than the US: Switzerland. All other OECD countries on that list spent less, even though the list includes the Scandinavian countries, Canada, Germany, Japan, Australia, Britain, France, and other countries said to do a better job at educating their children. I have no reason to believe that this information is outdated.

**Myth or Half-Truth Number Four:** *The problems of higher education are the result of a relentless drive to "corporatize" it.* Under pressure from the public, the State Government and the Wilson-appointed board of trustees, the University's managers (for example new CSU Chancellor Charles Reed) increasingly wish to make education into a business, modeling it after the private sector. Students become "products," education a "commodity," the criterion for success is "productivity." Teachers' pay should be based on merit. Tenure should be abolished. There should be accountability. Education should become more job-relevant.

All of this is said to undermine the quality of a traditional liberal arts education, reducing Universities to vocational training centers and undermining academic freedom. The University's business becomes money and profitability, rather than providing knowledge, liberal arts and the cultivation of civilized citizens.

This belief is held by the teachers themselves, their unions, and all those who are suspicious of applying the private corporate model to higher education.

Like Myths Number Two and Three, this one is also largely self-serving. Here, it is the teachers unions and the professorate that are the conservatives, wishing to maintain the status quo.

There is no question that the trends favored by the proponents of Myth Number Four are under way. However, (1) the process is slow, gradual and not far-reaching; (2) it aligns our Universities with a majority of Universities in other states, which have been practicing many of these things for years; (3) many of the changes are for the better, as is for example the increasing use of technology in distance learning, so as to better serve the wider community.

With diligence, current changes in higher education will not reduce the universities to diploma mills, vocational training grounds or competitive businesses where, as in Gresham's law, the bad drives out the good.

**Myth or Half-Truth Number Five:** *Professors are lazy and under worked:* At elite universities with a heavy research focus (e.g. UC Berkeley, Stanford), it is true that there is less and less teaching being done by senior, tenured professors. I read somewhere that the average teaching load for tenured professors at the University of Michigan is now 1.1 class each term. Even in that one course, most of the teaching and grading is probably done by Teaching Assistants. I agree that this is scandalous. The teaching load of senior tenured faculty at elite universities has probably declined since people of my generation went to graduate school.

However, this does not apply to my bailiwick -- the CSU: Our teaching load is very heavy: The norm remains *four* classes per term, i.e. three to four times that of the privileged faculty at elite universities.

And of course, each class requires many weekly hours of preparation, background research, grading and management. As an example of the latter, consider that I might receive and answer, on any given day, between 15 and 25 e-mail messages from students -- a volume no doubt increased by the fact that one of my classes is televised. Most committee work, Masters Thesis supervision and a myriad of other tasks, is done as an unpaid overload as well.

A professor's workload consists, by law, of three areas: teaching, scholarship and service. Teaching is our primary responsibility, and many of us engage in scholarship and service as an overload. However, some professors receive grants for scientific research, which enables them to reduce their teaching load, and others are assigned various managerial functions, for which they receive release time from (some) teaching. Unlike elite faculty at Cal and Harvard, we can not always count on Teaching Assistants, or other forms of help.

So we are, as Chancellor Charles Reed said recently, the work horses of higher education. The other guys are the show horses. No doubt many of them work very hard and make important contributions to science and society; after all, there are many Nobel laureates at Berkeley and Stanford. However, some are feathering their nests. But the CSU is not an environment conducive to that.

**Myth or Half-Truth Number Six:** *Professors are overpaid:* In 1996, the average annual salary for a public university professor in America was \$50,000. At private Universities, professors made a little more -- \$57,000. Full professors who have been at it for several decades made, at the peak of their earning careers, \$64,000 and \$76,000, respectively (Stat. Abstracts of the US, 1997: 187).

The pay of CSU faculty is about 11% behind comparable Universities in other states. We top out in the upper sixties. A few of our top administrators (e.g. Presidents) make over \$150,000, but *no professor comes even close to receiving a six-figure annual University salary.* I have never met one, or heard about one.

Let me also remind you of what the average primary and secondary school teacher makes: \$38,000 per year (up from \$25,000 in 1986). California teachers are a little better off, making \$43,000 per year (Stat. Abstracts of the US, 1997: 167).

Most professors' doctoral training has caused them to delay earning a full paycheck until their thirties or later. For example, when I went to graduate school at the University of Minnesota in the 1960s, I lived on \$2,400 a year for four years. Most primary and secondary school teachers make only enough if theirs is the second paycheck in a dual-income household. How can people begrudge educators what they make, when professional athletes, rock stars, corporate executives and assorted others make *more in one day than teachers make in a year.*

It is true that educators have longer breaks and -- at least as far as professors are concerned - - greater flexibility than the rest of the labor force. Overall, we enjoy a higher level of job satisfaction than many others who make more money. But don't be mistaken about it: if you want to make a lot of money, don't become an academician!

**Myth or Half-Truth Number Seven:** *Academic tenure is bad.* At the risk of sounding self-serving, let me just make three simple points in favor of retaining academic tenure:

(1). Tenure is only granted after a probationary period lasting from 5 to 7 years, depending on the institution. Thus, there is ample opportunity to weed out the people who do not deserve tenure.

(2) Many other major professions enjoy the same level of job security. This includes high school teachers, cops, correctional officers and many other categories of public employees at the county, state and federal levels, as well as HMO physicians, partners in law firms and many others. The difference is that elsewhere it's not *called* tenure.

(3) Why single out professors? If anything, the issue of academic freedom suggests that job security is more important in our profession. After all, it is in the University, the marketplace of ideas, that there is the greatest need for First Amendment protection. It is professors who are most likely to express controversial and unpopular views, and who would lose their livelihood not because of incompetence but as the victims of intolerance.

**In conclusion:** Perhaps the tension between town and gown is inevitable. It certainly has been perennial. Today, that tension continues. On the inside, teachers and professors are unionized and they feel fairly strongly that they are not being treated fairly.

On the outside, there is sometimes the perception that Universities and their faculty are mostly feathering their own nest rather than serving the people's educational needs as best as they could. There is a growing clamor for *accountability*. The message is coming down to us from outgoing Governor Wilson, his CSU trustees, the legislature and the messenger -- new Chancellor Charles Reed.

Regardless of whether you are on the town or the gown side of the argument, I wouldn't hold my breath waiting for a drastic turn-around in our state's educational system. The French have a saying -- the more things change, the more they stay the same. Well, not exactly, but close (*Gold River Scene*, Nov. 1998).

#### 8. The Academic Proletariat: Underpaid and Radicalized

*On March 19, 1986, the Wall Street Journal published an article about the plight of non-tenure-track faculty members in America. These are professors who are grossly underpaid and overworked, and who will never get tenure. Their numbers have been growing rapidly. They are the academic proletariat. I promptly fired off a letter to the Journal, hoping to shed additional light on the matter. They did not print it.*

Lester Jackson's article about the plight of part-time faculty (March 19) is accurate. I just want to add that there is an insidious way in which they may be getting back at us after all. *Accuracy in Academe* tells us that there are 10,000 Marxist professors on our campuses. I hypothesize that these are disproportionately concentrated among part-timers -- the intellectual proletariat.

Joseph Schumpeter alerted us to something of this kind. The overqualified, underpaid and often underemployed intellectual turns radical revolutionary. As a teacher, he brainwashes gullible young students into virulent anti-capitalism. His ideology reflects his condition. His resentment is his class consciousness. He undermines the system. So we pay for neglecting him after all.

#### 9. Are Professors Lazy and Overpaid?

*Vast segments of the public continue to believe that professors are a privileged lot - overpaid and under worked. In the Spring of 1992, the Sacramento Bee published one of several articles which reflected this misconception. I sent them the following letter to refute their*

*accusations, and they printed it on March 2.*

The *Sacramento Bee* has recently printed several anti-academic diatribes. The latest is Andrew Hacker's article about rich professors in the March 8 *Sunday Forum*. I don't know about Harvard and Berkeley, but as far as my neck of the woods is concerned, Hacker's statements bear no relationship to reality whatsoever. An unfortunate consequence of such articles is that they may lead the public to generalize to *all* institutions of higher learning and to believe that we all live and work in affluence and privilege. Let me set you straight as far as the California State University is concerned:

We are *uniformly* on a year-around four-course teaching load. Recent articles have spread the myth that most professors teach only one or two courses. At Harvard and Berkeley, that is the case, but here, *never*.

In addition to our *four* courses, our work schedule includes preparations, correcting, research, reading, committee work and student advising. This easily adds up to over 50 hours per week.

As to pay, I know of *no* professor with a six-figure salary. After *decades* of work, we top out in the low \$60,000's. However, we all begin in the \$20,000's. Imagine that! We go to school until we are in our 30's to get a Ph.D., we deny ourselves everything, and finally obtain a degree every bit as difficult as an M.D., to then begin at the same income level as people without a college degree. Our entry level income is half of what starting accountants make, one-fourth of starting lawyers, one-fifth of starting M.D.'s, not to mention the obscene compensation of athletes, entertainers, and business executives.

Neither are Hacker's international comparisons helpful. I received my undergraduate training in Europe, and I know that European professors enjoy far better pay, more perks, and higher status than we do in America.

Here, we spend 20 years of our lives to get a Ph.D., we spend the next 15 years teaching 200 students every semester, and by the time we are 45, we average nearly \$50,000 a year to support our families. Whoop-de-do! We go for years without cost of living adjustments, we are threatened with layoffs, the university is cut to the bone, and Andrew Hacker wonders why fewer and fewer people opt to go for a Ph.D. I, for one, am not advising my children or my students to become professors.

The traditional stereotype of the teacher/professor was that he/she was overworked and underpaid (remember Jerry Brown's "psychic income?"). But lately, the new myth is that we are under worked and overpaid. Which is it? Make up your mind. It can't be both (*Sacramento Bee*, March 2, 1992).

#### 10. Cal State Professors are not Lazy and Overpaid

*A year later, I felt compelled to send a similar correction and reprimand to the Sacramento Bee again, following renewed disinformation about faculty perks printed in that paper. I wrote the following piece on February 28, 1993. This time they did not print it.*

The February 24, 1993 issue of the *Bee* contains at least two articles about the universities. While much of what Peter Schrag and Lisa Lapin write has merit, the latter article needs to be corrected in at least one respect: The typical CSU faculty currently teaches *four* courses a term, not three, as Ms. Lapin states erroneously.

Having taught in both the University of California and the Cal State systems, I know how vastly different the teaching loads are in the two systems. It is true that UC faculty teach only one

or two classes per quarter - at the most - (while enjoying a higher pay scale). That is what my load was, even though I was low on the totem pole. In contrast, the Cal State faculty typically teach four courses, term after term.

It is important that the public realize how much more privilege there is on campuses such as UCLA and Berkeley, than at Cal State. Generalizing about all professors does injustice to those of us who already teach a great deal and who are not guilty of the low productivity often attributed to all of higher education.

### 11. How Much do Professors Make?

*Not only is the public misinformed about professors workload. It is also in error about our income. In January 1997, I once again fired off a letter to the Sacramento Bee, to correct some misinformation they had just laid on the public. To their credit, they printed my letter, on January 9.*

The January 5 article "Wilson to seek no UC, CSU fee hikes" quoted a California Postsecondary Education Commission study that claimed that the average faculty salary in the California State University system is \$75, 481. This is way off base. The correct figure is a fraction of that amount. Salaries for tenure-track faculty commence in the low \$30,000s and top out in the mid \$60,000s. The average is probably somewhere in the \$40,000 range, guessing optimistically. But if non-tenure-track faculty are included, the average would be much lower. I know of no professor whose annual salary from full-time teaching exceeds \$70,000. Of course, there are administrators who make more, but they are not faculty.

*As a result of my corrective letter, the Sacramento Bee tried to "set it straight" by printing another article about faculty salaries, with updated figures. But they still didn't get it right. So on January 11, I sent them the following letter. They did not print it. They were probably sick and tired of me.*

At the risk of being a pest, I am writing again about Cal State salaries: Although you recently printed my letter (for which I thank you) and on January 11 tried to "set it straight," your figures are still wrong by a wide margin:

In "Setting it Straight" on January 11, you write that the average salary for tenured profs at Cal State is \$65,781. This cannot be correct. That figure can only represent an average if it includes departmental chairs (i.e. de facto part-time administrators) and excludes the lower ranks of tenure-track faculty. More likely, it represents the TOP of the pay scale which was in effect until 1995, and which still determines the pay of the overwhelming majority of the faculty. As I explained in my previous letter, the average -- even for tenured profs -- is probably many thousands of dollars lower. You can check this out with payroll or personnel at any of our campuses, or at headquarters in Long Beach.

If I am so insistent on accuracy in this regard, it is because of the extremely destructive effects of an already existing public perception that professors are under worked and overpaid. This perception, erroneous in my view and in my experience, has led to the serious under funding of public higher education in California which threatens our state's education, economy and well-being (*Sacramento Bee*, Jan. 9, 1997).

## 12. Professors don't Make Enough

*...And so, on and on. In March 1999, the Sacramento Bee once again published erroneous salary data about the university faculty, and I had to do my job: Teach the truth to ignorant people. I sent the following letter, which was printed in Late March 1999.*

Your Sunday March 21 editorial regarding professors and merit pay makes several good points, but it contains a factual error:

As often in the past, you don't have our salary straight: \$71,600 is not the *average* professor's salary, but the *top* salary. The average is much lower than that, probably below \$50,000, when including new hires and non-tenured faculty. It is important that the public be aware of the gross underpayment of academic work. At a time when most self-respecting professionals earn six figures, those of us who have a Ph.D. are still far below that. Our legislature's salary has increased by 150% in 8 years; state employees just received a generous pay raise; the private sector is enjoying the benefits of the greatest stock market boom in history; meanwhile, professors lag further and further behind.

I may agree with you that we shot ourselves in the foot by voting down the recently concluded collective bargaining agreement. However, regardless of the politics involved, the fundamental reality is that *overall* pay of Cal State faculty and overall funding of our university are grossly inadequate -- and getting worse, even at a time of general prosperity elsewhere (*Sacramento Bee*, March 1999).

## 32: OTHER UNIVERSITY ISSUES

### 1. Why does the University Spend Most of its Money on Other Things than Teaching?

*Over the years, I dabbled in many other university issues. Sometimes in my capacity as chair of some committee or other, sometimes as a private individual. Always firing off letters, articles or e-mails, many of which were printed or disseminated in other ways. In 1994, I scribbled down a few quick calculations which showed that the university only spends a small fraction of its budget on what it is supposed to do, i.e. teaching. I sent this as an e-mail to the President, and I reproduce it here. Perhaps as a result, I was appointed to the university's budget planning council.*

Here is what the University budget looks like to me:

1) Faculty salaries make up one third of the budget. Or put differently, the university spends one third of its money on teaching.

2) The 1993-94 budget for our campus is approximately \$124,000,000

3) The School of Arts & Sciences faculty salary allocation is \$22,186,662

4) The School of Arts & Sciences represents 52.3% of our campus, based on 9.1 thousand full-time equivalent students out of a total of 17.4 thousand.

5) Therefore, the total 1993-94 faculty salary allocation for our campus should be about \$42,421,000. This is only 34.2% of the total budget.

Question:

6) How come only one third of the budget goes to pay our salaries? Where does the remaining two-thirds (65.8%) of the university budget go? One hears that schools are "labor intensive," i.e. that salaries make up the bulk of their budgets. This is apparently not so in our case.

Yes, we all know that there are operating costs, utility bills to pay, etc. But two thirds of the

money? I think I have a pretty good idea of where a lot of the money goes - more and more every year: Administration!

## 2. Why Do Committees Accomplish Nothing?

*So the disease is bureaucracy. I chaired some big-time university committees, which was a frustrating experience. After a few years, I stepped down, disillusioned. Here is the parting shot I e-mailed to my successor, on May 8, 2002:*

Amy:

Thank you for your brilliant comments at the May 7 meeting of the Curriculum Policies Committee (CPC). As I said, I have absolutely no problem with anything you do or plan to do. I have the utmost appreciation for all the excellent work you have been doing all year to help the committee, which you are about to take over from me.

My main point, however, is that there is something wrong with the system: As most people understand it, the Curriculum Policies Committee is *the* major committee at the University that deals with anything curricular, i.e. with *what we teach*. What could be more important? Yet, the truly important curricular changes happen without any CPC involvement. Examples include terminating entire majors (e.g. German), abolishing the Advanced Placement Program, and closing down some graduate programs. The university's Foreign Language Department is in danger of becoming nothing more than a Spanish Department. Isn't this a very big deal? It seems that it would be big enough for the Curriculum Policies Committee to be involved in such a big deal. But this committee is not involved in this whatsoever, any more than it is involved in other momentous changes.

I know, I know: The CPC's mandate is to formulate "policy," not substantive changes. But over the past few years, this has meant that CPC has spent its time word smithing detailed sentences which are then codified in the University Manual, the program review guidelines, the distance education policy, the program approval process for Continuing Education and other documents that are rarely read by anyone and just gather dust.

The really tangible and important decisions are made elsewhere - by Deans, by departments, and above all by higher administrators who are not accountable to anyone. As it is, then, the CPC committee, which is supposed to be responsible for all curricular changes at the university, is in fact a token committee of little consequence or relevance. We don't do important things. We sit here every week, talk a lot and send out advisory memos. We are paid fat salaries even though we are released from our teaching duties, but we accomplish nothing. This committee might as well not exist. I have no solution for this problem, and maybe you, as my successor, won't even consider this a problem.

Thanks for listening to my commiseration.

## 3. Should the University Kick ROTC off Campus because of the Military's Policy on Gays?

*Like many other universities, Cal State tried to shut down its ROTC program, in protest over the military's policy on gays, which it deemed discriminatory. However, in 1994, the Congress of the United States passed legislation which would deny federal funds to any university which banned ROTC. Now, standing up for principles would start to hurt. I had always suspected that the universities' eagerness to shut down ROTC had as much to do with the academe's customary anti-*

*militarism, anti-patriotism and anti-Americanism, as with Clinton's don't-ask-don't-tell policy for gays. Also, as long as the stand was cost-free, the campuses could have a heyday with their symbolic resistance. But now, the pricetag for our campus alone would be in the order of about \$50 million, consisting of all the federal student aid which our university would be denied.*

*So in the end our President wisely rescinded the order to shut down ROTC. But before that happened, there was an orgy of finger pointing, both on campus and in the local media. Many people tried to blame the university President for the ill-advised earlier decision to shut down the ROTC program in the first place. This is what I rectify in the following article, printed in the Sacramento State Hornet on February 21, 1995.*

Without passing judgment on the wisdom of keeping or phasing out ROTC, the interest of accuracy requires the following clarification:

Both the public and the legislators who are attempting to reverse the decision to terminate the program seem to think that this was a unilateral presidential action. However, it was the faculty and the university senate which demanded that President Gerth phase out ROTC. Although the decision is ultimately that of the President's, it should be remembered that he in fact showed some resistance to faculty pressure on this issue, and that he agonized over his decision for at least over a year. Thus the (stupid) decision to end the program is presidential in name only, while in reality it is a collective action which was supported by a near-unanimity of at least those who spoke out and voted on the issue in the academic senate (*Sacramento Bee*, Feb. 21, 1995).

#### 4. Should the University Build a New Road to Accommodate Increased Traffic?

*There were all sorts of other issues. And as a faculty senator, I participated in the decision making process. In 1997, the university needed to build an additional peripheral road around the campus to ease traffic congestion. After all, Cal State, Sacramento had grown from 7,000 students when I began work there to 25,000. However, the faculty senate was often obstructionist, raising ideology over necessity. The tree-hugging environmentalist faculty members were trying to prevent the construction of the new road. I jumped into the fray. On March 14, 1997, I circulated the following campus-wide e-mail to the university president, the administration, the faculty senate and the entire faculty.*

At the risk of alienating myself (more, or again) from the politically correct majority among my peers, I will now attempt to explain to you why you should vote in favor of construction of the peripheral road:

1. As a member of the executive committee, I have heard the arguments on both sides *ad nauseam* and, while I am not better informed than most of you, I claim to be at least as well informed about this issue as any of you.

2. I have come to the conclusion that it isn't possible to choose one's position on this issue on the basis of only objective facts. As with so many other issues in life, the differences are ultimately ideological. While this may not be true of all the opponents of the road, I am convinced that this camp includes many people who generally don't want to see any more roads built -- for the obvious general environmental reasons (with which I totally sympathize). Similarly, many of us on the other side are temperamentally and ideologically still more stuck in old-fashioned modern notions of "progress," "growth," etc.

3. So, we could go on debating the number of (potential) accidents, traffic flows and other technicalities, but let's face it: Most of us have feelings about the road, feelings about building things made of concrete, paving over more land, cars, pollution, etc., and it's on the basis of such

feelings that we either oppose or favor building the road.

4. One of the more amusing and aggravating aspects of the debate is how so many of us are rationalizing our feelings: I had no idea that our faculty includes so many traffic experts and engineers -- most of them in departments of philosophy, psychology, English, anthropology and such. Amazing!

5. I hesitate to use the dreaded word rooted in old-fashioned modernity, but my money is still with the *experts* (ouch!), and my judgment after hearing the arguments and presentations on both sides is that the Harrison-Harris side has more expertise in this matter than the Dundon-Metcalf-Hornback side. I admire and envy the latter side's eloquence, but that's not the same thing as expertise. I am sure that I am being naive, but I simply believe, as an act of faith, that the Harrison-Harris side has done more homework and knows more about traffic safety, traffic flows, projected congestion, environmental impact, etc., than its opponents. Similarly, if Mernoy Harrison and Stan Dundon were to argue about how to properly interpret Plato's Symposium, I would have to vote for Dundon, based among other things on his credentials and his expertise. So, my vote goes to the "real" engineers, and not to the Renaissance men -- however much I identify with and admire the latter.

6. Now that the dreaded words are out -- "progress" and "expertise," -- let me be quite simple: While I am in total sympathy with the environmental movement and fully support limiting growth both locally and planetarily, one shouldn't be categorical about anything: As often, the most common-sensical and simple truths came, during the March 13 senate debate, from the mouths of students, i.e. those who will have to live with the consequences of our decisions long after we are gone.

And what was their perspective? The simple truth that California, Sacramento and CSUS are not done growing. We may not like it, but that's reality. So what does the road mean? Simple: more efficient traffic, less congestion, more safety, all the things necessary to keep up with a growing university.

7. Sure, we should all ride our bicycles to work; we should have great public transportation systems, like some other parts of the world, but we don't. And we won't. Not in our lifetime.

8. Professors and other assorted intellectuals often shoot themselves in the foot. A negative senate vote will probably not prevent construction of the road (that would probably require more drastic forms of obstruction). It will, however, confirm in the eyes of the public, the media and the legislature our perennial image and identity. That image is this: We spend an inordinate percentage of our time arguing over issues, often stupid issues. We do not spend much of our time working hard at solving mundane problems of deteriorating infrastructure or academic achievement. That's boring. Stuff for the administration to take care of. We prefer to grandstand over issues that we think are flashy, each of us thinking that we are a Cato the Elder or a Cicero. What we do, however, is shitting in our own nest -- in full public view.

9. When Mr. Eiffel was planning to build his tower in Paris at the turn of the century, the great intellectuals of that era - people like Guy de Maupassant -- were up in arms over the project. It will ruin the City of Light forever; it'll ruin the Paris skyline; how dare anyone suggest such an iron monstrosity. So much for the vision of intellectuals.

10. On a personal note: No, I was not paid to write this by Don Gerth, Jolene Koester, or the company that has the contract for the road. Neither do I speak for my department. However, I reserve the right to express my own personal opinions, as does my honorable colleague, Ted Hornback, who I am sure does not poll his department each time he plans to mail out one of his fascinating weekly letters.

## 5. Witch hunt against Fraternity

*Another contentious area was the Greek system. Since the cultural revolution of the 60s, the "Greeks" became increasingly persona non grata on American campuses. An institution which had long made a positive contribution to a sense of community at American universities and which had become a venerable tradition, now came under attack - primarily from the "progressive" faculty and from the administration. Charges included racism, sexism, sadistic initiation rituals and excessive drinking. True, hazing has occasionally led to excess, including a few deaths nationwide. However, those rare occurrences have been treated harshly and selectively by university administrations. It seems that the administration's agenda was often the ultimate dismantlement of the traditional Greek system. In this campaign, any fraternity transgression became a convenient tool. Fraternities (and sororities) became one of the fronts in the culture wars.*

*One example occurred on my campus in 1990. A fraternity was accused of having done something racist, and the university threatened to shut it down. Once again, I sided with the unpopular underdog. In my view, the fraternity hadn't done much wrong, certainly nothing that warranted the university's extreme reaction. Here is the letter which I fired off on April 28, 1990, outlining the situation and defending the fraternity:*

Mr. Ray Galbraith,  
Delta Chi Fraternity National Headquarters  
Iowa City, Iowa

I wish to alert you to the current witch hunt taking place at Cal State. The facts are as follows:

Over the past two years, the African American Student Alliance at Calif. State, Sacramento has been accusing the university of racism and demanding remedies. The administration, always more than eager to appease, has made drastic concessions:

During the spring of 1989, the campus held a symposium on racism. There, specific professors were identified *by name*, in public, by angry students alleging racist talk in their classes. Next, policies were developed and put in place by the academic senate and the administration. A long list of proscribed language is now in effect. Violations result in mandatory participation in racial sensitivity workshops and, if repeated, firing.

Most far reaching, the new general education program requires that all students take at least three units of ethnic studies before being permitted to graduate. Despite these generous concessions, the African American Student Alliance again occupied part of the administration building on April 25, accusing the university of racism. At this point, scapegoats were needed.

Somewhat stupidly, *Delta Chi* fraternity on that same evening rehearsed a skit - as part of its spring rush - which included some black face characters. This perfectly innocent show has been enacted by the fraternity every year for the past four years. It mimicked a number of rock stars, some white, such as Mick Jagger, and some black, such as Lionel Ritchie and Diana Ross. This is no more racist than Neil Diamond re-doing Al Jolson's *Jazz Singer* a few years ago. It is certainly far *less* racist than Eddie Murphy painting his face pink and mimicking "honkies," including the Pope, in whose mouth he recently put a long and obscene monologue replete with four-letter words.

Nevertheless, *Delta Chi's* "transgression" has been blown out of all proportion by the university and the media. The fraternity is now 1) being investigated, 2) subjected to vandalism and

violent mob attacks. There is going to be 3) an effort by the administration to shut it down, and 4) students may be expelled from the university. All this, despite the fact that Delta Chi promptly made extensive public and written apologies. The fraternity is clearly nothing but a sacrificial lamb.

No group has done more to revive a sense of community at California State University, Sacramento, which is otherwise largely a 25,000 student commuter campus, than the Greeks. Most fraternities are racially integrated, although many black students resist the white fraternities' advances and prefer to form their own black fraternities. Black fraternities engage in hazing, including *branding* of new pledges with red-hot objects. Other fraternities have rules against harmful hazing, so this is another source of divergence. Despite the positive contributions made by Greeks to the life of the community, the administration and the faculty have long been prejudiced against them, seeking the flimsiest excuses to shut them down. They think that they have now found a way. Thus, free speech on campuses across the U.S. is going the way it went in Nazi Germany, and the fear among students, faculty, and staff is palpable.

If the local and national Delta Chi do not fight this appalling injustice vigorously, things will get worse. It is important that the innocent Delta Chi students at Cal State be provided with legal counsel and that the University be sued if it harms the members of Delta Chi in any way. I hope that your response to the lynching mentality of some groups here will be more than just appeasement. Remember Pastor Niemoller's words, spoken in Nazi Germany: "First they came for the Jews and I did not speak out because I was not a Jew. Then they came for the Communists and I did not speak out because I was not a Communist. Then they came for the trade unionists and I did not speak out because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for me and there was no one left to speak out for me."

Sincerely.

#### 6. Defending Fraternities, Again

*Fifteen years later, neither the political climate nor my position regarding fraternities had changed. In the September 20, 2005 issue of the State Hornet I was interviewed by Lora Simmons about fraternities. She was doing a story on Rush Week for fraternities and sororities and she asked me why, in my expert opinion, college students join these types of organizations. With an increase in hazing, why do kids continue to pledge? She also asked me whether I was a member of a fraternity. She wanted to know what I thought of Rush Week. Here are a few of the things I said in our interview:*

Yes, I belonged to Phi Sigma Kappa. According to me, the fraternities and sororities are not the nefarious and obsolete institutions that many people make them out to be. Sure, there is often too much drinking, and some hazing practices are out of bounds. But by and large, they are social clubs that enrich the students' social life, and I favor them.

I remember the hazing at Phi Sigma Kappa to be fairly harmless. We had to hold a burning match in our hand and let it burn down to our fingertips and we were teased a little bit...But some of the hazing now is sadistic and there is too much binge drinking. But even with the hazing that occurs, the Greek system is positive for many members. I lived in a house with 30 other guys. I moved here from Holland to go to college and if it wasn't for the fraternity I would have been completely alone (*Sacramento State Hornet*, Sept. 20, 2005).

### 33. ACADEMIC CULTURE: THE IRANIAN HOSTAGE CRISIS

#### 1. America: The Elephant that was Afraid of the Mouse

*On November 4, 1979, Iranian thugs captured the U.S. Embassy in Teheran and took 66 Americans hostage. This was done with the approval and support of the Khomeini government. I was outraged by this act of banditry, but not as much as by the Carter administration's paralysis which followed what was in essence a casus belli.*

*I waited a full week to see how our government would handle the crisis, before I resorted to my time-tested ways, i.e. before I fired off an angry letter to the media. People, including my wise and lovely wife Anita, have sometimes called me a hothead. Also, I have occasionally lived to regret an emotional public outburst in the media. For example, little more than a year had lapsed since my violent exchange with New Yorkers in the New York Times. That one had bloodied me up, and perhaps contributed to my job loss at Penn State.*

*Nevertheless, after witnessing a week of inaction by the Carter government, a week of confusion among the American public, a week of despicable sympathizing with the enemy by many of my rabidly anti-American colleagues, I finally sent off the following letter to several venues. It was published in the Sacramento State Hornet on November 13, in the Sacramento Bee on November 15, and in Human Events on December 1, variously titled "Americans Getting Pushed Around," "Iran and the US: What Now?" and "U.S. Elephant Fears Iranian Mouse."*

*This triggered the longest and most bitter political fight between me and my academic colleagues, a fight which lasted half a decade, which ended up costing me a great deal of pain and suffering, but which also earned me the respect of many people, as well as satisfaction and pride in my achievements.*

Occupation of embassies and harm to diplomatic personnel are both outrageous and prohibited by international law.

What is even more outrageous, though, is our government's posture at the present time. While even a second-rate power such as England (to whom much less harm was done, its embassy and personnel being released within six hours) displayed the common sense and normal instinctive courage to strongly condemn and threaten Iran for its gangster-like conduct, what has our own response been thus far? Our national security council huddles, Jimmy Carter's administration cowers and the only public statement from "our government," whose primary function is to guarantee the safety of all Americans, has been to *rule out* military intervention. My God, have we gone totally mad? What kind of absurd bargaining strategy is it, to *unilaterally* renounce *the potential threat of force before negotiations even begin?* To say to the other guy, "don't worry; no matter what you do, we won't use force."

I suppose if Pearl Harbor were attacked today, we would offer to Japan that it take over Hawaii, paying them \$200 million to boot. And by the way, a country's embassies constitute portions of its territory. What unimaginable level of moral bankruptcy has this country reached? There was a time of national pride and international peace through strong and benevolent American leadership in the world---from Teddy to Franklin Roosevelt. Now, our perverted desire to be loved by all people makes us despised by all nations. The Roosevelts - unlike Jimmy "the-smile" - knew

that respect must come first (and if "love" follows, so much the better . . .)

Where have common-sense, self-preservation and human nature gone? Are we to cower into oblivion because we got burnt in Vietnam? Is it not totally obvious to anyone with any degree of sanity that we should immediately threaten to send in armed forces to free the hostages, as did President Ford only four years ago with the Mayaguez? Is what is happening not the ultimate case of the elephant fearing the mouse, or the helpless giant that we seem to *want* to become? ( *Sacramento State Hornet*, Nov. 13,1979; *Sacramento Bee*, Nov. 15, 1979; *Human Events*, Dec 1, 1979).

## 2. I Organize and Lead a Rally in Front of the California State Capitol Building

*On November 13, 1979, the same day that my article appeared, I also led a rally in front of the California State Capitol Building. The object was to protest the outrageous and illegal seizure of our embassy and of 66 U.S. citizens, and to urge the authorities to start acting more forcefully. This was the flyer I created and disseminated.*

# **RALLY IN SUPPORT OF AMERICAN HOSTAGES IN IRAN**

**\* \* \* \* \***

**Time: Tuesday Nov.13, 12:00 noon**  
**Place: North side, Capitol Bldg.**

**Are you sick and tired of:**

- Ayatollah Khomeini's murderous international criminals?**
- President Carter's policy of inaction and appeasement?**
- Our Iranian guests' abuses of our hospitality?**
- America being blamed for all of the world's ills?**

**Show your support for the American hostages in Iran.  
Send a message to our government.**

**Join the rally.**

**Bring a sign or a flag.**

### 3. “Communist” Professors

*After my initial letter appeared, all hell broke loose. I had no premonition of what I had triggered. I had no idea how deep-seated and widespread the hatred of America was among my colleagues - the knee-jerk assumption that in any international confrontation, America is the guilty party. Half a dozen “colleagues” of mine across campus published vicious personal attacks against me. How dare I take a pro-American stance? they wondered. Don’t I know that we are the imperialist devils? We deserve to have our embassy taken over and our staff taken hostage. They are probably all CIA spies anyway. Don’t I know that it was our government and the CIA which overthrew Iran’s fine progressive social-democrat Mossadegh and replaced him with our fascist puppet, the Shah of Iran?*

*And to put icing on the cake, these professors resorted to the time-tested tactic of the radical Left - ridicule and ad hominem: Prof. Richard Hughes noted in his article that my expertise is in the field of transsexualism, not international relations, about which I know nothing. Therefore, I had no right to comment about the Iranian hostage situation. I should butt out and leave the discussion to experts such as himself.*

*It got worse. I now realized that I had become the victim of an academic lynch mob. I was being crucified in print by my colleagues. During the following weeks, many others joined the fray. I was called a trigger-happy John Wayne, a whore, a racist and a xenophobe, among other things. The latter insult was both sad and funny, since I am a Hungarian-born Jewish immigrant who grew up in four different countries and speaks half a dozen languages.*

*I was angry, and I fired back the letter below, which was printed in the Sacramento State Hornet on November 20. In this letter, I commit the cardinal sin of red-baiting. I cross the line. I use the “C” word. I call some of my colleagues “Communists.” Was this wrong? What can I say? I was mad. I was symbolically being gang-raped by a bunch of radical left-wing Marxists. What do you expect?*

In response to Profs. Hughes, Dorman, Henry, etc.: Hughes' use of cheap and hominem derision needs no reply.

The really important point is this: professors like the above ones are, and have been for many years, apologists for any unspeakable murder and oppression as long as committed by left-wing, communist and/or third-world dictatorships. Hughes, specifically, is just a vulgar communist, excusing year after year Soviet imperialism, Stalinist genocide and communist bloodshed anywhere in the world.

Every imbecile (sic) argument by the likes of Henry and Hughes could be easily refuted if space permitted (e.g. did Israel occupy Argentina's embassy to obtain Adolf Eichmann? Did Iran occupy the Mexican embassy when that country was harboring the shah? etc )

There is basically little difference between those misguided Europeans who aided, abetted and joined the ranks of the fascists in various Western European countries during the thirties, and the likes of Hughes, Dorman and Henry today. Such people are simply the collaborators of the rising tide of left-wing fascism in the world. In the United States, so far, they constitute a minority, thank God (*Sacramento State Hornet*, Nov. 20, 1979).

#### 4. American Professors are Elitist Snobs

*On November 15, 1979, the Sacramento Bee printed more or less the same letter as the one which I had published in the Sacramento State Hornet on the 13<sup>th</sup> (See above). In addition, the Bee published the following letter of mine on November 21.*

On November 21, Pakistanis stormed another American embassy, screaming, "Kill the American dogs" and, indeed, killing a couple of Marines. We have approximately one ambassador killed per year, plus two or three embassies ransacked. Meanwhile the likes of Dorman, Livingston and Fox hold teach-ins on the evils of the CIA.

On November 13, I marched arm in arm with construction workers, state employees, hard-hatters. Where were these intellectual snobs, these radical elitists, who claim to speak for the working class but sneer at every laborer as a dumb "Archie Bunker"? Who really speaks for the working class? Who is attuned to the plight of the American people? As I see it, these "colleagues" of mine either don't know what they are talking about (ignorance of history is a common affliction among American political and social scientists) or, worse, they are deliberately working for the final collapse of freedom and civilization as we have known it (*Sacramento Bee*, Nov. 21, 1979).

#### 5. Nazi Symbols by My Name

*Until 1979, there were thousands of Iranian exchange students at Cal State, several hundred on my campus alone. After the publication of my anti-Khomeini articles, I began to receive threatening phone calls, like, "Kando, we know you work for the CIA, and we're going to get you." The Iranian Student Association was threatening to come after me. Of course, in the larger scheme of things, it was the Iranians themselves who were under the gun in this country. Public opinion would not tolerate radical pro-Khomeini students, and soon all such people left the country.*

*The real threat to my safety came not from angry Iranian students, but from the domestic American left. I found graffiti and threat letters posted on my office door. In late November, 1979, a vandal amended the faculty roster as follows:*

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY**

	<b><u>ROOM</u></b>	<b><u>EXT</u></b>
<b>Professor Landis, Chai r</b>	<b>450A</b>	<b>6281</b>
<b>Professor Al-Qazzaz</b>	<b>453B</b>	<b>6267</b>
<b>Professor Barnes</b>	<b>460A</b>	<b>6423</b>
<b>Professor Chakravorti</b>	<b>455D</b>	<b>6388</b>
<b>Professor Darknell</b>	<b>455B</b>	<b>6801</b>
<b>Professor Dorn</b>	<b>455A</b>	<b>6388</b>
<b>Professor Garber</b>	<b>451B</b>	<b>6694</b>
<b>Professor Hubbard</b>	<b>451D</b>	<b>6694</b>
<b>Professor Kando</b>	<b>451C</b>	<b>6694 Sieg Heil !!!</b>
		<b>(SWASTIKA)</b>
<b>Professor Kanter</b>	<b>454D</b>	<b>6675</b>
<b>Professor Kingsnorth</b>	<b>455C</b>	<b>6801</b>
<b>Professor Kloss</b>	<b>461C</b>	<b>6865</b>
<b>Professor David Lee</b>	<b>453C</b>	<b>6678</b>
<b>Professor Ivy Lee</b>	<b>460D</b>	<b>6424</b>
<b>Professor Malelu</b>	<b>454B</b>	<b>6363</b>
<b>Professor Maykovich</b>	<b>453A</b>	<b>6678</b>
<b>Professor McGillivray</b>	<b>460C</b>	<b>6344</b>
<b>Professor Rendon</b>	<b>460B</b>	<b>6344</b>
<b>Professor Summers</b>	<b>453D</b>	<b>6267</b>

## 6. My Department Gangs up on Me

*Meanwhile, professors continued to print letters and articles attacking me. Having used the “C” word against some of my colleagues, I had opened myself up to accusations of McCarthyism. And indeed, it wasn’t long before some professors called me a “neo-McCarthyist.” And just to make sure, someone else wrote that my statements might as well have been written by the Ku Klux Klan. Others accused me of hating foreigners, especially foreigners of color, of racism and of anti-Semitism. A local TV reporter asked me in an interview whether I was on the CIA payroll. (!) Others assumed that I was a pampered upper-class American whose ancestors had come to the United States many generations ago.*

*All these reactions were a great surprise to me. Nowhere in my brief editorials had I mentioned race, nationality or any such topic. I replied that it would be difficult for me to be a xenophobe, since I was a xeno myself, or to be anti-Semitic, since I was Jewish, or to be against immigration, since I was an immigrant, or to be ignorant of international matters, since I had lived and traveled in dozens of countries and I was fluent in many languages.*

*Then the most hurtful thing happened: Instead of being concerned about my safety, and instead of rallying to my support, my own department of Sociology joined the wolf pack of other faculty members and printed a public denunciation of me in the newspapers. I was appalled. It began as a petition, circulated by a rabid and hateful feminazi who had been terrorizing the department for years. She managed to collect the signature of every single member in my department who was in town at the time. It was unanimous! Not one member had the courage to resist her! I doubt that they all signed because they all agreed with the witch, although I am sure many did. But many were simply cowards.*

*The petition was a denunciation of my “extremist” views. It was published in the Sacramento State Hornet and in the Sacramento Bee. I began to fear the directions which things were taking. Although I was tenured, my department and the university were building a case to fire me. I asked myself, in astonishment, how these people could have the gall to call me a McCarthyist. Was there ever a better example of the pot calling the kettle black? Time had come for me to retain legal counsel.*

*However, once the community at large became aware of my situation, the table turned in my favor. Hundreds of thousands of people read my departmental denunciation. When I came home from work, there were TV vans parked in front of my house, scaring my wife and my children. It was a zoo. But the upshot was that my department received hundreds of outraged letters and calls in my support. I had become a cause celebre, and my job was safe. The following article from the November 27, 1979 issue of the Sacramento Bee reproduces the flap, including the departmental condemnation:*

### **Ostracism By Colleagues Hurts And Troubles CSUS Professor**

By Mike Castro Bee Staff Writer

Professor Thomas Kando said he has had political differences before with members of the sociology department at California State University, Sacramento, but their current disavowal of him because of his views opposing the government in Iran has left him hurt and troubled.

Thirteen faculty members, including Judson Landis, sociology department chairman, signed a letter disassociating themselves from Kando. They also said they oppose the use of force or threat

of force by the United States to settle the crisis with Iran. The letter was scheduled for publication in today's issue of the *Sacramento State Hornet*, the student newspaper.

Kando announced on Nov. 9 that he would establish formal picketing and demonstrations at the Capitol to oppose the taking of American hostages in Iran.

Later Kando became involved in a series of letters with faculty on different sides of the Iranian question. Landis said many of the members of the department do not identify with Kando's views and decided to disassociate themselves from him. Landis added that he, too, signed the letter.

Sociology Professor Louise Kanter said she circulated the petition among 17 members of the department. Two were out of the country and one refused to get involved. Everyone else signed, she said, except Kando.

She said this is the text of the letter: "We the undersigned members of the sociology department disassociate ourselves from our colleague, Thomas Kando's public comments on the Iranian situation.

"We do not support the United States' use of force or the threat of force to resolve the conflict over the shah's presence in the United States and the hostages in the American embassy in Iran. And we deplore Professor Kando's *ad hominem*, anti-intellectual and unfounded attacks (11/20/79 *Hornet*) on other faculty." *Ad hominem* refers to an attack on an opponent, instead of on an opponent's argument.

Kanter said those who signed the letter are: Frank Darknell, Rodney Kingsnorth, Robi Chakravorti, Patrick McGillivray, David Lee, Andres Rendon, Ivy Lee, Ruth Summers, Landis, Sharad Malelu, Dean Dorn, Jeffrey Hubbard and Kanter.

Kando said his feelings are hurt by the letter. "The reason I'm unhappy," he said, is that "there seems to have been a double standard here ever since the Iranian crisis."

He said that out of the crisis, "the only target they have been able to identify is me in their own ranks." Kando's colleagues were reacting to an earlier letter written by Kando in which he attacked Professors Richard Hughes, Bill Dorman and John Henry.

"Such people are simply collaborators of the rising tide of left-wing fascism in the world," Kando wrote.

"I must admit," Kando said Monday night, "it was a hot-headed letter." He had been ridiculed that day as trying to be like John Wayne (one anti-Iranian demonstrator carried a sign with a picture of the late movie star) and as an expert on transsexuals (Kando wrote a book on the subject). Kando said he had also received two anonymous threatening telephone calls. And so he sat down and wrote an angry letter. "I wrote this, what can I say?" he asked. If he had it to do over, he said he would not use the same words *Sacramento Bee*, Nov. 27, 1979).

### 7. My Response to My Department's Witch-hunt

*At the same time (November 26, 1979), I circulated the following memo in reply to my department's unanimous condemnation of my political expressions:*

Your near-unanimous denunciation of my admittedly hot-headed reply to Hughes, Dorman et. al. is unfortunate:

In the first place, the printed insults and ridicule started with them. I only lashed *back*. Also, there have been threats against my safety by Iranian students and miscellaneous other pressures resulting from my hard-line stance in this matter. None of these things seem to matter to you, as you appear to apply the old double standard: When traditional academic dogma indicting American imperialism is questioned, when someone questions the evils perpetrated by Third-world dictatorships instead of those of American oil companies or the ubiquitous CIA, he is in for severe criticism, at least in the academic community. When people like Hughes and Dornan hold teach-ins about "evil America" while barely mentioning that 66 Americans have been hostages for nearly a month, no criticism.

In sum, as to the geopolitical situation, I am absolutely certain that the old liberal analysis attributing much blame for international conditions to "evil American imperialism" is bankrupt. I am totally certain that as time goes, the only viable position for this country is going to be a hard-line one; not a reactionary one, mind you, merely one that displays a healthy dose of national self-interest through strength.

As to your denunciation, it, too, was premature and possibly as hot-headed as my letter: you now appear - in print - to be ganging up on the only deviant in your midst. The impression of scape-goating will not be lost on many people outside the department. While honest disagreement about ideas is precisely part of our job, this episode will appear to others as a case of mob behavior on your part. Clearly, a lot of anxiety and hostility has been generated by the Iranian crisis, and there must have been quite a bit of that before already. While you may not like me or my style (it is not the first time that I find myself pitted against the entire department), I am wondering how it is possible that the *only* target you have been able to identify collectively in these turbulent times is a professor in your midst, when in fact my "transgression," if you want to call it that, is totally trivial compared to what is being done overseas, compared to the misguided activism of professors on this campus, and compared to the insults and threats of which I have been the recipient.

I had a dream that my departmental colleagues stood up in public, denouncing those who had threatened me physically and insulted me in print for exercising my first-amendment and academic freedom rights.

#### 8. The Left-wing Indoctrination of Students by Radical Professors

*The battle raged on. On November 30, 1979, I published the following article simultaneously in the Sacramento State Hornet and in the Sacramento Bee.*

If I reply once again to what some of my colleagues are saying (both about me personally and about the Iranian crisis in general), it is neither because of Fox's compliments (it is flattering to be called John Wayne), nor because events now appear to vindicate my position (Carter is finally applying the pressure I recommended weeks ago, realizing that there is no other recourse when dealing with a madman - I told you so). It is because of a much more fundamental imperative:

Students are impressionable, believing professors rather gullibly. In turn, many of their professors (Fox, Livingston, Dorman, Campbell, Isaacs, Henry, Hughes, etc.) have been indoctrinating them for many years into a vicious left-wing anti-Americanism based either on misinformation or deliberate lies (examples of which abound in Fox's Nov. 20 letter). While I would hope to be joined by some of my more reasonable colleagues in my efforts to redress the truth, I also feel that it is the *Sacramento State Hornet's* obligation to provide (as it has graciously done thus far) equal time for the alternative to the radical party line. That's what freedom of speech, first amendment and other such goodies are all about, right?

In his ramblings about "evil America," Fox has the audacity to mention Angola as a case in point, when we all know that it is Cuba which sent thousands of troops to invade and rape that hapless country (from which Castro is still deporting children to his own shores in a veritable modern-day slave trade!). Fox lists Rhodesia-Zimbabwe as another case in point, when it is in fact our very own government that supports exclusive representation for the terrorist faction in that country (Andrew Young's disastrous foreign policy legacy)! Oh yes, then there is that CIA-sponsored coup in Iran some three decades ago that allegedly replaced a good guy (Mossadegh) with a bad guy (the Shah) who in turn was thrown out by a good guy (Khomeini). The truth of the matter is that Mossadegh was a Soviet puppet, and that the Shah initiated land reform, which antagonized people like Khomeini and other members of a feudal land-owning clergy.

Let's face it, by now "American Imperialism" is by and large a red herring. By 1979, the CIA, FBI and other instruments of international and domestic control have been so totally emasculated that no one in his right mind could still view the United States as the primary source of world-wide oppression and exploitation. But what about some years back? Even then, American foreign policy has been one of benign internationalism, not imperialism (George H. Mead's profound distinction). Through massive foreign aid programs such as the Marshall Plan and through billions of capital investment, this country has given to the rest of the world far more than it ever took back.

Fox says that marching to free American hostages is inflammatory and irresponsible. But of course, rioting against the Vietnam War, or nuclear power plants, or whatever other cause is okay, right? It is above all the double standard and the hypocrisy of such professors that boggle the mind. The Cal State academic senate has passed a resolution urging us not to threaten Iranians. Fine with me. But did you know that as a result of my controversial stance, I have been threatened by Iranians? So far, three or four lives have been lost by this crisis -- all Americans.

Livingston, one of the other participants in the Cal State "teach-in," is the professor who distinguished himself, while Dean, for forbidding professor Carole Barnes to teach a course in intercultural relations because she dared present alternative points of view. Do you understand what would happen to academic freedom and to freedom in general if people like that came to power?

On Nov. 21, Pakistanis stormed another American embassy screaming, "kill the American dogs" and indeed killing a couple of marines. We have approximately one ambassador killed per year, plus two or three embassies ransacked. Meanwhile, the likes of Dorman, Livingston and Fox hold teach-ins on the evils of the CIA.

On Nov. 13, I marched arm in arm with construction workers, state employees, hard-hatters. Where were these intellectual snobs, these radical elitists, these parlor communists, who claim to speak for the working class? Who is attuned to the plight of the American people? As I see it, these "colleagues" of mine either don't know what they are talking about (ignorance of history is a common affliction among American political and social scientists) or worse, they are deliberately working for the final collapse of freedom and civilization as we have known it.

As to the denunciation published by a near-totality of my department (which just now came to my attention): It confirms the double standard of which I spoke earlier. As long as I am the recipient of derision and name-calling by their radical sympathizers (as in Hughes' and Fox's letters), it's okay. But when I commit the unforgivable *faux pas* of lashing back (as in my letter of Nov. 20), they are ready for the kill. I was hoping there would be at least some support for me among my colleagues since 66 innocent Americans were taken hostage nearly a month ago. Instead, I am becoming a scapegoat, while the real issue is still not being addressed. Not one professor at this University has had the wisdom or courage to express his or her outrage at the real abomination, at the time of this writing. A terribly sad thing (*Sacramento State Hornet*, Nov. 30, 1979; *Sacramento Bee*, Nov. 30, 1979).

### 9. To Be a Left-wing anti-Americanist Means Never to Say you Are Sorry

*Two years later, Reagan was President and the Teheran hostages were free. This happened within hours of Reagan's assumption of the U.S. presidency. The Iranians were no fools. They knew that the new President would act somewhat differently than Jimmy-the-smile.*

*In December 1981, the issue was revived in the local media, in a Sacramento Bee editorial by Lloyd Bruno. The article described an interesting turn of events: Immediately after the Khomeini Revolution, the man who became Iran's U.N. representative was Cal State professor Monsour Farhang. However, by 1981, this man realized the monstrosity of the Khomeini regime, and he bailed out. The Sacramento Bee editorial complimented him for his wisdom, and contrasted it with the stupidity of the Cal State faculty's reaction to the hostage crisis in 1979. This prompted professor Duane Campbell - one of those unrelenting America-haters who never admit error - to print a letter protesting the article.*

*Campbell's letter, in turn, prompted me to send in the following article on December 11, 1981, but the Sacramento Bee did not print it.*

It would have been wiser for Duane Campbell to let Lloyd Bruno's column about Monsour Farhang lie. His reaction was predictable. Campbell distorts what happened on this campus two years ago.

When on November 4, 1979 the Khomeini regime took 66 hostages, Professors Henry, Hughes, Fox, Dorman, Isaacs, Campbell and others promptly chose to focus not on that act of terrorism, but to explain and condone it by harping on a vast variety of alleged American sins.

A teach-in was held by these individuals to warn against American racism and violence against Iranians in this country (hardly any of which ever materialized, despite continued demonstrations and misbehavior by Iranian students around the country). Professor Hughes wrote that there was a "US governmental campaign directed against Iranians inside the US," and he made the patently absurd allegation that our government was considering "the atomic bombing of Iran." Hughes wrote that the Iranian hostage taking was a plea for justice, claiming that "80% of the Iranian people are for Khomeini (so were the Germans for Hitler). Dorman stated that the mass media were responsible for the anti-Iranian feelings in America," clearly implying that the Khomeini revolution was actually a glorious one.

Campbell is still trying to justify the grievous judgmental error he and his likes made two years ago. The fact of the matter is that these people took a consistently biased and irrationally anti-American position, going to the extent of raising such irrelevancies as the IWW, the Indian

wars and the Ku Klux Klan, while saying nothing about the butchery of the Ayatollah, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and other atrocities committed in the name of Socialism or Third World liberation.

Campbell mentions Jeane Kirkpatrick as one of the current bad guys, but it would be more appropriate to talk about her predecessor at the UN, who called Khomeini a saint (!).

There is no way Campbell can now claim that his group was or is merely advocating non-intervention, democracy and other fine things. If that were the case, they would also speak out against Cuban, Libyan and Soviet imperialism and the terrorism of the Red Brigades, the PLO and the SLA (which Campbell supported). But they do not, because in their heart they remain convinced that our democracy is so evil that any group which endeavors to weaken it, by whatever means, deserves at least sympathy.

Bruno was naive in expecting "intellectuals" like Campbell to change or to learn. Professors rarely change or learn anything. Ideologues never do.

The American left's incessant criticism of our system is actually a case of displaced self-loathing and self-blame. Subconsciously, many of these upper-middle-class white intellectuals feel guilty about being better off than much of the world; they feel that they do not deserve their relatively plush existence.

Throughout the Iranian episode, people who took a pro-American position, as I did, were accused of xenophobia (I was twenty-five when I arrived in the US, being of Hungarian-Jewish origin). I submit that people like Campbell suffer from the opposite condition; this might be called *xenophilia* - the assumption that foreign countries (especially Third World ones) are better than America, and victimized by America. At least Mansour Farhang had the humility to recognize his past errors. Don't expect such humility or wisdom from the likes of Campbell.

#### 10. Anti-Americanism: What Happens When the Party is Over?

*But all of the above was already clear to me at the time of the hostage crisis, in 1979. In December of that year, I wrote the following wrap-up of the local reaction to the crisis, one of the few pieces which was never published.*

All in all, the local reaction to the Iranian hostage situation was a major political storm. Accidentally, to some extent, I stumbled into the center of it.

Concerning my personal involvement, many additional events occurred, some good and some bad. With the help of my students, I organized a nationally publicized downtown rally in support of the hostages. For some weeks, my family and I suffered considerable discomfort. We received life-threatening calls from (Iranian) students, television trucks from the TV stations showed up on our front lawn without warning, and I was of course vilified by my colleagues, some students and some others. During 1980 and 1981 Professor Comerchero of the English Department and a few others attempted to organize a faculty group to combat the self-destructive anti-Americanism rampant among our colleagues, and to provide an alternative to the Marxist garbage to which college students are all too frequently exposed. This effort has now pestered out.

But what are the truly important lessons to be learned from this episode? The Iranian hostage situation was a turning point in history. It was the first test of our wisdom, courage and ability to our react to a new set of conditions in the world, namely a world that is largely hostile

and in which we have, unlike previously, far more enemies than friends, a world in which American society is more vulnerable than it has ever been before. Of course, we failed this test from beginning to end. The Carter Administration began by shamefully rushing the Shah out of the country to placate the terrorists and ended by paying \$130 million for each of the 52 hostages freed.

An analysis of the local reaction to the crisis can help us understand the grave peril in which we are, as a society. The words and actions of my misguided colleagues are a good illustration of the social-psychological mechanisms at work in revolutionary times and leading eventually to the triumph of barbarism and to the downfall of civilization:

1. Many of my protagonists (look again at the letters of Fox, Hughes, etc) are in basic agreement with Khomeini that America is the true Satan. As I stated earlier, there are only two explanations for this: some of these intellectuals are deliberately lying, while others are mistaken. The hard-core Marxists are, like violent terrorists, deliberately trying to destroy our democracy. The many other ultra-liberals truly believe that our society is bad. They have caved in under the relentless barrage of anti-Americanism coming our way from overseas since World War Two. They have *internalized the negative labels laid on them by their critics*.

As labeling theory states, if you are called bad often enough, you surely will end up believing that you are bad, i.e. agreeing with your detractors. Thus victims and captives begin to switch sides, believing that their captors and torturers are the good guys, and that the police who are trying to free them are the bad guys. This is a classic case of the *Stockholm Syndrome*.

2. One of the anti-Americanists' most effective arguments is to *change subject* whenever they are on the defensive. In other words, instead of answering for the intolerable misbehavior of Khomeini in Iran or that of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, they switch issues and talk about American racism toward Iranian foreign students, about what Prof. Kando said in his letter-to-the-editor, or about some other irrelevancy.

3. Thus we rarely read about the nasty war the USSR is waging in Afghanistan any more. But remember how, when America was doing something possibly comparable in Vietnam, the world was one great mass demonstration against US imperialism overseas.

4. Similarly, the blatant repression and imperialism of the USSR, Cuba, Eastern Europe, North Yemen, Angola, Ethiopia, Nicaragua, Vietnam, North Korea and a score of other countries are rarely criticized by the anti-Americanists. Their target, instead, consists of the American multinational corporation, the CIA, the US government and our timid support of some right-wing or neutralist regimes like the one in El Salvador.

5. The fact that the American media reflect the above biases shows how deeply American liberals have fallen into the trap of anti-Americanism.

6. The psychology of the American liberal is characterized by guilt and self-hate. The American liberal is by and large white and affluent, and he feels guilty about that -- guilty that he has more than American blacks, Chicanos, more than most other people around the world. He also hates himself because deep down he feels that he doesn't deserve the privileged life which he enjoys. So he welcomes flagellation and insult; he likes to be told that he and his country are evil - he loves to be psychologically whipped.

7. Thus, no matter how often the American liberal is exposed to rape, murder and theft, his heart continues to bleed for the poor prison inmates and for the bad prison conditions, never giving a thought to the hundreds of thousands of victims of murder, rape, crime, and their relatives, dead or maimed for life.

8. Anti-Americans use a double standard: from America they expect perfection; as to other countries, atrocities are excusable in the name of revolution. America may not spend one dollar to train anti-guerilla forces in Chile or in El Salvador, because those regimes are undemocratic. But when North Vietnam, Cuba or the Soviet Union annihilate *hundreds of thousands* of lives, well, that's unfortunate.

Similarly, capitalism is bad because it only results in some people getting rich. But the fact that socialism leaves *everyone* poor is conveniently overlooked.

9. Anyone taking a pro-American position on an issue or indicting Marxism or communism is promptly neutralized through the label "Mc Carthyite". This is the flag word and ultimate opprobrium, denoting a bigot, a jingoist, a racism, a right-winger.

10. Why does being accused of McCarthyism remain so effective? Because it is still widely believed that the greatest threat to our democracy is from the right (Anita Bryant, Phyllis Schlafly, Jerry Falwell, the KKK, the Nazi Party) rather than from the left. This is clearly no longer true: The above list elicits more laughter than admiration. Nevertheless, to be liberal, to be on the left, to be anti-American is still perceived as being an underdog, as being brave, as being for poor people and against the rich and the powerful.

Today, the political left has its cake and eats it too: it is still perceived as the brave underdog bucking the system, while its size and power are actually awesome. (Is Hugh Hefner's multi-billion dollar empire an underdog?) One can no more lose by being on the left than by ridiculing Archie Bunker for his bigotry, or by praising the virtues of sexual freedom or taking potshots at organized

religion.

11. Austrian-born Joseph Schumpeter said it in his classic *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* : Capitalism contains the seeds of its own destruction. Not in the Marxian sense, to but in the sense of being so lavish, so productive, so efficient, so free and so good that it breeds and sustains a class of professional malcontents -- well-fed pampered malcontents whose role it is to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs. I mean university students, professors, intellectuals. These are the professional malcontents. Some, like Carlos the Jackal, turn into mass-murderers. Remember the contradiction: Carlos' father was a millionaire Marxist lawyer(!). Most, like many of my colleagues, merely pass their ideas on to ever wider circles of followers. Note that there are no professional malcontents among the doers of society B the working class, the business executive or the policeman. Neither can such a class be afforded by a society like the USSR, where life is rugged, work is hard and time scarce.

12. It is fun to be a professional malcontent. Anti-Americanism and left wing rhetoric are psychologically rewarding. They put you on the side of the underdog, and make you feel brave and moral. The trouble is, the more successful this movement becomes, the less there is left to criticize and to dismantle. Eventually, the party must end. There is no America to kick around any more (reminds you of someone?) Then what? What happens to Professors Hughes, Fox, and the like? One thing is clear: the first thing to go is the luxury and the freedom that enabled them, and my other colleagues, and Hollywood, and Hugh Hefner, to do their thing. In the end the big losers are the professional malcontents and the radical chic crowd. As for the rest of society, life goes on, a bit harsher, or perhaps a lot more so.

### 34. WHAT HAPPENED TO ACADEMIC FREEDOM ?

#### 1. I Create My Own Newspaper: Initial Battle

*During the 1980s, my political activities rose to a much higher level. Instead of engaging in interpersonal skirmishes, I founded my own newspaper. I gathered half a dozen students and created a newspaper called the Sacramento Forum. For a while, I also had the support of Dr. Victor Comerchero, a professor of English. I managed to get modest financial backing - a few thousand dollars per year. The paper came out every month for about four years. The circulation was less than ten thousand copies per month, large enough to stuff every mailbox on campus and to leave a few thousand copies on news stands. I wrote about half the articles. The paper's mission was to unmask political hypocrisy on campus and in the community, to question rampant orthodoxies and to reestablish dialogue. Since the university is overwhelmingly on the Left of the political spectrum, the Sacramento Forum inevitably took on the Left more often than the Right. For example, I had no interest in discussing things like President Reagan's and Oliver North's lies about Contragate. There were already hundreds of articles being written about that in all of the mainstream media. My group had a different job to do. So for four years, I was practically single-handedly responsible for re-introducing true dialogue and diversity to the university. It was a wholesome revitalization.*

*Sometimes a bitter pill is hard to swallow. The Sacramento Forum was the medication, I was the doctor, and the university was the patient. However, the patient was non-compliant. For example, our newsstands were often vandalized and the papers were often stolen and burnt. Several times I found swastikas scratched on our newsstands.*

*I often did the tedious and exhausting job of stuffing copies into campus mailboxes myself. Thus, I occasionally caught office secretaries in the act of taking my newspapers out of professors' mailboxes and tossing them. When I confronted them, they might reply something like this:*

*"I'm just following the chair's orders. He told me that the Forum is a fascist rag and that it has no business in faculty mailboxes."*

*"Fascist rag, hey?" I asked. "Have you ever read it?"*

*"I don't suppose I have had time to," she confessed, adding, "if we read all the junk mail we get, we'd never get anything done, you know."*

*And then, I applied the coup de grace, saying, "well, this provides interesting material for a story in our next issue. There'll be an article mentioning how your department censors free speech."*

*And there was. The Sacramento Forum's main weapon was shame. Every act of vandalism or violence, every swastika, every call for my firing, every threat that came to my attention was described in future articles in the newspaper.*

*A Trotskyist group calling itself the Progressive Alliance and led by economics professors Joe Furey and John Henry was pretty scary. Once, I returned to a bookstore to renew a contract for an ad, but Ron, the manager, told me that he could not renew. When I asked him why, Ron explained, "I'm terribly sorry, but a group of tough guys came by last week. They said they represented the Alliance for Progress, or something like that. They threatened to trash our store if we continue to advertise in your paper."*

*This, too, went into a subsequent article. For four years, I used shame as my main tool, holding up a mirror in which the university had to see its own ugly face. Most of the faculty ran for cover, like frightened mice. Many ostracized me and never spoke to me again. However, in the long run, many developed a grudging respect for me, and this benefitted me for the rest of my life. I had created a newspaper which re-educated the university and fundamentally altered its culture.*

*On a personal level, my colleagues' accusations, over the years, were oddly paradoxical, always blaming me for the opposite of what I truly am. Being accused of racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia, sexism, flag waving jingoism, conservatism, and of being a McCarthyist and a Social Darwinist, I knew that I had always been precisely the opposite of these things. None of my colleagues could boast of a life more diverse, more international, more interracial, with more vicissitudes and more deprivation.*

*There were only two accusations to which I do plead guilty. (1) I have continued to believe that America is by and large a great and benevolent society which deserves my love, gratitude and support. (2) I am convinced of the centrality of the individual and of the importance of individual effort and responsibility. To my malcontent and collectivist colleagues, this is unforgivable.*

*Of course, some might say that I underwent a gradual conservative conversion as I became older and more successful. It wouldn't be the first time that an upwardly mobile parvenu had moved rightward. I have wondered at times whether Marx's concept of false consciousness, or Sartre's idea of bad faith applied to me. Am I just a traitor and an opportunist, I have asked myself, the sort of thing they accuse conservative blacks like Supreme Court Judge Clarence Thomas of being?*

*A wag once said that anyone who is under thirty and is a Republican lacks a heart, and everyone over thirty who is still a Democrat lacks a brain. Have I followed this familiar pattern? Or what about the witty Englishman who said, "there are two sorts of people. Those who make something of themselves in life, and those who fail and therefore become socialists."? Funny maybe, but is it true? So I have examined my motives and I have wondered: Have I become a neo-conservative? I don't believe that I have. My views have simply matured, that's all. I remain highly critical of the atrocious level of imprisonment in America, the maldistribution of wealth in the country, America's terrible environmental record, the country's utterly inadequate health insurance system, and its excessive reliance on the free enterprise system.*

*However, I also made it my mission to question sacred cows, to be the devil's advocate, to be dialectical. In a university environment, this also meant examining many of the liberals' most cherished beliefs, and this was my unforgivable heresy.*

*After the first issue of the Sacramento Forum came out, all hell broke loose - again: The radical Maoist "Progressive" Alliance circulated a flyer - several thousand copies - taking incredible potshots at me, personally. The accusations were the usual ones - racist, sexist, fascist, etc, plus much personal ridicule and insult thrown in.*

*So the next issue of the Forum, on May 6, 1983, contained the following reply. Perhaps not terribly effective, but what can I say? I was really upset, and not at my best.*

**Joe Furey and the "Progressive" Alliance: Left-wing Fascists in Action**  
**By Michael Sofinowski and Tom Kando**

We wish to thank the "Progressive" Alliance for the interesting piece of fiction recently circulated regarding the *Sacramento Forum*. It would usually be difficult to address such a cowardly, anonymous piece of literary terrorism, but luckily enough when the suspected author, Prof. Joe Furey, Department of Economics, was asked why he does not sign the garbage he writes, he confirmed that he was the author. He immediately retreated, screaming obscenities and losing control in front of students. Perhaps he was afraid to sign this piece of dribble because he knew the ridicule he would receive when the Cal State community read his childish mudslinging.

Such anonymous hit and run tactics are the most cowardly form of scape goating. It is indeed not the first time that I (Kando) am being singled out for *ad hominem* attack. During the Iranian hostage situation, the campus Left ganged up on me, professors behaving like a lynching mob. Then, as now, the Progressive Alliance circulated slanderous flyers directed at me personally. The strategy seems to be one of targeting and intimidating one individual, doing so in a malicious and despicable fashion, rather than taking on the real issue, namely the *Sacramento Forum* and its contents.

The Progressive Alliance goes beyond misquoting and distorting. It simply fabricates total lies, attributing words and things to me which he never said and ideas which I never supported. Nowhere did I talk about "rank orders of excellence". Nowhere did I say that racism, sexism and war are God's will. Nowhere did I even imply any of the 30 or so other absurdities attributed to me in this flyer. I have, in fact, opposed these things with more genuine fervor than ideological phonies like Furey.

But let me be similarly *ad hominem* about the other side: The Progressive Alliance is one of America's 3 or 4 established Communist parties. I forget whether they are Trotskyites, Maoists or something else, but I do know that they are more extreme than the Communist Party of the USA. And as I stated earlier, it turns out that Joe Furey is primarily responsible for this flyer.

Three years ago Professor Victor Comerchero described Furey in words that remain as applicable as ever: "To debate Furey is to be shat upon. For days, one goes around feeling soiled,

and others perceive the stench and either commiserate - all the while holding their nose - or turn away. One is helpless before the brutality of Furey's lies . . . I do not think Furey is very bright - just very frightening.

He is a "true believer", a holder of the one and only true faith. One has no doubt Furey (and the "Progressive" Alliance) could eliminate you if it furthered their cause."

People like Furey and their ideas are malignant. I will continue to publish the names and reveal the character of people like Furey, holding them accountable for their actions. One good thing to come out of this terrible flyer is that it reveals the "Progressive" Alliance's fear of having its deceptions exposed.

Joe Furey's role model must have been his name-sake, Papa Joe (Stalin). His group claims that the *Sacramento Forum* is only interested in stifling dialogue and the free exchange of ideas. But isn't the present exchange between the *Sacramento Forum* and the "*Progressive*" *Report* already a form of *dialogue*? Does this not prove that we are fulfilling our goal? We have interrupted their *monologue* on the interpretation of social and economic reality. For that they call me and my paper racist, sexist, warmongering, red-baiting, McCarthyist and call me a thug. Again, the pot calling the kettle black.

I'll admit it: My feelings are hurt. I'll say it again: The shoe does not fit. For those of you who still don't know who I am: for most of my life, my legal status was that of *refugee*. My family and I survived World War Two, the Holocaust, Fascism, Communism and a violence and poverty which are unimaginable to Americans. I moved to America at 25, believing that this country, especially the academe, stood for freedom of speech. I am deeply disappointed that once again the faculty is totally indifferent to the "Progressive" Alliance's assault on me and, more importantly, on academic freedom and freedom of speech.

However, the *Sacramento Forum* will not be silenced. It is based on idealism, on hundreds of volunteer hours and dollars donated selflessly by students, teachers, and little people. The "Progressive" Alliance's flyer has a sanctimonious "Labor-Donated" label at the bottom. No duh! And where do you think *our* labor comes from, at the *Sacramento Forum*?

Through your attack, you have given us more publicity. As we gain strength, we will challenge your deceptions with growing effectiveness. We must be doing good work because you already hate us so much. Yes, you have good reasons to fear us. The people at the *Sacramento Forum* have begun the challenge. You have lost your monopoly on public opinion. You will have to live with - God forbid - democracy and diversity (*Sacramento Forum*, May 6, 1983).

## 2. Why does the University Want to Silence Free Speech?

*And so the battle continued. A year later, in March 1984, I published the following article, once again rehashing my complaint that most people at the University wanted to silence the Sacramento Forum and that they didn't truly want diversity of opinion.*

Today I want to talk about people's reactions to the *Sacramento Forum*. I want to examine some of the negative reactions we have experienced.

After our last (February) issue came out, we were not permitted to stuff it into the mailboxes of the Economics Department. In the Criminal Justice Department, a large number of copies were later found in the garbage can. And we told you earlier how our stands were first damaged and finally stolen. We also told you about the stab-in-the back letters and anonymous phone calls to our few sponsors, threatening them with boycott or worse for advertising in our newspaper.

And then of course there is the ostracism, the looking-the-other-way by one's peers and former friends ("Are you handing out that propaganda rag again?"), the ridicule, the venomous letters that - oh what courage! - are actually signed by their authors. Remember also the Nazi signs scratched by our name in the past, public vilification in thousands of anonymous flyers spread all over the University.

### **Opponents' Gross Behavior Confirms Forum's Charges**

There have been an awful lot of crank calls as well as threats by phone and in writing, lately. Some callers scream obscenities, others threaten our jobs, our safety. Most callers were anonymous, one called himself "Paul Mason" - you all know who you are. These are the kind of people we are dealing with!

Often when we tell people about the harassment, they disbelieve us, thinking that we invent or exaggerate our stories. In fact, much of the abuse is documented in a growing file. But of course many of the instances cannot be - the perpetrators make sure of that. In the end, whether someone is going to believe us, think of us as liars, or remain simply indifferent will not be decided on the basis of facts but on his prejudices.

As to the facts, I can assure you that the incidents I have just described are merely the tip of the iceberg. If publishing a dissenting paper on a university campus doesn't make you paranoid, nothing will.

But how is this possible in the academic community? Surely what we write at the *Forum* does not warrant the abuse we receive from the fascist left and the indifference and snickering from the silent majority. This is the lofty ivory tower, this is where true liberalism and civility are supposed to thrive. Where is the sense of fair play and sympathy for the underdog? Is it not clear that if the fascist left were to succeed in silencing us, it would be even more difficult to revive dialogue the next time? Is the vicious treatment of the *Sacramento Forum* not proof of our main point, namely that true liberalism - understood as the vigorous defense of pluralism and dissent - is moribund?

Our call for dialogue has been a cry in the wilderness. The great principles voiced by Voltaire and John Stuart Mill seem to have been forgotten. Lip service is paid to academic freedom, pluralism, the right to disagree, but these concepts have become desiccated pieties, rarely enacted.

How else can one interpret the near- unanimous rejection by our faculty of what the *Forum* attempts to do? Why is the vast majority totally indifferent to the abuse to which we - dissenters - are often subjected? Why total silence when *Forum* and its views and its personnel are viciously and unreasonably attacked?

But let someone take a pot-shot at feminism, or gay liberation, or affirmative action, or the nuclear freeze fad, or the excesses of the welfare state, or environmental extremism, and promptly a chorus of sanctimonious outrage rises, attempting to silence the poor soul who had the temerity to question one of the sacred cows.

Why? Because it takes neither courage nor imagination nor honesty to come to the rescue of sacred cows, while it takes precisely those qualities to speak out in defense of underdogs such *Forum*, its views and its staff.

How convenient it is: today's so-called progressive person - be he (yes, I am using generic masculine!) a professor, an intellectual, a lawyer, an opinion leader, a journalist, a yuppie - can have his cake and eat it too: He can gang up on a Comerchero or a Kando, accusing him of engaging in McCarthyist tactics. He can thus feel that he is courageously fighting against power and oppression, while he in reality embodies majoritarian conformity and group think himself! Today's "progressive" person embodies the power and the status quo, and yet when he punishes lone dissenting voices such as *Forum* he can, all the while, retain the illusion that he is fighting against

the power and the status quo.

What a myth! There is no courage, no innovation, no intellectual honesty among the majority of the academic community. There is only what has historically always been the case: conformity, punishment of dissent, scape goating of underdogs, all this accompanied by the self-righteous belief that the underdog is evil and powerful. That is how the Inquisition operated, burning evil and powerful witches, that is how the Germans and others treated and continue to treat jews, those evil and almighty world-conspirators. Here, the destruction takes a more humane form: so far, only the *ideas* of the dissenters are neutralized. But the result is the same: moral and political orthodoxy.

*Forum's* arguments are neutralized, suffocated, *killed* in a number of ways: For one thing, some people write letters to us responding only to some totally irrelevant detail of one of our statements. For example Dr. Hadley (Women's Studies Department) wrote, objecting to Comerchero's characterization of the *Progressive Report* (the local Trotskyist or Stalinist publication, I forget which) as a "used tampon" and preferring to describe it as a slimy condom. As far as descriptive terms go, I have no particular preference and will take either one. But more

<p>LIP SERVICE IS PAID TO ACADEMIC FREEDOM, PLURALISM, THE RIGHT TO DISAGREE, BUT THESE CONCEPTS HAVE BECOME DESICCATED PIETIES, RARELY ENACTED.</p>
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importantly, by debating this issue, we would change the subject, which is precisely the favorite strategy of Marxist-Liberals. By focusing on some silly alleged terminological faux-pas and forcing us to defend ourselves on that front, our opponents steer us away from the really important issues raised in Comerchero's article. And all the other letter writers who have complained about *Forum's* style are doing precisely the same thing: Ignore the substance of the issues and arguments raised, talk about the poor language, intemperate style, sexist terminology, blah blah blah.

### **Marxist-Liberals Must be Criticized**

A second cop-out used by our opponents is to blame us for excessive *ad hominem* attacks. We are told that we should not have written so critically about Professor so-and-so, or about Student Paper Editor Scott Schuh, because they are after all such nice people and because personal attacks are unprofessional.

Here again we see the double standard which always allows open season on conservatives such as *Forum* staff, against whom far more vicious "ad hominem" attacks have been made, attacks that were totally ignored by the University community. Thus Professor Griffin is now angry at us for attacking Student Paper Editor Scott Schuh and his editorial which places part of the blame for the KAL downing on the US Government. Well, Mr. Schuh was wrong and he must be corrected. But where was Professor Griffin when campus communists like Joe Furey spread thousands of leaflets full of lies about Kando, my name dragged through the mud in 2-inch letters? Where was he when I was censored for my political views? He knew about these widely publicized events. The truth of the matter is that Professor Griffin has become scared, like all others, and that he wants to reestablish his credentials with the Left. So he joins the pack and attacks *Forum*.

But what about the "ad hominem" distinction. Isn't it spurious? If a person, however nice, is wrong, shouldn't we criticize and correct him? And does that not mean telling him that he is wrong, that he has wrong values, or that he is ignorant, or that his motives are bad? Is this not even a duty, when the wrong takes the form of a media publication?

And do the American media not publish every day thousands of personal attacks on Ronald Reagan, for example. In the *Sacramento Bee*, scarcely a day goes by without a cheap, vicious cartoon attacking Reagan's very integrity and worth as a human being. But the *Bee* does this because it is convinced that Reagan is wrong, i.e. that his actions are harming people. As to our generic attacks on Marxist-Liberals, why are we taken to task for that, when the media and the "liberal" elite incessantly insults Southern whites, "dumb housewives," conservatives, "white males," Christian evangelicals and other such categories?

So our opponents are setting up a fraudulent standard for us, telling us that somehow we should only criticize a person's ideas but not the person, as if the two were distinct!

A third method used to destroy our ideas is to deliberately misunderstand them (although there are probably many who truly misunderstand them, I shall not deal with them here, as their problem is mere stupidity). For example, people object to our use of the label Marxist-Liberal and its application to many professors on campus and to the Student Paper's dominant editorial philosophy. We are being lectured about the differences between a Marxist and a liberal; we are being told that we are stupid if we don't know that the two are different.

Well of course we know the difference. The blurring of the line has not been *our* doing. Last year Comerchero already devoted a long article to the *interaction* between Marxists and liberals, noting the corrosive effect of the former upon the latter. Of course we know that the true liberal will fight in defense of democratic pluralism, unlike the doctrinaire Marxist, for whom the

end justifies the means. But it has been precisely *forum's* point that there are fewer and fewer true liberals. President Kennedy was a true liberal. His liberalism was accompanied - no, was *predicated* upon, as liberalism must be - staunch anti-communism. Similarly *Forum* is truly liberal, opposed to all forms of totalitarianism, of which Communism is by far the most virulent form.

But most of those who consider themselves liberal today have lost that awareness. They are no longer anti-communists. They see a need for accommodation with Communism, perhaps in the name of survival, as if there were no alternatives to accommodation and nuclear annihilation. Or they have come to acquiesce with the Marxist creed that the Third World is better off following a socialist developmental model, thereby shutting their eyes to the inescapable truth that socialism is the *cause*

of economic stagnation and poverty, not is solution. So, as liberals have become increasingly muted, gutless, nihilistic, with some moving more assertively to the Marxian Left, we coined a convenient term for this new hybrid: the Marxist-Liberal. It fits!

Similarly, our critics deliberately misunderstand the fact that our attacks upon certain individuals are mere vehicles to make important points. Thus Comerchero's critique of Student Paper Editor Scott Schuh or his lengthy reply to Professor Herb Perry in our November issue are not personal vendettas. You know better than that! We have never even met some of the people whose statements we rip apart. We use those statements, and inevitably their authors, to make profoundly important points. Thus it does not matter that Scott Schuh is a nice person. He wrote an editorial which *exemplifies* the fraud perpetrated by Marxist-Liberals in America today. In his effort to be more popular among the Left (to which I am told he does not assign himself), he called a conservative Republican (Doolittle) gratuitous names ("hypocrite," "preposterous"), he blamed part of the KAL downing on U.S. spying practices, he equated the United States and the Soviet Union morally and he refused to take a courageous stand which would have isolated him at the Student Newspaper. We have nothing against Scott Schuh; we merely abhor what his article stands for: Dishonesty, doublethink, an attempt to placate the Left. People like Scott Schuh cannot have it both ways. I am told that he calls himself "conservative" and claims to have supported Reagan and Deukmejian. Well, which is it? these rumors, or the contents of the article in question? Isn't the latter the only solid evidence of Mr. Schuh's political views? Perhaps on another occasion Mr. Schuh will give a better accounting of himself.

But many of you already know this. Many of you are intelligent enough to understand the true objective of our diatribes. You know that we do not discriminate. You know that what is really important about *Forum* are the essential points it makes, the positions it takes, and not the individuals it happens to criticize, or the vehemence of its language. You know it, but do not wish to admit it, as that would force you to recognize the fact that *Forum* is a truly important and revolutionary effort rather than merely a mud-slinging affair (*Sacramento Forum*, March 1984).

### 3. How Often Have My Academic Rights been Violated?

*Publishing the Sacramento Forum for nearly half a decade gave me some breathing room. People developed a healthy respect/fear for me - for a while. That is why I lasted 40 years at the University. But the threats and attacks never stopped. Students, for example, made repeated efforts to have me fired, often sending delegations, memos and official complaints to my superiors. These were invariably of a political nature, and never, ever, accusations of poor teaching or unprofessional conduct. Some of the charges were about improper speech, i.e. violations of the University's Orwellian speech code - for example using generic masculine, or the word "Negro" instead of African-American. Many more were about opinions such as those reproduced in these*

pages. In 2000, I jotted down the following partial catalogue of some of these assaults on my academic freedom and on my First Amendment rights over the years.

1) 1969-1970: An article appeared in the Sacramento State Hornet in which I was called a sexist pig by an anonymous writer.

2) 1970: Representatives of the radical countercultural *Students for a Democratic Society* came to my office demanding that I do not use Edward Banfield's textbook in Urban Sociology, which they viewed as too conservative.

3) 1970: A student and her husband filed a grade grievance with the university ombudsman, after a political disagreement with something I said in class.

4) 1970-1971: A female student made sexual advances to me in my office. I was 29, attractive and younger than she was. After I turned her down, she filed a complaint against me with the university ombudsman, charging me with unprofessional conduct.

5) 1972: A grade grievance contributed to my failure to get tenure at the University of California. I had graded a class more harshly than usual, because it was a bad class.

6) 1976-1977: Harassment by the radical Student Sociological Society. They demanded access to my own house, where I held meetings of a subcommittee which I chaired. They claimed that the committee must have student representation, and if the meetings were held in my house, I must admit the student reps.

7) 1979≡: The huge Iranian hostage crisis episode, related in detail above.

8) 1983-1987: The countless attacks upon the *Sacramento Forum*, discussed above.

9) 1985: Charge of anti-Semitism filed with my chairman by a Jewish student whom I failed, and who was utterly deserving of his grade.

10) 1987: Semester-long harassment, interruptions and misbehavior by several radical feminists in one of my classes.

11) 1980s: Several such incidents by black students.

12) 1990: Complaint filed with my chairman by Sacramento Chief Probation officer Robert Keldgord, in reaction to an article which I published in the *Wall Street Journal*.

13) Complaint sent to the university President by a Sacramento Business, caused by the fact that I used one sheet of university letterhead for a personal business matter.

14) Early 1990s: Charge of racism filed with my chairman by a black student whom I failed, and who was utterly deserving of his grade.

15) Mid-1990: I teach a televised course in criminology and discuss the concept of

vigilantism. An irate citizen calls in, disagrees and berates me, and then sends a formal complaint to my superior.

16) The Vice-President of the student body, who is also my student, files official charges against me with the Dean, for having used generic masculine language in my lecture. He starts an “investigation” of my teaching practices. Unrelated, a year later he is arrested for a felony crime, kicked out of the university and ends up in criminal court.

17) 1999: A student complains to my chairman, accusing me of having spread homosexual lies about another professor. In fact, I had never even heard of the other professor.

18) 2000: A rabid student activist, a 55-year old relic from the sixties, files a formal complaint charging me of racism because I shared with the class a joke from the Tonight Show about NBA players’ many illegitimate children. I am forced to make a formal apology, so as to avoid more severe punishment.

#### 4. If You are not P.C., You are Likely to be Fired

*But I survived. Others were not so lucky. At Hampshire College, a professor was sacked because he didn’t tow the party line. When I read about him in the Wall Street Journal, I felt compelled to write the following commentary, which I sent to the Journal on February 5, 1991. They did not print it.*

The situation at Hampshire College described in your January 4 editorial and debated in your February 5 issue is representative of many - if not most - other colleges and universities. President Prince’s rebuttal is typically bureaucratic and dishonest, as is the letter by Hampshire graduate Ken Burns. The age-old strategy is either to change subjects (talk about the innovative structure of the curriculum, etc.) as does the latter, or to whitewash charges by appealing to formal rules and regulations, as does the College President.

Mr. Prince knows, of course, that no institution of higher learning is going to *specify* political correctness as a criterion for promotion, retention and tenure. He also knows that it is standard practice to subtly (and not so subtly) stack the deck against those guilty of incorrect thoughts. For example, faculty members who are politically incorrect are ostracized, they rarely get elected to committees and administrative positions, they rarely receive intra-mural grants, release-time for research, travel money, invitations as guest speakers, paid sabbaticals and other perks and benefits without which it is so difficult to be a productive academician. Even the use of gossip and students in order to undermine one’s enemies’ classes is not infrequent. The fact that some professors become deficient in research, teaching or community service is often a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Any freshman sociologist understands that organizations operate as much informally as they do formally - perpetuating old-boy nepotism and eliminating the deviants. Formalistic cliches cannot hide the ruthlessly politicized and conformist reality of the contemporary ivory tower.

#### 5. Let’s “Out” Republican Professors

*In 1995, I had a funny idea - how about “outing” Republicans on campus? Here is what I suggested.*

We know that the vast majority of academics are Democrats - probably 90%. As to the 10% who are Republicans, they are probably all *closet Republicans*. Being a Republican at a university is like being gay in the army. You hide it!

In recent years, gays have sometimes outed each other. The motives for this can vary, but they are rarely nice. Militant gays don't like it that some of their fellow-homosexuals are hiding cowardly, sometimes behind a wife's skirt. They may have a point. Still, whether to be openly homosexual or not is your own business, and being outed forcefully is wrong. Many Hollywood stars have preferred to hide their homosexuality throughout their lives, for the sake of their career. Who are we to condemn them?

Anyway, I am drawing the funny analogy between closet gays and closet Republicans. So here is an idea: Say there is a professor who really pisses you off. One way to get back at him could be to accuse him of being a Republican. Imagine!

Whether he is truly a Republican or not, watch him deny it with all the force he can muster! After all, at a university, being called a Republican is the kiss of death.

#### 6. The Foul and Malodorous Place Where I Work

*Although I survived, and even thrived at the university for 40 years, sometimes I became depressed. Here is a funny little piece I improvised on February 14, 2001, on a bad day. It doesn't mean that I always felt this bad about my shop. The language is an attempt to mimic the pompous and ponderous pseudo-biblical language used by Cecil B. DeMille as the background narrator in such epics as the Ten Commandments.*

I went to campus yesterday, for committee meetings in the administration building, where I feel good, respected, at ease, where people like me and treat me with dignity. These are all upper echelon people, including the President, the Provost, the Senate Chair, all the vice presidents, etc.

On the other hand, there is the snake pit called the Sociology department. I assiduously avoided that building, at the other end of the campus. The moment I enter that building, I get a headache. Students and "colleagues" descend on me to (1) demand things from me, (2) to harass me, or (3) to insult me. So, while driving, I improvised as follows, mimicking Cecil Be DeMille's biblical grandiloquence:

"That is a place of foul stench and perversity and suffering. A place to be avoided with all one's effort, so as to escape pain and suffering. It is a place injurious to the soul, the mind and the body. It is a place of cruelty and fighting, a place of acrimony and stupidity, a place where people's wills collide and where powers compete for the accumulation of objects and favoritisms. It is a place that weakens the person, and harms the health. It is a place of manipulation and ugliness, of moral turpitude and vindictiveness. Cold and harsh words prevail amongst participants, and contempt and hatred fills their hearts. Such is this place where labor. Conflict and pain prevail amongst the multitudes. A place of fear, fermentation, and intimidation, a place of duplicity and mendacity. The men and the women in such a place dare not speak the truth, as the truth is foul to them, for they believe in falsehoods and lies, believing that they only are worthy, while viewing all others as their enemies. They employ cunning and ridicule to achieve their depraved goals, and their greed knows only the bounds of their ineptitude. Their minds are as small as their appetites are bottomless. Their lust for power and vindictiveness exceeds their capacity for achievement. Their

achievements are terse, meager and devoid of elegance. They drown in self-absorption and wander about seeking petty corpuscles, like creatures of the night, hiding behind distorted images of a non-existent world. Their visages reflect the suffering they inflict mutually upon one another. Such is the poverty of this micro world, a world of avoidance found at the end of a dead end road.

### 35. THE DISEASE OF ANTI-AMERICANISM

#### 1. America Should Stop Trying to Take Care of the World

*Here is the first of many letters and articles I wrote about this topic. Whatever happens in the world, America is blamed for it. Our ambassadors and diplomats are frequently killed and kidnaped. When are we going to learn that we have nothing to gain from "Empire.?" As we practice it, most of it consists of America giving of itself - money, treasure and lives - and in return getting defecated on by every third-rate country on earth. I say, go back to the splendid isolation we enjoyed until World War One. When are we going to learn that Empire sucks?*

*The particular issue on this occasion was the 1974 Greek-Turkish confrontation over Cyprus: The right-wing military junta which ruled Greece forced the ouster of Cyprus' legitimate head, Archbishop Makarios, in an attempt to take over the island. However, the Turks responded forcefully, and the island was partitioned. This was an embarrassing defeat for the Greeks. During the turmoil, our ambassador to Cyprus was murdered. And somehow, there were riots all over the world blaming the U.S. (!) for these events. That is what outraged me, and prompted me to write the following letter, published in the Sacramento Bee on August 29, 1974.*

How long will this country lend itself to the role of international scapegoat? By no stretch of the imagination could the US government be held responsible for the Greek fiasco - well deserved - in Cyprus.

If anything, it is a well known fact that our government was far more sympathetic to the Greek junta and to the gangsters who first ousted Makarios than to the Turks.

It is said that our CIA had something to do with it, and although I doubt that, we were certainly morally more partial to the Greeks than to the Turks. Yet the warped and lunatic anti-Americanism rampant the world over, and now again manifest among defeated and frustrated Greek hoodlums manages, somehow, to blame it on Uncle Sam.

Cyprus is not worth one hour of Kissinger's time, much less the life of our ambassador, or anyone else's, for that matter. The island is half the size of one Hawaiian island! Is it our business that it wishes to self-destruct? And beyond that, when are we going to learn that there is nothing to be gained from empire, and everything from splendid isolation? ( Sacramento Bee, Aug. 29, 1974).

#### 2. Even Americans are Becoming Anti-American

*The worst aspect of anti-Americanism is that it can become internalized by Americans themselves. When someone is bombarded with criticism for a long time, he becomes disoriented and begins to feel guilty. This problem became especially acute after the Vietnam debacle. Patriotism became a bad word, at least among liberal intellectuals and in some of the liberal media.*

*I came across a Time Magazine editorial which accused Americans of being too self-*

*righteous, and which claimed that we are much more prone to flag-waving than other countries. On April 18, 1979, I wrote the following rebuttal to this, but it was never printed.*

To the Editor:

You don't get it. Your article asks, "what lesson can we learn from Vietnam?" and then you proceed to rake America over the coal by saying that we are too self-righteous.

Let me enlighten you: There is nothing unique about Americans traditionally being self-righteous and on the side of God. All nations have waged war under that banner, from the Conquistadores to the Nazis. What is truly worrisome is this country's anemic sense of pride and self-interest, even in comparison with such places as Western Europe. The very fact that you single America out for having been uncommonly self-righteous in the past proves this. When will Americans cease wallowing in self-flagellations?

### 3. When in Doubt, Blame Uncle Sam!

*In September 1980, Iraq and Iran went to war against each other. There were those who, once again, had the gall to blame America for this. One such person was my colleague (and good friend) professor Ayad Al-Qazzaz, who published articles and gave TV and radio speeches arguing that the United States had caused the war between those two countries. On October 4, 1980, I published the following articles in both the Sacramento Bee and the Sacramento State Hornet, challenging my colleague's idiotic position.*

Professor Ayad Al-Qazzaz's comments regarding the Iraq-Iran war must not be permitted to remain un-challenged. They represent a transparent attempt to justify his country's blatant aggression against a neighbor weakened by two years of internal bloodbath. In this effort, my colleague avers that - who else, of course, - the U.S. is one of the beneficiaries of this war. Sure, Ayad, bring out the old scapegoat; when in doubt blame it on America, and let's all feel some more guilt!

It is grotesque to argue, as my Arab colleague does, that once again America is one of the villains behind the scenes. We are now witnessing the Kafkaesque show of these two countries trying to out anti-Americanize each other as they try to destroy each other. Yet every bullet, airplane and tank used by Iraq comes from the Soviet Union, of which that country is a vassal state. Al - Qazzaz complains that American bombers destroy Iraqi cities. That was never our intention. Our intentions in arming foreign countries have always been defensive, and directed at one target only: Soviet imperialism.

How can Al-Qazzaz equate the roles and interests of the U.S. and the Soviet Union in the Middle East? How can he claim that we are not interested in peace? It is obvious that we have everything to gain from peace and everything to lose from war, while the Soviets are both the indirect force and the prime beneficiaries of this war.

Al-Qazzaz's tactics are deceptive: by accusing both the Soviet Union and the U.S. of complicity, he gives the impression of even-handedness. But once one sees through this, it is clear that he is in fact propagandizing for his country. This is understandable: people like Al-Qazzaz and Mansour Farhang (the Cal State professor who became Iran's U.N. representative after the Khomeini revolution) before him better side with their country - right or wrong, or else! Were the professor to express any objectivity in his analysis of his country's behavior, the Iraqi government would not likely forget and forgive this on his next visit to Baghdad. Countries such as Iraq do not quite share America's conception of political freedom (*Sacramento Bee*, Oct. 4, 1980; *Sacramento State Hornet*, Oct. 4, 1980).

#### 4. The Myth of American Omnipotence

*A full year (!) after our 66 diplomats were taken hostage in Teheran, the Carter administration had still not been able to free them. It was still flailing, looking for moral sympathy from other governments and humiliating itself around the world, instead of sending the Fifth Fleet to Iran and demanding the release of the hostages. On November 19, 1980, I gave the following speech to a large gathering of Cal State students and faculty, and also published this in Dialogue.*

During the 1950s a majority of Americans were convinced that their country's role in the world was fundamentally benign. Our foreign policy - peaceful programs such as the Marshall Plan and other massive foreign aid programs, as well as the necessary wars fought to contain communism in Korea, Vietnam and elsewhere - was based on the presupposition that we indeed had the *means* and the *power* to *save the world*. The Dulles doctrine, the Cold War, NATO, SEATO, CENTO and the entire worldwide structure of self-protective alliances erected by this country after World War Two were all part of that master plan and of that vision: America should - and more importantly can - save the world.

Today, the question is whether America can *save itself*. How is it possible that a nation which *simultaneously* defeated two empires a generation ago is now paralyzed by a disorganized rabble of clerical and Marxist zealots? It is fashionable to point to the "limits of power," but surely America's frightful paralysis today - as it pathetically limps from the UN to the World Court to the European capitals seeking "moral" support and humiliating itself in a way never seen before - surely this unbelievable behavior is self-imposed and not a reflection of an *objective* absence of power!

Today's powerlessness thesis is as mythical as was the notion of all powerfulness in the 1950s. While the US emerged from World War Two with approximately 50% of the world's economic and military might, it was probably even then in no position to impose its will upon the world. And of course the country's relative power immediately began to decline, simply by virtue of the rest of the world rebuilding and catching up. Today, our economy makes up approximately 20% of that of the world, we are the second most powerful military nation and we make up 5% of the world's population, just to mention a few *objective facts*, as opposed to mythology.

My point is not to laud or to deplore our relative decline, but to establish it as an indisputable fact. Neither is it my point that we should desperately hang on to an abstract notion of being "number one." Such vulgar patriotism is indeed, in Samuel Johnson's words, the scoundrel's last refuge. . . Those who incessantly tell us that American imperialism is at the root of most of the world's ills are guilty of the same *megalomania* that motivated the cold warriors of the 1950s - namely the belief that America is the overwhelming *cause* in the world. Thus, we hear that we caused the current turmoil in Iran, when in fact (if we must dig up ancient history, as Carter put it), the British and the Russians played a far greater role in Iran after the second world war. Remember that they - not us! - deter-mined Iran's boundaries and its very existence as a nation in the 1940s!

We are told that the Cambodian starvation and the Vietnamese boat people are primarily a consequence of our involvement in Vietnam, when in fact the French oppressed, exploited and waged war in those countries far longer and far more devastatingly than we did. We are told - unbelievably - that Angola, Ethiopia and other African nations that have turned hostile or that are in turmoil have done so *because* of past American sins, when in fact our meddling in Africa is dwarfed by that of a score of other countries. For example, when Belgium moved into the Congo in the mid-1800s, that region's estimated population was 20 million. By the time Belgium relinquished its colony in 1961, the population was down, a century later, to 10 million! Compare that record (or

that of the Spanish conquistadores, or that of the Dutch in Indonesia) with the United States' handling of American Indians. Practically every European nation - indeed, practically *every* nation, period - has a far, far worse record of genocide than America. Look at Africa again: there is the past genocide of the Belgians, the Portuguese, the French, the British, the Italians in Abyssinia, and there is the current genocide of the Soviets, of the Cubans, not to mention that of African dictators themselves. Yet the mania for singling out America and its multinationals for blame for every possible problem persists. Watch the rhetoric building up around the fall of the latest domino - Liberia. Once again we will hear that it is an uprising against US imperialism - not imperialism mind you, but US imperialism.

South African racism is of course said to be in large part America's fault, no matter that the colonization of that region was entirely a British and Dutch affair, as is *apartheid*; no matter that those and other European countries and *their* multinationals (for example Royal Dutch Shell) have greater dealings with South Africa than we do. How many of you assumed that Shell, like most other multinationals, is primarily American? It is not. We do not control and are not the home base for a majority of the world's corporate power. The European Common Market's GNP exceeds ours, Japan's is the same on a per capita basis. We account for no more than one fifth of the world's economy.

With selective perception we single out American corporations such as I.T.T., the United Fruit Company and Anaconda Mining to account for all the social injustice in Latin America, forgetting that nearly every country south of the border spent centuries under European subjugation and that many, like the Guyanas and the Antilles, have yet to achieve full emancipation. Most are thoroughly tied to economic interests in advanced industrial nations *other* than the US. And I shall not dwell upon the costs to us and the benefits to the so-called "colonies" of America's relationship with Latin America and other parts of the world: For example, our relationship with Panama has been far more to that country's advantage than to ours; it owes its very *existence* as well as that of the canal to the US.

The list of world problems mythically blamed upon America could go on. I suppose there are those deranged individuals like Lybia's Kadhafi whose oil revenues fuel the carnage in Northern Ireland and who would blame *that* area's trouble upon American imperialism as well. Inequality between nations is as natural a fact of life as inequality between individuals. America has permitted itself to be pushed into the awkward position of *international scapegoat*. It began with a virulent anti-Americanism overseas (I remember it all too well from my days at European universities), was fueled by the Vietnam war, and now appears to have contaminated Americans themselves!

If America is the international scapegoat, it is not because it is particularly responsible for the plight of the Third World, but precisely because it is not. Social psychology teaches us that the targets singled out for collective attack are more often than not groups and individuals most likely to be *harmless* and *least likely to resist*. Remember the Jews, gypsies and other scapegoats of European history and the blacks in the history of this country. Societies on a rampage - whether Hitler's Germany or Khomeini's Iran - do not go after powerful enemies; they attack, lynch, kidnap, terrorize and kill the innocent.

What happens next is also well known to psychologists. Labeling theory teaches us that the repeated application of negative labels results in their internalization. This is also where the concept of the *Stockholm Syndrome* is applicable: When a few years ago some citizens were held hostage for a time by terrorists in Stockholm, they eventually developed love, respect and loyalty to their captors. The Stockholm phenomenon is now well established. Thus we see Patti Hearst falling in love with her abductors and marrying her prison guard, and many of

our hostages and their relatives are more sympathetic to their Iranian tormentors than to their own government, which will do everything short of national prostitution to safeguard their release. This aberration is scientifically understandable - but so is disease. To understand is not to accept. As a nation, we are disoriented and many among us now feel that since we are incessantly criticized and attacked from every conceivable part of the globe, there must be much truth to the criticism. This is a disastrous trend. We shall certainly not silence the critics and the terrorists by acquiescing with them. Quite the contrary. To acquiesce in the negative labels laid on you is the fastest way to mental illness - in this case national psychosis.

The world view according to which America is defined as the world's number one public enemy is a *mirror reversal* of an earlier megalomania which was also mythical. The Cold Warriors felt that it was within our means to save the world. *It was not.* Today's conspiracy theorists feel that ours is the power to oppress the world, at least what remains of the free world today. But whether or not it ever could, America can now certainly no longer be viewed as the preponderant *cause* of planetary events.

Reality is more sobering than the conspiracy theory: No matter what we do, no matter how much we flagellate ourselves, no matter how much we repent and apologize for our imaginary sins, the world will remain a troublesome and hostile place that we cannot control, and which we can certainly not force to love us. The sooner we abandon that mythical illusion and the sooner we get down to the business of *survival*, the better off we shall be, and the better off the *world* will be also.

Perhaps America is too pluralistic. Perhaps we are bound to continue tearing ourselves apart, identifying only with our own narrow sexual, racial and occupational subgroups. If so, things will continue to deteriorate, and our children's lives will be immensely more difficult than ours - perhaps entirely unbearable.

Sociology has long taught us the fundamental prerequisites for a decent collective existence. These include a collective consciousness and solidarity in some form or another. The French sociologist Emile Durkheim was right when he wrote that *anomie*, the breakdown of norms, is the most profound curse of society. A lack of norms, chaos, individualism run bezerk - these are the cancers that kill societies.

And this is the final reality to which I draw your attention. Again, there is a corresponding myth: the myth is that we have too much authority, too much institutional oppression, not enough freedom, not enough liberation. Bullshit. America has been close to anarchy in recent years. Today, while we are no longer on a street rampage, we have rampant *moral* anarchy: do your own thing; look out for number one; I won't bother you if you don't bother me. The privatist's pursuit of individualized aims - through a job, through crime, or through a combination of both as chiseling, cheating and corruption - this is probably a far more insidious and more dangerous form of anarchy than the street riots of the 1960s, which could be dealt with squarely either through law enforcement or through remedial social programs. But the most serious form of anarchy in terms of consequences is the irresponsibility of educators, media, opinion leaders, authors, writers. They are the ones reaping the mega buck profits from the sexual, moral and cultural revolution, while a gullible population goes down in an orgy of drugs, "decriminalization," liberation and nihilism.

The old prophets of the 60s may have been relevant at that time, but we must grow and adjust to an ever-changing reality. The liberationists who formulated their leftist concept of society in the 1960s have now been overtaken by events. Attempts to apply their vision to today's events are futile. To claim that in today's world - in Iran and elsewhere - America remains the aggressor is a myth.

But let me conclude on an upbeat note: The American *people* are good; they are profoundly dissatisfied with their leadership, as well they should. Despite years of a liberal indoctrinatory barrage by the media and educators, a majority of the American people have retained

a curiously healthy instinct for common-sense, self-preservation and sound values. Current opinion polls, calls to radio talk shows, letters to the editor, primary elections, these are only a few indications of the fact that, remarkably and surprisingly, *the people have not been had*, even in the electronic age. The spontaneous strength and common-sense that persist and manifest themselves in the current restlessness and the rejection of cockamamie ideas of the left-wing governmental, media and educational elite is the single greatest sign that our society remains fundamentally healthy. In time, the electoral process will force the government to clean up its act. Similarly, the media will improve as soon as quality and responsibility become once again lucrative. The hope, then, is that the university is not left behind (*Dialogue*, Nov. 19, 1980).

### 5. The Politics of Anti-Americanism

*Continuing my campaign against anti-Americanism, I gave parts of the following speech to the United Nations Association of Sacramento on March 22, 1982, where members of the audience booed me! I later expanded the speech and published the following version in the form of two articles in the November 1983 and the February 1984 issues of my paper, the Sacramento Forum.*

As I was running and chatting with a group of runners yesterday morning, a young lady who had picked up my foreign accent asked me why I had moved to this country.

I am often asked this question. At first, I used to be at a loss for an answer, because to me, my decision to emigrate to America in 1965 seems so obviously correct, such a no-brainer. On this occasion, my answer was something like this: "I came to America for the same reasons nearly a million others do it every year legally, plus another million illegally: North America provides a far better life for hundreds of millions of people than any other comparable area. Even in comparison with contemporary Europe, this continent is more spacious, more affluent, cleaner, better off. There is still more courtesy, more freedom, less bureaucracy, more advancement opportunities, more tolerance. The millions who continue to vote with their feet, as I did, know this."

What this woman failed to realize, as many other Americans also do, is that people like me are the contemporary equivalent of the German, Irish, Italian and other masses that poured into this country earlier. The Kennedy saga continues. America continues to represent the aspirations of much of the world for the two things that make human life truly human: material well-being and freedom. Immigrants continue to be an important lifeblood for this still-growing country.

The traditional immigrant came primarily from European societies that suffered under elitist oppression. Today, most of us are escaping from a different kind of oppression. We come from Eastern Europe, Vietnam, Korea, Cuba, El Salvador, Nicaragua. We are the boat people and the Hungarian freedom fighters. We are the displaced middle class of countries that have seen the rise of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The first large-scale wave of such educated refugees from the mobs was that of the Jews escaping Central European fascism in the 1930s. So America remains the land of the free and for the free. As things continue to deteriorate overseas, millions of additional middle-class refugees can be expected to stream into this country, especially from South of the border. This has the advantage of correcting the leftward drift of the country. These new immigrants know the value of freedom.

Lest you think that I am a wealthy émigré, I should add that grew up under conditions of poverty and squalor that make the South Bronx or Watts look positively upper-class. I was born and raised in Budapest, while the bombs were pulverizing the city. I am Jewish on my mother's side. My maternal grandparents were interned during World War Two, at least one aunt died in an camp,

and all my relatives were forced to wear the yellow star.

I clearly remember the Nazi occupation and the Soviet invasion. Opposing the fascist Horthy regime, my parents belonged, like many good people in those days, to the Communist Party. However, when the Soviets reduced our country to a colony in 1948, we escaped to Western Europe, where I spent my next 17 years.

<p>MARXIST PROFESSORS KNOW NOTHING ABOUT COMMUNISM AND WORLD HISTORY</p>
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This biographical information is relevant since many professors at Cal State of not knowing what Communism is, of being a racist, an elitist, a sexist and a bigot (*“Progressive” Alliance*, May 1983), of being xenophobic (Professor Dick Hughes, November 16, 1979), of being ignorant of international affairs (Professor Ron Fox, November 27, 1979). I have been unanimously denounced on the media by my Sociology Department (November 27, 1979), I have received life-threatening calls, four-letters from professors and Nazi signs on my name on the office door.

Odd accusations. I know nothing about Communism? I grew up under it in Hungary. I have been in Russia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia. Xenophobic? The world is my country. I have been in forty nations, lived for many years in each of four different countries, I speak four languages fluently and a couple less well. Racist? I am the victim of it, indeed – anti-Semitism old and current.

The real problem is not the sheer absurdity of these accusations – I was marching in Washington with Ralph Abernathy and campaigning for Martin Luther King’s presidency in 1967 – but the vast ignorance of my accusers. In fact, they are the ones who know nothing about Communism, international affairs and world history. And because they cannot put America in such a larger perspective, they don’t even understand America itself and its precious role in the world.

When I grew up in the slums of Budapest, Paris and Amsterdam, most of us knew about America, a great and wonderful country that had recently fought selflessly to, free us from tyranny. Everywhere in Europe, boys my age knew who the good guys were: Buffalo Bill, Davy Crockett, Wild Bill Hickock. We knew about America, a great and wonderful country that had recently selflessly fought to free us from tyranny. We remembered the GIs trekking across the continent, many dying for Europe, most giving away food, cigarettes or chewing gum to the kids, all friendly, courteous and funny.

We did not realize that the rapid rise of Europe from ashes to mass affluence was primarily due to the infusion of 15 billion (1947) dollars under the Marshall Plan, although we did have an intuition that somehow these Yankees were a sort of Santa Claus. We loved America and its culture. Its twangy kind of English was more appealing to us than the haughty British variant. American informality, humor, attire, jeans, music and mannerisms turned us on. We understood the symbol of the Western cowboy - Gary Cooper in *High Noon*, John Wayne in *The Seekers*. He was a metaphor for the latter-day knight-errant, a chivalrous hero protecting the weak and fighting for justice.

In 1979, when Professor Fox wanted to sling the ultimate insult at me, he called me a “John Wayne!” In little over one generation, the very symbols that once stood for honor, courage, beauty and virtue have, for many people, been inverted to denote ridicule, stupidity, bigotry.

What is happening? Why has good become bad and bad become good? Why has the land of the free and the home of the brave, in some eyes, become *Satan America*? The psychotic anti-

Americanism of a Khomeini is not yet shared by all. But hatred of America is widespread, both overseas and at home. In the latter case, it is tantamount to self-loathing.

VIETNAM BLOWN OUT OF PROPORTION

When I left Europe permanently for this country in 1965, anti-Americanism was already rampant on that side of the Atlantic, particularly in academe, which was already largely Marxist. Then came the Vietnam escalation. While other countries have committed and continue to commit innumerable acts of war, aggression and imperialism, none suffered the massive worldwide condemnation and self-flagellation caused by Vietnam and from which the United States has yet to recover.

The truth is that the Vietnam War was merely an excuse for an explosion of anti-Americanism in the world, an expression of resentment that had been latent and growing. Such resentment is strongest in areas like Western Europe and Australia, particularly among the intellectual elites there. Why? Because they correctly perceive themselves to be peripheral, historically irrelevant, the recalcitrant followers of trends which are - for better or worse - still largely set in motion in this country.

Of course our own elites - the media in particular - were also guilty of suicidally exporting anti-Americanism to the world. Night after night Walter Cronkite stressed, before millions at home and abroad, the latest body counts and American atrocities.

Nearly ten years after the war, we continue to wallow in Vietnam analysis, seeking some mysterious meaning or lesson in it, not realizing that there may be none. It is a clever trick indeed, which the elite has played on the working class veteran: most of those who fought and died in Vietnam came from the lower strata. Most of the draft-dodgers, peaceniks and Woodstock generation (now often running the country) are Harvard and Berkeley graduates. And these are the people who have their cake and eat it too: they did not have to serve, fight or die, yet they occupy the moral high ground. After all they are the ones who remind us forever of the evil nature of war. Meanwhile, the Vietnam veteran is portrayed as a misfit and a loser.

It pays for the elite to keep stirring the Vietnam pot and to keep alluding to some mysterious "lesson." But there is no lesson. Failure generally serves no purpose. It merely weakens you. Failure must be chalked up as such, and then left behind, forgotten and above all forgiven.

ON OCTOBER 13, THE 93 "NON-ALIGNED"  
COUNTRIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS  
ISSUED A 21-PAGE DOCUMENT WHICH  
CHARGED THAT "THE U.S. IS THE *ONLY*  
THREAT TO WORLD PEACE AND  
PROSPERITY.

No other country has allowed itself to descend into such self-doubt, guilt, disorientation, mental illness, as a result of a failed foreign entanglement that, by historical standards, was relatively minor. Yet the list of military adventures by France, Britain, Holland, Spain, Portugal, Belgium and of course the real biggies - Russia, Japan and Germany - dwarfs our minor involvements. Since World War Two alone, the French have waged war in a dozen countries, including Indochina, Algeria and much of Africa. So have the British. And the Belgians in the

Congo, the Dutch in Indonesia, the Portuguese in Angola and Mozambique.

And then, of course, there is the Soviet Union. In a recent editorial in the *Manchester Guardian*, conservative British M. P. Enoch Powell had the gall to assert that "no Russian soldier stands today beyond where Russian soldiers stood in 1948" (!). This is truly bizarre statement was made in the context of a vicious anti-American tirade in which the author managed to accuse the U.S. simultaneously of encouraging revolutionary subversion (in Northern Ireland) and of being hopelessly anti-revolutionary (Vis-a-vis the aspirations of many Third World people).

In fact, the USSR now has military personnel in over thirty countries, including Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Bulgaria, Cape Verde, Congo, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Ethiopia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Hungary, Iraq, Laos, Libya, Madagascar, Mali, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Peru, Poland, Romania, South Yemen, Syria, Tanzania, Vietnam and Zambia. Between Afghanistan, Cuba and Syria alone, the number is 200,000. Since 1948, the list has grown by 22 countries.

After World War Two, the French waged a longer and equally bloody battle in Indochina, plus Algeria; the British killed many people in all parts of their empire before reluctantly relinquishing it; the Dutch likewise in Indonesia, the Belgians in the Congo, the Portuguese in Angola and Mozambique. And then there is, of course, the Soviet Union -- the greatest imperial power of the twentieth century. The bloodbaths of Hungary, Czechoslovakia and now Afghanistan and Poland. And permanent military occupation of half of Europe.

Did Europeans and others around the world march, demonstrate, riot and burn the embassies of the Soviet Union and other aggressors? Rarely. But Vietnam! The world's intelligentsia had only waited for the excuse to fully vent its irrational hatred of America, and now Vietnam provided the perfect opportunity. There was finally proof that America was - as our family doctor in Amsterdam kept reminding my mother and me - indeed the "curse of mankind."

Virulent hate has a corrosive effect upon its recipient. Sooner or later it turns into *self-hate*. So much at least we know from labeling theory and social psychology. The American was so often and so relentlessly told that he was an *Ugly American* that he began to believe it. Vietnam came and went. It should merely have taught us that we too can make mistakes, like everybody. But did we just chalk it up as a loss or as a learning experience? Did we leave it behind us and move on, as the British and the French and all the other former colonial powers did with their ill-fated colonial wars? No. Vietnam has become a major and lasting trauma. It has led to lasting self-doubt, disorientation and guilt.

Little more than a generation ago Germany committed the greatest act of genocide in all of history. The German generation that witnessed and indeed *participated* in that genocide is still largely alive. But do Germans feel guilty? Of course not. Quite to the contrary, they have the gall to point their accusatory finger at warmonger Reagan, as does Prime Minister Schmidt, or worse, they kidnap, bomb and kill American personnel, as does the Red Army Fraction, fully supported by most German students, professors and intellectuals.

Do the Dutch, who invented apartheid, or the British, who invented the concentration camp, or the Japanese, who committed genocide in Nanking, or the Russians who invented the pogrom, feel guilty? No, instead they condemn American imperialism, American racism and American capitalism, often sympathizing with the worldwide rise in violence and terrorism which threatens to engulf us in total chaos.

But Americans feel guilty. With curious masochism, American liberals remind themselves day after day that they maltreated the Indians and the slaves, that they confined the Japanese

Americans and that they have occasionally dared to interfere in other countries' affairs.

Our reaction to the Vietnam war has been so pathological that the mere registration of draftable youngsters causes street demonstrations. If the government were to reinstate the draft, it would probably have a revolution on its hands. A majority of other countries have compulsory military service, but only in America, where there is no draft, is there an anti-draft movement, and only America is accused of militarism!

<p>U.S. IS LESS IMPERIALISTIC THAN OTHER COUNTRIES</p>
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The world - and we ourselves - judge our actions with an incomprehensible double standard:

Item: The presence of 70 American advisors in El Salvador is cause for major national alarm and international condemnation. But the 130,000 Soviet troops in Afghanistan and the murderous yellow rain they spew upon that population are barely noted on the back page of a few newspapers.

Item: When one of our advisers in El Salvador is seen carrying an M-16 rifle instead of a handgun, he is recalled, following a nationwide front-page flap.

Item: The U. N. Security Council convenes a emergency session to deal with rumors that the US *might* contemplate the covert destabilization of Nicaragua. Not once did the same body denounce the USSR's annexation of Afghanistan. America gets slapped for mere talk of foreign intervention; the Soviets invade countries and the world sits idly by.

Item: On October 13, 1981, the 93 "non-aligned" nations of the UN issued a 21-page document that charged - and I quote - that "the US is the *only* threat to world peace and prosperity." This country foots 25% of the world body, budget, far more than what its share should be, and it allows itself to be treated like that!

Item: Currently the Soviet troops are massing on the borders of Iran and Poland, and fighting in Afghanistan, and the Reagan Administration fires and recalls one of its officers for carrying his M-16 rifle instead of a handgun in El Salvador.

Item: Since American paralysis set in after the Vietnam debacle, the Soviets have annexed Afghanistan and waged war in Yemen and in Ethiopia; their Cuban proxies have waged war in Angola, other parts of Africa and parts of Latin America; the North Vietnamese have annexed Laos and parts of Cambodia; the French have repeatedly airlifted paratroopers to Central Africa; the British have a permanent occupation force in Ulster; Libya has annexed half of Chad.

In the same period, the US has conducted three minuscule and largely inept military operations: the recapture of the Mayaguez from Cambodia, which cost more American lives than it saved, the pathetic Iranian rescue mission attempt, and a 60-second dog fight with two obsolete Libyan MIGs. Each of these actions was widely condemned - overseas almost unanimously, and also by a majority of the domestic media and the congressmen, in other words by the American elite - as bullying and provocative, indeed acts of war! While the U.N. votes 120 to 9 to condemn our rescue of Grenada, no action is taken when France moves into Chad, or Vietnam into Laos, or the Soviet Union into Afghanistan.

This month, the Cal State university community, as usual out of touch with the American people, 85% of whom support the Grenada rescue, used that incident as a pretext to organize a "Central American Activities Week." A teach-in was held on November 10 under the nauseating title *The American Empire: Crumbling and Desperate*. The Teach-in featured the same old worn-out standbys: Films narrated by Ed Asner, speeches by professors John Henry, Bob Curry, Duane Campbell, sponsorship by the Socialist Party, etc. All the propaganda aimed at gullible students.

Of course, these Marxist professors do not represent American public opinion. However, such intellectuals have a corrosive effect in the long run. Already, formerly responsible newspapers such as the *Washington Post* and the *Sacramento Bee* have become extremely liberal propaganda tools. Then gradually, more and more Americans begin to turn against their own society, their own values, their own interests.

The most implausible excuse is used to revive the specters of American imperialism and of the ubiquitous CIA. What mythology! The true facts about our military and intelligence capabilities surfaced in 1980, when Satan America was incapable of properly flying and landing half a dozen helicopters into a patch of undefended desert - at the cost of 8 military lives. But what do you expect, after years of neglect and criticism?

Item: In January 1981, Iran finally freed the American hostages. I was in Australia at that time, so I picked up the local Melbourne dailies for a sample of public reaction to the event. To my great sadness, I searched in vain for sympathy among the letters-to-the-editor. Instead, I found statements like the following: "No sympathy for the US. The US has supported and continues actively to support governments which have committed far worse atrocities (than Khomeini)". Or: "America cannot complain about the treatment of its hostages after the torture it inflicted on Vietnam with the use of sprays which even Hitler banned." Or: "...for years the Americans provided instructors in torture to countries like Iran and Chile. It is now the case of the pupil turning on the teacher."

While there were many more such vitriolic anti-American statements, I couldn't find one single letter to counterbalance these terrible accusations. These are our Australian friends. The people for whose freedom 4,000 Americans died in the battle of the Coral Sea.

I do not believe that we taught the Iranians or the Chileans torture techniques. I do not believe that we engaged in chemical warfare in Vietnam to any significant degree. I do know that we restrained ourselves in that conflict because we were too civilized to go all out, and that we could have created far greater destruction had we had the morality of the Soviets, or even the French. I do not believe that we are more responsible than other countries, including Australia, for the oppression that occurs in right-wing countries. It is in the nature of governments to support friendly governments. Just because the British were in alliance with the Czar during the Napoleonic wars does not make them responsible for serfdom. American military and economic aid goes to a variety of countries, including friendly as well as neutralist regimes. There is no proof that it includes support for repressive practices. On the contrary, the aid is frequently contingent upon a policy of democratization, as was the case in Zimbabwe and is belatedly the case in El Salvador. We have no monopoly on war-time atrocities. We had our Lt. Calley and the Australians had their Breaker Morant. Chances are we have fewer war criminals than most.

I could go on with my list of unfair and unfounded accusations, always singling out this country and its foreign policy for blame, always attributing the world's ills to Satan America. But

these few examples amply illustrate what is, in my view, an indisputable fact: world-wide anti-Americanism.

But even more tragic than foreign anti-Americanism is, in my opinion, the contaminating effect this has had on domestic public opinion. What has happened is perhaps a macro-Stockholm effect, i.e. the victim siding with his tormentor: Americans have been maligned and held hostage to world public opinion for so long that they have increasingly internalized those negative attitudes, becoming convinced that they must be really guilty, or else why would they be constantly picked upon? Thus when the Iranians took the hostages, the immediate knee-jerk reaction of my colleagues at Cal State was to organize a teach-in, *in support of Iranian foreign students*. Later, many of the hostages' relatives were more sympathetic to their Iranian captors than to the Carter government and its attempts to free them.

GUILT AS A COP-OUT
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I am not sure why so many Americans - primarily liberal intellectuals at first, increasing numbers of others in recent years - prefer to see their own society and government as the guilty party in each international confrontation. But I have a hunch that it has something to do with psychological weakness. Psychologically, it is more difficult to sustain a sense of self-righteousness and moral outrage at injustice perpetrated against oneself, than it is to assume that somehow one, *oneself*, was "asking for it."

Raped women and other victims of crime often develop profound guilt feelings. Attribution theory teaches us that the victim of mishap, aggression or injustice invariably asks himself, "What did I do wrong?" It is difficult to sustain the conviction that we may not have done anything wrong at all to cause the calamity that has befallen us. It means that we are simply the victim of great injustice either human or cosmic (the latter is called "bad luck").

Besides, such a conviction requires one to remain in a long-term state of rage, and this is draining. So, because we are lazy, we take the easy way out: we assign guilt to ourselves. If we are bullied and raped and cheated, it can only be because we deserve it, i.e. because we have been bad. The religious variant of this is that God is punishing us for our sins.

For America to believe in its own badness is a terrible thing. The rage that follows from the perception of injustice is a healthy thing. One must feel anger when victimized. That is the only healthy way to cope, to mobilize one's energies and to pull oneself out of the hole. The opposite reaction - the guilt-ridden acquiescence with one's detractors - is the surest way to ruin.

\* \* \* \* \*

Today, two definitions of America compete for world supremacy: the current and fashionable one is that of a domineering and imperialistic bully that exploits other countries and is vastly richer and more powerful than anyone else.

The other one is the image I grew up with: After World War Two, America, although wealthier and mightier than the rest of the world combined, took upon itself the burdensome and costly role of saving the world. *Pax Americana* was an era of unprecedented peace and prosperity for more people and more countries than ever before. America's role in the world was benevolent and generous, benefitting others more than America itself. Through huge amounts of foreign aid, through two major wars fought to contain communism and through costly defensive alliances,

America managed to selflessly raise continents from the ashes of war, to bring billions of people into the age of high mass consumption and to improve life chances for a majority of mankind.

Today, neither of these two conceptions of America is correct. While I have no doubt that America remains a benevolent society where freedom, peace and prosperity continue to thrive, it is no longer in a position to either save the world, *or to oppress it*.

Per capita income exceeds ours in a dozen countries already. Our economic, military and political problems are mounting. Today, we own 20% of the world's wealth, 4% of its population. The metaphors that come to mind are more humbling. "Paper Tiger" perhaps, or "helpless, pitiful giant." Or the "Great PX", as sociologist Charlie Moskos has called the country. In other words, come and get it while the getting is good, and then throw away the empty shell. Or yet another one, from Robert Redford's fictional book in the movie *The Way We Were*: "A County Made of Ice Cream." Alexander Solzhenitsyn compares us to a cow being slowly milked empty.

In my view, the chief danger facing this country is its vulnerability, its inability to sustain a sense of collective purpose or identity; its centrifugal tendency rooted in a marvelous but precarious pluralism; in sum, its inability to develop the same sort of self-interest and self-love found in every viable community.

When I toured Australia a year ago, I found an enormous amount of self-love and self-pride among Australians, nauseating as a matter of fact. The French love themselves and their culture, totally convinced of their superiority to all others. The same goes for the Dutch; and the Canadians; and the Russians. Travel anywhere, and you will find pride, patriotism and collective self-love everywhere.

But in America, patriotism is a code word for bigotry and jingoism. It is associated with people who are generally considered to be buffoons, such as Archie Bunker or the Reverend Jerry Falwell. When I call for a return to a healthy sense of patriotism, I am often ridiculed as a vulgar flag-waving chauvinist or worse, as a right-wing militarist. That totally misses the point. I speak to you as a sociologist. I know that without a healthy sense of self-love, a sense of we-feeling, a collective consciousness, collective symbolism and pride in one's place in the world, no community survives for very long.

I see America as a society that has a tendency to tear itself apart instead of pulling itself together. A society that has not permitted its last six Presidents to serve out their terms. A society that is becoming increasingly ungovernable. A society that is having trouble saving itself, and yet is accused of trying to rip off the world. A society that is kind, confused, vulnerable - and yes, weak, at least for now. A society that has rehashed old issues and criticized itself sufficiently for now, and now to develop a sense of self-respect and compassion. America must now pull itself together and start believing in itself again. I have lived in countries which blew it. I hope that America will learn from the errors of others, and not repeat them (*Sacramento Forum*, Nov. 1983; Feb. 1984).

#### 6. Anti-America Cartoon Panders to "Useful Idiots."

*On January 10, 1986, the Sacramento Bee published a cartoon which juxtaposed two lists of countries where human rights were being violated: On the Left was the list of violations for which the Soviet Union was responsible, and on the Right a much longer list of human rights violations which were America's fault. The two lists are reproduced below. They show the warped thinking behind them. I promptly sent the letter, below, to the Sacramento Bee, and they printed it within the next few days.*



<p>WE DEMAND HUMAN RIGHTS IN:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• USSR</li> <li>• AFGHANISTAN</li> <li>• NICARAGUA</li> <li>• CUBA</li> <li>• POLAND</li> </ul>	<p>WE DEMAND HUMAN RIGHTS IN:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PHILIPPINES</li> <li>• THAILAND</li> <li>• HAITI</li> <li>• CHILE</li> <li>• PARAGUAY</li> <li>• GUATEMALA</li> <li>• PUERTO RICO</li> <li>• SOUTH AFRICA</li> <li>• HONDURAS</li> <li>• EL SALVADOR</li> <li>• PALESTINE</li> <li>• ILLEGALS (USA)</li> <li>• RED SKINS (USA)</li> <li>• BLACKS (USA)</li> </ul>
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Source: *Sacramento Bee/Excelsior*, Mexico City: Jan. 10, 1986

Once again I call to your attention how dishonest and destructive anti-American cartoons like the one on your January 10 editorial page are-- equating American and Communist human rights violations.

Everything is wrong with that cartoon. First, by listing more pro-western than communist human rights violators, the impression is created that the West is guiltier. Why not add Hungary, Yugoslavia, Rumania, Czechoslovakia, North Korea, Cambodia plus the fifty or so other countries that belong on that list, not to mention the 90% or so of all terrorist acts committed in the name of left-wing causes and abetted by the Communist world?

Second, what are Puerto-Rico, Thailand and so on doing on "our" list? Isn't it obvious that places like Puerto-Rico are *fortunate* to be in the US sphere, and not the opposite, as the vast majority of its people realizes?

Thirdly, if one were to tally the number of people tortured and murdered by pro-West and by Communist regimes, the latter would come out ahead 100 to 1. All the atrocities of the Shahs, the Pinochets, the Marcos and the Somozas of the world are dwarfed by one single Stalinist or Maoist purge - I know, I was there. In Afghanistan alone the Red Army has killed more people than has the US in all of its alleged imperialist wars put together.

Finally, America is not responsible for the sins of the world. Far from being responsible for

Apartheid, we are in fact pressuring South Africa to abolish it, something few other countries even bother to do.

The implication that all human rights violations in right-wing countries are somehow America's fault is the most vulgar and enduring myth of our age. The belief that the USSR and the US are morally equivalent is a patent lie. Yet millions of Americans have begun to subscribe to this falsehood, becoming what, Lenin called "useful idiots." And overseas, anti-Americanism has become the new racism, America-bashing the new sport, increasingly bloody, too.

I can see why the Mexican press would enjoy this sport, but why does the Bee encourage it by reprinting such sleaze? (*Sacramento Bee*, Jan. 1986).

### 7. America is Finished. Japan Takes Over

*During the 1980s, before its decade-and-a-half long stagnation, Japan could do no wrong, both in its own arrogant eyes and in the eyes of many envious American businessmen. I remember a conversation I had with a Japanese tourist in Europe at that time. Upon hearing that I was an American, she expressed nothing but contempt. She said, and I quote, that "the trouble with Americans is that they are lazy."*

*On July 18, 1988, Insight Magazine had an extensive cover story documenting the Japanese economic miracle. The article itself was somewhat balanced, but the Japanese leaders who were interviewed spoke about America rudely, negatively and chauvinistically. They were confident that it was only a matter of a few years before they would overtake us. I was pretty disgusted, so I fired off the following letter, which Insight did not print.*

The following criticism is leveled not at your fine magazine or your excellent articles on Japan (July 18), but at the overblown Japanese nationalistic sentiment documented in that issue:

Japan the new Rome? America finished? Come on, let's look at the *facts* and not the fantasies: our GNP remains two and a half times theirs; our population is over twice theirs, and the disparity is increasing; our land area is twenty five times theirs; our mineral resources and arable land dwarf theirs; militarily, Japan couldn't defeat Connecticut.

So once again Japan's success is going to its head, as it did half a century ago. It is easy to predict where such *hubris* is likely to lead, as it did half a century ago.

### 8. So Tell us: Why is Japan so Much Better Than America?

*On May 20, 1993, the Wall Street Journal published a letter in which a whole bunch of "experts" protested against the Journal's alleged anti-Japanese attitude. But these high-fallutin' "experts" didn't say anything - they just sent a list of 33 names of somewhat famous university professors. So I wrote the following letter to the Journal myself, blasting this group. They didn't print it.*

This is in response to the odd letter on May 20 criticizing your Japanese coverage and signed by 33 people. Judging from the half dozen names I recognize, these must be academicians who somehow know something about Japan. But surely it is the epitome of arrogance for them to assume that a contentless statement affixed to a number of names has any meaning. Are these professors so intellectually lazy and self-important as to feel that their 33 names represent an

argument? Come on guys (and dolls), share your wisdom with us and tell us what it is that the *Wall Street Journal* is doing wrong. You say that the coverage is “slanted,” “misinformed,” replete with “bogus claims,” etc. Without specifics, your letter is meaningless. As educators, you surely must know that you can only educate by explaining and arguing. That’s the only way you’ll have an impact. Or do you consider it to be below your dignity to stoop to that lowly chore?

### 9. Absurd Claim that America is the Most Criminal Country in the World

On March 13, 1993, the *Sacramento Bee* published an article written by Tim Weiner, a reporter for Knight-Ridder Newspapers, under the following headline: *US IS WORLD’S MOST VIOLENT PLACE, SENATE PANEL SAYS*. This utter hogwash prompted me to write the following statement, which I didn’t have a chance to clean up and submit for publication.

This article describes the recent report of the Senate Judiciary Committee, chaired by Sen. Joe Biden, D-Del. (The gentleman who would run for President in 2008, TK). Some of the sentences in the article - presumably taken from the Senate report - are: “America is the most violent and self-destructive nation on earth,” “in 1990, the United States led the world with its murder, rape and robbery rates,” “violence against women is even more pervasive.”

This is outrageous. Where do you get such ideas? Both the senate report and the article based on it are utterly false. Let me just make the following points, *seriatim*:

1) A majority of the countries of the world have higher crime rates than we do. This includes, just for starters, *all* of Latin America (that’s 30 or 40 countries), *all* of Africa (another 30 or 40 countries), *most* of Eastern Europe (that’s another 20 or 30 countries), plus various countries elsewhere in the world, including Europe and Asia. Only in comparison with most of the other developed countries do we look bad. In other words, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, most of (North)western Europe and some Asian countries, for example Japan, Singapore and Korea, have lower crime rates than we do. A total of 30 countries maybe. You finally admit this later, in the body of the article, in a confused way, when you write that the “U.S. has no equals *among developed nations*.”

2) You lump together widely different crimes, which makes your numbers meaningless: You write that in 1990 1.8 million Americans were murdered, raped, robbed or assaulted. Why don’t you add that murder accounted for only *one percent* of this number, and that simple assault accounted for a larger proportion than murder, rape, robbery and aggravated assault *combined*?

3) You don’t even seem to grasp the basic concept of *rate*: of course America has a large *absolute* number of crimes. We are a large country. The total number of crimes in small countries like Guatemala and El Salvador may not be as high as ours, but I can assure you that their rates are much higher. Your chances of being murdered, raped, mugged or kidnaped in Mexico and in other Central American countries are five to ten times higher than in the US.

4) Differences in record keeping and in police practices make many of these statistics meaningless: For example, you write that “violence against women is even more prevalent in the U.S.”

This is a demographic statement. There is no evidence that women are treated better in Japan or in Italy than in America. The opposite is probably true.

5) There is no evidence that our crime rate in 1990 was the highest ever. Perhaps the highest since the FBI began to keep a record. However, there was certainly more crime in America on the Western frontier (the "Wild West"), in the South until the 1940s (the Ku Klux Klan had a free hand), and during Prohibition. Again, if the total number of murders is higher in 1990 than it was fifty or hundred years ago, this means nothing, since the population has doubled or tripled since then.

6) Finally, the report's true intent comes out at the end of your article: The object is partisan politics. The report blames President Bush for our high rate of crime. This makes little sense, since Bush - and conservatives in general - are more concerned about law and order than are Democrats such as Senator Biden, who prefer to decriminalize various offenses such as marijuana smoking, which they consider to be "victimless."

### 10. A Well-known America-Hater Departs

*On January 17, 1991, Alexander Cockburn wrote his valedictorian article in the Wall Street Journal. Cockburn had been the Journal's token Left-winger. For years he had been featured on the Journal's editorial pages criticizing America, Reagan, Bush, our foreign policy and everything conservative. Over the years, the Journal had printed several of the letters which I had written in rebuttal of Cockburn's venomous anti-Americanism. On January 18, I sent one more such missive, reproduced below, but the Journal chose not to print it.*

Alexander Cockburn's parting shots (January 17) are a concise summary of the general perspective he shares with a majority of my academic colleagues. Over the years, Cockburn's arguments have been fundamentally flawed for one simple reason: They are derived from a false paradigm.

The mindless group-think that characterizes left-wing intellectuals (a redundancy in itself) is based on two sets of assumptions: One is the deconstructionist premise that there is no objective truth or reality. The other is an amorphous left-socialist, collectivist, anti-American, anti-capitalist ideology. The fact that the former relativistic and the latter absolutist assumptions contradict each other never seems to bother these people.

The left-wing intellectual's misfortune is that reality and truth do, in fact, exist. Thus, false theories are eventually replaced by paradigms which possess (greater) empirical validity.

Cockburn's January 17 editorial contains many *empirical* errors. He states that "the U.S. and the U.K. are usually the most determined to sabotage sanctions." The opposite is the truth. He states that a disproportionate number of American soldiers are "pressed" into the military. The opposite is true, since we are one of the few countries without a draft. He writes that they will use badly made weapons. The opposite is the truth. Our weapons are the best in the world. He maintains that there is nothing morally reprehensive (sic) about doing things under constraint, forgetting that half of mankind has been willing to die for freedom -- i.e. just for the right to refuse. He attributes intransigence to George Bush. The opposite is true, Bush being flexible but Saddam Hussein intransigent. He attributes the expression "new world order" to the Nazis (an attempt at guilt by association). Wrong again: Hitler spoke only of a *New Order*.

I could go on. The bottom line is that Cockburn and his allies are basically America-haters - - Anglophobes. Their entire analysis is grounded in an irrational hostility to their own society, no matter what. They are malcontents who hate the world as they see it. Their problem is

psychological, although they rationalize it at the political level. Having created a political model which satisfies them psychologically, they fail to see that the model is in error.

Today, socialism is disappearing as a viable alternative to capitalism. It has become apparent that the free enterprise system, liberal democracy and Anglo-Saxon civilization are the greatest accomplishments of mankind so far. Thus, people like Cockburn are becoming the equivalent of Freudians, Neo-Nazis, or the Flat Earth Society: they will go to their graves believing in the wrong theory. To be a confirmed deviant is one thing. To persist while being demonstrably wrong is pathetic.

### 11. If You Drive an American Car, that Says it All!

*Here is another example of the automatic distaste for things American typical of many "modern" people these days. This experience happened in 1993.*

I just I met this nice, modern, female judge. Don introduced me to her. We are going to do a triathlon together - I'll be the runner, she is the cyclist and Don is the swimmer. In preparation for the race, we met at a downtown bar this afternoon. The race is next Saturday.

I drove to the place, parked, and entered the bar. Right away I saw Don sitting at a table in the back, and this fairly attractive, tall brunette sitting next to him. As I sat down next to them, I introduced myself to the female judge. Her reply was so revealing that I am jotting it down, now that I am back home. Here is what she said:

"Hi, Tom, nice to meet you. So you are the one who drives an American car."

Apparently, she had noticed me driving my Chevrolet when I came by the bar and parked. This fact then became my determining identifier. In her mind, I am, first and foremost, an American-car-owner. I may also be a sociology professor, a Hungarian immigrant, etc., but above all I drive an American car. And as everybody knows, it's not cool to drive an American car. It is best to drive a Saab, or a Volvo, or a BMW, or a Lexus or a Mercedes (which is what she drives, I believe). Even a Nissan or a Honda will do. But an American car? Definitely gauche!

Now don't misunderstand me: I am not talking about either the quality or the cost of different cars. True, American cars are not very good any more. True, American cars are cheaper. So if you can afford it, you are better off buying a foreign car. But I am talking about something else. I am talking about *culture*. Even if Ford and General Motors started making good cars again, people like this female judge would not buy one. For any self-respecting quiche-and-brie liberal, only a foreign car will do, even a lousy foreign car that breaks down all the time, like Fiat or Peugeot.

I guess I am done for, in the eyes of this attractive female judge. I drive a Chevrolet. The stereotype will never wash away. She may even suspect me of being a Republican, my God!

But two can play the game. So here is how I have *her* pegged: She is forty-something single white female, quite well off (how much do judges make?), still attractive. She is having the time of her life, doing triathlons, probably flying to Paris and to Baja a lot, dating various guys, not a thought about having children, emancipated and P.C. as can be.

Me, I am the slob with the American car.

## 12. Dutch Professor Doesn't Like America Any More

*By March 2002, half a year after 9-11, our war on terrorism was under way. For starters, we had invaded Afghanistan, so as to defeat the Taliban and go after Osama Bin Laden. While most of the world had expressed compassion for America immediately after 9-11, the hypocrisy soon became apparent. Everyone commiserated with us - until we started to fight back. Like Golda Meir said about the Jews: "The World loves us when we are dying; but we prefer to live." It is the same with Americans.*

*So now that we were taking the bull by the horns, many of our fair-weather allies no longer liked us. An example occurred in early March, when Dutch political science professor Van Wolferen published an article titled, "Doubts are mounting in Europe," in the New York Times. In this article, Van Wolferen basically criticized America and especially the Bush Administration for being too militaristic, and the gist of his article was that America had ceased being a good country, which it had been in the past.*

*On March 7, I wrote the following reaction to his article, and sent it to him privately. I also told him that I was coming to Holland in a month, and I offered to hold a debate/seminar at the University of Amsterdam for his students. He never replied.*

Although your article contains much that is commendable, and it is palpably written from the heart, I fundamentally disagree with you. I hope that you will have the patience to read on and follow my reasoning:

1) In the first place, you vastly exaggerate the importance of some of President Bush's utterances and some of his administration's actions. His "axis-of-evil" statement was merely the simplistic and misdirected utterance of a relatively unsophisticated person. And regarding America's current military muscle-flexing in response to the September 11 attack: this is no different from this country's foreign policy since at least World War Two. Many if not most previous administrations have a history of very strong military intervention overseas, ranging from "enlightened" democrats such as Truman, Kennedy to "reactionary" republicans such as Nixon and Reagan, from moderates such as Johnson and Eisenhower to conservatives such as the Bushes. Let's face it, this country's military interventions overseas have been practically uninterrupted since 1941. There was just a temporary period of timidity after Vietnam, culminating in Carter's paralysis during the 1979 Teheran hostage crisis.

2) Not much has changed, or will change, as a result of September 11. Most Americans are perfectly aware of the fact that there is no war. All reasonably intelligent people understand that the management of international terrorism will remain an ongoing affair, just like the management of crime, drug trafficking and other social problems that are to be controlled, not eradicated (although one could hypothesize an analogy with high-seas piracy -- a one-time scourge which the civilized world, spearheaded by the British navy, did put an end to).

3) America is a bit younger and less sophisticated than Europe. So we use the "war" metaphor a lot. We have been waging a "war" on poverty since the sixties, a "war" on drugs, etc. Orwell notwithstanding, such loose use of language may not have the dire consequences which you predict.

4) About half of the American people (including my darling daughter) view George W. Bush as a buffoon. While I did not vote for him, I am now on the fence. In view of what happened on September 11, I am actually glad that we elected an uncomplicated cowboy, a John Wayne. Right now, that may be just what we need: It's simple, really: when you are attacked, you must defend yourself. Neville Chamberlain did not understand that. And George Orwell, whom you quote, also said that pacifists were *de facto* aiding Hitler.

5) One more thing about the military angle: The bombing of Afghanistan over the past few months, I have found necessary, but not admirable. However, the current ground offensive by a few thousand American troops evokes in me the deepest feelings of admiration and patriotism. When I think of these brave young men enduring and dying near the Himalayas, when I think of the heroic actions of these men in the farthest reaches of the globe, I am able to achieve a sounder perspective upon my own petty concerns. Home mortgage, car trouble, headache, argument with spouse or colleague -- how do I dare think of these as important, in comparison with what these young men are doing?

6) You may not like the jingoism, but this is how it is: America is Rome -- for better or worse. Pax Americana, for now. That's what these young men are trying to enforce in the snow caves of Afghanistan.

7) But the Roman analogy probably does not please you. Many have long equated US imperialism and militarism with fascism. Many of my stupid academic colleagues here do. I find it absurd to allege any commonality between America and the Nazis or the Fascists. At worst, our chauvinism can be compared to that of France under, say, Napoleon III -- when that country was throwing its jingoistic weight around the world (in Italy, Mexico, etc.) and finally fell flat on its face in 1870. You see, America, like France, lacks the temperament for ruthless, efficient imperialism.

8) You express sympathy and admiration for America *in the past*, a country that was "once a shining example to the world...(but) the United States (has changed) into a country that its admirers no longer recognize." This puzzles me. In every conceivable respect, this society is now far more enlightened and humane than it was in the past. Race relations and respect for diversity are at an all-time optimum, as are gender equality, acceptance of homosexuality and all other measures of tolerance and civility. To be sure, Holland may still be slightly ahead of the US in this regard, but surely the America you admire for having saved European democracy in the 20th century was nowhere nearly as benign and progressive as the country is today, no?

9) Finally, the economic issue. It never ceases to amaze me how Europeans, who are every bit as affluent as we are, keep pointing the finger at America. I know, I know. America does not give quite as large of its GNP out in foreign assistance as some European countries do (although in absolute terms, we remain the largest donor of foreign aid, of course). Yes, I also know that per capita energy consumption is higher in the US than it is in most of Europe (although lower than in Canada and in *some* European and middle-Eastern countries). It is also common knowledge that the distribution of wealth is not quite as just in the US as it is in a few Northwestern European countries such as Holland. And, as the cliché has gone throughout the 1990s, "the rich keep getting richer and the poor are getting poorer." In fact, there has been a *slight* increase in inequality in recent years, but by and large the distribution of wealth within the US today is roughly the same as it was a century ago.

As to the deplorable *global* economic inequality: where is it written that the world's socio-

economic problems -- poverty, starvation, plague, exploitation, war -- are *particularly* attributable to the United States? If we must speak of guilt, okay: then, the Europeans (and Japan, and the rest of the affluent West) are every bit as guilty.

Sanctimonious Europeans must stop lecturing and pointing the finger at America, and admit that they are utterly in cahoots with the US in ripping off the rest of the world. The multi-nationals are headquartered on *both* sides of the Atlantic. America's GNP -- and thus the opulent and wasteful lifestyle of the populace allegedly at the expense of the starving Third World -- is about the same as that of the European community. In fact, Western Europeans live somewhat plusher lives, working less than Americans, and yet spending as much and benefitting from more leisure. The pot should not call the kettle black.

### 13. Nobel Prize Winner Harold Pinter finds America the Curse of Mankind

*In 2005, the British playwright Harold Pinter received the Nobel Prize for literature. He used the occasion of his acceptance speech to deliver one of the most virulent attacks on America I have ever read. I wrote the following rebuttal, which I submitted to the International Journal for World Peace for publication. They did not print. My rebuttal quotes many of Pinter's charges.*

The famous British playwright Harold Pinter received the 2005 Nobel Prize for Literature. His acceptance speech is a virulent anti-American diatribe which was widely publicized at the end of 2005. Pinter writes that "the crimes of the United States have been systematic, constant, vicious, remorseless... (and) the United States is...brutal, indifferent, scornful and ruthless." He indicts the totality of "United States foreign policy since the end of the Second World War." Past crimes include "the tragedy of Nicaragua, (where) the United States brought down the Sandinista government, (after which) the casinos moved back in, free health and free education were over. Big business returned with a vengeance."

"This policy was... conducted throughout the world...The United States... engendered every right-wing military dictatorship in the world after the end of the Second World War...Indonesia, Greece, Uruguay, Brazil, Paraguay, Haiti, Turkey, the Philippines, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Chile."

"America's favored method...is to infect the heart of the country...establish a malignant growth and watch the gangrene bloom. When the populace has been subdued - or beaten to death - and your own friends, the military and the great corporations sit comfortably in power, you say that democracy has prevailed."

"The invasion of Iraq was a bandit act, an act of blatant state terrorism... Inspired by a series of lies upon lies...As every single person here knows, the justification for the invasion...was that Saddam Hussein possessed...weapons of mass destruction. We were assured that was true. It was not true...(Now) at Guantanamo Bay (there are) hundreds of people detained without charge for over three years...We have brought torture, cluster bombs, depleted uranium, innumerable acts of random murder, misery, degradation and death to the Iraqi people." No question about it, according to the Nobel laureate America is the great, evil, Satanic empire.

Many may find that Pinter's diatribe has merit. In my view, however, he is hopelessly wrong. First, let me make four brief comments about Pinter's specific accusations:

(1) It is true that the Bush administration's charade about Saddam Hussein's Weapons of Mass Destruction was an embarrassment. The lie was transparent and obvious from the start, and it was unnecessary.

(2) All the other foreign interventions mentioned by Pinter - from Truman's intervention in Greece to our support of anti-Communism in Indonesia and Reagan's assistance to the Contras - are well-known and controversial. The Right and the Left have been arguing over them for decades, the Right seeing them as part of America's long and valiant struggle against Communism and for freedom, while the Left agrees with Pinter.

(3) Pinter's list is selective. He does not mention the Marshall Plan, other massive U.S. foreign aid programs, the rebuilding of Europe and Japan into free and affluent societies, Eisenhower's opposition to the English-French-Israeli invasion of Egypt in 1956, America's bleeding in Korea and Vietnam, or Clinton's rescue of Muslim populations in the former Yugoslavia.

(4) Pinter, like other rabid America-haters as well as many on the far right, vastly exaggerate the magnitude of American power. Both extremists see America as the cause of everything that happens in the world. Like Satan (according to Pinter) or God (according to some conservatives), America is viewed as almighty.

The remainder of this article is a refutation of Pinter's indictment and a demonstration that America's role in the world is necessary and good.

### Pre-eminence vs. Hegemony. Britain vs. Ancient Rome.

In order to understand America's role in the world, it is useful to view it in historical perspective. Not a day goes by without the media reminding us that America is the most powerful country in the world. The over-used platitude is that we are the only superpower.

America is only the latest country to be the most powerful one, to be "Number One." There have been others throughout history. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Britain was Number One, and 2000 years ago ancient Rome was the most powerful society, at least in the western world. These two examples provide us with two models, The British model and the Roman model.

### The British model: Pre-eminence but no Hegemony

A century ago, Britain was the most powerful country. While it was "number one," it did not have hegemony. It could not impose its will on the rest of the world alone. In order to defeat its enemies it needed allies. It relied on coalitions with other nations to carry out its foreign policy and to protect its national interests. When threatened by Napoleonic France, it used the Austro-Germans as allies. When threatened by Germany, it switched its allegiance to France. These allies were themselves powerful, although slightly less powerful than Britain. For example, in the Franco-British alliance known as the entente cordiale, France's power and empire were only slightly inferior to Britain's. For most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Western world was relatively peaceful and prosperous thanks to an arrangement which became known as the Concert of Europe.

In this arrangement, Britain was *primus inter pares*, first among equals. It needed coalitions with other slightly less powerful nations to achieve its objectives. It enjoyed primacy but not

hegemony. Its power was relative.

### The Roman model: Hegemony

Unlike Britain, Rome ruled alone. After the fall of Carthage, Roman power in the Mediterranean was unchallenged. It enjoyed not merely primacy, but a near-monopoly of power. Its power was almost absolute. In sum, a hegemonic nation enjoys uncontested power. If necessary, it can carry out its foreign policy and impose its will alone. Its power is *absolute*. It is nearly invincible, i.e. it can prevail even when acting unilaterally, without the support of allies.

Which model applies to America - the British model or the Roman model? Is America a hegemonic power, or is it merely number one - *primus inter pares*?

To answer this question, let me distinguish between the era preceding the implosion of the Soviet Union a decade and a half ago, and the preceding period, which includes the Cold War and the two World Wars. Before the collapse of the Soviet Union, America had become the most powerful country from about the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. America was far from hegemonic. Both its economic and military might were contested by Japan and the Nazis. Later, it faced the Soviet challenge, i.e. a superpower which was inferior to America economically, but rivaled it militarily. Only by relying on complex alliances was America able to prevail against its enemies.

One could argue that since the demise of the USSR, America has changed from being merely pre-eminent to being hegemonic, i.e. from the British model to the Roman model. Militarily, this may be the case, as America spends more than half of the world's military budget. However, America's economic power continues to be contested by Japan and a united Europe, among others. The Euro is on its way to replacing the dollar as the preferred international currency.

Then, too, China's meteoric rise, if sustained for another few decades, may eclipse America both economically and militarily. If and when that happens, one will be able to ask, again, whether China is merely pre-eminent - *primus inter pares* - or hegemonic, in any event replacing America as the next superpower.

But for now America is still number one. Is it merely the pre-eminent superpower in the world, or does it enjoy hegemony?

### Harold Pinter and George W. Bush agree with each other: America enjoys hegemony.

Typical of the anti-American Left, Harold Pinter is convinced that America is an (evil) hegemonic power, ruling the world essentially by itself and for itself. And, lo and behold, this is precisely what neo-conservatives like Paul Wolfowitz and the other architects of Bush's foreign policy also believe - except for the "evil" part! According to Pinter, "the United States' actions throughout the world made it clear that it had concluded that it had *carte blanche* to do what it liked... (and) its official declared policy is now defined as 'full-spectrum dominance,' (which) means control of land, sea, air and space and all attendant resources."

Here, Pinter refers to what has become known as the Wolfowitz doctrine: A 1992 Department of Defense Planning Guidance authored by Paul Wolfowitz and Lewis Libby states that "our number one mission in the world, now that we are the sole superpower is to make sure that we stay that way." (See Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia: Wolfowitz Doctrine). The Project for the New American Century published in 2000 states that "At present the United States faces no global rival. America's grand strategy should aim to preserve and extend this advantageous position as far into the future as possible." (Rebuilding America's defenses: Strategy, Forces and Resources for a New Century, 2000: ii). Paul Wolfowitz was, again, on the team that produced this document.

Thus, Pinter and the architects of the Bush administration's foreign policy agree: They both

see America as the lone superpower which wishes and is capable of imposing its will upon the world. The only difference is that Pinter blames the U.S. government for pursuing this hegemonic policy, whereas the Bush administration embraces it. The fact that Pinter sees America as behind all of the world's injustices is proof that he views this country as a hegemon. Proof that the Bush administration also feels that it can go it alone as it pleases is found in its decision to wage war in Iraq in the face of near-unanimous worldwide condemnation, to remain the only major country to oppose the Kyoto Treaty, and to reject the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice over American war crimes.

This belief in our invincibility may have been engendered by our victory in the Cold War. The collapse of the Soviet Union must have caused great euphoria among the cold warriors, and then delusion.

In my view, both the America-hating Left and the patriotic right are delusional. They both attribute far more power to America than the country truly possesses. America's growing weaknesses are obvious for all to see. The country is choking on a war and the occupation of a primitive country of 24 million people (making any suggestion of invading Iran - four times larger - laughable). It is headed toward national bankruptcy, as its dual deficit (federal and balance of trade) is out of control and reducing it to the biggest debtor-country on earth. It is de-industrializing, as its automotive and aerospace industries are being replaced by those of Japan and Europe.

In an article published in the Fall 2004 issue of *Foreign Affairs* and titled "Riding for a Fall," Peter G. Peterson outlines the costs of being a superpower. According to the Chairman of the Council on Foreign Relations, "almost nobody believes that the U.S. current account deficit is sustainable for much longer than five years." We are headed for a "hard landing." (*Foreign Affairs*, September-October 2004: 111-125).

America's trajectory reminds me of that of another country that was briefly number one at one time - Spain. After reaching the zenith of world power in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Spain squandered its fabulous wealth, engaged in chronic deficit spending and began a gradual three-century long decline which reduced it to the one of the weakest, poorest and most under-developed countries of Europe in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Today, America is paying a heavy price for its role in the world, and it has its hands full. While the country is still *primus inter pares*, it is ridiculous to suggest that it is hegemonic. The news reminds us daily of the limitations of American power. Both Harold Pinter and the Bushites are wrong.

#### America's role in the world. Imperialism, Colonialism, Internationalism and Globalism.

True, America, as the *primus inter pares*, has a significant impact on the rest of the world. It has penetrated the global economy more deeply than any other country, simply due to the fact that the size of its national economy is still one fourth of the world. Its culture and political values fan out over the globe, again because of America's sheer size. Its foreign policy, buttressed by frequent military intervention and assistance from a multitude of allies, is in large part responsible for the character of the existing world system, such as it is. This system's most tragic shortcoming is its terrible inequality. Its greatest accomplishment to date is some semblance of order. What America does can be called imperialism. That is what Pinter and the Left like to call it.

What the Europeans (and the Japanese and some others) did until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is called colonialism. That is, the Portuguese, Spaniards, British, Dutch, French and Belgians conquered large swaths of Third World territory for exploitation. Then too, there were two Johnny-come-latelies to this game - Germany and Japan. Feeling deprived of their "place in the

sun,” these two imperialist have-nots went on a violent and genocidal 20<sup>th</sup> century rampage that culminated in World War Two.

Finally, there is, again, the mother of all imperialisms: Ancient Rome.

But is America the current great imperialist power? Or is it something different, albeit tinged with a dose of imperialism? University of Chicago sociologist George Herbert Mead distinguished between imperialism and internationalism. So we have the terms (1) imperialism, (2) colonialism and (3) internationalism. To these I add a fourth related concept: (4) globalism. In order to examine America’s role in the world, let me try to define these four terms.

(1) Imperialism occurs when a nation expands into or conquers other nations and attempts to incorporate them, thus forming an empire. The conquered and integrated territories may benefit from being integrated into the empire. Rome is the best example of this. A majority of the territories annexed by Rome were far better off belonging to the empire than being excluded from it. The judgment of Gibbon has often been quoted: “If a man were called to fix the period in the history of the world, during which the condition of the human race was the most happy and prosperous, he would, without hesitation, name that which elapsed from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus.” (See Encyclopedia American, 1988, Volume 23: 728). The period Gibbon refers to is the 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D., but the entire history of Rome can be seen as a process of civilizing surrounding areas, exporting a better quality of life, a higher standard of living, better health and longevity, literacy, technology, urbanization, the rule of law, and greater public safety.

To be sure, Pax Romana also had its costs, including great economic inequality, war, slavery, the curtailment of tribal freedom and the exploitation of the provinces for the enrichment of the Metropolis. However, the Roman world order was on balance far preferable to any alternative. This became obvious after the fall of Rome, which was followed by the Merovingian era, one of the darkest and most savage periods ever experienced in the Western world.

(2) Colonialism occurs when a society conquers other territories for exploitation, using them as provinces (from the Latin “for the victor”), without integrating them into a unified nation. Colonialism may benefit the mother country, and it devastates the colonies. In time, it may also be too costly and destructive to the mother country itself.

Colonialism is what the Europeans practiced from the 15<sup>th</sup> century through the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For hundreds of years, the British, the French, the Spaniards, the Dutch, the Portuguese and the Belgians enriched themselves on the backs of their colonies. However, in time, colonialism became too costly to the Europeans. The military burden came to exceed the economic returns. By the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, nearly every European country had jettisoned its colonies.

It is significant that the last one to do so was Portugal, the poorest country of Europe. Indeed, contrary to the simplistic leftist belief, there is a strong negative correlation between a country’s standard of living and its possession of colonies. The richest European countries are almost invariably those which never had colonies, for example Scandinavia, Switzerland, Germany and Austria. On the other hand, the poorest ones had vast colonial empires, for instance Spain and Portugal. And a third group consists of European countries which had many colonies and which were, while not terribly poor, nevertheless suffering from many adverse effects caused by those possessions, for example France, Britain, Belgium and the Netherlands. These countries all became far better off after they jettisoned their colonies.

The latest example of a country coming to its senses and disengaging from the burdensome and costly colonial/imperial business is Russia. By the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, that country came to

realize that it could simply no longer afford to support a “Soviet Union.” It saw the light. During the 1980s, many Russians were saying that the price of their Empire was too high. Northerners complained about having to subsidize the Caucasus and the Muslim nations without receiving any gratitude—just terrorist threats. They argued they should chuck the Empire and use these resources on their own decaying infrastructure in Russia. My point is simple: colonialism is bad business all around. As everyone knows, it is devastating to the colonies. What is less obvious but equally true, is that it can also ruin the mother country.

(3) Internationalism: As mentioned, this word was used by George Herbert Mead to distinguish between a nation’s nefarious expansionist activities (called “imperialism” and “colonialism”) and more positive international entanglements. Instead of trying to give a formal definition of this murky word, let me just say this: Internationalism is the opposite of isolationism and provincialism. It is the policy and attitude of a country that is deeply engaged with the rest of the world community, rather than withdrawn from it. It is good.

America was an isolationist country during most of its history until about World War One. It wanted no entanglements with Europe and the rest of the world. Then, it was gradually sucked into world affairs, gradually becoming more internationalist. This did not happen without a struggle. The country has often swung between Internationalism and Isolationism. America’s refusal to join the League of Nations was an isolationist reaction after World War One. Such reactions and the tendency to withdraw from world affairs continue to crop up, especially after painful international experiences such as the Vietnam War. However, the long-term trend has been for America to become less isolationist and more internationalist.

(4) Globalism: This is the most recent of the four terms I attempt to define. It is vague and controversial. Most generally, it refers to the increasing integration of the world economy into one unified system. This system is international capitalism, and it can be conceived as a group of concentric circles. At its core are the United States and the rest of the industrialized world, including Europe and Japan. Surrounding the core is a circle which consists of countries making economic progress, but not (yet) on a par with the core, for example the Asian “Tigers,” China, Mexico, some Eastern European countries, etc. Beyond that are found most Third World countries, in varying degrees of remoteness from the core. Many of the most peripheral and economically least developed countries are in Africa, although some are not, for example Haiti.

Globalism and globalization are controversial for one simple reason. There is disagreement as to whether or not the process is beneficial, and for whom. Figure I presents four possibilities:

Fig.I. Who benefits from Globalization?

		The Core	
		yes	No
The Periphery	yes	1	3
	no	2	4

In Figure I, cell #1 represents the view that the (capitalist) globalization of the world economy benefits everyone, including the affluent, highly industrialized nations of the world, and the developing Third World. The benefits to the Core are obvious. Our multinational corporations extract the Third World's natural resources and invest in its cheap labor force, thus reaping great profits. Globalism is also said to benefit the American consumer, who enjoys the inexpensive products manufactured in the Third World. The benefits to the Periphery are said to be jobs. When Nike invests in Indonesian workers, those workers may only earn a nickel an hour, but at least they have jobs. The alternative would be unemployment and much greater poverty, so the argument goes. This is the position of Western Business and its political representatives, for example the Republican Party. It is the "conservative" position.

Cell #2 represents the opposite position, namely that globalization is good for the Core, whose corporate elite reaps fat profits from the exploitation of the international proletariat and whose consumers also enjoy the inexpensive products manufactured in the Third World at slave wages. However, according to this position, the periphery is the victim of globalization. This is the Left position, associated with Marxism and other forms of anti-capitalism. It manifests itself through violent protests at the annual meetings of the I.M.F., the World Bank, the G-8, and other Core institutions.

Cell #3 is the position associated with some forms of isolationism in America and perhaps in Europe. Here are the people who feel that globalization is helping the Third World at the expense of the American (and European) economies. These are the people who complain about the outsourcing of American jobs to India and to Mexico. They also argue that globalization leads to a decline in the Western World's standard of living, as its workers must accept lower wages when competing with cheap Third World labor. They are also threatened by the immense worldwide northward migration of poor people of color moving to Europe and to North America. They feel that what may be profitable for Wal-Mart may not help the American working class.

Cell #4 is the last logical possibility. Here, globalization is viewed as bad for everybody. Some opponents of globalization may feel that it not only exports Western jobs, but that it also needlessly industrializes, pollutes, disintegrates and harms the Third World which does not need to be developed, certainly not in the image of the West. For example, environmentalists point out that if China and India join the ranks of the industrialized world, the planet will most definitely choke to death.

#### Has America been a Colonialist or an Imperialist country in the world?

One thing is clear. All four processes I have defined, and especially globalization, lead to a weakening of the nation state and of national boundaries. This internationalization and globalization process can be positive, or it can be negative. The worst of the four phenomena I have defined is colonialism. This - the pure conquest and exploitation of some nations by others - is what the Europeans did for nearly five hundred years. They plundered the Third World for their own gain, rarely returning any tangible benefits to their colonies. Granted, in some cases European colonization lead to improved conditions. For example, Britain left a positive legacy in India which enables that country to carry on as the world's largest and one of its most stable democracies. The French built impressive cities and infrastructures in such places as Casablanca and the Suez canal. More often than not, though, the Europeans reduced their colonies to a wasteland, as did the Belgians in the Congo and the Iberians in much of Latin America.

Imperialism also has a bad rap, but as I argued when referring to Rome, if by imperialism

we mean the incorporation of less developed nations into a more developed one, and the ensuing economic development of those nations, as done by Rome, then imperialism can be positive.

America has rarely engaged in colonialism, and neither is it much of an imperialist. True, during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the country briefly joined the European rush to invade the tropics. Examples of American imperialism include the permanent take-over of Puerto Rico and Hawaii, the temporary protectorate over the Philippines and Cuba, plus a few other forays into Asia and the Pacific.

There is also the matter of how the (South) west was divided up. It is now fashionable among liberals to say that much of California and the Southwest was “stolen” from Mexico. However, this is a very tendentious argument. In fact, in the 19th century, the West was up for grabs. Many countries vied for it, wanting to colonize, occupy and ultimately “own” it, including Spain, Mexico, Britain, France, and the United States. No matter which of these countries would end up in possession on the territory, it would constitute annexation. In sum, compared to Europe, America’s imperialism has been negligible.

A huge difference between the two is this: European nations each colonized countries and areas that were ten to two hundred times larger and more populous than they were themselves. Indonesia is hundred times larger than the Netherlands. The Congo is hundred times larger than Belgium. Brazil is hundred times larger than Portugal. Britain, Spain and France each controlled parts of the world that were hundred times larger than they were themselves. The magnitude of European colonialism was astounding.

America, on the other hand, was itself a gigantic continental country. America’s business was largely internal, domestic. It rarely engaged in foreign military conquest, as did the Europeans. On a rare occasion, the country also engaged in some foreign “gunboat diplomacy,” but this is dwarfed by the record of European colonialism.

### Has America been a colonialist or an imperialist country at home?

America’s alleged crimes against the native North-American population is a separate topic. How are we to judge this? Morality is a relative and comparative matter. When judging a behavior, one has to ask how it compares with alternative behavior. Good and evil are not absolutes. They do not come in black and white, but in many shades of gray. The “morality scale” is continuous, not dichotomous. That is, the crucial moral question should never be whether someone is good or evil, but how good or evil, and compared to what? Put simply, morality is a matter of degree. Absolutists are too simple-minded. The anti-American Left expects perfection from America, but perfection does not exist. Harold Pinter is an absolutist. He does not deal in degrees of good and evil. It is not clear what his standards are.

True, when the European settlers populated the North American continent, they clashed with the local population. Native Americans were killed and died from disease in such large numbers that they became nearly extinct, which would justify the use of the term genocide. But what happened exactly in North America throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century?

Immigrants came to North America by the millions, most of them from Europe. They wrestled the continent out of the hands of the aboriginal population, either subduing or killing many of them. No other outcome could have been expected. As Jared Diamond demonstrates in his brilliant *Guns, Germs, and Steel* (W. W. Norton, 1999), when cultures collide, the technologically most advanced side wins. This is what Darwin’s “survival of the fittest” means for humans. It is not the fittest group that survives, but the group with the best weapons, which in turn is based on superior technology, larger concentrations of population, complex writing systems, highly productive agriculture and industry (Diamond, 1999).

Was the conquest of America by the European settlers evil, as it is now politically correct to aver?

Again, the question should not be whether it was evil, but how evil? What was the magnitude of the North American genocide compared to other conquests? I maintain that the evils perpetrated by practically all other conquering powers dwarf the violence which occurred on the American frontier. The Iberians destroyed several major civilizations in Latin America, causing the death of one hundred million aborigines. The violence perpetrated by the other European colonial powers throughout Africa, Asia and South America also greatly exceeds what happened in North America.

There is a tendency among Americans of all stripes, both on the right and on the left, to characterize their country as having a uniquely violent history and as still being exceptionally prone to violence. And thanks to Hollywood, the rest of the world has also lapped up this stereotype. "We are a violent society," Americans claim. "We have a tradition and a culture of violence," many like to say. More often than not, this is said with a sort of perverse pride, even by liberal and anti-gun intellectuals. Such people would never admit their secret admiration for America's violent character, professing to deplore it. However, they secretly admire it, because if true, it means that America is strong, manly, macho and not yet totally tamed, like effete Europe. Also, characterizing American history as exceptionally violent makes it appear more grandiose; more tragic to be sure, but also more heroic in many ways.

Unfortunately (or fortunately), the facts suggest that Americans themselves and foreigners both vastly exaggerate the violent nature of American society, culture and history. True, the Civil War was the bloodiest conflict up to that time. However, the Indian wars of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were minor skirmishes by world standards. Casualties in famous battles like Custer's defeat at the Little Big Horn always numbered in the hundreds, never in the thousands. Why, even in antiquity battle casualties were ten times greater.

Or take the American Revolution. There is no doubt that it was one of the most significant events in the history of the world, comparable to Athens' golden age under Pericles. However, in terms of casualties, it was a small affair, causing fewer than ten thousand combat deaths. Compare this with the French Revolution 13 years later, in which several hundred thousand people were killed, including fifty thousand under the Paris guillotine during the eight months of Robespierre's Terreur.

No, America has not been very violent. Americans who claim that it has are navel gazing, and foreigners who say likewise are either malicious or misinformed. The truth is that just about every other continent has a history of much greater violence. Even the radical America-hater Michael Moore admits as much (see his film *Bowling for Columbine*, 2003). Europeans have waged world wars that cost dozens of millions of lives. Latin America has always had the highest rate of private criminal violence of any continent. Russia's murder rate is ten times higher than that of the United States. True, there are slightly more gun deaths in the US than in Western Europe. However, the difference between the US and the European crime rates is negligible and declining.

Let us grant to critics of America that the treatment of Native Americans by European Americans borders on genocide. However, as just explained, this "genocide" is dwarfed by those which were committed by all other conquering nations throughout history. Furthermore, far more American Indians died from disease than from violence. Jared Diamond demonstrates that both in North and in South America, it was the native population's lack of resistance to smallpox and other European diseases which was the fundamental cause of their annihilation (Diamond, 1999).

Some go so far as to accuse the United States of having waged bacteriological warfare

against the Indians - for example deliberately distributing smallpox-infected blankets. While there may have been an occasional anecdotal instance of such behavior, the claim that this was a concerted policy is more likely to be another example of paranoid left historical revisionism. What Winston Churchill said about western democratic governance can also be said about American policy: It is terribly flawed and corrupt, except that the policies of all other countries are even more flawed and corrupt.

### The maintenance of World Order.

But let me get back to the main subject. Why does America meddle in the affairs of other countries? America's age of innocence formally ended when it entered World War One in 1917. The country had already been moving away from isolationism and towards globalism since the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with the notion of developing naval bases around the world to protect the shipment of American goods for sale overseas.

Before that, the country had been isolationist. As I conceded in the previous section, America had been somewhat of a bully at home and in its own backyard - the Western Hemisphere. But it certainly did not lead the charge in the colonization of the entire non-Western world. It was far more preoccupied with its own internal development. While America was rapidly becoming the world's new economic giant, it was militarily insignificant compared to the major European powers and compared to Japan. This utter lack of military interest resumed after World War One. Some world imperialist!

The situation finally changed after World War Two. The exhausted European powers lost their colonies. A vacuum arose, and so did the Cold War. Now, America took over the mantle, the responsibility and the burden of leadership from the Western European democracies. The United States began to fill the vacuum left behind by Britain in the Middle East, the French in Indochina, the Dutch in Indonesia, and so forth. From 1945 onwards, America's concerns became global. If internationalism and globalism are the indictment, I suppose America must plead guilty. However, anti-Americans like Harold Pinter call it imperialism, finding it profoundly evil. Is it?

First, let me concede that American foreign policy exhibits a tension between idealism and self-interest - which country's does not? In fact, America's foreign policy has probably contained a larger dose of idealism than that of most other great powers. Let us also concede that some of the idealism that has guided American foreign policy has been misguided - the best example of this being George W. Bush's current attempt to "export democracy" to Iraq. Granted, then: At least since the 1950s, America's foreign policy has been as much a product of national interest and political realism as that of idealism, as Hans Morgenthau explained.

The question is not whether America has been a global power for the past half century - the "essential nation," as some call it. The question is how and to what end it has done so. Has it done it through cruel and violent means? Has it done it to enrich itself at the expense of the world? Only if these two questions are answered affirmatively can we agree that America is the evil imperialist power described by Harold Pinter and his likes.

But the answers to these two questions are resounding no's. America's interventions in world affairs during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have been more often economic than military, i.e. of a non-violent nature. A few times, America did resort to war - in Korea, Vietnam and now in Iraq - paying a heavy price for it. The end served by America's role in the world is not self-enrichment, but the maintenance of the world order. All communities require law, order and law enforcement. In the absence of a world government, other means must be found to maintain

some semblance of order. *There has to be a cop.*

How did America become the cop? Granted, it was not elected to that role. In the absence of world government, the responsibility to maintain some semblance of order in the world automatically devolves upon those who are (1) able to do so, i.e. one or a few of the most powerful states, and those who (2) have some moral authority. America and its allies meet both qualifications better than any alternative nation or group of nations.

During much of antiquity, Rome was the order maintainer. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was largely a British-led coalition which did the job. The defeat of Napoleon and the subsequent century of relative world peace was the achievement of the coalition which first met at the Congress of Vienna in 1815. Foremost among the architects of a world order which lasted until 1914 was the Austrian foreign minister Metternich. Gradually, it was the Franco-British alliance which became the dominant force for stability in the world.

Are such world orders on balance beneficial or harmful to the world? The world orders which were maintained by such earlier powers were undoubtedly flawed in many ways. Slavery, inequality, colonialist and imperialist exploitation were rampant. Rome benefitted from the Pax Romana and Europe benefitted from the Pax Britannica, and many now assert that these regimes caused nothing but pain and suffering to the provinces and to the Third World, respectively. However, I argue that on balance, even the Pax Romana and the Pax Britannica did more good than harm in the world at large, not merely in the Metropolis. The 19<sup>th</sup> century was a century of peace, progress and growing prosperity not only for Europe but also for a majority of mankind. The world grew more orderly, secure and prosperous than it would have otherwise. Finally, from 1917 onwards, it was America which came to play an increasingly preponderant role in world order maintenance. Without America to the rescue, the other Western democracies would not have been able to defeat fascism and communism, and they surely seem to be utterly paralyzed in the face of 21<sup>st</sup> century terrorism.

#### America as the World order maintainer. Beneficial or harmful to the World? Selfish or altruistic?

Granted, America benefits from the status quo and from the maintenance of the existing order. However, that is by no means its major motivation. Just as the cop doesn't enforce the law for his own enrichment, but does so because that is his job, so also the order maintainer does his job for more than purely selfish reasons. He does it because he believes that civilization and the rule of law are preferable to chaos, prosperity better than poverty, scientific and technological progress preferable to stagnation and superstition.

Assuming the responsibility of world order maintainer is as much an act of altruism as one of selfishness. As I argued earlier, international entanglements - by whatever name - are often more costly than beneficial. The happiest and most prosperous countries have frequently been the ones without colonies, the countries which turned inwards and "cultivated their own gardens," for example Switzerland, Scandinavian and Canada. Countries which previously had empires, or attempted to build empires, and subsequently abandoned such aspirations generally became far happier and more prosperous, including all former European colonial powers, as well as Japan and Russia. And America, too, was in many ways better off during the days of isolationism. America does not benefit from its current role as world cop.

Furthermore, compared to all previous world order maintainers, America has been far more enlightened, benevolent and willing to make sacrifices. Its international policies have been much more humane than those of previous order maintainers such as ancient Rome and the Congress of

Vienna coalition. Historically, one of the key rules of war was, “to the victor belong the spoils.” This is how it has been since ancient Rome to the Soviet Union. After the victor defeats its enemy, it proceeds to plunder him, as happened in our own era in Eastern Europe after World War Two.

America, however, is the first country in history to do the opposite. After it defeats a nefarious opponent - Japan and Germany for example - it lavishly rebuilds him, at the cost of dozens of billions of dollars to itself. A 1950s comedy, *The Mouse that Roared*, was an astute spoof on this. In this film, a small European country was having severe economic difficulties. So it declared war on America, promptly lost, and was then rewarded with generous foreign aid and reconstruction assistance from Uncle Sam.

After World War Two, America’s Marshall Plan helped Europe back on its feet, in time making that continent an economic giant that rivals and threatens America’s economy. The Marshall Plan cost America the equivalent of nearly two hundred billion dollars. It was also offered to Stalin, who declined to participate. America rebuilt Japan at great cost to itself as well. Some imperialist! A recent article by Mathias Dapfner in *Die Welt* (December 12, 2005) is one of the rare European publications supportive of America and its foreign policy. Dapfner takes on his fellow-Europeans, calling them cowardly appeasers. He reminds us that America has had to do Europe’s work for a long time - from defeating Hitler and liberating Eastern Europe to Kosovo. According to Dapfner, America is now once again the only country that dares to stand up to Islam Fundamentalism and the latest assault on Western Civilization.

### The Price America Pays for Being the World Cop.

Mathias Dapfner also notes the immense cost America is incurring to protect itself and the rest of the free world. The burden of the war in Iraq is enormous, both in lives and in dollars. The American economy is in jeopardy as a result. Meanwhile, the Europeans thrive and enjoy six-week vacations and thirty-five hour workweeks, and the Japanese are free to compete with and devastate American industry. Europe and Japan are free from the heavy military burdens born by America.

It used to be said that America’s military-industrial complex was good for its economy. While this may have been true for pulling America out of the Great Depression and putting Americans back to work, it is clearly no longer the case today. Military spending produces no wealth, it does nothing for the infrastructure and it does not help the consumer. The damage done by our short-sighted reliance on a military-industrial economy becomes obvious to anyone who visits Europe and Japan, where the infrastructure is much more impressive and where public services - ranging from medicine to public transportation and education - are much more generous, equitable and efficient.

Similarly, America suffered through the previous ordeals of Vietnam and Korea, carrying out those campaigns practically single-handedly as well, with only token assistance from a few allies. If America’s foreign entanglements were merely imperialistic and based on self-interest, why on earth would the country be the sole, steadfast, loyal supporter of Israel since that country’s foundation in 1948? Israel is one of the few Middle-Eastern countries without oil. It is a minuscule country of six million people surrounded by an Islamic ocean populated by hundreds of millions and awash in oil. Supporting Israel has cost America billions of dollars each year, without returning one ounce of economic benefit. Nevertheless, America has supported Israel through thick and thin, often being the sole member of the United Nations voting with the Jewish state, frequently outvoted by absurd and humiliating margins like 160 to 1 and 175 to 2.

Is this the behavior of a calculating, selfish Imperialist? No. Such a foreign policy is courageous, selfless, altruistic and moral. Of course, anti-Semites will say that America’s foreign policy is under the heavy influence of the Jewish lobby. I suppose something should be said about

America's seeming "biases" and its selective support of other countries. True, America has shown preference for certain countries over others. Two stand out, Britain and Israel.

But these "biases," for want of a better term, can be explained in a much less conspiratorial and racist way than with reference to such things as the Jewish lobby. As William Bennett pointed out, our relationship with Britain has always been special. It is the same with Israel. History, culture and affinity render some relationships more special than others. America is friends with compatible cultures, and it is willing to suffer and to sacrifice for its friends. Again, the motives have nothing to do with imperialistic self-interest.

Hopefully there will be a day when the world unites under one government. As a young college student in the Netherlands, I belonged to the World Federalists, and I still believe in that ideal. The World Federalist movement has always advocated a world federation of autonomous nation states. Its aim is to achieve the highest purposes of the United Nations and a more orderly and secure world - not to establish a Big Brother-like world government. Logically, this system will grow out of a much strengthened United Nations. Already we see a progression. The first step, the League of Nations, was extremely weak and tentative, compared to which the U.N. today is already a great improvement. Thus there is hope for world government and world peace in the future.

However, for the time being, there is no alternative to an America-lead coalition to enforce some semblance of world order. NATO, for example, can be quite effective, as was demonstrated in the former Yugoslavia during the 1990s. Imperfect as Pax Americana is, it is as good as it gets, for the time being. What alternatives are there? Would a Pax Sovietica have been better? Or Hitler's New Order? Or an Iranian-style theocracy? Or, most likely at this point if America fails, chaos and regression to barbarism, as happened after the fall of Rome? Already, some states are disintegrating (Somalia), some areas of the world are no longer governed, piracy on the high seas is returning both in the Indian Ocean and in the Pacific.

It would be poetic justice if America were to withdraw again into isolationism. Part of me wishes for this. As I look around in American cities, I see more and more poverty and decay. I see a country that is terribly over-burdened. Maybe America should turn inward, repair itself and become once again a clean, prosperous peaceful and happy country more like Switzerland or Canada, more like America was in the past. Let the world take care of itself, and let us see who will have the last laugh.

#### 14. Europeans Find Ariel Charon and George W. Bush Two Main Threats to World Peace

*But Harold Pinter was not alone in his hatred of America. Here is another appalling symptom of the disease of anti-Americanism, this one from 2003:*

A recent survey of 13,000 Europeans (done by the *Manchester Guardian* or the *Economist*, I forget which) asked the following question: "Which political leader is the greatest threat to world peace?" Results: Ariel Charon came in first and George W. Bush second.

### 36. DEFENDING AMERICA

#### 1. Let's Insult the Europeans, for a Change

*Alright, so they are all against us. Once in a blue moon, it gets so tedious that a childish tantrum is well deserved. As I was preparing to go to Europe in December of 2004, I told myself,*

*“Okay, if they harass me again about Bush, if they keep criticizing America, and if it gets nasty, I’ll let them have it. Here are some of the things I’ll say:*

1. Europeans are dirty and smell bad. French women don’t shave their armpits. The British have rotten teeth.
2. They all smoke and stink of cigarettes. They also drink way too much.
3. They are cowards. All you have to do is bark at them and they run away.
4. They are lazy. They vacation for months, they take three hour lunch breaks.
5. Their population is dwindling. In one generation, there won’t be any Italians, Swiss, Germans, or Danes left. Only the Arab immigrants are having babies.. Europe will have to be re-named “Eurabia.”
6. They are like Carthage, America is Rome: They are indolent, rich, live lives of idleness and luxury. They have no armies of their own and they can’t protect themselves.

## 2. Muslim Culture Should Try to Understand the Inscrutable American Mind

*The next essay represents a more sophisticated approach to the “clash of civilizations.” How often have we heard that ethnocentric Americans must try “to relate to the Islamic mind, and try to “understand the Muslim perspective and Muslim grievances,” instead of being prejudiced against them?*

*Well, here is a spoof I wrote on September 28, 2006. It reverses those cliches, and asks the **other** guys to assume the anthropological attitude towards **us**. How does that feel, for a change? By the way, I sent it to George Will, the conservative columnist with the sharpest mind around. He only sent me a form letter back.*

The leaders of the Islamic struggle against American imperialism are facing increasing internal criticism. Osama Bin Laden, Iranian President Ahmadinejad and Hetzbollah leader Nasrallah, among others, have to deal with a growing segment of their own people who feel that they are acting too aggressively against the American imperialists.

While agreeing that the struggle against America and the Western world will be long and cannot be shirked, these voices fear that the extreme and violent response to American hegemonism is likely to stoke the flames of anti-Arabism, and to create more hatred and resentment towards Muslims among millions of Americans and Christians in the Western world.

These dissenters argue that, instead of responding to American grievances through violence, Muslims should make an effort to understand the root causes of that resentment. They should study American and Christian culture and values, and develop an understanding of the sociological and historical causes behind the West’s and the Christian world’s deep-seated mistrust of Muslims and Arabs, including centuries of oppression of millions of Europeans and Christians by Moors, Turks and other Muslims, and centuries of economic dominance by Muslims, who for long enjoyed technological and military supremacy in the Middle East, in the Mediterranean Basin and in much of Europe. They should also understand that it is a misreading of the Bible to assume that it preaches violence against non-Christians, and that a majority of Christians do not advocate

violence.

This group of critics points out that, by reacting to American resentment violently and by failing to understand the complex and mysterious American mind and the reasons behind American grievances, Muslims exacerbate the conflict and create additional millions of American militants every day.

They note that, in the end, the conflict can only be resolved through mutual understanding, for as long the Muslim leadership insists on dealing with America with an iron fist, this will merely drive more and more Americans towards hatred, prejudice and violence.

### 3. The United States Remains by Far the Number One Country in the World

*Here is an article I published in the Sacramento Bee on October 24, 1982. I have added a post-script in 2007 which puts the article in a post-Cold War perspective.*

There has been a lot of talk lately about the relative position of the United States in the world. Are we still number one? Are the Russians stronger? Are the Japanese overtaking us? Are the West Germans and the Scandinavians living better than we are? Many people fear that our posture and the quality of life are declining, particularly in comparison with strong countries like Japan and Germany. Others find such an idea intolerable.

Out of curiosity, I recently updated my rusty knowledge of the question: Where do we stand in the rankings?

The most general measure of economic strength is the Gross National Product; 1978 was the last year for which I found figures for all relevant countries. At that time, our GNP was \$1.972 trillion. The Soviet Union was a distant second with a GNP only slightly over half ours - \$1.17 trillion. Japan, so often said to be on the verge of overtaking us as an industrial giant, had a GNP about one-third ours - \$731 trillion.

True, on a per capita basis some countries are now wealthier than we are. But these are mostly islands of affluence that cannot fairly be compared with a vast continental society such as ours. In 1978, American per capita GNP was \$9,002. Switzerland's was \$10,121, Sweden's \$9,575. Belgium, Denmark, Iceland and Norway, were also slightly ahead of us, as was one mid-size country - West Germany - with a per capita GNP of \$9,056. As to Japan, its per capita GNP was still a mere \$6,360, while that of the Soviet Union was \$4,481.

Thus we only look "bad" by comparison with some small pockets of wealth in Western Europe. But there are regions in the United States that are far larger and with a higher per capita income than any European country, for example the New England-Mid-Atlantic region, and the West Coast, each 10 times the size and population of Switzerland or Denmark.

As most people know, our agriculture remains one of the wonders of the world. Three percent of our labor force feeds the remaining 97 percent plus millions of others overseas. Here are some facts: The world's annual wheat production is currently about 445 million tons. In 1980, our share was 65 million tons, second only to the Soviet Union's 98 million. However, wheat is the USSR's all-purpose staple crop, whereas we produce and consume many other types of grains as well. For example, out of the 392 million tons of corn produced in the world in 1980, our yield was 169 million tons, or nearly half (Russia's corn production was an insignificant 9 million tons).

In 1980 world meat production was 104 million tons. Our share was nearly 18 million tons, again followed by the Soviet Union with 13 million tons.

America remains number one in most other areas of consumption as well. We produce more

energy than any other country - the equivalent of 2.09 trillion tons of coal per year. Our per capita energy consumption is the highest - twice that of the Soviet Union and three times Japan's. We account for half of the world's civilian flights (4 billion miles per year), one third of the cars (135 million) and nearly half the telephones (170 million). The list could go on with pieces of mail per capita, TV sets, refrigerators, etc.

As to quality of life indicators, we do not always outshine the rest of the world, although we come close: Life expectancy in this country is 73 years. It is exceeded by a number of countries, including Japan (76), Holland (75) and Australia (74). Similarly, our infant mortality rate of 12 per 1,000 is inferior to Japan's (8 per 1,000), Holland's (9), France's (10) and Australia's (11), among others.

However, the total amount of money we spend on education still far exceeds the sums spent by any other country: America's annual education bill is about \$121 billion, for 46 million youngsters kindergarten through the 12th grade plus 12 million college students. Far behind us is the Soviet Union, spending \$47 billion on 44 million primary and secondary students plus 5 million higher education students. Japan is third, spending \$56 billion on a total of 24 million students.

Tragically, the world currently spends .6 trillion dollars per year on the military, or \$135 for every man, woman and child, or 5.4 percent of its total GNP. We in the United States account for about \$150 billion of the total, or \$600 per person and 5 percent of our GNP. The Soviets spend considerably more, namely nearly \$200 billion, or \$750 per person and 13 percent of their GNP.

Other rich industrialized nations have much smaller military budgets (\$10 billion in Japan and \$20 billion in Germany), and these take up much smaller bites out of their national wealth - from 1 percent in Japan, or \$75 per person, to around 3.5 percent for most NATO countries, or \$250 per person.

In general, the countries that spend the most devastating amounts of their resources on the military are Third World and Communist countries. The only Western country that has a very large military budget is the United States. However, due to our great size and wealth, we still spend less of our GNP on the military (5 percent) than does the world as a whole (5.4 percent).

As to who is militarily Number One, that debate remains to be settled, and this is not the place to do it. Suffice it to say that military strength results from both quantity and quality. The Russians and Chinese have both far more men in uniform and more military ships than we do. The Soviet Union has 4.8 million soldiers, China has 4.5 million and we only have 2.1 million. The USSR has 2,845 ships, China has 2,299 and we have 2,148. But surely no one would argue, for instance, that China is a stronger military nation than the U.S.

Russian submarines outnumber ours 482 to 157, but we have 23 aircraft carriers to their 5. In fact, we have over half of all the world's carriers - 23 out of 40.

The Soviet Union's nuclear capability exceeds ours in several categories. Their total nuclear destructive force is over twice ours and their 2,384 strategic launchers outnumber our 1,628. However, we still have more nuclear warheads, namely 9,480 to 8,040. The USSR's ferocious drive for nuclear supremacy is certainly the most worrisome aspect of global comparisons. Nevertheless, the quality and accuracy of our weapons probably make up some of the numerical imbalance. Witness the success of American weapons against Russian ones in last summer's confrontation between Israel and Syria.

A final set of data is of interest: From 1945 to 1980, America has given \$213 billion in foreign aid (grants and credits) to other countries. In 1980 alone, the figure was \$11 billion.

Of all post-war foreign aid, \$25 billion went to Western Europe, including nearly \$6 billion to Britain, \$4 billion to France and \$3 billion to Germany.

Also, since World War II, \$3 billion of American foreign aid has gone to Eastern Europe,

including \$1.4 billion to Poland and \$700 million to the Soviet Union.

Asia and the Pacific have received \$74 billion from us, including \$2 billion going to Japan. In 1980, that region received \$5.5 billion.

The Western Hemisphere has received \$14 billion since 1945, including \$700 million in 1980. Other major beneficiaries of American largesse include Israel, which has received \$11 billion, and Iran, to whom we gave \$1 billion.

To summarize, it is true that on a per capita basis, Americans are no longer invariably the most blessed people, particularly with regard to quality of life indicators (we do not live quite as long and we are not quite as healthy as people in some other countries).

However, in many forms of consumption we remain unquestionably far better off than most or indeed all of the world.

Whether or not the USSR has more nuclear launchers or submarines, the combination of America's considerable military muscle and its economic and technological superiority over the Soviet Union makes it clear that this country is not about to be eclipsed by anyone - be it a military dictatorship such as Russia or an industrial colossus with feet of clay such as Japan.

In addition, America has also been number one in generosity, distributing foreign aid by the hundreds of billions.

The 20th century has been the American' Century. This country has provided the world with benevolent help, leadership, stability and. with a shining example of the successful combination of power and freedom. The world remains indebted to this truly remarkable and. unique civilization. And the good news is that the American Century is not about to come to an end (*Sacramento Bee*, Oct. 24, 1982).

\* \* \* \* \*

*A postscript (2007):*

When I re-read all the tirades I wrote during the Cold War, I am struck by how vastly I over-rated the strength of the Soviet Union. Like everybody else, I was going by official statistics, which indicated that (1) the Soviet Union was at least our military equal, and that (2) it was the second economic power in the world, with an economy which grew more rapidly than ours and which would therefore enable it to overtake us in the near future. When Nikita Khrushchev exclaimed in 1959, "We will bury you," - meaning that Communism would overtake Capitalism - I feared that this might indeed come to pass.

The Soviet Union was dissolved in 1991. By 2006, the size of the Russian economy was *one thirtieth* (!) that of ours, according to official numbers. It was smaller than that of tiny Holland! Our Gross Domestic Product is \$11 trillion. Russia's is .38 of a trillion! Even if we allow for a hidden underground economy in Russia, this unbelievably huge difference between what used to be the world's two superpowers can only mean that the official figures published by the Soviets during the Cold War were largely fiction.

The collapse of the Soviet Union took me totally by surprise, as did the revelation of Russia's incredible weakness in all areas - economic, demographic and military. The Soviet Union had the third largest population in the world, far ahead of us. But today, Russia's population is *less than half ours*, and declining. Militarily, the Russians were unable to hold on to Afghanistan and they are unable to defeat the rebels in Chechnya. Their nukes still pose a threat, of course, but mostly in the sense that they may reach the world market, where they may be purchased by rogue

terrorist groups.

I may have exaggerated the Russian threat, and I may not have predicted the sudden collapse of the USSR, but then, neither did the CIA! As a matter of fact, the very point of my 1982 article is that our economy is far larger than that of Russia. My only error was to underestimate the size of the difference!

#### 4. In Praise of American Mediocrity

*In December 1984, I published this article in the Sacramento Forum.*

As an immigrant to America, I have long lectured and written in defense of my adoptive country. Most of it has been political. I was a patriot back in the seventies, when America-bashing was in. When the rest of the world enjoyed spitting at America because of its alleged evil doings in Vietnam, I already sensed hypocrisy and double standard as perhaps part of the motivation of the foreign and domestic left-wing intelligentsia. When the domestic Left acceded to power by taking over the media, the universities, the Carter White House and the Democratic Party, I totally parted with it, detecting the dawn of left-wing bigotry, stupidity and selfishness.

When crises such as the Iranian hostage situation hit, anti-Americanism was still *de rigueur*, and my patriotic response was, in 1979, a punishing experience. I was ridiculed by most of my students, denounced in the press and ostracized by my colleagues.

But by 1984, nearly 60% of the American people felt comfortable in re-electing Ronald Reagan. I am now perhaps as popular among students as are my Marxist colleagues. This is a fine and recent feeling. The CIA is no longer the embodiment of absolute evil. I even know some students who are seeking employment with that agency. It's okay to wave the flag once again, to root for one's country or one's football team. The ROTC has no trouble recruiting on campus. Patriotism is at least acceptable, if still a bit vulgar in the eyes of self-styled intellectuals.

What I was saying ten years ago was actually so simple-minded and so obvious that it was bound to become widely accepted eventually. It doesn't take a whole lot of smarts to realize that America is by and large good while the Soviet system is terrible. That Communism is an abomination and that American democracy is infinitely preferable. That there is a cold war in which America must protect its interests and its survival, meaning a need for a strong military, a strong CIA and a policy of containing communism.

What was not obvious to a majority even five years ago is now widely accepted: Those who speak of "Satan America," be they Muslim fanatics, Third World terrorists or Soviet officials, are them-selves the predators, and America must have no qualms defending itself against them.

And yet, I am not altogether happy. Why?

Well, you see, I never felt that our problem would go away if only some of us would do enough red baiting and reawaken others to the dangers of communism. The red-baiting has occurred, anti-communism is once again acceptable and there is now a respectable neo-conservative movement. But there are other problems.

For one thing, many people might draw the wrong conclusion from their newly found conservatism and their Olympic-style patriotism. They might feel that some unprecedented new strategy is in order. To them I say: You still haven't learned your lesson. You still fail to give America its due credit and to grant the fact that it has done a marvelous job of helping itself and the world for the past half century. Therefore, do not change your game plan. Sure, shift your emphasis a bit here and there, renovate your arsenal, cut down the size of the bloating government somewhat,

but do not, repeat do not change the basic character of the American way.

Take the San Francisco 49ers. They are outstanding. They haven't won all their games, but darn near all of them. They aren't perfect, but pretty close. Would you change the game plan, the personnel? Of course not.

It's the same way with America, its politics, its culture and its way of life. What America needs, above all, is to stay the course, and to reaffirm its own nature. We do not need to try to make friends and find support overseas any harder than we have in the past, but neither can we afford to become lax. We do not need a major revival of macho militaristic chauvinism, but neither should we toy with an ostrich-like neo-isolationism. We do not need a cultural revolution or a new value system. We only need to reaffirm what we stand for and what we believe in, and be proud that the 20th century has become the American century.

This exhortation remains necessary, because the faddish new patriotism at times seems to contain a paradox, namely a sense of shame over alleged American weakness, stupidity and inadequacy in the

recent past and continuing today. Thus under the mantle of the new patriotism there could be lurking just another wave of destructive self-criticism and second-guessing. God knows we have done enough of that regarding Vietnam and Watergate. Let's not start doing the same thing with Iran and other alleged blunders associated with Carter or other liberals. Let bygones be bygones.

A similar and related paradox is found in the behavior of those who, while staunchly anti-communist and professing to have the American way of life at heart, at the same time exude profound contempt for what America really consists of: Here, we have some of the cultural criticism from the New Right. There are many intellectuals, for example in France and elsewhere in Europe or at the Hoover Institution and elsewhere in America, who profess to be fighting the battle against left-wing totalitarianism and at the same time express nothing but contempt for the culture of the one nation that stands in the way of worldwide totalitarian-ism - America.

Even Solzhenitsyn is guilty of this snobbish cultural anti-Americanism. How cheap and hypocritical it is for the European intellectual, including new right-wing *philosophes* such as Jean-Francois Revel, to deplore American mass culture and rock music (an "intolerable sound," in Solzhenitsyn's words), to indict the hedonistic materialism of our capitalist society, to bemoan the vulgarity of American mass education, to accuse Americans - as do anti-communists everywhere, from John Birchers to Moonies to recent Russian Jewish emigres to the French *philosophes* - of being too decadent, cowardly and stupid to be effectively alert to the dangers of international communism.

Must I remind foreign and domestic right-wing critics that it is America and no one else who lost 100,000 lives in Korea, Vietnam and elsewhere fighting communism since world war two?

The right-wing intellectual criticism of American weakness and stupidity mirrors that of the Left as well as that of the 1930s' fascists. The world has always tried to accuse America or more accurately, liberal Anglo-Saxon civilization - of suffering from that terminal affliction - bourgeois decadence. They have all done it - from Marx to Spengler and from Mussolini to Mao Tse Tung.

What the true believers have never understood is the unique contribution made to the world by Anglo-Saxon civilization: a culture of civility, tolerance and happiness. The extremists have always mistaken the British emphasis on civility and tolerance for weakness (to their regret, as Hitler found out, as well as the Argentinian generals more recently). And then, they also mistook America's *joie de vivre* for decadence and weakness - again a grave misconception.

So, foreign intellectuals and domestic snobs continue to dismiss American culture,

Hollywood, television, rock music, jazz and fast food as inferior and even as profoundly evil. Americans have no class, they say; no intellectual tradition; no finesse.

Bah! Coming from overseas, this is merely another form of chauvinism, parochialism, bigotry and prejudice. And insofar as cultural anti-Americanism contaminates domestic intellectuals (professors, public television, etc.), it is merely another form of anti-American guilt and self-hate.

In fact, what is wrong with the Anglo-Saxon agenda? What is wrong with civility, tolerance and the pursuit of happiness? What is wrong with enjoying life? Not only is there nothing wrong with it, but it is in fact the best conceivable program. The alternative is seen in the history of continental Europe and that of the Third World. Is it better to wage sectarian war or to follow the latest disco fad? These are the choices. So let's hear it for the apathetic American college student.

Another expatriate intellectual like me - I believe it was the Polish born author Jerzy Kosinsky - made a somewhat similar point. In America, we have used car ads flaunting sexy women and singing silly limericks; behind the Iron Curtain, you must face giant Marx and Lenin posters and hear quotations from the Communist Manifesto on public elevators (or something like this). Kosinsky and I have no difficulty choosing the lesser evil.

So I say, up with America. Up with American culture. Up even with American mass culture and mass education. We may not produce the creme de la creme at our State Universities, but we process more people than any other country, and they come out somewhat literate. And the Nobel Committee doesn't seem to feel that Americans are stupid either - we have won more Nobel Prizes than anyone else.

But even beyond that: What about American television, Hollywood, Dallas and J.R.? Sure, most of it isn't very edifying, but you know what? European television and movies are even worse (exceptions granted): They suffer from the worst possible problem - they are BORING. Don't quote me, quote the late Francois Truffaut! He said it!

American food? We have the greatest chefs and restaurants in the world. The best food, too. California wines? Second to none, not even to the the French ( sacrilege!). American music - rock, jazz, classical orchestras? The best, in many cases.

So let's not talk about America-the-stupid, America-the-cultural-wasteland. The foreign visitor mouthing off in such fashion should, it seems to me, be happy (and make me happy as well) if he returned to his own superior culture at his earliest opportunity. And as to Americans who have similar misgivings about their own culture, I suggest two final remedies: (1) compare the number of people who move *to* America, attracted by the American way of life, with those leaving permanently. Result: one million to one. Or better yet: (2) Go live overseas for a year - not in a back-alley country like Iran or Cambodia, mind you. No, go to Holland, France, or Japan, or Australia. See how fast you'll be back stateside (*Sacramento Forum*, Dec.1984).

### 5. Is there anything RIGHT about America?

*I published this article in the January 1992 issue of the International Journal on World Peace.*

Never since I moved to America, in 1965, has the national mood been so pessimistic. The faltering economy is the primary cause of our somber disposition, but we also fret about other problems, including crime, AIDS, the environment, education and moral turpitude. Part of the

chicken little atmosphere is due to the upcoming election. The agenda of the Democrats and of the liberal media is to exaggerate bad news and to bombard us with it, so as to finally vote a Democrat into the White House.

The current recession is relatively mild compared to other post-war slumps. After all, the economy *is* growing, however slowly. But that's not the impression you get from the outlandish statements found in the media: The "worst recession since World War Two," we hear, or, "the worst end-of-year sales in thirty years," and, "the worst depression in history (!)" according to a California budget analyst.

To paraphrase sociologist W. I. Thomas, if people define situations as real, then for all intents and purposes that is the reality. So there is a widespread feeling - fueled by the opinion elite and by political interests - that the country is going down the toilet. If enough people come to believe this, it may yet become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

The doomsayers' gloom is most often about the United States: They fear that America has lost its economic pre-eminence and that we are in decline (Yale historian Paul Kennedy launched this thesis back in 1987), whereas Japan and Europe are thriving.

Almost as frequent are grim analyses of global trends. Whether focusing on the environment or on population, on the world economy, or on international relations, the liberal Left only sees decline and negativity. Around New Year, I heard countless idiots whining about how bad 1991 had been, and how things couldn't possibly get worse in 1992.

1991 a bad year? Come on! It was the year when Soviet Communism died; when half a billion people rediscovered freedom; when the U.S. carried out its most successful military campaign *ever*. 1991 will be remembered as a glorious year, like 1776 and 1945 - all three dates mark the dissolution of evil empires and the resurgence of freedom.

But what about the home front? Are we in as bad a shape as the nattering nabobs of negativism claim? (Spiro Agnew had a way with words). Absolutely not. I can think of a dozen reasons for optimism and happiness about our condition:

1. As to global environmental deterioration, North America remains less polluted, less over-populated and less impacted than most other regions. We are geographically lucky and we have more sound environmental policies than most other countries.

2. Crime and violence? True, we have a high crime rate. Nearly 24,000 Americans were murdered last year. On the other hand, Japan and Europe have much higher suicide rates (so much for gun control) as well as higher rates of drunk driving and traffic deaths. If we add up all non-natural deaths (only 6% of all deaths), our rate compares favorably with those of Europe, Japan and Australia. The rest of the world isn't even in the same league.

3. Despite our current economic problems, our share of the world economy has remained nearly constant for the past quarter of a century - between a fourth and a fifth. Our Gross Domestic Product remains by far the largest in the world.

4. Now that there is no more Soviet Union, we are the only superpower left. This is not a matter of vulgar jingoism. If someone is going to be in charge, wouldn't you rather have it be *your* country?

So we are now in charge. There can be no doubt about that, certainly not since the brilliantly successful police action in the Gulf. Nor does this mean that we are imperialists.

American foreign policy has always been magnanimous and altruistic. From the Marshall Plan onward, we have distributed hundreds of billions in foreign aid to hundreds of countries and spilled the blood of hundreds of thousands of young Americans, not to conquer and to loot, like other superpowers, but to promote freedom and democracy in the world and to protect *others*.

5. What about quality of life? Do they live better in Japan and Germany? True, Japan's life expectancy is a couple of years longer than ours, due to our high rate of infant mortality, especially among lower-class blacks, where many mothers use drugs during pregnancy. But other indicators of the quality of life are in our favor: We live in much larger and nicer houses; we have more cars and appliances; we eat more, better and more varied food; we have far more and better recreation, ranging from an exciting mass culture to our unmatched great outdoors. Above all, we have much more freedom, choice and variety. We have more fun.

6. But what about poverty, hunger, homelessness? Aren't these on the rise, and don't we have more of them than other countries? Data show that the distribution of income and wealth in America has remained approximately the same ever since we began to collect the information, with occasional fluctuations. As far back as the Civil War and as recently as the 1980s, the bottom fifth of the population made between 4% and 5% of all income and the top fifth earned between 42% and 43%. Unfair, you say. Perhaps, but the distribution of income is only slightly better balanced in Japan and in a couple of Northern European countries, and much worse everywhere else.

The bottom line is this: what is considered poverty in America is viewed as comfortable living in 90% of the world. Only on the North American continent do hundreds of millions of people live in comfort. No other major region of the world is as well off, except tiny (population-wise) Australia. Europe lags *far* behind. Most of Europe does not consist of countries like Sweden and Switzerland, where economic conditions are admittedly as good as or better than here (although not better than in vast prosperous regions such as Minnesota or Northern California). Most of Europe consists of France, Italy, England, Wales, Ireland, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Yugoslavia, Poland, Hungary, Russia, etc. Material conditions in these countries do not even *begin* to compare with those in the U.S. Only in America are there good roads, universal schools and colleges and cornucopia-like supermarkets available to all, including those on public assistance, from coast to coast.

And it is the same with opportunities. Sure, unemployment is high right now. Still, help wanted ads go begging and each year more Americans are added to the labor force, even during the current recession.

7. Another fallacy propagated by the trouble mongers is American racism. However, According to black sociologist Orlando Patterson, "the sociological truths are that America, while still flawed in its race relations .... is now the *least* racist white-majority society in the world; has a better record of legal protection of minorities than any other society, white or black; offers more opportunities to a greater number of black persons than any other society, including all those of Africa; and has gone through a dramatic change in its attitude toward misgenation over the past 25 years."

8. It is the same with gender: Nowhere on earth are women as powerful as in the United States. Even in Scandinavia, where traditional sex roles are reversed perhaps more often than here, women are not as powerful as they are in America. The power of American women should not only be measured by their paycheck (which is now nearly equal to that of men), but also by their

influence on the culture, on the family, on the young and on men.

9. We hear a lot about the lazy American. People say that this is a major reason for our alleged economic decline. Another fallacy. While the Japanese workweek is still longer than ours, that of the Europeans is not. If you want to see real laziness, go to Europe - East or West. The truth of the matter is that most Americans work hard and long hours, and like it. That is what the yuppie stereotype means. College students work their way through school. The rate of female employment is higher than in Japan and in Europe. More and more teenagers work even as they complete high school (a questionable good). Countries like England and Holland have far more people on the dole, and those welfare states make it possible to be unemployed and to receive nearly full pay almost indefinitely. The work ethic is alive and well in America, certainly more so than in Europe.

10. America is also one of the few societies without any serious disintegrative nationalistic or revolutionary tendencies. Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union are the most spectacular cases of total disintegration, but such centrifugal forces also exist in many other countries: The British have to contend with their murderous IRA, the French and Spaniards have the ETA terrorists, the German RAF refuses to die, Corsica and Brittany also want to secede from France, as do Scotland and Wales from Britain, Quebec from Canada, and so forth.

On the other hand, how likely is it that Texas, Florida or California would ever attempt to secede from the Union? Our country enjoys strong cultural integration, thanks to the ubiquitous mass media. There is no possibility in hell that any region of the United States would once again attempt to do what the Confederacy did in 1861.

11. Finally, America remains far *freer* than any other place I have ever visited (which includes over 40 countries). Not only are our freedoms formalized in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, but there is also something about the American *way of life* which makes freedom a palpable reality. In this country, people allow each other more *space*. They don't meddle in each other's affairs as much as elsewhere. They criticize less. They are more tolerant and open-minded. Here, you are free to live as you wish.

I am not comparing us with caste-like India, or totalitarian Iran, or traditional Saudi-Arabia. That would be too obvious. No, I grew up in Holland, Hungary and France - countries considered progressive, non-racist and tolerant. But even there, people are likely to ridicule you in public if you wear the wrong clothes or the wrong hairdo. People will bother you on the subway if they don't like your appearance or mannerisms. A neighborhood might gang up on you if you are of the wrong color, nationality, social class, lifestyle or if you speak the wrong language. The same goes for oh-so-advanced Japan. Try to live there openly as a liberated feminist, a homosexual or a Korean. Ask Algerians how they are treated in France. Even our Canadian cousins have a lot to learn from the Americans in this regard.

Why is there more freedom of lifestyle in America than anywhere else? Because we are the most diverse country on earth, and because of our cult of individualism.

Tomorrow, you can start enumerating our social problems again (including the dangers of *too much* individualism, *too much* freedom and diversity). For now, why not ponder the advantages I have just described? As for me, I will always remember that the best decision of my life was to apply to an American college and to move to the United States (*International Journal on World Peace*, Jan. 1992).

## 6. America's Contributions to the World are Primarily Cultural

*In September 2001, America needed comforting. On September 21, ten days after 9-11, I wrote the following piece, to remind people of America's greatness. This was never printed.*

At a time when American patriotism is called for, yet a time when there is still an undercurrent of anti-Americanism and self-blame among left-leaning, intellectual, pacifist, academics and other folks who are alienated from their country, I suggest the following uplifting exercise:

Let's enumerate some of the unquestionable, major, positive contributions to the world made by *America*, particularly cultural, scientific and political contributions.

I don't mean general advances - such as technological and medical progress, or a high standard of living. These are the collective achievements of the Western World, achievements which America shares with many others. What I am alluding to is something like the anthropological distinction between *invention* and *diffusion*. These are the two ways in which cultural and political change and progress occur. For example, America acquired the English language through diffusion and it got basketball through invention. We can claim the latter as "ours," but not the former. Nor do I mean things like Capitalism, high mass consumption, automobiles, etc. While we have more of these things than just about anyone else, they are not always that great.

No. In order to make our list, an item must be three things: (1) it must, on balance, be *good* and/or *beautiful*, (2) it must be *important*, and (3) It must be something *American*, i.e. something that may now belong to the world, but something which is *by and large* America's gift to the world. Here are a few examples - a bunch of apples and oranges all mixed together and not prioritized in any order of importance.

1. Jazz
2. The Musical
3. Country and Western Music
4. Rock 'n Roll
5. Hollywood
6. Cioppino
7. Fun sports and games such as basketball, baseball and football
8. The exploration of space.
9. The Internet; Computers
10. The greatest system of higher education in the world
11. The defeat of fascism
12. The defeat of communism
13. The rebuilding of Japan and Europe through the Marshall Plan
14. The most advanced form of feminism
15. The most successful civil rights movement
16. The haven for over half of the world's refugees and emigrants
17. Hence, the survival of freedom

Note that this list includes cultural, scientific and political items, but *hardly any economic* ones. That's exactly the point: You misunderstand America if you equate it with money and economic might and nothing more. We don't realize it, but America's main contribution to the world is more cultural and political -- *spiritual* you might say - than material. This flies in the face

of all the criticism coming from Middle-Eastern mullahs and European intellectual.

Can you add items to the list?

### 7. America Should Save Itself Before It Can Save the World

*In 1995, Benjamin Barber published the book Jihad vs. McWorld. The author's thesis is that two principles are confronting each other in the world today - Tribalism and Globalism. One is associated with the backlash against Western Capitalism and Modernity. We see the most militant expression of this backlash in the Middle East, where it often assumes the form of violent terrorism, as it did on 9-11. The other principle is the global corporate capitalism which emanates from the United States and other parts of the Western World, and penetrates the rest of the world ever more deeply.*

*In 1993, George Ritzer published The McDonaldization of Society. This book is a critique of the regimentation, massification and "uniformization" of modern life and modern consumption - McDonald becomes the model for the dull and mediocre Brave New World which (American) Capitalism creates.*

*In the media cacophony which followed 9-11, authors such as Barber and Ritzer were popular guests on talk shows, where they were considered to be "experts" who might shed light on why 9-11 happened. Just a few days after 9-11, I saw an interview with Benjamin Barber on one of the national TV channels. That interview prompted me to write the following piece regarding September 28, 2001. It was never published.*

I don't know how many "experts" have been interviewed on TV since 9-11, all being asked to explain why 9-11 happened. Why are all these guys so damn liberal? They equivocate, they say that maybe the terrorists had a legitimate grievance, they see moral equivalence between the 9-11 attack and American foreign policy. How aggravating!

Now take this guy Barber. I liked his book. I even assigned it to my students. His *Jihad vs. McWorld* distinction makes sense. So does Ritzer's idea that the world is being "McDonaldized." But now Barber is trying to tell us that we - America - are the root cause of terrorism. Come on!

The thesis of such liberals is the following oft-heard cliché: MacWorld is the global capitalist system led by the United States and consisting of MacDonalld, Nike and all the other multinationals. It includes economic imperialism and cultural imperialism (e.g. Hollywood). This system is creating a world order which benefits a few people in the West, but creates oppression, exploitation, poverty and misery for a majority of the people of the world, especially in the Third World. In addition, it violates the cultures of non-Western people. That is why there is terrorism. Thus terrorism will persist as long as we - Americans - do not address its root causes - namely poverty, injustice and bigotry. This is the well-known belief of all liberals, both domestic and overseas.

It is patently wrong. Let me explain why:

1. It is true that in the current global economic system, the US happens to be the largest player - in terms of both economic and cultural impact.
2. It is also true that this system is benign for a minority of the world's population, mostly

the people who live in the affluent North/West of the world, and that it does not benefit the four fifths of the world which lives primarily in the Third World (including the Middle East).

However:

3. The impact which the West -- and it is extremely important to emphasize that this is *not* just the US, but *the West collectively* -- is having on the rest of the world is *both positive and negative*. One could count up in one column all the pain which the Western world has inflicted upon the Third World, and in another column all the benefits that the Third World has derived from the West. The debate as to which outweighs the other would never end.

4. The vast and growing misery of the Third World is a consequence of:

A. Population explosion, which is a consequence of Western medicine, *not* of American imperialism, as some have suggested absurdly.

B. The vestiges of old-fashioned *colonialism*, for which the Europeans were 90% responsible, not the Americans.

C. Economic development and modernization, which emanates from the West, but could not occur if it weren't embraced enthusiastically by the Third World itself.

D. The incompetent, corrupt and criminal leadership in those countries. Idi Amin, Seko Mubutu, Robert Mugabe, Charles Taylor, Saddam Hussein, Hugo Chavez, are just a few among the endless procession of dictatorial thugs who starve and kill their subjects while stashing away billions in Swiss banks. Is this America's fault? Liberals insist that it is, because we support those regimes. That's ridiculous. We deal with the governments that exist. Should we switch sides and start supporting revolutionary forces everywhere? Can't liberals remember what has happened every time that we have tried to do that? In Vietnam, we switched sides and supported Diem's assassination. In Iran, Jimmy Carter tried to cosy up to Khomeini. In the Philippines, Ronald Reagan withdrew his support from Marcos. Every time that we put expedience ahead of principle, it backfires.

5. Our cultural influence on the Third World is more a blessing than a curse. Our *number one* cultural export can be summed up in 7 letters: F.R.E.E.D.O.M.

6. But the most important reason why the liberals are so utterly wrong is this: They have a *megalomaniac belief* that the US has the power to remedy the world's problems -- through economic assistance, regime change, nation building, support for revolution, or whatever! When will our domestic liberals learn that *America is not all mighty!*. *America can hardly save itself, much less the rest of the world.*

We have often been described as a helpless giant and a paper tiger. There is truth to that. The verdict isn't in, as to how good we are at helping ourselves. Our foreign policy record since World War Two is mixed. There have been successes, and also many fiascos. Yet, both right-wing patriots and left-wing America-bashers tend to pound themselves on the chest repeating the America-is-the-superpower mantra.

This is unwarranted. I see a lot of fallibility here. We should feel compassion for a country that -- while large -- is in many ways struggling, struggling now against vicious aggressors, struggling against a terribly unfair rap from world public opinion, trying to solve many domestic and external problems for which it has, so far, no answers. We are not an almighty super-power. We don't have the know-how and the resources to *either oppress or to save* the world. There is no

American exceptionalism.

In the end, our foreign policy is going to remain largely irrelevant to what happens in the Third World. The only thing our foreign policy should try to salvage is security at home. We don't have the resources, the manpower, the knowledge, the skills and the influence to significantly improve the rest of the world. We represent 4% of the world's people and 20% of its wealth. There are 5 billion people out there who are floundering. If we continue to flounder with them, we will all go down. On the other hand, if we "cultivate our own garden," i.e. (1) defend ourselves against aggressors, (2) develop economic and energy independence, (3) join hands with reliable allies and (4) create a just, benign and effective society at home, then maybe we can have a positive impact overseas.

It's the same as with individuals: In order to help/save others, you first have to help/save yourself. Right now, we are not even doing the latter.

#### 8. Americans are Becoming Tougher and more Conservative

*Sometimes I was more optimistic. I wrote this piece in 1989 (it was never published). In it, I express the hope and the expectation that Americans are becoming more conservative, more realistic, and more assertive in protecting themselves as a nation. This was written nearly a decade after the Reagan revival, and there was, indeed, cause for optimism.*

I predict the gradual increase of conservatism in America. Already, among my students, I find a majority who identify themselves as conservatives - and this is in the traditionally left-wing discipline of sociology. This trend is likely to increase, especially among the young. To be sure, it isn't clear whether this is political conservatism or merely lifestyle conservatism. Therefore, the trend I discern may not translate into support for the Contras, Republican victories and other tangible conservative gains at the ballot box.

#### **Life Becoming Tougher**

Why the increase in conservatism? In order to see this, two things must be understood: One, life in America is getting tougher, and it is likely to get tougher yet. Today's college graduates face a much more competitive job market than we did in the 50s and 60s. The federal and trade deficits are already beginning to impoverish the next generation. The social security pyramid is becoming ever more top-heavy.

#### **Americans working more**

Americans are working harder and harder merely to stay even. Soon the standard of living will begin to decline, despite our best efforts. Already millions have given up on unaffordable "luxuries" such as children and single-income families. It takes two paychecks and foregoing a second or third child (or children altogether) to sustain the lifestyle to which most large, single-income families were routinely accustomed in the 50s. Surveys show that Americans work longer workweeks, sleep fewer hours and vacation less now than a generation ago. After the rhetoric dies down, the main legacy of the women's movement may well be women's "right" to work themselves into a stupor.

#### **Conservatism can be defined as the appreciation of pain**

The second factor in this equation is my definition of conservatism: Conservatism can be defined as the appreciation of pain. Social psychology - for example *cognitive dissonance* theory -

teaches us that there must be balance and harmony between human attitudes and human experience. Therefore, as life becomes tougher for working and middle-class Americans, they will have no choice but to become more conservative. We have already seen this happen to the young. College students are now more serious, less intellectually playful, also less hedonistic, less into indiscriminate sex and drugs. Many barely have time for television. Most of them, at least in mass state universities, work their way through college, putting 40 hours a week into some grueling job in order to make it through college.

These people have more in common with America's early settlers than with the Woodstock generation of the 60s. They are austere, not very sophisticated, not very funny, and they are conservative. Survival is what it's all about now, not the luxury of idealistic or off-the-wall causes, whether here, in South Africa, Ethiopia or Afghanistan.

College students today don't want to save the world, only themselves. Is this good or bad? Both. We all know about the bad part: apathy, no idealism, no intellectual curiosity. Allan Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind* is correct in this respect.

But there is also some good: When society is in disarray or when the world becomes hostile - as during the decline of Rome, the taming of North America, or today - people develop a theodicy of suffering. Early Christianity and Calvinists did this.

Perhaps a secular theodicy will emerge at this point. One thing is inescapable: the harried American working man (and woman) is coming to terms with the new, meaner reality. One sign that this is already happening is the stunning resurgence of the work ethic. At a time when Europeans are becoming lazier than ever, Americans feel, increasingly, that extreme hard and lengthy work is not only necessary, but also good. Millions work brutalizingly long work weeks - at all levels of the occupational structure. What's more, they are hooked to work; they love it; they can't wait to get to the office.

### **Good Leadership is needed to bring Americans together**

As a nation, where does this leave us? We have become more serious, less happy, less loony *a la* sixties, less idealistic, above all more *mature*. So we'll be alright. Maybe America's foreign policy will be based more on *real politik* and less on "love," as under Jimmy Carter. Maybe Americans will not permit the world to mess with their interests as much.

On the other hand, the new realism and selfishness may remain so chaotic and individualistic that Americans will remain divided in the face of common threats to their national interests.

The Democrats may become the new nationalist socialists, while Republicans will remain wedded to the global international capitalist system. The outcome will depend on leadership. Good leadership could bring the new selfish but mature Americans together. And this is at least as likely to come from the Democrats as from the Republicans. We already see that it is the GOP which is the internationalist party, and the Democrats who are the nationalists and the isolationists. Democrats shun foreign entanglements and favor protectionism and Japan-bashing, as do the labor unions. The Republicans want to salvage the international corporate capitalist system, therefore favoring cooperation with the Soviet Union, loans to every conceivable country on earth no matter how hostile to the US, and possibly greater doses of foreign aid and support for international agencies. The Democrats may become the nationalists, the America-firsters - as labor unions have often been. Being also socialists, this makes the Democrats national socialists - not a pretty association!

But party politics aside, what does seem to emerge is a picture of a new America which has

matured, become less childlike, more conservative, more selfish and assertive. The naivete and the stupidities of the 60s are behind us. For that, we can be thankful, even as life becomes more arduous.

### 9. Is America a (Declining) Empire?

*In January 1991, the Wall Street Journal published an editorial which praised our swift Gulf War victory. Historian Paul Kennedy then wrote a rebuttal to that article titled "A Declining Empire Goes to War," The Journal printed it on January 24, 1991. Kennedy is the Yale professor known for his "Decline" thesis, i.e. the idea that the United States, like previous empires, is bound to decline, and that it has in fact already begun to do so as a consequence of "imperial overstretch." I jotted down some notes criticizing Kennedy's article and his thesis, but I never got to finish and to submit the article. Here it is now, slightly amended in 2007:*

Paul Kennedy (January 24, 1991) deliberately misunderstands the *Journal* editorial to which he responds: The editorial emphasized that the Gulf War was first of all a practical and a moral necessity, but that a welcome byproduct might also be America's recovery of its self-esteem. In other words, the war's aim was to expel Saddam Hussein from Kuwait and to safeguard the world's oil supply. The byproduct to which the *Journal* alluded was the fact that America's Vietnam defeat has so traumatized our national psyche that we have often behaved like a helpless, pitiful giant since then (think for example of Carter's pathetic handling of the Iranian hostage crisis). And it is from this paralysis and this low self-esteem that we are recovering, thanks to our Gulf War victory.

Paul Kennedy jumps all over the *Wall Street Journal* and accuses it of advocating the waging of war for the recovery of self-esteem. That's stupid. The *Journal* didn't suggest any such thing.

\* \* \* \* \*

More importantly, what are we to make of Kennedy's "decline" thesis? Is America an empire in decline, as the historian claims? Which analogies are apt, if any? Ancient Rome? 17<sup>th</sup> century Spain? The Habsburg Empire? France's Second Empire? The British Empire in the 20<sup>th</sup> century?

I am ambivalent. Kennedy makes valid points - points which would become even more pertinent during the 2003-2008 Iraq war: America is paying a high price for policing the world. Its government and its national economy are getting ever deeper into debt. The dollar is losing strength and is in danger of losing its position as the world currency. Our domestic infrastructure is in shambles, we have crying social needs in education, medicine, transportation and other areas, our cities are collapsing and they are not being rebuilt (New Orleans), we are bogged down in several wars which we seem unable to win (Iraq, Afghanistan). Yes, things sometimes appear bleak.

Kennedy's favorite historical analogy is 17<sup>th</sup> century Spain. In the beginning of that century, Spain was the wealthiest and most powerful country in the world. Its empire was global. By the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, it had lost its pre-eminence to Britain and France, and for the next two centuries it declined to the point where, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Spain became the poorest and most backward country of Europe. The cause? In Kennedy's words: "imperial overstretch." Spain just tried to do too much, it fought too many wars, it believed in its omnipotence. It went broke.

Is America going down the same road? I sometimes worry about this, for example whenever I hear that irritating phrase, "America, the only superpower." Media pundits and others - both on the Right and on the Left - hold an inflated and unrealistic conception of America's capabilities. The neo-cons on the Right believe that we can take on the entire world and defeat everybody single-handedly. The Left believes that we are single-handedly responsible for all of the

world's evils, that the CIA is omnipotent. The two sides are mirror-images of each other.

\* \* \* \* \*

But *are* we traveling the same road as Spain did in past centuries? Are we going down the path of *imperial overstretch*? Is this the most apt analogy? Here are a few counter-arguments to Kennedy:

1. Perhaps it is more accurate to compare America with Ancient Rome. Like the Romans, we benefit from pacifying parts of the world. Not by looting them as the Romans did, but by expanding the global capitalist economy and the sphere of freedom and the rule of law.

2. Like Ancient Rome, we export a superior and more advanced civilization - it's called Democracy. Spain, on the other hand, was the enforcer of the *status quo*, namely Catholicism and a semi-Feudal civilization. It opposed the forces of modernity - Max Weber's Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism. Its enemies were the Dutch, the British, the French Huguenots and the Yankees.

Spain was a retrograde power, which neither ancient Rome nor America are.

3. Our share of the world economy is stable. It has been about 25% for several decades. Neither the former Soviet Union, nor Japan, nor the European Union have increased their share at our expense. So there is no decline, no losing ground here. And it is idle to speculate about all the possible newcomers in the distant future - China, India, etc.

4. Demographically, same story, if not better: America has the fastest population growth in the developed world. Europe is in incipient population decline - both East and West - and so are Russia and Japan.

5. Kennedy is right in worrying about our deteriorating infrastructure and this country's poor level of public services. However, the solution to these problems entails raising taxes and growing the welfare state. This would make our economy less efficient and less competitive, so this is a dilemma.

6. the argument that our military expenditures are going to bankrupt is a shibboleth: Yes, our military budget is the largest in the world, but as a percentage of our economy it is modest and bearable - fluctuating between 3% and 5%. Many countries have higher percentages than we do. Not the Japanese and the Europeans, mind you, which is quite inequitable, as they benefit from our protective military umbrella while living lives of opulence. But this is another topic.

7. Finally, Kennedy's (and the Left's) most important error: America is *not* an empire. Empires have consisted of a relatively *small metropolis*, which controls and exploits *huge outlying provinces* that are many, many times the size of the metropolis in area, in population and in resources. Spain was such an empire. So were Britain, France, the Netherlands, Belgium and Portugal. In each case, the metropolis was dwarfed by the size of its colonies - twenty, fifty, *one hundred to one* sometimes!

America's "colonialism" pales in comparison: Our overseas possessions have included, at one time or another, such places as Cuba, the Philippines, a few Pacific Islands here and there, Panama, and Puerto Rico and Hawaii if you insist. America is not an empire. It does not possess provinces (< Latin: pro-vincia = for the victor). It is a vast, continental, *domestic* economy. America exploits *itself*, its own oil, its own coal, its own farm land, its own labor force. America's

population is cohesive and patriotic, despite its enormous diversity. Which segment of the population is going to rebel and demand independence, as Gandhi demanded India's independence from Britain?

The world must get it into its head once and for all: America is not an empire, it is a *country*.

#### 10. Why Do Americans have a Bias against Shyness and Introversion?

*Anti-Americanism is not only political. It is often cultural, which proves that it is pure and simple bigotry. After all, when the international Left accuses us of being responsible for all the world's economic ills, they have at least some coherent Marxian theory to back that up, even though their theory is wrong. But when my European friends ridicule Americans for the way they dress, the way they talk, the food they eat and the fact that they are overweight, it becomes clear that it's pure xenophobia.*

*Some the questions Mary Massaro asked me to answer for her book Beyond the Pale (Diogenes Press, 2003) was the one in the title, above. The implication was that there was something wrong with being extroverted, as most Americans are. Here is how I defended Americans.*

We are a bombastic people. Our body language, kinesics, and proxemics all express this. We have been blessed by affluence and a good life, so we became a jolly people. We are extroverted, but we are also kind, giving and hospitable. We are still a youthful society, and we like to laugh. I don't think that there is much wrong with our public behavior, even though some might find it irritating. Also, because we like to be happy, we are somewhat naive, and we tend to shove problems under the rug. This can be a problem when others attack or criticize us, because we are so unprepared to confront hostility and negativity (Massaro, 2003:8).

#### 11. How did Americans Get to be so Materialistic?

*This was another loaded question posed by Mary Massaro. How often have Americans been accused of being very materialistic? Once again, I needed to defend our national character.*

Clearly because we became the largest advanced country - that is, we became the embodiment of progress through science and technology. Along with Europe, Japan and the rest of the affluent West, we achieved a high standard of living and a high level of consumption because that is what science and technology deliver when they are pursued successfully and with benign intent. In other words, we went down the road of consumer capitalism. This isn't so bad, considering the alternative: The Nazis and the Soviets, for example, perverted science and technology for the purpose of military conquest.

True, we are now reaching an impasse -- over-consuming, destroying the planet, etc. But we shouldn't be too harsh in our judgment of the American experience. It's been a pretty good ride, for the past 250 years. And let's remember that we have no monopoly on materialism. The rest of the world shares that value in varying degrees (Massaro, 2003:8).

#### 12. Why are Americans Partial to Illusions and Self-Deception?

##### Are we not Emotionally Equipped for the Truth?

*Boy, Mary Massaro is pretty down on our national character at this point! The rest of her book is not negative or P.C. at all, and that's what I liked about it. Anyway, I had to disagree with the question's implication, which was that we are a singularly stupid people.*

We are not unique in this regard. Perhaps compared with Canadians and northwest Europeans we have fundamentalists, more weird religious, satanic and cult-like movements.

However, compared with the rest of the world, we are a relatively sober and rational people. Americans certainly do not have a corner on mass hysteria. Even compared to the Europeans we may not be more prone to nonsensical beliefs and self-delusions. Insofar as some of us believe the wrong things (even in the face of contrary evidence), that's just the human condition (Massaro, 2003:9).

### 13. So Who is Better, America or Europe?

*You have noticed by now that I spend an enormous amount of time thinking about America and the world: The (largely negative) attitudes of Europeans and other foreigners towards us; America's relative advantages and disadvantages vis-a-vis Europe and other foreign countries; Here, finally, is a skit I wrote in the Fall of 1995. It was never published. I'm sure it will make everyone angry on both sides of the Atlantic.*

Table I. Who is Better - America or Europe?

	America	Europe
Better	1. Stronger work ethic 2. Friendlier people 3. Cleaner bodies; Better teeth; Less smoking 4. More freedom 5. Lower taxes 6. Cheaper to fly 7. Lower cost of living 8. Cleaner neighborhoods 9. Emission controls 10. More spectacular natural scenery	1. More culture and leisure 2. More sophisticated people 3. Leaner, healthier people; Healthier, better food; More walking, exercise 4. Less crime 5. Better public services 6. Better public transportation 7. Higher wages 8. More beautiful monuments 9. Fewer cars 10. More spectacular cities
Worse	1. Less culture and leisure 2. More people with bad taste 3. Fatter people; More junk food; Less exercise 4. More crime 5. Poor public services 6. Lousy public transportation 7. Lower wages 8. Plain looking neighborhoods 9. Traffic gridlock 10. Uglier cities	1. Lazier people 2. More rude people 3. Dirtier people; More bad breath and bad teeth; More smoking 4. More meddling, less freedom 5. Higher taxes 6. Expensive to fly 7. Higher cost of living 8. Graffiti out of control 9. More pollution 10. Less beautiful and pristine nature

## 37. DEFENDING PRESIDENT REAGAN

### 1. How Do You Prove that Jimmy Carter is Better than Reagan?

*I spent a lot of time supporting President Reagan. I knew, along with a majority of Americans, that his time had come. He turned the country around, the same way as De Gaulle did for France. His election as President in November, 1980, was preceded by a campaign in which the attacks upon him by his opponents and by the media, most of which are Democratic, were extraordinarily vicious. The reason for this was that Reagan was so effective and so much more threatening than lesser men, such as Gerald Ford, had been.*

*Of course, some of the media were on Reagan's side. One of his staunchest supporters was Human Events. The campaign was raging, it was anybody's guess who would win, and every contribution was important. On October 20, 1980, after Human Events had published a pro-Reagan article, I wrote the following short piece, planning to submit it to them for publication. I never got around to it. Here it is, concise and well done, I think.*

Let me anticipate the many hostile letters you will receive about your October 20 article on Ronald Reagan: "Reagan lives in a celluloid fantasy land of yesteryear;" "a trigger happy cowboy;" "doesn't realize you can't live in the past;" "too simplistic;" "can't solve today's complex problems with John Wayne methods;" etc.

But how do liberals prove that collectivism is better than individualism, socialism better than capitalism, equality more important than freedom, today better than yesterday, complexity better than simplicity, the new morality superior to the old one, government better than business, public better than private, flight better than fight, left better than right, Carter better than Reagan?

### 2. The Media Are Sabotaging Reagan

*I did publish a strong pro-Reagan article in Human Events shortly before the election. Maybe it made a small contribution to the Gipper's election. Here it is:*

I can no longer resist registering my frustration regarding the viciously distorted media coverage of the presidential campaign. Papers such as the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times* and our local *Sacramento Bee* are now going far beyond decency and fair play in the use of blatant lies, distortions and fraudulence to indoctrinate the population against the conservative candidate.

The liberal media power structure has such a stranglehold over the formation of American public opinion that one begins to despair, wanting to leave a society and a mass culture that have turned lunatic. Let me be specific:

! Since the campaign got under way, the American people have been bombarded by a relentless barrage of pseudo-events about Reagan's alleged gaffes. While the Republican candidate has made neither more nor fewer tactical errors than your average politician, he has been mercilessly hounded by the hordes of biased editorialists making enormous mountains out of every imaginary molehill.

! Over the past two months, our local *Sacramento Bee* has printed practically *one*

disparaging caricature or political cartoon of Ronald Reagan *per day*. None of the other candidates.

! The September 21 Reagan-Anderson debate was officially judged and scored by my colleague, Prof. Barbara O'Connor. She was appointed by Gov. Brown to the California Public Broadcasting Commission. She said that she is "way to the left of the candidates" but that this would not affect her judgment(!).

! A September 20 *New York Times* editorial accuses Reagan of "Me-Too Economics." The gall! For months the Republican candidate has been labeled reckless and extreme. Now, having moved toward the political center, the *Times* terms him (I quote) too "dull" and "cautious." The same editorial goes on to lie about the Reagan tax cut proposal, saying that it favors business. The opposite is true: Carter's proposal would give a greater share of the cut to business, whereas Reagan's would favor individuals more.

Why in God's name do we permit such writers to mold public opinion? College courses in English and Social Science teach students about bias in testing and reporting. Do schools of journalism only teach them how to most cleverly lie with and ravage the English language?

Surely this disgusting and growing brand of journalism must be exposed and opposed. Surely Reagan, or any other honest man, does not stand a chance unless we put up a far more vigorous collective fight against the corporate liars at the *Times*, the *Post*, in Hollywood and at the Big Three networks! There is nothing mystifying about Reagan's decline in the polls. The media are quite obviously and effectively doing him in!

### 3. Is the Sacramento Bee to Blame for Hinckley's Attempt on Reagan's Life?

*On March 30, 1981, two months after Reagan took office, he was nearly killed by would-be assassin John Hinckley. I was livid, and I wrote the following angry statement addressed to the Sacramento Bee, our local very liberal anti-Reagan daily. Fortunately, I did not submit it for publication. It does seem somewhat intemperate, after all these years. I do not hold the Sacramento Bee responsible for the attempt on Reagan's life.*

Long before the 1980 election, you began your daily anti-Reagan barrage of vicious editorials and derogatory cartoons. You and the liberal media have infected public opinion with hatred and hostility for the current administration. After the recent tragic bloodshed at the White House, you will no doubt editorialize about such things as the American Way, fair play and democracy, telling your readers sanctimoniously that violence is not the way. Yet indirectly, you have contributed to the poisoned atmosphere which sometimes results in violent assaults upon those with whom one disagrees.

### 4. Reagan and The European Peace Movement

*Ronald Reagan's greatest accomplishment was to win and to put an end to the Cold War. He did this by upping the ante of the arms race so high that the Soviet Union could no longer afford to stay in the game. One of the key steps in that process was the deployment of cruise missiles in Western Europe during the early 1980s. This happened despite the vehement opposition of the European Peace Movement, which held million men protest demonstrations. In the end, Reagan succeeded.*

*Before the demise of the Soviet Union, the Europeans had a choice to be either Red or Dead, and many preferred to be Red. Now, thanks to Reagan's genius, they don't have to worry about being either.*

*While the peace protests raged and the deployment of our cruise missiles was up in the air, the European pacifists enjoyed the sympathy of many American media. One of these was Time Magazine, which published an article about them on the Fall of 1981. On November 30, 1981, I wrote the following letter criticizing that article. However, Time did not print it. They apparently could not accept the truth.*

Your analysis of the European peace movement contains a contradiction: On the one hand you say that it reflects the coming of age of a new post-war generation; on the other hand you state that it is rooted in the Europeans' recollection of the horror and futility of war. It can't be both ways. As one born and raised in Europe until age 25, I remember the tyranny of both Hitler and Stalin. In my view, the first explanation is more plausible: Unlike their parents, the young Europeans who prefer to be red than dead don't seem to realize that they might well end up both, like Europe's six million jews. It is sad that each generation must learn from its own mistakes rather than from history.

#### 5. Reagan is Correct on Human Rights: Totalitarianism vs. Authoritarianism

*I continued to publish pro-Reagan articles throughout that eminently successful presidency. On September 5, 1981, I printed the following piece in Human Events. The article is good. I have one misgiving: It seems to condone the junta which ruled with iron fist over Argentina at the time (and which started the Falkland War half a year after I wrote this). This was not my intent.*

One of the Reagan Administration's major foreign policy departures has been to redefine our government's conception of human rights and to reorder its priorities.

The liberals are up in arms over the new direction, because it seemingly represents a willingness to indict repression by left-wing regimes while looking the other way when it comes to right-wing dictatorships. Actually, the government's new human rights policy is based on another distinction, namely that between authoritarian and totalitarian regimes. Argentina, El Salvador and Uruguay are examples of the former. Cuba and the Soviet Union represent the latter.

While many authoritarian governments are classified as rightist and many totalitarian ones are viewed as leftist, this correlation is neither perfect nor inherent. (Nazi Germany is classified as both right-wing and totalitarian). The only thing the Reagan Administration has suggested, rather timidly at that, is that totalitarian regimes are more repressive than authoritarian ones.

Prof. Ernest Lefever was one of the people who recently drew the distinction. This did not sit well with liberals. They saw it as one more sign of Lefever's rightist leanings, and they therefore made it impossible for him to become Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights.

However, the Administration need not be timid about the distinction between authoritarian and totalitarian governments, and liberals must not be permitted to treat it as some sort of phony verbal gimmick. The distinction is basic and well established in political science and in the literature on political violence. It is valid and meaningful.

The repressive powers of totalitarian governments are infinitely greater than those of authoritarian ones. Proof of this lies in the fact that countries such as Nazi Germany, Cuba and the Soviet Union have never had a terrorist problem, whereas countries like Argentina, Uruguay and El Salvador of course do. The menace provided to human rights by totalitarian systems is far greater and more irreversible than that coming from authoritarian dictatorships. Totalitarian regimes are far

more efficient in their ruthlessness and commit violence on a much greater scale.

Consider the case of Argentina. Jacobo Timerman is an exiled publisher from that country. He has just published his memoir in which he describes the gruesome torture and imprisonment he received at the hands of Argentina's ruling junta. Timerman has been eagerly coopted by America's liberal establishment. His experience and his book are used as ammunition to attack Reagan's new human rights emphasis. Timerman is proof, so the reasoning goes, that there should be no compromises with regimes like Argentina's.

**The liberals are wrong. Some of them may truly believe in the morality of their beliefs, and some are simply twisting their arguments because they are wedded to the vested interests of the American liberal establishment. Whatever the case may be, they are wrong.**

Nobody is saying that the rulers of Argentina are nice guys. Timerman no doubt suffered great injustice (although it is not clear that this was because he is Jewish). What liberals refuse to face is the fact that Argentina's present condition is the inevitable outcome of the unbearable level of violence and terrorism which prevailed in the mid-'70s, and the vast majority of Argentinians prefer their current situation to what was happening then.

The facts speak for themselves. Between 1970 and 1977, terrorism in Argentina became a massive problem. At the height of their activities, the ERP (*Ejercito Revolucionario del Pueblo*) and the Montoneros numbered over 30,000. Along with many other smaller groups, they were responsible for hundreds of Kidnapings, bombings and indiscriminate killings of foreigners, natives and innocent civilians. Their annual budget, derived from ransom, was over \$100 million. One single ransom netted \$60 million. As terrorism expert Walter Lacqueur notes, Argentina became one of the very first cases in history of terrorism turning into urban guerrilla warfare.

It is an axiom in the study of terrorism that when the level of violence finally threatens the very foundation of society, the state will, with its infinitely vaster resources, introduce whatever repressive measures are necessary as a last resort to guarantee a return to order and collective survival. The price, of course, is a loss of democratic values.

This is clearly what happened in Argentina. After 1977, terrorism subsided. It is now entirely under control. The pattern occurred in Uruguay a few years earlier. There, terrorism began in 1961 and gradually grew to massive proportions until it was defeated in 1972. Like Argentina, Uruguay became an authoritarian dictatorship.

The liberals attribute terrorism to unbearable economic deprivation, but no such correlation exists. While the Tupamaros of Uruguay and the Montoneros of Argentina rose during economic depressions, Brazil's great upsurge of terrorism (1968-1971) happened precisely during an economic boom. There is simply no cause-and-effect relationship between terrorism on the one hand and poverty and oppression on the other: witness the German Red Army faction, the Italian Red Brigades and other similar groups.

The Carter Administration's human rights policy was quixotic and counter-productive. The new Administration's approach is correct. It makes sense to distinguish between authoritarianism and totalitarianism. While governments such as Uruguay and Argentina's are repressive, they are less rigorously so than the USSR government, and they are the unfortunate but inevitable response of societies that were recently floundering on the verge of anarchy. The real world does not consist of two sides - good and evil - but of many gradations of both. It is fortunate that the Reagan Administration recognizes this fact (*Human Events*, Sept. 5, 1981).

## 6. The Reagan Revolution: Starve the Beast and Stay the Course

*I wrote and submitted this article to the Wall Street Journal this article on February 8, 1982. They didn't print it, even though it is excellent. It is a well-informed economic analysis of public expenditures and a well-grounded defense of Reaganomics. In one respect, however, it is time-bound: a few decades later, state coffers are no longer bulging with surplus revenue, and governments at all levels have difficulty discharging their responsibilities to the public. But the fact that America is no longer in danger of "becoming too socialistic" (to put it ironically!), is testimony to the success of the Reagan revolution.*

The Reagan Revolution is now over a year old and the values which it represents have been aired at length. The public may be confused by the conflicting arguments presented by opposing sides. People may side with whomever is fighting for their special interests. The side chosen by most democrats, republicans, businessmen, industrial workers, public or private employees, taxpayers or welfare recipients can generally be predicted as the product of correct information, ignorance or self-interest.

On the other hand, policy makers, including all levels of the Federal Government, are presumed to base their behavior on only two of those criteria: information and self-interest.

The facts I am about to review are easily accessible and they are matters of common knowledge to any moderately well-informed citizen. However, perhaps a simple overview can enable us to once again focus on the forest rather than getting lost among the trees.

Issue number one: Due to the ever increasing size of the public sector at the expense of the private sphere, American society is drifting toward socialism. Fortunately we have not drifted as fast and as far as most of the rest of the world, but the maelstrom is exerting its inexorable pull even on this great ship. Indeed the figures are undeniable: By 1983, the federal budget (expenditures) is reaching \$758 billion. Furthermore, state and local governments are spending about \$577 billion per year, of which \$83 billion consists of federal aid.

Thus all governments combined spend \$1.252 trillion *per annum*, which is nearly 40% of our \$3.3 trillion GNP. The Federal government's share of the GNP is 23%. These two percentages compare with 26% and 16% in 1950, respectively. In little over one generation, Uncle Sam's share of the American pie has increased by nearly 50%, that of all government combined by nearly two thirds. These two curves are fairly straight. They do not fluctuate very much. At the existing rate, the future is quite simply the far-gone socialization of the American economy and of American life.

Issue number two: The government's (federal, state, local) responsibilities (expenditures) have generally *not* exceeded their revenues. In other words, it is not true that the governments (federal, state, local) have been perennially starved, as liberals like to claim, and unable to discharge their benevolent social, regulatory, scientific, educational, military and other responsibilities. Over the decades, the governments have more often had *too much money*, i.e. a surplus, than a deficit. Although this has no longer been the case for the federal government since the early sixties, it has been *increasingly* the case for state and local governments, most clearly since the 1960s and due in part to revenue sharing. Year after year, the state and local governments' receipts have exceeded their expenditures, and year after year the surplus has *grown* -- from a couple of billion dollars annually during the 1960s to over twenty billion per year by the late 1970's.

By the time Howard Jarvis spearheaded the taxpayers rebellion from California, state and local governments had amassed a cumulative surplus of \$150 billion dollars. While this does not make up for the federal deficit, it is worth remembering that it is not in the nature of governments to

be starved for money.

Issue number three: The country has neglected its defense, spending less and less on defense every year. Reagan is not launching a fantastic military build-up, merely a moderate catching-up for past neglect: The federal military budget declined from 9.3% of the GNP in 1960 to 5% of the GNP in 1980. Even at the height of the Vietnam war, defense only took 8.3% of the GNP -- well below its level in peaceful 1960. In contrast, the human resources component of the federal budget increased from 5% in 1960 to nearly 12% today. Even after the so-called Reagan-sponsored military build-up, defense will, in 1983, only take 6.7% of the GNP.

Issue number four: Each year the federal government goes into deeper debt. The federal debt has grown from \$291 billion in 1960 to \$1.146 trillion in 1983. Government agencies hold only one fourth of this debt -- the rest is owed to the public, you and me. Each year the federal government must pay more interest on its debt -- from \$7 billion in 1960 to \$113 billion by 1983 (current dollars).

The fourth issue is obviously where the Reagan Revolution is faltering -- the federal budget is not being balanced, at least not for the time being. By the same token, this simple review of the issues also points to the simple and obvious solution: Continue to combat runaway government vigorously and do not worry about its ability to adequately discharge its responsibilities. It operated effectively and humanely in the 1960s, and of course the Reagan Revolution's ambition is far more modest than to return to that funding level anyway, even though that would not be an unattainable objective.

## 7. The First Rule in American Politics: Do not **Ever** Say What You Mean

*During Fall 1983, the politicians and the media were playing their usual "gotcha" games in Washington - scandal mongering and trying to find dirt on whomever they were seeking to destroy. James Watt was Reagan's Secretary of the Interior. He had many strikes against him: He was not a conservationist, to put it mildly. So the environmentalists hated his guts. He was also very conservative and - worst of all - he was a born-again Christian. So he had to go.*

*What happened next is what I object to in my article, below - published in the October 1983 issue of the Sacramento Forum. It's not that I had any particular sympathy for this man. But the dishonesty and hypocrisy of American politics drives me up the wall!*

*They couldn't simply attack Watt for his bad environmental policies and demand that Reagan fire him for being a bad Secretary of the Interior. That would have been too straight forward and too honest. No. They had to resort to scandal mongering. And you know what dirt they used to get rid of Watt? He spoke a politically incorrect word in one of his speeches!*

*So that is what we do in American politics: We get rid of people through scandal mongering and through the invention of pseudo-issues, instead of confronting them frontally about their policies. That's how presidents have been destroyed, from Nixon to Clinton. After all, as any lawyer will tell you, in politics, rule number one is: Do not ever say what you mean.*

This month has witnessed another manifestation of the nauseating political culture of Imperial Washington -- Gopher Prairie on the Potomac. After Watergate, Koreagate, Lancegate, Burfordgate, Debategate and God knows what else, we have just had James Wattgate.

Our system is incapable of addressing the real issues. It must invariably concoct pseudo-

events and pseudo-reasons to justify the rejection of public officials. If James Watt has lost the mandate of the people, so be it; let him leave. But why must it be under the absurd pretext that he used the word "cripple"?

Humans, like other animals, reject those of their peers they dislike. But in American politics, we must *invent* reasons for rejecting one another. This is particularly so when the individual has not done anything terribly flagrant, but instead simply elicits some undefined gutlevel dislike, as do people such as James Watt and Richard Nixon. The culture does not permit to simply say, "We just don't like him; we don't want him." That would be too honest.

So the system reels under the strain of pseudo-events, falsehoods and legal fictions. We are told that the Constitution mandates racial quotas, abortion and a ban on Christmas creches on municipal grounds. We are told that the only President ever to be fired lost his job because he tried to cover up a minor crime by some of his underlings. We are told that Watt lost his job because he joked about cripples and Jews. In fact, abortions and racial quotas are now *de rigueur* only because women and minorities have enormous power, and their desires have absolutely nothing to do with the views of the Founding Fathers. Watt was fired because he evoked visceral hatred from powerful elites, as did Nixon.

It is terribly unhealthy to always lie to the people, to confuse them about what is real and what is not, what is important and what is not, what is true and what is not. Compare Watt's transgression with that of Congressman Gerry Studds, who had *sex* with a 17-year old page boy! This is a felony, it is a perversion and it is deeply harmful to another human being.

Fortunately, most common people are still able to distinguish between true evil and pseudo-events. We are constantly being confused about that distinction, made crazy as it were. Most of us simply tune out and become alienated. This paves the way for a totalitarian mass society *a la* 1984 (*Sacramento Forum*, Oct. 1983).

## 8. Contragate: Politics by Scandal Mongering. Or How America Commits Political Suicide

*But the biggest instance of scandal mongering during the Reagan years was Contragate, of course. In 1986, members of the Reagan Administration secretly sold weapons to our archenemy Iran, and they used the proceeds to arm the Contras, who were the anti-Communist rebels attempting to overthrow Nicaragua's Marxist Sandinista government. This illegal activity was revealed to the public by the media in November. A major scandal got underway - dubbed Contragate or Irangate. Did President Reagan know? He claimed that he didn't. Once again Washington was embroiled in an attempt to unseat a President by scandal mongering, using Watergate as the model.*

*I was unhappy. Why can American politics not be straightforward, I wondered? If congress disapproves of what a President does, why on earth can it not vote his policies down, and be done? That is what the European parliamentary democracies of Europe do. When an executive no longer has the support of a majority of the legislative branch, a vote of no confidence is held, and the president/prime minister is canned; or if the system doesn't allow for that, because the executive's term is fixed, as it is in France, then at least the legislative branch votes down everything the executive proposes, in effect rendering him powerless.*

*But in America, the battle shifts to pseudo-issues. That's how Nixon was defeated, that is how Clinton would be impeached in 1998, and that is how they tried to destroy Reagan. I wrote the following article on December 6, 1986, and it was published in the Sacramento Union.*

To many non-natives such as myself, the latest chapter in America's long-term suicidal

decline is as pathetic as it is infuriating. Once again the country is embarking on a self-mutilating palace-revolution. Once again the circulation of Washington elites is going to sap the country's energies for months or years, paralyzing it and preventing it from attending to its real domestic and global problems. Once again we are going to experience an orgy of legalistic battles, a fratricidal paper war from which only the American people will suffer and only our rapacious enemies will profit, including the Soviet Union, Nicaragua and Iran.

The dominoes are going to resume falling as rapidly as they did under Carter. The Reagan doctrine of supporting anti-Marxist rebels will be reversed by the opposition. The Nicaraguan communists will consolidate their power, Chile and other Latin American countries will soon follow. Mexico too, eventually. Additionally, nearly every other country will thrive in direct proportion to our further economic decline, including Japan, South Korea and the Europeans. The longer the Americans are busy playing palace revolution in Washington instead of addressing their federal and trade deficits, their de-industrialization, their educational, criminal and drug problems, the more other countries of the world will pick up the pieces by default. A tragedy all around, what this country is doing to itself!

A Martian anthropologist - or any foreign observer - would ask: What on earth is this new Iranian scandal? Any outside observer would be as mystified by this Irangate as the entire world outside the U.S. remains, to this very day, unable to understand what in God's name Watergate was all about. The only clear certainty at this point is that Irangate is going to ruin Reagan's magnificent presidency as surely as Watergate destroyed Nixon and his accomplishments.

What is Irangate? It is - in one word - *nothing*. It is a contrived, fictitious pseudo-event. It is a concoction of pseudo-legal fabrications, innuendos, rumors and the selective application of questionable moral, legal and procedural principles.

As California State Senator Richardson recently put it: "When vultures...discover someone they dislike, they vomit on them...Rising into the air, they swoop down on their victim and eject the carrion...in their tummies. It's usually quite smelly...The recent attacks upon Ronald Reagan by the liberal Democrats and their port-side pundits in the press reminded me of this...To reword the Bard - Birds of a feather vomit together."

The only possible sane reaction from a Martian anthropologist to this vast puff of smoke, this thousand-fold magnification of a minor and routine diplomatic incident, this concoction brewed by the Media and the Democrats, is a simple and loud *so what?*

This should have been the President's sole and final response. Not repeated national TV and radio appearances; not the firing of trusted, loyal, courageous and competent aides; not apologies, excuses, explanations and justifications. Merely one big, vigorous *so what?* Maybe accompanied by the following equally simple and obvious retort to the Congress and the media: What are you going to *do* about it? Go ahead, sue me and make my day!

It has been understood at least since Macchiavelli that chief executives must have latitude to perform their duties and to serve the general welfare effectively. The *lack* of such latitude afflicting America's commander-in-chief - at least over the past twenty years - is already a disgrace and a scandal. It already accounts for this country's ineffectiveness as a world power, its declining global position, the ridicule and low esteem in which it is held by most of the world today. Whatever was done by Reagan, North, Poindexter, McFarlane, Regan, the CIA, the NSC and others concerning Iran, hostages, ransom in the form of weapons, fund transfers to the Contras, etc...etc..., all this is still *nothing*. It is *nothing* compared to the routine and unilateral use of executive power and privilege by practically *any* other chief executive in history, including Washington, Lincoln, Kennedy and all foreign leaders at all times.

For crying out loud, John Kennedy hatched a secret war against Cuba with the CIA without

the advice or consent of Congress or the people. He planned the assassination of Fidel Castro through Mafia hitmen like Sam Giancana. US planes and vessels participated in the abortive Bay of Pigs invasion. As a result of Kennedy's last minute loss of nerve, 114 members of the Cuban Brigade died on the beach and many others went to Castro's prisons. Should Kennedy have been impeached? The double standard of the Reagan-hating Left is obscene. To repeat, by any reasonable comparative standards, Irangate is practically *nothing*.

But the American establishment has lost this perspective. It is an inbred closed system. It no longer contains objective observers. No one sees that the Emperor has no clothes. Even the *victims* of the witch hunt and their sympathizers have been contaminated by the disease - witness Republicans like Dole and Kissinger and sympathetic editorialists like George Will and Jeane Kirkpatrick. Instead of coming to the White House's rescue by noting that the whole affair is largely a case of extreme partisan harassment, they equivocate and join the hair-splitting about the administration's allegedly shady conduct. Instead of using their considerable indoctrinary powers to beat back the mobs, these "respectable" Republicans are running for cover, distancing themselves from a beleaguered President, abandoning a ship which they perceive to be sinking. Not only does this show lack of integrity, but also an absence of foresight which will soon return to haunt even the so-called moderates of the GOP.

Even the President and his own men are cowering instead of fighting. They, too, are convinced that somehow they have done something wrong, even though they have *not*! But what do you expect? It is human nature to believe that, when everyone turns against you, you must obviously be guilty!

Were these men of clear mind and clean conscience, they would either (1) ignore the howling wolves or preferably (2) go to the offensive. But no, they tremble, they huddle and they apologize. They play a stupid *defensive* game. They permit the opposition to define the terms, the questions and the issues. Instead of turning the conversation to the lies, perjuries, slander tactics and fraudulent and unethical behavior of the Sam Donaldsons, instead of talking about the *treason* committed by congressmen and their aides when leaking highly sensitive information, they continue to submit themselves to the Press Corps' Gestapo tactics. Instead of displaying anger at their tormentors, they listen to their own inner fears. Instead of *asking* questions, they submit to the endless grilling, subconsciously believing that they are already guilty before even been tried.

Each step of the way, with each new inquisition and accusation, one loss leads to the next, producing ever greater fear, confusion and paralysis and further emboldening the sharks circling them. This is the same familiar downward quicksand which swallowed Richard Nixon and his men 13 years ago.

The victims *have internalized guilt without being guilty*. Unaware that all struggles are ultimately struggles for survival and *power*, they idiotically believe that if the opposition is after them, they must somehow have done something bad. They are idiots because they assume that their enemies are motivated by the same motives as they are, namely decency and a concern for truth, justice and the well-being of the American people. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The tragedy and blind spot of decent people like Ronald Reagan is that they generally impugn their own motives to their protagonists; being good-hearted themselves, they cannot see that others may not be.

America's media-Left-wing coalition has become the judge, the Grand Inquisitor and the executioner to an extent that makes Joe McCarthy look downright innocuous. We have *permitted* this to happen by being weak, cowardly, naive, stupid and masochistic - a bit like the European Jews in the 1930s.

Why did Reagan immediately address the nation three or four times within the first few

weeks of this scandal anyway? Millions of us - most of us - only began to attribute any significance to this nonsense *after* the President's speeches. It takes two to tango; had he refused to play, there would be no game.

There are few detached observers left to shed light and sanity on the American political process, but I can remember one of the last few: A couple of years before his death, this is what John Wayne had to say about Watergate: "If I were President Nixon, I would have simply kept all those tapes and junked them; I would have told Sam Irvin and the media and the lot of them - hey, those are my tapes, so you all go home and leave me alone, you hear!"

\* \* \* \* \*

So what is the *real meaning* of this new circus show? Most of it is so simple, so obvious - at least to any objective observer. It is such an obvious case of the emperor's clothes, such an obvious instance of a simple truth escaping America's pervasive collective blindness.

What does it all mean?

(1) Well, there are no Martian anthropologists to tell us how utterly ridiculous and self-destructive this periodical ritual regicide is, but for starters, that's exactly what it is: After 6 years of peace, strength, prosperity and order, the rambunctious children are ready to once again immolate the father. Freud said it in *Moses and Monotheism*. This must inevitably happen. So this is meaning number one: Ritual patricide.

(2) Secondly, the incipient new orgy is an obvious sideshow aimed by congress and the remainder of the left-wing elite to distract the people's attention from the country's real problems, which congress cannot and does not *wish* to solve.

Now that the Democrats control both houses, they have a sudden responsibility to *solve* problems rather than to *create* them or to *block* the President's attempted solutions. So what does the gang of 535 do? Within two weeks of its election victory, it switches to its new agenda (an old agenda, really): instead of going to work on our nation's intractable problems, it starts up the 1988 power grab, beginning with a nice new scandal out of the blue which will carry for the next couple of years. A great strategy; it diverts attention from our real problems and causes people to forget what the Democrats were elected for, namely to *govern* and to solve our problems.

Nothing proves more clearly the cynicism of Reagan's left-wing detractors than the fact that they are now accusing him of being soft on terrorists. But for crying out loud, doesn't anyone remember that these phonies, for years, blamed him for being too *intransigent* with terrorists, wanting him to *negotiate and to make concessions so as to obtain the release of the hostages*? Doesn't anyone see through Tip O'Neil's hypocritical assertion that there is nothing worse in the world than making deals with the Iranians? He, and others like him, were the ones who for years harassed "trigger-happy," "macho, cowboy" Reagan for *not wanting* to negotiate with terrorists and for *punishing* them instead, as in the Libyan raid! Doesn't anyone remember that our 66 hostages in Teheran were freed *within half an hour (!)* of Reagan's swear-in ceremony as President, and that this was due to the fact that the Iranians feared him and perceived him - correctly - as infinitely tougher than his predecessor? And now the Democrats dare to accuse him of being soft on terrorists!

(3) Thirdly, Irangate now shows beyond any doubt that we have become a state without a head, an executive branch lacking any and all latitude to govern effectively. We have been told for

the past 6 years that Reagan is a rigid right-wing conservative ideologue, a rabid authoritarian, a crypto-fascist. What a laugh! Compared to John Kennedy, Reagan's policies make him look like a countercultural hippie, a peacenik, an appeaser of communism and of Third World radicalism, an isolationist fearful of foreign entanglements. Look at him in Reykjavik, offering Gorbachev a zero-option nuclear deal! Look at the White House ferrying Honduran troops to repel the Nicaraguan invaders, but *desperate to avoid any and all American participation in combat!* Under Reagan, American forces aren't even allowed to *defend* themselves any more, as in Beirut three years ago! And this is the great imperialist warmonger?

No wonder: For years this country has been ruled by the Fourth Estate and the Congress - jointly making sure that nothing ever gets accomplished. Congressional impediments like the idiotic Boland amendment, the Neutrality Act, the War Powers act, and dozens of other nuisances have emasculated executive power, the CIA and the military. No wonder the President must conduct foreign policy out of the White House basement and secret NSC offices, picking up what the CIA can no longer do. This is leadership? This is the government which must save Western Civilization from the onslaught of the barbarians?

(4)Fourthly, it is simply a matter of the Republicans having lost the latest election. *How can it have unanimously escaped every political observer in the country that the so-called scandal erupts exactly and immediately after the election?* Coincidence? Sure, and the tooth fairy exists, too!

Those who stoked up this fire are a cynical and daemonic bunch, willing to go to bed with Iranian con-artists, Nicaraguan Marxists, international terrorists, or do anything else to wrest power from the only people they truly hate - the Reagan White House. The jackals of the press corps are willing to crucify the President, and the congress would gladly sell out the country for revenge and for temporary political power. And if in this process they inflict further irreparable harm on the nation and on the people, the hell with America!

It's all so obvious. Promptly after the November balloting, the newly elected majority dug up a few third-rate facts which had occurred a year-and-a-half earlier and which were probably already known to many people in Washington, including some powerful Democrats. Now the Democrats and their media - 90% of the media *are* democratic - felt that as the new majority, they were entitled to govern. Hence a nice artificial scandal to ruin the Republican White House.

But why this circuitous, painful, protracted and nationally ruinous route to power? *Because under the American system, unlike that of Europe, there is no institutionalized way for a party to make a midterm transition from opposition to ruling party!*

In all European parliamentary democracies, the parliamentary majority is *ipso facto* - either alone or in coalition - the *governing* party. When the ruling party loses majority support, there may be a vote of no confidence, and out goes the premier, to be replaced by a member of the hitherto opposition.

With its rigid presidential system mandating 4 or 8 year executive terms, America has gained stability and avoided the grotesque succession of ten or twenty different governments per decade *a la* Fourth French Republic or post-war Italy.

But now look at us since the late 1960s! The Democrats have added a variant to Von Clausewitz's dictum: *pre-fabricated scandals are politics by other means*. When the Democrats lost the 1972 election, they concocted Watergate to rob the Republicans of their victory won at the ballot box. This time, having gained control over both houses, they feel that they can once again win through scandal-mongering what still eludes them legally, namely the demise of the Reagan Administration. In Europe the way would at least be open to replace the sitting premier with one from the ranks of the newly elected parliamentary majority.

Here, we go instead through wrenching bloodlettings that may last years, and of which Watergate is the prototype. What a catastrophic situation! What a disaster for the country and for the world! Each such crisis paralyzes the world's pre-eminent country for years, disabling it and preventing it from tending to immense and real domestic and global problems.

A two-trillion-dollar federal deficit growing by 200 billion annually. A trade deficit growing by an even larger amount. An expanding Soviet Empire which gobbles up another few countries every time America lapses into one of its paralyzing fratricidal orgies (During our 1970s impotence, we lost - either to the Soviets outright, or to the ranks of "neutral" but rabidly anti-American states - Libya, Iran, South Yemen, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Nicaragua, Surinam, Ethiopia, Somalia, Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Peru).

Have we reached the period of slow, relentless and irreversible decline begun by Spain after 1588? After the defeat of Philip's Armada in the English Channel, Spain never recovered its political health. Was our defeat in Vietnam a similar turning point in our history? In any objective sense, Vietnam was not really a big deal. Most countries win some and lose some, without being forever traumatized by a minor loss. England recovered from the loss of its North-American colonies to become the world's greatest power. France has done little but losing for a long time now ( Franco-Prussian War, World War Two, Algeria, Indochina), yet it continues to pursue its international interests and obligations undauntedly, as in Tchad, New Caledonia, Lebanon and its nuclear force.

Is the American national character so flawed that it cannot live with the memory of *one* failure? Are Americans psychologically so weak that they can't take anything short of a perfect batting average? This is childish and immature!

Or maybe we are reliving the Roman Social Wars of the first century B.C. Then, Marius, Sulla, the Gracchi and other forces confronted each other. Some represented the aristocracy and some were more or less a popular front, representing the plebs. Maybe today's Democrats are bound to become the forever majority party, as the Plebeians permanently displaced the Patricians 2000 years ago.

Another historical analogy dates from just a few decades later - also in Rome: The periodical immolation of the President (Nixon in 1974, maybe Reagan in 1987) reminds me of Caesar's assassination in 44 B.C. Today's left-wing congressional inquisitors are latter-day Brutuses and Cassiuses who, just like those Roman senators, pretend to act on noble impulses, but are in fact driven solely by the greed for power.

Two thousand years ago, the senators murdered Rome's greatest, most effective, most humane and most honest leader nominally to save democracy. Instead, their bungling *coup d'etat* was the death knell of the Republic and the beginning of four centuries of corruption, decadence and decline. Today, the Congress is similarly irresponsible, doing irreparable harm to the Executive and to the country, and seemingly only picking on those Presidents who are effective. Weaker presidents such as Ford and Carter are left alone, since they present no threat to the vultures of the Left. But like Brutus and Cassius, these petty and inept politicians are woefully incompetent to provide any viable substitute for strong presidential leadership.

In this process, the Left cares about one thing and one thing only - Power. Under the cloak of moral rectitude, it stoops to fraud, slander, bigotry and any other underhanded method to achieve its sole objective - power.

Look at the thinly veiled bigotry of an Arthur Schlesinger in a December 5 *Wall Street Journal* editorial: Passing himself off for the moralist and detached intellectual which he is not, the Harvard bigot rails at Reaganites, Republicans, movie stars, but most of all at that truly evil and inferior creature - the *businessman*! Somehow Schlesinger leaps from Irangate the Boesky scandal and to yuppie selfishness, blaming it *all* on Ronald Reagan! Sure, why not the Jewish

holocaust too, while you are at it, Art, and the extinction of the dinosaur too!

Look at the use of slants and innuendos passed off as substance. Look at the guilt-by-analogy tactic of the Camelot has-been: Reagan is guilty because he somehow reminds you of the Wizard of Oz. Reagan is guilty because he was a movie actor!

What pompous, pious, hypocritical hogwash! All we glean from such an article is the full list of Schlesinger's prejudices: Apparently, the ivory-tower professor hates (1)businessmen, because they are allegedly always stupider than politicians (!), (2)military men, (3)Republicans (no explanation given here) and (4)former movie stars, but probably only those who played in corny old patriotic pro-American westerns with happy endings where the good guys win. Had Reagan been a tragic actor in European avant-garde movies, snobs like Schlesinger would no doubt love him as President.

But the greatest tragedy is the blindness of vast numbers of common folks. Why on earth are so many Americans unable to distinguish between *reality* and *fraud*?

I ask you: How many people did the President have assassinated? How many did Nixon have murdered or locked up in connection with Watergate? How many disappeared behind bars on secret presidential orders? How many American journalists and dissidents were beaten up or tortured by the CIA?

For crying out loud, isn't it totally obvious that this is *not* history in the making? That these are *paper wars*, lawyers' wars, with nothing of substance happening whatsoever, except verbiage, legal briefs, political careers destroyed, gossip, rumor, and the country's long-term welfare being irreparably damaged? Archibald Cox's firing by Nixon was *not* a "Saturday Night Massacre"! A massacre means *killing* people, not firing them!

Every day *real* events happen in the streets and cities of America - conflict, murder, rape, marriage, birth, bankruptcy, strike. What is happening in Washington now is *unreal*. It is *bullshit*. It only means one thing: the 1986 election produced a new parliamentary majority, and those selfish bastards want immediate power and revenge, so they prefer to inflict harm on America rather than cooperate with a lame duck President for another couple of years. Big Deal! (*Sacramento Union*, Dec. 1986).

### 9. The Abuse of Language by the Reagan-Haters

On January 20, 1990, I wrote the following piece as a commentary on recent articles in the Wall Street Journal. I sent it to them, but I don't remember whether they published it or not.

The abuse of language by the Reagan-haters (January 22) is worth commenting on:

A favorite tactic of American left-wingers is the attack-by-metaphor; the reiterated cliché: Left-wingers call the Reagan administration a "Wizard-of-Oz Presidency" (Smith) and they endlessly reiterate adjectives like "mean-spirited," "Orwellian" (Heagerty) and "sleazy" (Harris); as if they were thereby saying something of substance. In fact these are meaningless words. These people are merely saying that they hate Ronald Reagan for reasons unexplained.

It is the same with the mis-use of the word "right-winger" (Andrews): American liberals now abuse this term to mean essentially "bad person" and nothing more. Thus the largely left-wing media, being in love with Gorbachev, call his *opponents* right-wingers. In fact, it is Gorbachev himself who is on the right of the Soviet political spectrum, along with the Lithuanian secessionists and just about everyone else in Eastern Europe. Let's get it straight: Ceaucescu was a *left-winger* (=

rigid communist); Lech Walesa, Ronald Reagan, Glasnost and Perestroika are on the *right* (= critical of Marxism and sympathetic to capitalism and freedom). American left-wingers should once and for all confess their preference for authoritarian government (the Left) and their dislike of freedom (the Right).

American left-wingers now also claim that they were correct about the cold war all along (Andrews). This is another act of shameless chutzpah. In fact, they have always praised the virtues of socialism, viewing it as the way of the future. Now that this system is collapsing, they have the audacity to turn around and say: see, we were right, there was never any reason to take Soviet socialism seriously. The gall!

#### 10. Was the McMartin Child Molestation Tragedy Reagan's Fault?

*The McMartin child molestation case was a tragedy which occurred during the (late) 1980s: As part of widespread hysteria over child molestation, a group of parents sued the owners of a child care facility (the McMartins), charging them with unspeakable sexual crimes against the children. The charges were bogus, and in the end the McMartins were acquitted. However, the process ruined them and led to Peggy McMartin's premature death. Overall, a terrible miscarriage of justice.*

*But this is not the main point of the letter, below, which I sent to the Wall Street Journal on February 10, 1990, and which may have been printed shortly thereafter. I wrote the letter in response*

*to an article by my old nemesis at the Journal, Alex Cockburn. This rabid Reagan-hater had the audacity to blame President Reagan for the McMartin tragedy! The main point of my letter was to express my outrage over that.*

I wish to respond to Alex Cockburn's review of the McMartin child molestation case (Feb.8). For a moment I thought that I finally once agreed with Cockburn. He is absolutely right that the case is a modern-day witch hunt. In my view it is politically motivated and reminiscent of Tom Wolfe's brilliant *Bonfire of the Vanities*.

But then, Mr. Cockburn helplessly relapses into his own pathological scape goating - the one no American liberal is immune to: *it's Reagan's fault!* We are told that the charges in the McMartin case are "quintessentially Reaganite" and that somehow this witch hunt is typical of the "Reagan era"!

Look, Alex: can't you see that in your brain and in that of your mates, Ronald Reagan has become the functional equivalent of *Satan*, i.e. the source and symbol of all evil, including war, injustice, AIDS, drugs, child molesting (or unfair *accusations* of child molesting, take your pick), acne, menstruation, smallpox, California earthquakes, jet lag, bad breath, the floods in Bangla Desh, the Holocaust, the extinction of dinosaurs, or anything else you chose to add to the list? I submit to you that none of these items is any more absurd than blaming Reagan for the McMartin miscarriage of justice. (*Wall Street Journal*, Feb. 1990).

### 38. DEFENDING THE MOONIES

#### 1. The Persecution of Reverend Moon

*During the 1980s, I befriended some "Moonies." These are the followers of the Reverend*

*Sun Myung Moon, the Korean evangelist who came to the United States in 1971 and founded a new sect.*

*It is always an uphill battle for a new sect, be it the early Christian Church two thousand years ago, the Mormons in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, or the "Moonies" today. For years, the media have been spreading wild allegations about this group, for example accusing them of kidnaping and brainwashing their members a la Jim Jones. Also, the Reverend Moon has spent nearly two years in prison for alleged tax evasion.*

*I met several Cal State students who were Moonies, and I participated in several conferences of this organization, where I met the Church's upper echelons, including Sun Myung Moon himself. I discovered that there was no truth to the outlandish accusations and prejudices held by the public. The "Moonies" are a fine and decent group of youngsters whose membership is entirely voluntary, and so is the leadership.*

*I can no more subscribe to their belief system than I could be a Mormon, a Muslim or a Catholic. I am an agnostic and a rationalist. However, the organization also has a valuable social agenda. Here was another underdog which was being maligned and treated unjustly, so I came to their support. I printed the following article in the November, 1983 issue of the Sacramento Forum.*

Ever since the so-called Moonies burst upon the American scene in the late 1960s, they have been the victims of a persecution reminiscent of the treatment of Christians in Ancient Rome. Sociologists -- including the Loflands at the University of California, Davis -- have had a hey-day doing studies showing the Moonies' alleged sinister "brainwashing" techniques combined with the kidnaping of gullible, young all-American types. The media have been happy to popularize and spread these rumors.

It has become apparent in recent years that the Unification Church in fact did not engage in such sinister practices. Sound recent sociological research refutes the early biased findings. Most of the literature so hostile to this church is based on interviews with disaffected former members. Actually the only people guilty of kidnap have been the so-called deprogrammers who have often been hired by relatives of Moonies wishing to force their children back out of the church. But, of course, the damage cannot be repaired easily. The media and public opinion are content with their prejudice as it is.

The vicious hostility directed at the Unification Church is not coincidental. Its 3 million members spread in more than 100 countries are largely Asian, most of them South Koreans. They follow the Reverend Sun Myung Moon, their Korean guru and messiah. Their number in the United States is relatively small, although their tremendous activism gives them great visibility.

And that is the rub. The Unification Church is perceived as threatening by many Americans due to three facts: In the first place, it is simply following in the footsteps of all other emerging sects. As the Mormons experienced their initial growing pains in the 19th century and other sects did at other times throughout history, so too the Moonies can expect some of their problems to be only the temporary hardship suffered by any new kid on the block.

Beyond that, however, the Unification Church is the victim of racism and political discrimination. After all, it is still dominated by Asians, and it is -- God forbid -- staunchly anti-Communist.

Local representatives of the movement have been viciously attacked at Cal State, by the Communist "Progressive" Alliance, among others. So have visitors such as Eldridge Cleaver who, while not members of the church, are friendly to it. So will I, surely, now that I show sympathy for this group.

To be (1) profoundly religious, (2) staunchly anti-Communist and in favor of traditional family values (as the Moonies are), and on top of it all, being largely Asian, is no easy thing in our

day and age. The US Government has joined in on the action, prosecuting the Reverend Moon for tax evasion and convicting him, pending appeal, to 18 months in prison. James Kilpatrick has read most of the briefs in the case, including an *amicus* filed by half a dozen other religious organizations such as the National Council of Churches. The record does not establish Moon's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

Aware of his negative public image, the Reverend Moon asked to be tried not by a jury, but by a judge, who would presumably be more impartial. Remarkably, the government insisted on a trial by jury, and succeeded. In this simple act of vindictiveness, the government banked on public prejudice and bigotry to win its case, which it has so far. It is not only Moon who has been denied a fair trail. It is the entire principle of freedom of religion which is at stake in this case. No wonder, Kilpatrick concludes, that other churches are alarmed (*Sacramento Forum*, Nov. 1983).

## 2. Media Crucify Someone Because he is a Friend of the Moonies

*Leon Skousen was a well-known author, who also happened to be a conservative Mormon. In the spring of 1987, he was vehemently attacked in a Wall Street Journal article for some of his conservative views and for using politically incorrect language. Because he had also attended some conferences organized by the Moonies, his detractors saw him as guilty by association. I came to his support in the following letter, which I wrote for the Wall Street Journal on May 20, 1987, and which was printed it a few days later.*

The article by Gottlieb and Wiley (May 20) does a hatchet job on Cleon Skousen. It is a transparent attempt at character assassination. The evidence consists purely of innuendos and out of context quotations.

The flap about Skousen's use of the word "pickaninnies" was a pseudo-event created and exploited by the Left, and leading to the censorship of Skousen's book in California. Those who have read the book know that it is non-racist.

Gottlieb and Wiley also find Skousen guilty by association - namely with the Unification Church. The Causa meetings attended by Skousen were also attended by Fundamentalist and Mainline Christians, Jews, Mormons, Republican and Democratic Congressmen, Sociology Professors, UN Undersecretary Generals, White House staff, domestic and foreign diplomats, Eldridge Cleaver, the Reverend Ralph Abernathy, Senator Orrin Hatch, Arnaud de Borchgrave and many others.

But Gottlieb and Wiley are bigots, and they wish to destroy Skousen by exploiting the bigotry from which the Unification Church has suffered in the past. What better way than to "expose" him as a friend of those "Moonies" who, as everybody knows, are a crazy cult? If that's not the kiss of death, what is?

In fact, the crazy "Moonies" have begun to make a real difference in American politics. The *Washington Times* is read by Reagan and his men, and *Insight* is now the best of the big four weeklies. (And neither is this any more a breach of Church-State separation than other fine publications like the *Christian Science Monitor*).

The only point of this appalling piece of disinformation and yellow journalism is this: according to Gottlieb and Wiley, Skousen is a bad person because he is conservative (*Wall Street Journal*, May 20, 1987).

## 3. The Unification Movement's Wholesome Impact on American Culture

*During the summer of 1988, the Unification Church invited me to do a three-week lecture*

*tour of Korean and Japanese universities. I ended up criss-crossing the two countries and giving a dozen lectures at universities in Seoul, Taegu, Tokyo, Fukushima, Morioka and many other cities. My lectures were primarily about American society. However, I also prepared the following speech about the Unification Church. In it, I praised Moon's organization for its positive contributions, while withholding comments about his theology (which I could not share).*

Ladies and gentlemen, it is a pleasure and an honor to be here. I have traveled in four continents and over forty nations, but this is my first time in your beautiful country. Mark Twain, always the cynic, said: "In all my travels, the thing that has impressed me the most is the universal brotherhood of mankind, what there is of it." To which the British playwright Arlen added: "It is amazing how nice people are to you....when they know you are going away."

Well, it's not like that at all, for me. There is a need for a bridge between Asia and America. I want to be part of that bridge, as the Unification Church is a very important part of it. Sympathetic allies and friends of the Unification Church - for example those of us in the academic community who have participated in such organizations as the Professors World Peace Academy, the International Cultural Foundation, the International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences, CAUSA (the Confederation of the Associations for the Unity of Societies of the Americas), CARP(Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles) and ACUMI (the Advisory Council to the Unification Movement International) I are highly impressed by the impact the movement is having on Western culture.

Western culture is in disarray. As the most powerful, most influential country, and as the leader of the Western democracies, America and its culture might be expected to represent the crowning of the historical evolution of free, liberal, democratic, Western Civilization. However, there is little support for such an interpretation of contemporary American culture. Instead, many observers would agree that American culture - and therefore much of Western culture, which is so centrally interdependent with the nation that is, in many ways, the 20th century equivalent of ancient Rome - is in fact in danger of collapsing.

Although there are many who still argue that what prevails today in America is healthy pluralism, freedom and tolerance of cultural diversity, this may be wishful thinking, overlooking the many obvious signs of the progressive deterioration, decay and cultural collapse of a society which is in danger of losing its traditionally exceptionally strong coherence and resilience.

It is in this socio-cultural environment that the Reverend Moon decided, when he came to America in 1971, to alter the course of history. Since that fateful date, the Reverend and his original flock of disciples, including such eminent leaders as the Reverend Kwak, Dr. Bo Hi Pak and their American brethren such as Dr. Moses Durst, have erected an organization that branches out in a myriad of directions. In addition to having created a solid economic base, the Unification Movement has established itself as a major religious presence in North America (as well as in Europe and in an increasing number of Third World countries, more recently) and it has undertaken to alter the very collective consciousness of the United States and indeed of much of the world, by creating a vast structure of educational, political and cultural institutions. It is this latter aspect of the Movement's efforts which holds the greatest interest to those of us who work in the field of education and who are therefore vitally concerned with the struggle of ideas and the survival of the core values of Western Civilization.

In addition to the organizations mentioned in my preamble, some of the institutions that come to mind are the now highly successful and influential *Washington Times*, *Insight Magazine*, the *New York City Tribune*, the *World and I*, the *International Journal on World Peace*, the *International Journal on the Unity of the Sciences*, and *Paragon Publishing House*. These are

among the instruments with which the Unification Movement partakes in the inner worldly struggle for ideas and for the hearts and minds of people. They represent the Movement's deep involvement - primarily through the world of mass media 1 in the contemporary politico-cultural struggle in America and in the World. There are other creations - the *American Constitutional Committee* founded for the U.S. Constitution's bicentennial, the *International Relief Friendship Foundation* to assist with Third World development, etc. These and the many other ramifications of the Unification Church (its important theological seminary in Barry town, New York, its massive New Yorker skyscraper headquarter in Manhattan, etc.) reveal to us a vibrant, organic movement ever changing, growing and adapting in a world that is increasingly chaotic and in need of its presence.

It is not difficult to explain and to account for the sudden and impressive emergence of the Moon phenomenon: It stems from the vision that the world, including America, are headed toward spiritual as well as perhaps physical disintegration. The Reverend Moon's overriding motive is, quite simply, to save America and mankind. Both his vision and the immense energy with which he and his followers have acted upon that vision stem from their unshakable faith.

Their vision is unquestionably correct. It stems from certain transcendental truths according to which, as anyone who is still in touch with the nature of things will readily see, society can only do so much violence to nature, to god-given and self-evident truths, to human nature, to fundamental principles of love, mental and physical health, humanity, common-sense and pragmatism, before it perishes in a form of collective suicide.

Nothing proves more convincingly that the Reverend Moon's mission was pre-ordained and was in no way contrived, than the experience of the Church since its inception. As with other true movements, the history of the Movement has been a combination of pain and growth. In America, in Europe and elsewhere, public reaction to the "Moonies" was swift and harsh. As is so often the case, it was a left-leaning consciousness elite which misinformed and caused many Americans to develop a variety of prejudices and fantastic ideas about this allegedly bizarre new cult, one often placed in the same category as Jim Jones' People's Temple, the Charles Manson family and other murderous and drug-crazed communities - the final ripple effects of the Counterculture of the 1960s.

What was particularly offensive to the consciousness elite, and what therefore singled out the Moonies for special vitriol, was their unqualified anti-communism, which is viewed as unforgivable bad taste by the Western intelligentsia. The fact that the Unification Church's anti-Marxism is a logical cornerstone of an anti-materialist world view does not matter to the urban intellectual. The movement is opposed to all forms of shallow materialisms - the excesses of capitalist consumerism no less than Marxian dialectical materialism, social-scientific paradigms such as Behaviorism, which fail to deal with human spirituality, no less than materialistic greed in the layman's sense. However, these subtleties escaped those opinion leaders who immediately launched a campaign of disinformation aimed at convincing the American people that we had here a sinister new cult practicing group marriages, mesmerized into blind obedience to a fuhrer-like leader, and forcefully brainwashing and kidnapping new members.

I remember two students in my graduate seminar discussing alleged similarities between the so-called Moonies and the Nazis of the 1930s (two extreme dogmatic feminists, in this event). I asked them whether they had ever met a "Moonie." "Well, no," one of them answered, "but I can feel what they are doing! I have had dreams about them."

The stigmatization and harassment reached a crescendo when the Reverend Moon himself was imprisoned in 1985 on highly controversial charges of tax evasion. While there is no consensus that the charges were entirely trumped up, many knowledgeable observers agree that the case

represented the highly arbitrary enforcement of at best questionable IRS codes - in plain terms: discrimination and religious persecution. One of the great unanticipated outcomes of this abuse of government power against a Church was the fact that many other religious groups rallied to the support of the Unification Church. These included the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and its leader Dr. Ralph Abernathy, Martin Luther King's successor, as well as a host of Mormon, mainline Protestant and other Christian Churches.

In fact, most of what the Moonies were accused of by their detractors were sins and crimes of which those detractors were themselves guilty. For example, it was the so-called "deprogrammers" often sent after *bona fide* members who had joined the Church as fully consenting adults who were guilty of kidnappings and brainwashing. Also, part of the hostility directed at the Movement must clearly be seen for what it is: a thinly veiled racism directed at an unwelcome upstart from Asia. Here again we see an inversion of the so-called liberal critic, attacking a movement which has done more in deed and in action to dismantle racism than all the sanctimonious liberal lip service to a no-racist society combined. In my experience with many Moonie couples over the years, I have hardly ever met one that isn't interracial or intercultural. The Moonies do by deed what hypocritical liberals merely preach *for others*. They are the true non-racists of the world, yet they have been viciously attacked for their allegedly reactionary views.

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From my vantage point as an academician and opinion leader, what do I see as the movement's essential social function in the modern world? Sociologically, the Unification Movement's mission is nothing less than to turn around the culture, i.e. the very collective consciousness of the Western World, including America. In a recent issue of the Unification News (January 1988: 8-9), Gordon Anderson follows theologian Richard Niebuhr and traces, quite aptly, the consecutive stages of the relationship between Christ and Culture: Initially, Christians were against a worldly culture which they perceived to be largely wicked. This was followed by stages during which, as in the Middle Ages, Christians at times were part of the worldly power structure, or at times felt, as Thomas Aquinas did, that the Church should be above the worldly culture. Later, Martin Luther developed a skeptical attitude toward organized religion, arguing for the separation of Church and State. Today, a fifth and final possibility is emerging, namely one of constructive collaboration between Church and State.

It is precisely this possibility which I have seen enacted with vigor and enthusiasm since my dealings began with the Unification Movement a few years ago. I see, in essence, the successful influencing of American consciousness by the Unification Church and its many branches.

Both the Unification people and the secular materialists who are attempting to gain control of America realize that nothing is more important than this struggle, that the battle over the culture is pivotal. It is the outcome of this battle which will determine the future of mankind. It is precisely because they realize the crucial importance of the Church's thrust that the secular materialists have stressed with increasing vehemence the need to maintain a strict separation between Church and State. By this expression, they no longer mean freedom of religion as embedded in our Constitution by our Founding Fathers, and meaning that the state shall not impose any (single) mandatory religion upon the people. To them, the concept is to be used as a vehicle to stamp out religion and to make it increasingly difficult or impossible to familiarize youngsters with the Judeo-Christian ethical and religious system, to socialize them into the Christian values central to Western Civilization and to conduct the affairs of State in line with such principles. Today, the groups attempting to gain control of America's power structure - the media, public education, the

governmental bureaucracies at all levels, the legal and helping professions - all pervert the concept of the separation of Church and State to mean that religion must be kept out of all important political, social and cultural decisions, thereby reducing it to the epiphenomenon which Marx already considered it to be. Religion thus joins the category of optional and largely irrelevant human interests such as leisure, hobbies, or astrology. Is it any wonder, then, that Western culture is collapsing?

The Reverend Moon understood, when he came to America seventeen years ago, that America is the New Rome. He did what Peter did two millennia ago, coming to the New Rome from Korea, the new Israel. He understood that the way America goes, so will the civilized world, and that saving America is first and foremost an educational process. The key institutions in this process are education and the media. On one point the Moonies and the Marxists agree: to capture the hearts and minds of the people, one must capture those two institutions, i.e. penetrate and if possible take over the *consciousness industry*. The struggle is an uphill one because the Marxists, and more generally the Left, have had an immense influence - some would say a stranglehold - on Western intellectuals throughout the century.

I have lived in four different countries for nearly a decade in each, namely Hungary, France, the Netherlands and the United States. In addition, I have traveled to forty countries. I have been either a University student or a Professor in three of these countries, and I have participated in professional academic work in many other ones. I can attest to the blind orthodoxy which governs University life in every country where I have experienced it. Furthermore, that same orthodoxy dominates the media, the public schools, the publishing world and the public bureaucracies. It is a doctrine centering around value neutrality, cultural relativism, secular materialism, logical positivism, socialist economic values, and a visceral hostility to traditional values, bourgeois lifestyle, Christian and Western traditions, the traditional family the free enterprise system and the freedom to permit differences to exist. In many ways, the West, the Iron Curtain countries and even the Third World are converging toward a uniform, drab, materialistic Huxleyan Brave New World.

Anyone with a reasonably good memory and a sense of history can recognize the vast deterioration which has occurred in only a couple of decades. Even during the turbulent sixties, when the Left began to cause irreparable damage to the American educational system, one could still hear voices - in print, in the media, in the classroom - which provided an antithesis to the new world culture which I have just described.

But today, the vast majority of college textbook publishers, major magazines and major universities are clones of each other. They all subscribe to the same largely bankrupt sociological and psychological explanations of crime, poverty, racism, war, teenage suicide, drugs, family breakdown and other social problems. All human misbehavior, all social problems, all aberrations and all misery are said to be caused by economic inequality (read: the free enterprise system). All solutions consist, somehow, of greater governmental expenditures. Hardly anywhere does one find an analysis which interprets human behavior as the product of mental, cultural or spiritual factors.

The political and intellectual elite often claims to be liberal, but this is a misnomer, since it feels little but contempt for liberty. Its true character is Marxist. It has embraced a deterministic economic and sociological model of man which clearly doesn't work, but to which so many powerful vested interests are now wedded that its replacement is politically impossible. As a result, life deteriorates, human misery and misbehavior grow, every year the people become a bit poorer, the family erodes further, drugs and crime are up. These are the fires which sociologists and psychologists are called upon to extinguish but, as Stanislaw Andreski explains, the social engineers are a fire brigade which pours gasoline on the fire, not water. Meanwhile, the masses are duped; they believe the witch doctors; they do not see that the emperor has no clothes. I am an adoptive

American. I have benefitted from the magnanimity of this brave and generous people. They saved and rebuilt my continent - Europe - as they did with your country. The American people remain vital, generous, open-minded, optimistic and moral. They embrace each year over 2 million new people fleeing from oppression and poverty. They carry the burden of defending the freedom of the world. I love the American people, and so does the Reverend Moon. The people's instincts are solid, and when given the opportunity to elect a moral, honest, strong and effective leader such as President Reagan, they overwhelmingly do so.

But the American people need our love and our support, now more than ever, because they are confronted by a band of false prophets. For example, it is difficult for students to discern the truth when many of their professors are Marxists. It is difficult for children to know what's right when many people in positions of authority tell them that casual sex and abortion are okay, that drugs are no big deal, and that praying in school is a crime.

A student recently asked me what I thought should be done to curb the AIDS epidemic. I told him that the less promiscuous he is, the safer he would be. "But isn't it true," he replied, "that the main cause of the rapid spread of AIDS among gays and drug addicts is that our society discriminates against these minorities, thus forcing them to contaminate each other?"

It is in this thicket, this confusion and this incoherence, that the Unification Church has jumped. What are some of its central messages? In the first place, the movement has been stressing that the rampant value neutrality of the Western elite is a profound aberration leading, in essence, to nihilism. Far from representing an enlightened tolerance of diversity, it leads to the very destruction of all values.

According to the Unification Movement, correct values, far from being relative or merely subjective, are absolute and universal. Nature and God are inescapable realities and the modern anthropological conception of value is mere sophistry. When a culture loses touch with transcendental or "natural" values, as for example when it posits the moral equivalence of heterosexual monogamy and homosexual promiscuity, or the moral equivalence of communist totalitarianism and democratic freedom, it decays and dies. Instead of positing the moral equivalence of all views, opinions, lifestyles and values, the Unification Movement urges us to affirm universal values. As a result of this, the movement's potential appeal is worldwide, not merely limited to the Christian world. And indeed, the Church is already making significant inroads into many parts of the Third World.

A fundamental and inescapable truth, for example, is that man is not merely a physical entity. Here, the Unification Movement converges with some important trends in modern psychology. While psychology does not, by definition, delve into the soul or the otherworldly, not all psychological paradigms are strictly behavioristic, i.e. materialistic. There is for example the legacy of those great American pragmatists, William James and George Herbert Mead, which stresses that human behavior must be understood to be both physical and mental, and that the mental cannot be reduced to the physical, as Skinnerian Behaviorism claims.

While issues pertaining to the mind-body dualism and to the related spirit-matter dualism cannot be dealt with adequately in the present essay, I am merely drawing attention to the fundamental distinction between those who maintain that there is nothing beyond physical reality, and those who reject that extremism. To the former group belong the Marxists, the Behaviorists and, often unknowingly, a growing majority of a modern world which has become essentially materialistic, both in the philosophical and in the mundane sense of the word.

In addition to combatting materialism, the Unification Movement has advocated the centrality of the family, the love and harmony between people and God, people and nature, man and woman and between man and his fellow man. All this is once again contrary to the dominant winds,

both East and West. Marxism is the most virulent preacher of hate and resentment, but in the Western world, we have also had decades of the politics of resentment, entitlement and special interest selfishness. Even in America, more and more people feel that society and the government owe them something, that they are not receiving enough, and that others have too much. People resent one another. Every ethnic and sexual minority coalesces around its narrow parochial self-interest, and the common welfare of the whole leaves everyone indifferent. I am told that things are different in Japan, and that this is one of the causes of the economic decline of America, which is milked dry by every conceivable interest group while inspiring neither love, nor allegiance nor compassion from anyone.

Thus I see the role of the Unification Movement as a healing one. The movement attempts to teach us once again how to love, not to hate. It teaches us to love each other, ourselves and our country, which after all is our home. And just as a harmonious neighborhood consists of families that are all proud of their homes, keeping them clean and beautiful while coexisting peacefully with their neighbors, so too the international community should be made up of countries that are, each, proud of themselves and maintain their health and well-being while working together with others.

Ever since the Vietnam debacle, the American people have been made to feel guilty. There has been a loss of self-confidence and a decline of patriotism. Again, this is largely artificially induced and emanating from the intelligentsia. But this, too, is one of the unhealthy tendencies which the Unification Movement counteracts.

And as stated earlier, the movement also attempts to confront the enormous excesses stemming from a materialistic, hedonistic and chaotic culture. As our culture became distant from God-given, natural, organic principles of human health and sanity, the costs became apparent to all but the most deluded proponents of this misconceived conception of social progress: Under the cloak of freedom, diversity and various human and civil rights, we became addicted to drugs, our streets were taken over by criminals, a new and lethal venereal disease began to take dozens of thousands of lives every year.

While our society remained free and dynamic, it also became, in some ways, reminiscent of Sodom and Gomorrah. America began to falter, not because of the deliberate evils of a totalitarian or power hungry State. Rather, it began to engage in various aberrations in the same manner as adolescents do. It became a victim of naivete, ignorance and indolence. So the problem is an educational one, and this is exactly how the Unification Movement has tackled it. From my vantage point, there is a great deal of hope and quite a bit of progress being made already. This is in no small part thanks to the many hardworking and wonderful people who have come to America in recent years, who perpetuate the 200-year old tradition symbolized by the Statue of Liberty, and who, in no insignificant numbers, belong to the Unification Church.

#### 4. Religious Persecution in America: The Case of the Unification Church

*On August 13, 1991, I was asked to review Carlton's Sherwood's book, Inquisition - the Persecution and Prosecution of the Reverend Sun Myung Moon for the International Journal on World Peace. The review was published shortly after that date. It is reproduced below.*

During the past ten years, I have met several members of the Unification Church - the so-called Moonies. Some were students of mine at Cal State, others were members of the Church hierarchy. I have also attended some conferences sponsored by the Church, visited members' homes, including Reverend Moon himself in his home in Seoul, followed the group's political

struggles as reported in the media, and read accounts of their practices by sociologists like John Lofland at the University of California.

Therefore, Carlton Sherwood's newly published Inquisition - the Persecution and Prosecution of the Reverend Sun Myung Moon (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Gateway, 1991) held few surprises for me when I recently read it. The book basically confirms what I already knew, namely that (1) the Reverend Moon is a good and honest man, (2) his followers are by and large good and honest people who (3) follow Moon voluntarily and out of religious dedication and (4) the treatment of this Church by the media, public opinion and the government (which sent Moon to prison for a trumped up case of tax evasion) has been a bum rap.

This doesn't mean that I don't strongly recommend the book. It is the most detailed and best documented account of the sordid treatment of the Unification Church by the American media and politicians.

Sherwood is a distinguished investigative reporter who has won the Pulitzer Prize, *inter alia*. In 1984, he accepted a job with the *Washington Times*, a newspaper owned by the Unification Church. He admits that one of his motives for accepting the position was to expose the Church from within, i.e. to document the many evils of which the Church had been accused since the Reverend Moon's arrival in the US in 1971.

Indeed, ever since Sun Myung Moon came to America from Korea to found the North American branch of his Church, he and his followers have been harassed relentlessly by the media, by left-wing atheist intellectuals as well as right-wing fundamentalist Christians, by political demagogues and by bigots of all colorings. They have been accused of kidnaping and brainwashing their new recruits, of tax fraud and sexual debauchery, and of aiming towards the revolutionary takeover of the government and, indeed, of the world altogether!

But anyone who bothers to acquaint himself with the empirical facts soon realizes the absurdity of these *National Enquirer*-like allegations. This is what happened to me, and it is what happened to Carlton Sherwood.

The book is an excellent documentation of the trials and tribulations of the Church in America. For example, Sherwood discusses the so-called de-programmers. These are people hired by relatives of Unification members. They are hired, for example, by parents who are upset that one their (grown up) children has joined the Moonies. The de-programmers then proceed to literally physically kidnap church members, locking them up for weeks on end in motel rooms and attempting to sever their allegiance to the Church. It is clearly the de-programmers who engage in criminal kidnaping and brainwashing, rather than the Moonies, as the media were falsely telling us!

Sherwood also devotes a chapter to the 1978 Koreagate scandal -- another bum rap, it turns out. The Church was accused of somehow trying to peddle influence in Washington for the Korean CIA. No evidence was ever found to this effect.

The book contains many other interesting facts, including a discussion of the sinister role played by yellow journalism in fanning the flames of anti-Moon bigotry, as well as accounts of the Church's origins in Korea and Japan, and of Sun Myung Moon's unbelievably tough life during the massive wars and catastrophes that have plagued Korea during much of the 20th century.

However, the centerpiece of Sherwood's book is the account of the IRS tax case against Moon. The author shows conclusively that there simply was no case, even though Moon ended up spending a year and a half in Federal prison. At worst, there was an underpayment of less than \$8,000, but even this is not clear, since the Unification Church should be entitled to the same tax-exempt status as any other church. The fact that Moon went to prison for a year and a half when other tax cases involving similar amounts rarely result in any imprisonment at all, is also proof of the government's selective application of "justice." But even to obtain a conviction on these grounds, the government had to engage in jury tampering, selective law enforcement, the arbitrary

use of documents and translations, and a whole series of shady tactics.

When one is finished reading about this trial, it is clear that the IRS accusations had no merit and that the trial was a political witch-hunt. This was already clear to many of us who were acquainted with the facts back in the early 1980's. Moon was supported by many people concerned about religious freedom and civil liberties. These included left-liberals like Laurence Tribe (Moon's defense attorney) and the ACLU, centrist groups like the Catholic Church and Ralph Abernathy's Southern Christian Leadership Conference, as well as conservatives such as Jerry Falwell and James Kilpatrick. These and many others filed *amicus* briefs in court -- to no avail of course.

One is left with a sense of sadness and apprehension, almost despair, about contemporary human society. Is America the beacon of freedom and tolerance, the shining city on the hill envisioned by Reagan? Or do we share in a bigotry and intolerance so universal that they seem to be rooted in human nature?

The persecution of the Moonies is only the latest example in a chain going back to the dawn of history. As the new kids on the block, the Moonies have been getting it in Europe, in Asia, and in America. Currently, Unification Church ministers are disappearing into bottomless prisons in Thailand. In Germany, there have been instances of flagrant official malfeasance toward the Church. At least in America, they do not simply "disappear." But the worldwide persecution of the Moonies perpetuates a historical pattern going back to the early Christians, the 19th century Mormons, the medieval Inquisition, the witch burnings of medieval Europe and 17th century New England, the Jewish holocaust and the psychopathy of current Shiite fundamentalism. There is no end to religious intolerance in the world.

While intolerance is a constant, its shape varies: In America today, intolerance and bigotry are found primarily on the Left: Masquerading as progressive liberalism, the leftwing agenda long ago abandoned freedom *of* religion in favor of freedom *from* religion. The ban on even silent non-denominational praying, the ban on Christmas creches in public places, all these absurdities reveal that our country's atheist establishment is virulently hostile to religion in general and to Christian religion in particular, of which the Moonies claim to be a part.

Furthermore, the leftwing power elite recognizes two additional taboos: anti-communism and traditional family values. To these people, to be an anti-communist means being a red-neck, a bigot and a McCarthyist. And to advocate traditional family values is inimical to the interests of liberated women, militant gays, etc.

Unfortunately for the Moonies, their emergence in America occurs just when the country's elite has abandoned the very values advocated by the Church: religiosity, anti-socialism and traditional family values. Add to this the fact that this new faith comes from Asia, spread by the "yellow peril," and you begin to understand how convenient this target has been for cynical demagogues in search of a new Jew. (*International Journal on World Peace*, Aug. 1991).

## 39. WAR AND PEACE: VIETNAM

### 1. Professors' Hypocrisy

*During the Vietnam War, I was an active member of the Peace Movement. In a later section (See Section #44, below) I will reproduce many of my anti-war articles. The present section is different. It contains two pieces which do not blame America. The first essay unmasks the hypocrisy of some of my peacenik colleagues during the Cambodia-Kent State crisis. I wrote this in January 1972, a year and a half after the fact. I also edited it quite a bit in 2007. It was never published.*

Academia can be a disillusioning environment. The discrepancy between word and deed, theory and practice, pretension and achievement, is perhaps greater in our profession than in other ones. A realization of this can be painful, as it undoubtedly is to many young people who arrive on campus full of idealism which is bound to turn into cynicism by their sophomore year. About a year and a half ago, I had an experience which sheds light on this.

On April 30, 1970, President Nixon announced the invasion of Cambodia. This led to nationwide campus protests and to the death of a score of students at Kent State and at Jackson State Universities. In the following days, most of America's ten million college students, most of its one million college professors, and millions of other citizens joined the fray. Four or five hundred colleges were shut down, some, like Princeton and Boston University, for the remainder of the academic term.

Cal State was in the forefront of the nationwide protest. In order to avoid violence, Governor Ronald Reagan ordered the shutdown of all public colleges and universities in California for the remainder of the week. However, this did not prevent us from continuing to meet on campus and to organize further protest. Since we were the Capital campus, we decided to march on the State Capitol Building and carry out our protest under the nose of the conservative governor. Instruction came to a halt for the rest of the semester. There was talk of reconstituting the curriculum, and of carrying out a full cultural revolution, as the French students had done in 1968.

The faculty was in the forefront. We provided the students with the rhetoric, the motivation, the slogans. "Power to the People!" shouted the pony-tailed political science assistant professor. "We demand relevance in education!" echoed his sociology colleague. "Make love, not war!" screamed the junior Afro-haired black teacher in his dashiki.

"Groovy, man!" "Right on!" hollered the faculty members, as they readied their students for the big march downtown and for the confrontation with the police and the national guard, scheduled to take place on Sunday, four days later.

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On Wednesday, four days before the march, the Faculty Senate held an organizational meeting in the music recital hall. Thousands were expected to protest on Sunday. People were pouring into Sacramento from all over California.

There was a need for hundreds of monitors, to make sure that the march would not degenerate into a bloodbath like Kent State the previous week, and like the Chicago Democratic convention in 1968. We, the Faculty Senate, had to supply the monitors and keep the protest under control. The first order of business was to appoint someone in charge of monitoring the march, i.e. basically in charge of the entire march. And guess who won that dubious honor?

Yours truly! I didn't volunteer for the job, but somehow a bunch of hippie professors liked me so much that they nominated me and I was voted into the position. I was confused and flattered, I didn't have the presence of mind to say that I didn't want the job. Before I knew it, I was in charge of one of the largest peace demonstrations ever to be held during the turbulent Vietnam era.

I had no choice but to make the best of it. The Senate meeting adjourned. A subcommittee of professors surrounded me and promised to help. I was given the faculty roster. I walked to my office, which now became the march headquarters. Colleagues and students dropped off picket signs, flyers, legal information, and *first aid kits*. That made me feel real good!

The President of the University and his staff came by and offered their full cooperation. The next morning I, as march coordinator, would be given special office space in the administration building, additional telephone extensions, mimeograph and electronic equipment, transportation,

etc.

Later that evening, the President of the student body came by my office with his adjutants. His name was Mike. He was a huge, bearded fellow. He shook my hand and sat down, saying, "Far out Man! We really dig it - you helping out and all." Then he pulled a city map out of his pocket and we began to strategize.

\* \* \* \* \*

By nine 'o clock, things had calmed down. I was alone in my office. I was profoundly agitated. I realized that I was in over my head. Nevertheless, I was trying to carry out my responsibilities as conscientiously as possible. The most urgent priority was to sign up enough faculty members to monitor the march and to keep it orderly. Mike had dropped off several hundred orange arm bands. These would be worn by the official monitors as identifying badges. There were about seven hundred faculty members on our campus at that time, so I tried to set up a telephone tree. This was where I had my rude awakening:

At the organizational meeting of the Faculty Senate that afternoon, the mood had been festive. Those who had nominated me and voted me into my job were euphoric - no doubt aided by a little hemp. The Sunday march was gonna be a blast, they seemed to be saying. I had identified half a dozen of the most enthusiastic people. Colleagues who had said things like, "You can count on me, man," and, "If there is anything I can do for you, Tom, let me know," and "I'm with you, man, all the way!"

Now, I figured I'd start the telephone snowball by calling these high-profile individuals. In addition, there were three other categories of colleagues on top of my list: (1) Those whom I knew well personally, (2) people whom I knew to be outspoken anti-war activists, and (3) members of my own department. So I had about thirty or forty individuals on my list altogether. In turn, I figured that each of these people would call eight to ten people, and soon we would have our team of, say, three hundred monitors in place, right?

Well, it didn't quite work out that way. Here is a sample of the phone conversations I had in my office that night:

First conversation:

I call my colleague Alex, a Marxist Sociology professor who has been teaching his students for years how evil the U.S. government is, and how important it is to resist by any available means.

Me: "Hi Joan (that's Alex's wife). How are you? This is Tom. Is Alex home? I'm calling about those picket signs he promised to drop by my office this afternoon. And also, I sure hope he'll sign up as a monitor for Sunday... Can I talk to him?"

Joan: "Sorry Tom, he is not home" (It's about eleven PM)

Me: "Oh? When will he be home?"

Joan: "I have no idea..."

Me: "Ahem.. Well, how about those picket signs? Can I pick them up tomorrow?"

Joan: "I don't know anything about picket signs..."

End of conversation.

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Second conversation:

I call a professor of Sociology who got his Ph.D. from Berkeley. His office door is covered with “Impeach Nixon” stickers. He is a gentle, mustached six foot six radical who wears beads and looks like Frank Zappa.

Me: “Hey Frank, whatsup? I’m calling up about the Sunday march. Can I count on you?”

Frank: “Well you see, Tom, I’ll be out of town on Sunday. I have to pick up Edie at the airport, and I have a dental appointment...”

Me: “A dental appointment? On Sunday?”

Frank: “What? You don’t believe me? You think I’m lying?”

End of conversation

\* \* \* \* \*

Third conversation:

I call Ernie, a middle-aged history professor. Very hip, very radical. Sports a huge beard. I often see him sitting on the lawn in front of the cafeteria, surrounded by half a dozen student groupies, sometimes passing around a joint. He is their guru. He lectures about Herbert Marcuse, repressive desublimation, the evils of American imperialism and the need for a revolutionary consciousness.

Me: “Hi Ernie. Tom here. This afternoon, you said that I could count on you on Sunday...”

Ernie (sounding embarrassed): “Oh gees, Tom,... ahem... I’m sorry, something came up, I’m afraid I won’t be able to make the march...”

End of conversation

\* \* \* \* \*

Fourth conversation:

I call Joe. He is an Econ prof. I have heard him speak at committee meetings. He has urged his students to resist the fascist and racist pigs on the Sacramento police force. He is a rabid Trotskyist. He preaches the need for violent revolution to his students. He campaigns for Gus Hall, the head of the American communist party, every time the guy runs for President. Surely he’ll help me out on Sunday, not?

Me: “Hi Joe? How’re you doing? Getting ready for the big protest march on Sunday?”

Joe: "Sorry Tom. I can't participate..."

Me: "Oh? Why not? I thought you were really against the war, Aren't you?"

Joe: "Hell yes! I think Nixon should be shot. But you see, I don't believe in marches. that's not my function. I am an intellectual and my role is to be the revolution's theoretician. I am the Kamenev of the Peace Movement (Kamenev was one of the Russian Revolution's theoreticians, an expert in dialectical materialism). My role is not on the street. I leave the marching to our students."

End of conversation.

\* \* \* \* \*

And so it went. By the next morning, a pitiful handful of professors had expressed a tentative willingness to cooperate. Some bluntly admitted that they were afraid that people might get shot, just like at Kent State. Some said things like, "I don't believe in marches, I don't believe in violence." The majority had other more pressing business on Sunday. Some had dental appointments on Sunday. One guy said that he had to go burry his mother-in-law, even though I could swear that the guy was gay, so how could he be married? These people were pathetic. They couldn't even lie properly. And to think that I only contacted that third of the faculty which I thought was committed to the peace movement! The third which prides itself on being activists, being courageous and rebellious! Amazing! The cowards were saying these things to me with a straight face. How could they live with themselves?

I should have asked them the obvious: "So why the fuck have you been telling your students for years to go out and march and get their heads bashed in?" But there is no point. This is the moral fiber of academic intellectuals.

Well, it's *not* that professors are more cowardly or more selfish than other professionals. No doubt there are probably as many evil, lying s.o.b.'s in the corporate world, among lawyers and among politicians. No, the problem with the professorate is that it *claims the moral high ground*. At least, corporate s.o.b.'s and crooked lawyers know that they are bad. Professors, on the other hand, believe themselves to be morally superior. They see themselves as the clergy of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as society's moral compass. But they are not. They are petty, selfish and dishonest, like everyone else.

I now realize that I have been had. The sly faculty members who put me in charge of the march in California's capital city knew very well who would be held responsible if things got out of hand, who might get fired and who might go to prison. They made me the point man. I was the gullible crow who fell for the fox's flattery. Sensing that being in charge of the march was a mistake, I accepted nevertheless, reluctantly. After all, the trust which the faculty members placed in me was an honor. Also, I didn't want to be labeled a coward.

On Sunday the giant march came and went, and nothing bad happened. Thanks to veteran labor organizer Mannie Gale, who practically took over my job, the event was orderly and peaceful. Not all of Cal State's students could march. Many of them were among the armed and uniformed national guardsmen on the opposite side of the picket line, protecting the Capitol Building. The peace marchers approached the armed guardsmen, shook hands, chatted with them, smoked cigarettes, laughed. Some were classmates of each other. A good time was had by all.

Governor Ronald Reagan came out of his office, protected by half a dozen secret service men. He made a brief speech about the virtues of democracy and the need for non-violence. He was jeered and interrupted several times, but the situation remained calm. Afterwards, the Governor walked down the steps of the capitol building and approached the front line of the march, where I stood. He looked at me and said, almost jovially, "Professor, you are to be commended for keeping the march peaceful and orderly."

This made me feel a hell of a lot better. After all, the governor was one of the trustees of the university. With him in my corner, my job might be more secure.

## 2. We Were Not the Bad Guys in Vietnam

*I published this short letter in Time Magazine on April 20, 1979.*

Having traditionally been uncommonly hung up on success, Americans have equated success with morality. Now, after our first military defeat, we lapse into the logical obverse of that proposition - losers must *ipso facto* be wrong. Hence our continued tendency to wallow in guilt. The truth of the matter is that neither proposition is correct. Not the least benefit to be gained from the humbling Vietnam experience might be the lesson that it is possible to lose - as we did - and at the same time be the good guys - as we were (*Time Magazine*, April 20, 1979).

## 40. WAR AND PEACE: GENOCIDE AND ETHNIC CLEANSING

### 1. Ethnic cleansing in Eastern Europe

*During the 1990s, Eastern Europe and the Balkans were in turmoil. The bloodiest events occurred in the former Yugoslavia, where the Serbs tried to hold on to Bosnia and to the other parts of the former Socialist Republic. The civil war there was by far the bloodiest event in Europe since World War Two. While the term "Ethnic Cleansing" existed before the 1990s, it was the Yugoslav wars of that decade which made it into a widely recognized part of the general political vocabulary. Although ethnic cleansing and genocide are not synonymous, they are close. I had been in Yugoslavia during the 1980s. I went to Hungary several times during the 1990s. I did research on post-Communist developments in Central Europe and in the Balkan. The results were published in professional journals and presented at conferences. Here is brief abstract of some of that work, presented at a Conference in September, 1998, and published in an anthology two years later:*

**Abstract:** I begin my paper by clarifying some terms and places, including *genocide*, *ethnic cleansing* and some of the states and empires that have played a significant role in the history of the area under discussion. While my focus is on the Balkans and on the former Yugoslavia, I also must touch upon Austro-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire and some other nations.

The second section of the paper discusses five major current flash points, namely Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo and Macedonia. In addition, I remind the reader of five other major cases of genocide or ethnic cleansing which have occurred in this region, namely the Armenian genocide, Anatolia, the Jewish Holocaust, the Romanian Revolution and the treatment of Gypsies.

The final part of the paper discusses seven factors said to be part of the problem: (1) Hyper-

tribalism, (2) Self-Determination, (3) the Role of past ethnic hatreds, (4) a militaristic national character, (5) Balkan geography, (6) a paucity of economic and political institutions and of enlightened leadership and (7) the role of external interference (Alex Kimeny, *Genocide*, 2001).

## 2. Hyper-tribalism

*On March 14, 2000, I presented another paper on ethnic cleansing and genocide at a conference. This meeting dealt with atrocities worldwide, including such World War Two Japanese war crimes as the Nanking massacres. My focus was, again, on Eastern Europe. Here is an abstract of my paper, plus a selection which explains the concept of hyper-tribalism.*

**Abstract:** As a participant in this conference, I do not discuss specific cases of atrocities in Asia. Instead, I discuss the *generic* (related) problems of *genocide* and *ethnic cleansing*, using examples from (Eastern) Europe, i.e. the region with which I am familiar.

I first clarify such terms as genocide, ethnic cleansing and hate crime. I then briefly address the recent world-wide increase in tribalism and separatism, and its concomitant rise in ethnic violence.

The remainder of my discussion deals with (A) factors said to be part of the problem, and (B) actions that might be part of the solution. The former include: (1) Hyper-tribalism and nationalism, (2) self-determination run amuck, (3) A long history of ethnic hatreds and racism, (4) a militaristic nature, (5) geography, (6) bad economy, poor institutions, bad Leadership, and (7) external interference. The latter include (8) the positive role of the international community, (9) economic development, (10) federalism: A Compromise between Identity Politics and Unification and (11) democratic institutions.

**The Age of Hyper-Tribalism:** The 1990s have seen the acceleration of tribalism and nationalism in the world. Nowhere has this happened more virulently than in the former "Second World," i.e. the now disintegrated world of Eastern European Communism -- including the former Soviet Union, its satellites, and Yugoslavia.

The strength of separatism and secessionism has fluctuated throughout the centuries and throughout recent decades, in Europe and elsewhere. Examples of European secessionist movements during the second half of the 20th century include those in Catalonia, the Basque country, Corsica, Brittany, Scotland and Ulster. Instances elsewhere in the world include the cases of Biafra, Katanga, Eritrea, Timor, Kashmir, Quebec, New Caledonia, to name just a few.

Add to this the more recent cases of Sindhis and Baluchis (Pakistan), Kurds (Iran, Turkey and Iraq), Shiites (Iraq), Tibetans and the people of Sikang (China), Puerto Ricans and Hawaiians (U.S.), the Welsh (U.K.) the Lombard League and Sardinia (Italy), the Tamil (Sri Lanka) and many other groups in Ethiopia, Nigeria, the Congo, South Africa, Sudan, Kenya, Uganda, Mozambique, Burma, Indonesia, the Philippines, Guiana, Suriname and other countries (see Denitch, 1994: 138).

A *Wall Street Journal* editorial has estimated that there are 10,000 potential countries in the world. That is, there are 10,000 groups which can, on the basis of ethnic cultural, linguistic or religious identity, make a legitimate claim to nationhood. Clearly the trend today has become *centrifugal*, whereas it was, in the recent past, more *centripetal*. In 1500, Europe had about 500 political entities. By 1920, that continent had 23 states, with 18,000 kilometers of border (Will: 1998a: 5). However, by 1994, the number had risen back to 50 states and 40,000 kilometers of borders.

In the 20th century, the creation of the League of Nations and of the United Nations signified a trend toward World Federalism, i.e. international peace through global unification. However, since 1945, United Nations membership has tripled. There are, simply, more and more countries in the world. According to French political scientist Pascal Boniface, we live in "the secessionist age" (see his The Proliferation of States quoted in Will, loc. cit.). And it is, more than any other event, the collapse of Communism which ushered a veritable torrent of such movements.

Tribalism and nationalism are associated with genocide and -- to use the neologism -- ethnic cleansing. In the post-Cold War era, war is increasingly associated with ethnic identity -- both its militant assertion *and* its repression. Nowhere is this clearer than in the former Communist world (the best current example is the war in Chechnya), although that region does not have a monopoly on genocide and mass atrocities.

Other major 20th century instances of genocide and mass atrocities include (1)the Armenian genocide carried out by the Ottoman government at the turn of the century, (2) the Jewish Holocaust, (3) the East Timor massacre by the Indonesian government during the 1970s, (4)the Cambodia "killing fields," (5)the ethnic cleansing of Bosnia by the Milosovic government, (6) the Tutsi genocide in Rwanda in 1994, (7) the fate of the Biafran people in Nigeria, (8) the Nanking massacre at the hands of the Japanese government (a central event for the present conference) and others (Ivy Lee, *California Genocide Conference*, 2001).

#### 41. WAR AND PEACE: OTHER ISSUES

##### 1. Are Americans the Only Ones who Can't Defend Themselves?

*Now that America is once again a martial country (and severely criticized for it by the effete Europeans and by practically everyone else), it may seem odd that I accuse this country of being a cowardly, helpless, pitiful giant. But you must remember that in 1982, the trauma of our Vietnam defeat had not yet worn off. At that time, we were truly very weak. The facts speak for themselves, as my article below convincingly demonstrates. I published this in Human Events on July 3, 1982, when Britain went to war to recover the Falkland Islands.*

The British response to the Falklands crisis highlights once again the sad contrast between the weak and cowardly foreign policy of the U.S. in recent years, and that of most other, more normal, countries.

Although the British possession is remote and relatively worthless, England reacted with the normal instincts of anyone under attack; i.e., in self-defense. Most other nations do likewise, when their interests are at stake, be they "good guys" like France airlifting a few thousand paratroopers to central Africa four years ago, or bad guys like the Soviet Union doing its thing anywhere it wishes.

But what about us? When the Panamanians make a grab for our canal, we promptly sign a treaty to hand it over, with apologies and millions of pay-off dollars to boot; a profoundly strategic and economic possession built by us, belonging to us, paid for by us, and not very far away from us. When Iran takes over our embassy and 66 American diplomats, we crawl for two years from the U.N. to the World Court begging for meaningless legal and moral support, and end up "negotiating" their release at the cost of \$130 million per head. Some victory!

If someone made a grab for Samoa, the Virgin Islands, Guam or some other American possession, we would no doubt "negotiate" its "peaceful" transfer to the aggressor along with millions in foreign aid. We are not even sure we have a moral right to the Southwestern half of the U.S. I just saw another one of those TV shows reminding us that we "stole" the area from Mexico and ought to consider returning it.

We are the only country that is incapable - no, unwilling - to fend for its interests, in due time perhaps even its territorial integrity, paralyzed as we are by guilt and a pathological desire for approval. The British, on the other hand, are but the latest example of how things are normally done (*Human Events*, July 3, 1982).

## 2. Why I Favor Re-instating the Draft

*These are just some notes I jotted down in 1988. I suppose they will get me in the doghouse now. Also, it's cheap and easy for me to favor the draft at my ripe old age. Although I was drafted as a 25-year old immigrant to this country, I was later exempted from military duty, and I am of course far too old for such duty now. Still, are there any arguments in favor of compulsory military service? In 1988, I thought that there were. I edited this a bit in 2007.*

1). Most people at both ends of the political spectrum agree that some sort of mandatory national service for all young people would be salutary. It would not have to be military service. It could be a Vista-like domestic Peace Corps. Every young man (and woman) would have to donate a year (or some other amount of time) to their country. This would be excellent for the country, which is starved for public works, public services and public repairs. Equally important, it would also be good for the morale of the youngsters themselves, who so often drift and misbehave.

2) Military or not, mandatory and universal national service would also greatly help the government balance its books. The government's deficit has been out of control for decades. The services provided by a national youth corps would not be slave labor, but they would be infinitely cheaper than the work of unionized government employees and of contracted businesses. And if the armed forces were based on the draft, this would be far cheaper than a professional, salaried defense force, i.e. a *de facto* mercenary army.

3) By far the most criminal age cohort are people between 15 and 25. By corralling a significant portion of this age group for a year or two, society could reduce the crime rate by 80%. Imagine, again, the saving to society, which currently spends an enormous amount of money on police, prisons, courts, lawyers, judges, social work and all the other parts of an out of control criminal justice system.

4) As they say, this would make men out of boys. Experts have long noted that growing up in modern society is much more problematic than it was in pre-industrial cultures. Adolescence is a terrible age in the Western world, but it wasn't always so. The transition from childhood to adulthood would be greatly facilitated, if everyone had to spend a year or two performing national service and functioning in a disciplined institutional environment. It would create good habits, provide a ritualized status passage, foster maturity, a sense of identity and belonging, and better morale.

5) Leaving the defense of the country to mercenaries is never a good idea. And that *is* what a professional, salaried army is. To whom does the mercenary owe his allegiance? His incentive is material gain, not love of country. He will fight with enthusiasm as long as the campaign is successful. However, when defeat is around the corner, is it not logical that the mercenary's motivation would sag? The terrible sacrifices which were made by the French in World War One and by the Russians in World War Two, can only be expected when an army fights for the defense and the survival of its motherland.

The ancient Roman legions consisted largely of paid mercenaries, to be sure, and these

served Rome well for many centuries. However, that was only the case as long as the Roman armies consisted of Romans and of other Latins. In time, more and more soldiers came from the ranks of Germans, the Gauls, and other non-Romans, whose loyalty to Rome was questionable. Similarly, Carthage's great weakness was that it used foreign mercenaries to do its fighting.

America may not be on the verge of doing anything like that. However, if more and more of the young people who volunteer for military service are motivated by salary, a free education and things like that, rather than patriotism, this could become a problem.

6) All of America's enemies, and many of its allies, rely on the draft. For a long time, the only two major countries which had an all-volunteer army were the U.S. and the U.K. Recently, other countries have followed this trend. However, a majority of countries still have a draft.

### 3. The U.S.-led Coalition Could Loose the Gulf War

*In February, 1991, the Gulf War was under way, but it had not yet been won. While the military campaign was going well, things did not look as good on the public relations front. There was mounting criticism of the war. I was worried about a repeat of the Vietnam scenario. There, the media and public opinion had turned military victories such as the Tet Offensive into public relations defeats. I worried that we might once again snatch defeat from the jaws of victory. I wrote the following piece, which was never published.*

The recent accidental killing of hundreds of Iraqi civilians has revived much of the latent anti-Americanism which is never far beneath the surface of world public opinion. The Gulf War now enters a very delicate period.

As any reasonably perceptive person has known for years, the world culture - both foreign and domestic - has two distinct standards by which it judges the behavior of various countries: one exceedingly exacting standard for the United States, and another much more forgiving one for everyone else. For years, every major and minor human rights violation of the United States has been documented, examined and criticized relentlessly. On the other hand, acts of violence committed by other countries are generally viewed with much greater equanimity.

American sins ranging from the Japanese internment to My Lai and from Wounded Knee to the bombing of Iraqi civilians are ceaselessly and forever belabored. They receive proportionally much more attention than state-sponsored violence by other governments, even when that violence assumes genocidal proportions, as the Soviets in Afghanistan or Saddam Hussein against the Kurds and the Kuwaiti. The standard of forgiving indifference even applies to other Western countries. There are no massive peace demonstrations or human rights protests anywhere when England wages war against Argentina, or when France sends troops to the Chad. Clearly, it is America which the world loves to hate.

The real problem is that the anti-American attitude is shared by our own intellectual elite as well, including the American media. The media's behavior at times borders on treason. CNN's Peter Arnett and others report from Bagdad exactly what Saddam Hussein wishes them to report. They are shamelessly prostituting themselves and aiding the enemy. Arnett's record of anti-Americanism is impeccable: To this very day, he has never revealed the identity of the officer who allegedly said, in Vietnam, that a "village had to be destroyed in order to be saved." Did Arnett just make that up, along with god knows what else?

The selectivity with which the Gulf crisis is covered is appalling. We are in coalition with 28 other countries. These had provided about one third of all the deployed the troops. Yet Diane

Sawyer and Ted Koppel choose to relentlessly interview King Hussein and other Jordanians - the *only* country in the region not aligned against Iraq. No interviews with Hosni Mubarak, or with King Hassan of Morocco, or with any of the dozens of other allies. Daily harping on Jordanian anti-Americanism in the streets of Amman, with scant attention paid to supportive public opinion in large countries such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

Given the perverted mind-set of the American media and the cowardice of our ruling class, the Vietnamization of the Gulf War is not inconceivable. What would happen in such a worst-case scenario?

First of all, the guilt-mongering, finger-pointing and resurgent pacifism on the home-front would begin to undermine the administration's resolve and effectiveness. Fostered by Congressional pressure, there would be an increasing "open-mindedness" for a possible diplomatic solution, compromise, a "comprehensive" approach to Middle-East problems, etc.

Once the coalition's prospects of swift and total victory became less obvious, others would begin to hedge their bets. Not only would the coalition begin to lose its cohesiveness - a danger of which the administration has been aware from the very outset. More importantly, two key players might decide to swing behind Iraq, namely Iran and the Soviet Union.

There are already indications of a shift in those two countries' official position. Iran has said all along that it would join Iraq in a war against Israel. Those 140 Iraqi war planes which are now being "protected" by Iran might yet see action! And as far as Moscow is concerned, *Izvestia* has just stated that "Desert Storm is turning into Desert Murder" and that there might come a point where it becomes necessary to oppose the US war against Iraq. There must be hundreds of Red Army and KGB officials salivating at the prospect of paying us back for our support of the Afghan rebels who killed so many Russians.

If Iraq were to gain the military support of Iran and the Soviet Union, this would accomplish an exact replica of Vietnam - an endless quagmire, unlimited military supply of the enemy, and no decisive victory in sight.

Once again, the U.S. would snatch defeat from the jaws of victory due to its inability to win the propaganda battle. Once again, America would show that it can win a war, but not a peace. Once again, American boys could die in vain.

Admittedly, this is not yet an immediate probability. Chances are that the Gulf war will be concluded successfully and in the not-too-distant future. Nevertheless, it is important to understand that we do not have all the time in the world. There are many enemies out there, and Saddam Hussein's legions are only one of them.

#### 4. How Many Men Died at Verdun?

*In 2002, I read Malcolm Brown's outstanding book, Verdun - 1916. It is the detailed history of the largest military battle ever fought: The battle lasted from February 1916 to the end of that year, i.e. about eleven months. The Germans and the French each lost an estimated 400,000 men, for a total of nearly 800,000!*

*However, there is a disastrous typographical error on the book jacket, for all potential buyers to see from the get go: it says that the number of men who died in the battle of Verdun is 75,000. The publisher and the copy editor missed the correct figure by a factor of 10!*

*I was aggravated by this error, which I saw as indicative of people's appalling innumeracy, even people who work for high-fallutin' New York publishers. So on August 21, I sent the following e-mail to Nancy Howe, the editor in charge. Never got a reply. They don't care if they do shoddy work (and thereby lose money).*

I am not sure you are the proper person for this communication, but I selected you from Arcadia's web page because you are in charge of military history. As you know, Tempus published in 1999 Malcolm Brown's outstanding *Verdun - 1916*. Once I started reading it, I couldn't put it down. It is probably an excellent adoption for a variety of college courses.

However, one thing has aggravated me since I picked the book up: On the very back of the book jacket, within the first sentence on top of the book cover, there is a monumental typographical error: The number of deaths at Verdun is in error by a factor of 10! The correct number should be 750,000, not 75,000. This is unfortunate, because Verdun's claim to fame as the bloodiest battle in all of human history stands on this silly little missing zero. The error is located prominently. The erroneous figure - 75,000 - is the first thing that comes to the attention of any potential reader or buyer.

Anyway, if this is not your affair, please pass it forward to whoever it does concern - for example the author. Also, if it is permissible, you could give me the author's e-mail, and I would be honored to communicate with him directly - not only to nitpick about this typo, but also to congratulate him for his master piece.

### 5. The Origins of World War Three

*In January 2003, we had invaded Afghanistan, but the Iraq war had not yet begun. As President Bush was getting ready to invade Iraq, I was fretting. On January 26 of that year, I wrote the following science fiction-like piece. You can see that I didn't much approve of the pending war. I'll grant you that the scenario I describe is silly and unrealistic. It is also the old-fashioned Euro-geopolitical warmongering which went out of style after World War Two, and which had inspired Orwell's 1984. These are classics and they are brilliant, but they have little relevance to today's world. Oh well, maybe you'll find my peace entertaining.*

On September 11, 2001, the bloodiest terrorist act in human history occurred. Because America was hurt so badly and so unexpectedly, the shock caused a permanent change in its national psyche. Henceforth, the country's attitude was a mix of fear and anger, anxiety and bitterness, indifference to the outside world and a desire to control it.

After a swift and effective retaliatory war in Afghanistan, the country and its leadership were by no means done, the problem of international and anti-American terrorism was by no means over. To the contrary, retaliation led to counter-retaliation and escalation on both sides - the two sides consisting essentially of America and its western allies on the one hand, and much of the Muslim world on the other.

It seemed a good idea to America's leadership to continue the fight by waging a war against Saddam Hussein's Iraq. This project seemed promising and potentially rewarding: You get rid of a notorious dictator, you help the Iraqi people, you get your hands on enormous oil reserves, you make a great impact on the Middle East, and all of this for a war that promises to be almost as swift and effective as the Gulf War was in 1991. The fact that Saddam Hussein was not directly linked to September 11 was relatively irrelevant. In the larger scheme of things, deposing him promised to be a helpful step in the worldwide struggle against terrorism.

Unfortunately for America's leadership, during the year-long preparations for the Iraq war, the dilly-dallying and the efforts to cooperate with the UN and its inspections, the Bush administration gradually lost the support of a majority of its allies, as well as that of a growing segment of domestic public opinion. Additionally, an increasing number of countries sitting on the fence began to turn their back on America. Finally, countries and publics which were at first merely *potential* adversaries gradually became *real* adversaries, now boldly getting off the fence.

This was the case, for example, with North Korea, Iran and most of the populations of countries such as Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.

Thus, when the US finally attacked Iraq during the late spring of 2003, this was immediately followed by conflagration elsewhere:

During the summer of 2003, Several Middle-Eastern countries formerly allied with the US experienced radical Islamic revolutions which their governments were unable to suppress. This happened first in Pakistan. As a result, US forces still operating in neighboring Afghanistan were now trapped. Most were evacuated by air, although nearly 2000 of our troops were never heard from again. The US Afghan operation came to the same dismal end as the Soviet campaign 20 years earlier.

Worse perhaps, the Saudi regime was also overthrown. This was, of course, entirely unacceptable to the United States. Our government now developed a plan to restore a friendly regime in Saudi Arabia as soon as the Iraqi campaign came to an end, i.e. by Fall of 2003. Meanwhile, America also had to evacuate all its forces from Saudi Arabia - hopefully temporarily.

\* \* \* \* \*

In the beginning of September, North Korea, emboldened by America's difficulties elsewhere, handed an ultimatum to South Korea, as well as a threat to Japan: It demanded the "unification" of the Korean peninsula under a "neutral" government, and the expulsion of all American forces not only from Korea, but also from Japan, Okinawa and the rest of northeast Asia.

Two days later, South Korea, Japan and the US notified North Korea of (1) their obvious and predictable refusal to comply with North Korea's ultimatum, (2) their outrage at the obscene ultimatum and (3) the counter threat to declare war on North Korea the moment it makes the slightest hostile military move.

On September 15, US satellites detected vast southward movement of North Korea's million-man army, amassing itself near the demilitarized zone. With the obvious prospect of an immediate invasion of South Korea and only 37,000 American troops to hold the line, the President of the United States warned that the moment North Korean forces cross the 38th parallel, they would be repelled with tactical nuclear weapons. On September 17, the North Koreans began to cross the border, and the US had no choice but to abide by its threat.

It had been suspected that North Korea possessed half a dozen nuclear bombs, and the missiles to deliver them to such near-by neighbors as South Korea and Japan. Neither US intelligence nor other sources were aware that the North Koreans in fact possessed ten times that number of nuclear devices.

With nothing left to lose, on September 18, the North Korean armed forces now launched all their remaining nuclear devices - half of them on South Korea (Seoul was obliterated, with a death toll estimated between 2 and 3 million) and half on Japan. Luckily, all missiles missed Tokyo. Nevertheless, this second nuclear attack suffered by Japan in its history resulted in an estimated 5 million casualties, i.e. fifty times the number who perished in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The US was now deeply involved on two fronts. The Iraqi campaign had been as swift and successful as predicted. The year-long logistical and manpower preparations had paid off. While little help was being provided by any of our so-called European "allies," (The United Kingdom being the lone exception), Turkey had at least permitted the US to open a Northern front against Saddam Hussein.

Thanks, in addition, to excellent support from the Kurds, the battle in the North was swift and overwhelmingly successful. This, in turn, enabled the US forces to advance rapidly from

Kuwait and the Basra area in the South. By late August, the Americans were in control of most of Iraq, including Baghdad, although some urban mop-up operations were still under way. As predicted by some, Saddam Hussein had attempted to create havoc with the oil fields, but the allied victory had been so swift and the take-over of the oil-fields so well-planned and executed, that the damage was relatively minor (compared to what had been done to the oil fields in Kuwait during the Gulf war). Saddam Hussein's body was found in one of the family residential palaces in the outskirts of Baghdad, along with those of his wife and several other members of his extended family. A bullet had been shot through his mouth, suggesting suicide (although this could have been staged).

As the US was now turning its attention to the Northeast Asian conflict, the world was shocked to hear, on September 25, that the new radical regimes in Arabia and Pakistan were beginning to send thousands of "volunteers" and "martyrs" into Iraq to liberate that country from the yankee infidels. While the "volunteers" from Arabia merely had to cross the Iraqi border, those from Pakistan had to cross Iran. In another setback for the United States, Iran was only too happy to oblige, in fact joining the radical Muslim coalition that was now forming against the U.S. In essence, then, most of the Muslim world had now been solidified into one vast anti-American and anti-Western coalition.

The Europeans (including Russia) were aghast, terrified, and desperately trying to remain neutral, particularly now that the conflict had gone nuclear in one of the theaters of war. Frantic efforts were under way at the United Nations to de-escalate, to no avail.

Even more troublesome was China's deafening silence. With nuclear war raging near its borders, the most populous nation on earth could be expected to begin, somehow, to throw its weight around.

On October 1, the Chinese representative to the UN finally spoke, introducing a resolution: All military activities were to cease immediately, both in the Middle East and in Northeast Asia. Settlements were to be arrived at under UN supervision. Relevant regional spheres were to be delineated. Each sphere's autonomy was to be recognized and respected. The UN-supervised and authorized settlements were to be arrived at solely internally, i.e. by the states *within* each delineated sphere.

In the case of Northeast Asia, the only parties to any settlement were to be Asian states. Thus, the war had finally provided China with a rationale for its long-sought objective, i.e. to exclude the United States from Asia. The Security Council voted 14-1 in favor of China's proposal. The US was the lone dissenter, vetoing the proposal, of course.

Presently China became more belligerent: Arguing in a manner reminiscent of George W. Bush's warning - half a year earlier - that if the UN and/or allies don't come on board, the US will handle the "Iraq problem" unilaterally, China now announced something similar: It warned that, if necessary, the People's Republic would single-handedly enforce the regional peace settlement in Northeast Asia, including the expulsion of all "extraneous elements" (read, of course, America).

Thus, conflicts which initially involved minor countries had now escalated to a confrontation between the world's two greatest military powers - the United States and China.

This was uncannily reminiscent of the onset of World War One. A terrorist act (the murder of Archduke Ferdinand by a Serbian assassin in Sarajevo) first led to war between local powers (Austro-Hungary, Serbia), then between major powers allied to them (Russia, Germany, France, Britain), and finally pulling even far-way America in.

Of course, *nothing* about the China plan was acceptable to America, absolutely nothing.

This was clear from the very start of the confrontation. And the power disparity between the two countries was still so great that the United States saw no reason to take the Chinese proposal seriously.

But no single factor is more responsible for causing global war than misunderstandings and miscommunications between nations and governments. That is what caused the world to fumble and stumble into World War One (and, as a result, World War Two), and that is what happened again this time:

While America considered itself invincible and the Chinese proposal not worthy of serious consideration, the Chinese saw things differently: They were convinced that their proposal was serious and meritorious; in this, they enjoyed the support of a majority of the UN; they were as proud and unable to back down as any large, rising country tends to be; finally, if worse came to worst, they were convinced that their vast demographic advantage would enable them to defeat the United States through sheer attrition. This had, of course, been their prevalent attitude during the Korean War half a century earlier. Mao Tse Tung had even been so crass as to say that China would always come out the winner in any war, even a nuclear war, since it, alone, could afford to lose hundreds of millions of people and still have plenty left.

Thus, neither of the two giants was willing to back down. By summer of 2004, China had marched into Korea, the US had send 20 new rapidly formed divisions (the military draft had been reinstated, of course) to the peninsula, and a second Korean war was under way.

Because both superpowers possessed vast nuclear arsenals and the ability to annihilate each other, they kept the war conventional. In this regard, the conflict was comparable to the Cold War and its many confrontations (Berlin, the Cuban missile crisis, etc.) during which the reality of MAD had prevented the Soviets and the US from ever going nuclear.

Nevertheless, the conventional war in Asia was taking a frightful toll. By the summer of 2004, the US was so exhausted that it had to pull out of Korea entirely, pulling most of its forces back to Japan. China thereupon opened an attack on Japan.

Meanwhile, the Middle Eastern war raged on. The aggressive coalescence of the Muslim world became such a threat to Europe and to Russia that they - belatedly - came to America's help. Two factors finally opened the Europeans' eyes: They were increasingly affected by the violence themselves (Chechnians, Hetzollah, Al Fatah and other groups carried out more and more frequent operations everywhere in Europe, from Moscow to Paris), and the flow of oil to Europe had practically stopped.

\* \* \* \* \*

We are now in the year 2015. What has become known as the "Pacific War" has now been raging for 12 years. Its ebbs and flows have been many. It has involved different countries at different times - the Northeast Asian countries, of course, but also Australia, New Zealand, Russia, the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand and a host of other countries off and on. But the two permanent protagonists remain China and the US. The lives and resources which have gone into this war can no longer be estimated. They dwarf the combined losses of World War One and World War Two. Yet, China has not given up its dream to be the sole superpower in Asia, i.e. to eliminate all American presence from that continent. And the US has not accepted defeat.

The Middle East, too, remains a battle field. The participants in that conflict include Russia and most of Europe, as well as the United States. Thus the struggle continues, in a more or less semi-permanent state, as predicted by George Orwell.

## 1. Should America Love its Enemies?

*The 9-11 terrorist attack traumatized me more than I realized at the time. My immediate reaction was similar to how I felt after the 1979 hostage taking in Teheran. I immediately focused on the home front, wondering whether the American people and its leadership would muster the necessary anger and outrage to respond bravely - something which they had failed to do in 1979. There was, again, the danger that the effete media and intelligentsia could emasculate the country and prevent it from doing what was necessary, i.e. fight back. Of course, George W. Bush was no Jimmy Carter. But therein lay also part of the problem: While this President had the right instincts, and whereas the country was no longer in the doldrums of the post-Vietnam "malaise," Bush had a different baggage which made him potentially ineffective: He was uncharismatic, unintellectual, verbally impaired and widely seen as just plain dumb. There was no reservoir of sympathy for him, either overseas or among the liberal domestic elites.*

*And indeed, within days of the attack, - no, within hours! - the media and the public were already divided along familiar lines: on one side stood a majority of the people, stunned, outraged, ready to do battle. On the other side were many of the media, the intellectuals, many Californians and New Yorkers, Phil Donahue, - you know, the usual crowd - dismissing as red necks the millions of Americans who waved the flag and were ready to fight, arguing that "war was not the answer," etc. Things were the same as what they had been after the Teheran hostage taking in 1979, except that the attack was infinitely more serious.*

*I was aghast. I felt, just as I had felt in 1979, that this was a time to fight, not a time to hold peace seminars. As William Bennett said, this was a rare moment of "moral clarity" which should unite the country, not divide it.*

*My first foray into the public debate occurred on September 13, two days after the attack. I had been listening to National Public Radio, where liberals like Dan Shore (and an awful lot of callers, too, I am afraid!) were advocating caution, diplomacy, the need to avoid shooting from the hip and a "John Wayne-"like response, etc, etc. I was appalled. Here is what I wrote to NPR:*

I am listening to the Sept. 13 call-in show with Dan Shore, about the terrorist attack. I have tried to call you a hundred times, but it's busy, so here is my input this way: I am appalled by what a majority of the callers are expressing. Yesterday, I heard Bill Bennett say on television that for once, America has reached a "moment of moral clarity." But not these confused callers to NPR. Most of them are talking about the need "to understand the motives and the underlying causes" for terrorism, a need for "a change of heart" in America, "revenge is not the answer," etc. etc. My God, we have become a pacifist country! If this country cannot even defend itself, how can it claim to provide world leadership? Of course the response has to be against the proper parties, of course we shouldn't go and start indiscriminate bombing, and all that, but surely now is not the time for mushy talk about love and understanding. Don't these people have any normal instincts left? When someone tosses a hand grenade into your living room, do you sit down and discuss the problem?

Sorry, I am upset -- upset about such utter moral confusion, a problem which may be worse than the attack upon America itself. By the way, lest you think this message comes to you from a flag-waving redneck: Okay, maybe I am a redneck, but a Hungarian-Jewish one who survived world war two in the bombed slums of Budapest.

## 2. A Response to Pacifists

*And that was just the beginning. Within days, the pacifist Left was cluttering the airwaves*

*and the editorial pages of the liberal media in a barrage of anti-war propaganda, at a time when America had not yet lifted a finger in self-defense. Here are some of my diary notes, written just a few days after 9-11.*

Once again, the pacifists are organizing and getting ready to march (e.g. in Washington D.C. on Sept. 30). Some of their leaders are panelists on National Public Radio call-in shows. Thank God, many of the callers are against them, even though NPR is very liberal. Is here my reaction:

1. I agree fervently with one of NPR's panelists who was *not* a pacifist (the associate editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, I believe). This man quoted a statement made by George Orwell in 1942: Pacifists are de facto pro-Nazi. By weakening the allies' war effort, they objectively help the Nazi war effort. And the NPR guest speaker went on to add that today's pacifists may be speaking from a moral high ground, but that they are not serious people. They have no solutions, he said, only slogans ("violence only begets violence," etc.).

2. My brother-in-law Hans is a hard-nosed Dutchman. He makes a totally valid point: Appeasement doesn't work. Chamberlain tried to appease Hitler in 1938 - Munich, "Peace in our time." It only encouraged further aggression.

The present situation is similar. These terrorists -- radical Muslim America-haters -- will do it again, and again. We could toss Israel to them and it would make no difference. It would merely encourage greater aggression, as tossing Czechoslovakia to Hitler merely encouraged him to gobble up Poland a year later.

Today's terrorists were probably encouraged to blow up the World Trade Center by our weak responses to them in the past: Jimmy Carter's disastrous response to the 1979 hostage crisis. It took him fifteen months to free our hostages, when it should have taken fifteen days. On that occasion, our government, to its ever-lasting shame, did not engage in a single act of violence against the enemy, even though the enemy was clearly identified and known -- the Khomeini government. Our failure to respond forcefully to previous terrorism (Lockerbie, the US embassies in Africa, the military barracks in Beirut, the navy ship blown up in Yemen, the Achilles Lauro, and many, many other acts over the past twenty years) -- our weakness has encouraged terrorist escalation, and it will continue to do so.

3. Consider the progressive growth of pacifism in our society (and indication of progressive decay):

- A. In the 1940s, we had war and no pacifist protest.
- B. In the 1960s we had war and pacifist protest.
- C. Now we have pacifist protest *without* war!

4. The pacifists propose "legal action," action under the auspices of the U.N. This is lunacy. It is as if someone had proposed to sue Hitler, Mussolini and Tojo during the 1930s, instead of waging war against them! And don't the pacifists know that the U.N. has hardly ever carried out an effective police action? Today, the UN is inherently incapable of action!

5. The Left keeps manufacturing outlandish figures for the number of people allegedly killed by America in its foreign police actions - for example in Iraq since the end of the Gulf War. We are given numbers into the hundreds of thousand, even the millions. This is utterly

unbelievable and undocumented.

In any event: Even admitting that the West - and this means Europe far more than America - has been guilty of imperialism and exploitation of the Third World ever since Columbus, it is *not* clear whether, *on balance*, the West's contributions to the rest of the world have been more positive or more negative. What about generous foreign aid, Marshall plans, hundreds of thousands of Americans dying to free the world from Fascism and Communist Totalitarianism, modern technology, economic development, a higher standard of living, progress, medicine, cultural goods (music, movies, television, education, literacy), modernity, democracy, equality, freedom, the emancipation of women, the abolition of slavery and piracy, and much more. It is called *progress*, and it comes from the West, especially from America.

6. We hear from the pacifist Left that we helped create Bin Laden and the Taliban - so as to help Afghanistan kick the Soviets out, in the 1980s. So? What if a woman marries a man, but later he becomes abusive with her. Should she be blamed for having married him in the first place?

7. The pacifist Left will *never* agree that the time has come for America to defend itself. This time we lost 3,200 innocent people. Next time 100,000? A million? What if terrorists kill the pacifists? What if they kill children, mothers and wives, for example through bio-terrorism? Will the pacifists still turn the other cheek? Will they follow in the footsteps of the early Christians, who let themselves be slaughtered, allowed Rome to become internally weak and to collapse, and thus brought on a thousand years of darkness which retarded world progress by a thousand years?

8. Millions of misguided Americans -- liberals, others, perhaps a majority -- are mouthing off the cliches, "We must find out *why* they hate us so much;" "What are the *causes* behind their behavior?" "What did *we* do that is causing their aggressions against us."

Who cares! Did we need to know *why* Tim McVeigh was angry and why he blew up nearly 200 innocent lives? We have been told that he did it because he was angry about the government's assault on the Branch Davidians. So? Who cares? Tim McVeigh was a madman who killed hundreds of people. We don't need to empathize with his mad thought processes. Doing so solves nothing. Similarly, do we really need to know *why* Hitler and the Nazis did what they did. Okay, go ahead, read *Mein Kampf*. Is that helpful? I haven't read it, but I understand that it is a meaningless tract of rambling, raving lunacy. And even if it were a well-articulated document, what's the point? People like Hitler and the Nazis had to be eradicated, not "understood." The latter can be done by University professors with too much time of their hands.

### 3. Differences between 1941 and 2001

*A few days later, I watched Fox's Bill O'Reilly interview the fool Phil Donahue. Donahue had suggested things like suing Osama Bin Laden in the World Court (!) instead of killing him. I laughed hysterically, as I wrote the following e-mail to Bill O'Reilly:*

Mr. O'Reilly:

You are the best media man in America at this time. My wife and I watch you daily. One point I am sure you are aware of, but failed to use against Phil Donahue is the Munich Analogy. Appeasing Hitler by tossing Czechoslovakia to him in 1938 didn't help, did it? Also, let's ask the likes of Phil Donahue if their solution to Hitler would have been to sue him. Below is a list which you might find amusing/aggravating/enlightening.

Differences in America between 1941 and 2001:

1. 1941: War, but no pacifism.  
1960s: War AND pacifism.  
2001: Pacifism, but no war.
2. 1941: President urges us to tighten our belt and to sacrifice for the war effort. There is rationing (on sugar, gas, many other things) and war bonds.  
2001: President urges us to spend, fly, go to restaurants for the “war” effort.
3. 1941: Government raises taxes for the war effort  
2001: Government cuts taxes
4. 1941: We are angry with our enemies.  
2001: We must try to understand our enemies.
5. 1941: We focus on fighting those who have attacked us.  
2001: We focus on making sure that we don’t discriminate against those who are of the same culture as those who attacked us.
6. 1941: We intern Japanese Americans.  
2001: We escort Arab Americans to protect them against hate crimes. The President visits Mosques, but not synagogues or churches.
7. 1941: We attack our enemies (Japan, Germany).  
2001: We send food and economic aid to our enemies (Afghanistan).
8. 1941: We attack the countries which help our enemies.  
2001: We ally ourselves with countries which help our enemies (Sudan, Pakistan, Syria, Iran).
9. 1941: We wage war.  
2001: We talk about war.

4. The September 11 Terrorist Attack: America and the World

*Two days after the attack, I also sat down and wrote the following article. This was somewhat less hyperbolic and more measured, and it was published in the Fall 2001 issue of the International Journal on World Peace.*

I would like to comment on one aspect of the destruction of the World Trade Center and the murder of over 3,000 innocent Americans. That aspect is our perception of America’s place in the world community. In my view, the current general perception is inaccurate and harmful, and I would like to propose a correction:

I don’t want to be misunderstood: My point is not to belittle America. Quite the contrary: What I would like to see is a re-direction of our perspective towards a more *global* conception of the family of man, a family of which America is a prominent member, but *not the hegemonist*

member. It is only in such a context that America can achieve its objectives, which are (1) to protect and defend itself against the virulent, hateful anti-Americanism which has just taken thousands of innocent lives, and which will continue its rampage for the foreseeable future, and (2) to remain a respected and liked member of the international community of nations. These objectives cannot be accomplished if we subscribe to an “America-vs.-the world” paradigm.

That paradigm can be summed up under the label of “American Exceptionalism” -- a well known concept among social scientists. This is the view, in essence, that America is not only unique, but that it is also apart from all other countries. This view is held *both* by many patriotic Americans themselves, *and* by foreign and domestic America-haters. Most Americans feel, rightly so, that America is uniquely good. America-haters feel that America is uniquely bad -- Satan America. The point on which *Both sides* tend to agree is that America is uniquely *powerful*, that there is American hegemony in the world. Everyone agrees that we are *the only superpower*.

What is distinctive about this widely held view is that America is seen not only as unique, but as *uniquely* unique. After all, most people will agree that every country, culture or society *is* unique in some way or another. But many people attribute to America a separate sort of uniqueness. In addition to possessing, like every other society, a unique cultural, political and social character, America is viewed by people all over the world on both sides of the political spectrum as being in a class apart from all other countries -- American exceptionalism.

In fact, while there are some *quantitative* differences between America and other large countries, there is no *qualitative* difference that warrants the thesis of American exceptionalism: True, we have the largest GNP of any country, because we have a relatively large population and a relatively high per capita income. But we are neither the richest country of the world per capita, nor the largest, nor the most populous. Economically, we are the biggest kid on the block, but we are surrounded by other rich and powerful countries (Japan, Germany and the rest of the European community), other incredibly large and populous countries (China, India), other countries with enormous nuclear destructive capabilities (Russia), other countries with vast territory and natural resources (Canada, etc.)

I just returned from the Netherlands (connecting, by the way, with a Newark-San Francisco flight *one day* ahead of flight #93 which was hijacked and went down in rural Pennsylvania!) and I noticed, again, that the quality of life and the standard of living in that country are at least on a par with ours.

Neither should it befall to America alone to defend democratic values. We share these values with a host of other countries (Western Europe, Canada, Australia, etc.), and an attack upon American democracy is an attack against all like-minded societies.

America cannot become the lightning rod for Third World, Muslim, or any other resentment. America is a member of the international community. It shares with the rest of the world responsibility for both what is good and what is problematic.

Similarly, the familiar argument that we have been targeted due to our unique support of Israel rings hollow: Yes, we provide the largest single share of economic and military support to that country (as well as to Egypt and the PLO, by the way). However, support to Israel is a collective effort in which the Europeans and others are also actively involved, both at the material

and the psychological level. So, again, the view of America being uniquely responsible in this area does not match reality.

It is good that President Bush, Secretary Colin Powell and others have now been talking about international coalitions in order to combat international terrorism. It is good that NATO has invoked section V of its charter, indicating that the conflict at hand is *not* between America and its enemies, but between a community of nations and its assailants.

The cliché -- and the truth -- is that the world has reached the age of *globalism*. The East-West confrontation of the Cold War has been replaced by the new North-South divide. The emerging line of differentiation and conflict pits the haves versus the have-nots. One billion people on earth, living mostly in the Northern hemisphere, enjoy decent lives. The remaining five billion are retrogressing. Africa, for example, is devastated by AIDS, war and starvation -- Add to this a growing religious fanaticism and nationalism in many parts of the world. This is the 21st century reality. America happens to be *one* of the large, affluent countries of the Northern hemisphere.

Clearly, the North-South divide is the greatest challenge of the 21st century. Even mere enlightened self-interest dictates that the affluent North come to the rescue of the poor South. Otherwise, the invasion of the North -- both violent, as in the September 11 terrorist attack, and peaceful, as in the millions of legal and illegal immigrants into North America and Europe -- will continue unabated, causing increasing economic and political dislocation, and demographic and environmental difficulties.

But I did not write this essay with solutions to world economic problems in mind. I am merely suggesting that we begin to view our problems as *global* rather than national, and that we cease placing America into a category by itself. America cannot become the whipping boy and the lightning rod for Third World, Muslim, or any other resentment. America is a member of the international community, a powerful and relatively affluent member. But it *shares* with the rest of the world responsibility for both what is good and what is problematic on our planet.

If we could re-orient ourselves to seeing things this way, perhaps greater progress could be made in the world, and this would certainly be a healthier and more realistic role and identity for America itself. No country can or should go it alone. The truth is: we are all in this together, America included (*International Journal on World Peace*, Fall, 2001).

### 5. America's Achilles Heel: We Want the World to Love Us

*I remained upset about the way things were going after 9-11. Three and a half weeks after the attack, there was still not much of an American response, and what response did occur was a confused mix of pacifist, foreign aid-type initiatives, along with some rumblings of military action. Here are some of my October 4 diary notes, somewhat edited in 2007:*

I just put my finger on America's fatal flaw, weakness, Achilles heel: Americans desperately want to be liked! My colleague Victor Comerchero said it well: Americans want to be perfect and admired by all. They cannot ignore criticism, guilt or imperfection.

This occurred to me today, because I heard on the news that we are now sending \$360 million worth of food and other humanitarian aid to Afghanistan (!)

My God, aren't we putting the cart before the horse, again? We haven't even engaged in *any* military action anywhere on earth yet. We have done *nothing* to Afghanistan yet - the country

which harbors the Taliban and Al Qaeda. But right away, our knee jerk reflex is to act as a Santa Clause to some country/countries around the world. This is the habit we have. It is so much easier to give, especially for our governmental elites which give what does not belong to them, namely the hard earned fruit of the American taxpayer's labor.

George W. Bush now reminds me of his father, who smiled happily on world television, when he announced the end of the Gulf War ten years ago. That was such a clear indication that Bush Sr. wanted, above all, to be *liked*! Now, there seems again to be a desperate wish to convince the world that one is a good guy, not a war monger, not a racist. Why did the current President Bush go to a *mosque* (!) two days (!) after the terrorist bombing? Why not to a church or a synagogue? Surely there were more Christians and Jews than Muslims murdered in New York! Tony Blair did not do this, did he?

It has only been 3 weeks since 9-11, we have not even *begun* to fight back, but foreign criticism has already started! And so has the spiral of anti-Americanism followed by American efforts to ingratiate themselves with our critics. When will we learn that this only leads to contempt, not to respect? Did you see pathetic Phil Donahue on TV the other day - pleading for peace when there is no war, and warning against American bellicosity and racism towards Arabs, when there is none?

So foreign terrorists murder three thousand Americans, and our response is foreign aid. Nuts.

## 6. Is America Failing?

*Diary notes from October 14, 2001 - a month after 9-11. Same theme as above.*

It's been over a month since 9-11. Let's take stock. First, two unquestionable facts: (1) 9-11 was the worst attack *ever* suffered by America. (2) It was the worst terrorist act in the history of the world. So then: How are the American people and their leaders responding? How am I reacting?

My first impulse has been the same as after the hostage taking in Teheran in 1979: Nuke them! And just as then, I worry that we are *under*-reacting; that we will *not* fight back; that we will be weak and cowardly.

\* \* \* \* \*

So far, there has been a lot of confusion, and no effective response.

- Item: 9-11 was followed by panic and hysteria about anthrax attacks and additional hijackings which did not happen.
- Item: on 9-11, Bush fled to an undisclosed location. This is presumably the prescribed drill, so as to safeguard the presidency and an orderly functioning government. However, it did not look good. One wonders whether great leaders of the past - Lincoln, FDR - would have acted the same way, or whether they would have displayed more charisma and leadership. To his credit, though, President Bush has been forceful and courageous after his initial confusion.
- Item: we have begun to drop bombs on Afghanistan. But strangely, we are also dropping food and other foreign aid to the villagers. I have never heard of such a thing! It is as if the government wanted to satisfy two constituencies - the conservatives who say "nuke them!"

and the liberals who say “war is not the answer; economic aid is.” Our policy reflects our national schizophrenia. Then, too, by dropping food and other gifts, we have opened the door for the paranoid Left and the conspiracy nuts, who already accuse the Pentagon and the CIA of hiding bombs inside children’s toys.

- Item: When we cause collateral damage (we kill some civilians), the news media spend more time covering that than any other event, keeping up their never-ending guilt trip.
- Item: Since 9-11, most of the media and the intelligentsia have been more preoccupied with the protection of the civil rights of Arab-Americans than trying to suggest a proper military response to terrorism. Moron Phil Donahue was an embarrassment. He pleaded the government, teary-eyed, not to retaliate, whining that “war is not the answer,” and he suggested that we sue Al Qaeda in the International World Court in The Hague.
- Item: Comedian Bill Maher said that America is waging war on the cheap and in our customary cowardly way: We drop bombs from 20,000 feet up. Colin Powell’s and the Defense Department’s stated strategy is to only start a fight if we are assured of success, and of zero casualties. We bomb Third World villages from the air, but we don’t have the courage to mix it up on the ground and to go in to get the bad guys in hand-to-hand combat, like real men, as we did in World War Two.
- Item: After Bill Maher said this, his TV show was canceled. So we are in-fighting. We take our frustrations out on each other. We kill the messenger. This reminds me of the man who is harassed by his boss at work, or who gets into a traffic altercation on the road, and then beats up his wife or his children when he gets home. Instead of facing an external enemy, we invert our aggression and pick on weak members of our own group.
- Item: Since 9-11, there are lots of flags everywhere - on houses, on cars, etc. Patriotism on the cheap?
- Item: Here I am ranting about the need to fight back, from the safety of my affluent suburban home.

\* \* \* \* \*

So here are a few annoying questions for you:

- Is America a paper tiger?
- Is America incapable of exercising power? Considering its size, it should have exercised far greater power in the world than it has. Look at Britain, and even tiny Holland, and the other European countries in their heyday: They all went about the globe pushing people around -- often with terrible consequences for the subjugated people of the world, and in the end leading to disaster in Europe as well (World War One). Why is America so much more fearful of exercising power than other countries have been in the past? Sure, this makes America a “nicer” country, but look at the result: The world does not think that America is nice anyway. In fact, a case can be made that the country receives *more* criticism and is viewed with *more* contempt *because* it fails to project power more assertively. When it did,

in the past, as under Presidents Roosevelt, Truman and Eisenhower, it got a lot more respect.

Have we changed? Is it due to the corrosive influence of the effete and misguided intelligentsia elite, which, over the decades, has managed to undermine the healthy instincts of the people and to weaken the society? It succeeded during the Vietnam war. It caused the country to get cold feet, even though we were winning the war. And the country never fully recovered. Oh sure, under Reagan we did get back to playing somewhat of a leadership role, but we are still timid. Look at the Gulf War: we won, but then Bush Sr. failed to administer the coup de grace.

- Are Americans incapable of putting up with discomfort? Have they become weak, spoiled and pampered? Have they been affluent for too long?
- Is money our only value?
- Is my honeymoon with America over? Has she, like a wife to whom you have been married for too long, lost her luster for me? I came to America in 1960, full of awe and admiration for this superior civilization of brave, generous, manly, fun-loving, hard-working, handsome and intelligent people. 1960. What has happened to the “the land of the free and the home of the brave”?

**Conclusion:** The verdict isn't in. America has surprised the world in the past. It is a sleeping giant. It has been slow to wake up, but in the end it has always measured up to adversity; it has always showed the right stuff when it mattered. It is slow to anger, and it is generous. But once aroused, its wrath can be terrible. I am too impatient. Let's see what happens.

### 7. A Typical Confused Intellectual

*On October 21, 2001, Mark Danner published an editorial in the Sacramento Bee. It sounded wise and sophisticated, but it was in fact a confused mess. It was a good example of the quandary of liberals after 9-11: How to reconcile their primary impulse - which is to blame America first - with the realization that maybe there are, after all, people out there who want to kill us all. The article consisted of mystifications which said nothing. The only thing which it expressed quite clearly was the fact that liberals like Danner have (1) no solutions, that they (2) are afraid, and (3), since they can no longer sort things out due to their ingrained mental habit of always blaming America, they are short-circuiting. That's sort of what I said in the following article, written and sent to the Bee on October 21, but never printed, even though I think it is excellent.*

This is in response to Mark Danner's October 21 article in the *Forum* section of the *Bee* -- *Battlefield of this War is here -- in our Minds:*

Mark Danner, you are basically doing nothing but *venting*, and you have no clue whatsoever as to what ought to be done with regard to the terrorist assault on America. There is not even a hint of a constructive solution. The entire article is a contradiction between two sentiments: (1) America needs to be strong/firm/admit and defend its interests/etc. and: (2) America is at fault, the Islamic fundamentalists want to bring about a new order of purity and righteousness to a corrupt world that is held in place by America.

- 1) On the one hand, you list a series of defeats, of events that led us to cut our losses and

run. You timidly insinuate that we should have been firmer. We should not have quit Beirut, Somalia and Saigon, we should have finished off Saddam. We must engage in “a clear and honest defense of our interests...” Do you mean to say that America should use common sense and defend itself? You are afraid to say so, aren't you?

2) But on the other hand, you obscenely dignify the vision of the likes of the Taliban as one aiming at a new order of purity and righteousness. You attribute to Al-Qaeda “true genius.” This reminds me of the imbecile admiration some western intellectuals (the Futurists, Ezra Pound) had for the Fascists, the Nazis and Hitler in the 1930s, and later for Stalin (e.g. Sartre). In fact, the Muslim fundamentalists aim to reduce all societies under their control to a theocracy more malignant than anything the world has ever known, even in the darkest days of the Inquisition, more hellish than Fascism ever was. Compared to that, the current corrupt autocracies would look benign in retrospect. And what is the US allegedly “holding in place?” It is a certain world economic system, imperfect, but hobbling along, and relatively stable. It is held together *collectively*, and *not* exclusively or for the sole benefit of “Satan America.” Imperfect as the McDonaldised world is, the Jihad alternative would be infinitely worse.

So which is it, Danner?

You have no clue, and the reason is that you are a confused liberal, used to blaming America, but now fearful that the United States (i.e. *you*) are going to suffer. You don't know which way to go, do you?

Your words don't make sense: What is it that “the country has not yet begun to grasp?” If you know what it is, why don't you tell us? What is “a lack of political grounding?” Our weakest point is our “political psyche.” What is that?

You say that we are “inconsistent and capricious.” Is that serious stuff? Should people who are inconsistent and capricious be murdered by the thousands?

You write that we should “speak honestly about the country's interests...” If that's your idea of a clear solution to the incipient world war now getting under way, we are in trouble!

You say that Americans don't know why they are being targeted. It is *you* who doesn't have a clue. But Henry Kissinger is right, and *you* are wrong: it is *precisely* our *existence* which is being challenged, and *not* our policies: We could toss Israel to the dogs in an attempt to appease the opposition -- Czechoslovakia *redux* -- and there would be no decline in the frenzied hatred directed at the West, quite the contrary.

Let me explain something to you: When someone attacks you, you must defend and protect yourself. That's how it is with all organisms. That's how it has been throughout history. That's how it was in 1941. It's really quite simple. Most people understand this, but for some reason many intellectuals don't.

You are confused, and you are afraid. You are somewhat afraid of the terrorists and the violence coming to America, but you are especially afraid to speak the truth with clarity and simplicity, because that truth is a manly truth, a simple and courageous truth, a truth which says that sometimes, there is no alternative but to fight, to suffer, and to take risks. It is a truth which many members of our cultural elite are still unable to accept.

#### 8. Why do a Considerable Number of Terrorists and Deranged Leaders Hail from the Middle East?

*This was another one of the questions I was asked by Mary Massaro. My answer, below, is*

published in her book *Beyond the Pale* (Diogenes, 2003).

Now *that's* the million dollar question -- since September 11. Let's first dispose of the pious politically correct clichés: We shouldn't harbor racist attitudes towards Middle Easterners, most Middle Easterners are upstanding citizens, racial profiling is wrong, etc.

With that said, there is unquestionably a growing tension between the West and the Islamic world. It is fashionable to attribute this to the West's imperialistic behavior (we are there just for the oil; the US supports Israel, which oppresses Palestine, etc.). In my view, however, we could toss Israel to the Arabs just so as to appease them, and yet the hatred would persist. Why? Because there is a hateful militancy that manifests itself not only in increasing terrorism, but also in the widespread popularity of the likes of Osama Bin Laden among hundreds of millions of Muslims. There are profound cultural and religious differences between the West and the Islamic world, and there is much more conflict to come.

Xenophobia -- the dislike of foreign cultures -- is a universal tendency. Nonetheless, in places like Iran, among the Taliban and in many other parts of the Muslim world, it has become feverish. This is (1) a reaction to the growing westernization of the world, which is threatening to those cultures, and (2) the product of decades of propaganda by some of the media and the intellectual and cultural elites in those countries -- not unlike the job done on the German people by Hitler's propaganda machine. In other words, many Arab minds have been poisoned - especially among the lowest strata, where the resentment is greatest and easiest to exploit (Massaro, 2003: 4-5).

#### 9. A Case of Prestidigitation: 9-11 Was Not Really an Attack on America. It Was an Attack BY America upon the World

*On September 11, 2006, America commemorated the five-year memory of 9-11. Much had changed in those five years. Most public opinion - especially overseas - had quite simply turned into the 180 degree opposite of how it felt in 2001. No two ways about it: From being the victim five years earlier, America was now seen by 80% to 90% of the world as the aggressor. I found this stunning, and I wrote an article for the Sacramento Bee on that day. They didn't print it, no doubt because they, too, had undergone this incredible metamorphosis.*

An amazing reversal has taken place in the world. Five years ago today, America suffered the greatest act of unprovoked terrorism in history. Three thousand innocent victims were incinerated, the world's largest office complex and part of the Pentagon were destroyed. This horrific aggression was committed by the representatives of a large America-hating Muslim population that may not comprise all Muslims but certainly includes many millions of sympathizers.

For a few days or weeks there was, as William Bennett said, a brief moment of moral clarity. Most Americans knew who the bad guys were and who the victims were. As to the rest of the world, many people overseas briefly expressed compassion for America. French President Chirac said, "we are all Americans today."

Then what happened?

Five years later, a majority of the world, including many Americans, have made a 180 degree about face. The problem has been radically redefined into, basically, its *opposite*:

The problem is *not* Islamo-fascism. It is American hegemonism. The problem is not terrorist

aggression against America. It is American support of Zionism, American failure to understand Muslim culture, American racism, American failure to address economic conditions in the Middle East. The American government is doing *everything* wrong. It is fighting (and losing) an ill-advised and illegal war; it is - along with its evil partner Israel - killing innocent Muslim families; it is suppressing our civil liberties. The imperial Bush administration is trying to establish world domination.

Don't be mistaken: much of the criticism claims to be about *means*, i.e. Iraq was the wrong country to attack, bombs and bullets can't defeat terrorism (*Sacramento Bee*, September 11, 2006), etc. But this obfuscates the true sentiment of most critics, both domestic and foreign, which is that there should not *be* an aggressive military war on terrorism at all.

It is as if an act of prestidigitation had occurred. One of the greatest illusionist acts in history occurred on 9/11: What we all *saw* on our TV screens was the incineration of 3000 innocent Americans in one fell swoop. But - just like the woman whom we see being sawed in half in a wooden box, only to jump out safe and sound after the illusionist is done with his trick - what we saw was merely an *illusion*: In reality, 9/11 was the excuse for a series of war-like, imperialistic and Zionistic acts of aggression by the American government against innocent Muslim victims.

How on earth could such a reversal have happened? How is it possible that America transmorphed from being tragically victimized five years ago, to a widely despised entity today?

One hears interviews with Americans overseas, telling us that America has squandered the good will it enjoyed immediately after 9/11. One hears that most Bulgarians, Brazilians, Koreans, or whoever, felt much sympathy for us right after 9/11, but feel nothing but antipathy for us and our government today.

Domestically, you see bumper stickers such as "Grandmothers for Peace; Bring the troops home now; Impeach Bush." One third of the American people subscribes to the conspiracy theory that 9/11 was concocted by Bush/the CIA/Cheney/Rusmfeld/Jews, take your pick, so as to forward American world domination.

This is astounding! It is as if an act of prestidigitation had occurred. As Dutch columnist Mark Traag wrote recently, one of the greatest illusionist acts in history occurred on 9/11: What we all *saw* on our TV screens was the incineration of 3000 innocent Americans in one fell swoop. But - just like the woman whom we see being sawed in half in a wooden box, only to jump out safe and sound after the illusionist is done with his trick - what we saw was merely an *illusion*: In reality, 9/11 was the excuse for a series of war-like, imperialistic and Zionistic acts of aggression by the American government against innocent Muslim victims.

Imagine if public opinion had reversed itself in this manner after Pearl Harbor. Japan would have attacked us, we would have begun the slow and bloody process of retaliation, and two or three years later the *world* - including a majority of domestic public opinion - would be convinced that America is conducting an evil and misguided jihad!

Or imagine if “analysts” had said in 1939 what they say in a September 11, 2006 *Sacramento Bee* article: Bombs and bullets won’t win the war. They only contribute to more terrorism. Instead, we must win the hearts and minds of those people. Imagine if our reasoning had been similar regarding the Nazis: Bombs and bullets will only make Hitler angrier. We must win the hearts and minds of the Nazis.

Yes, there was much sympathy for America the day after 9/11. That sentiment was *pity*. The fact that it has dissipated is no great loss, if that is the price America had to pay for defending itself. What Golda Meir said about Jews is applicable to us: “The world loves us when we die; but we prefer to live.”

#### 43. ISRAEL; JEWS; ANTI-SEMITISM; HOLOCAUST

##### 1. My Family and Judaism.

*I don't know if I am Jewish or not. My mother is. Her entire family was. But they converted to Catholicism. To Hitler and Eichmann, this didn't make any difference. My grandparents were still forced into the Budapest ghetto and prepared for deportation to Auschwitz. But my mother married a gentile, and this was one of the things which helped us survive the war and the Holocaust. But I didn't grow up Jewish, and I know little about Jewish culture and Jewish religion. On the other hand, my gentile father made heroic contributions to the saving of Jews during the war.*

*In early 2000, the New York Review of Books published an article about the Holocaust. I used the occasion to write to them (on March 3) and to document my parents' courageous efforts on behalf of Jews during the war. As usual, they pretty much ignored me. I reproduce my letter here to clarify two things:*

*(1) It is true that my parents risked their lives to save Jews. This is not one of those fabrications that came out so often after the war, when suddenly half the European population claimed that they had helped Jews and fought in the Resistance: **in 1998, My parents were granted the award of the Righteous Among Nations by Yad Vashem, Israel's national Holocaust Memorial.***

*(2) The letter establishes my semi-Jewish identity, and my undying pro-Jewish and pro-Israel sympathy.*

At the risk of being once again ignored by your elite publication -- after all, this originates in the low-prestige hinterlands -- let me react to Eva Hoffman's review of Novick's *The Holocaust in American Life*:

Novick's book and Hoffman's review are on the mark regarding the political and psychological uses of the Holocaust by American Jews. The issue seems to be one of *identity*. To put it vulgarly: who is “truly” a victim? Who has a “right to the memories” -- indeed, who is “truly” Jewish? The case of my family may shed light on this -- marginal European Jews who were nevertheless involved in the Holocaust in ways unimaginable to most American Jews:

I am a partial-Jewish-immigrant-from-Hungary (what a mess!), born in Budapest in 1941 to a Jewish mother and a gentile father. Although my mother's parents had converted to Catholicism before the war, they and the rest of the family on that side were nevertheless, in 1944, corralled in the Pest ghetto, yellow star and all, ready for deportation and extermination. Luckily, the war ended and most of them survived.

At the same time, my parents (both graphic artists) were heavily involved in the resistance, producing false certificates for Jews and engaging in other acts of bravery that saved many Jews. A little over a year ago, they were both (in my father's case, posthumously) granted the *award of the Righteous Among Nations* by Yad Vashem, Israel's national Holocaust Memorial, where their names now appear on the Wall of Honor. This recognition occurred at a ceremony at the Israeli embassy in London on November 1, 1998.

Thus, my mother belongs to that odd category of people who were both victims and victims' helpers. With its recent award, the government of Israel classifies her -- albeit with gratitude -- as one of "them" (an outsider) rather than one of "us."

Whatever identity my mother and the rest of my family may claim or receive validation for, it is important to remember that identity claims must be based on memories rooted in real experiences. They should not be constructed *ex post facto*, when the political climate favors a particular ideological trend or ethnic identification.

## 2. Let's Be Fair to the Palestinians

*Curiously, one of my earliest letters-to-the-editor was pro-Palestinian. It was the following brief piece, printed in The Nation on November 2, 1970. I guess I was still somewhat of a revolutionary back then, and my sympathies were still with groups such as the PLO. I also felt that the Israelis, for whom I generally harbored great sympathy, had crossed the line on this occasion.*

As a long-time subscriber *The Nation*, I have never before disagreed with your editorials to the point of writing to you. This time, however, you seem to have lost some of your otherwise fine objectivity. The editorial I am referring to is "Faint Hope" (Sept. 28), dealing with the Middle East crisis.

The kidnapping of civilians is indeed, as you point out, a dirty business. But why distinguish between the commandos' piracy and the Israelis' counter-seizure of Palestinian hostages? Why attempt to quantify evil by pointing out that Israel, at least, seized Palestinians rather than neutral citizens? (The fact that Israel released its hostages almost immediately is equally irrelevant). Why apply the term "defensive" to Israel's act? What is offensive and what is defensive in the Middle East can no longer be established, after twenty-five years of hostilities. I hope that *The Nation* maintains its traditional position, which has in the past always included sympathy and compassion for the wretched of the earth, including Arab refugees (*The Nation*, Nov. 2, 1970).

## 3. The 1973 Yom Kippur War

*But in general, I was far more concerned about the mortal peril in which Israel existed. When a dozen Arab countries once again ganged up on Israel in 1973 and started the Yom Kippur war, I was highly agitated. I feared for Israel's total destruction. It faced four combatant countries - Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Iraq, with a combined population forty (!) times larger. In addition, half a dozen other Arab countries were helping out with military aid, and so was the entire Soviet block, including the USSR and even North Korea. How could tiny Israel, with its 3 million people, possibly survive? On October 19, 1973, I wrote this long, somewhat rambling and highly pro-Israel article. I submitted it to both the Sacramento Bee and the Sacramento Union, but neither of them printed it. Was it because they didn't like Jews, or because the article wasn't great? I don't know. At least it was passionate.*

*I then circulated the article among my colleagues on campus, and this earned me a great deal of animosity. Now there, it was definitely due to the fact that many of these people are closet anti-Semites.*

The media-and public opinion are deplorably noncommittal over the Middle East war. In fact, the widespread tendency is to bend over backwards and to show compassion for the Arab standpoint. Indeed, the *Bee* has printed cartoons deploring Israeli bombing of arab civilian centers (October 8) without decrying Syrian rocketing of Israeli kibbutzim; it has printed letters sympathetic to the Arabs (for example October 15) not counterbalanced by pro-Israeli expressions. The fact that the war was started by the Arabs is generally condoned, as it is argued that they merely seek redress of earlier wrongs. As a perennial letter writer, feel compelled to provide the vigorous advocacy needed by the Jews at this time:

The Jewish *state* is a 25 year old dream conceived and carried out in response to the horrors of genocide and anti-Semitism that had been the age-old fate of that ethnicity. Israel's birth created some serious problems, most of all the victimization of about half a million Palestinians. Now, for the fourth time since 1948, nearly a dozen nations, related only by virtue of some contrived cultural factor, gang up on struggling country of 3 million.

While the Arabs' grievances are not without merit, we should begin to view their actions in proper perspective: for years now, the plight of the Palestinians and so-called Israeli imperialism have been the justification for international terrorism, air piracy, murder of innocent diplomats, athletes and civilians, sabotage, gangsterism, blackmail through so-called oil diplomacy, large-scale international wars, disruption of world economy, the threat of World War III and the collapse of the world order itself. Arab leaders can be quoted saying, in sick desperation, that they will hope to drag us all in.

So there are 500,000 Palestinian refugees (and, admittedly, a million or so second-class citizens within the confines of Israel proper). Does this warrant undying wrath, resentment and bloodshed? Does it warrant decades of violence? Does it warrant the destruction of the highly successful experiment that Israel is? The current war's objective is said to be the restoration of the pre-1967 boundaries, but the ultimate goal of course remains the destruction of Israel. If the Arab cause justifies any actions, if the revolutionary rhetoric which passes for Marxism applies to that situation, if the entire world order must be brought down, or at least made to shake, to redress injustice in that part of the world, then what about the 17 million blacks living under the yoke of apartheid? What about the 3 million refugees created by the Vietnamese war? What about the uncounted millions of dead and moribund displaced persons created by the successive Indian-Pakistani wars? What about the millions of Hungarian, Polish, German, Czech and other European refugees fleeing Soviet totalitarianism? And what about the second-class citizens found everywhere, for example the French Algerians and the U.S. minorities? When all these far more numerous victims of history react with the same pathological rage and murderous resentment as the leaders of the Palestinian Liberation Movement and the other Arab leaders, and in addition receive the moral support of a majority of world public opinion, plus active military support from governments that make perfidy and opportunism their national policy, that is when we will have reached hell on earth.

How can we, looking back over 25 years of Middle Eastern history, fail to see that the sole objective of one camp has been the destruction of the other, whereas the other side's only goal has been national survival, admittedly through such consolidations as the creation of a buffer zone in

the Sinai? Can the Arab world realistically fear further Israeli expansion? Of course not! It is Israel which has been and continues to be under siege. Furthermore, most of the areas in contention have only two options: productive development under Israel, or remaining arid wastelands under nominal Arab rule.

I do not believe that Israel, Jews and international Zionism represent the monstrous threat they are depicted to be. In fact, while Israel has, of necessity, developed into a garrison state, it remains surprisingly benevolent, humanitarian and democratic - something which cannot be said of other societies under similar economic, political and military duress.

The disease of our time is that we are no longer willing or able to make moral judgments. Expediency has become the ubiquitous standard for all behavior. The pseudo-Marxian rhetoric of third world liberation has become so vociferous that even the most rational minds become intimidated. Thus nothing good is heard, these days, about a country like Israel and American foreign policy. All arguments are framed into the conceptual context of neo-colonialism. The dogma, since World War Two, has been that the West oppresses and exploits the Third World and that Israel spearheads this effort.

But where are the facts? Where is the evidence? Where is the proof of a *causal* link between Western affluence and Third World poverty? Of neglect and indifference we may be guilty. But has our government *actively* contributed to the hunger of India and the poverty of Africa? Have the multinationals, perhaps? of course not! Our meddling with the world and our neo-colonial adventures have been unprofitable and burdensome to *us*! While we do extract some wealth from such areas as Latin America, I would venture to say that 90% of our development has had nothing to do with our alleged exploitation of third world resources. Even today, only 4% of our oil is imported from the Middle East. Similarly, is the sorry state of the Arab world the *result* of Israel's advanced presence? if it is, that is only because the desperate and corrupt leaders of that part of the world have been unwilling to channel their enormous oil revenues into anything but weapons and luxury items. The truth is that differential rates of development have always characterized the world map. To view this complex world as an interrelated system in which all events and conditions reflect international capitalism or Pax Americana is as absurd as to attribute the fall of the Roman Empire to the erection of the Chinese wall.

We live in the age of resentment. Contemporary international relations are based on one motto and one motto only: "If I can't have it, you can't either." The United Nations have become the symbol of this sorry principle. There, we find ourselves increasingly retrenched in our lonely affluence; the Third World members use the institution as a forum to voice their admittedly serious - and I fear, insoluble - problems; and then we have the opportunists; France, guilty of perhaps greater genocide than any other colonial power, now flirting with the wretched nations of the earth while at the same time selling, per capita, more weapons to them than any other nation on the globe; Russia, whose contributions to world civilization include the invention of the Pogrom, fueling the Middle East fire and thereby bringing its foreign policy into harmony with its domestic anti-Semitism.

Having just enjoyed six months of peace since the conclusion of the Vietnam disaster, we are obviously reluctant to face a new involvement. Yet not all involvements are bad. It is one of America's great redeeming qualities that its foreign policy has not been dictated by expediency alone. Unlike the Soviets, we have not lost our soul altogether, yet. So far, we seem to be among the few countries, along with such traditional islands of sanity as the Netherlands, to realize the moral

imperative of safeguarding Jewish survival. Although lonely and unpopular, this is the proper posture. Yet I fear that we, too, are going to cave in under the pressure of economic, political and ideological exigencies.

We could, of course, tell Israel that we are morally on their side but politically, alas, neutral as we need the Arab oil. However, it is a basic law of sociology that people will develop legitimating ideologies for their actions. What is required, then, is a system of ideas that defines the Jew, the Zionist, the State of Israel, as the villain. Of course, it takes some doing to define as the villain a group half of whose membership was annihilated only thirty years ago. It is also somewhat difficult to demonstrate that 3 million people are victimizing 120 million. But the task is not insurmountable, particularly as many of the building blocks of the new anti-Semitism can be found in the various liberation rhetorics.

Thus we have lately been hearing about the Jew who exploits the ghetto, the wealthy Jew and his friends who control congress and influence our imperialistic foreign policy (cf. *SacramentoBee* letter of October 15), the evils of international Zionism. There is also a resurgence of cruder clichés: Kissinger is shrewd (like all Jews), Jews have a lot of money, etc. To those of us who experienced recent European history, this is all, of course, *deja vu*. How can we forget that it all began with silly ethnic stereotypes and ended at Auschwitz and Buchenwald? In a different vein, how can we fail to draw analogies between Israel's lonely struggle for survival and the comparable plight of Czechs, Serbs, or Spanish Republicans, all groups which, in an earlier era, fought for an autonomy and sovereignty to which they had a moral right, yet ended up being destroyed or swallowed by their far more powerful opponents because the western democracies opted for a fearful hands-off policy and thus failed to live up to their responsibilities?

So once again the Jewish question is upon us. Note the familiar ring. Remember *Die Juden Frage*. Do we have evidence that Jews exploit ghettos more than do, say, Italian Americans? Or that they exert greater influence upon foreign policy than German or Irish Americans (remember, Kissinger is Jewish, but Nixon is Irish, and his cabal of advisers - Ehrlichman, Haldeman - are German-Americans). Are Jews more moneyed than Scandinavian Americans? Where are the facts? Where is the proof? And granting that Jews may be over-represented in some areas, so what? Different subcultures have different areas of expertise. Must we always resent Jews for their alleged over representation in certain occupations? Do we hear complaints about the fact that 40% of the NFL and 50% of the NBA is black?

Sadly, the honeymoon between Jews and public opinion may now be over. The extermination of 6 million Jews created some guilt and bought Jews 25 years of sympathy. Now, we move back to the historically more customary situation: Majorities have, in the face of insoluble problems, always taken their feelings out on vulnerable minorities. Scape goating is a common tension reduction strategy. Jews have often provided an easily identifiable and therefore convenient target for that purpose. No one will ever be able to demonstrate that the successive Middle Eastern wars and the possible obliteration of Israel will have been a necessary prerequisite for the solution of Arab problems. Yet there is in many minds today a perverted revolutionary logic which dictates destruction - presumably as a prerequisite for the establishment of some kind of justice. This ideology of desperation is spreading to these shores, of course, as ever fewer among us are ready to bemoan the collapse of existing institutions.

if Israel must be the next sacrifice in the name of third world liberation, so be it. But at least,

let us be aware of what is happening. Let us understand the hypocrisy of those who indict American intervention in Vietnam but condone Soviet and North Korean intervention in Israel. Let us see through the arguments of those who decry Israel's 1967 campaign but approve of the 1973 Arab offensive. Let us dismiss the opportunistic and *ad hoc* distinction between wars of liberation and wars of imperialism.

A majority of the world's countries have somehow developed a contorted perspective which now permits them to view their support of the Arab goliath as actually a courageous and progressive show of solidarity with a victimized underdog. It is no coincidence that Eastern European governments are more sympathetic to the plight of the Palestinians than ours: 50% of their oil comes from the Middle East! If we, too, finally join the wolfpack currently called United Nations, let us not try to give moral justification to an unjustifiable decision. Let us admit that we did it for the oil.

#### 4. Is Israel a Military Giant?

*My fears were unfounded. Israel won the Yom Kippur. This was due to its courage, its resourcefulness, its vast military superiority and, most of all, to the Nixon-Kissinger administration's admirable support.*

*But Israel never gets a break. It has remained a country under siege, facing periodic wars with its neighbors, as it did again in 2006, and suffering frequent Intifadahs, in which suicide bombers kill dozens of civilians indiscriminately, including pregnant women and babies.*

*But world public opinion has little sympathy for Israel. The media often portray Israel as a Goliath, and its Arab enemies as David. Much of the public buys this, because most people are ignorant of even the simplest geographical and demographic facts. Most people don't know that Israel's population is less than half of Los Angeles. Or that its territory is that of a mid-sized county in California. And that it faces an Arab world with a population and an area larger than the United States.*

*Another mythology is that Israel is a military giant. I have come across articles and letters which call Israel the fourth largest military force in the world (!) Examples of this include a 2002 article in the New York Review of Books by Tim Judah, and faculty and administrative memos at Cal State, in preparation for a 2002 "teach-in."*

*I always knew that these assertions were absurd, but I wanted to get some precise facts, so on May 5, 2002, I consulted the Statistical Abstracts of the U.S. and here is what I found:*

Table I: Total Size of Armed Forces, Countries Ranked 2002:

Country	number of men
1. China	2.6 million
2. U.S.	1.53 million
3. Russia	1.3 million
4. India	1.26 million
5. N. Korea	1.1 million
6. Turkey	.82 million
7. S. Korea	.67 million
8. Vietnam	.65 million
9. Pakistan	.61 million
10. Iran	.58 million
11. France	.48 million
13. Egypt	.43 million
14. Italy	.42 million
15. Iraq	.4 million
16. Taiwan	.4 million
17. Germany	.34 million
19. Syria	.32 million
20. Brazil	.3 million
22. Indonesia	.28 million
23. Mexico	.25 million
24. Japan	.25 million
25. Poland	.23 million
26. United K.	.22 million
27. Greece	.21 million
29. Israel	.18 million

True, on a per capita basis, Israel may have the highest rate of conscription in the world (33.4 per 1,000, vs, 5.7 in the US), Obviously, the small country's survival depends on this. The

size of Israel's armed forces is *one eleventh* of that of its combined Arab neighbors (185,000 vs. 2 million men). Those countries also outnumber Israel 4 to 10 times in numbers of tanks, fighter jets and all other categories of armaments. Throughout the Cold War, the military aid from the US to Israel was more than matched by Soviet military aid to Egypt, Syria, Iraq and other Arab States.

### 5. The 2006 Israeli-Lebanese War: Fair Media Coverage?

*In 2006, Israel waged another war - this one against the Hetzbollah in Lebanon. Once again, I was concerned with the world's lack of sympathy for Israel, as evidenced by the unbalanced media coverage. Here is what I wrote about this on August 1. The Sacramento Bee, to whom I sent the letter, did not print it.*

This is in response to your August 1 article (page A1) about the continuing bloodbath in Lebanon:

I am not the first person to remind you of an obvious aspect of this war, namely the one-sided focus of world public opinion upon the suffering of the Lebanese. Where are the articles and vivid pictures of the sixty dead Israelis, the rubble and bombed buildings in Haifa and other Israeli cities, the hundreds of thousands of Israelis taking refuge in bomb shelters for three weeks already?

True, ten times more Lebanese than Israelis are dying. However, this imbalance is not for lack of effort to kill Jews. While the Israelis are making at least some effort to avoid civilian casualties, the Hetzbollah is deliberately aiming its hundreds of rockets towards Israel's civilian population.

If the side that kills the most people is the bad guy by definition, then America was much more evil than the Nazis were during World War Two, which of course is nonsense. The reason that more Lebanese than Israelis are dying is that Hetzbollah is militarily not skilled enough to kill as many Jews as it desires.

Here are three pertinent quotes for you:

“The world loves us when we die. But we prefer to live.”

*Golda Meir, 1970*

“If Israel were to disarm tomorrow, there would be another Holocaust. If Israel's enemies were to disarm tomorrow, there would be peace in the Middle East.”

*Bill 'O'Reilly, 2006*

“Israel *tries* to avoid civilian casualties. It drops leaflets urging the population to leave before bombing. Hetzbollah deliberately and indiscriminately aims for civilians. There is no moral equivalency here.”

*Senator John McCain, 2006*

### 6. What's the Big Deal About the Holocaust?

*During the eighties, there were already those who began to ask why everybody made such a big deal about the Jewish Holocaust. I published the following critique of this in the May, 1985 issue of the Sacramento Forum.*

I write regarding the recent furor over President Reagan's visit to the German cemetery at Bitburg. We saw Elie Wiesel plead with the President on national television not to do it. Jews - like me - also felt that his initial decision to bypass a concentration camp site during his German visit was deplorable. The final compromise consists of visits to both a German and a Jewish war memorial. This is meant to placate both our German ally and the Jewish community. Fine.

While this should be the end of the story, most parties refuse to let it die. The liberal media are all too eager to exploit the incident in order to drive more nails into Reagan's coffin. Editorialists like Peter Schrag (*Sacramento Bee*, April 24) continue to dwell on Reagan's insensitivity, his stupidity, his lack of historical awareness, etc. This has more to do with partisan politics than true moral outrage.

Then, there are those who, on the other side, are engaging in the most perverted sort of historical revisionism. The wacko "historians" and others who - more "moderately" - feel that it is time to put the holocaust "in perspective", which means something like this: So what's the big deal about the holocaust? True, a substantial number of jews died, but then, it was war, and the same thing has happened to Armenians, gypsies, Slavs, Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians, kulaks, etc., not to mention American Indians and American and South African blacks. Then, too, massive genocide is occurring at the present in such places as Cambodia, Afghanistan and Ethiopia.

**Should one Save up one's Outrage?** What is happening here is that several forces are converging to debunk the importance of the Jewish holocaust. The revisionism is becoming fashionable both on the Left and on the Right. In East Germany and elsewhere behind the Iron Curtain, World War Two commemorations rarely emphasize the Jewish holocaust anymore; black racist Farrakhan and the Palestinians question the very occurrence of the holocaust, or they minimize its magnitude. A month or so ago on the Phil Donahue show, Farrakhan exulted to a delighted all-white audience: "If blacks had been able to tell their story as effectively as jews, even a brass monkey would cry."

And then there are the anti-communists on the right who also push this kind of revisionism. Thus columnist Joseph Sobran writes that, "Hitler was not the worst...; (it is) misleading to speak of Hitler's crimes as "the" Holocaust because this has been a century of (many) holocausts." (*Washington Times*, April 23).

It may be that the extermination of nearly half of the world's Jews has been milked for all its sympathy value, and that forty years later, the world is ready to "transcend" the event, read - relativize, trivialize, even perhaps forget about it. If so, there is truly no hope for mankind.

For make no mistake about it: True, it is important to be aware of and to combat contemporary genocide, most of which is occurring at the hands of communists. Indeed, nothing is more important. However, when this thrust is combined with a deliberate debunking of the Jewish holocaust, then clearly there is hidden agenda. The code words used by both the anti-communists and the radical Left are revealing: They speak of the "Jewish lobby" controlling US foreign policy, the "Jews controlling the media and American public opinion," "international Zionism" (read: Jewish Plutocracy), etc. Surely a grim *deja-vu* revealing nothing but vulgar, old-fashioned anti-Semitism.

What is it about human nature that requires whipping boys? Why is it impossible to agree that both blacks and Jews have been horribly victimized? Why can't we agree that both the Gulag and Dachau must forever remain etched in our consciousness as monstrous monuments to man's inhumanity to man? Must we deny the titanic monstrosity of Hitler's deeds in order to focus on

Stalin's? Why must the struggle against genocide in Southeast Asia, South Africa and Afghanistan be accompanied by a debunking of the Jewish holocaust?

To argue, as increasing numbers of anti-communists do, that our failure to recognize communist atrocities in the world is somehow caused by our excessive preoccupation with the past sins of fascism is perverse. They are saying: stop talking about the Jewish Holocaust and start talking about the Gulag. This is absurd, as Solzhenitsyn would be first to agree. Isn't it obvious that Jews, kulaks, Latvians, Afghans and boat people are all soul brothers? The liberals' use of the commemoration flap is transparently phony. The Jewish extremists who cannot tolerate Reagan's combined visits to both the German and the Jewish memorial are arrogant. As a Hungarian Jew who lost relatives to the Nazis, I disagree with Elie Wiesel's intransigence.

I see grave danger in the growing impatience with what many now see as an excessive "harping" on the Jewish Holocaust. Insofar as this revisionism is motivated by a renewed resentment toward Jews - their over representation in many professions, their excellence in academic fields, their military successes in the five Arab-Israeli wars - it is nothing more than old-fashioned anti-Semitism. There is much of this going on at the U.N., where Israel is truly a pariah nation, protected from expulsion only by the courageous US veto. And of course this is also the motivation of the fake neo-Nazi historians and the other racist hate-mongers among us.

**Bitburg and Genocide:** As to those who tell us that it is time to "transcend" the Jewish holocaust, to stop treating it as something special and to start facing the fact that communists have committed and continue to commit much worse crimes, and that this is the real problem to be faced today, this is stupid. We at the *Sacramento Forum* do not want to choose between genocidal fascism or communism. The Farrakhans, Khadafis, Khomeinis, Red Army Faction and PLO types, are fascists or communists - take your pick, it makes no difference. Red racism and black racism are the same.

You do not refocus on the Gulag from an excessive focus on Auschwitz. The two go hand in hand. It is only by continuing to "harp" on the Jewish Holocaust that we remain at least somewhat vigilant and alert to presently ongoing genocide. One does not save one's moral outrage, as if it were a finite zero-sum quantity, reducing one's anger at Hitler so as to better condemn Pol Pot or the Soviets in Afghanistan. It is stupid for other minorities which have suffered genocide (for example Armenians or Croats) to go around asking, in effect, to be "let in" on the Jewish sympathy stock, saying, "Give less to the Jews, more to us. It sounds like some asinine jealousy: "Look how lucky those Jews are: everybody cries for them, but what about us?" Well, the more we keep up our outrage about the Holocaust, the more we are likely to recognize the plight of other minorities, not less!

One of the great absurdities of our age is the tendency to think of all human relationships as zero-sum situations. Thus the socialist argues that in order to elevate the poor one must lower the rich, not understanding that it is by stimulating capitalism that all benefit. It is the same way with love, compassion, hatred. Must I love my mother less in order to love my wife and daughters more? Of course not. Love, entrepreneurship, good, evil are not finite - they are contagious. The more of it there is here, the more there. This is how it is with our outrage about genocide.

One does not let bygones be bygones so as to better face contemporary atrocities. On the contrary. Those who are now beginning to debunk the Jewish Holocaust are asking us, in effect, to desensitize ourselves against this major and vividly documented case of genocide. Far from enabling us to then better confront Soviet and other contemporary atrocities, such a process of desensitization would merely carry over into generalized indifference. In effect, those who are expressing impatience with the harping on the Jewish Holocaust are saying: leave us alone, don't

bother us with any bad news about genocide.

To say that it is time to move on because the Holocaust is now forty years old and most of its survivors are gone is as absurd as to say that we must cease dwelling on the crucifixion of Jesus, or to relativize that event, since after all many others died similarly cruel deaths at the hands of Roman and other oppressors. Like the crucifixion, the Holocaust will forever remain a centerpiece of Judeo-Christian history. It is *the* prototype of the modern, technocratic, systematic, cold-blooded, efficient, dehumanized mass genocide. This is so because of its magnitude, because of the historical context in which it happened, because it is so vividly documented and thus engraved in the consciousness of the West. No amount of revisionism is going to undo that. It cannot be cut down to size by saying that it is "merely" one of many such atrocities. It is good that so much has been made of it since 1945. To attribute that to the excessive Jewish influence on the American mass media is perverse. The importance of the Jewish holocaust cannot be exaggerated (*Sacramento Forum*, May 1985).

### 7. Did the Holocaust Really Happen?

*By the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there were many Holocaust deniers. Some of them were British, German and Austrian "historians," some were anti-Semitic Muslim politicians, for example Iran's firebrand President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. On December 12, 2006, I sent the following letter to the Sacramento Bee to denounce this trend (although I do not favor the German policy of imprisoning Holocaust deniers). The Bee did not print my letter, probably because they weren't intelligent enough to pick up the sarcasm.*

This is in reaction to your December 12 article "Holocaust 'debated' in Iran": I want to thank Iranian President Ahmadinejad for hosting a holocaust conference attended by such luminaries as the KKK's David Duke, and thereby finally opening our eyes to the truth.

Let me add that additional historical corrections are also in order: There is also evidence to suggest that (1) the crusades, (2) slavery, (3) the Armenian genocide, (4) Pearl Harbor and (5) the 9-11 attack never took place. All these myths were generated by Western pseudo-historians in order to justify world Judeo-European-American supremacy. For example, the 9-11 incident was concocted by the Zionist lobby.

Sincerely, Tom Kando

(P.S. for the less astute reader: this letter is what is called sarcasm, i.e. it says the opposite of what is really meant.

### 8. Is the World Anti-Semitic, or only Anti-Zionist?

*At Cal State, as elsewhere, the Palestinian-Arab-Muslim presence is much more conspicuous than that of Jews. The former group holds many meetings, organizes many events, and it expresses its political opinions often and forcefully. On the other hand, Jewish students and faculty members are largely silent and invisible. They rarely act as an organized ethnic or political group.*

*Once in while, though, an organized Jewish response is called for. There are occasional anti-Semitic incidents. A November 2003 Hillel meeting was invaded by Muslim students. There*

was physical intimidation and minor “body contact.” A year earlier, an art exhibit featured anti-Semitic work. Sometimes, one finds Anti-Semitic vandalism in bathrooms, on walls and on public signs. And when a major international conflict erupts, like the 2006 Israeli-Lebanese war, the campus political temperature rises, and this has potentially adverse consequences for Jewish students and faculty. That is why the Cal State Hillel held a conference on anti-Semitism in the Spring of 2003. My participation consisted of the following speech, which I gave on May 8. I later edited it a bit.

The current violence between Israelis and Palestinians is dividing world public opinion - with the Palestinian sympathizers enjoying the edge at the moment, although there also remains significant support for Israel. The facts are known to anyone who has followed the news and who knows the rudiments of 20th century history. They do not need to be rehashed in great detail: The State of Israel has existed for 54 years. Most of the Western world has been supportive of Israel’s creation and existence, and much of this support has been part of a (belated) guilt reaction to the Holocaust. At the same time, Israel’s creation and existence have caused great Palestinian suffering, and most of the Arab world is hostile to Israel.

Since its creation in 1948, Israel has lived in virtual chronic conflict with the Arab world. This has flared up into full-scale wars on half a dozen occasions, including the initial war for Israeli independence in 1948-9, the 1956 “Suez” war, the 1967 war, the 1973 “Yom Kippur” War and the current Intifadah, which has been raging and escalating since 2000. In addition, throughout the past half century, Israel has been ceaselessly involved in violent “low-level” conflict with Arabs -- including terrorist attacks upon its civilian population, shelling from adjacent countries, military reprisals, occupations of portions of Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and other territories adjacent to Israel.

Israel is under 8,000 square miles in size. That’s roughly four times the size of Sacramento County. Its population is under 6 million, i.e. fewer than that of the San Francisco Bay area. At its neck the country is less than 10 miles wide. The Arab states that surround it or are in close proximity to it (Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Syria and the various Gulf States) possess a population and an area close to those of the United States, i.e. fifty times those of Israel.

Due to its technological superiority, Israel has thus far come out on top in its wars against its neighbors. Basically, the conflict has been one of (1) technological advantage vs. (2) astronomical demographic disadvantage. In addition, a third factor plays a major role: (3) international support.

It is this third factor -- the attitudes of the international community and the propaganda war - - which I want to briefly discuss. One thing that distinguishes the current chapter of violence from earlier ones is the changing attitude of the world beyond the Arab world. Clearly, the Western World appears to have become more critical and less supportive of Israel. Here are four of the themes which often reoccur in the current propaganda battle:

1) The conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, or Arabs in general, is often described as David vs. Goliath -- Israel being Goliath. Surely the geographical and demographic facts I just mentioned show how absurd this is. *It is Israel itself which represents David.* Its future is in jeopardy, given the demographic situation.

2) Many say that Israel’s military successes are due to American support. However, American aid to Israel’s neighbors is at least as generous -- aid to Egypt alone amounts to about the same as that to Israel.

3) The current violence and deadlock are primarily the result of Israeli intransigence. In fact, Israel long ago (at meetings in Camp David, Madrid and Oslo, among others) offered to give up 95% of the occupied territories, to dismantle its settlements there, and to establish a Palestinian capital in East Jerusalem.

By 2005, Ariel Sharon had unilaterally withdrawn from Gaza without any specific Palestinian *quid pro quo*. This statesmanlike act was completed just before Sharon was incapacitated by a near-fatal stroke. It did little to appease the virulent anti-Zionists of the world. They just moved on to the next demands on their list: Israel's total withdrawal from the West Bank, and the Palestinians's right of return.

4) Israel's military activities kill many innocent Palestinians and its invasion of the West Bank is a particularly heinous act of aggression and imperialism. In fact, this "invasion" was preceded by a year-and-a-half of unrelenting terrorism which killed hundreds of Israeli civilians.

True, Israel's retaliation against the terrorists has taken a very heavy toll on Palestinian civilians. However, no matter how much I detest the Orwellian euphemism "collateral damage," it remains a fact that every single Palestinian casualty has been precisely that: In other words, at no time have Israelis deliberately targeted mothers, pregnant women, babies, high-school children, supermarket shoppers, disco dancers, movie theater visitors, hotel customers, teachers, school busses. But these are precisely the victims of the suicide bombers who, before their final attacks, spend weeks meticulously filling their bombs with nails, razors and other content aimed at inflicting maximum pain, horror and suffering. Are there words to describe such a mentality? I cannot find them. Can one understand the warped justification for 14-year old suicide-terrorists, for human bombs of both sexes? I cannot.

Yet, increasingly, discussions of topics such as the above four favor the Palestinian/Arab position. Here are just a few indications of the world's growing hostility to Israel:

1) While Israel has always been the pariah of the United Nations, past votes of condemnation in that body at least included the frequent dissenting voice of the United States, as well as those, on rare occasions, of a few other brave countries. This time, the Security Council's March 2002 condemnation of Israel was unanimous (with the exception of Syria, which felt that the condemnation was not harsh enough). I have always admired the moral courage of the American government, which often dared to embarrass itself by being the lone dissenting vote. I have often wondered when we, too, would cave in. After all, we derive no economic or strategic benefits from supporting Israel. Our past policy toward Israel has been dictated by moral considerations. It is far more pragmatic to side with the oil-rich Arab world. To our ever-lasting honor, we have resisted that temptation throughout the past half century. Now, this admirable stance seems to be waning a bit, although I am by no means suggesting that we have abandoned Israel.

2) The Europeans' policy of expediency over ethics is much clearer and more despicable: Norway, Germany, the Netherlands, France and the European Community in general are all quickly jumping on the anti-Israel bandwagon. The European Community is discussing economic sanctions against Israel. As the perpetrator of the Holocaust, Germany's role should be singled out as especially repugnant. The sanctimonious Dutch don't look too good either, in view of their shared responsibility for the Srebrenica massacre, in which nearly 10,000 Bosnian died while Dutch troops watched and failed to raise a finger. But the clearest resurgence of European anti-Semitism occurs in France. There, it is not only government policy that is turning anti-Israel, but also a growing number of popular manifestations of anti-Semitism, including many attacks on synagogues. No doubt the French have to cater to their large internal Muslim population.

And make no mistake about it: What is being passed off as reasonable criticism of Israel

and “Zionism,” is often -- not always, but often -- a cloak for anti-Semitism. One hears from academic intellectuals and media pundits that they are not anti-Jewish, or anti-Israel, merely anti-Zionist. I suppose by Zionism is meant the colonization by Jews of territories belonging to others, and the establishment of a Jewish state in those areas, to the exclusion of other ethnicities and faiths. So the argument “I have nothing against Jews, I am just against Zionism,” sounds reasonable, until we notice the accompanying baggage: This includes:

- 1). arguments about the “disproportionate and undue influence of Jews in Hollywood, American politics and business.”
- 2) Attacks and acts of vandalism against synagogues from Berkeley to France.
- 3) The questioning of the Holocaust. Only a few weeks ago, while in Paris, I was chatting with a distinguished-looking and intelligent-sounding gentleman. At one point, he asked me, “So how much of this Holocaust business is actually true? How much of it really happened?”
- 4) The unwillingness to apply the basic right to self-defense to Israel, a right which, according to the U.N. Charter, every nation enjoys. Notice also the double standard regarding America’s response to September 11 and Israel’s response to the proportionally far greater amount of mayhem wreaked upon its civilian population: We feel justified in bombing an entire country to smithereens, but Israel is scolded for entering hostile territory on the ground, at great cost to itself.

So there may be a legitimate distinction between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism, but the two often go hand in hand.

A recent article by Herbert London, *World’s Outrage over Israel Reveals darker Sentiments* (Sacramento Bee, April 18, 2002: B7) puts it this way: “The world reaction to the Israeli military invasion in the West Bank provides graphic testimony of how deep-seated is the animus toward Jews.” So, world public opinion is becoming more critical of Israel, and the world is becoming more anti-Semitic. Why?

I have a revealing memory of how things were back in 1956, when I still lived in Amsterdam: That was the year of one of Israel’s victorious wars against its neighbors, including Egypt. Israel had captured hundreds of Egyptian POWs, and they were being held in a camp somewhere in the Sinai. The POW camp was surrounded by barbed wires, turrets manned by armed guards of course. The visual appearance was not unlike that of a concentration camp in World War Two.

What strikes me now, in retrospect, are the remarks of the news commentator in the film clips shown at the time in the movie theaters of Amsterdam: “How refreshing it is to see, for once, a reversal of roles, with Jews being the guards,” he said. Can you imagine Peter Jennings or Dan Rather saying such a thing today without being fired, or sent to prison? But 1956 was only eleven years after the Holocaust.

And this leads me to the first of the following four reasons why anti-Semitism is becoming once again more possible:

- 1) People are beginning to forget about the Holocaust .
- 2) A second reason why more and more of my friends, students, colleagues, even relatives, spout “anti-Zionist” rhetoric is that this is what they hear, see and read in the media. There is no mystery about public opinion. It is formed by opinion leaders. And with the passage of time, as the lessons of the Holocaust wear off, a new generation of opinion leaders no longer feels the guilt and moral sympathy which Jews enjoyed during the first few decades after World War Two.

3) Also, it is logical that Europe, America and the rest of the world would lose patience with Israel. After all, the whole oil business would be a lot simpler if Israel simply disappeared. So we wish and hope that it does.

4) Finally, there is something about the entire world culture which makes this phenomenon logical. In most ignorant people's minds, "Jew" is a word and an idea, nothing empirical. The word "Jew" is an enduring part of language. No matter that Jews are undistinguishable from others visually or behaviorally. No matter that there may only be five Jews left in, say, Poland, it's still their fault. The language and culture remain accommodating to the idea that somehow, it's the Jew's fault. Blaming the Jew is a habit which comes easy, even though those who do this don't have the slightest idea of how Jewish malfeasance operates. Much of this is *deja-vu* all over again.

But I don't want to be misunderstood: I don't want to exaggerate this tendency. *It is only a tendency.* Israel remains viable and strong, and, for the time being, able to defend itself. Most of the Western world (certainly America) continues to refrain from egregious anti-Semitic behavior. Perhaps the best way to put it is this: The potential for anti-Semitism always lurks underneath the surface. It's there. It is currently more palpable, because of the violence to which Israel is part. (Cal State Hillel, May 8, 2003).

### 9. Why Are Jewish People Especially Ambitious?

*This was another question I answered in Mary Massaro's book Beyond the Pale (Diogenes Press, 2003). Because the stereotype is accurate and complimentary, it doesn't qualify as anti-Semitic.*

*Here is what I said:*

This is a terribly complex, historical question. Jews have been marginalized for thousands of years, excluded from agriculture, land ownership, and so forth.. In addition, the Jewish tradition places heavy emphasis on education and on skills in medicine, music, literature, etc. Perhaps by default, Jews often became the merchants within the societies that tolerated their presence. Remember that money lending and other forms of business were low-status occupations, below the dignity of the nobility. Shylock was a despicable character.

Finally, the Holocaust motivated those Jews who survived, teaching them that they can never relax, slow down, become indolent. Jews are the nerds of the world, the ones studying and getting good grades instead of partying, thus inviting the resentment and persecution that have been their fate (Massaro, 2003: 5-6).

### 10. So What Exactly Did Mel Gibson Say?

*In July 2006, Mel Gibson was arrested for DUI, and apparently he delivered a drunken anti-Semitic tirade to the arresting officer. I jumped into the public melee which ensued, and printed the following letter in the Sacramento Bee a few days after the actor's transgression. I was not trying to pile on Mel Gibson. I like him, and I liked his movie the Passion of Christ, which in my view is absolutely not anti-Semitic. Nor did I come to his defense. No, my thing was this: In the entire flap over Gibson's utterances, it was almost impossible to find out what his actual words were!*

*The trouble with our politically correct culture is that it sanitizes and censors everything. We, hoi polloi, are not trusted to make our own judgments. The media often report incidents without*

*giving us the raw data. This is chicken shit. It's like the use of those taboo words - "Nigger," "Bitch," "Faggot," etc. Even my spell checker is programmed so as to not let me use them (they are highlighted as errors). If we are to agree, as mature adults, that some language or someone's behavior is bad, the first thing we need is to hear or see the exact thing - not some journalist's sanitized interpretation of it! So here is what I said about Mel Gibson's transgression:*

This is in response to your August 1 article (page A2), which covers Mel Gibson's alleged anti-Semitic remarks:

How can we decide for ourselves whether Mel Gibson is guilty or innocent of anti-Semitism if you don't provide us the facts? What is it about our culture which refuses to call a spade a spade? Nowhere in the news can we find out what Mel Gibson actually *said*.

When Bush said something untoward at the recent big-eight meeting in Saint Petersburg, it took major research to find out that he used the word *shit* when talking to Blair - whoop-tee-do! Now, again, the media only *paraphrase* and *allude* to Mel Gibson's anti-Semitic remarks, without ever simply giving us the *facts*, i.e. telling us *his exact words*. We are a fearful, hypocritical and censoring culture. We don't trust the people's ability to judge things for themselves (*Sacramento Bee*, July, 2006).

#### 44: TAKING ON THE RIGHT: OPPOSING THE VIETNAM WAR

##### 1. My Vigorous Participation in the Peace Movement

*When I was in graduate school at the University of Minnesota, I was a radical peace activist. I wrote and published innumerable articles. I advocated the presidential candidacy of Martin Luther King, and later I campaigned vigorously for Eugene McCarthy, the Peace candidate. I also carried on a copious correspondence with my relatives, friends and intellectuals in Europe about American foreign policy. Here are a few notes I took in February 1966:*

The only way we can stop this war and reform American politics is through a coalition between the (1) Peace Movement, which is largely young, white, college-educated and affluent, the (2) Labor Movement, whose members are middle-aged and working-class, and (3) the Civil Rights Movement, which is black. We must explore the possibility of Martin Luther King running for the presidency. To those who call us unpatriotic and want to ship us to Vietnam, here is what I say: Quite the contrary; *you* are the ones who should be shipped to Vietnam, since you are so eager to fight the commies over there. All we want is to live and let live - in peace. We don't care if Vietnam goes communist, and we know that this will not cause America to become communist.

\* \* \* \* \*

I have a problem of identity and of allegiance: I have been getting an awful lot of letters from my family, my former fellow-students at the University of Amsterdam, even sociology professors under whom I studied. Miklos, Suzette and my sister have all accused me of joining the fascists - just by moving to America. They say that I did the moral equivalent of moving to Germany in 1938. This is such bullshit!

True, America is waging an unjust war. But there is so much good in this country! What the hell do these European snobs know anyway? I am never moving back there, no matter what happens to me.

## 2. My European Friends are Full of Shit

*So when I moved to America in 1965, I found myself between a rock and a hard place. On the one hand, this was still the promised land for me. However, six months after my arrival, President Johnson and my draft board sent me my military induction papers, even though I was not a US citizen. I was stunned, and I appealed. I also wrote to my family and to my friends in Europe what was happening, and that I was on the verge of being sent to Vietnam. Many of them advised me to flee the fascist warmongering country to which I had just made the terrible mistake of moving, and to return to Europe. I wouldn't hear of it. I was opposed to the Vietnam war, and I dreaded the prospect of being sent to fight in the jungles of Southeast Asia. However, I was prepared to obey my orders. I was not prepared to be a draft-dodger, to flee the country, or to file for Conscientious Objector status - all three of which was being done by students around me.*

*Here, I reproduce parts of a letter which I wrote back to a radical hippie Dutch girlfriend who now lived in Germany, and who had accused me of being a collaborator, comparable to someone who would move to Germany after Hitler's ascent to power. In other words, in her eyes America was a fascist country and I should flee from it A.S.A.P. This letter was written on March 3, 1966, in Dutch. It is so good that I have translated it so as to share it with you.*

Dear Suzette:

As far as Vietnam is concerned, my position is the same as that of any other sane person: LBJ & Co. are insane criminals who should have stepped down a long ago. But when you advise me to flee to Sweden, so as to avoid being drafted and sent to Vietnam, you need to understand one thing: Under no circumstances am I going to leave the United States.

You are wrong: America is *not* Nazi Germany. I can't even get mad any more at blind criticism from self-satisfied Europeans, but for anyone willing to listen, I'll say this again: I know more fine, rebellious, non-conformist, left-leaning, artistic, progressive people here than I ever met anywhere else. And what's more important, *the authorities leave us alone*. Do you seriously believe that the millions of good, progressive people will be exterminated, imprisoned, or kicked out of the country in the near future? Is this the idea of America you people hold over there? We haven't reached that point yet, trust me. Leaving is not the solution. Sinclair Lewis' *It Can't Happen Here* is fiction, so far, not reality!

Furthermore, if you ever look at a newspaper or at the news, you should know that there is no question here of "lying low and keeping your mouth shut so as to save your neck," as you suggest. In case you hadn't heard: This is a *free* country, and freedom of speech is one of America's most sacrosanct rights, protected under the first amendment!

I'll spare you a list of all the protest movements which are under way, but if you still haven't heard of the myriad of mass demonstrations - both peaceful and violent - the teach-ins, the debates, the publications, and the draft card burnings, you won't believe me anyway.

"Oh sure, all talk," you may say. But then, I'll remind you of the well-known pot calling the kettle black: I have no idea what is going to happen to all these brave protesters. Maybe at some point a majority of the public will turn cowardly, go along with the government's war policies, and abandon the peace marchers, as the cowardly German people gave silent support the Nazi thugs, even though many of them had misgivings. All I know is that *to date*, the most cowardly, beastly

war crimes and lemming mentality have taken place in Europe, not here. I don't know whether America will go down the same path. We're going to do our very best to prevent that. But in an event, the Europeans should keep their mouths shut and live in shame.

Who has, thus far, killed not hundreds, no thousands, but *millions* of innocent people? The Germans, you say? Wrong. Not just the Germans, but also the Belgians, the French, the Dutch, the Russians, the British, you name them. When? It happens every day. It would be easy for you to believe that it's all behind you, but it isn't. People are still beasts, even after Auschwitz. If it's not the French torturing Algerian prisoners, it's the Russians mowing down Hungarian freedom fighters, or Dutch settlers imposing their ruthless Apartheid in South Africa, or the Belgians' bloody attempt to hold on to the Congo. And how do the brave, outraged artists and intellectuals on your side of the Atlantic react? They gripe a little over a glass of beer at the *Rijnders* sidewalk café. Don't talk to me about words without deeds.

Did your boyfriend Ben refuse to serve in the army? The Dutch army is just as much an instrument of capitalist oppression. We're all in the same boat - NATO - and the Vietnam war is just one symptom of Western imperialism. Didn't Ben's brother fight alongside the Americans in Korea? And as a volunteer, to boot! Who is the "fascist," to use your favorite term?

Furthermore, if you were consistent, you would never have settled in Germany, where you are now surrounded by war criminals. Or have those people somehow been cleansed of their sins? Since you believe in the collective guilt of the American people for supporting the Vietnam war, you must also agree that all those "krauts" are guilty. And by the way, the German Chancellor Ludwig Erhard wholeheartedly supports President Johnson's Vietnam policy.

Please understand that I have no plan to participate in Johnson's murderous war. I have not yet decided whether to file for conscientious objectors status. I may turn out to be a coward, or a hero. But one thing I will not do, is accept advice from people like you. Europeans are every bit as cowardly, as unprincipled, as ready to collaborate as Americans, if not more so. In fact, it is *here* that the great moral issues of our times are being grappled with. How do lazy, self-satisfied European café philosophers dare criticize and offer advice to American college students who are in the middle of a titanic and bloody struggle against a government gone astray?

### 3. Is the Vietnam War going to Escalate into a War With China?

*This correspondence was not an isolated instance. I kept getting accusatory letters from a host of European friends. For example, there was my friend Miklos, who had been one of my fellow teaching assistants at the University of Amsterdam. He was a rabid Marxist and he was convinced that America was a fascist country. I wrote long letters to him in which explained patiently that, while Lyndon Johnson's war in Vietnam was immoral, this did not make America the equivalent of Nazi Germany. I reminded him of all the freedoms Americans enjoy, including the freedom to demonstrate against the war. He asked me why I was not afraid of going to jail, and I explained to him that I would only go to jail if I broke the law, which I was not planning to do.*

*But I was soon done bickering with my European friends, and I plunged into the American Peace Movement. My first anti-war publication was a translation of a Dutch article by W.G. Wolters. It appeared in the Minnesota Daily on September 27, 1966.*

America is planning to continue the destruction of North Vietnam until the Hanoi government stops supporting the Liberation Front. The question is: will Peking allow North

Vietnam to surrender? If the answer is no, there is a good chance that China will send in troops to prevent North Vietnam's defeat. There is some disagreement on this.

According to one version, China will do everything it can to stay out of the game. There are signs that Peking is pressuring Hanoi and the Liberation Front to switch over to a lower level of guerilla activity, to fall back to a level where the Viet Cong can maintain itself without support from the North. This would have to be done until happier days, when American troops have been withdrawn.

According to this version, China considers it unwise to allow North Vietnam's total destruction and to risk a war with America (itself). Since Peking and Hanoi are unwilling to accept peace on America's terms, a curtailment of guerrilla activities is the only way to avoid an expansion of the war.

The second version is that of the French journalist and China expert Robert Guillain, expounded in *Le Monde*. Guillain emphatically warns against Washington's thesis that China will remain passive if America forces Hanoi to its knees. According to Guillain it is dangerous to believe that the boundary of China's patience coincides with its political boundary.

**America's goal is the destruction of the Tonkin area, and this is something which the Chinese will not tolerate. They will not allow Giap's army to be defeated because they see North Vietnam as a bastion for China's own defense. If this bastion collapses, the whole political and military balance of Central China will be upset. South China, which is traditionally anti-Peking, will exhibit political protest and Chiang Kais-hek will not hesitate to invade the mainland.**

Moreover, the war in Vietnam is the test case for the Chinese conception of guerrilla warfare. Vietnam involves the most fundamental principles of Mao Tse-Tung's interpretation of Marxism-Leninism: the people's war of "Liberation" is invincible and America is a paper tiger. These principles are at the heart of the Chinese Russian ideological conflict. They will not be abandoned lightly.

Guillain's conclusion is that China is preparing itself for war. The decision not to avoid war with the United States must already have been taken last fall. During a military conference in Peking in January of this year, preparations were made to resist an American offense.

In February the military command in South China was reorganized and centralized. All this was accompanied by a fervent antiimperialist campaign. The strengthening of the position of Defense Minister Lin Piao, the perpetuation of the orthodox line by means of the "cultural revolution," the renewed indoctrination and the purges, are all closely related to the expectation of war.

**According to Guillain, Washington commits a serious mistake by persistently believing in China's passive attitude. During the past half year China has frequently warned that its determination should not be underestimated, and that Vietnam's interests are also China's interests. On July 22 President Liu Shao-chi said "Do not make any miscalculations," and "American imperialist aggression against Vietnam is aggression against China."**

Robert Guillain fears that we are on our way to a war between China and America. His argument is more convincing than the argument that China wants to remain out of shooting range at any price. There is a new political doctrine in the United States, Johnson's Asian policy which foresees a lasting American presence in Southeast Asia. This means decades of war between America and China.

Washington is tempted to try to shorten this conflict by a preventive attack on China. McNamara's statements to the effect that China will soon have longrange nuclear missiles at its disposal clearly point in that direction. America does not like long wars and wishes for rapid pragmatic solutions. It is possible that America, fancying itself to be in the right, and taking its

opponent for the devil, will no longer wait for the great showdown (*Minnesota Daily*, Sept. 27, 1966).

#### 4. Even Aggressors Use Analogies in Viet War

*A few months later, on April 18, 1967, I published the following article in the Minnesota Daily.*

Several weeks ago Dr. Kenneth Galbraith wrote a letter to the editors of the New York Times criticizing the use of historical analogies by administration officials to justify the war in Vietnam.

He pointed out the fallacy of the Munich parallel, so often used by Dean Rusk, and commented on Walt Rostow's preposterous comparison of America's present struggle against world Communism with the American Civil War. In the latter analogy the present war against Vietnam is equated with Gettysburg. As Gettysburg formed the turning point of the Civil War, it is wishfully stated that once the Vietnam war is won the tide everywhere will have been determined in our

favor. Then, the remaining local wars against Communism will - and the analogy is still Rostow's - have the same significance as the Wilderness battles at the end of the Civil War.

As far as the Munich analogy is concerned, it is interesting to note that the very same theme has been used by the other side. Sartre, in a recent article in the *Temps Moderne*, so vehemently accuses the Soviet Union of appeasement that the French Communist daily *l'Humanite* saw itself compelled to dissociate itself from Sartre's statement and to label him a warmonger.

Whatever the case, it is clear that the fear of appeasement exists on the other side as well. Sartre's point was precisely that. Russia's reluctance to support North Vietnam more actively (and the French philosopher advocated the immediate use of Russian troops) was seen as another Munich, which once again will lead to increasing boldness on the part of the adversaries and to ultimate catastrophe.

Galbraith's criticism of the misuse of history is well-taken. Yet some additional analogies are worth considering. If any recent historical event comes to mind at the sight of the present carnage in Vietnam, it is the Spanish Civil War. As Vietnam seems to be becoming today, the Spanish Civil War was the dress rehearsal for a world conflict. As this country's murderous air war today, Hitler's intervention in Spain was predominantly from the air, his notorious Kondor squadrons bombing defenseless civilians in Guernica and elsewhere.

**As Russia feels today that its national interests dictate minimal involvement in Vietnam, so did the same country under Stalin refrain from effectively supporting the Spanish republic. The total betrayal of the republic by the Western democracies is, of course, a better precedent for the present fate of North Vietnam yet. Finally, as Hitler became bolder in his support of Spanish fascism with the increasing realization that he had nothing to fear from his opponents, so does our government find encouragement to escalate, ad infinitum, as long as its only opponent is a tiny backward Asian republic.**

Another precedent which comes to mind is Japanese policy on the Asian mainland during the thirties. As we set up and support a fascist puppet government in South Vietnam, so did Japan create the artificial state and government of Manchukuo. The most striking similarities between these two situations are the rationalizations used by the aggressors on both occasions. As Johnson's war today, the Japanese invasion of China was labeled "a war for the preservation of peace,

freedom and order."

Such double-think is now associated with Orwell, but it is apparently always a property of war propaganda. Allegedly, Japan was also fighting Communism, as we are doing today, and not in the least interested in Asia's mineral resources. The point here is not whether the war in Vietnam ought to be interpreted economically or not, but to note that our government is justifying its intervention in Asia in the exact same terms as did Japan thirty years ago.

One can reject these analogies, as one can reject the administration propagandists' use of history. But whether history repeats itself or not (and the question is obviously not an either-or matter), it is good to remember such instances. Or are we the good guys by definition? (*Minnesota Daily*, April 18, 1967).

### 5. Even Senator Fulbright Doesn't Get It

*This was followed by another pro-peace article in the Minnesota Daily a couple of weeks later (May 5, 1967):*

The publication of a series of excerpts from Fulbright's book by the *Daily* was a valuable public service. For a number of years Senator Fulbright has substantiated a bit of the faith we would like to keep in politicians.

Yet even Fulbright, like most liberals of his generation, is reluctant to go along with the disorderly ways of political expression used by the Peace Movement and by the New Left in general. Understandably, a man who has committed his career to the traditional American political system will have difficult facing the possibility of total breakdown of that system.

**Fulbright states that it "is only when the Congress fails to challenge the Executive, when the opposition fails to oppose, when politicians join in a spurious consensus behind controversial policies, and when institutions of learning sacrifice traditional functions to the short-term advantages of association with the government in power, that the campuses and streets and public squares of America are likely to become the forums of a direct and disorderly democracy."**

Aside from the negative value judgment implied in "direct and disorderly democracy," it is clear that Fulbright is not willing to accept the inevitability of such a new form of political expression.

It is precisely here that the New Left and the old liberals differ radically. The New Left feels, justifiably or not, that the situation described in Fulbright's quote is no longer hypothetical but a fact. One does not have to be a Marxist or believe in conscious conspiracy at the top to see a gross concentration of power in the hands of a few, whether these few be labeled power elite or establishment, and to point out that this situation deprives us of genuine political choice. The sick state of political information is one reflection of this.

**An even more obvious case in point is the fact, pointed out by many critics abroad, that the American two-party system does not offer meaningful alternatives to the voters. The absurdity of the 1964 elections, after which the defeated party's foreign policy platform was carried out, hardly needs reemphasis. The traditional mechanism of co-optation of dissent into one of the two major parties has led to the blurring of all political demarcation lines. In America, politics is considered a conflict less matter, a friendly competition for votes rather than a struggle for the implementation of ideas.**

It is because this situation is believed to be truly democratic that new parties and new alternatives have such incredible difficulty crystallizing. The New Left, so far unable to form a third

party, has to resort to mob behavior - a very mild form of mob behavior of course.

The point is simply that it may be too late to go back to the friendly politics which still worked fairly decently in Fulbright's generation. If the old liberals are reluctant to face the fact that times are changing, this should not, and does not prevent those who are less committed to the existing political system from experimenting. What is happening today may be sign that America, latecomer in many ways, faces up to the inherent conflict character of politics (*Minnesota Daily*, May 5, 1967).

#### 6. Large Peace Marches Show Strength of Anti-War Cause

*My next anti-war article, again in the Minnesota Daily, came out ten days later, on May 15, 1967.*

Judging from the number of participants, the spring mobilization against the war in Vietnam was extremely successful. Even if one accepts the deflated figures given by *Time* and other fiction magazines, it is evident that the demonstrations last month were among the largest in U.S. history. The anti-war cause has aroused greater motivation among more people than perhaps any other issue.

Supporters of the administration point out that a couple of hundred thousand people constitute only a small fraction of the total population. This silly statistical argument implies that the 195 million or so Americans who did not march have all thereby demonstrated their support for the war. No matter how deep and generalized discontent is in a society, only a few will translate their feelings into action. To restate an old truism: Revolutions have always been the work of minorities. But the considerable size of the protesting minority is indicative of the weakness of the government's popular support.

**It is important to keep these things in mind. Defeatism has been all too characteristic of the mood among anti-war groups. Most campus activists will tell you that their *activism* is a moral imperative rather than an attempt to realize political objectives. They see their struggle as ultimately futile and as absurd as the human condition itself.**

One can observe that the individualistic nature of the Peace Movement follows a pattern traditional to this country, and one can see some nobility in this type of protest, but it certainly results in a great dissipation of energy which could, if better organized, lead to more tangible achievements. One can sympathize with the young idealists who wish to stay away from the political game and thus preserve their integrity, but their pessimism is not justified. If pacifists and other dissenters want to indulge in self-pity clothed in existential terminology, they will have to admit that whatever they are after, it is not the immediate termination of the war.

.It should be clear from the recent marches in New York and San Francisco that such pessimism and the ensuing reluctance to organize the Peace Movement into a political tool are no longer necessary. The fact that several hundred thousand people found the time and the money to participate in the demonstrations shows that the formation of a Peace Party is now feasible. As Kearns and Levinson point out in a recent issue of the *New Republic*, "the longer the marchers sit around in coffee houses and tell each other how great it was, and debate how many people were really there, the less likely is a viable political strategy to convert into a meaningful political voice the wide base of support for peace that was demonstrated at the march."

**There is already much talk of a third and fourth presidential candidate next year. George Wallace and Martin Luther King are the most prominent prospects for these candidacies at the present time. Whoever will be found most acceptable to head a peace ticket - and certainly a coalition of the Peace and Civil Rights movements under King would have**

**strategic value if nothing else - it is important to realize that such a ticket is now not only desirable but also possible.**

It is fashionable to complain about one's political impotence, about the establishment's tight control over the channels of communication and about the enormous financial obstacles to a peace campaign waged against the Democrats and the Republicans. These obstacles are no longer insurmountable, due to the intensity of the opposition to the war. Obviously one does not think of the election of the peace candidate in order to see the usefulness of political organization for next year.

The formation of a third party is now a realistic possibility, regardless of the outcome of the elections. As the two authors mentioned previously point out, there is nothing sacred about the two-party system. As it now stands it is this very "system" which undermines parliamentary democracy in America. It is precisely in order to save the parliamentary system that dissenters should make an all-out effort to offer the American voters a genuine political alternative (*Minnesota Daily*, May 15, 1967).

#### 7. Eugene McCarthy's Stunning Performance in the New Hampshire Primary Proves that he has a Good Chance of being Elected President

*I wrote this article at about the same time as the preceding one. It was meant for an overseas publication, but I don't believe that it was printed.*

Only a couple of months ago there was unanimous agreement about the fact that Senator McCarthy's candidacy was purely symbolic. Columnists and news commentators were convinced that McCarthy would at best get a small fraction of the Democratic and independent votes, those of students, peaceniks, hippies, malcontents, marginals in general. Polls, taken in New Hampshire and elsewhere, validated this view. And from my own conversations with campus radicals I could see that even McCarthy's own supporters did not realistically consider the Senator a major candidate, a serious challenge to the administration. The general argument was that McCarthy lacked the charisma, the forcefulness, the political verve to reach the broad masses of American voters. He was said to be too much of an egghead to appeal to anything but a small sector of intellectuals and radicals.

Since the New Hampshire primary things have changed. Columnists ranging from David Lawrence to James Reston have had to revise their belittling opinion of the Minnesota Senator. On television, Walter Cronkite and Eric Savareid, have admitted their amazement at McCarthy's 42% of the votes. Student activists who admittedly worked for McCarthy in New Hampshire primarily to satisfy their conscience are now campaigning with the genuine hope that their candidate will make it into the White House.

The point is that the columnists' and pollsters' predictions have failed once again. Once more the "experts" on public opinion have been unable to accurately gauge the political climate. As so often in the past, editorials and expert opinion come fumbling after the facts, groping for the hidden factors which prevented them from accurately assessing the situation beforehand.

This is certainly gratifying to someone who had consistently refused to see McCarthy as merely representative of a marginal mood in American politics. Ever since the beginning of his campaign, I have refused to take seriously objections to the effect that his style and personality would prevent him from reaching a substantial proportion of the voters. If Adlai Stevenson succeeded in getting nearly half of the votes on two occasions, why would the Minnesota Senator be

too much of an intellectual, too soft-spoken and too subtle to appeal to a great number of Americans?

It is reassuring to realize, at this point, that a civilized and intelligent politician can be as successful in American politics as a Texas cowboy, a racist, or a movie star. As Joseph Kraft observes, it is possible to think of McCarthy - as it is not possible to think of, say, George Wallace and Ronald Reagan - as President. That this would be the case had been my firm belief all along. It should become clear to an increasing number of Americans, to campus radicals as well as suburban housewives, that decent and civilized politicians have as much of a chance for popular support in this country as vulgar power seekers.

One can no longer justify one's reluctant support of the administration by saying that, although one sympathizes with McCarthy, voting for that man would be wasting one's vote, since "most people" will not support him anyway.

### 8. U.S. Plans to Invade Cambodia

*Neither was the next article, also written in 1967, ever printed. That's too bad, because it was brilliant in a least one respect: It predicted Nixon's invasion of Cambodia three years before it happened!*

Much of the recent news about the war has been devoted to the murderous engagement between American marines holding out in Con Thien and the North Vietnamese just across the Demilitarized Zone. Despite some speculation about the meaning of this particular confrontation, there has been a striking lack of interpretation. Some see in Con Thien the beginning of a defensive strategy, others consider it still part of the offensive. Time Magazine even compares the situation with Dien Bien Phu thirteen years ago. But in general, few columnists or news commentators have wondered what our military men are trying to do in Con Thien. And yet one ought to wonder, for what seems to be the sense of piling up twelve hundred men within the range of North Vietnamese fire?

It appears that the move is part of a wider plan which will soon lead to an expansion of the land war and is based on a reassessment of the overall strategy in Vietnam. Most administration officials, beginning with secretary of defense McNamara, now realize that the air war is not doing the job. Meanwhile, with presidential elections approaching, drastic steps must be taken to either make some actual progress in the war or at least to give the American people the impression that something is being done. Continuation of the same strategy means a perpetuation of a costly stalemate, and this is becoming increasingly evident to the man in the street. Seen in this light, Con Thien is merely one phase of a larger project which consists of an attempt to seal off South Vietnam against Northern infiltration. Army engineers have already finished the first stretch of a 600-yd.-wide barrier that was bulldozed from the Gulf of Tonkin inland and in which anything that moves is shot at. The idea is to extend this barrier along the whole length of the Demilitarized Zone.

But what do our strategists hope to accomplish with this? Whatever northern infiltration there is already takes place mostly along the Ho Chi Minh trail which runs through Laos and Cambodia, not across the Demilitarized Zone. In order to be effective, the project will have to include an extension of the barrier to those adjacent countries. Already the Cambodian government has filed a complaint with the United Nations Security Council, accusing the United States of planning to extend the war to that country. This fear is highly justified. A few thousand American special forces are already operating in supposedly neutral Laos, and our military presence in

Thailand is now a public secret. What we are witnessing is the preparation for a link-up between our forces in South Vietnam and those in these other Southeast Asian countries. With this wider front, American involvement in Southeast Asia will be assured for the coming decades.

### 9. Duck Calling World Championship Trumps Vietnam War

*On December 25, 1967, I published the following letter in the Minneapolis Tribune, expressing my outrage over what I saw as our society's warped values:*

The Tribune is to be commended for reprinting an editorial from the Montreal Star (December 11) concerning the erosion of American values due to the war in Vietnam.

Further evidence of this process was provided by the CBS television news on December 11. Part of the news was devoted to the "body count" problem encountered by American military men in Vietnam. On the screen, visible in every American household, were shown piles of Viet Cong bodies. Additional bodies were being carried and dumped on top of these piles by GIs. The commentator observed with cool detachment that these bodies, which were only hours before living, breathing human beings, were now a "mere sanitation problem."

To my knowledge, only World War Two documentaries depicting the nightmare of Auschwitz and Buchenwald equal the dehumanized horror of what could be watched from the dinner table by every American child, father and mother.

Meanwhile, what are some Americans concerned with? The same news program ended with a report on the world championship in duck calling held at this time of the year in Stuttgart, Arkansas. This included sample performances in the rare skill of duck calling.

Rarely have I seen a more depressing illustration of the absurdly perverted moral state which this country now seems to have reached (*Minneapolis Tribune*, Dec. 25, 1967).

### 10. Nixon Mines Haiphong Harbor

*Five years later, the war was still raging, can you believe it? As you saw in a previous section, after I moved out to California in 1969, I became even more actively involved in the Peace Movement. After the invasion of Cambodia (which I had predicted three years earlier), and the murder of a dozen students by the National Guard at Kent State and Jackson State Universities, I was one of the major leaders and organizers of a massive peace demonstration in front of the California Capitol Building.*

*It was 1972 and nothing had changed. In fact, the government continued to escalate, as when Nixon ordered the mining of Hanoi's harbor. I continued to protest the war in various ways, including the writing of articles and letters, such as the following one, which appeared in the Sacramento Bee on May 20, 1972.*

The American conscience may be close to being beaten into submission. Mining Haiphong and giving the rest of the world an ultimatum brings us closer to World War III than did the invasion of Cambodia. Yet current protest is not commensurate with what took place two years ago. Runaway presidential power and its abuse are apparently uncheckable. Fatigue and fatalism have set in, occasionally interrupted by political assassinations. What right does Nixon have to gamble with my life and that of 4 billion others? Nixon is angry, so we hear. Thus in 1972 wars are once again waged at depots whims, as in the days of heroic kingship.

Thus far, brinkmanship has paid off. Yet the world rarely appeases aggressors indefinitely.

Hitler's lucky streak ended in 1939. The wise gambler does not press his luck. Since Cuba, the Russians have caught up with us militarily. Moreover, this showdown would take place in a location far more convenient to them. Having become the international bully and outlaw, it is now increasingly perilous for us to play that role.

Nixon's despotic ultimatum to the rest of the world is an act of mental illness. Rational decisions are based on realistic appraisals of means and ends. An act that subordinates mankind's existence to saving personal face belongs in the same clinical category as, say, suicide. Yet during the past few days many Americans have applauded the President's new move as the bold act of a brave and decisive man or, worse yet, deplored it as not sufficiently far-reaching. How fatal a mistake, to model the international arena after a world championship. The mistake is, of course, that this tough stance may soon be brought home to us in the form of a nuclear shower. This is not the World Series, yet it is being discussed at the neighborhood tavern as if it were.

Washington's approach to world policy is game-theoretical, based on an analogy between the world and a crap table. Yet it does not seem to realize that, even if the President lucks out once again, one thing is certain: One day - and it will be within our lifetime - the lucky streak will end. And then we shall have an eternity of peace (*Sacramento Bee*, May 20, 1972).

### 11. We Resume Bombing Vietnam

*...And so on and on. A year later, the situation was the same. For a while the U.S. had stopped bombing North Vietnam, but then it resumed. This was the stick-and-carrot approach which Henry Kissinger was now trying. Once again I protested in the form of a letter, this one published in the Riverside Press -Enterprise in the Spring of 1973:*

Since the resumption of the Vietnam bombing, I have been searching for something to say about it. But after all these years I seem to have run out of angry words.

Now Tuesday night's NBC news provided a theme after: We have apparently lost, within a couple of weeks of bombing, one-tenth of the relevant part of our Air Force. B52s are no longer manufactured and their replacement model won't be available until 1985.

Think of it: Our Air Force is being decimated; this latest presidential tantrum has only produced another military defeat. It is not just that we are morally wrong, but America the almighty turns out to be a large, weak and backward country using and losing its last 1940s planes, unable to replace them.

We think of ourselves as the most advanced society - computers, science, GNP, right? - but try on the following perspective: Might our military machines not be the 1973 equivalent of the 1939 French and Polish armies rather than the super-streamlined computerized tool we are told it is? Large, soft, opulent, with an obsolete technology and social structure, like some lethargic ancient empire, we lose our Air Force and soon perhaps much more. Just a thought (*Riverside Press -Enterprise*, Spring, 1973).

## 45. TAKING ON THE RIGHT: OPPOSING THE IRAQ WAR

### 1. Does Bush Have a *Casus Belli* Against Iraq?

*Between the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 and 2007, America has been at war nearly half the time. What a tragedy! Especially for a peace-loving people whose destiny was going to be to*

*show the world - by example - how to live and let live, how to first and foremost leave one another alone. It was not to be. Table One gives the breakdown of the past 66 years:*

Table I: America at War and Peace since Second World War

Years		Number of Years
1941-1945	World War II	5
1946-1949	Peace	
1950-1954	Korean War	5
1955-1963	Peace	
1964-1975	Vietnam War	12
1976-1990	Peace	
1991	Gulf War	1
1992-2000	Peace	
2001-2007	Iraq/Afghan Wars	7
Total number of years at war:		30 out of 66

*From day one after 9-11, I was 110% in support of hitting back, and hitting hard. However, I have always opposed the invasion of Iraq. I knew from the outset that it was the wrong move and that it would come back to bite us. Above all, I was on to Bush's charade, I knew that there were no Weapons of Mass Destruction, and I knew that this was only an excuse for an attack which was foreordained. In other words, I was not against strong retaliation against the terrorists - in fact I was a vocal advocate of that - but I knew that invading Iraq was a stupid move based on moronic and fraudulent arguments. Here is a piece I published in the Sacramento Bee on August 30, 2002:*

Talk of war against Iraq has become a constant drumbeat. The Vice President and others make daily speeches and statements indicating that the administration is itching to attack Iraq. One doesn't need to sympathize with Saddam Hussein to realize how awful this is. Yes, he may be a bloodthirsty dictator, yes he may be developing weapons of mass destruction. But since when does America belong to those countries that simply attack and invade other countries without even a hint of an immediate provocation? That used to be the role played by Hitler, the Soviet Union, Third World dictatorships and European colonial powers. Are we now such a country - so brazen that we no longer even need the fig leaf of a provocation - a **Casus Belli**? At least the Gulf War was in response to Iraq taking over Kuwait (and finishing off Saddam Hussein at that time might have been a good idea). But how on earth can we justify attacking now, and not, say, a year ago, or next year, or at some other time? Have we become so reckless because our military power is now unmatched? Are we going to attack other countries (bad as they may be) just because we CAN? This is a terrible direction to take, for a country which in the past only waged war in response to

direct provocation (*Sacramento Bee*, Aug. 30, 2002).

## 46. TAKING ON THE RIGHT: DEFENDING FRANCE

### 1. Racist Anti-French Cartoon

*The relationship between France and the United States has always been interesting. Love-hate, you could say, although that's not quite it. It's more that a significant portion of the people in each country is utterly enamored by the other's culture, while another huge segment laughs at it.*

*From its very inception, America has been admired and assisted by many French leaders and intellectuals. Think of Lafayette, DeTocqueville, Crevecoeur, the gift of the Statue of Liberty, etc. On the other hand, there are also many rabid Anti-Americans in France - snobs who dismiss us as vulgar and uncultured, and politicians who can't abide that America is so much more powerful than France.*

*There is a similar divide on this side of the Atlantic. Among intellectuals, in Hollywood and elsewhere, millions of Americans appreciate and love the beauty of France and its culture. At the same time, there has always been a strong current of contempt and ridicule for the French, especially among the millions of ignorant people who know nothing about history and about the outside world. These are the bigots and the xenophobes who call the French "frogs" and stereotype them as quaint and old-fashioned at best, or cowardly, lazy and dirty at worst.*

*After 9-11, the bigots and the xenophobes got the upper hand. France and America had a genuine disagreement about the war in Iraq. France was opposed to it, and as one of the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council, its voice was important. Now it wasn't as if France was the only country opposed to Bush's invasion of Iraq: A vast majority of the countries of the world were against it, including Russia, Germany, China and other major powers. But somehow, Americans - at least those who were solidly behind the Bush policy - took their fury out on France. From 2001 onwards, TV comedians like Jay Leno and Dennis Miller, Radio and TV commentators like Rush Limbaugh and Bill O'Reilly, even democratic newspapers like the Sacramento Bee and progressive columnists like Thomas Friedman began to take cheap shots and sling massive amounts of calumnies and ridicule at the French and at their character, doing no such thing to the Russians, the Germans, the Chinese, the Canadians, the Dutch and the hundred and fifty other countries which also disagreed with our foreign policy. The French were called cowardly, lazy, dirty, smelly, their women don't shave their legs and armpits, they don't wash, etc. Clearly, there must have been a vast reservoir of anti-French bigotry waiting to be tapped by conservative Americans.*

*These idiots should understand that the Franco-American friendship goes back to the birth of the United States, and that it has never faltered. Both countries are deeply indebted to each other. France helped America gain its independence. America helped France win World War One, and we saved France from Hitler. For nearly two and a half centuries, the two countries have been allies. They have acted as such militarily, politically and economically on innumerable occasions, and they have never been enemies.*

*As a lifelong Francophile, I find the numerous attacks upon France in the American media since 9-11 appalling. I had to jump into the fray and come to the defense of the country in which I grew up. In addition to writing numerous letters and articles, I also organized activities to present the French point of view at my university, and I worked with the French Embassy in a variety of ways. The first article, below, was printed in late December 2001 in the Sacramento Bee in*

*response to a slanderous anti-French cartoon in that newspaper.*

The December 27 Oliphant cartoon is offensive to Frenchmen and to Francophiles. For one thing, letting Richard Reid through at Charles de Gaulle Airport was a one-time lapse which could have occurred at an American airport just as easily. The long-term safety record for French airports is superior to ours. More importantly, the cartoon depicts a filthy sleazy character as “probably a normal-looking” Frenchman. The word for this is simple: racism.

The widespread anti-French prejudice of most Americans never ceases to amaze me. It’s okay for Jay Leno to describe Frenchmen as cowards and French women as dirty. Haha. These stereotypes are grossly offensive as well as the opposite of the truth. Apart from a one-time demoralization which led to the 1939 military debacle against Nazi Germany, the French have historically been among the bravest and fiercest warriors. Also, the country has been the world center for perfumes and toiletry products, as well as on a par with the US in medical progress. So much for French cowardice and lack of hygiene.

The fundamental reason why it’s okay to engage in disgusting and counter-factual stereotyping of Frenchmen is that they are, under political correctness, an unprotected category. It’s open season against such groups. (Think also of Italian-Americans, and how the popular culture describes them as a bunch of mindless mafiosos).

Additionally, France remains the only major country that obstinately resists Anglo-Saxon linguistic hegemony and wants to keep its own culture intact. Remember, America has always been able to count on France’s undivided loyalty and support when it mattered the most. We owe our very independence to France. Cartoons like Oliphant’s on December 27 are wrong (*Sacramento Bee*, Dec. 2001).

Cc. French Embassy

## 2. FOX News’ Bigoted Views of France

*On January 20, 2002, I caught one of FOX News’ many ignorant, bigoted anti-French comments. Below is what I wrote to Bill O’Reilly about it. Of course I didn’t get a reply. But I have kept at it, sending O’Reilly e-mails once in a while. For example, on January 18, 2006, I offered to “bloviate” with him about the French (i.e. to debate him; the word “bloviate” is his). Still no answer from Bill.*

My wife and I watch you frequently, and we like most of what you say. We are regular Fox News watchers. You may appreciate this, since I am a sociology professor, a group which is usually diametrically opposed to you and your organization.

Nevertheless, here comes some criticism -- not of you, but of a colleague of yours at your network. I only have your e-mail, so I hope that you will pass this on. It concerns Rick whatshisname's War Zone show, and his expert panelist Larry Johnson, former CIA officer:

On January 20, there was a discussion of the British citizens who are currently imprisoned at Guantanamo Bay -- among the terrorist members of Al Qaeda captured in Afghanistan. As you know, the British government has raised some questions about our treatment of these individuals. Former CIA man Larry Johnson expressed -- on Fox's War Zone show -- that the British should stop whining and that we are treating these terrorists just fine. I tend to agree.

But then, he went on to a totally ridiculous and uncalled-for side swipe at the French. Here is the gist of what he said: "Anyway, the Europeans should all just butt out. Take the French for

example, their favorite flag is the white flag for crying out loud, after all the innumerable times they have surrendered over the past 100 years!" This is mean-spirited and utterly absurd, for many reasons:

1. The flap over the British Al Qaeda prisoners at Guantanamo Bay is between Britain and the US. France has nothing to do with it.

2. However, knee-jerk American jingoists like Larry Johnson cannot bring themselves to criticize another Anglo country, so they side-swipe another country that has absolutely nothing to do with this issue. Talking of kicking the dog!

3. As a matter of fact, France has had *one* spectacular case of military defeat, surrender and demoralization over the past couple of centuries: the 1939 debacle against Germany. Otherwise, the French have traditionally been among the bravest fighters, not only during the Napoleonic wars, but as recently as World War One. America had its own debacle in Vietnam, so that makes the score for these countries just about even.

4. The widespread Francophobia of so many Americans never ceases to amaze me. I suppose the French are not protected under political correctness, so it's open season on them in this country.

5. However, people like Larry Johnson should remember that France has always stood by America when it really mattered. In fact, this country owes its very independence to France, to a large extent.

(By the way, tell Johnson that it's *one* criterion, two *criteria*. How can the CIA be effective in foreign countries if its operatives don't even have mastery of English?)

Too bad Johnson blew it this time. Your network's political positions are otherwise usually wholesome, correct, and a refreshing counterweight to the academic political culture, in which I have been suffering for almost 40 years.

cc. Mr. Yo-Jung Chen, French Consulate, San Francisco

### 3. Jay Leno is a Bigot and an Idiot (When it comes to the French)

*And then there is Jay Leno. He has been picking on the French for years. He does this in a crude, vulgar, racist and ignorant way, showing that he knows nothing about France. I have sent him many e-mails, for example this one, sent on March 16, 2003. Of course it was not acknowledged.*

Dear Jay:

My wife and I watch you practically every night of the year. By and large, you are funny. You pick on everyone with relative even-handedness, including the French.

However, what troubles me when it comes to French bashing, is your utter disregard for the facts: When you laugh at the French people's cowardice or their dirty health habits, I wince and I am reminded of the ignorant folks you interview while jaywalking. Surely you should know some history: Two million french soldiers died protecting their country in World War One. While

American assistance arrived in 1918, the turning point of the war was the 1914 French victory at the battle of the Marne, where they beat back the Germans practically single-handedly. Even in World War Two, France lost in proportion more men fighting the Nazis than did America. Frenchmen died by the hundreds of thousands defending Paris in 1790, 1815, 1870, 1914, even 1939. Over one hundred French troops have died protecting Bosnia, vs. zero Americans. The French lost 6000 men in Dien Bien Phu before losing their Indochinese War - as we lost ours twenty years later. Today, 4000 French soldiers are fighting alongside Americans in Afghanistan. Etc. I hope that you don't resent this intrusion. I am just trying to do my job. I am a teacher. After all, where is it written that comedians must do violence to the facts?

Sincerely,

Dr. Tom Kando,  
Professor of Sociology

cc. French Embassy

#### 4. Jay Leno has Always Been a Bigot

*But it didn't take our post 9-11 disagreement with France to bring out the anti-French bigot in Jay Leno. He already had an ax to grind years before 2001, as evidenced by the following e-mails I sent him on July 30, 1998.*

Dear Mr. Leno:

We have been enjoying your show every night for years. However, we take offense at one of your jokes of late: you have been ridiculing an entire people, this time the French. (They are "cowards," unlike brave Tom Hanks in his recent movie; they are "losers" and winning the world cup soccer is out of character; they "smell bad and don't wash;" etc.)

Would you joke about black GIs eating watermelon on the beaches of Normandy? If racist jokes about one ethnic group are wrong, aren't they wrong about another? But maybe they don't show your program in France, so you don't worry about loss of market.

Most intelligent Frenchmen would probably find it undignified to refute the unfounded stereotype still held about them by some out-of-touch Americans. But let me remind you, in any event: As far as soldiering is concerned, Americans, Frenchmen and others all win some and lose some. We lost the Vietnam war, and didn't do so well in Korea either. The French were beaten in 1939-40 (while fighting gallantly and successfully during World War One, not to mention their military prowess in centuries past). Remember also that *10 times* more Frenchmen died in combat during World War Two than Americans. Cowards? Hardly. Also, it took Holland 4 days to surrender to the Germans in 1940, less than *one-tenth* the amount of time the French resisted, but one doesn't constantly hear about those cowardly Dutch. So the stereotype is just nonsense.

Same with this business of smell and cleanliness: those people have longer and healthier lives than we do; their medicine is very good; they are the world capital for perfume. Where have you been?

There is the danger that my letter (if it gets read), will only lead you to redouble the jokes to which I object -- or perhaps generate some other ridicule (e.g. about those idiot sociologists, eggheads, professors, take your pick). Whatever. I still think that you are a smart man. Your "Jaywalk" skits, exposing the public's abysmal ignorance is a public service. Overall, I give your show an B+.

Keep up the good work,

Dr. Tom Kando,  
Professor of Sociology

cc: French embassy

#### 5. How About Ridiculing Jay Leno's Ethnicity - Italians - for a Change?

*Of course, Leno has never acknowledged any of my e-mails. But I kept trying. On April 18, 2003, I tried his own medicine for once - ridicule. Since he is Italian-American, he lives in a glass house so to speak, when he accuses the French of being cowards. After all, Italians have also often been put down in that vein. Now don't misunderstand me, I have nothing but the utmost admiration for Italians. My wife is the quintessential Italian-America - one of the things for which I love her so much. But hey, I thought some of the funny things, below, might work with an asshole like Leno. And frankly, I still think that they are pretty good. It took me twenty minutes to think of all of them.*

Dear Jay:

I am glad to see that you read my mail. It seems to be goading you to do even more French bashing. But why limit your excellent sense of humor to just one group. How about, say, the Italians?

1) How many wars has Italy lost? Answer: it has never lost one, because it switches sides to the winner after each war.

2) Why did Mussolini invade Ethiopia? Because he tried to take over the Vatican, but the Vatican defeated the Italian army.

3) During World War Two, Fiat developed a highly ingenious airplane which had the capability of going into reverse, when under enemy fire.

4) Which side does Italy choose to support when there is a war? Whichever side is ahead.

5) What is Italy's usual strategy in war? Wait until it's over.

6) What was Mussolini's main military contribution to his allies? Leaving plenty of room on the battlefields for them to fight the enemy.

7) What weapon does Italy use to send its enemies into panic and retreat on the battle field? Anchovy pizza.

Just some suggestions for your script writers.

cc. French Embassy

#### 6. My Colleague Tom Pyne Also Thinks that the French Are Treacherous and Ungrateful Assholes

*I had many other interesting exchanges about the French and the Iraq war. In September 2004, my good friend Tom Pyne e-mailed me about France's alleged duplicitous, cowardly, ungrateful behavior, plus all of its military failures in the past. He blamed France for Turkey denying us a second front when we invaded Iraq, alleging that France had tried to pressure Turkey through NATO. He said that France had always been a poor judge of where its own national self-*

*interest lies. He had a warped view of World War One. He blamed France for nuclear proliferation (to Iran and Pakistan, among others). Finally, he expressed confidence that the Iraq war would be an American success.*

*Tom is a philosophy professor. He is a great guy. He is a brilliant. But my, my, what a long list of errors he made on this occasions! Here is my reply to him, sent on September 14, 2003.*

Tom:

1) I agree with you that we now have to finish the job in Iraq. Colin Powell's metaphor of the "Pottery Barn" principle is apt: If you break it, you own it, and must pay for it. Now that we have broken Iraq, we have to fix it.

2) In general, I am convinced that this country is unfairly and opportunistically singling out France for its wrath. Criticism of our foreign policy is pandemic. Public opinion is far more anti-American in Germany, Holland, Scandinavia, Switzerland, etc, than in France. France is a convenient target because there are few French immigrants in this country and because it's culturally and racially a bit more different than are England and other more Nordic countries. It's a bit easier to treat France as "the other," to use postmodernist lingo.

3) We could discuss French history - the wars in 1870-71, 1914-18, 1939-45, Indochina, etc. Remember that 3 million Frenchmen died in WW One, that the French stopped the Germans practically single-handedly at the battle of the Marne in 1914 (helped only by a British expeditionary force, the Americans arriving only 3 years later). Remember that several hundred French soldiers have died in Bosnia/Serbia/Kosovo, vs. zero Americans, and that several thousand French troops are operating, right now, in Afghanistan as well as many parts of Africa.

4) (In)gratitude? Without France, this country might not have gained its independence. Again, this is not to side with the French regarding the present disagreement (Iraq). But I do maintain that the French are honorable and brave. They happen to disagree with America at this time. Of course they pursue their national interest. Don't we, as well? The slanderous caricatures of dirty cowardly treacherous Frenchmen we get from Fox News and Dennis Miller are very unfortunate.

I was in France just last month. Did not experience one single instance of anti-Americanism. *Au contraire mon ami*, it's America which is going through an anti-French frenzy at this time. But the Anglo-Saxons have always enjoyed ridiculing the French (and this has always been somewhat mutual), so the current climate is a *deja-vu*.

Cheers,

from a die-hard Francophile

### 7. Is America at War with France?

*My colleague Tom Pyne didn't relent. A few days later, he sent me an e-mail about an article by New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman, titled "Our War with France" (!). Friedman is a Democrat and a Bush critic. However, he has been a strong supporter of the Iraq war. And this leads him to write outlandish things about France, because France does not support our Iraq war. In this column, the syndicated columnist called France "America's enemy," and he*

said that France wants the U.S. to fail in Iraq, because it wants America to be weak. Here is my response, sent on September 20, 2003:

Tom:

I have known about Tom Friedman for a long time. Read many of his editorials ever since September 11. I have liked his hawkish stand regarding terrorism. As I keep telling students and others: When you get hit and you don't hit back, there is something basically wrong with you, as a human being and as a living organism. However, to call France an enemy and to say that we are at war with France, is outlandish. Are we going to nuke or invade France next? Two points:

1) I see the whole thing with France simply as a policy disagreement between two countries. Such things do happen, you know. It doesn't mean that we have to become hysterical about this one country.

2) I resent the double standard: relentless French bashing, whereas another 100 countries in the world are equally critical of our foreign policy. In an earlier article, Friedman had written "imagine how much worse off the world would be if the only superpower left would be France rather than America." My reaction to that: The only difference might be that the world would eat better food - French onion soup instead of McDonald's...

See ya.

#### 8. Should France be kicked out of the United Nations?

*In 2004, the Sacramento Bee printed an article by conservative columnist George Will. His argued that France, which has a population of only 60 million people, should make room on the U.N. Security Council for India, which has a billion people. I wrote the following letter about this, and it was printed in the Bee a few days later.*

A few days ago, you printed one of George Will's columns. He argued that the United Nations' Security Council membership should be changed, to reflect contemporary reality: Some of the old "Big Five" (the US, Russia, Britain, China and France) are no longer necessarily the world's most important countries. For example, France has 60 million people, whereas India has a billion. And there are other countries like Brazil which are also much larger and populous than some of the old "Big Five." So, George Will argued, why not replace France, for example with Brazil or India?

I just want to point how self-serving and biased George Will's column was, being written entirely in the service of the Bush administration's foreign policy: Ever since France dared to oppose our invasion of Iraq, it has been open season on that country among American conservatives. George Will's latest column is another example of this. Note that he doesn't suggest kicking Britain out of the Security Council, even though that country's population, land area and economy all lag behind France's. The reason for this is that Britain is practically America's 51st state, obeying President Bush like a lapdog (*Sacramento Bee*, 2004).

#### 9. The Truth about France is the Opposite

*On May 9, 2003, I wrote the following, more detailed, catalogue of all the lies and errors being spread about France in this country as of late. This was never published/*

As we all know by now, France has been one of the many countries that disagreed with the U.S. decision to go to war against Iraq during the Spring of 2003. America proceeded to wage and win a swift war in spite of worldwide condemnation. While domestic public opinion was also divided before the war, once the invasion began and after it ended swiftly and successfully, the vast majority of Americans rallied around to a patriotic support of the conservative Bush government and its war.

So for the time being, conservatives have been in the ascendency, and their propaganda has been very successful. Part of this propaganda has been a very vengeful campaign to malign those foreign countries which did not support our invasion of Iraq. For some reason, one country above all - France - has been the recipient of an enormous amount of vengeful vitriol in the United States. While most of this originated on the extreme right of the political spectrum (Fox News, Bill O'Reilly, Talk Radio, Rush Limbaugh, Republicans, the Bush Administration, etc.), it has now become fashionable and widespread among much larger segments of the population. For example, Jay Leno's nightly anti-French jokes are outright racist - as when he and guests like Dennis Miller call the French "dirty scum bags" and cheese-eating surrender monkeys, smelly cowards who never wash or shave, etc, and then elicit louder laughter from the audience than any other jokes.

No matter that France is in the company of Germany, Russia, China, Canada, Mexico and 75% of all the countries of the world in criticizing the current bombastic, militaristic, unilateralist and yes, imperialistic, policy of the United States. For some reason, both our government and a growing segment of the always gullible and brainwashed population has a unique fixation with France. They love to hate France.

Let's remember that the lies which have caused even many of my university students to have recently become France-haters began with the rabid right, i.e. Fox News, Talk Radio, Rush Limbaugh, Bill O'Reilly, etc.

Here are some examples of what these liars say, and how the exact opposite is the truth:

1) The French are ungrateful and indebted to America, because the US saved them from German occupation. ***The opposite is the truth:*** Yes, the US liberated France in 1944, and helped tip the balance against Germany in 1917. However, French help to America outweighs this: Were it not for France, *America would not exist*. Without French help, the British would have won the revolutionary war and America would have remained a British colony.

2) The French are military cowards. They always lose their wars, and turn tails. ***The opposite is the truth:*** Except for the debacle of 1939, the French have fought more valiantly than the Americans, and they have won far more often than they have lost:

A) To begin with, 80% of the effort in World War One was French. This is reflected in the fact that the Supreme Commander of Allied Forces was French General Foch. The Americans helped to tip the balance against Germany from 1917 on, but their participation is dwarfed by the French effort. About 80,000 American soldiers died in World War One, vs. 3 million Frenchmen. Long before the arrival of the Americans, the French had already turned back the Germans at the

Battle of the Marne in 1914, practically single-handedly.

B) Under Napoleon, the French were victorious, for 25 years, against a coalition comprising nearly every other major military power on earth. The French were the most feared soldiers in the world.

C) Throughout its 2000-year long history, the French record of military courage and victory is unparalleled, as anyone with knowledge of the following periods will attest: Frankish, Merovingian and Carolingian times; the remainder of the Middle Ages, including the 100 years war, which was ultimately won by France; the Golden Age which began with Henry the Fourth, Richelieu and the Musketeers, and culminated with Louis the Fourteenth; the Napoleonic wars; the 19<sup>th</sup> century colonial conquests; finally World War One.

D) During the modern era, France lost its war in Indochina, as did America (which also had to accept the Korean stalemate).

Only in the distant future will America have the right to compare its own military record and prowess with that of France. For now, America's record is dwarfed by that of France.

3) France opposed America's invasion of Iraq because it has made shady deals with Iraq, and it did not want these deals to be jeopardized, or come to light. ***The opposite is the truth:*** The American war against Iraq is already being followed by sweet-heart business deals with companies like Haliburton, in which the Vice President of the United States holds an interest. The first and only part of Iraq that the occupying American forces have made totally secure so far are the oil fields. Surely this shows our country's priorities, and the ultimate objective of the war.

4) Again, On the subject of who is willing to fight and die for democracy: The French are accused of not willing to make the sacrifice, of being weak and cowardly: ***The opposite is the truth:*** Throughout the Yugoslavian wars of the 1990s, it was the French (and other Europeans) who went into Bosnia and other parts of the former Yugoslavia *on the ground*. The American government's policy (enunciated by Casper Weinberger under Reagan and Colin Powell under Clinton) was one of zero tolerance for ground casualties, allowing involvement only through aerial bombing. Let the European NATO members do the dying on the ground, said the Clinton administration. America is willing to help, as long as this is 100% risk-free. Consequently, many dozens of French (and other European) soldiers have died keeping the peace in Bosnia, but no Americans.

5) As to all the other vicious and racist slurs often heard on Jay Leno, uttered by comedians like Dennis Miller, printed on editorial pages. Things like, "the French are dirty, the French smell bad, etc.:" ***The opposite is the truth:*** France is the world's capital for perfume, soap and hygiene products. French medical science, from Pasteur to Montanier, is second to none. For example, France is in the forefront of the fight against AIDS. In proportion to size, more Frenchmen than Americans have won Nobel prizes. Frenchmen live longer and healthier lives than do Americans. French cities are cleaner and more beautiful than are American cities. The quality of life in France - including food, leisure, culture and transportation - is superior to that in America.

6) And what about freedom? What is this myopic belief that America has a monopoly on freedom and democracy? ***The opposite is the truth:*** France is *at least* as free and democratic as is America. In many ways more so. The hypocritical censorship of movies, television (the naked body!) And other aspects of life goes much further in America than in France, as do the periodical moral panics which convulse this country. Neither does France lock up millions of men - some major felons, many minor non-violent offenders - in a vast gulag, as does America, or execute dozens of them each year (some proven to be innocent after their death!)

The list could go on. You get the point: If ever there was a case of the pot calling the kettle black, surely it's the vast anti-French tantrum of self-righteous Americans at this time. But all forms of mob behavior eventually come to an end. And when people recover their senses, there is nothing left for them to feel but a deep sense of shame.

#### 47. TAKING ON THE RIGHT: DEFENDING RUSSIA, ASIA AND EUROPE

##### 1. The Soviet Union is Great!

*When I was a graduate student in the late sixties, I was a radical Left-winger. On November 21, 1967, I published this article in the Minnesota Daily, defending the Soviet Union. I was an idiot and I didn't know what I was talking about.*

Bridgman's anti-Russian tirade recently in the *Daily* is more of a cliché than the enlightened recognition of Soviet progress which, according to Bridgman, represents a trend in "nouveau thinking."

How often must we hear that Communist totalitarianism is responsible for Russian cultural sterility? How often have we been told that pluralistic America offers political choices and a dialectic political climate which Russia lacks? How much longer shall we hear that Russian technological progress was made possible only by the pillage of its satellites and the neglect of its consumers?

**And how valid are these arguments? That Russia produced one of the greatest literary upsurges in history during the 19th century is undoubtedly in part due to the blatant social and economic injustice in that country at the time. Would Bridgman prefer to see poverty, starvation, illiteracy, serfdom and feudal conditions restored so that Russia could once again produce a body of heartbreaking literary social criticism à la Dostoevsky? At any rate, contributions by Communist authors ranging from Gorki to Yevtushenko should not be overlooked.**

Highly debatable is also the assertion that tsarist Russia enjoyed greater political freedom than the Soviet Union today. If Stalin's NKVD was somewhat more efficient than Nicolas' Cheka, this was mainly a function of improved technology. But then, the potential contributions of modern technology to the establishment of the ultimate in totalitarianism are all too visible in the United States as well. It is not clear at this point which country, the United States or Russia, will reach 1984 first.

**And as far as Russian economic development is concerned, no amount of distortion can hide the phenomenal progress achieved over the past fifty years. The results were achieved, it should be noted, in spite of two devastating German invasions, in spite of the loss of forty million people and the destructions of a great part of the capital equipment and the infrastructure. Arguments such as Rostow's stages of economic growth, with its seductive charts showing the American rate of growth to be equal to that of the Soviet Union, quietly ignore these facts.**

In sum, a condemnation of Soviet manipulation of its cultural and political milieu is unjustified on two accounts: Coming from Americans anno 1967, such condemnations sound too much like projection. Moreover such manipulation, insofar as it did occur, is justifiable in view of the imperative priorities which took precedence over the luxury of cultural freedom and political

dissent. And one does not need to be a Marxist to admit that the sacrifice has paid off (*Minnesota Daily*, Nov. 21, 1967).

## 2. America and Russia Should be Allies

*In 1980, I was no longer a radical left-winger, to put it mildly. If you've read my innumerable anti-Communist tirades written in the 1980s ( above), you know that I was really, really "mining that vein" at that time. My mission during those years was to unmask the hypocrisy and the mendacity of my many Marxian colleagues.*

*But I also found room in my mind to write the following unpublished notes. Here, I favor an alliance with the USSR, which is contrary to everything else I was publishing back then.*

*What can I say? Inconsistent? So what? Didn't someone say that consistency is the mark of a small mind? Also, I am pretty proud of having foreseen in 1980 that our greatest struggle in the future would not be against Soviet Communism, but against Islamo-Fascism, and I even specify Iran. On the other hand, I did not foresee that Russia would become one of the world's major oil exporters. While I edited this a bit in 2007, the gist of it dates from 1980.*

Starting with the assumption that America is my country, that it a great country, and that it is more responsible than anyone else for maintaining world peace, here is my question: How can America best achieve its objectives?

Well, let's realize first of all that the greatest threat to the Western World in the future may not come from Russia, but from the Muslim World. We have just begun to see Iran's true face under its new theocratic leadership. Soon there will be a billion Muslims in the world. Their birthrate is astronomical. It is the fastest growing religion in the world, and many of its adherents are becoming radicalized. Muslim terrorism is becoming a worldwide threat. So far, it has killed many Middle-Easterners and Europeans, and only some Americans who happen to be traveling overseas. However, they may yet reach our shores, and God knows what weapons they will bring with them.

Furthermore, the Middle East possesses a majority of the world's oil reserves. I do not feel that underpopulated places like Saudi Arabia deserve their huge oil revenues, just because they are the lucky beneficiaries of a geological accident. OPEC holds a gun to the West's head. It can extort trillions of dollars from us and cause a massive transfer of wealth from our pockets *not* to those who need it the most - the wretched of the earth in Africa, South America, India and elsewhere in the Third World - but to the pockets of rich and corrupt oil Sheiks. Then, when those governments turn radical, they have the vast resources necessary for militarization, for the funding of international terrorism, and for the development of weapons of mass destruction - including nuclear and biochemical warfare. Thus, the Muslim world is replacing Russia as the real problem in the world.

So then, why can't we and Russia bury the hatchet and face our common enemy *jointly*? After all, we did it before. That's how we defeated Germany and Japan. If the two superpowers joined forces, they would be unbeatable.

Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the great powers - France and Britain, most notably - maintained a *Pax Europæana* and protected Western Civilization because together, they were unbeatable. Similarly, it is only through *coalition* politics that America and the West can hope to prevail today. And certainly Russia is a good candidate to become our partner. After all, she shares our Western culture. Furthermore, she is highly vulnerable to Muslim extremism on its Southern flank. Russia and the West share a common enemy.

### 3. Diary Notes from East Asia: Are Things over there Better than Here?

*In 1988, I did an extensive lecture tour of Japan and South Korea. I learned a great deal about those countries' strengths, and the concomitant American weaknesses. After my return to America, I gave the following lecture to several university audiences in this country, for example on September 16, 1988 to a group of Cal State students and faculty. Consider this to be a classic example of a jeremiad.*

I just spent several weeks on a lecture tour in Japan and Korea. I was wined and dined at a dozen universities, and I also spent time in out-of-the-way rural areas. It was red carpet treatment all the way and I experienced those cultures truly from within.

In Korea, my guide and I criss-crossed the country by train. We stayed at fancy urban hotels in major cities such as Seoul, Daejeon and Kyongju, and in modest abodes in the countryside. I slept on the floor most of the time, and ate most dinners sitting on the floor as well, with my legs either stretched out under the table, or sitting lotus position. Most of the people I encountered in the provinces did not speak English.

The culinary delights we sampled included raw squid (calamari) which still squirmed on my plate as it was being served. I had to bite the crunchy, bonelike suction-cup covered tentacles, in order to make them stop wiggling. I also ate a lot of seaweed, kimchi (spicy, fermented vegetables), the transparent, gelatinous, rubbery flesh of jelly fish, and dishes which contained cooked and softened fishbone. After several weeks, I flew home by way of Hawaii. The first thing I did at the Honolulu airport was to pig out on a double cheeseburger and french fries.

In Japan, I participated in a noodle-eating contest, where the object was to empty a maximum number of small cups filled with vermicelli - at one seating, of course. Each cup contained not much more than one large mouthful. I stopped at 17 cups. My guide got up to 47 cups. I was told that the record was 210 cups. The winner of such contests is considered to be a real man.

From Tokyo, we took the bullet train to cities such as Fukushima and Morioka, traveling at 200 mph and covering the 400 miles in under two and a half hours, including stops.

Tokyo and Seoul are gigantic cities. With a population of 21 million, Tokyo is the largest city on earth, three times the size of New York. Seoul's population of 10 million makes it considerably larger than Los Angeles. In Seoul, security measures were out of this world, due to the pending Olympics. Metal detectors and guards carrying automatic weapons were ubiquitous.

In both countries, people were so kind and generous that it became almost embarrassing. My hosts were simply over the top, incomparably more polite than we are in America. The incessant bowing and smiling, the laughing even when I said nothing funny, some of this in fact became irritating.

Each time that I walked onto the podium to give a speech, I was introduced with a pomp only appropriate for the President of the United States. A band played the Star Spangled Banner, American flags were unfurled, and I received an ovation before I even opened my mouth. Embarrassing.

Another interesting vignette: Earth tremors can be felt almost daily in Tokyo. People don't even talk about them any more.

\* \* \* \* \*

But this is not a travelogue. What I want to talk about today is the current social and political

situation in the Orient, and its relevance for America.

Japan has now become the new giant of Asia. This is leading to renewed friction with its neighbors, who resent the growing Japanese dominance. Many of the Korean professors with whom I talked told me that "Japan is arrogant." There is again the image of the "ugly Japanese," the equivalent of the Ugly American elsewhere in the world. Whether this is based on fact or not does not matter. What matters is that the perception exists. I noticed anti-Japanese attitudes even in Hawaii, where I stopped over on my way home.

At the same time, there is a revival of Japanese nationalism. I spent part of my lecture tour in the company of Professor Masakuki Muto. This man was a World War Two veteran, and he missed no opportunity to express his anti-Americanism, reminding me repeatedly of the horror of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

We visited the Korean National War Memorial, and his only comment was that it contained needless anti-Japanese propaganda.

He also expressed strong feelings of irridentism, as when he suggested to me that Japan should take Sakhalin back from the Soviet Union. He was more anti-Communist than a rabid American Cold Warrior might be. He compared Japan to ancient Carthage, saying that Japan was rich but vulnerable, because it relied on foreign mercenaries for its security, as Carthage did (the foreign mercenaries being U.S. GIs).

In Korea, the situation is somewhat different. The American media have recently made a big deal of some anti-American student demonstrations in that country. This is hogwash. In the three weeks that I spent touring half a dozen Korean universities, I did not see one single manifestation of anti-Americanism. There may be a handful of radicals somewhere in Korea, but they don't stand a chance. They mean absolutely nothing.

\* \* \* \* \*

But the main impression with which I came away from my extensive visit to these countries is this: They seem to be going about their affairs much better than we are, at this point. Let me be specific:

- Tokyo is the largest city on the planet. As I said, it is three times the size of New York City. Yet, it is amazingly clean, prosperous, crime-free and practically drug free. The subways are clean, modern, air-conditioned, without graffiti, and safe. And so are public buildings and restaurants.

The Japanese visitor to New York City must feel that he has descended into Dante's inferno. Same in Los Angeles. Consider the fact that this year, *L. A. gangs alone will kill 460 people*. That is *more than all the murders of Japan combined*, a country with a population of 125 million.

- The Japanese people live three years longer than we do. Their health statistics are better than ours in every respect, despite the fact that they smoke more and that their diet is highly salty.

- I hardly need to remind you of the Japanese economic miracle. Americans are increasingly becoming the *labor* for Japanese *capital*. American economists - always the apologists for whatever economic trends are under way - keep telling us how great it is that *Honda* and *Sony* and all the other Japanese companies invest so much in our country and thereby provide jobs to the American people. Well you know what? This is becoming the classical *colonial* relationship - America being the *colony*.

- For the past two decades, South Korea's economy has grown at a staggering *annual* rate of 15% to 18%. Recently it has slowed down to a "mere" 6% to 7%. Here in the U.S. We are happy when our economy grows by 3% *per annum*.
- Finally and most importantly, the main reason for their strength and our weakness is not economic but it is *cultural*. The reason that the future may belong to Asia is that their *values* are still healthy. Their work ethic is extremely strong. Their family system is not collapsing. Their community spirit is vibrant, as is their patriotism. These countries are practically drug free and crime free. Their sexual mores are similar to ours forty years ago.

Now don't misunderstand me: I don't foresee Japan overtaking America as the world's number one economy and the world's number one super-power. For that, Japan is too small. However, it is worrisome to see countries which in many ways are healthier than ours, and thereby highlight some of America's weaknesses. This is the lesson with which I return from Asia.

#### 4. Europe Must Reign in America's Policy Blunders

*And look at this! After all my invectives against those holier-than-thought, anti-American Europeans, here is a piece saying exactly the opposite. Suddenly, I see our European critics as right on, and I see America as moving dangerously to the right.*

*Again, does this mean that I am talking out of both sides of my mouth? Not necessarily. Here is what it means: I wrote this on November 8, 2003 (for the Dutch newspapers NRC Handelsblad). By then, America had indeed swung sharply to the right. The objective situation had changed. There was an awful lot of jingoistic, xenophobic breast beating and flag-waving. And you know me: If there is one thing I detest, it's the wolfpack mentality, lemming-like and sheepish conformity. So, this time, this is how it panned out.*

Dear *NRC Handelsblad* Editor:

Thank you for the opportunity to express my views to your newspaper. The question you asked was whether the Netherlands should primarily follow and support American foreign policy, or be part of a more independent European policy, with regard to such things as the Middle East, Iraq, terrorism, etc.

In my view, Europe, including Holland, must develop and maintain a strong and independent international policy, so as to counteract the dangerous and ill-conceived policies of the United States. Europe, including the Netherlands, has a wisdom and historical experience which America lacks. For example, France has played a positive role over the past year (even though its motives may be somewhat suspect). France has paid a high price for what is perceived, here, as cowardly and self-serving anti-Americanism. "French bashing" is now *de rigueur* in the U.S. in many quarters (e.g. Thomas Freedman at the *New York Times*).

A strong and independent Europe is now more important than ever. The current US administration's foreign and economic policies are the most regressive since President Herbert Hoover. The entire country is veering sharply to the right. There is very little dissent, either in the media, in congress, or among the population.

Europe is rich, intelligent, resourceful and populous. Although it possesses little military power, its economic and moral position in the world is second to none. It is Europe's (including

Holland's) responsibility to counteract and to mitigate the damage done by US policies at this time. (*NRC Handelsblad*, Nov. 8, 2003).

## 48: TAKING ON THE RIGHT: BIGOTRY

### 1. Racism in Rural Wisconsin

*In 1968/1969, I got my first job as an Assistant Professor. It was at Stout State University in Menomonie, a hole-in-the-wall in rural Wisconsin. A terrible college in a terrible place, from which I escaped within a year. While there, snowed in among Midwestern farmers and lumberjacks, I rented an apartment which I shared with a black student. His name was Kent Denson, and we became good friends. Once, when he was looking for a part-time job in Menomonie, I went along to help. We experienced the townspeople's racial attitudes. Afterwards, we sent the following letter to The Stoutonia, the student paper, which published it on February 28, 1969.*

Here is a bit of recent local news: A couple of months ago, the two of us were going from business to business, looking for a job in Menomonie for Kent, who is a black student. One of the businesses where Kent had a job interview was *Don's Supervalue* Supermarket. Part of the interview went as follows:

Store Manager: "Now you understand, Mr. Denson, I'm only a middleman..."

Kent: "So?"

Manager: "Well you see, my first responsibility is to run a profitable business..."

Kent: "Would you please get to the point."

Manager: "I would really like to help, but I can't," the implication being that he would lose customers by hiring a black student.

The store manager went on to suggest that the local Chamber of Commerce convene and decide on a racial hiring policy for *all* Menomonie businesses. Then, perhaps, he could do something himself. This is what one calls passing the buck.

But the most amazing part of the interview came at the end. The manager asked whether this whole thing was a conspiracy - a federal sting operation perhaps?. After all, he figured, a black guy and a white guy coming in for a job interview together like this, well, they could be a bunch of agents sent by the Federal Office of Civil Rights, or somebody, to test racial discrimination in the locality, couldn't they? Such paranoia was actually uttered by the store manager!

Isn't this a microcosm of what is ailing the country? Let's look at ourselves, right here in Menomonie, and blush of shame.

Kent Denson, graduate student, and Tom Kando, assistant professor (*The Stoutonia*, Feb. 28, 1969).

## 2. By the Time We Got to Pheonix: Another sort of Bigotry

*In 1972, the country was torn apart by the Vietnam war and by the Counterculture. On the Left there was the massive contestatory movement, and on the Right were the millions of Americans seething at the "hippies." I was leaning to the Left of course, although I was not a drug-using hippie by any means.*

*A Dutch friend, Paul, came to visit me in California. I took him on a long trip around the southwestern United States, to show him the splendor of America. This was his first visit to our country. Well, the trip was a negative experience. We were treated the same way as the hicks treated Peter Fonda and Jack Nicholson in Easy Rider. While weren't shot at, establishments refused to serve us, and we were maltreated in other ways, even though we drove a car, not a motorbike like Captain America, and we were well-groomed and well-behaved ( I must admit, I had a beard).*

*So my Dutch friend saw America at its ugliest. Afterwards, we wrote the following article, which was published in the The Phoenix Gazette on January 20, 1972, and in the Sacramento Bee on January 28, 1972.*

We would like to share with the readers some experiences we recently had while traveling in the United States, and some concerns about a country that has become the adopted homeland for one of us, and has always been a source of leadership for both. One of us had, until a few weeks ago, never been in this country. The other has been living here as a naturalized citizen for more than six years. Thus, to celebrate a first visit to the country and the revival of an old friendship, we decided to visit some of the spectacular parts of North America during the two-week Christmas recess. Our discussions, while driving, first centered around ecology and the environment. As we left urban America behind and began to cross the Rocky Mountain states, there was the liberating feeling that at least portions of the world still remain habitable.

However, at this point a problem became manifest, a problem whose first symptoms appeared as we drove east on celebrated Route 66: Whereas 10 years ago public establishments in several parts of the country were decorated with racial segregation signs, we now have a new target for the small store owner's venom - the hippie. Hardly a store, restaurant or bar in the small towns along our route failed to post such signs as: "No shoes, no shirts ... no service," or: "We may refuse service to anyone," or: "Hippies not welcome."

Because one of us wears a beard, however well-groomed, the problem soon became more acutely personal: Service in the various establishments was generally bad, dirty looks more common than friendly chatter. On one occasion, a waiter first greeted us with the words: "What will it be, gentlemen?" and then, observing the beard, added: ".. well, ;let me retract that."

\* \* \* \* \*

By the time we got to Phoenix, America had clearly shown its ugliest face to us. We reached the Arizona capital late at night. Approaching the center of town, we noticed, literally, more police cars than private automobiles. Some officers were frisking a fellow, some were handing out traffic citations, some were merely patrolling, but most were helmeted, even inside their bulletproof cars.

We stopped for coffee at the first restaurant in sight. We were immediately told the establishment was closed, in spite of the fact a sign, "Open 24 Hours," and half-a-dozen customers were being served. We left, but seeing at that point another customer entering and receiving service, we decided to go back in and ask for clarification. Now, the waitress told us that she would simply not serve us, and when asked why, she exploded, saying: "Look, I don't have to give reasons. Get

out!"

Equally deplorable was the attitude of the police officers who were contacted: Not only were they partial to the coffee shot (perhaps predictable), but they also used perverted "constitutional" arguments to convince us that we were infringing upon the owner's civil rights!

Consider the impact of such incidents on a foreign visitor who has for years been exposed to conflicting reports about the United States and who now, for the first time, travels in America in order to put various conceptions to an empirical test.

For someone spending his first week in this country, the general impression gained from this trip was sad: Here were Americans, frustrated by deteriorating social and economic conditions, hostile towards strangers, towards politicians, towards hippies, towards anyone, in sum, perceived as a threat to their precarious security.

Whereas the initial purpose of our trip had been to explore the beauty of the Southwest - one of us, familiar with that part of the country, wanted to show its archaeology, its people and its architecture to the other, who himself is an architect, who had never been here but had deep-seated expectations about America - the country let us down most miserably. One of us, now returning to Europe, can thus testify that America is, indeed, in trouble. The social and political climate we sampled was a fearful, hostile and reactionary one, one that rejects the foreign, the new and the different.

The other, staying behind, has the feeling he is fighting battles already lost. Say what you wish about the inadequacy of our sampling technique as we draw our morose conclusions, the general impression remains a depressing one. Bad vibes, as the current colloquialism goes.

THOMAS KANDO, PhD.  
Cal State University, Sacramento

PAUL HERTZBERGER.  
Amsterdam, The Netherlands

(*The Phoenix Gazette*, Jan. 20, 1972; *Sacramento Bee*, Jan. 28, 1972).

#### 49: TAKING ON THE RIGHT: OTHER ISSUES

##### 1. Is Labor Part of the Military-Industrial Complex?

*In 1969, I was directing all my venom at conservatives, including capitalists and the Military-Industrial Complex. Here is a letter I printed in the Sacramento Bee on August 21, 1969, criticizing an editorial which blamed labor unions to be in cahoots with the Military-Industrial Complex.*

Let me point out a logical error with ideological implication in the August 12 column by Mankiewicz and Braden:

The authors point out that the "military-industrial complex" has been renamed the "military-industrial-labor complex." The new element of "labor" was added to the label by Defense Secretary Melvin Laird although, according to the two columnists, one would expect this addition to come from the New Left.

I don't see why the addition of "labor" to such a pejorative label as "military-industrial

complex” might be expected to come from the left rather than from our conservative Secretary of Defense.

The point is this: The “M.I.C.” - whatever it is - has recently become the target of senatorial, editorial and general public attack. It has been identified as the vague but real cause of war, exploitation and injustice, and it stands for such things as “business,” “capitalists” and “the Pentagon.”

Well then, doesn't it make much more sense for a conservative, business-oriented secretary of defense than for the New left to put labor into the same bag as this evil force? As a matter of fact, isn't it in the interest of the M.I.C. itself to redefine the power structure and thus hopefully get additional groups to share the blame for our skyrocketing military budgets and continuing military involvements? (*Sacramento Bee*, Aug. 21, 1969).

## 2. Are Professors to Blame for Campus Riots?

*I published the following letter in the Sacramento Bee on May 29, 1970. I was protesting the fact that the State legislature blamed professors for stoking the flames of Vietnam protest. Could it be that I lost my job at the University of California in 1972 because I had printed too many Left-wing letters and articles critical of the legislature, governor Reagan and powerful people in general?*

The scandalous policies of the state government toward our system of higher education deserve strong reaction. The Senate Finance Committee voted against a pay raise for the University of California faculty. It would have done the same for the state colleges had it not been for an oversight. California faculty members are falling the farthest behind in the race with inflation.

The motives behind these punitive political acts against the teachers are disgusting: Senator Howard Way was quoted saying that the members of his committee are unhappy with campus unrest, that they therefore feel that professors do not deserve a pay raise, and that such punitive

measures are justified because “academia is not in touch with the rank and file citizen of California.”

This is all very wrong. To begin with, it is assumed, unjustly, that professors are the cause of campus disruptions. While several teachers indeed sympathize with radical political action, it is neither logical nor ethical to punish the entire profession as a collective scapegoat. Those professors who sympathize with the activist students generally follow them, rarely lead them.

Of course, there is a more general way in which professors can be held accountable for current campus unrest: The good teacher teaches his students to question; he advocates and practices academic freedom, freedom of thought and speech, and other constitutional rights; above all, he refrains from transmitting values and ideas unquestioningly. In a way, then, libertarian quality education is a cause of current student unrest, but only in this way, and nothing short of the total destruction of this type of education will accomplish the restoration of the totalitarian law and order on the campuses which some conservative politicians seem to have in mind (*Sacramento Bee*, May 29, 1970).

## 3. The Manufacture of Deviance

*In the earlier section on Crime, I reproduced several pieces in which I deplored America's excessive amount of punishment - mostly in the form of imprisonment. The present article is placed here because it is liberal. It was originally written on January 20, 1995, and it was never published. I edited it and updated some of the statistics in 2007.*

The idea that punishment can contribute to deviant behavior originated in early Sociology, for example in the works of Emile Durkheim and Kai Erikson. It became the central idea of *Labeling Theory*, as spelled out in the works of Edwin Lemert, Nicola Tannenbaum, David Matza and many others.

Briefly, the difference between Labeling Theory and the conventional understanding of deviance is this: The common-sense lay view is that people are punished *because* they are "bad," i.e. deviant. In contrast, *labeling theory reverses this and says that people become bad because they are punished*. Labeling theory is also known as "societal reaction" theory. It is also associated with Robert Merton's concept of the *self-fulfilling prophecy*. The logic here is that if someone is punished and he is told that he is bad, he may as a result of this live up to the expectation and become bad. Merton based his idea of the self-fulfilling prophecy (1964) on W. I. Thomas's famous concept of the *definition of the situation* (1923) and on the philosophy of *Pragmatism*.

Labeling Theory is based on the distinction between primary and secondary deviance. Primary deviance refers to committing a deviant act. Secondary deviance refers to the punishment/labeling which society may inflict upon you. Table One presents the gist of Labeling Theory

Table I: Labeling Theory

		Primary Deviance	
		Yes	No
Secondary Deviance	Yes	1	2
	No	3	4

Table One generates four logical possibilities:

1) A person commits a deviant act and is punished/labeled for it. For example you are caught D.U.I. and you go to jail. You now have a criminal record. You are a deviant.

2) A person doesn't commit any deviant act, yet he is punished/labeled. This is unjust and it happens to scape goats and to many other innocent victims of labeling. If this happens to you, you become a deviant, even though you haven't done anything wrong.

3) A person commits a deviant act but gets away with it. You do D.U.I., but you are not caught. You are not a deviant.

4) A person doesn't do anything deviant, and is not labeled deviant. This is the normal scenario for most people most of the time. We are not deviant.

The great insight provided by Labeling Theory consists of cell #1 in table One. It points to the fact that often, in life, people become deviant *not* because they do anything wrong, but because they are labeled deviant - for no valid reason. Bad luck.

Today, labeling theory is basically *the* sociological understanding of deviant behavior. It is part of a sociological orientation called *Symbolic Interactionism*, which is the major Pragmatic, interpretive, constructionist and humanistic orientation in the social sciences. Here is what I mean by this mouthful of jargon: The social sciences are desperately positivistic. They want to be “scientific” and deterministic, as in Skinnerian Behaviorism and quantitative social survey research.

However some sociologists, including me, don’t go along with this, because we recognize that human beings have *free will*, and human beings make moral decisions. Therefore, we describe human behavior humanistically, the way artists have done for millennia. Postmodern sociology, cultural sociology and feminist sociology do this, but they are all derivations of *Symbolic Interactionism*, which has been sociology’s great “loyal opposition” for nearly a century, and to which I proudly belong.

Labeling Theory is not a high-fallutin abstraction. It addresses the countless real-life situations in which, for example, youngster are treated negatively - scolded, reprimanded, punished, neglected, humiliated, verbally abused - by parents, teachers, cops, counselors and other authority figures. Labeling Theory predicts that such negative treatment by adults *precedes* and *causes* misbehavior. Or less rigidly, it suggests that societal *over*-reaction to minor mischief aggravates the misbehavior. Had Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn committed their minor foibles in today’s professionalized and bureaucratized society, they would have been processed through the juvenile justice system and criminalized by it, according to Labeling Theory.

The empirical validity of Labeling Theory has been the subject of endless debate. One can get carried away with it, as has been done often in a culture prone to simplification and exaggeration. In a silly sort of way, we all subscribe to Labeling Theory today, witness the “self-esteem” rage and the oft-heard defense plea of every vicious criminal who claims that “society made him do it.” Tabloid television, Oprah and Dr. Phil, the popular culture and many anti-social and dysfunctional individuals themselves are always on the look-out for excuses which will exempt them from responsibility for their actions. The favorite excuses include bad parents, bad teachers, bad cops, bad employers and bad societal forces such as poverty and racism. The widespread acceptance of the labeling perspective by the masses is a flattering testimony to sociology’s unwitting influence. Paraphrasing Kingsley Davis, who said the same thing about Functionalism half a century ago, we could say that “today we are all Labeling Theorists.”

So let’s not carried away. Let’s agree that there are countless people who engage in terrible acts of deviance, who hurt people and who are a menace to society. And what is worse, they and their sympathizers abuse Labeling Theory to absolve them of guilt and to mitigate their punishment.

With this caveat, I nevertheless want to salvage Labeling Theory. A theory is valuable as long as it sensitizes us to possibilities which may be empirical realities. Labeling Theory does this to a significant degree.

\* \* \* \* \*

Let’s look at deviant behavior in America. Remember, there are two aspects to deviance - primary deviance and secondary deviance: (1) There are people who commit deviant acts and (2) there is societal reaction to deviance. America is unique among countries in that it ranks extremely high on *both* aspects of deviance. The growth of America’s deviant population has been explosive and frightening. Our country has been manufacturing deviant people on a scale that is unprecedented in modern history. It is this explosion which I would like to try to explain.

America's rate of incarceration is the highest in the world. Because this country has the third largest population in the world, we may also have the largest absolute number of prisoners, although China may have more prisoners than we do because its population is more than four times ours.

There are now over two million Americans behind bars. That is a rate of 750 per 100,000 population. Add to this juvenile reformatories and juvenile halls (which house about 100,000 kids), mental hospitals and other places of involuntary confinement (community treatment programs, halfway houses, people under house arrest, stockades, etc.) And the rate jumps to 800. We also have nearly three million probationers and half a million parolees. This brings the total number of Americans under the jurisdiction of the criminal justice system to five and half million, i.e. about 2% of the population.

For men, the percentage is 3%. For black men, it is 8%. For black men between the ages of 15 and 45, it is 20%. Think about it: *One out of five black males is a criminal.*

Nils Christie wrote in *Crime Control as Industry* (1994) that no other Western country comes anywhere close to our rate of incarceration, and even among totalitarian police state one would be hard pressed to find one with comparable rates. In Europe, the rates of imprisonment range from 100 per 100,000 in Britain to 92 in France, 47 in Norway and 36 in the Netherlands. Asian rates range from 140 to 21. Before its collapse, the Soviet Union locked up 350 people per 100,000, and under white rule, South Africa locked up 330.

There is regional variation in the rates of incarceration in the United States. The District of Columbia locks up an astonishing 1600 people per 100,000. The next highest rate is in Texas, with about 900. Although California has the largest absolute number of prisoners, its rate is moderate compared to other states, namely 600. Minnesota locks up the smallest percentage of its citizens, namely 110 per 100,000.

So what? You may say. We lock up a lot of people because we have to. But that is precisely the main point of this article: The growth in imprisonment *does not reflect* a corresponding growth in crime. In fact, crime has been *declining*.

Examples of needlessly punitive legislation include (1) Three Strikes Laws, (2) Megan's Laws, (3) Jessica Laws and (4) mandatory sentencing laws: (1) Three Strikes Laws require long (20 to 27 year) sentences for a third felony, even when that felony is relatively minor. (2) Megan's Laws require sex offenders to register, and their addresses must be posted on the Internet and known to the entire community. California was the first state to enact both of these measures, Megan's Law under Proposition 83 in 2006. (3) Jessica Laws are another California innovation: They impose stringent residency requirements on all (former) sex offenders, making it illegal for them to live in vast tracts of our cities. (4) Mandatory sentencing ties the hands of judges and juries by imposing specific sentences - or narrow ranges - for specific crimes. Notice that much of this legislation is nicknamed after a victim - usually a young girl who was abducted, raped and killed. (The California Three Strikes Law was a direct response to the murder of Polly Klaas). There is no question that the perpetrators of such crimes should be executed - as far as I am concerned, slowly tortured to death. However, basing legislation on rare and celebrated cases is not wise.

As a result of such legislation, our prison population has been growing by 6% *per annum*. At this rate, we will soon reach a situation whereby one half of the population guards the other half. Eventually, *all* Americans would be behind bars. This would happen shortly after the middle of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Clearly an absurdity.

It is time to recognize what Labeling Theory has been telling us, namely the extremely

destructive nature of this type of crime control. It is destructive because incarceration is *crimogenic*. In other words, it does the *opposite* of what it intends to do. It does not reduced crime, it *contributes* to crime.

\* \* \* \* \*

What accounts for America's punishment craze? There are only two possible answers: (1) There is so much crime and deviance that society has no choice but to punish more. This was the position taken by Senator/Sociologist Daniel Patrick Moynihan in a recent syndicated column. (2) Society over-reacts. Both answers have merit.

First, let me dispose of answer #1. Moynihan was a good sociologist and a brilliant politician. There is no doubt that America is more criminal than most other Western countries. Why? The best explanations for America's high crime rate are (A) cultural and (B) demographic. (A) We are culturally more diverse than just about anyone else, and much of the diversity stems from immigration. Also, Southern culture stresses values of honor, manhood, revenge and violence

more than other regions do, and this is one reason why there is much more crime in the South than in other parts of the country. (B) Our population is still younger and growing more rapidly than those of Europe and Japan. No factor correlates more strongly with crime than demographics, notably age. Domestically, the most criminal ethnic groups are also the youngest - blacks and Hispanics. Internationally, the same applies. Areas of the Third World with extremely high crime rates - Latin America and Africa - also have very young populations. A third factor is often said to contribute to America's high rate of violence: Guns. This explanation also has merit.

The one explanation preferred by liberals and by ignorant people is the economic one: They like to say that crime is caused by poverty. This is nonsense by and large. Most violent crimes (rape, murder) are not motivated by financial gain. Most property crimes (white collar crime, burglary, shoplifting) are not committed by poor people. There is more crime in rich contemporary America than there was in poor America during the Great Depression, or in poor India today, etc., etc.

\* \* \* \* \*

But it is answer #2 upon which I want to focus. This answer is much more correct than answer #1. How can I prove this? Simple: There is no correlation between the rates of crime and incarceration, either in (A) time or in (B) space: (A) Incarceration rates have been *rising*, even though crime rates have been *falling*, and (B) the states which punish the most (e.g. Texas) do not have lower crime rates than the states which punish less. Furthermore, you cannot argue that crime is down *because* we now punish more, since the decline in crime *preceded* the rise in punishment.

So there is no doubt that America vastly over-reacts to crime and to deviant behavior - as documented by my earlier prison statistics. Why do we do this?

We do it because our society is a unique combination of First World and Third World features. You see, *culturally* and demographically we share features with the Third World, but *structurally* we belong eminently to the First World. Culturally, we are a vast melting pot not unlike Brazil. Our population is in flux. It consists of millions of immigrants and of people of color.

*Structurally*, on the other hand, we are not only part of the 1<sup>st</sup> World. Heck, we are probably *more* 1<sup>st</sup> World-like than any other country in the world. Our economy and technology

are still the most advanced, our government is rational, democratic and stable, our bureaucracy is vast and highly sophisticated. We lead the world in the scientific and medical approach to the control of human behavior, as in psychiatry and sociology. We are *the positivist society par excellence*. More than anyone else, we believe that human beings are mechanisms which should be studied and repaired, the same way as machines (computers) and organisms (plants, rats). In table Two, I give some examples of countries classified by using these two distinctions.

Table II: Deviant Behavior, and Its Control across the World

		Deviant Behavior	
		<b><i>High:</i></b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> world-like CULTURE High diversity And youth	<b><i>Low:</i></b> 1 <sup>st</sup> world-like CULTURE low diversity (and old pop)
Weberian rational efficiency. C.J.system is a professional bureaucracy. Medicalization of deviance	<b><i>Yes:</i></b> 1 <sup>st</sup> world STRUCTURE	United States	Europe, Japan
	<b><i>No:</i></b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> world STRUCTURE	Brazil, etc	Tribal societies

Table Two is a typology. The differences between countries and regions of the world are matters of degree. You might also object that other advanced countries, for example in Northern Europe, use more therapy and less punishment than we do in America. This may be so, but the ideology of the *medicalization of deviance* is stronger in America than anywhere else. Applied psychology and sociology have produced social work, probation, parole, psychiatry, counseling, therapy - in sum the armies of what we call the “helping professions,” but what might better be called the “social control professions.” In America more than anywhere else, the control of deviant behavior - Criminal Justice - is a scientific, quasi-medical profession, and it is in the hands of a vast bureaucracy which claims all of the Weberian features of rationality.

The medicalization of human behavior is spreading. Individuals and families are not “bad,” they are *dysfunctional*. This is a medical word. New diseases appear every year. That alcoholism is a disease and not a moral flaw has been accepted for a long time. But new conditions are added to the list every year - obesity, attention deficit, oppositional defiance syndrome, repressed memory syndrome, sexual addiction, assorted nervous conditions, etc.

Another facet of this industry was highlighted in a *Sacramento Bee* article on February 26, 1995. This is the explosive growth in disability payments to people who do not suffer from any demonstrable illness, but who have assorted “nervous conditions.” This is one more example of the growing application of the medical model to all social problems.

Some of the most preposterous attempts at “professionalizing” the language come from relatively uneducated personnel, such as cops and prison guards: Recently, an inmate at Sacramento county jail was found dead in his cell in the morning. In a media announcement, a prison spokesman told the press with a straight face that the “cause of death was *unexplained death*

*syndrome.”*

My critique of psychiatry is not new. Its pernicious power was noted many years ago by Thomas Szasz, Erving Goffman, Stanislas Andrevski and others. Szasz felt that psychiatry was a pseudo-science, the 20<sup>th</sup> equivalent of witchcraft. But today, the medicalization of deviant behavior has progressed to a degree which Szasz could not have imagined.

\* \* \* \* \*

Why has America embraced the medicalization of deviance more fully than any other country? Is this the wave of the future, and are we just a little ahead? Well, one “cultural” reason could be that we, Americans, tend to have a more naive faith in a bright future ruled by science and technology than others. For example, science fiction is an American invention. With us, the belief in flying saucers and extra-terrestrials is a tradition. I have never seen (Star) Trekkies in Europe.

But there is a much more important reason for the advent of the medical-therapeutic criminal justice system, and it is economic. The social control professions have now become a massive vested interest which involves millions of jobs and trillions of dollars. Without crime and its control, our economy would collapse. The prison-industrial complex includes cops, prison guards, the courts, lawyers, probation officers, parole agents, social workers, psychologists, sociologists and the security technology sector. This machine’s hunger is insatiable, and it must be fed. This is what necessitates the creation of a nationwide system of prisons in our country, a system whose size now vastly exceeds the famous Gulag Archipelago described by Alexander Solzhenitsyn in the Soviet Union.

America may represent the wave of the future, as it has done so often in the past. As Europe becomes more diverse due to large immigration, its crime rate is rising. It may follow in the footsteps of America in its social control practices, using more advanced and more efficient scientific technologies to process and to warehouse a growing deviant population. The dilemma of this course of action is twofold: In the first place, it is financially ruinous. Already, states like California are neglecting education and other public services because the prison-industrial complex is devouring a growing part of the budget. Furthermore, the process is a vicious cycle, as the growing rate of incarceration - whether or not accompanied by psychiatric services - adds to the crime rate, rather than subtracting from it.

#### 4. Is America Becoming Green, Blue, or Fascist?

*In 1971, Charles Reich published his pop sociology bestseller The Greening of American. The great sociologist Peter Berger and his wife Brigitte wrote a commentary about that book in the New Republic, pointing out that it was naive. I, in turn wrote the following commentary on the Bergers’ article, which I sent to the New Republic on June 22, 1971. While they didn’t print it, they forwarded it to Peter Berger, and it led to a nice exchange of letters between us.*

The article by Peter and Brigitte Berger on "The Blueing of America" has further stimulated the debate around the basic issues raised in that article.

It is clear that the Berger’s prognosis is far more realistic than, say, Charles Reich's. No sensible sociologist can deny that. Indeed, a couple of million upper-middle class drop-outs (an optimistic figure, at that) are not going to do irreparable damage to the technocracy and its

continued existence. Indeed the most significant (and, incidentally, latent) function of the emergence of the "love generation" may be the creation of room at the top for a new elite.

Being of Eastern European birth and Western European academic training, I have attributed my sympathy for Professor Berger's historical and "relativistic" sociology (e.g. in The Social Construction of Reality) to my own "Europeanness." The *Blueing of America* is refreshing to someone with my background but now living in an intellectual environment characterized by the ahistoricity and myopia most typically found in such writings as Reich's *The Greening of America* and, more generally, in pop sociology.

There is only a slight aftertaste for which I deplore the article. Let me try to put my finger on the exact objection:

While it is probably true that we are currently witnessing a process whereby room is being created at the top for hard hatters and children-of-hard hatters to move into, this observation should not be made without the additional and equally true observation that this circulation of elites may represent a neo-fascistic trend.

By minimizing the historical significance of the flower *children* and by (alas, accurately) dismissing such appraisals as Reich's *The Greening of America* and Roszak's *The Making of a Counterculture* as a wishful dream rather than realistic prognosis, the Bergers have only done half of a necessary task and thereby made it possible to misinterpret their position as one of condoning some sinister trends in current American history. To repeat, it is equally important to note that the replacement of the old wasp-Jewish Northeastern establishment by a new working-class derived Texas or orange-county style elite, *if total*, may move this country significantly closer to fascism (please forgive the worn-out but handy shorthand term:

I am referring to such features as working-class and "nouveau riche" political attitudes, jingoism, racism of the non-liberal type, materialism and the social-Darwinistic mentality so often found in the self-made man.

In sum, what is lacking in the Bergers' "realistic" prognosis is the equally undeniable sociological fact that the more complete this circulation of elites is and the more completely the old liberal establishment abdicates its leadership responsibilities, dropping them into the hands of used-car dealers and Wallacites (or their children), the more likely it is that the morality and good taste that remain in this country's foreign and internal policies and in its dominant cultural values will degenerate into a new technocratic barbarism.

### 5. Is America Moving Towards Fascism?

*By the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup>, the distribution of wealth in America was deteriorating. That is, the inequality against which the Western world had made so much progress for a couple of centuries was now again on the rise. Humanity was losing ground. I found this alarming, and I wrote about it many times. The following is an excerpt of my contribution to a seminar on this subject that was held on February 21, 1999.*

According to Michael Harrington – the leader for many decades of the American Socialist Movement – there is no doubt that the third millennium will be the age of collectivism; the only question is whether it will be a progressive, democratic collectivism, i.e. social democracy or a right-wing, regressive collectivism with elements of fascism and feudalism.

I share Harrington's, dream and pray that the world will move in the direction of greater equality and democracy. However, I am a pessimist – both by temperament (I am Jewish) and based

on the facts as I see them and interpret them. So, I am *afraid* that we may be regressing toward greater amounts of inequality, hierarchy, stratification, injustice, violence by the powerful against the weak, exploitation of the poor by the wealthy, etc., even as the world becomes more collectivistic.

Let me briefly discuss four areas in which this trend may be observed:

**1. The economy:** As we all know by now, there is a growing polarization of wealth and income, both domestically and in the world at large. As Tennyson said in a different context, the center cannot hold.

In the US, the erosion of the middle class is slow, but unmistakable. The distribution of wealth and income is getting more uneven. Most Americans feel that they are doing well because they have jobs. However, they have to work harder and harder in order to stay even, and they hardly even manage to do that. It takes a dual income to support a family as comfortably as a single income did a generation ago.

Internationally, parts of the Third World are regressing towards a state of utter chaos and barbarism. Africa, for example, is now in worse shape than when the Europeans began to colonize it. There, the Malthusian prophecy is being confirmed as we speak.

Meanwhile, the number of millionaires and billionaires is skyrocketing. So there is no question that inequality is on the rise.

**2. Capitalism Uncontested:** The problem is that since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Capitalism is once again essentially unchallenged. Prior to that, the welfare state, started in this country by FDR, was a way for capitalism to somewhat coopt the working class, which it did out of fear that Socialism/Communism would spread to the West.

The motivation for foreign aid to the Third World was the same, even though much of the economic assistance given out during the Cold War popularity contest between the two superpowers consisted of military aid.

But today, Western Capitalism has no "Evil Empire" to fear, and it is once again becoming "unfettered," with little fear of triggering working class revolution. Union membership is at an all-time low and class consciousness has all but vanished.

**3. American Hegemony:** America now enjoys hegemonic power in the world. It is not clear how long this will last, but for now, we have assumed the role of world cop, and no one is in a position to challenge this.

Russia? That's a laugh: Their population is now less than *half* ours, and declining. The Soviet Union's population was much larger than ours. Russian life expectancy has declined by a decade since 1986. Their GNP is smaller than that of the Netherlands or that of Florida, and declining. Their nukes? Yes, still dangerous, although soon probably obsolete and out of commission.

So we go around the world bombing countries selectively: Iraq, Serbia, Kosovo, etc. I am not necessarily opposed to military intervention overseas. We *can* play a positive role in the world if we do this with the support of the U.N. and join forces with others, for example NATO. However, all too often we act unilaterally, and worse, *arbitrarily*.

**4. Punishment:** But for the best documentation of some emerging fascist tendencies, I go to our criminal justice system. I know a great deal about this. I teach it: We are, without a doubt, the most punishment-oriented country in the world, and as the first post-modern society, we may

represent the wave of the future. Foucault would be aghast at how his analysis of punishment has been confirmed with a vengeance in the US today:

- ! 5.5 million Americans are under the jurisdiction of the criminal court, i.e. 2% of the population.
- ! 2.5 million Americans are behind bars, i.e. far more than in the military.
- ! That's 800 per 100,000 people, i.e. *by far* the highest rate in the world.
- ! By comparison, the Europeans lock up between 30 and 100 people per 100,000, depending on the country. No other country locks up as high a proportion of its people, not Communist China, not Cuba, not Iran, not Iraq, no Third World dictatorship, no one.
- ! We also execute between 50 and 100 people per year. That's more than *any* other industrialized country, most of which don't have the death penalty.
- ! Nor can we blame this on a unique necessity to punish so much. Our crime rate is not higher than it is in Europe, Canada, Australia and other comparable countries. In only one category do we stick out, namely murder, and that's because we have so many guns.
- ! This frenzy of punishment goes on even as our crime rate has been declining precipitously for a decade, reaching the low levels of the early sixties. For example, NYC's murder rate has declined by 75% since 1990!
- ! What we have, then, is hysteria and fear of crime, while crime is declining. I am sure that Media sensationalism has a lot to do with this.
- ! Over half of all prisoners are black, even though blacks make up less than 13% of the population. The use of deadly force by cops against blacks is three times higher than it is against whites. The disproportionate representation of blacks behind bars is due, in large part, to the very harsh way in which we treat drug offenders.
- ! Indeed, the two major sources of the astounding growth of our prison population are both "lifestyle" violations, not violent felonies: They are drug violations and sex offenses. These are the two areas about which our society is now in a moral panic. We give life sentences to third-strikers whose third strike is possession of a marijuana joint (a parole violation); we send to prison 18-year old boys who have sex with their 17-year old girlfriend (statutory rape); we lock up people for possession of pornographic materials; we pass Megan's laws and Jessica laws.
- ! Our prison population has been growing by 6%-7% per year: At this exponential growth rate, we will *all* be behind bars by the year 2052 -- *all* of us, all of you, judges, cops, correctional officers, grand-mothers, babies; there will be no one left outside the gates to guard the prisoners!

- ! In a 1999 cover story of *The Atlantic Monthly*, Eric Schlosser discussed the emergence of the *Prison-Industrial Complex*: the punishment business has now become highly profitable. Small communities with dying economies are begging the States to build new prisons in their jurisdictions. We have a *reverse NIMBY* syndrome: Yes, by all means, please, build a prison in my backyard! Furthermore, an increasing number of penal institutions -- prisons, juvenile facilities, boot camps, group homes, etc. -- are *private*. The punishment business is highly lucrative. Group homes commonly receive up to \$7,000 dollars from the State *per ward*. That's \$84,000 of the taxpayers' money to house and feed *one child* for a year -- twice what an average household lives on for a year. A couple in charge of a group home with half a dozen kids can make good money, this way, right? There are systemic economic forces in place that encourage institutionalization of as many people as possible. If you have money to invest in stocks, let me give you a piece of advice: invest in prisons. The motto now is: If you build it, they will come.

Conclusion: So, is the future likely to be collectivistic? Yes. Why? Because it is humanity's ecological and historical destiny. Ecologically, as population density increases, solutions to human problems *must* be increasingly collective. Individualism is a luxury that could only be afforded in thinly populated places such as the Wild West.

Historically, the trend has been toward collectivism. Nation-states have grown ever larger, and with organizations such as the League of Nations and the UN, we are hobbling, however clumsily, toward World Federalism and World Government.

Historically, individualism has been most characteristic of the Western World, particularly the Anglo-Saxon world. Even Continental Europe (e.g. France and Germany) has a more Statist tradition than England and America. So the extreme individualism typical of our country -- and to a lesser extent of other parts of the Western World since the Renaissance -- is somewhat of an anomaly. China, for example, in its thousands of years of history as the largest and often the most civilized nation in the world, was always collectivistic -- nothing like Western Europe and North America.

However, while I agree with Michael Harrington that the future is going to be collectivistic, I fear that it will *not* necessarily be a just, egalitarian, democratic and free sort of collectivism. My model for the present and for the incipient future is the Roman Empire. Collectivism, international stability under the leadership of a major power (America, for the time being), combined with great injustice, inequality and suffering. Rome was powerful, stable, lasted 12 centuries, and it produced impressive technology and culture. At the same time, its economy was based on slavery, militarism, imperialism and genocide. It was the prototype fascist state. That may be the world we are becoming, in a modified form.

Fascism has been defined in many different ways. One definition, based on the model of Mussolini's corporative state, is this: A collaborative system between the corporations and the State, supported by a strong police and military force. That is why Ralf Dahrendorf described the emerging social system in America and some other similar societies as a sort of "benign" fascism.

#### 6. Is America Becoming too Religious?

*On January 24, 2005, I gave the following speech at Antwerp's School of Comparative Religious Studies. In my presentation, I described the growing influence of religion in American*

*politics, something which I deplore.*

It is a pleasure to be invited to lead a discussion group of graduates students at this fine Belgian institution. Professor Lydia Vonk, who invited me, suggested my topic, which is the emerging relationship between Politics - or Policy - and Religion in America. Needless to say, my remarks can only be very general and merely suggestive.

**Retreat from Modernity:** There is today in America a resurgent undercurrent of resistance to modernity. This is ironic, since America is the leading modern country, the country which spearheads the fight against radical Islam fundamentalism. Modernity is the culture and attitude which emerged during the Age of Reason and culminated at the end of the Industrial Revolution in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A cornerstone of Modernity is Secularism. The modern Western World consists of secular democracies, the first two of which were the United States and France. The Revolutions of 1776 and 1789 established, first in those two countries and later elsewhere in the modern world, the fundamental principle of the separation of Church and State.

As anyone who has picked up a newspaper in the past 30 years knows, there has been a resurgence of virulent religious fundamentalism in the world in recent decades, most obviously in the Middle East, but also elsewhere. Until the end of the Cold War, most social revolutionary movements were still "modern." That is, they were primarily economically motivated, following some variant of Marxian dialectical materialism.

No more. Increasingly, the politics of social change have become either *identity politics*, or *religious politics*, in both cases pursuing *psychological* and *cultural* objectives, rather than the material objectives of old-fashioned socialism. In the West, where most people are not in dire economic need, social movements now focus on identity issues, e.g. gay rights, ethnic diversity, obese people, etc. In the Muslim World, insurgency is of a religious nature, aiming to restore fundamental religious faith, doctrine and conduct.

The main point I am getting at is that America is experiencing, in a watered down and considerably less lethal form, its own version of fundamentalist reaction against modernity, materialism and secularism.

The blurring of the Church-State separation is of concern to American secularists and to all others who are wedded to modernity and to the Cartesian tradition born in the Age of Reason - on both sides of the Atlantic. This includes the vast majority of academicians, for example myself.

Religiosity remains strong in America, whereas it has long been declining in Europe. But interestingly, it is in Europe and not in America where political parties still follow religious denominational lines. Many European countries still have their Christian Democratic Parties, or some equivalent, as does Germany. In the Netherlands, the three former denominational parties of the *Christelijk Historische Unie*, the *Anti-Revolutionaire Partij* and the *Katholieke Volkspartij* merged to form that country's equivalent of the Christian Democrats.

The American party system also covers the Left-Right spectrum, as all party systems do. But it would be inconceivable for our conservative party (the Republicans) to rename itself Christian Democratic. The American Republican Party is not the equivalent of a European Christian Democratic Party. It is the equivalent of a European *Liberal Party*, such as the VVD in the Netherlands and the Liberal Party in Britain. These are parties which represent *business*.

So there is a paradox. On the one hand, America is experiencing a resurgence of fundamentalism and an effort by those groups to impact politics. The Religious Right has had some influence on the Bush administration. It has succeeded in the election and in the appointment of conservative judges. On the other hand the American political system has purged religion from politics more effectively than the Europeans have.

I now turn to a more important paradox. This is the fact that America, in its present zeal to defend modernity and to protect it from the theocratic assault upon it by Middle Eastern fundamentalism, is *itself* taking on a crusading character. America's war in defense of modernity itself assumes religious aspects, becoming a religious, largely (Judeo-)Christian crusade. Of course it is far from becoming a mirror image of Islamo-fascism, and nobody in the American leadership would dare to suggest that the war on terror is a religious war. A clash of cultures, perhaps.

At home on the other hand, the Bush Administration has unabashedly put forward some of the Christian agenda and it has worked, albeit timidly, to weaken the separation of Church and State. And neither is this as great of a departure as it may seem at first. The U.S. has long been the most religious country in the Western World. Europe, Canada, Australia and the rest of the First World have become secular during the 20th century. Church attendance and membership are much higher in America than in other comparable countries. In Europe, churches and cathedrals are now cultural centers, respected for their beauty and for their historical significance, but not very full of parishioners on Sunday. Things are different in America.

But there is a caveat to this, as noted by sociologist Peter Berger: The high rate of American Church attendance and participation may be not be a sign of devout religiosity, but it may represent an important *social* network. In other words, Berger suggests that Americans go to church as more to keep alive their community ties than to express a deep spirituality.

Today, the growth of American religion is at the fringe, not in the mainstream. The mainstream denominations - Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Baptists, Lutherans, Catholics and Jews - are withering. On the other hand, Fundamentalists and fringe movements are thriving. These include 7th Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Scientists, Scientologists, Mormons, Unificationists, "New Age" movements such as Hare Krishna and Wicca, Black Muslims and other religious factions ranging from fringe cults to large but non-traditional orientations. The major political ramification of these trends - for America and for the rest of the world - is the blurring of traditional separation of Church and State.

Without delving into the controversy as to whether the current confrontation centering around Muslim fundamentalism represents a clash of civilizations, as the Bush administration and its supporters feel, *or not*, as most intellectuals, liberals and Europeans prefer, let me say this: Nothing is more threatening to modernity than the emerging *theocratic* tendencies arising in the Middle East, for example in Iran. In other words, the true antithesis - clash of civilizations, to those who subscribe to that thesis - is between secular modernity paired with religious diversity and freedom of religion on the one hand, and the theocratic systems already in existence in Iran, and advocated by the likes of Bin Laden and assorted Imams for the entire world (, *Antwerp's School of Comparative Religious Studies*, Jan. 24, 2005).

### 7. Is America a Bloated and Inefficient Bureaucracy?

*Sometimes, I loose patience with America. Here is a piece I sent to the Sacramento Bee on February 12, 1984. They didn't print it. It expresses my frustration at the country's failures and inefficiencies. Sorry.*

Jeffrey Record's article(Forum section, February 12) on the incompetence of the American military takes the words out of my mouth. Without in any way disagreeing with this excellent article, I want to amplify it a bit:

To some extent, our list of military failures must (also) be blamed on the interaction between the military and the civilian-political sector. Vietnam was lost both by the military and by

the civilian society back home and our political leadership (or lack thereof). For example, the Tet offensive was a major American victory - exactly the opposite of the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu - and yet it was subsequently redefined as a failure by the American public opinion leadership. The Iranian rescue operation failed in part as a result of Carter's wishy-washiness, giving only a half-hearted go-ahead to the mission, then aborting it midstream.

More importantly, American military incompetence is a specific instance of a general condition pervasive in all sectors of society. Mr. Record notes correctly the military's tendency to substitute money and technology for human effort and dedication. This is the central problem of post-industrial America everywhere. Our solution to our social problems is to throw massive amounts of money at them. Our attitude is: let the experts and the professionals solve the problem; let us spend more money and use more computers.

In a way, this means that we are trying to solve our problems *on the cheap*, because we want to do it without effort, without sacrifice, without personal involvement and responsibility. We pay others and buy machines to do the job rather than becoming involved ourselves. We feel that we can buy peace, national security, safety in our streets, equality, justice, education.

The problem of American incompetence seems to be system-wide and not merely limited to the military. It is now embedded in our irresponsible and indolent cultural value orientation, and in our calcified and top-heavy bureaucratic social structure. It is just as evident in education, in medicine, in the welfare bureaucracy, in law enforcement, even in sports. Each of these sectors is increasingly bloated, expensive, bureaucratized and incompetent. Each of them spends ever more and accomplishes ever less. Even the recent winter Olympics are a case in point: We had the largest and most expensive contingent of athletes in the world, yet performed dismally compared to other countries and compared to our own earlier record. The problem, then, is essentially moral and sociological rather than technical.

### 8. Another Example of American Decline

*And here is another measure of America slipping. Our seaports are no longer among the world's largest. I looked up these data on December 29, 2006.*

I just came across an article in the Dutch newspaper *NRC Handelsblad* about the port of Rotterdam, which was the largest in the world only six years ago, but has now slipped to third position. So I quickly looked up the standings of other major ports in Wikipedia. I was especially interested in how U.S. ports are doing. Table One gives the current rankings of ten major ports:

Table I: World Ports, Ranked

Port	Annual Tonnage
1. Shanghai	443 million
2. Singapore	423
3. Rotterdam	377
4. Nongbo (China)	268
5. South Louisiana	224
6. Hong Kong	230

Antwerp	160
New York	152
Long Beach, CA	80
Oakland, CA	16

Notes: There are other ports which are larger than Antwerp, so Antwerp, New York, Long Beach and Oakland are *not* the world's 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> largest ports. I just singled them out from a much longer list because they are of special interest. What is most indicative here, is New York's position: When I came to America in the mid sixties, it was the world's largest port.

### 9. How About a Balanced, Centrist View, for a Change?

*In late November 2004, right after George W. Bush's second-term re-election as President, I gave the following speech to a United Nations-affiliated organization in New York. This paper departs from what I usually do in two ways: (1) It is neither critical of America nor unswervingly patriotic. (2) It is neither on the "Left" nor on the "Right." It is "Centrist."*

**1. Preface:** I was recently asked to sketch the outlines of a "Head wing Philosophy" which might combine the core values of the Democratic Party (Justice, etc.) and those of the Republican Party (Freedom, Economic Productivity, etc) into a policy that would work for a nation in the present world.

The uncanny timing of this invitation suggests that there is some sort of providence at work: Just a few days earlier, right after the 2004 Presidential election, I had begun to jot down some ideas along these very same lines: What I had started to write down, as a playful exercise, was *what my platform would be if I ever ran for political office*. We all have these delusions of grandeur once in a while, you know, like "If I were in charge, this is what I would do about..." Then you fill in: "Iraq," "the Israel-Palestine question," "the oil problem," "the budget deficit," "the trade deficit," "global warming," "nuclear proliferation," or anything else.

Such opinions are expressed by nearly everyone in all sorts of conversations and they range from sophisticated ideas to...well, less sophisticated ones. For example, I was chatting about Iraq with my students the other day, and one of them expressed his exasperation with the bloodbath in that country by saying that if he were in charge, he would simply "make it a hole."

So I am now being given the opportunity to express my opinions as to what I would do if I were in charge.

**2. America Rightward:** First, let me tell you how I see current American politics in historical perspective: What is going on is the continued long-term retreat from the 1960s: The 60s were the culmination of a liberal political culture. This culture had taken roots starting in the 1930s with the New Deal, the Roosevelt era, the war against fascism and the (uneasy) alliance with the Socialist world.

True, the 1950s were a conservative *interregnum*. However, far too much has been made, in retrospect, of the alleged excesses of McCarthyism and the red scare of the fifties. This was a mere blip on an otherwise continuing liberal radar screen. And then, the 1960s saw the true culmination of a European-style liberal culture: Pacifism, Civil Rights, Feminism, abortion rights, the extension of social and economic benefits to the sick, the retired, the elderly and the unemployed, decriminalization of a variety of behaviors, abolition of the death penalty, growing secularism, etc.

A turn to the Right did not begin until 1980: The 1970s were still the aftermath of the Counterculture. In 1976, the country elected Jimmy Carter, a President who still reflected the soft, compassionate, feminine values of the liberal culture. In its foreign policy, America remained mired in paralysis, still traumatized by the Vietnam debacle. For a year and a half, the government was unable to move decisively to resolve the Iranian hostage crisis. The most distinguishing aspects of President Carter's agenda concerned the environment.

Only with President Reagan's election in 1980 did the immense American ship of state

begin to turn. Like the Titanic, the movement was slow. The first efforts at re-asserting national self-interest were timid: small tentative acts in Panama (apprehending President Noriega) and in Grenada. Then the more significant expulsion of the Sandinistas from Nicaragua. Gradually, America regained its self-confidence and began to move to the right.

Men are from Mars and women are from Venus. Similarly, Europeans are from Venus and Americans have now become more Martian-like. European politics are timid, effete, environmentally sensitive, pacifist, at best compassionate, at worst weak. The opposite of such Venusian politics are Martian values such as nationalism, unfettered free enterprise, at best courage and strength, and at worst imperialism and militarism. America is now becoming more Martian.

This movement has not abated. The Clinton years were a slightly liberal *interregnum*, but only slightly so. True, Clinton's foreign policy was once again timid - in places like Bosnia and Somalia, reminiscent of Carter's. However, Clinton was a centrist in many ways, relatively conservative in some cultural areas (e.g. his "don't ask don't tell" policy regarding gays in the military) and fiscally as well.

The rightward trend has not only continued but even accelerated since the election of President George W. Bush. I don't need to enumerate the current administration's policies to show that it is probably the most conservative regime this country has had in nearly a century. What is less clearly realized is that in democracies, the government mirrors the people. America is now a deeply conservative society. It reluctantly tolerates the permanent blood-letting in Iraq which has already cost the lives of 1,200 Americans. A decade ago, the loss of 17 of our boys in Mogadishu was deemed politically unacceptable. The impact of September 11, between these two points in time, is obvious.

The conservatism is manifest on all other fronts as well: The separation of Church and State is under assault. More and more school districts are ordering the teaching of Evolution and Creationism side by side, as two equally plausible "theories." The maximal exploitation of the environment to satisfy our energy needs takes precedence over conservation. We are retreating from the Social Welfare State, reducing taxes, planning to privatize not only much of the economy, but perhaps Social Security as well. And most significantly, many of these policies enjoy their greatest support among the young, not the old.

**3. Anti-Americanism:** Now let me tell you how I see foreigners' attitudes towards America. Anti-Americanism has existed since America's inception. European intellectuals have been particularly prone to it, as far back as the 19<sup>th</sup> century. I witnessed it throughout the first half of my life, growing up in France, in the Netherlands and other parts of Europe. I remember seeing "Yankee Go Home" graffiti on the walls of European cities throughout the 50s and 60s. To some extent, this is part of the territory. Any group that excels or dominates is going to be resented. Anti-Americanism has much in common with anti-Semitism.

Hatred of America fluctuates, because it is a function of both culture and politics. When America asserts itself and its self-interest, as it does now, anti-Americanism grows. However, an important part of anti-Americanism is also blind, bigoted prejudice, dislike of American culture and xenophobia.

Even if America were to behave in an exemplary fashion in all aspects of its foreign policy, millions would continue to hate us. The *mea culpa* attitude of many home-grown America-haters is misguided (think Michael Moore). They think that it is the behavior of Americans and of their government which causes foreign hatred of America. This is palpably false. For example, the Jimmy Carter era symbolized a more idealistic and moral approach to the world, yet anti-Americanism and assaults on Americans overseas were at an all-time high during those years.

The causes of the present frenzy of anti-Americanism can be divided into three:

1) Currently, it is true that the country is asserting itself and its self-interest in a more forceful and unilateral manner than it has for a long time. First of all, there is the war in Iraq of course, and then a whole host of other unilateral actions, including such things as our failure to sign the Kyoto Treaty and the International Criminal Court Treaty. However, American political behavior does not, by itself, explain the vitriolic hatred many foreigners feel for our country at this time.

2) A second and equally important cause of the uniquely high level of anti-Americanism at this time is President George W. Bush's individual *persona*: There is something viscerally repugnant about him to many intellectuals, particularly European and other foreign intellectuals. For one thing the man is from Texas, and that state, as every self-respecting so-called intellectual knows, is a barbaric place populated by gun-toting, beer-guzzling, illiterate cowboys. These people eat practically nothing but *meat*, for crying out. So uncivilized!

And then there is the President's alleged stupidity. He is simply perceived as a dumb guy. His limited verbal skills have been noted, and intellectuals have concluded that this indicates a low I.Q. How a dumb guy could climb to become the world's most powerful man, even with the help of his friends and family, is not clear. So the bottom line is that Bush and intellectual elites simply don't mix - they are like oil and water. And the reasons for this, as just outlined, ebb over into my third root of anti-Americanism - Culture.

3) The reason why anti-Americanism will exist forever is that xenophobia is a universal human feature, and hundreds of millions of people are prejudiced against Americans, many aspects of our culture and simply the way we look, dress and talk.

True, we export a great deal of culture overseas - products that range from Hollywood movies to McDonald hamburgers. True, some of this is not terribly wholesome. True, some of it is so massive and overwhelming that it may be viewed as cultural imperialism (even though it is empirically more accurate to say that America *exchanges* culture with foreign countries, rather than merely Americanizes other countries). Finally it is also true that foreigners are often *ambivalent* rather than opposed to American culture, as millions embrace Rock 'n Roll, MTV, McDonald and Disneyland.

However, one thing remains: a visceral and irrational hatred among some foreigners toward some aspects of American life. The best example of what I mean is the growing derision expressed by Europeans regarding American obesity. True, this is a greater public health issue in the US than elsewhere at this time. However, Americans are only marginally fatter than Europeans, and chances are that we'll tackle the problem ahead of the Europeans, as we did with smoking. But let a European see a fat American tourist walk out of a Restaurant, and there is no end to the calumnies: "Look at those fat slobs from over there! They have no self-control, they have no morals, they are evil..." (As if overeating is on a par with child molestation).

It is the same thing with foreigners' perception of crime, guns and violence: Many believe not only that most of us own firearms (true), but that we also kill each other in unparalleled numbers (false): As a criminologist, I am thoroughly familiar with the numbers: The European and American homicide rates have been converging for many years. Ours is now half of what it was 20 years ago (about 5 per 100,000), whereas those of many European countries are approaching or surpassing ours (the UK and France are now up to 2 or 3 per 100,000, Russia's is far higher than ours - perhaps as high as 30 per 100,000).

Also, some of the most smug European countries (e.g. Switzerland) have higher rates of gun ownership than we do, and yet there is no moral outcry about that. The relationship between gun

ownership and homicide rates is not clear at all. As to overall crime rates, including other violent crimes and property crimes, they are probably considerably higher in Europe than in the US. What we have here, then, is one of the mythologies supporting anti-Americanism in Europe.

Another such mythology concerns our death penalty: True, about half of our states allow the death penalty. Together, they execute a combined total of about 50 people per year. However, the Europeans believe that we execute thousands of people every year. In fact, one state is responsible for nearly half of all our executions (Texas), most of the remaining executions occur in the South, and many of the states where executions are legal hardly every apply that penalty.

Thus, anti-Americanism is often a broad dislike of how we live, often fed by outlandish exaggerations and myths. It extends to matters of taste, whereby foreigners condemn the taste of our beer, our wine, coffee, pizza and hamburgers, and the sound of our music, be it country and western, rap, jazz or rock. There is no use trying to deal with this.

**4. If I were in Charge:** Finally, let me briefly tell you my position on a number of political issues. As I said at the outset of my presentation, I was asked to come up with some ideas about how to reconcile some of the best ideas offered by the Democrats with the best that the Republicans have to offer. And as it so happens, the recent national election prompted me to do just that, because I have long felt uncomfortable with many things both parties are doing, while also agreeing with some of their positions. What I present in the following pages are merely examples of a few randomly selected issues which have been topical in recent months. I organize the issues into three groups: (1) Domestic and economic issues, (2) Cultural issues and (3) Foreign policy:

1) Domestic and Economic Issues:

A) The Republican administration has lowered taxes, especially for the rich. This was done in the name of economic productivity. The result has been an immense increase in the federal deficit and a growing gap between the rich and the poor. No other advanced industrial country equals the maldistribution of wealth in the United States. In this respect, we resemble a Third World Country. In my opinion, taxes need to be raised, especially the marginal rates on the highest income brackets. We need to return to Clinton's policies, which had finally begun to produce a federal surplus for the first time in half a century.

B) I strongly oppose the Bush administration's efforts to privatize (read: dismantle) Social Security. The system needs to remain secure. It is wrong to gamble with the only safety net people have in old age. Handing over your retirement plan to the private sector may make some people richer, but it may also cause some to lose money. Furthermore, it would further increase the federal deficit.

C) The fall of the dollar against foreign currencies, especially the Euro, is catastrophic. The Euro is now worth 1.4 dollars. The British Pound is worth \$2. For many years, our multinational elite' mantra has been that a weak dollar is good for exports. I am not an economist. However, looking back historically, I cannot think of a single nation that has benefitted from the deliberate destruction/devaluation of its currency. Economies based on strong currencies are strong, economies based on weak currencies are weak. Does the corporate elite believe that when the dollar reaches the value of the peso, Americans will be better off? Of course not. What they do know, I am sure, is that a weak dollar helps their profits, even though it gradually impoverishes the American population.

D) I have the same argument against the globalization of our economy and the outsourcing of millions of American jobs. This helps the multinationals' profit margins, while impoverishing the American people and exploiting the Third World workers who are paid a dime per hour.

E) America's medical system is also flawed. Granted that the majority of the middle and

upper class receives adequate medical care, and that the United States is in the forefront of medical research. Nevertheless, the situation is unsatisfactory. For one thing, we have sixty million people without medical insurance, and the number is rising fast. And despite the fact that this country spends a far greater proportion of its gross national product on medicine than any other country, our population is not as healthy and does not live as long as those of several other advanced western countries. We need socialized medicine, similar to what they have in Canada and Europe. Republicans, conservatives, the Medical professions and the drug manufacturers keep telling us the chimera that socialized medicine lowers the quality of medical care and leads to rationing and long waiting lines. Perhaps a less expensive and more equitable system would cause some individuals to be denied some highly expensive procedures. However, the bulk of the population would benefit. The true beneficiaries of our byzantine medical system are the medical profession (American physicians are overpaid), the drug manufacturers and most of all the insurance companies.

Additionally, Americans must be permitted to import prescription medications from Canada. The FDA's argument that this might be unsafe is a bad joke: Overall, Canada is a healthier and more hygienic country than the U.S.

On a personal note: My mother lived with us in California for 20 years. As she became old and more likely to become ill, she moved back to Holland, where she came from originally. The medical provisions over there are at least on a par with ours, and they are practically free to all. From this standpoint, the decision to move my 85-year old mother back to the Netherlands was an easy one.

F) It is imperative to deal with the combined energy/environment problem: America's reliance on the private automobile and the internal combustion engine is excessive. It causes wars and contributes to the destruction of the planet. Clearly our entanglements in Iraq and the rest of the Middle East would be far less if that region were not the world's primary oil producer. Only an imbecile can deny this. Similarly, only a blind man can deny the reality of global warming. Satellite photos of the Arctic icecap show that its size has declined by one third over the past generation. America makes up 4% of the world's people, but consumes 37% of its energy. Even the Europeans and the Japanese rely on private cars less than half as much as we do.

Gradually switching to alternative energies and public transportation is a must. We also must get on board of the Kyoto Treaty. We are in the rear guard of the environmental movement, and we remain there at our own peril. Our domestic oil production is declining fast. It peaked in the 1960s, when we were the world's largest producer. Ever since then, we have had to import a larger percentage of our oil every year, and this is causing us (1) to wage wars, as we have to police the oil-exporting regions of the world and (2) to become poor.

G) We have lost control over our borders. I have never been able to comprehend why a country would give up its sovereignty by tolerating an illegal invasion of millions upon millions of people. Yet that is what is happening: We admit about one million legal immigrants to this country every year, which is good, but we also let another million or more in illegally, which is terrible. I therefore favor a vast increase in the budget of the INS, much tougher enforcement of border controls, and the expulsion of, rather than amnesty for, illegal immigrants.

On a personal note: I came to America on a green card after waiting for my turn for *five years*. Then, I waited *another five years* before becoming a citizen. Furthermore, Uncle Sam sent me a draft letter a few months after my arrival to the US, even though I was not even a citizen. Speaking of paying your dues!

Yet, muddle-headed liberals like California Green Party candidate Peter Camejo have run on a platform that advocates eliminating the distinction between legal and illegal immigrants!

H) American criminal justice is also a mess. Unlike most of my knee-jerk colleagues, I am not in principle opposed to capital punishment. What do you do with people like Hitler, Adolf

Eichmann, or Scott Peterson for that matter? I have no problem with keeping execution as an option the State has to render justice.

However, there is no question that our criminal justice system is by far the most punitive in the world: We lock up 750 people per 100,000. The rates in Europe, Japan and other parts of the Western world range from 30 to 150. There is no country on earth which locks up a higher percentage of its population than we do. With the possible exception of China, which has four times more people than we do, America has by far the largest prison population in the world (about 2.2 million) Three-Strikes laws should be curtailed, as they have led to the incarceration of many non-violent offenders. Unfortunately, we seem to continue to move in the wrong direction. California just overwhelmingly rejected proposition 66, which was an effort to reign in our Three-Strike Law.

Similarly, the hysteria about sex offenses must stop: Laws such as Megan's Law in states ranging from New Jersey to California have made it mandatory for paroled sex offenders to register in their community at all times. One can debate the merits of this requirement. However, further extensions of the Megan's Laws are now taking place: In many communities across the country, every member of the community is being notified of every paroled sex offender's address and whereabouts. Furthermore, there have been many false accusations and ensuing trials which, even once retracted or proven false, have caused unspeakable harm to those innocently accused.

In my view, America now has a prison-industrial complex whose manifest function is to reduce crime, but whose latent function is to contribute to a full-employment economy - replacing the military-industrial complex against which President Eisenhower warned a long time ago. To some extent, the prison industry is a powerful lobby that operates on the motto "if you build it, they will come." It is a job program for the several million Americans who work as correctional officers, guards, police officers, prosecutors, defense attorneys, parole and probation officers, psychologists, social scientists, and the helping professions. This machine needs to be fed, and society must continue to supply the bodies that justify these people's jobs.

I) In general, policies aimed at reducing social injustice should be guided by economic disadvantage, not race, gender, sexual preference, or other group differences. Some jurisdictions are moving in that direction. Texas, for example, has Affirmative Action policies based on income rather than race or gender. Under those policies, poor rural white folks are more likely to be the beneficiaries of affirmative action than wealthy blacks. This is as it should be.

My own profession of Sociology has become hopelessly wedded to the holy trinity of *Class, Race and Gender*. My argument here is that when it comes to social programs, and who should benefit from them, *social class* should indeed remain a major consideration, but not race and gender *per se*. In other words, the government has a responsibility to help the economically disadvantaged, but it is not obligated to create a color-blind or a gender-neutral culture.

## 2) Cultural Issues:

A) During the 2004 Presidential Election, Eleven States voted to make gay marriage unconstitutional at the State level. Fine. I, too, favor the *status quo* in this regard. The issue of gay marriage is a symbolic distraction from more important issues. The overwhelming majority of the American people support the traditional conception of marriage as a union between one man and one woman. God knows that the traditional family is already under duress from many disruptive forces. Discrimination against homosexuals is wrong and it must be forbidden, but I oppose the legalization of gay marriage.

B) When it comes to the abortion debate, I would oppose the repeal of *Roe vs. Wade*, as would the vast majority of American women, as well as men. Without getting into the minutiae of

the debate and without discussing the exact point in the development of the fertilized egg at which abortion should or should not be permitted, let me just say that I favor the status quo, i.e. the continued legal status of at least early-term abortion.

C) A growing number of school districts in the United States teach Evolution and Creationism side by, as two equally plausible “theories.” This is abominable. It is a regression from the progress achieved by Science and Reason which began during the Renaissance and culminated in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. One would have hoped that the Scopes trial pitting Clarence Darrow against William Jennings Bryan represented the final victory of reason over unreason. However, the backsliding is now under way. To equate a belief in Creationism with the best available scientific theory on the origins of species is a travesty.

There are nuances, of course. There are those who try to reconcile the two positions through concepts such as “intelligent design,” i.e. God as the ultimate cause. Fine. The most brilliant attempt at reconciling science and religion is Teilhard de Chardin’s *The Phenomenon of Man*. If school districts truly wish to educate their students, let them expose the students to such works. However, they should not place the literal biblical story of genesis on the same footing as Darwin’s work in high school biology classes.

D) I oppose the politicization of language, the criminalization of certain words, the mandatory imposition of politically correct speech, and the outlawing of certain appellations, e.g. forbidding schools to name their sports teams and their mascots such things “Indians,” or “Redskins.” Political Correctness is especially virulent in the academic community, where it has caused some people to be fired. People have been punished for using generic masculine, or for using the word “Negro” instead of “African American.” Laws are being proposed in State legislatures to forbid schools from naming their football teams “Indians.”

E) Over the past three decades, my discipline of Sociology has degenerated to the point where it does one thing and one thing only: It documents social inequality. In this, it focuses on four variables to the exclusion of nearly every else: The holy trinity of *Class, Race and Gender*, plus a fourth one: *Sexual preference*. And because the social sciences, as practiced in the academic community, inform so much of what is passed off as social policy at the level of government, the same focus is also found there. In my view, only economic inequality (social class) deserves a central place in the academic discourse and research which leads to applied social policy, i.e. the government spending taxpayers’ money for remedial social programs. As to the other variables - race, gender and sexual preference - they should have no place in political platforms, social programs, government budgets. As long as Democratic candidates continue to make campaign speeches drenched with those words - as was the case with Kerry and Edwards in 2004 - they will lose elections, and rightly so.

### 3) Foreign Policy:

A) The war in Iraq must be brought to a successful conclusion. That is, Iraq has to be pacified. If this requires sending more American troops, so be it. If that, in turn requires the reintroduction of some sort of selective draft, then that too, will have to be done. I realize the utter impracticality of trying to re-introduce the military draft in the U.S. This might cause major riots. However, the involuntary extension of reservists’ Iraq tour of duty already represents a *de facto* draft. Furthermore, the US military is already stretched so thin around the world, that any sudden additional international crisis might necessitate biting this bullet...

B) Similarly, the war against terrorism must be pursued vigorously - hopefully with international support, unilaterally if need be.

C) The United States should promptly sign the Kyoto Treaty. In general, the Bush administration should not act as unilaterally as it has done in the past. That said, neither should our

government wait for or expect a great deal of international support before it acts to safeguard its national interests.

**5. In Conclusion:** What I have presented are merely a few selected examples of policies which I would favor “if I were in charge.” The coherence of the “package” which I would recommend lies in this: It is guided by (1) a wish to keep America strong, (2) a tendency to do what works for the *collective* benefit of the people, not just a free-wheeling society in which some thrive and many flounder, and (3) reason. As I see it, many of the Bush policies have weakened the country, but many of those proposed by the Democrats might weaken it as well. The Republicans’ domestic economic policies are disastrous for the country in the long run, while the Democrats’ foreign policies would jeopardize our security. Also, the Democrats have a deplorable tendency to engage in symbolic and divisive politics, focusing on things such as gay marriage instead of trying, for example, to bring back labor unions which are so sorely needed in our “Walmart labor market.” Thus, I would combine Republican foreign policies with Democratic domestic economic policies, and exclude the politics of symbolism favored by the Democrats.

If this makes me somewhat of a leftist, so be it. However, remember the distinction made during the 1960s between the “Old Left” and the “New Left?” Well, I am more of an Old Leftist. As a Democrat, I am an FDR/Truman/Lyndon Johnson Democrat, not a Kerry Democrat. As Republican, I am an Eisenhower Republican, not a George W. Bush Republican.

All of this is predicated on the conviction that America must remain strong, and if America remains strong, it can do far more for the rest of the world than if it is weak. The question now is whether America will be the Rome of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, or emulate Spain instead.

Ancient Rome thrived for 12 centuries, because it combined strength with wisdom, enlightened self-interest with courage and temperance. Spain on the other hand, from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onward, squandered itself. At one time, its empire encompassed one fifth of the world’s area and population, and the wealth it extracted from the Western Hemisphere dwarfed that of the rest of the world. However, its obstinacy, its arrogance, its belief in its own omnipotence and above all its wasteful ways drove it to perdition (*U.N. Affiliated Conference*, New York, Nov. 2004).

## 50: PLAYING: SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, COMPUTERS, MATH, “PROGRESS.”

*So there has been an awful lot of politics in my life. But what is life without playfulness? Here, I return to some of the funny, silly, playful pieces I have written over the years. I hope you enjoy them.*

### 1. Can We Make Things Disappear by Looking at Them?

*This piece speaks for itself. No, I was not on acid when I wrote it (on February 8, 1983). It has not been published, but it should.*

As a Sociologist trained both quantitatively and phenomenologically, I have often toyed at the intersection of these two opposite world views. Here is the contrast in a nutshell: Quantitative science assumes - correctly - the fundamental distinction between the *observing subject* and the *observed object*. On the other hand, phenomenology does not.

In Sociology, the “phenomenological” view is represented by *Symbolic Interactionism* and the tradition which stresses the facts that (1) social reality is very much *defined, interpreted, constructed*, and *not* an objective given, and therefore, (2) the observing subject - for example the

sociologist - is himself part of the reality which he studies.

Postmodernism carried this insight to an extreme. It relativizes reality to the point of denying that it exists. According to authors like Baudrillard, there is no fundamental difference between reality on the one hand and myth or fantasy on the other. Everything is a narrative.

Phenomenology is fine and dandy in the social sciences, but it does not apply to the physical world. Attempts to transfer the perspective from one to the other can lead to absurdity. Postmodern insights are often helpful at the cultural level, but they have no application in the natural sciences.

Sometimes a funny thing happens. It is the misuse of the great discoveries of quantum physics. Paperbacks have popularized such things as the *Heisenberg Principle*, also known as the uncertainty principle, and Schrodinger's thought experiment with the cat. Heisenberg discovered that at the quantum level, it is not possible to measure *both* the position *and* the momentum of an object accurately, due to the observer's position. Schrodinger demonstrated that at the quantum level, measuring something (for example a cat) interferes with that which is being measured.

Now let me be the first to confess that my understanding of quantum physics is nil, and that everything I know about it comes from popular culture. On the other hand, I am familiar with the phenomenological literature and its sociological applications. In Sociology, the principle of "reactivity" and the blurring of the subject-object distinction have been central principles since Max Weber. All "interpretive" sociological paradigms accept this as axiomatic. And as I said, the postmodern extremists get so carried away that they sometimes deny the existence of objective reality altogether.

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All of this gave me a fun idea for a *Twilight Zone* or Roald Dahl-like article. This is not serious. It is a postmodern joke, a Science Fiction-like piece based on the (false) premise that PERCEPTION IS EVERYTHING.

I start with the phenomenological assumption that the subject-object distinction is NOT basic. Objects are what they are because of how they are perceived. And how they are perceived is determined by the subject's perspective. Now let's carry this one step further: A subject's perspective not only determines an object's size and shape, but its very *existence*.

A physical example: The moment a ship disappears beyond the horizon, it (visually) no longer exists for the subject who stands on the beach (although it may still exist in his memory).

Social example: the social problems of drunk driving, smoking in restaurants and a host of other behaviors did not exist before the 1980s. The fact that they do exist now has nothing to do with their objective magnitude. There is probably less drunk driving today, and there is certainly much less smoking. It is our perspective which has changed, thanks to the consciousness raising activities of such moral crusaders as the Surgeon General. So these social phenomena *loom* larger, but they are in fact smaller.

For this idea, let us use the following equipment: A large hexahedron, as shown in Figure One, which we'll call the Universe. And within this universe, there is a smaller box, as shown in Figure Two, which we will call the vanishing box. In addition, we are also putting a *subject* inside the Universe. His name is Alfred, after Alfred Schutz, the founder of sociological phenomenology

Figure I: The Universe



Figure II: The Vanishing Box



Let's say that our Universe is 10x10x10 cm = 1000 cm; and that the vanishing box inside it is 1 cm; (not drawn to proportion). Let us locate this object in the rear upper right-hand corner of the Universe. (That's as far as it can be, probably near Galaxy 3C 295 in the Constellation Boötes - Just kidding). And let us put Alfred at the exact opposite end of the Universe, namely in the lower left front corner. We can use the list of coordinates in Table One to indicate where the subject and the object are located.

Table One: System of Coordinates.

	Axis X (horizontal)	Axis Y (vertical)	Axis Z (third dimension)
Corner A (upper left front)	0	10	0
Corner B (upper right front)	10	10	0
Corner C (bottom left front)	0	0	0
Corner D (bottom right front)	10	0	0
Corner E (upper left rear)	0	10	10
Corner F (upper right rear)	10	10	10
Corner G (bottom left rear)	0	0	10
Corner H (bottom right rear)	10	0	10

So the object (the little vanishing box) is located at coordinates 10,10,10, and Alfred is

located at coordinates 0,0,0. Because Alfred has extremely good vision (or maybe an excellent telescope), he can see the little box at the opposite end of the Universe. And what does he see? He sees what he should see, namely a three-dimensional box.

However, Alfred now decides to move to another place in the Universe, namely the upper right front corner, i.e. to coordinates 10, 10, 0. He puts his spaceship into hyperwarp and he gets there in two days. After arriving at his destination, he takes a new glance at the object of his interest, namely the small box at the far corner of the universe. What does he see now? Lo and behold, the box has turned into a two-dimensional square, measuring 1 cm<sup>2</sup>! This is shown in Figure Two.

Figure III: Object viewed from position 10,10,1



It should be possible to express the change in the relationship between the subject and the object mathematically. The format of the equation is based on the phenomenological maxim that perception determines reality, i.e. that *the object (reality) is a function of the subject (perception)*:

$$f(x) = y$$

where input x is the subject (perception) and output y is the object (reality). Since the object is initially a cube measuring 1 cm<sup>3</sup>, the original functional equation is:

$$f(x) = 1 \text{ cm}^3$$

But after Alfred's first trip across the Universe, the object (y) has changed to 1 cm<sup>2</sup>. Therefore the equation must become:

$$\mu^\infty \bigvee_{x \heartsuit}^2 = 1 \text{ cm}^2$$

Next, Alfred takes another trip across the universe, this time to coordinates 0,10,9. Now what does he see, when he goes to his telescope and gazes at the object on the other side of the universe? Amazingly, the 1cm<sup>2</sup> large square has now become a 1cm long line! This is shown in figure Three.

Figure IV: Object viewed from position 0,10,9



Why has the object become a mere one-dimensional line? Because, remember, *reality = f(perception)*. Therefore, when Alfred only saw a flat square rather the initial cube, at the end of his previous intergalactic journey, that object *had truly become* a square.

Now Alfred must take one final trip. He must travel to coordinates 10, 0, 9. As soon as he arrives there, he takes a look at the object of his perennial curiosity, and you know what? It has disappeared altogether. It no longer exists! Actually, it is a point, but as we all know, points exist without having any size, mass, body or volume.

Q.E.D. I have demonstrated to you that you can make something disappear by switching your position. For example, you could try to do this with your mother-in-law. Of course, all of this could be done much more simply and less ponderously by just closing your eyes, burying your head in the sand or going to the bathroom. But this was a fun thing to do.

\* \* \* \* \*

One more thing: Remember that the mathematical equations which express the process are dictated by the phenomenological law which says that *the observed is a function of the observer*. So what happens next?

Well, at phase #3, the equation becomes:

$$\mu^\infty \overset{3}{V}_{x^\heartsuit} = 1 \text{ cm}$$

And at phase #4 it becomes

$$f(x \bullet 0) = 0 \text{ cm}$$

What does this mean? it could mean a number of things: (1) One, although you could make your mother-in-law disappear, there is a risk that you, yourself, will also disappear! (2) It is also possible that the object's value could become negative, as in

$$-1 \text{ cm} \quad \text{or:} \quad -1 \text{ cm}^2 \quad \text{or:} \quad -1 \text{ cm}^3 \quad \text{etc.}$$

In that case, the equation would look something like this:

$$f(-x) = -1 \text{ cm}^3 \quad \text{or:} \quad \mu^\infty - \overset{2}{V}_{x^\heartsuit} = -1 \text{ cm}^2$$

This means that both you and the object would move into a parallel, negative universe. In fact some postmodern scientists believe that nothing ever really disappears. When the object loses dimensions as a result of the observer's behavior, going down from three-dimensional to two-, one- and then zero-dimensional, those dimensions move over into the negative universe. (3) A third possible scenario is an *increase* in the object's dimensions beyond three - again caused by a subject's manipulation of his observations. This probably happens when the observer is on LSD.

## 2. Are Prime Numbers Fun?

*I like to dabble in all sorts of things. For example, on July 20, 1997, I played around with prime numbers. Here are my notes:*

Prime numbers are mysterious. These are numbers which can only be divided by 1 or by themselves. In other words, let's just say that they *cannot* be divided and yield an integer. For example, there are 25 prime numbers under 100, namely 2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, 17, 19, 23, 29, 31, 37, 41, 43, 47, 53, 59, 61, 67, 71, 73, 79, 83, 89, 97.

What is fascinating about prime numbers is that they have to be discovered. Of course, there are known methods to sieve out non-primes. The ancient Greek philosopher Eratosthenes (275-144 B. C.) Discovered the following method: cancel any number divisible by 3 to the largest prime number whose square is < than the largest number in the sequence. (The man was a genius. he also determined the earth's size with remarkable accuracy). But no one has ever come up with a mathematical formula which predicts the next higher prime number. Computers have gone into the trillions to lengthen the list of known primes, but one can always go higher. Euclid demonstrated in about 300 B.C. that there is an infinite number of primes.

For the fun of it, I computed the list of all prime numbers under 10,000, using a few simple principles: 1) only odd numbers qualify of course (except 2). 2) all prime numbers end on 1,3,7 or 9 (except 5).

## 3. Astronomical Numbers

*Astronomy is another subject in which I have occasionally dabbled. Here are some interesting astronomical factoids I looked up and computed on December 15, 1998.*

The astronomical universe is fascinating. Cosmology is fascinating. Here are some facts which may astound you, or at least interest you. I had fun looking things up and computing these numbers.

1) First of all, do you have any idea how far a light-year is? Well, light travels 299,793 kilometers per second. (Let's say 300,000). Or if you prefer miles - 186,282 miles per second. There are 31 and a half million seconds in a year (31,536,000). So a light-year is 5,874,589,252,000 miles. That's nearly 6 trillion miles. Six followed by 12 zeros. Six multiplied by 10 to the twelfth power.

\* \* \* \* \*

2) The Universe is 26 billion light-years in diameter. That's  $15 \times 10$  to the 22<sup>nd</sup> power. Or 1,500,000,000,000,000,000,000 miles. What's the word for such a number? After quadrillion comes quintillion, then sextillion, then septillion?

\* \* \* \* \*

3) The earth is about 8,000 miles in diameter. The sun is 150 million miles away, so that's nineteen thousand times the earth's diameter. The sun is 80,000 miles in diameter, i.e. ten times the earth.

The moon's diameter on the other hand is only half ours, namely 4,000 miles. The moon is about 200,000 miles away.

Mars is a bit smaller than we are; its diameter is 6,000 miles. It is 300 million miles from us.

Here are the solar planets, listed in order of distance from the sun: Mercury, Venus, Earth (remember, the stupid TV show? we are the Third Rock from the sun) Mars, Saturn, Uranus (no, don't say it), Jupiter, Neptune and finally poor Pluto, recently demoted from planet to..., to what? asteroid? "body"? Rock? Pluto is almost three billion miles away from us. No wonder nobody loves her.

\* \* \* \* \*]

4) Even though Pluto is the most distant (former) planet, it is practically our next door neighbor compared to stars.

Stars are very, very far. The closest three stars are Proxima Centauri, Sirius and Alpha Centauri. They are about four light-years away. And do you remember how unbelievably far even *one* light-year is? Almost six *trillion* miles! So the closest stars are 24 trillion miles away.

But even these distances seem small compared to galaxies. Our own galaxy, the Milky Way, is eight thousand light-years across. Captains Kirk and Picard may be shooting across the galaxy in hyperwarp, but only on television.

And what about beyond our galaxy? There, the distances become even more unimaginable. We have a "neighbor" galaxy called Magellan. And you know how close this neighbor of ours is? Seventy thousand light-years!

\* \* \* \* \*

5) You think the sun is pretty big? Actually, it is a smallish fourth-class star. They even call it a dwarf. Some stars are incomprehensibly large. They are called red giants. For example Antares and Betelgeuse.

Betelgeuse is so large that if its center were the sun, its outer surface would reach Jupiter, which is five hundred million miles from the sun. In other words, Betelgeuse's diameter is a billion miles, or one hundred and twenty-five thousand times larger than that of the earth. This is 5000 times greater than the distance to the moon. Just to complete one orbit around Betelgeuse with, say, something like our Space shuttle would take our astronauts 172 years. Getting to Betelgeuse, which is nearly five hundred light-years away, would take until the end of time.

\* \* \* \* \*

6) **A miniaturized version of the Universe:** If the earth were a sand pebble (say, one millimeter), the sun would be the size of a peanut, and it would be about 60 feet away. The moon would be one inch away from our "pebble" and it would be half a millimeter in diameter. Mars would be about the same size, and it would be about 40 feet away, i.e. at the street corner. Pluto, the most distant (former) planet would be a third of a mile away.

One light-year would be about five hundred miles, or from Sacramento to Salt Lake City. The closest stars - Proxima Centauri and Sirius - would be like Chicago from San Francisco. Our galaxy, The Milky Way, would be four million miles across, or twenty times the distance earth-moon. Magellan, our "neighbor" galaxy, would be ten times further, i.e 40 million miles away.

#### 4. Humans Will Never Travel to the Stars

*Using such astronomical statistics, I published the following finished article in the Spring 1995 issue of the Gold River Scene*

Now that we have landed on the moon and probed the outer limits of the solar system with our machines, we often assume that Star Trek-like interstellar travel is just around the corner.

Forget it. Not in a million years. It's one thing to cross the solar system and perhaps land on Mars or even circle Jupiter. It is quite something else to reach even the closest star.

The closest star, Alpha Centauri, is 1.3 parsecs away, or 4.3 light-year. Since light travels at over 186,000 miles per second and there are 31.5 million seconds in a year, light covers nearly 6 trillion miles in a year. Alpha Centauri is over four times farther than that, i.e. over 25 trillion miles away.

Assume that we somehow manage to double the speed of our currently most advanced space vehicles. Some of our satellites and rockets can now circle the earth twice in an hour, so let's assume that we can speed them up to 100,000 miles per hour. At that speed, it would take an astronaut 29,000 years to reach the closest star. That's about as much time as has lapsed since Cro-Magnon man!

Now let's assume, fantastically, that we can speed up space travel to one-tenth of the speed of light. Our rockets would now travel at 67 million mph (faster than any conceivable Indy car, right?). We could reach the sun in two hours. How long would it take to get to Alpha Centauri? 43 years, i.e. the better part of a lifetime. Note that such a fantastic vehicle would travel one thousand times faster than our fastest space ships (e.g. the space shuttle) are currently capable of. (Today, our fastest space vehicles reach one-ten thousandth of the speed of light, which is the same difference as that between a man walking and the speed of the space shuttle itself).

Were we to use our current state-of-the-art vehicles for interstellar travel, we would reach the closest star in 58,000 years, i.e. fifteen times longer than the time elapsed since the construction of the ancient Egyptian pyramids.

Let's face it: We may not be completely earth-bound, but we are certainly the prisoners of the solar system - *forever*. And from what we have learned about our sister planets in the 20th century, it is becoming apparent that earth is the only livable, lovable and life-filled body in our planetary system. The moral of this story? We better learn to do things right here at home, because there is nowhere else to escape to - there is no exit! (*Gold River Scene*, Spring, 1995).

#### 5. Popularization of Einstein's (Poincaré's) Formula Easily Misunderstood

*Cosmology, relativity theory, quantum physics and other such topics are fascinating to many lay persons. They continue to fascinate me, albeit in popularized form. On January 1 2002, I read David Bodanis' paperback about Einstein titled, what else, **E= MC square**.*

*The famous equation is prominent on nearly every page, waiting to be misunderstood, as it has been for nearly a century by nearly everyone, ever since it was first popularized. Here are some of my notes from that day.*

The only thing which Einstein's (actually Henri Poincaré's) famous **E= MC square** makes clear to the layman is that the amount of energy which can be released from the conversion of mass into energy is enormous. This is obvious, because the speed of light is such a large number, and

when you square a large number, it becomes astronomical.

But beyond that, the formula can only be a metaphor, or a summary of something so complex that a majority of people cannot understand it. I certainly cannot.

Clearly, the “C” in the formula - the speed of light - cannot be a specific number, even though it is a constant. It is called a “conversion factor” to convert units of mass into units of energy. Fine.

But Bodanis leaves us in a lurch. Worse, he insinuates specific quantities for C (See page 69). This is obviously nonsensical. You can’t simply plug a number into Einstein’s formula (the speed of light) and presto, you know how much energy you are going to generate. How the value of C - the conversion factor - is determined remains entirely unclear.

Let me emphasize how silly it is to suggest simply “plugging” in the speed of light for “C.” Light travels at 299,792 kilometers per second. This number is meaningless. If we use miles instead of kilometers, the number becomes 186,282. Equally meaningless. If we express the speed of light in mph, the number is 670 million, and C square becomes 448,900,000,000,000,000, or nearly 450 trillion (Bodanis, p. 69). This is the number Bodanis dangles before the reader.

Why does the author not provide more information about how the conversion factor - based on the speed of light - is derived? That is what he should do, instead of trying to impress the dumb layman with enormous and meaningless numbers, which only show the well-known facts that (1) light travels very fast (nothing can travel faster) and that (2) the conversion factor is huge and thus accounts for the enormous energy which the conversion of mass can produce.

I’m sure that Einstein and Poincaré thought about the speed of light in kilometers and not in miles, as do all scientists. This points again at how meaningless Bodanis’ figures are. If you express the speed of light *in kilometers per second*, the number is nearly 300,000. Then Bodanis would have to give C a value of  $300,000 \times 3,600 = 1,080,000,000$  kph, i.e. nearly 1.1 billion kph. So then, C square becomes  $1,166,400,000,000,000,000$ , i.e.  $1.2 \times 10$  to the eighteenth power, or nearly *1.2 quadrillion*.

Conversely, you could express the speed of light in *parsecs*, i.e. the distance light covers in about 3.3 years, i.e. slightly over  $3 \times 10$  to the 13th power in kilometers, or nearly  $2 \times 10$  to the 13th power in miles.

If Bodanis were to name the distance which a parsec represents (that’s the distance light covers in 3.3 years) “*One*,” (as he did arbitrarily with the mile in his calculations on page 69), then Einstein’s formula becomes the following *absurdity*:

$$E = m \times 1 \text{ square,}$$

$$\text{i.e. } E = m !$$

Well, you get my drift. As a well-educated layman who knows nothing about Relativity Theory and Einstein’s formula, beyond what I have picked up from such sources as Rod Serling’s *Twilight Zone* and David Bodanis’s book, I am disappointed by the the failure of the scientific community and of popularizers such as Bodanis to properly explain Einstein to the lay public. Nowhere in this book, or in any other similar book about Einstein written for the mass market, have I come across some basic and necessary explanations of what the components of Einstein’s famous formula mean. For example: (1) When we speak of the speed of light (C) are we speaking of time or space (i.e. distance)? (2) When we speak of energy (E), what units are we speaking of? (3) when

we speak of mass (m), what units are we speaking of? (4) finally, how do the alphanumerical symbols in Einstein's formula become converted to specific numerical quantities?

#### 6. Has Technology Made Life More Stressful? Will it Make Society Collapse?

*These were among the questions raised by Mary Massaro in Beyond the Pale (Diogenes, 2003). Here is how I answered them:*

Due in part to the technological explosion, life is more stressful. And society may experience more chaos and cacophony from the information overload brought on by the Internet and other computer innovations.

It is a fact that we are working harder and spending more time with our machines (computers, cell phones, DVDs, vehicles, etc.). Some recent studies have questioned whether the computer revolution has increased productivity. Americans today sleep 1 hour less per night than they did in the 1960s. When we go on vacation, it's for a week rather than for two months (as we did in the 1950s). We are now the hardest working society, ahead of Japan. There is a "simplicity movement" on now, wherein people are voluntarily deciding to be less acquisitive and consumerism. For now, this movement hasn't caught on very much. We'll see (Massaro, 2003: 96).

\* \* \* \* \*

As to whether society is likely to collapse because of over-reliance on technology, that's an interesting question. I suppose, we are becoming more vulnerable, as we just saw on September 11. One terrorist act can paralyze all the airlines, the entire economy, the whole society...

Collapse? I don't know...Maybe just more disorder and more helpless people who can't handle the complexities of life. Also growing stratification.

#### 7. Will the Human Brain Continue to Evolve or is this the Best we'll get as a Species?

*This was the last question I had to answer in Mary Massaro's book Beyond the Pale (2003). I did my best.*

Unless we mutate into a different species, this is as good as it gets. In terms of cephalic capacity and potential IQ, Cro Magnon man was as intelligent as we are. Our species has made no evolutionary progress in the past 50,000 years. If taken from the cradle and given a good education, a Cro Magnon man could obtain a Ph.D. with the same ease as I did. So it seems to me that progress will have to occur at the cultural level, not the biological level, at least for the next few hundred thousand years (Massaro, 2003: 131).

#### 8. This New Disease Belongs in the DSM: it is Called Ypologistophobia

*In the Spring of 2001, Time Magazine came out with a hilarious list of hundreds of phobias, many listed in the Diagnostic Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association. One thing*

I missed in Time's list was "Computer Phobia." Here are some of my notes from that day:

In the whole list of phobias in *Time's* cover story, I did not see *computer phobia*, or *computer anxiety*. Yet I know that this disease exists, because I sometimes suffer from it. Let me suggest a fine new name for the disease, and some of the symptoms. This will facilitate its inclusion in the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic Statistical Manual* next year.

**Name of the Disease:**

The disease is called *Intermittent Computer Anxiety Syndrome*, or *Ypologistophobia*, for short, which means "fear of computers" in Greek.

**Symptoms:**

1) Onset of the disease: In my case, attacks of the disease are typically triggered by a computer malfunction and by the anticipation of a technical challenge.

2) Initial physiological reaction: My body's first reaction is increased perspiration, rapid breathing and increased heart-rate.

3) Psychological responses: Psychologically, my mind anticipates failure, for example failure to download a web site or to connect two e-mail accounts.

4) Moreover, my mind is convinced that this failure will result in life-long catastrophe for me, my job, my family and my community.

5) Suicidal ideation.

6) Paranoia: I am convinced that the I.T. person to whom I turn for help will treat me with contempt and will think that I am a moron. He will do this, even though he *himself* will be utterly unable to communicate any thought or any information intelligibly. He will dazzle me by racing through dozens of incomprehensible procedures, treating my keyboard the way Arthur Rubinstein treated the piano. But he will not be able to answer a single question or explain a single problem to me in a coherent and logical fashion. And by the way, I know that by law, computer geeks may not be older than eighteen, and that they must have Asian ancestry.

**Who is at Risk?**

My wife and I have occasional bouts of this illness, but it is rarely virulent. On the other hand, my mother is highly susceptible to it. In general, elderly people have low resistance to the illness, while young people are practically immune to it. Why this is so remains a medical mystery.

Also, people who are anally retentive, compulsive-obsessive control freaks are the most vulnerable.

**Cure:**

The psychiatric experts quoted in *Time's* cover story about phobias remind us that the best cure for any phobia is to confront the problem and deal with it. In other words, DO precisely that which you are afraid to do. If you are afraid of flying, make sure you go on airplanes.

So I have resolved to take my computer with me wherever I go. When I am in Hawaii this summer, I will have my laptop with me at all times, on the beach, at luaus, on hiking trips. Because if it weren't for computers, nothing great would ever get accomplished. For example, computers would have greatly improved the quality of Shakespeare's work.

There is, however a side-effect to the cure: It can produce another disease, which is called *Ypologistophilia* - addiction to computers.

## 51: PLAY: SPORTS AND THE OUTDOORS

### 1. My First Boston Marathon

*For much of my life, I have been able to integrate my profession with my leisure: My most successful book was Leisure and Popular Culture in Transition (Saint-Louis: Times-Mosby, 1975, 1980). It made me some money, and put me on the map as a sociologist. The book was translated and published in Japanese, it was widely used in the United States, Canada, Australia and elsewhere. Because of the book, my wife and I were feasted to a month-long tour of Australia, all expenses paid, as the guests of the Australian government and Australian universities, where I was the keynote speaker at major national conferences. The book also caused me to be "raided" by Penn State University from Cal State. Without me ever soliciting this, Penn State simply called me and offered me a prestigious, senior faculty position, which I accepted. Beyond that, I published dozens of scientific papers and journalistic papers on recreation, leisure, culture and sports at venues all over the United States and overseas, including Sweden and Asia.*

*At the same time, I was an avid athlete and sportsman. Always trying to integrate my profession and my private life, I even began a book titled The Incomplete Book of Trout Fishing. This would be co-authored with my father-in-law Bob Costa, and it would be based on his extensive expertise in that department. It didn't happen.*

*On the other hand, I did become a reasonably good long-distance runner. And picking up major running allowed me to quit smoking without ever looking back. Until 1980, I smoked one or two packs a day. Since then, I have never even had a craving or nostalgia for cigarettes.*

*I won several Northern California races in my age group, including a half marathon. (Masters, i.e. over forty). For a while I was sponsored by the running-shoe manufacturer Saucony. I ran my first Boston Marathon on April 30, 1982. Boston is the grand-daddy of marathons, and it is more competitive than other marathons, because you have to qualify for it. So I was proud and excited.*

*Within an hour after I finished, I gave the following telephone interview to the Sacramento Bee. They reprinted my spoken words and called it an article written by me.*

(Tom Kando is a professor of sociology at Cal State. He qualified for this year's Master's Division of the Boston Marathon. With a lifetime best of 3 hours, 7 minutes, Kando finished Monday's race in 3:22.36. Following is his account of a dream come true.

By Tom Kando Special To The Bee

BOSTON - I witnessed a tremendous hype, an enormous amount of commercialism. Many people still think Boston is the Super Bowl of running. For me and other mediocre runners, it's something we just want to do once in a lifetime, but for the pros, everything is at stake.

It started for me in San Francisco with 75 other runners at the rear of a jumbo jet. They had all qualified. All these guys were middle-aged businessmen and lawyers, not professional runners.

It was intimidating from the start. I'm 41 and I trained very, very hard for six months. On any given day I can win a fun run. I'm competitive locally, but I'm immediately surrounded by these guys. You ask what kind of performance they are expecting at Boston and they all say, "Well I expect to do 2:40 or better." Even these guys are all outstanding runners. You immediately realize all the people that run at Boston are among the best long distance runners in the world. It's a humbling experience.

My goal was to do under three hours - which I didn't do. I did 1:19 in a half-marathon two weeks ago. I thought I'd be disappointed if I didn't do under three hours. But it was very grueling.

Every single person I bumped into after the race said the conditions were bad. In the first place it was too warm; secondly, except for the top runners seeded in the first line, everybody had to start in the pack.

It took me four minutes to make it to the starting line. I timed it. My time was 3:22.36, which is the second-worst time I've ever run. It was absolutely jammed pack the first mile with something like 8,000 runners.

Finally, I think we're going to start running; but even after we started moving forward a little bit, we'd come to a full halt again. We'd hurry a bit and then, a full halt. It was like a rubber band. This happened three or four times. The first mile I did in something like 9 1/2 minutes and then I was so agitated, I started dodging, hopping around people and that's a waste of energy. I was just trying to move forward. I was kicked once.

Then you get into running and you try to make up for lost time. I clocked one mile at 6:10, which is faster than I had anticipated. I planned on running 6:35 miles, but it didn't work out that way at all.

I did my best. I felt lousy; it was hot, dehydrating, but everybody was complaining about the same problems. I had cramps in my stomach by mile five or six. You massage yourself, you breathe in heavily and sometimes the cramps go away. I had long periods later in the race when the cramps left me alone. Then I had great fatigue. I walked half a dozen times. Only one previous marathon did I walk.

There are crowds everywhere, but beyond the halfway point there is Wellesley College where you have these really beautiful girls screaming and cheering you on. That's real nice.

The encouragement from the crowd is incredible. I was wearing a Buffalo Chips Running Club shirt. Most people thought I was from Buffalo, New York. I would have walked a lot more, my time would have been a lot worse, but all these people started yelling "Come on Buffalo!" I started running just for them. It was incredible.

Then there was a group of people, about a half dozen, screaming "Tom Kando!" They simply looked up my number, got my name and were expecting me to come by at that time. I raised my hand, they all looked at me and cheered me on. They actually called out my name without knowing who I was.

Heartbreak Hill is the last in a series of four hills from mile 17 to 21, just when you're getting tired. Well, when you drive by it in a car, you're not in awe. But when you run it, the combination of hot weather, hills and where the hills are located makes it grueling. I was not going to walk up Heartbreak so I ran, very, very slowly. I just put one toe in front of the other.

It was the hardest marathon I ever ran. It just happened to be a bad day. I could have had the same experience at the Avenue of the Giants Marathon (Arcata) or San Francisco. Of the whole front group of runners, half at least just dropped out. An hour and a half after I had finished, they were still coming in.

We have a lot of real nice marathons out on the West Coast, so I don't think I'll run at Boston next year. I don't need to come back I every year.

**Postscript:** Let me add a few facts: The Marathon was won by the American Alberto Salazar in 2:08:52, a world's best at that time, and by Germany's Charlotte Teske in the women's category. But what made this experience even more exciting for me was the fact that I was in the company of some of the world's elite runners. You see, in Sacramento, I had been training with people like Dennis Rinde and Eileen Claugus, and it is with them that I flew to Boston. Dennis

finished in a world-class time of 2:13, and Eileen was the first American woman across the finish line, 3<sup>rd</sup> overall only seconds behind the winner, and good enough for a bronze medal (handed out by legendary 4-time winner Bill Rodgers). These were the people with whom I trained! Although my performance at Boston was disappointing that year, I did go back to run it again (*Sacramento Bee*, April 30, 1982).

## 2. Different Types of Jocks

*So, as I said, ultra-sports were an important part of my life. Here are some observations I made in 1995 about people who run and people who exercise - or who pretend that they do.*

I have always had a problem with the, excuse my French, half-assed way in which many people exercise. And don't even get me going on the appalling state of our national health and the fact that most Americans don't exercise at all!

It would be interesting to come up with a typology of runners. I have been doing fun runs almost every weekend, sometimes a 5 k, sometimes a 10 k, sometimes half a marathon, and five or six times a year a full marathon. So I come in contact with all types of runners. It's fun to observe them, as they mill around the starting line in the early morning.

1) There are regular runners, like me: We train well and we purchase good professional equipment, for example a pair of *New Balance* for \$100, tops.

2) But then you have the folks for whom equipment is everything. They wear \$250 running shoes and waterproof, windproof, dustproof, luminescent running clothes which make them look like they are from Mars. They look very cheerful and proud of themselves at the starting line, but they generally cross the finish line dead last, huffing and puffing. Then, they light up a cigarette. You see, there is a notion in America that if you spend money, you're already halfway there.

3) Some runners are jovial. Some are even jokesters. They do it for the fun. They wear Halloween-like costumes, or they do a whole race running backwards. When I did the Bay-to-Breakers in San Francisco, I saw several people running completely naked. That's great!

4) But there are also mean, competitive runners. One time when I was running the Napa Valley Marathon, I was passed by a couple of runners who were obviously better than me and who would cross the finish line half an hour ahead of me that day. I smiled at them and joked: "I'll catch up with you later."

Their answer: "We don't care whether you do or not."

5) During the California International Marathon in Sacramento one year (that's the one they use as the qualifying race for the Olympics - I've run it six times), it was my turn to pass someone. As I ran by him, the guy said, "you look real tired and you're running inefficiently. You'll never finish the race, this way." He was apparently trying to undermine me psychologically.

\* \* \* \* \*

And then there are the people you see at health clubs. For many people who belong to these

clubs, their activities there are truly much more of a *ritual* than a meaningful work-out.

It is not clear how aerobic your work-out has to be in order to be beneficial. Many physicians say that you can derive benefit even from a half hour walk every other day. On the other hand, I just came across a Harvard study which stated that exercise has to be vigorous in order to be helpful. By vigorous, we're talking about burning 800-1000 calories in one hour. I don't know. But I do know that people go to the health spa for a variety of reasons, and that exercising to improve your health is only *one* of them. Take the following types:

**1) The Ritualist:** This person is on a treadmill, or on a recumbent bike, or on a stair master, and he/she moves so slowly that it induces sleep. The person is reading a book, and he/she yawns throughout the "work-out." This individual would probably burn up more calories playing chess.

**2) The Multi-tasker:** Our society suffers from *time-famine*. Americans are truly over-worked. I feel for the harried, upwardly mobile yuppies I see at our club. They can barely get a half-hour work-out into their lunch-hour, or quickly after work on their way home. And so, they have to multi-task. I see them working on the treadmill, while simultaneously going through legal briefs and real-estate contracts. Sometimes it gets ridiculous. The other day, a guy was (A) working out, (B) proof-reading a document, and (C) eating his lunch sandwich simultaneously!

**3) The Peacock:** For some people (particularly women), it's all about equipment, outfit, looks (just like those runners I described above). They wear \$500 leotards and tennis shoes. They look like supermodels. The moment they begin to "glow" (=sweat), they quit.

**4) The Foreplayer:** For some, foreplay is everything. I have seen people who arrive at the club and start getting ready when I do. They put on their exercise clothes. Then they go get a fan, but it's not the right fan, so they go get another one. They try one machine, but it's not the right machine, so they switch. They spend the next ten minutes looking for the desired TV channel or the desired music on their I-Pod. Next, they stretch for ten minutes. By the time they begin their work-out, I am done with mine. And after all the preparation, their work-out lasts fifteen or twenty minutes.

**5) The Talker:** Unfortunately, sometimes there is a guy on the treadmill next to me who wants to chat. It's not that I am anti-social (I'm quite gregarious actually). But when I work out, I go all out. I want an aerobic experience. I want my heart-rate up and I want to burn calories (so I can pig out afterwards). But the guy next to me insists on discussing baseball or his new car. Very annoying.

**6) The Singer:** This is even worse than the talker. This is a person with an I-Pod. He is totally oblivious to the outside world, and sings along with what he is listening to, sometimes pretty loud. I have tried to deter them by intoning a loud song myself. But this doesn't work, because they can't hear me, whereas other people can, so all I do is embarrass myself.

**7) The Anorexic:** There are also a few sad cases of anorexia - all females. You can see them working frenetically, sweating profusely, red in the face. But their bony bodies are extremely weak, and they are in pain. I feel like telling them to go eat something instead.

**8)The Dater:** This category contains elements of the peacock and the talker. You see, for many people the health club is a *social* and a *dating* facility. So you go there looking like a million dollars, and you socialize, and maybe you meet your future spouse (or a one-night stand).

### 3. The Sacramento Kings

*In 2002, the Sacramento Kings were the best Basketball team in the world. They should have won the NBA title, but instead, it was the Los Angeles Lakers who did, because they were psychologically tougher. On May 19, 2002, during a wild Western Conference championship series between these two teams, I printed the following letter in the Sacramento Bee:*

Way too much energy and attention goes to things like the noise level at Sacramento's Arco Arena, fan support, the word wars with the Lakers, "respect," etc. No wonder the Kings win more games on the road lately. Home court is a distraction and a disadvantage!

In the May 18 game, the Kings lost the first quarter and won the last three. Fact is, the Kings are just about as good as the Lakers. But deep down, few people truly believe this. Many of us were surprised when the Kings had such a hard time against Utah. And then, lots of people were surprised when they beat Dallas in 5 games. We swing wildly between shock and elation.

Kobe Bryant's quiet self-confidence is healthier. "Just taking care of business," he says. Of course, we have plenty of excuses: Peja Stojakovic is out, the refs stink, etc. Even so, the first order of business, I think, is to stay calm and not to act so surprised and shocked at every victory or every defeat (*Sacramento Bee*, May 19, 2002).

### 4. Soccer in America?

*On November 29, 2003, I had a minor e-mail interview with a student (Terry Filipowicz) about soccer. He asked me five questions and I answered them as follows:*

Question #1: To what degree do you consider yourself a soccer fan?

Answer: I grew up in Hungary, France and Holland - all "extreme" soccer countries, some years among the best in the world. Oddly, while I played a lot of soccer for much of my first 25 years (and I am still not too bad, at my ripe old age), I have actually become more enamored with American sports, especially football and basketball. The most problematic aspect of soccer consists of its low scores. This may be its greatest turn-off for many people. Of course, I am well aware that the sport involves sublime finesse and skill, and that high scores are a stupid criterion for judging a sport's appeal.

Question #2: Have you a favorite team?

Answer: I don't have one favorite team, but did like super stars such as the Hungarian Puskas way back, and later the Dutchman Kruijf.

Question #3: If yes, what team?

Answer: When I lived in Holland, Ajax (Amsterdam) was my favorite team, and I also liked Feijenoord (Rotterdam).

Question #4: Soccer is the number one sport throughout the rest of the world, but not in the States. Why do you think most Americans are not active soccer fans?

Answer: With respect to your first statement - do the media influence us in America not to watch and play soccer? I find this way too conspiratorial and paranoid. What's more likely is that (1) we have our own culture and its big three or four: Football, baseball, basketball, plus hockey to some extent. (2) these are the sports with which Americans grow up. (3) they have become major institutions, with vested interests and billions of dollars at stake (huge wasteful stadiums that are mostly empty for most of the year, obscenely lavish TV contracts, etc.) (4) so the media promote them, of course.

Question #5: What would have to change in American society that would cause the residents to become more involved fans?

Answer: However, soccer is also coming up: there is a lot of little league now, "soccer moms" has become an expression. Also, with the "Mexicanization" of America and the growth of other non-Anglo populations, we are bound to more and more resemble other parts of the world, including the popularity of soccer.

### 5. Estonia Wins the Olympic Games

*After the end of the 2004 Olympics, a Sacramento Bee article by Marcus Bretton bemoaned the fact that Mexico didn't do so well. Also, Americans were congratulating themselves for having once again won the most medals. So I decided to put things in perspective and sent them the following letter, which was published on September 3, 2004.*

Marcus Bretton's jeremiad about Mexico's dismal Olympic record (Sunday August 29, 2004) gave me the idea of ranking the countries' medal counts in proportion to population.

First of all, Bretton's choice of "Indo-freakin-nesia" as a country that shouldn't be expected to do better than Mexico is a bad choice, since Indonesia has 240 million people, almost as many as the US. Therefore, Indonesia's record is even worse than Mexico's.

But not to quibble. How do various countries and regions do in the medal count, in proportion to population? In order to figure this out, I divided each country's population by the number of medals it received. For example, the United States has a population of 295 million and it received 103 medals. Therefore its ratio of people per medal is 2.86, i.e there are 2.86 million Americans for each medal received. Thus, the lower a country's score, the better.

Of the 200 countries that participated in the 2004 Olympics, Estonia had the best record, namely .33. Next came Australia and Cuba both with scores of .41. After that came Slovenia and the Bahamas, both at .5. Skipping some countries, I list the following: No. 7: Hungary, 8 Jamaica, 9 Denmark, 10 Belarus, 11 Greece, 12 Netherlands, 24 Russia, 27 Germany, 28 Switzerland, 29 Italy, 30 France, 31 Britain, 33 Spain, 37 Canada, 38 USA, 39 Israel, 44 Japan, 68 Brazil, 70 China, 71 Mexico, 72 Colombia, 73 Indonesia, 74 Nigeria and 75 India.

So you see, the US is not exceptionally great, in 38<sup>th</sup> place, and Mexico's showing is almost exactly as good as China's! India's medal count is really bad, considering that it has one sixth of the world's people. However, there are another 125 countries which received no medals at all.

When it comes to regions, the 5 Western European countries of Germany, France, Italy, Britain and Spain's combined population is about the same as that of the US. However, their combined medal count is much higher: 162. Also, the countries making up the former USSR collected 162 medals. Thus, if the Soviet Union still existed, it would still win the Olympic Games, even though they no longer use transsexuals in the female events, and even though they presumably don't cheat more than anyone else using performance-enhancing drugs.

In conclusion, I am not insinuating that a country's Olympic success reflects its moral fiber (as the fascist and communist regimes used to claim in the past). Some wag in fact joked that the strongest correlate of a country's medal count is its propensity to use or not to use illegal performance-enhancing drugs (doping). The only intent of this note is to provide some interesting information (*Sacramento Bee*, Sept. 3, 2004).

## 6. The Tour de France

*When my knees became too creaky to run marathons, I switched to road biking. As a child growing up in France, I had been an avid road biker. That sport is as popular in France as baseball is in America. The Tour de France was the greatest annual sports event, and I not only followed it fervently every year, but I saw it live many times, as the racers approached Paris on their last stage and rode through the small suburban town where we lived.*

*Now, in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, I picked up biking again both as a participant and as a spectator. In 2003, I found some web sites, and I spent some time researching the Tour de France. Table One gives you a few of the things I found.*

*Note that in 2003, Lance Armstrong had "only" won five times yet. Also, the Belgian Edy Merckx, whom many see as the greatest bicycler of all times, is in 79<sup>th</sup> place, even though he won five Tours. That is because he "only" participated in seven tours, whereas many other racers did more than that (without winning).*

Table I. All-time Most Frequent Tour the France Participants, with 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> finishes

Name of Athlete	Country	No. raced	When	No. won	No. 2 <sup>nd</sup>	No. 3 <sup>rd</sup>
1. Joop Zoetemelk	Netherlands	16	'70-86	1	2	0
2. Lucien Van Impe	Belgium	15	'69-85	1	1	3
3. Raymond. Raymond	France	14	'62-76		2	5
4. Andre Darrigade	France	14	'53-66			
5. Joaquim Agostinho	Portugal	13	'69-83			2
7. Raphael Geminiani	France	12	'47-59		1	1
9. Pedro. Delgado	Spain	11	'83-93	1	1	1
13. Richard Virenque	France	11	'92-03		1	1
14. Laurent Jalabert	France	11	'91-02			
15. Louison Bobet	France	10	'47-59	3		1
16. Philippe Thys	Belgium	10	'12-25	3		
18. Laurent Fignon	France	10	'83-93	2	1	
20. Fred Bahamontes	Spain	10	'54-62	1	1	1
21. Charly Gaul	Luxembourg	10	'53-63	1		2
22. Stephen.Roche	Ireland	10	'83-93	1		1
24. Jean Robic	France	10	'47-59	1		
30. Erik.Zabel	Germany	10	'94-03			
31. Miguel.Indurain	Spain	9	'88-96	5		
32.Lance Armstrong	US	9	'99-03	5		
37. Bjarne Riis	Denmark	9	'88-98	1		1
49. Bernard Hinault	France	8	'78-86	5	2	
50. Jacques.Anquetil	France	8	'57-66	5		1
51. Greg.Lemond	US	8	'84-94	3	1	1
79. Eddy Merckx	Belgium	7	'69-77	5	1	

## 52: PLAY: TRAVEL

### 1. Into the Largest Volcano Crater in the World: A Visit to Pele's Temple.

*My entire life has been a travelogue. To really appreciate this, you will have to glance at my autobiography, which I mention in the very last entry of this book. For now, I will reproduce only a few of the more noteworthy accounts of trips which I have published. This first story is about the hike my children and I have taken across the largest volcano crater in the world - Haleakala. We have done this many times - it's become sort of a family tradition. I published a version of this story in the Spring 1992 issue of the Gold River Scene. This is a version which was revised in 2006, after several more crossings. I call it A Visit to Pele's Temple, after the Hawaiian Goddess of Fire!*

Having no sons, I have always treated my daughters gender-neutrally. While my wife gave Denise and Jeanette all the appropriate feminine habits required by the culture, I did many of the things with them which I would have done if they had been sons. Sports and outdoor activities have always been central to our way of life. While I was the only member of the family who ran marathons, my daughters were also outstanding athletes, Jeanette as a varsity runner and Denise a varsity swimmer, both of them winning several awards. The entire family skied avidly and frequently every winter, from Squaw Valley to Vail, from Sun Valley to Park City, from Zermatt to Innsbruck. Jeanette also went helicopter skiing in Canada.

From the time my daughters were about nine, I took them on innumerable mega mountain hikes. In addition to climbing up Half Dome and other Yosemite peaks on many occasions, they scaled Mounts Shasta, Whitney, several of the Cascades in Oregon, and they hiked in the Alps, in Norway, Australia and elsewhere.

However, our favorite and most frequent stomping grounds are in Hawaii, where we own property on Maui and Kauai. We go to our units several times a year, often inviting relatives and friends for weeks at a time.

One event, above all, has become a family tradition. Haleakala is a 10,000 foot volcano in Maui. It is the largest dormant volcano on earth, having last erupted in 1715. The crater is large enough to contain all of Manhattan. It is possible to cross this gigantic crater by hiking down from the top of the mountain to sea level on the opposite side of the island in two days. The hike is an exhausting twenty-five mile trek through lava and jungle, for which you need camping gear and food and water for the duration, since the volcano is as dry and desolate as the moon.

The first time I did this with my daughters, they were 9 and 11. Since then, we have repeated the experience a dozen times, sometimes doing it several years in a row. We are often accompanied by friends and relatives. Every trip requires careful logistical planning. The first morning a driver - usually my wife - drops us off on top of the ten thousand foot mountain at sunrise. Two days later, she will circle the entire island and pick us up at the rendezvous point, one hundred and twenty miles from our condominium on Kaanapali Beach.

At the end of the first day, our group reaches the Paliku campground, at six thousand foot elevation, in the middle of the crater. We have been hiking through a landscape that is initially devoid of any vegetation whatsoever and is totally moonlike, but gradually becomes covered with lush, tropical growth, as we descend to lower altitudes.

Camping at six thousand feet can be miserably cold. Some years, we are drenched in freezing rain. We wake up shivering, we quickly fold up our tents and we resume the descent. The

second day is always brutal. The lower you get, the greater the heat and the humidity.

By late afternoon, we are hiking through dense tropical jungle, following a sometimes vanishing trail. Occasionally we lose our way and we have to backtrack. We are sweltering, now drenched in sweat rather than in rain. The ten thousand foot descent with heavy backpacks puts such pressure on our legs, knees and quadriceps that we feel crippled. One year, my sister Madeleine did the hike with us, and she completed the last eight miles crying in pain. On another occasion Jeanette, my youngest daughter, told me that every time she took a step, she felt like someone was stabbing her in the legs with a sharp knife. There was also the time when our friend Tom came along, but then toward the end he told them that he could go no further. He sat down and said, "I can't do it anymore. You're gonna have to send a rescue helicopter to get me out of here." I managed to convince the other Tom to complete the hike.

If everything goes according to plan, the group usually reaches the Kaupo grocery store in the early evening of the second day. This is a native Hawaiian grocery store, a single building in the middle of nowhere, usually closed. It is located on a dirt road barely accessible by four-wheel drive. At this point, we still have to follow the dirt road for another five miles to the rendezvous point, where my wife picks us up.

One year, we were camping at the Paliku campground, in the heart of the crater. We were accompanied by three friends, including Jeanette's boyfriend Eric. In addition to our group, there was another tent tucked away behind tall grass fifty feet away, barely visible. It was the first night of the hike. The weather was good and we built a campfire. The star-studded sky was so bright and so clear that astronomers would have paid a fortune to be there. When looking at the sky through my binoculars, I could see thousands of additional stars not visible to the naked eye. Everyone was having a great time, bantering and joking. Jeanette asked, "dad, could Haleakala ever erupt again? What would we do?"

"I suppose we'd be barbecued," I answered. "Did you see the giant lava flows we've been crossing all day long? Can you imagine a two-mile wide river of red-hot lava coming at you at thirty miles an hour?"

"Gives me the chills just thinking about it," Denise chimed in. "It's been almost three hundred years since it last blew. Maybe we are due for an eruption."

Jeanette's boyfriend Eric, a prankster, said, "Hush everybody. I think I hear some rumbling. I think the volcano is acting up."

Everyone went deadly silent for a minute, and then Eric exploded in laughter. Jeanette said, "that's not funny, Eric! Now I'm going to have nightmares."

Everyone laughed and the conversation meandered to a different topic. After graduating from college, both of my daughters had moved - Jeanette to Los Angeles and Denise to San Francisco. For the past couple of years, they carried on a friendly North-South rivalry, as the rest of California did, all in good humor of course. At some point in the evening Denise said something about how happy she was to be living in Northern California instead of the L. A. area. She teased her sister by referring to the two parts of the State as "Superior" and "Inferior" California, to which Jeanette retorted something like, "Ha! San Francisco is just a village compared to L.A.! We could swallow you up!"

“It’s quality that matters, not quantity!” replied Denise. “You got Orange County, Republican fat cats, gangs and a fascist police department, and we got the San Francisco Bay, the restaurants, the culture, and at least some decent politics.”

“Bah, they’re all a bunch of snobs, in the Gay Area...oops, I mean Bay Area, haha,” said Jeanette laughing. “And speaking of politics, you got the People’s Republic of Bezerkley! That’s great if Maoism is your thing.” Jeanette is not only witty. She is also considerably more conservative than her sister, even though she was a Democrat, which is obligatory for anyone who is (1) young and (2) an urban Californian.

“Besides,” Jeanette continued, “we have ten times more restaurants than you - the best ones, too! Have you heard of Westwood, Wolfgang Puck and Santa Monica?”

“Oh yeah? and what about culture? You call Hollywood “culture?”

“Sure I call it culture! Culture isn’t just long-haired music. Anyway, we have fantastic classical music, too. Eric and I just saw Debussy’s *Pelleas et Melisande* last week. Tell her how beautiful it was, Eric.”

“And what about museums?” Denise persisted.

“Yeah, what about museums? Have you ever seen the Getty museum? You guys have nothing that great! Their collection is world-class.”

“Sure, all stolen from Rome and Greece,” retorted Denise, alluding to a recent scandal alleging that the Getty people had acquired some art illegitimately. “Anyway,” she continued, “I still wouldn’t want to live down there. Don’t you agree that San Francisco is nicer, the Bay, Marin County and all?”

“No I don’t. You guys can’t even play decent ball! Look at the pathetic Warriors. The Lakers can whip their butts any time. And football, oh my god, how can you even compare Cal with U.S.C. or UCLA? Trust me, I know, I spent four years at Cal.”

And so the bantering went on for a while. Usually Jeanette is the more aggressive of the two - some might say the more defensive - so Denise tends to back off. But the exchanges are always in jest. The girls love each other and are always there for each other in times of need. Their relationship is marvelous.

Suddenly, we heard a rustle through tall grass. Someone was coming from the other tent. It was a young blond, bearded, guy, looking like the Beach Boys looked thirty years ago - the typical California surfer/eco-freak. He told everyone that his name was Kevin and said, “man, I just twisted my ankle. It may be broken. I can’t go anywhere. Would you guys do me a favor? Tomorrow, when you get down from the mountain, call the National Park Service and have them send the rescue helicopter for me. I’m stuck here. The cell phone don’t work inside the crater.”

“Wow,” I said, “bummer. You all alone? You have enough water and supplies?”

“Yeah, man. I was going for two weeks. I still have some water purification tablets and a

bunch of power bars. I'll be okay. But I can't walk out of here. It's six thousand foot to get down and four thousand back to the top."

The following evening , I notified the National Park Service as soon as I could. As long as we were hiking inside the crater, my cell phone didn't work either. The Paliku campground was located in a gigantic natural amphitheater twenty miles across and surrounded by a vertical four-thousand foot tall circular wall.

Three days later, I was back at the condominium, when the National Park people called me. Someone said, "you told us that there was a guy who had to be rescued at Paliku? We flew up there and didn't find anybody."

I was shocked. I said, "I assure you there was a guy stuck up there. His name was Kevin. Broke his ankle or something. We all talked to him. You guys MUST find him."

"Would you mind joining us for the search?" the ranger asked, and of course I accepted.

The pilot, a ranger and I flew up to Paliku in an old Sikorsky. The helicopter flew back and forth between the volcano's gigantic four-thousand foot wall, which was shaped exactly like a horseshoe. Much of the time they were hovering, maintaining their altitude at seven thousand feet, i.e. about a thousand foot above the crater floor. The crater wall was covered with impenetrably dense tropical jungle. The area is called the Kipahulu National Forest preserve.

I kept looking through my binoculars, searching for Kevin. Suddenly, I saw a minuscule human shape move on the steep side of the crater wall, desperately trying to slash his way through the jungle. We flew towards the man and found a clearing where the lava was largely covered by tall grass. We landed, causing a veritable storm of flying grass and cinder. Kevin hobbled towards us and climbed into the helicopter. I asked him, almost angrily, "what were you trying to do, man? You crazy? There is *no way* that you would have made it!"

Kevin apologized and explained, "I wasn't sure you'd remember to call the park rangers, and I was beginning to run out of supplies. So I thought I' try the shortcut through the Kipahulu preserve."

The ranger said, "you would surely have died, and we would have found your bones in a few years." (*Gold River Scene*, Spring, 1992)

## 2. How is Eastern Europe Doing, After Communism?

*I spent my 1994 sabbatical doing research and traveling across Eastern Europe. One of the articles to come out of that is the following one, which was published in the Summer 1994 issue of the International Journal on World Peace.*

The fall of Communism and the end of the cold war are probably the most important events in the world since World War Two. While much is being written about problems and prospects in the former Soviet Union - Russia and the other 14 former Soviet republics - one hears less about trends in Eastern Europe, i.e. in the former satellite states. There are now 12 countries in the Eastern, Central and Balkan part of Europe that used to be communist and are now somehow trying to make a fresh start. Some are at war (Bosnia), some are floundering (e.g. Albania and Romania)

and some are doing better (for example the Czech Republic and Hungary). They are all, to a greater or lesser extent, attempting the transformation from communism to free-market democracy. How successful are they?

First, something about myself and my recent visit to Eastern Europe - my credentials if you will: I recently spent a three-months sabbatical in Europe, most of it in the East. I leased a little Citroen in Paris and drove it for 13,000 kilometers on a wild and fascinating tour of Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland and many other countries. I spent nearly a month in Hungary alone, my country of birth. This was my eighth trip to Eastern Europe. On previous occasions, I spent quite a bit of time also visiting Russia, Yugoslavia and other countries in that region. Altogether, I have crossed the Atlantic 25 times.

This time, I interviewed dozens of people and collected large amounts of data from libraries, universities, government offices and the media. The people I interviewed included professors, students, police chiefs, artists, media people, government officials, people on the street, cabinet members and the President of Hungary, His excellency Arpad Goncz.

I traveled up and down the major roads connecting cosmopolitan cities like Budapest, Prague and Warsaw. I drove through the backwoods of Transylvania, the godforsaken rural squalor of the great Eastern European plain and the snow-covered wilderness of the Carpathians. I stayed with acquaintances on the fancy Hill of Roses overlooking Budapest (a block from Rubic's cubic mansion), and in the slums of Obuda by the Danube. Only rarely did I stay in the anesthetized first-class hotels preferred by American visitors.

***I drove 13,000 kilometers on a fascinating tour of Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland and many other countries ... I interviewed professors, students, police chiefs, artists, media people, government officials, people on the street, cabinet members and the President of Hungary ... I drove through the backwoods of Transylvania and the snow-covered wilderness of the Carpathians. I stayed on the fancy Hill of Roses overlooking Budapest as well as in the slums of Obuda.***

During the early weeks of this trip, I traveled mostly alone. For the last few weeks, my wife joined me. In February and March, I was with my 80-year old Hungarian mother. Her knowledge of the languages, people and places was invaluable.

As we drove across the snow-covered landscape of Eastern Europe, we spent hours discussing the area's socio-economic and political condition. Every godforsaken Slovakian village, every Polish church, every Czech pit-stop, every Hungarian hitch-hiker we picked up prompted analysis, discussion, comparison.

Despite the recent crime explosion, traveling is still safer in Eastern Europe than it is in the US. There are more European visitors murdered in America than Americans killed in Europe. However, while violence is rare, theft is pandemic.

For example, ten minutes after my arrival in Budapest, two gypsies tried to steal my car. I was still unloading my suitcases and as I walked back to the car I saw these two fellows who had already broken the lock and who were presently hot-wiring the car and getting ready to take off. I chased them away, much less worried about being shot than I would have been in the US.

I thank God for this warning. The fact is, car theft is now so prevalent in Eastern Europe - especially the theft of foreign cars - that the rental companies in the West (Avis, Hertz, etc.) won't rent to you if you plan to go into the East. That is why I had to lease my car - essentially *buying* it for three months and then selling it back to them.

***Ten minutes after my arrival in Budapest, two gypsies tried to steal my car... These two fellows had broken the lock and were presently hot-wiring the car. I chased them away, much less worried about being shot than I would have been in the US... Thereafter, in cities like Prague, Budapest and Krakow, I parked the car in a maximum security place and used the subways and busses.***

In Eastern Europe, you cannot leave your car alone for 10 minutes, much less overnight. Although I promptly bought a club after my close call, that is certainly no guarantee. What I ended up doing when staying in cities like Prague, Budapest and Krakow was to park the car in a maximum security place and use the subways and busses. In Prague, I locked the car up in the maximum security basement of the luxury Forum hotel. \$10 a night. In Budapest, I paid to park the car in someone's front yard, behind a locked gate, with cars parked on the street in front of the gate. Only with a helicopter could the thieves have stolen it. I didn't use the car once in nearly a month. Instead, I used the highly efficient and cheap (although unbelievably filthy) subways and busses.

On the road was different: at no time could we leave the car unattended. Therefore, we either picnicked, or we took turns at eating inside a restaurant or going to the bathroom.

As we traveled, we spent hours evaluating the former communist countries and the new break-away nations in terms of economic development, quality of life and prospects for progress. Later, I buttressed or amended my impressions through statistical research and interviews with both lay and expert natives. What we had in mind was a *general* assessment of the quality of life in these countries. We did not always use systematic and quantitative criteria. The economy was always foremost in our minds, i.e. the material conditions and the standard of living. Also important to us were the level of freedom, democracy and people's subjective happiness. Thus a country like Hungary might be better off than, say, Bulgaria because, even though life expectancy is much shorter in Hungary than in Bulgaria, the Hungarians consume more and better products, are freer and generally live happier lives than the Bulgarians.

The countries with which we were concerned do not include the former Soviet Union. That's a whole different ball of wax. The focus of my sabbatical study was the state of affairs in the former *satellites* of the USSR, i.e. the formerly communist countries of Central, Eastern and Balkan Europe, not Russia itself. There are 12 such countries.

Of these, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia and Bosnia-Herzegovina are the products of recent secession and nationalist break-up. On the other hand, Eastern Germany is no longer an independent country. Then, too, the situation is so fluid that new nations might emerge in the near future, for example Macedonia, Montenegro and Kosovo, if Yugoslavia continues to disintegrate.

The *one* experience that binds all of these countries together is their "decommunization," i.e. the fact that they were all *formerly* communist. Some of them are becoming true western-style liberal democracies as we speak, for example the Czech Republic and Hungary. Other ones are still in economic shambles, and they lack democratic institutions and democratic habits, as is the case of Albania and Romania. And there is also Serbia, still ruled by Milosovic and an essentially old-fashioned communist dictatorship. Thus the "liberation" of the former communist world is extremely uneven. But there can be no doubt that there is a brand new ball game in Eastern Europe.

My mother and I are partial to Hungary, since it is our birth country. But in all objectivity, even though we feel that Hungary is *one* of the most promising countries, we couldn't put it at the very top of our list.

Having visited both Prague and Budapest, it is clear to us that the former approximates

living conditions in the West more closely than the latter. Prague is better off than any other former communist city, and it is making much progress.

Before World War Two, Prague and its surroundings (Bohemia) were probably among the most advanced, industrialized and civilized parts of the world, on a par with much of West Germany. Half a century of communism has taken its toll. For example, the reckless industrial policies of the former regime have caused immense environmental degradation. As we drove through the so-called black triangle (Silesia, Eastern Germany, Bohemia), we saw black snow, black trees, black earth everywhere - the result of acid rain and other forms of pollution. Nevertheless, the Czech economy is already growing - the first one to do so among all Eastern European economies. The Czech crown will soon be convertible - again the first one to do so.

**(1), (2):** All in all, we ranked the *Czech Republic* as number one. But we tied it for first place with the former *East Germany*. That country had been the most industrialized and economically advanced nation of communist Europe. Furthermore, its integration into Germany is likely to pull it up more rapidly than the rest of Eastern Europe. However, its level of pollution is so pernicious and its industrial apparatus so obsolete that it may face problems for some time. So we put it in a tie with Czechia (the Czech Republic is the only country in the world that doesn't have a noun for a name, only an adjective. I am therefore launching a new initiative: Let's henceforth call this country Czechia. After all, there is Russia, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, etc. A perfect fit).

**(3):** Biased or not, I see *Hungary* as the next most promising country. The work ethic is strong. Like Czechia, Hungary had a vigorous middle class prior to World War Two, and traditional middle-class values such as productivity, frugality, self-reliance, individualism and future-orientation are still alive. Hungarians are a talented people and they hustle. Just think of their disproportionate contributions to art, science and business both in the old country and in America. Additionally, they are becoming adept at tapping Western financial resources, including those of wealthy Hungarian expatriates like Mr. Soros and his foundation.

Also, Hungary rightly prides itself on being in the forefront of freedom and human rights. The country is arguably the most liberal in Eastern Europe. Recall that even under communism, the country was called the "happy barrack," meaning that, although all communist countries were austere and Spartan, Hungary was the least so. They called it "goulash communism," or "communism with a happy face - " alluding to the fact that, unlike the more prosperous Czechs and East Germans, the Hungarians ate better, consumed more, laughed more, were a bit more free, led happier lives.

This national characteristic continues. Today, the Hungarian police seems to do fewer "Rodney Kings" than they do in adjacent countries. There is more tolerance of deviant behavior. On environmental issues, Hungary is more progressive. It halted the development of a huge hydro-electric project across the Danube at the confines of Czechia, Slovakia and Hungary. Slovakia, on the other hand, is completing its part of the project. This is leading to friction between the countries (border disputes caused by the fact that the Danube, which marks the border, is now being diverted) and -- according to the Hungarians - to serious environmental harm.

Consider also the infusion of religion into Polish politics, where abortion has been outlawed and where the Catholic Church has become a fifth estate in politics. Hungary has not experienced this kind of backlash. Although Hungary does have its own little version of the Russian demagogue Zirinovski - a anti-Semitic nationalist extremist by the name of Csurka - this fellow does not enjoy much popular support. As to comparisons with Romania, the former Yugoslavia and the remainder of the Balkan, they lag far behind Hungary in economic and democratic development. But more on this in a moment.

***The Czech Republic is the only country in the world that doesn't have a noun for a name, only an adjective. I am therefore launching a new initiative: Let's henceforth call this country Czechia. After all, there is Russia, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, etc. A perfect fit.***

Until a few weeks ago, I would have categorically called Hungary the most liberal ex-communist country. However, the May 8 election (the second free election since World War Two) resulted in a communist victory. This backlash results from widespread unhappiness with the growing pains and dislocations of early capitalism - "Dickensian capitalism" as some of my Hungarian friends call it.

Hungarians, especially the older generation, had grown accustomed to a cradle-to-grave welfare state which, while leaving the economy in a state of perennial poverty and stagnation, did provide a sense of security. Under the new emerging conditions, there is polarization of income, growing unemployment (15% to 20%) and homelessness. The safety nets are unraveling. Inflation drives many people on fixed incomes into poverty.

The slogan "privatization" is posted in subway stations and on highways in an attempt to capture at least the rhetoric of a new economic policy which is often as much talk as it is action. But four years of half-hearted and haphazard privatization have not yet produced an efficient free-market system. Only some entrepreneurial wealth and great economic dislocation. Dickensian capitalism, the critics call it: Just like the darkest days of Manchesterism in 19th-century England.

So now the reformed communists, renamed socialists, have come back to take a plurality of the votes - about one third. They are putting together a left-center coalition. But Hungary is not about to revert to the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. It is merely taking a breathing spell from privatization while remaining firmly in the ranks of Europe's new democracies. Politically, it resembles Western democracies like France and Italy, countries that also have a long history of vacillation between left-center and right-center.

**(4): *Poland*** is often and rightly viewed as one of the more progressive and better positioned former satellites. After visiting this sympathetic country again, I have to place it slightly behind Hungary. Remember that under communism, Poland was not quite as nice a place as Hungary (but far nicer than Russia, of course). Also, it has recently suffered from two quite different sorts of backlashes: On the one hand, the Catholic Church is exerting a conservative influence on Polish politics, and on the other hand, elections have given the former communists some victories, thereby slowing down the privatization process.

Additionally, Poland has suffered more from the negative influence of the Soviet Union. Unlike Hungary, but like mother Russia, it is a Slavic country. It has therefore been easier for Russia to exploit and drag Poland down. Today, the pattern continues. As Russia becomes increasingly dominated by powerful gangs of highly organized criminals, this is being exported more to Poland than to Hungary. Poland is also more vulnerable in this regard than Czechoslovakia and Hungary due to its long exposed border with Russia. Therefore, problems of crime, corruption and poverty are greater in Poland than in the three countries which I ranked ahead of it.

**(5) and (6):** I did not, on this occasion, visit Slovenia, Croatia or any other part of the former Yugoslavia. I did earlier. My impression is that Slovenia and to some extent Croatia benefit from their cultural and geographic proximity to Western Europe, e.g. Austria. Apart from the ravages of recent wars with Serbia, these countries can be expected to make steady economic progress. Let me put ***Slovenia*** and ***Croatia*** in fifth and sixth position.

(7): We also traveled through *Slovakia*. This is a tiny new republic with a bleak future. Its secession from Czechia was prompted by nationalist *hubris* rather than rational economic choice. It has traditionally been the poorest province of Czechoslovakia. Its chief economic function was the manufacture of weapons for the Warsaw Pact. Slovakia was always jealous of the more advanced Bohemia. Now, it doesn't even have a viable military industry any more. Its secession was also motivated by cultural nationalism, having its own Slavic dialect that differs a bit from the Czech variant.

There are many other regions in the world that exhibit a similar combination of resentments. For example Quebec, Flanders, Wales, Corsica, the Basque country and Brittany. Such regions are culturally distinct from the rest of their country. Their obvious and foremost rationale for secession is cultural separatism. But an additional motive is that they are also poorer than the rest of the country, and they feel that the central government does not treat them fairly.

***Nowhere has nationalism had more calamitous consequences than in the former communist world. The Bosnian war is only one of many bloody conflicts raging there at this moment. Since 1989, at least 20 new countries have been admitted to the UN, and the process of mitosis goes on.***

In other cases, cultural separatism is found in provinces that are *better off* than the remainder of their country. Such regions want to secede in order to maintain their privileges and avoid sharing them. For example the Sikhs in Punjab, the Biafrans and Katangans in Africa, and lately Scotland. The latter province sees a chance to benefit from a break with England if it can claim the bulk of North Sea oil profits. Then, too, it isn't always clear who is better off -- the secessionist province or the mother country.

Nationalism is the scourge that has replaced the Cold War. And nowhere has nationalism had more calamitous consequences than in the former communist world. The Bosnian war is only one of many bloody conflicts raging there at this moment. Since 1989, at least 20 new countries have been admitted to the U.N. -- most of them from that area of the world. And the process of mitosis goes on.

***To their credit, the Czechs and the Slovaks parted amicably. The velvet revolution of 1989 was followed by the velvet secession of 1991. Why can't the Serbs and the Bosnians learn from their Slavic brethren just 100 miles to the North?***

The independence of Slovakia falls into the first -- and most idiotic -- category which I have just described. Out of nationalist pride, the country has decided to go it alone and stay poor, instead of staying within the promising national economy of Czechoslovakia. Slovakia has no resources and there is no demand for its military products. Its 5 million people live in a landlocked area that is smaller than West Virginia. They are going nowhere fast.

To their credit, the Czechs and Slovaks parted amicably. The velvet revolution of 1989 was followed by the velvet secession of 1991. Why can't the Serbs and Bosnians learn from their Slavic brethren 100 miles to the North?

(8): *Bulgaria* is the next country on my list. Its economy is primitive but conditions are stable. Bulgarian communism has been more repressive than elsewhere in Eastern Europe. The democratic experiment is still in its infancy. Coming from so far behind, Bulgaria is understandably still underdeveloped, both politically and economically.

(9): **Romania**: Like Bulgaria, this country is now at peace and experimenting with democracy. However, the revolution was much bloodier here than elsewhere. It took 100,000 lives to overthrow Ceausescu. The economy remains dismal. Romania is a third-world country. Pollution is worse than in the black triangle. Organized crime thrives like nowhere except Russia and Ukraine. There are also ethnic problems. Several million gypsies and ethnic Hungarians in Transylvania are maltreated and restless.

(10): Under Tito, Yugoslavia had earned itself a respectable position among the community of nations. Its diverse population lived in harmony. Alone among Eastern European communist capitals, Belgrade was not under the yoke of Moscow. There were symbolic successes such as the 1984 Winter Olympics in Sarajevo. More to the point, the economy seemed to be humming along. After all, no other communist country managed to export cars to the US, but Belgrade gave us the Yugo!

Since then, Yugoslavia has disintegrated into Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia -- with possibly more to follow. What remains, then, is **Serbia**. The war against Bosnia and the embargo against Serbia are setting that country back by several decades. The economy is in shambles, food is scarce, poverty rampant.

Were the war to end soon and the embargo lifted, Serbia might recover. On the other hand, there is also talk of escalation. Nato might bomb Serbia. The country's ranking could improve, or deteriorate.

***Some Swiss friends of mine who were visiting Albania received a letter at their hotel stating that unless they handed over their passports at an appointed time and place, they would all be killed. To underscore the threat, the letter was accompanied by photos of all the prospective victims.***

(11): **Albania** has always been the most primitive country of Europe. It has also been one of the most isolated and archaic dictatorships on Earth -- not unlike North Korea. As a communist country, it was too extreme even for the Soviet Union! It was the lone European Maoist outpost. Until the 1990s, it remained entirely inaccessible to the outside world.

I remember sailing by Albania some years ago, on my way to Greece. We were just outside the territorial limit. The shore was clearly visible. Parched, rocky hills and some stone hovels. No traffic, no movement. The American Automobile Association estimated that the country of 3 million people had 400 cars. No doubt all of them owned by the party nomenclature.

Albania has now opened its borders to foreigners. The political system is in transition. Some Swiss friends of mine recently went to Tirana, the capital. One night, two of them were held up at gun point for their money and -- more importantly -- for their passports. Of course they forked over everything. The next day, a threat letter was delivered to their room stating that unless their two friends (who were also in Tirana, but who had not been robbed) handed over their passports at an appointed time and place, they would all be killed. The letter was accompanied by photos of all the prospective victims -- to underscore the threat and the criminals' ability to identify and locate their preys. The whole group immediately went to the airport and left the country.

(12) At this time, **Bosnia** has to be last on the list. Since World War Two, Bosnia had actually been a stable and upcoming region. The 1984 winter Olympics in Sarajevo symbolized that progress. However, three years of war and genocide have reduced much of the country to

ruble. How Bosnia-Herzegovina fares in the future depends on a political settlement which seems as elusive today as it has been for the past three years.

Although I did not visit Bosnia on this occasion, I was very much in the vicinity. Across the border in Hungary and elsewhere in the Balkan, one senses the people's palpable fear of entanglement. I was often reminded that World War One started in Bosnia and that it could happen again. The Hungarians are bending over backward to avoid involvement -- not just in Bosnia but also in Romania and other ethnically explosive regions. Let us hope that the war remains localized.

I have ranked the twelve countries that make up formerly communist Europe outside the Soviet Union. The ranking is in terms of quality of life, including economic and democratic progress. I base my views on first-hand experiences and on information obtained in the region. Out of curiosity, I then compared my ranking with the latest per capita income figures published by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Below is a table which reproduces this information.

Table I. Socioeconomic Ranking of 12 Eastern European Countries

Kando's Ranking	Per Capita Income <sup>2</sup>
1 - 2: Eastern Germany, Czech Republic	East Germany \$9669
	Czechoslovakia: \$7876
3: Hungary	Hungary: \$6119
4. Poland	
5. Slovenia	
6. Croatia(“)	
7. Slovakia(“)	
8. Bulgaria	Bulgaria: \$5530
9. Romania	Romania: \$4896
	Poland: \$4625
10. Serbia	Yugoslavia: \$2474
11. Albania	Albania: n.a.
12. Bosnia-Herzegovina(“)	

Except for Poland, my ranking holds up quite well in relation to per capita income. In any event, official economic statistics from these countries are not very meaningful. Exchange rates work differently for various countries. For example, the Polish zloty has been so devalued that I got *half a million* zlotys for a twenty dollar bill! More importantly, as Radek Sikorski notes in a recent *Wall Street Journal* article (May 18), official statistics do not reflect that vast grey and black underground economies, nor do they reflect accurately the private sector. In general, the official statistics available to the Western media vastly under report the wealth creation that is now taking place in Eastern Europe, and conversely exaggerate the magnitude of the economic problems.

All in all, the strongest correlate of socio-economic progress seems to be geographical, cultural and social proximity to the West. In other words, (1) the closer a country is to Western Europe, (2) the more it shares modern western values, (3) the stronger its middle-class and entrepreneurial tradition are and (4) the more integrated its economy is with that of Western Europe, the more progress it is making and the more progress it is likely to continue to make.

In many ways, these countries are picking up where they left off, after a half-century hiatus. For example, places like Bohemia and urban Hungary had already developed a vigorous bourgeoisie before World War Two. They approximated Max Weber's model of capitalism. This tradition was not rooted out during communism; it merely went dormant and is now once again surfacing.

But as I just indicated, conditions are generally not nearly as bleak as they are reported to be. I encourage readers to go and see for themselves (*International Journal on World Peace*,

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<sup>2</sup>Source: Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1995 edition.

Summer, 1994).

### 3. My Worst and Best Travel Experience

*Ever since my mother moved back to the Netherlands, I have been going there a lot, sometimes twice or three times a year. As we all know, flying isn't much fun since 9-11. I hardly ever go to Europe any more without encountering at least a few surprises - flight delayed, flight canceled, connection missed, baggage lost, etc. My winter 2004 trip to Holland was one for the books. After my return to California, I wrote the following story about it, which was published in the February 2004 issue of the Gold River Review.*

This was more stressful than any other international flight trip I have ever taken, worse than losing luggage, worse than being bumped from a flight, worse than having to spend an extra night at an airport hotel, worse than being pick-pocketed...Here is what happened:

Today, I am flying back home to San Francisco from Holland. It's rather complicated: I am staying in a place about 40 miles North of Amsterdam International Airport (named Schiphol): I have to take a taxi from our flat in Bergen to the railroad station in Alkmaar, then the train from there to the Schiphol Airport. However, the train ride requires you to go into a suburb of Amsterdam (Sloterdijk), and transfer there onto an outbound train to the airport.

Everything is set: My flight to San Francisco leaves at 11:30 am. So I reserved the taxi for 7:15 am, and got my train ticket in advance for 8:00. That should get me to the airport no later than 9:30, i.e. 2 hours before the flight.

I have one carry-on suitcase and a monstrously large red check-trough suitcase. Both have wheels of course, but things promise to be a pain at transfer points, especially the small local railroad stations, which frequently lack elevators or escalators, and thus force you to haul heavy luggage up and down the stairways that lead to the train platforms.

At 7:00, I begin by going downstairs and outside the building to await the taxi. Already, hauling the red monster starts me sweating.

Outside, it's still dark, and - for the first time since I got to Holland nearly a month ago - the entire landscape is blanketed with a beautiful, thick, pristine snow cover. Wow!

The taxi arrives punctually but - living up to the image of that 10-15% of Dutchmen who are assholes - he promptly tells me that he can't take me because rules only allow one piece of luggage per passenger.

Short "discussion" ensues:

Me: "Why?"

Him: "Because there isn't room for all the passengers with several suitcases"

Me: "How many people you got this morning?"

Him: "Just you."

Me: "So what's the problem? If you don't take me, I'll miss my flight. "

Him: "The rules, blah blah..."

Me: "I'll pay you extra. Let's go."

Him: "Okay."

On the way to the Alkmaar railroad station, all stop lights are broken. Intersections are

dangerous and difficult to negotiate. The radio informs us that due to the freak overnight snow storm, much of the country is paralyzed. Trains only run sporadically, there are 891 kilometers of “files,” i.e. traffic jams.

Alkmaar railroad station: I haul the red monster up and down a couple of stairways to the appropriate platform. Sweating like a pig, I get on the train with 30 seconds to spare. Feeling good, though. First hurdle overcome. I sit down and relax. The train leaves, Amsterdam-bound. It’s dawn and I watch the snow-covered landscape whizz by. I am the only passenger in the entire car.

The train stops in various small towns, Dutchmen start pouring in at the consecutive stations - early morning commuters to Amsterdam.

Then, the really, REALLY annoying intercom announcement: “Ladies and gentlemen, we are told that all train traffic into Amsterdam has been halted, due to the snow storm. All trains stop at Zaandam (a remote suburb). All passengers must get off.”

I think: “I am fucked. I am going to miss my flight for sure. My ticket is non-refundable and it has so many conditions that I might as well buy a new one. What am I going to do?”

We arrive in Zaandam. It’s surreal: All trains have stopped, literally thousands of passengers have poured out onto the platforms. The crowd is so thick you can’t move one step in any direction. I toss the red monster and my small suitcase onto the platform, and I am imprisoned by the throng, unable to move anywhere. It’s utter pandemonium.

Okay, now what?

I begin to shove my way toward the exit. Maybe if I get down to the street (the train platforms are elevated), I’ll find a taxi (fat chance, with 10,000 other commuters competing for them!), or maybe there is a bus going to the airport (about 30 kilometers away at this point), or something...

I push, shove, the wheels of my red monster run over many feet. Of course there is no elevator in sight, so I drag the suitcases down the stairway.

Now I am outside, in front of the station, in the snow, with 10,000 stranded commuters. No taxis. No bus connection to the airport. It’s a quarter to nine. I have 45 minutes to get to my flight on time. Hopeless.

Maybe there is an information office. Where the hell is the train ticket office anyway? That’s where I have to start, right? - at least begin to ask some questions, like: “When are the trains gonna start running again, etc.?”

Well, that’s back up on the elevated level. Fuck! I haul my monstrous luggage back up, through the crowd. It’s like American football: You hit people as hard as you can. It’s best to use your shoulders. One big Dutchman, trying to fight his way downstairs, hits me so hard my glasses fall on the ground. I grab them up just as someone else is about to trample them.

Now I am in line at the ticket/information counter. When I finally get to ask my questions, they have no answers whatsoever.

But now, the Dutch start to show me their unbelievable class:

First, a guy who heard my predicament taps me on the shoulder and points me towards a KLM flight attendant who is also standing in line. So I go talk to her and exchange notes, so to speak: “You got a flight to catch, too? To Miami at noon? I see. So what are you going to do? Etc.”

Suddenly, someone tells the flight attendant that they found a taxi. It’s waiting outside,

downstairs. So I beg her: “please, let me share the cab with you!”

“Okay, follow me,” she says, and we start fighting the crowd to get back outside downstairs. She has little baggage, and I almost lose her. She disappears in the crowd in front of me, but I redouble my efforts, hitting and tackling people, shoving my red monster in their bellies, rolling over their feet.

Outside, I find her again, loading up into a minivan cab - along with half a dozen Dutchmen also desperate to get to the airport. I present myself and my baggage, but there is no way that I can fit in.

The cab driver is also talking to a second car parked behind him, which is trying to absorb some of the folks for whom he has no room. I walk to the second car, and beg: “Please, I MUST make my 11:30 flight...”

The lady driver of the second car grabs my red monster and together we begin shoving it into her trunk. The two cars figure out who is going in which car, allocating people and baggage as best as possible. I almost end up being separated from my baggage.

Finally both cars take off towards the airport. There are five of us in the second car, a small sedan. My black suitcase is on the knees of the elderly lady in the front seat. I am wedged between two large Dutchmen in the back. These folks are all flying to places like Miami, Surinam, etc.

A sense of hilarity and euphoria reigns. We are going to make it after all. I ask the lady driver how much I owe her. Turns out, she isn't a taxi driver, she is a Senator for the Province of North Holland, her name is Dr. Lydia Snuif-Verwey. My fellow passengers are friends of hers who are government officials going to Surinam on a State visit.

Jesus! And a moment before I let Senator Verwey lift my monstrous suitcase into her trunk, offering her a tip!

From that moment on, all we do is laugh roarily, talk and have a ball all the way to the airport. What a people, the Dutch! This is how they behave in emergencies. Whether it's World War Two or a freak snow storm, these people are there for you when it counts! Fantastic!

The roads being as they are, it takes us an hour and a half to cover the 30 ks (20 miles) to the airport - a fun, lovely hour and a half of bonding and laughing. Then, we quickly separate, after I make sure I get Senator Verwey's business card so I can send her a lavish gift.

I run to one of the KLM counters, begin the check-in process. I got less than an hour. My euphoria is premature. I am not out of the woods. My line is immense, and it's not budging. I observe and compare my line with another one next to us, and I swear, we go through a 45 minute time span without one single party moving forward, to the check-in counter.

Twice I approach one of the security people in charge, telling them that our line is clogged, that all other lines are moving at a reasonable pace, but not ours. Each time they give evasive answers and nothing happens.

Finally, I take matters into my own hands. It's amazing how sheepish, sullen and obedient travelers are. No one else does anything. I have been called a nervous Nelly, but you know what? If I hadn't taken it upon myself to play traffic cop, I would have missed my flight. What I end up doing now could have had me arrested, in our paranoid post-September 11 world:

I walk over to the front of our line and find out what the problem is: There is another line feeding into ours, and every single passenger who has moved forward over the past 45 minutes was from that other line, while no one from our side did. The idiot airport personnel have not been

paying attention, that's all.

So I approach security personnel again and tell them what they are doing wrong. I do more: I stand at the point where the other line merges into ours, and I tell the people there: "Look, you MUST ALTERNATE people from the two different sides. Otherwise, the 100 people on our side will all miss their flights!" I do more: I talk directly to the passengers in the other line and tell them to fucking wait and let some people from our side advance, as no one from our side has advanced in nearly an hour.

I didn't get arrested. Better yet: I had run out of time: my flight was leaving in 10 minutes, and my gate was half a mile away. So I told the airport security guy who had fucked up so royally: "Look, I don't care anymore what you do with the clogged up lines, but you GOT to let ME through NOW."

And he did. I checked the red monster, the woman at the check-in counter gave me my boarding pass in less than 2 minutes, she called the gate to tell them to wait for me, and I started running to the gate.

And so, I got to go home.

So here are the lessons: (1) Shit happens; (2) People in general - and the Dutch in particular - can be awesome. There is something truly redeeming about human nature, people helping people in emergency situations. (3) You got to take some goddam initiative, sometimes. Things aint gonna happen for you if you don't do some things yourself. Most of the trouble with the world today is that people have lost the initiative. I hate to moralize, I am usually no hero. But I'll tell you one thing: On this occasion, many things did fall into place the right way. I hope you enjoyed this true story (*Gold River Review*, Feb., 2004).

### 53: PLAY: LANGUAGE

#### 1. No Duh! How to Sike Out the Kids Without Getting Dogged or Moted

*Language has always been my forte. I am fluent in four languages and dabble in several more. English is my fourth primary language. As a child, I moved from country to country and I often had to become fluent in a new language, switching my native tongue from Hungarian to French, to Dutch and to English, plus taking six years of German, Latin and Greek. So I have always enjoyed playing with words, with colloquialisms, with translations and with verbal inventions. On December 8, 1985, I published the following article in the Sacramento Bee. It is about teen-age lingo, "patois" if you will. Of course, I owe all my knowledge of this subject to my daughters, who were 9 and 11 at the time.*

*Notice that some of the innovations make it into the general lexicon, while other ones are soon forgotten. For example, by 2007 expressions like "Creamed," "Have a Cow," "No Duh" and "Rad" were widely used, even by adults.*

MIDDLE-AGED PEOPLE who grew up in the '60s and who are desperate to stay with it, like Phil Donahue and me, still use hopelessly dated expressions like "far out," "right on" or "bummer." But the language and the culture change so fast that what was "in" just a few weeks ago has often already faded. Who remembers Valley talk?

But I am lucky. Although I am just a fuddy-duddy trying to act mod, I have two daughters - Leah who just turned 9 and Danielle who is 11. They attend two different local schools. Without

them, I would be lost in the modern world. But thanks to them I can go to any local playground and mix it up with the kids as if I were one of them. Here are some of the things we like to say to each other:

*Sike!* This is what you say to someone after you have just won an argument. Say we disagree about what day of the month it is, I look it up on the calendar and I turn out to be right. "Sike!" I explain to you insultingly.

*Motation:* This is more or less the same thing as sike. It means, "ha ha, you were wrong," or "I told you so, stupid." Derogatory and teasing.

*Moted:* Abbreviation of motation. Means the same thing. Used as in "ooh, moted!" meaning "you lose, stupid, and I win."

*Cremation:* A total defeat in a fight or in an argument. Results in total humiliation for the loser. Bystanders might say, "Boy, what a cremation that was for Tony!"

*Creamed:* Related to cremation, but different meaning. Similar to conventional usage. For example, falling on the ski slopes or losing a swim meet, you could say, "I got creamed real bad." Notice that creamed comes from cream, but cremation is derived from cremate, to burn.

*Muffed:* For example, "she completely muffed up on the test," meaning she did very poorly, she failed.

*Dogged:* As in "you really dogged her." This means that you really got her in an embarrassing situation. For example, she told the teacher a lie and later you inadvertently told the teacher the truth. So this is not the same as snitching or being a tattler.

*Have a Cow:* Means having a fit of laughter, anger or some other uncontrolled emotion. Used as in "don't have a cow, now!" meaning "calm down, don't have a fit over this."

*Mertle breakdown:* Seems to come from mental breakdown, but is definitely spelled differently. The meaning is similar to "have a cow." Means "don't go crazy now," but is limited to anger. Not applicable to uncontrolled giggling, for example.

*Blow your hair back:* This expression is so old as to be stale, says Dani. It goes way back to Valley days. I include it here anyway. It means "you're a liar" and it is used in arguments.

*You're drunk:* Means you are weird, crazy.

*No se que:* Of Spanish origin, but of general use. Means sarcastically "I didn't know that," when in fact it was totally obvious to me and everyone else.

*No duh!* Means the same thing as no se que, but is older and now used primarily by nerds.

*Sound major:* Sarcastic way of saying "I don't really care; that's really boring to me." (Heard frequently when I lecture Leah or Dani on some moral, philosophical or sociological issue).

*Major pains:* When you hurt yourself somewhat, but you still have a sense of humor, you can use this expression.

*Rad:* One of the survivors of Valley talk. Means radical, neat, really awesome.

*Burnt you Low:* Means "I really got you this time (in an argument, or a joke, or a rebuttal). This is also quite dated, I am told. It hasn't been in vogue for well over four months.

Well, there you have it. But make sure you tune in again next week. By then, only nerds and Phil Donahue will be using these expressions, and you better learn the new ones (*Sacramento Bee*, Dec. 8, 1985).

## 2. Bushonics - a New Language

*We've all had a good time making fun of President George W. Bush for a long time. His linguistic skills have been a particularly popular source of levity. On April 16, 2001, my friend Don*

*Hills sent me an e-mail which contained some of Bush's latest funny locutions. Here is my reply to Don's e-mail:*

I think I have the capacitation to speak Bushonics myself, due to my earlier experience with many foreign languages. As you know I was upreared in Europe, which is fractitioned into many different states. These states are small, and those citizenships often speak different dialogues. When traveling from one part of the country to another, you have to listen to many different altercations from one area to the next. Also, their dishes are exotic and un-American. Their beefs and poultry are often cooked in wine and other alcoholisms. My experience with these diversities gives me the facilitation to understand Bushonics.

### 3. French: The Fleur de Lys and the Color Purple: Chapter One

*So mimicking styles can be fun, and I like to experiment at it in different languages. French author Robert Merle has written a delightful series of novels about 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century France - the era of Kings Henry the Fourth and Louis the Thirteenth, Richelieu and the Musketeers. The novels are not unlike Alexandre Dumas' classics. What makes Merle's books especially delightful is his style. His writing is entirely - what do you call it in French? - the equivalent of "Elizabethan."*

*I have always thought that Merle's books could be successfully translated and sold in the English-speaking world. So in 2001, I tried my hand at translating one of his books' first few pages, remaining faithful to his elegant and archaic style. Here is how it began:*

Our good gossips at the Court said that Louis XIII, before he called Richelieu to be his counselor, nourished towards him the deepest misgivings. And this was true. They also said that Louis only accepted the Cardinal upon his mother's most pressing urgings. And nothing was further from the truth.

If there was one person on earth to whom Louis neither would nor could concede anything, it was indeed that woman, who was so close to him, yet had humiliated and lowered him so much during his childhood, and, during his more mature years, had twice taken up arms against him. When he finally freed himself from this yoke, Louis remained long suspicious towards the cardinal, as he had long been the minister of the infamous Concini -- executed upon his majesty's order on April 24 1617 -- and also because he had been the principal counselor to the Queen Mother, when she had to go into exile at Blois upon his son's order.

However, his judgment softened somewhat on this matter during the course of years. He finally recognized that Richelieu was attempting to exercise a moderating influence upon Marie de Medicis, insofar as such an influence was possible.

He also learned that the cardinal possessed impressive talents and, although in a sense these talents frightened him, -- as he feared that the prelate might wish to tyrannize him if he were to give him some power -- Louis had developed such disgust for his ministers -- mediocre, treacherous and prevaricators -- that he decided to put Richelieu to the test by trusting him, at least for the time being.

### 4. French: Is this How they Spoke, in Henry's Time?

*I went a step further. For the fun of it, I tried to mimic Merle's writing style in French. Here is a sample of that, written in 2002 and e-mailed to my mother and to my sister:*

Ma chere parente maternelle, et ma chere jumelle sororale:  
Je vous ecris en l'an de grace 2002.

Je suis en-train de lire un livre de Robert Merle. C'est un roman historique qui se joue aux 16eme et 17eme siecles. Le langage est tellement frappant que j'ai besoin d'y communiquer avec quelqu'un. Et puisque vous etes toutes deux francophones, quel meilleur choix d'interlocutrices pourrais-je faire? Alors voila l'ancien style dans lequel ce roman est ecrit. Je vais l'imiter au maximum de mes capabilities:

Il s'agit, dans cet ouvrage, du souverain Henri le Quatrieme, rex des Francais jadis. Or, il lui fut difficile d'atteindre telle position d'eminence, car auparavant il fut un Huguenot, c'est-a-dire un Calviniste Francais.

Sachez, cheres lectrices, que La France etait conflagree dans cette ere par une guerre civile sanglante et malignante. La majorite Francaise fut papiste, et elle ne tolerait point les Huguenots, et ni les Huguenots n'acceptaient guere les Catholiques avec equanimite, etant, eux, fort cales dans les arts et sciences militaires. On se souvient, par exemple, du massacre de la Sainte Bartolomee, lorsque la regente Catherine De Medicis, fit assassiner 25,000 Huguenots. Plus tard, cette "secte" s'emparra de LaRochele, et le Cardinal Richelieu exigea un grand effort militaire pour recuperer l'important port naval.

Par suite, la plupart de ceux de cette persuasion religieuse qui avait echapes a la persecution, evacuerent la France pour joindre les Neerlandes et le perfide Albion (= Angleterre) initialement, pour en aboutir finalement en Nouvelle Angleterre sous leur nouvelle appellation de "Puritains."

Mais Henri de Navarre (tel etait son titre precedent sa montee au trone du royaume) etait possedant d'une grande sagesse. Etant Huguenot, il comprenait clairement qu'il ne pourrait point acceder au trone des Francais tant qu'il demeurai ainsi et ne devenait pas un Papiste (= Catholique). Deja le Pontif Romain l'avait excomunique plusieurs annees auparavant, un chatiment eclesiastique qui evocait grande terreur et desolation dans le coeur des homme croyants jadis.

Donc Henri decida tout simplement de se convertir au catholicisme afin d'obtenir le support du peuple Francais qui etait, naturellement, en grande majorite papiste.

N'est le camouflage du chameleon une sage devise inventee par le createur pour proteger la creature contre ses ennemis naturels? N'est l'ideologie dont les humains se vettent pas plus qu'une devise pour se faire aimer, proteger et accepter par autrui? Et parmi lesquelles le choix est arbitraire et superficiel?

Ainsi en resonna Henri de Navarre, devenant d'abord Catholique, et ensuite Henri le Quatrieme, rex des peuples francophones.

On se souvient de ses paroles eloquentes et effectives a cette occasion: "Paris vaut bien une messe." Des elu *Princeps inter Pares* (= le premier parmi les egaux), Henri le Quatrieme mit fin a l'abominable guerre religieuse confrontant Francois contre Francois durant le 16eme siecle. En outre, sa conversion au Catholicisme causa le Pape de Rome de renverser l'excommunication qu'il avait inflige sur lui.

Par la suite, le bon monarque regit pendant presque trois decennies et renda son royaume pacifique, prosperant et potent. Il causa l'expulsion des armees Espagnoles de la terre natale des Francois. Il relanca la patrie vers la liberte et la prosperite.

Tragiquement, il fut, tel que bon nombre d'autres hommes excellents au cours de l'histoire humaine, assassine par le monstrueux Ravaillac. Tel semble le sort, frequemment, des hommes les meilleurs: Tel en fut avec les Presidents Lincoln et Kennedy, et les valeureux Gandhi et Martin Luther King. Henri le Quatrieme de France s'ajoute a cette liste, tel que la chanson le proclame: "Abraham, Martin and John; Why do the good die young?"

Voila donc mon maigre effort a l'imitation du style de Monsieur Robert Merle, fameux historien, romancier et professeur a l'Universite de Paris.

**Translation:**

Dear maternal parent and sororal twin:  
I write to you in the Lord's year of 2002.

I am reading a book by Robert Merle. It is a historical novel which takes place in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. The language is so striking that I feel the need to communicate about it with someone. And since you are both francophone, what better choice of interlocutors could I make? So here is the ancient style in which this novel is written. I will imitate it to the maximum of my capabilities:

This opus concerns the sovereign Henry the Fourth, rex of the French in days bygone. His trail to that august position was strewn with obstacles, for he had been a Huguenot in times past, or stated differently, a French Calvinist.

Know, my dear readers, that France was conflagrated in that era by a bloody and malignant civil war. France was in majority Papist, and she did not tolerate the Huguenots, nor did the latter accept the Catholics with equanimity, being themselves considerably advanced in the military arts and sciences. One can remember, for example, the Saint Bartholomew Massacre, when the regent Catherine De Medicis commanded the assassination of 25,000 Huguenots. Later, this "sect" took possession of LaRochele, and the Cardinal Richelieu applied great military effort in order to recapture this important naval port.

Subsequently, the majority among this religious persuasion who had escaped persecution, evacuated France in order to, initially, join the Low Countries and *Perfidious Albion* (= England), and to eventually end their peripatetic vicissitudes in Nova Anglica under their new appellation of "Puritans."

However, Henry of Navarre (for such was his titlature preceding his ascent to the realm's kingship) was in possession of great wisdom. For being a Huguenot, he understood with clarity that he could not accede to the throne of the French as long as he remained so and did not become a Papist (= a Catholic). Already the Roman *Pontifex Maximus* (= the Pope) had excommunicated him several years priorly, an ecclesiastical sanction which evoked great terror and desolation in the hearts of men of belief in times past. Thus Henry simply resolved to convert to Catholicism so as to obtain the support of the French populace, which was in its large majority Papist.

Is the camouflage of the chameleon not a wise device invented by the Creator to protect the creature against his natural enemies? Is the ideology with which humans invest themselves not a device employed in the pursuit of one's fellow man's love, protection and acceptance? And amongst which the choice is arbitrary and superficial?

Thus reasoned Henry of Navarre, who thereupon became Catholic first, and then Henry the Fourth, supreme ruler of the French people. One remembers his eloquent and effective locutions upon that occasion: "Paris is well worth a mass."

Upon being elected *Princeps inter Pares* (= first among equals), Henry the Fourth put a term to the abominable religious war which had pitted Frenchman against Frenchman during the 16<sup>th</sup> century. In addition, his conversion to Catholicism caused the Holy Pontiff to reverse the excommunication which he had inflicted upon Henry.

Subsequently, this most excellent monarch ruled during nearly three decades and rendered his realm pacific, prosperous and potent. He caused the expulsion of the armies of the Spaniards from the native lands of Frenchmen. He launched the fatherland towards liberty and prosperity.

Tragically he was, such as a large number of other excellent men during the course of human history, felled by the monstrous Ravailiac. This seems the fate, frequently, of the men who are the best: Such happened to the presidents Lincoln and Kennedy, and to the worthy and holy Gandhi and Martin Luther King. Henry the Fourth adds himself to this list, such as proclaimed in the song, *Abraham, Martin and John; Why do the good die Young?*

Thus is my meager effort at the imitation of Sir Robert Merle, famous historian, novelist and professor at the University of Paris.

### 5. French Song About a Deadly Crash on the Riviera. Funny?

*Transcribing songs is also fun. I did this with several famous European crooners, for example the Belgian Jacques Brel and the Frenchman Serge Gainsbourg. Here is one of the latter's songs, which I transcribed and translated in 2005.*

Ecoute, c'est toi qui conduit moi,  
c'est moi, bon alors tait-toi  
Y a du whiskey dans la boite a gand  
et des Americaines t'as qu'a tapper dedans  
Ecoute, ecoute un peu ca, poupee  
t'entend mon air prefere  
Met-moi la radio un peu plus fort  
et n'ai pas peur, j' vais pas aller dans les decors

Listen, you are driving me.  
It's me? okay then, shut up.  
There is whiskey in the glove compartment,  
and American cigarettes, just have some.  
Listen, listen to this, babe  
You hear my favorite song?  
Turn up the radio a bit  
And don't worry, I won't drive into the  
scenery.

Soudain, juste avant Monte Carlo  
C'est ca, c'est ca le manque de pau  
Y a qu' la jaguar fait une embardee  
et droit devant et vla qui pique dans le fosse  
Et pendant que toi tu agonisai  
la radio, la radio a continue a gueuler  
Demain, on les ramassera a la petite cuillere

Suddenly, just before Monte Carlo...  
That's it, that's what bad luck is:  
The jaguar takes a spill  
straight down the cliff,  
and while you were working the radio,  
The radio continued to blare.  
Tomorrow, they'll be picked up with a tea spoon.

### 6. French Childhood Songs - Some not so Innocent!

*The French are not as puritanical as we are. We used to sing songs such as the one below in elementary school. Maybe we didn't understand them?*

Janeton prend sa faucille, Pour aller couper du jonc  
(Janeton takes her sickle, to go cut the grass )

En chemin elle rencontre Quatre jeunes et beaux garcons  
(On her way she meets four handsome young boys)

Le premier un peu timide, Lui chatouilla le menton  
(The first one, a bit shy, tickled her chin)

Le deuxieme un peu moin sage, La coucha sur le gazon

*(The second one, a bit naughtier, laid her down on the grass)*

Le troisieme encore moins sage, Lui souleva le jupon  
*(The third one, even naughtier, raised her skirt)*

Ce que fit le quatrieme, n'est pas dit dans cette chanson  
*(This song doesn't say what the fourth one did)*

Si vous le saviez mesdames, Vous iriez couper du jonc  
*(If you knew, ladies, you'd go cut the grass)*

*On the other hand, some of our childrens' songs were perfectly innocent. For example this one:*

Maman les p'tits bateaux qui vont sur l'eau ont-ils des jambes?  
 Mais oui mon gros betat, s'il n'y en avaient pas, ils marcheraient pas.  
 Allant droit devant eux, ils vont autour du monde,  
 Mais comme la terre est ronde, ils reviennent chez eux.

Maman les p'tits bateaux qui vont sur l'eau ont-ils des jambes?  
 Mais non mon gros betat, s'il y en avaient ils marcheraient.  
 Allant droit devant eux.. etc.

**Translation:**

Mother, the little ships which sail on water, do they have legs?  
 Of course, my silly boy, if they didn't have legs, they couldn't move.  
 They go straight ahead and they go around the world,  
 But since the world is round, they come back home.

Mother, the little ships which sail on water, do they have legs?  
 Of course not, my silly boy, if they had legs, they would walk.  
 They go straight ahead and... etc.

**7. A Song by the Band, Transcribed. One of my Favorites.**

*I also transcribed American songs - the Stones, the Beatles, Bob Dylan, Donovan, Simon and Garfunkel, Crosby Stills and Nash, you name it. Here is one of my favorites, by the Band. After I was done transcribing it (in 2002), I found out that I could just download it from the Internet. I felt stupid, but I had a good time.*

**The Weight -- by The Band:**

I. I pulled into Nazareth  
 Was feeling about half past dead;  
 I just need some place

Where I can lean my head.  
 "Hey Mister, can you tell me  
 Where a man might find a bed?"  
 He just grinned and shook my hand and  
 "No" was all he said

## REFRAIN

Take the load off Fannie,  
 Take the load for free,  
 Take the load off Fannie,  
 And you can put the load right (on me)

- II. I picked up my bag,  
 I went looking for a place to hide;  
 When I saw Carmen and the devil  
 Walking side by side.  
 I say "Hey Carmen,  
 Come on, let's go downtown."  
 She said, "I gotta go, but my friend can stick around."
- III. Go down, Miss Moses,  
 There is nothing you can say  
 It's just old Luke, and Luke's  
 Waiting on the judgment day.  
 "Well, Luke my friend,  
 What about young Anna lee?"  
 He said "Do me a favor son,  
 won't you stay and keep Annalee company?"
- IV. Crazy Chester followed me  
 and he caught me in the fog.  
 He said "I will fix your rags,  
 If you take Jack, my dog."  
  
 I said "Wait a minute Chester,  
 You know I'm a peaceful man  
 He said "that's okay boy,  
 Won't you feed him when you can.
- V. Catch you cannonball,  
 Now to take me down the line  
 My bag is sinking low  
 And I do believe it's time  
 To get back to Miss Annie,  
 You know she is the only one  
 Who sent me here with her regards for everyone

## 8. French and Dutch Christmas Poems

*In Holland, Christmas is celebrated on January 6, and it is called Saint Nicholas. People exchange gifts, and with each gift they have to write a poem. Because we spoke both French and Dutch in our family, we wrote Christmas poems in both languages. Here is an example of a French poem I wrote in December 1962, to go with a bottle of perfume for my mother Ata. She was just about to leave on an expedition to the Amazon Jungle at the confines of Venezuela and Brazil. That is what the poem alludes to. Needless to say, the English translation was not part of the deal - it is just an extemporaneous thing I did ten minutes ago.*

### French Poem:

N'ai-je pas entendu, ma chere Ata,  
 que tu te prepares pour le Canada?  
 Ou serait-ce par hasard le Sahara?  
 Ou l'Nevada, ou peut-etre Cuba?  
 Costa-Rica, Panama, ou le Kenya?  
 Dis-moi: n'est-ce donc pas le Ghana?  
 Guatemala ou l'Nicaragua?  
 Peut-etre alors le Liberia ou Angola?  
 AH MAIS NON! J'Y SUIS, VOILA:  
 C'EST AU VENEZUELA QUE TU VAS!  
 Alors bon voyage, en tous les cas!  
 Ce souhait provient de moi...  
 Mais aussi de Nicolas!  
 N'oublie pas, en tous les cas,  
 Que mon coeur ne te quittera pas.  
 Et en outre, en plus de ça,  
 Emmene ce p'tit cadeau avec toi.  
 Je ne sais pas a quoi il servira,  
 Mais les fauves, tu les chasseras:  
 Ils se sauveront tous tres loin de toi,  
 A l'odeur de ce liquide-la.

Did I hear, dear Ata  
 That you are getting ready for Canada?  
 Or could it perhaps be the Sahara?  
 Or Nevada, or perhaps Cuba?  
 Costa-Rica, Panama, or Kenya?  
 Tell me: is it not Ghana?  
 Guatemala or Nicaragua?  
 Perhaps Liberia, or Angola?  
 Ah, no, I got it, *voila*:  
 it's Venezuela, where you're going, *oh la la!*  
 So *bon voyage*, in any case!  
 This gift is for your face,  
 And it comes from Saint Nicholas' place  
 Dont forget, in any case  
 That in my heart, it is a pounding race,  
 And furthermore,  
 Take this little gift in your case  
 I don't know for what it'll be a base,  
 But the wild beast, away it'll chase.  
 They will run from you to a far-away place  
 At the smell if this liquid, which smells like mace!

### Dutch Poem:

*And here is an example of a Dutch Christmas poem written on the same occasion, to go with a book by Dostoevsky which I gave to my sister Julo. At that time, I moved about Amsterdam on a little moped. Unfortunately, I got hit by a fierce rainstorm on my way home from the bookstore, and I didn't have a bag for the book. So it got very wet. Furthermore, my moped gave out and I had to walk most of the way. Also, I dropped the book in the muddy slush. So when I finally gave my sister her Christmas gift, it was a total mess. This is what the poem describes.*

In den Beginne was het Boek nieuw  
 Ik dacht, "Het kind is er aan toe;  
 Dostoevsky moet ze krijgen,  
 Dat leest ze toch sinds wijlen  
 Toen ik terugreed van de winkel

In the Beginning, the book was new  
 I thought, "The child is already twenty two,  
 Dostoevsky is what she needs,  
 That's where her education leads  
 When I rode back from the store,

Was de hemel één grote druppel  
 En ik die geen tas bij me had  
 Hield het boek, en het boek werd nat  
 Toen mijn brommer het begaf  
 Was de zaak helemaal af  
 Moeizaam moest ik lopen toen  
 en ik had niet eens een handschoen!  
 Ik liep door de hele stad  
 En het boet werd natter en nat.

Het Museumplein lag vol regen  
 Ik botste daar op windkracht negen  
 Toen viel alles op de grond  
 Maar ik verzette mij, en...stond!  
 Toen ik thuis gekomen was  
 Verpakte ik wat er van over was,  
 En dat dan, mijn lieve Julo,  
 Werde je Sinterklaas cadeau.

Of rain, there couldn't have been more,  
 And since I didn't have a bag  
 The book got wet, oh what a drag!  
 When my moped gave out  
 My errand became a rout.  
 I had to walk through the snow  
 And I didn't even have gloves on, Oh!  
 I walked through the whole city  
 And the book became wetter and wetter.  
 What a pity!

The Museum Square was full of rain  
 And the wind caused me great pain  
 Then, the book fell to the ground  
 But I picked it up and swung around  
 When I got home  
 I wrapped what was left of the tome  
 And this then, my dear Julo,  
 Is what became of your Christmas cadeau

### 9. Nonsense in Five Languages

*Sometimes, it's fun to mimic a language while actually babbling nonsense. Some Hollywood stars have been masters at this, for example the great Danny Kaye. He could mimic French, German, Russian, Italian, Spanish and just about any other language without uttering a single real word in any of those languages. On the other hand, Hollywood sometimes aggravates me by using non-native actors act out the part of a native. For example, the French President pays a state visit to the U.S. President played by Michael Douglas. And the actor playing the French President speaks French with an abominable accent. He is obviously not French. At worst, you sometimes see a movie or a play where an actor pretends to be a foreigner and to say something in a foreign language, but if you know that language, you find out that the actor is in fact speaking gibberish and merely imitating the language. Can't Hollywood afford to hire real Germans, or Frenchmen, or Russians, or whatever, for these bit parts?*

*But sometimes it's fun to say things which mean nothing - to say foreign-sounding things but in fact using gibberish syllables, as Danny Kaye did so well. Here is an example of this, written on April 13, 1992. These five statements have two characteristics: (1) They contain only nonsense and (2) They really sound like those languages.*

**1) French:** Je ne prolomine les dorines de la mague. Mais il faut deromer le porage. A tropot de la bizette.

**2) Dutch:** Zo gaan we naar toenderij om even te tomeren teen de anderaars.

**3) English:** How about the gran of the wiley brethings? And also for the gromper with tilongs to drover against some plabes?

**4) German:** Also wir mussen immer tatzuchen fur onerishes niemalsbiedervromen wie man tochterliches wahmieren, ja?

5) Hungarian: ember melekis nagy prohar minden szagad peherni

### 10. Fictitious International Christmas Greetings

*And then there is the popularity of multi-lingual Christmas greetings and salutations. Stores do it, you and I do it. And each year the list of languages in which we say "merry Christmas" gets longer. So in December 2006, I thought, why not mix it up a bit: My Christmas cards will say "Merry Christmas" in a whole bunch of different languages, plus some languages which don't exist. And you know what? Most people didn't even notice the difference. Here is an example of how I signed some of my Christmas cards:*

Dear.....:

Anita, the kids and I wish you the best for next year, etc...etc.  
 Merry Christmas  
 Joyeux Noel  
 Moyerr Doridad  
 Feliz Navidad  
 Mele kalimaka  
 Muziak Phouziak  
 Vrolijk Kerstmis  
 Kung His Nien bing Chu Shen Tan Min Sang  
 Frohliche Weinachten  
 Barabu Barabu

\* \* \* \* \*

*And then there are the Christmas greetings where people tell each other all that's happened since last year. In 2006, I thought that maybe I should start participating in this, but with a twist:*

For next year, I have a better idea: You know how people use Christmas card to fill each other in on all the family news since the previous year, including their cats' bouts with hair balls and their children making honor roll in kindergarten?

My Christmas card next year could go a number of ways:

(1) Since bragging is *de rigueur* in this annual ritual, I could go over the top. I could say things like:

"It's been a busy and productive year for the Kando family. Tom just got his third Nobel Prize. Dani qualified for the Olympic swim team, but she turned them down because her mother is sick and Dani is needed at home. Tom's brother has just been appointed President of Harvard University. Anita won the California state lottery. She is donating the entire amount, fifty million dollars, to the American Cancer Society.." etc.

(2) Or maybe do the opposite:

"The youngest Kando son is finally off parole. His seven-year prison term for running a network of methamphetamine labs had been reduced to five years, so we are real happy about that.

Tom was fired from his new job after three months. That's just as well because his boss was a woman and she adamantly refused to sleep with Tom. But Tom recovered fast from this mishap, due to the loyal support he gets from his gay lover. " etc.

### 11. F.A.R.T.

*A final irreverence here (jotted down on October 1, 2006):*

It is very difficult to get published or to even get an agent to glance at your work, right? Furthermore, it is not clear that what gets published and read is better than what gets turned down or ignored. This is enough to make one cry.

So I propose a support group for failed authors called **Failed Authors, Rejected and Turned Down (F.A.R.T)** Let's create a blog, a web site, a national network. Local support groups (chapters) will meet regularly. The potential membership is huge, because *everyone* is now trying to write books, especially autobiographies.

We will meet every week and commiserate. We will model ourselves after AA and Alanon. We get on the wagon, i.e. we quit wasting our resources and ruining our health trying to peddle our writing to agents and to publishers. We are addicts, just like gamblers and alcoholics.

A typical confessional at one such meeting might go like this: "I have been on the wagon for three months. I talk to my spouse and to my children again. I exercise again and I return my friends' e-mails and telephone calls.

Or conversely, "I thought I had kicked my addiction to sending out queries. However, I fell off the wagon last week: I Sent out another query letter to an agent I found in the Writers' Market."

### 54.: PLAY: OTHER IDEAS

#### 1. Bathroom Graffiti

*On February 15, 1999, I got the following media request for a sociological analysis of bathroom graffiti:*

BATHROOM GRAFFITI - AKRON BEACON JOURNAL (OH). I'm working on a story about bathroom graffiti, and I'm looking for someone who can place bathroom scribbles into a cultural context. Why do people choose to express themselves in this manner? Akron Beacon Journal is a Knight-Ridder newspaper in Akron, Ohio.

*I sent the following reply, and then I embarked on a quick study of graffiti, using my students to collect data:*

Thanks. The *News and Review* person who interviewed me was a woman, and she knew little about the graffiti in the men's rooms, as I know little about what's inscribed in ladies' rooms.

One interesting difference that emerged was that the men's graffiti are often sexual, obscene, sometimes racist, and sometimes invitations to gay sex (e.g. phone numbers). The women's graffiti, on the other hand, I am told, are not generally raunchy or sexual.

*By March 24, we had the following data:*

Men:

1. Library, 2nd fl.: "Hot Mouth; Hot Butt; 1620 6<sup>th</sup> str.; stop by"
2. " "I'm 17 and need a blow job"
3. " "I want to be fucked; looking for large cocks for my tight ass"
4. " "You all need Jesus"
5. Rest stop, Hwy.5: "Here I sit on the thrown  
as I wait to get blown,  
my hands begin to wander,  
my mind begins to wonder,  
I start to cum,  
fuck, I want some"
6. Veterans Hall, Placerville, CA.: "If you sat on the toilet, congratulations!!! you now have herpes."
7. 1st.floor, Ed. bldg.: "If you have someone, show some class,  
don't write it while wiping your ass."
8. 1st.fl.library: XIV - NORTENO'S RULE
9. Salinas cinema: XIV
- 10a. 1<sup>st</sup> floor, Douglas Hall: "I love foreign cocks! Anybody?"  
Response underneath:  
"Then leave the country, fag!"  
"How do people like you get in school?"  
Rejoinder from 1st individual:  
"Jealous, eh?"  
Response:  
"Go(t) to Kentucky"
- 10b. " On wall side: a crude drawing of a penis
- 10c. " Two overlapping male symbols (circle-arrow)
- 10d. " "Die, fags."
11. Sac. H.S. V.P. (Viet Pride)
12. Natomas H.S. "LIVING SACRIFICE"
13. Sequoia Hall: White Nation, Pure blood
14. Cal State: Need dick bad
15. CSUS Pub: 3rd floor Mendocino is the place to get a blow job
16. Mc Donalds: For a good time call 383-5917
17. Vacaville Gas station: Your mom has a hairy cock
18. Cal State:: XIV
19. " MOD (Asian Gang)
20. Rest area, I-5: For a good time, call . . .
21. " For a good time, ask for . . .
22. Fast food rest.:Pornographic drawings
23. " Poem about a vagina

24. House window  
(nice\_neighborhood): "James licks pussy," and: "burning from both ends"
25. Park playground slide: For good blowjob call 944-1507
26. Football locker room: Fuck Davis
27. " (Coach) John Volek sucks dick
28. K Mart: I enjoy sucking big cock
29. Douglas Hall: Stand closer, it's not that big
30. Univ. of Cal.: Be here at 4:20 on 6/19
31. Movie theater: For wild time 865-9210
32. River front Mkt.: Grout to meet you
33. " Urin a lot of trouble
34. " Tiled of the same old lines
35. " A tile of two cities
36. " You've grout a little penis
37. " Queen of the tile
38. " Tile me more
39. Alumni Grove  
(under bridge): L.B.C. Sur 13
40. " Burn your blunt here
41. " No po pos Here
42. " Fuck the Polocr (?)
43. " Blue
44. " Long Beach
45. " "BLK for Life" and "U will all die"
46. J.C. Penney's: XIV 'Loco'
47. " Tolo was here K.I.T. 987-1279

#### Women:

1. Sunrise Sears: "I hate Jennifer P. You better watch your back B!@#Z!"
2. Fair Oaks Burger king: I love (heart drawing) Robert
3. Godfather Pizza: April, Amber and Liz were here April loves the back street boys  
(tagged by junior high girls)
4. Cal State dorm: Fuck Sarah
5. San Jose H.S. Fucking bitch
6. " Marsha 398-1528
7. " Kelly's a ho
8. Cal State locker rm.: Stop spreading STDs; use protection
9. " Bitch
10. Berkeley bookstore: Kelli Raymond loves to eat pussy! Call her at 462-3655
11. Round Table Pizza: For a good time call Alysa at 489-6623.
12. Univ. Union: For good phone sex call espo 366-8217 or espomike@hotmail.com
13. Fanny Ann's: Monica Loves Bill
14. Mnd. Hall 3rd floor: "for a good time call Angela 456-8010" (drawings of hearts around words)
15. Univ. of Cal. Union: If a tree falls in the forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound?
16. Mnd. Hall 1st floor: Beth knows how to give a girl a good time
17. H.S.: Denise Koo has crabs

18. Arden Mall: 485-0021
19. Oak Park, public: Mary is a bitch
20. Howe Park: Good head for white/Hispanic males 19-31
21. Eureka Hall: Love is all around
22. " Kiss me baby
23. " Black people are not the only people who have been oppressed, we need to learn
24. JimBoys: Call Nancy or Brian @ 729-4902, she will suck anything, and so will I, call us
25. H.S. To Felicia: Hi Ho, Hi Ho, it's off to bed you go,  
You sleep with everyone you know  
Hi ho, hi ho, hi ho, hi ho
26. Mc Donalds: Beth is a hoe
27. adult school Kill the techres

### Categories:

1. gangs: Males 8, 9, 11, 18, 19, 39, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46
2. Invitation to homosexual sex: Males 1, 2, 3, 10, 14, 15, 16, 20, 21, 25 (?), 30, 31  
Females 10, 11, 14, 16, 20, 28
3. Religion: Males 4
4. General sexual, obscene: Males 5, 29  
Females 24
5. Admonitions re STDs, contraception, etc.: Males 6  
Females 8
6. general, limericks, mildly obscene, grout/tile puns etc.: Males 7, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38
7. homophobia combined with xenophobia, hostile exchanges: Males 10, 10d
8. Vengeful, personal notes: Females 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 17, 19, 25, 26
9. (Heterosexual) love, personal: females 2, 3, 18, 21, 22
10. Invitation to sex for someone *else*, probably a revenge motive: females 12
11. ?: Males 12, 40, 47
12. (White) Racism: Males 13
13. Current issues, politics, etc.: Females 13, 23
14. Highly obscene: Males 17, 22, 23, 24
15. Philosophy: Females 15
16. Drawings (usually sexual): Males 10b, 10c, 22
17. Athletic insults (rivals, coaches, etc.): Males 26, 27
18. Other hate towards groups: Female 27

### Places:

1. Cal State and other Univ. campuses
2. Rest stops, on the road, gas stations
3. Theaters
4. Fast food, restaurants
5. Misc.
6. H.S.
7. Dept. stores, book stores, malls

8. Bars
9. Parks
10. *Not* bathrooms, e.g. bldg. walls, windows, under bridges, etc.

## 2. The Barbarian Invasions: Will it Happen Again?

*Here is an interesting topic: Who exactly invaded the Roman Empire and Europe? Will it happen again (to the Western World)? In the Fall of 1994, I did a little research in this. The introduction was added in 2007.*

The decline of the Roman Empire remains one of history's most fascinating topics. The reason for this fascination is the large number of parallels between that era and our own. That is, between the situation of the West in the world today, and that of Rome 1800 years ago. (1) Cultural decay - either real or *feared* - a theme which has been with us at least since the publication of Oswald Spengler's *Decline of the West* in 1918. (2) Enormous increase in the size and power of the State. (3) Globalism, combined with the clash of cultures. (4) The role of one super-power. (5) Ups and downs - periods of triumph and felicity for the West, alternating with failure and defeat. (6) A slow and unpredictable process, inability to predict "how it will all end."

Two caveats: (1) Even if one were to admit that we are in decline (and many people do not), centuries can lapse before it becomes disastrous. Furthermore, decline may be temporary, and reversible. So there is no determinism. (2) Historical analogies can be found anywhere. There is no simplistic parallel between Ancient Rome and us.

That said, decline is always a possibility, and it is always bad. I would hate to see America and the rest of the West become gradually impoverished and criminalized, its quality of life declining to that of Third World countries. Similarly, the decline and fall of Rome was one of humanity's great tragedies. Had it not happened, the planet might *today* be a *thousand* years further along the upward line of scientific and humanistic progress, an evolution from which humanity took a thousand-year long break during the Dark Ages which followed the fall of Rome.

Rome, then, finally succumbed to the hordes of invaders which had threatened it for centuries. The history of the fall of Rome is the history of huge and violent migrations. Just for my own satisfaction, I recently decided to research and to catalogue some of the Eurasian population movements which determined the history of Rome and of Europe until our very own times:

1). From about 1,000 B.C. until 50 A.D., Visigoths and Ostrogoths descended from Scandinavia into the Rhineland and into the Danubian Basin. Clashes between them and the Romans were still far into the future.

2) Until the beginning of the Christian Era, Celts - including Gauls - populated the British Isles and what would become France. Clashes with Rome were insignificant, and they were no threat to Rome

3) From 100 A.D. to 300 A.D. the Huns migrated from Mongolia to the Caspian and Black Sea region. This was a consequence of Chinese politics and possibly in part due to the erection of the Great Wall. From the Caspian region, the Huns attempted to invade India, but they were repulsed. They then turned West, towards the Balkan and the Danubian Basin, where they subjugated the Ostrogoths. This occurred around 350 A.D. Attila himself decided to move West in the early fifth century. According to some sources, he took 70,000 families with him, from the larger Hun society in Central Asia. From then on, the Huns terrorized much of Europe until Attila's

defeat at Chalons (451) and his death in 453.

4) But before that already, in 376, the Huns had forced the Visigoths to cross the Danube and to seek refuge inside the Roman Empire. These refugees wanted homesteads and Roman citizenship. However, they clashed with the native population. In the ensuing Battle at Adrianople (378), the Romans were defeated and the Emperor was killed. Thereupon, the Visigoths became increasingly restless. They invaded Italy proper in 395 and they took Rome (temporarily) in 410.

5) In about 200 A.D., the Alamanni began to invade Gaul. This was a confederacy of Germanic tribes. They were generally not a major problem, as the Romans usually defeated them.

6) In 406, another Germanic tribe crossed the Rhine to settle parts of Gaul - the Burgundians. The process was peaceful and led to the creation of Burgundy.

7) The Vandals were another Germanic tribe which crossed the Rhine in 406. They numbered about 80,000. The Vandals went all the way to the South of Spain and to North Africa, ravaging the land on their way. They survived briefly as the major pirates of the Mediterranean, still active at the time of Saint Augustine's death in North Africa in 430.

8) The final major Germanic tribe to cross the Rhine into Gaul were the Franks. In 406, they crossed from their home base in the East Bank of the Lower Rhine, invading the Rhineland and Belgium. Later, the Frankish chief Clovis (481-511) conquered all of Gaul, evicting the Burgundians in the process.

9) From approximately 400 to about 600, the Mongolian tribe of the Avars moved from their former abode to the Hungarian plain.

10) From 580 on, the Lombards moved from Central Europe into Northern Italy. But the history of the (West) Roman Empire had already come to a formal end in 476, when the last Emperor Romulus Augustulus had abdicated to a German general.

To complete this list, four more groups should be added:

11) The Muslim invasions of Southern and Western Europe began shortly after 600 A.D. Parts of Europe (Spain) remained under Muslim control until 1492.

12) The Magyars migrated to Hungary in about 800 A.D. from the Uralo-Altai region of Central Asia.

13) between 800 and 900 A.D. the Vikings sailed down from Scandinavia and invaded coastal Europe, ransacking the area at first and establishing societies in such far-flung places as Normandy and Sicily.

14) Finally the Turks, as the Ottoman Empire, attacked and invaded Europe from the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century onwards, taking Constantinople in 1453 and thereby effectively putting an end to the East Roman Empire. After that, the Ottomans held on to large portions of Europe until the end of the 17th century, and it was not until 1922 that the Empire was abolished altogether, relinquishing most of its imperial possessions and being reduced to the country of Turkey.

### 3. Instead of Playing Monopoly, Let's Play Socialism

*In 1988, I thought of the following family board game:*

This game is called **SOCIALISM**. It's modeled after Monopoly. Same format, same number of participants. I haven't totally worked it out yet, but here are some of the rules:

1) You go around the board.

2) You buy property.

3) When you land on “Chance” or “Community Chest,” you pick up a card, like in Monopoly. Here are some examples of cards you could get:

“You have been selected for a Government job. You get to take one piece of property of your choice from each other player.”

“You are now a welfare recipient. You no longer roll the dice. Instead, you collect \$200 each time that it’s your turn to play.”

“You have been convicted of a felony. Either go to jail, or pay another player \$200 to go to jail for you.”

“You have been elected to political office. You collect \$200 from each player.”

“You have been appointed Governor. Take one half of the Tax Revenues.”

4) Each time you pass GO, you pay \$200 in taxes.

5) The tax revenues are placed in the middle of the board.

6) If you don’t have enough money to pay your taxes, the government will use eminent domain and accept a piece of property instead. It will reimburse you for the property’s assessed value, as per attached list. (The assessed values listed are half the properties’ real values). If you don’t have any property either, you go to jail. You have been eliminated from the game.

#### 4....Or How About a Game of "Syntax"?

*In early 2003, I had a dream. The exact game described below is what I dreamed! My daughter Danielle tells me it reminds her of "pctionary", or "Madlibs."*

This is modeled after a game we used to play in Europe - I forget the name : Each player takes a piece of paper. Starts by drawing the head of a person or animal, then rolls/fold it up so that the next player can’t see what he drew, then passes the paper to the next player around the table, who then draws a neck, folds the paper again and passes it on, the next person draws shoulders, the next one a belly, the next one upper legs, then knees or whatever, finally the feet. Then, when you unroll each paper, you get a funny-looking hybrid.

The principle here is the same, except that you use words, not drawings. So at the end you get a funny composite sentence. This game would have pedagogical value. It would teach children grammar, syntax and language. Table One gives a couple of examples:

Table I: The Game of Syntax

Grammatical term:	Example I	Example II
Article	A	The
Adjective	beautiful	blue
noun/subject	dog	man

verb (past, present, future) (transitive, intransitive)	ate	will run
Article	the	some
Adjective	large	funny
Object	cloud	soup

### 5. The Presidents - Good, Bad and In-Between

*In 2002, I listed all of our Presidents and tried to distinguish between good, bad and mediocre. Some of the comments were added in 2007.*

It started with the historian Arthur Schlesinger Jr. - the attempt to rank U.S. Presidents from good to bad, to single out "the worst ten," "the best ten," the "single worst" ever, the "greatest one," etc. In the Spring of 2007, *Newsweek* was at it again, with a cover story on this topic.

This is terribly problematic and unfair. The rankings are invariably done by (1) History and Political Science professors (like Schlesinger) and (2) the media. So guess which Presidents fare well? Liberal activists, of course! And guess which ones get the boot? Conservatives, Republicans, Presidents who do *less, rather than more*. So our allegedly "greatest" Presidents tend to be those during whose watch the country was at war (Washington, Lincoln, FDR), or who spearheaded great social revolutions and increased the role of the government (Lyndon Johnson). And if someone was at the helm of the country during a period of peace, prosperity and *laissez-faire* (e.g. Eisenhower), that President is at best viewed as mediocre. And if a President made a mess of things but was a liberal idealist (Wilson, Carter), then he still gets the benefit of the doubt from the "experts" (= University professors and journalists).

So we have to take the experts' opinions with many grains of salt. Of course, we can't disagree with someone like Schlesinger when he tells us that George Washington was a better President than Richard Nixon. That would be silly. But was Richard Nixon also worse than Jimmy Carter? According to most academicians, yes. According to me, no. Because of the Watergate scandal - whose importance has been vastly exaggerated - Nixon will forever be despised by liberals, despite his many positive contributions, including the opening to China. On the other hand, because Carter was such a nice and liberal man, the Left will always forgive him his utter incompetence as President, both internationally and domestically. So there is a lot of subjectivity and ideological bias.

That said, Table One gives you *my* list: I am giving Presidents about whom I know something scores which range from zero to ten. Based on what? On my (limited) knowledge of their record.

Table I: U.S. Presidents, and Their Merit Scores

President	Score	President	Score
1. George Washington	10	23. Benjamin Harrison	?
2. John Adams	8	24. Grover Cleveland	5
3. Thomas Jefferson	9	25. William McKinley	?

4. James Madison	9	26. Theodore Roosevelt	8
5. James Monroe	8	27. William Taft	?
6. John Q. Adams	7	28. Woodrow Wilson	5
7. Andrew Jackson	6	29. Warren Harding	1
8. Martin Van Buren	?	30. Calvin Coolidge	3
9. William Harrison	0	31. Herbert Hoover	2
10. John Tyler	5	32. Franklin Roosevelt	9
11. James Polk	?	33. Harry Truman	8
12. Zachary Taylor	2	34. Dwight Eisenhower	7
13. Millard Fillmore	?	35. John Kennedy	4
14. Franklin Pierce	?	36. Lyndon Johnson	4
15. James Buchanan	1	37. Richard Nixon	4
16. Abraham Lincoln	10	38. Gerald Ford	4
17. Andrew Johnson	2	39. James Carter	2
18. Ulysses Grant	3	40. Ronald Reagan	9
19. Rutherford Hayes	?	41. George Walker Bush	7
20. James Garfield	3	42. William Clinton	8
21. Chester Arthur	?	43. George W. Bush	4
22. Grover Cleveland	5		

Table II: U.S. Presidents, Grouped by Merit

Best Fourteen Men	1. George Washington - 10 Abraham Lincoln - 10 3. Thomas Jefferson - 9 James Madison - 9 Franklin Roosevelt - 9 Ronald Reagan - 9 7. John Adams - 8 James Monroe - 8 Theodore Roosevelt - 8 Harry Truman - 8 William Clinton - 8 12 John Q. Adams - 7 Dwight Eisenhower - 7 George Walker Bush - 7
Mediocre Nine	15. Andrew Jackson - 6 16. John Tyler - 5 Grover Cleveland - 5 Woodrow Wilson - 5 19. John Kennedy - 4 Lyndon Johnson - 4 Richard Nixon - 4 Gerald Ford - 4 George W. Bush - 4
Worst Ten men	24. Ulysses Grant - 3 James Garfield - 3 Calvin Coolidge - 3 27. Zachary Taylor - 2 Andrew Johnson - 2 Herbert Hoover - 2 James Carter - 2 31. James Buchanan - 1 Warren Harding - 1 33. William Harrison - 0
Nine Unknown Men	Martin Van Buren James Polk Millard Fillmore Franklin Pierce Rutherford Hayes Chester Arthur Benjamin Harrison William McKinley William Taft

55: PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

## 1. Empathy

*This final section is about the most important thing in life - relationships. I begin with a fabulous and lugubrious story I wrote in 1962, when I was 21. It's in Dutch. I haven't had time to translate it yet. It's supernatural, a bit like Daphne Du Maurier's mysterious stories.*

Op zoek naar rust en afzondering had ik in Oktober een kamer gehuurd aan de rand van de stad. Twee maanden eerder was ik teruggekeerd uit Amerika, en over die reis kon ik een boek publiceren...mits het een beetje behoorlijk werd.

Maar de eerste twee maanden na mijn terugkeer waren problematisch geweest: moeilijkheden mij weer aan te passen, conflicten met mijn ex-vrienden en de omgeving, enz. Na de lange en ongelooflijke reis in Amerika voelde ik me katerig, leeg, nutteloos. Ik had weinig fut om weer te beginnen... om weer WAT te beginnen? Al mijn vroegere toekomstplannen leken nu zinloos.

Liefst wilde ik schrijven, howel dit to dusver weinig concreets had opgeleverd. Wat ik schreef werd meestal afgekraakt en zelfs de stukken die men "wel aardig" vond werden nooit geplaatst. Zelf miste ik iedere overtuiging, en ik kon mijn eigen prestaties niet beoordelen. Nu had ik al mijn hoop en energie op dat boek gevestigd, een boek dat al lang klaar had moeten zijn, maar traineerde omdat ik teveel zorgen aan mijn kop had en te weinig tijd.

Ik was lusteloos met een academische studie begonnen, een studie waarvoor ik mij wilde interesseren maar die mij eigenlijk de keel uithing. Het legde steeds meer beslag op mijn tijd en de druk om mijn manuscript vlug af te krijgen werd er zwaarder door. Tenslotte werd de studie zo belemmerend dat ik af moest zien van een spoedige publicatie: Gekweld door frustratie besloot ik het half gereede boek in mijn kast op te bergen en het - althans tot de zomer - uit mijn gedachten te zetten.

Wat aanvankelijk "privacy" was geweest werd dus weldra eenzaamheid: ik woonde te ver weg, mijn vrienden kwamen nooit langs, ik was te lui om vaak naar het centrum en de activiteiten te gaan, te meer daar her winter werd en de sneeuw en de kou mij steeds meer binnen hielden. Ik woonde in een lelijke buurt tegenover de stadsgevangenis. Mijn kamer was groot, nogal leeg, zeer koud, en uitsluitend op mij en mijn werk afgestemd. Voor bezoek en gezelschap was her ongeschikt, en ik was dan ook meestal alleen.

Met de vordering van de winter bracht ik steeds langere tijd thuis door. Wanneer ik geen college had bleef ik liefst van 's morgens tot 's avonds binnen. Voor mijn maaltijden ging ik naar de automatiek beneden om de hoek, waar ik loempias en kroketten at.

Zolang ik intensief met mijn manuscript bezig was geweest had ik dit volgehouden zonder de zenuwen te krijgen, maar het geestelijke vacuum dat nu ontstond veroorzaakte vreemde dingen.

\* \* \* \* \*

De flat waarvan mijn kamer deel uitmaakte was luguber , evenals de hoofdbewoonster ervan, mijn hospita: Mevrouw Altevogt, alleenwonende weduwe van 78 jaar, lijdend aan een hartkwaal en zichtbaar wegwijnend.

Zolang ik al bij haar woonde hield zij lange zelfbeklagende monologen tegen mij, jammerend over haar eenzaamheid, haar zwak hart, haar slechte gezondheid en haar ellendige "levensavond." Tegen wil en dank vernam ik haar levensgeschiedenis tot in de finesses. Zij kwam uit Friesland, waar ze vrienden en verwanten had achtergelaten. Max, haar man, was zes jaar geleden overleden, maar voor haar was dat gisteren: "Tja, met Max was het heel wat anders...", of: "Ja, jongeman, het valt niet mee om alleen te zijn...", of: "Max is altijd zo goed voor me geweest!"

Haar drie kamers hingen vol van zijn portretten, Max op photos, Max op schilderijen, aandenkens van Max, Max overal. Overigens was al haar meubilair heel oud, donker bruin, lelijk. De hele dag leefde zij in duisternis, haar gordijnen bleven altijd dicht.

Ergens in de stad had mevrouw Altevogt ook nog een ondankbare zoon die nooit kwam. Overigens kende zij niemand, zodat zij voor sociaal contact uitsluitend op mij aangewezen was.

Voor mij was haar aanhankelijkheid lastig en ongewenst. Zij greep ieder voorwendsel aan om een praatje te maken: Ze bracht kopjes thee en koffie terwijl ik druk bezig was, ze nodigde mij uit bij haar televisie te kijken zodra ik thuis kwam, enz. Ik had geen vrije opgang en aangezien ik telkens door haar gang moest om mijn kamer te bereiken kon ik nooit aan het dagelijkse praatje ontkomen wanneer ik thuis kwam. Medelijden voor haar had ik een beetje, sympathie nauwelijks.

In December en Januari verslechterde haar toestand zinderogen. Nu begreep ik dat ze zich niet meer aanstelde. Zij kon zich nog maar moeizaam verroeren, iedere beweging bracht haar aan het hijgen, haar gezicht werd bleek, met paarse, koude lippen.

Wanneer ik 's avonds thuis kwam stond zij nog steeds op om mij te groeten. Nog steeds verweende ze mij met thee en koffie. Wanneer ik tegenstribbelde en zei dat ze zich niet zo moest uitsloven, antwoordde zij dat ze "toch in beweging moest blijven, niet?"

Achter deze uitlating school haar enorme angst, haar vrees voor de waarheid, voor het besef dat het bijna afgelopen was.

Wanneer ik 's nachts werkte of nog in bed wakker lag, hoorde ik haar heen en weer schuivelen op de gang, in de keuken, in haar drie kamers. Het was vooral de nacht en het donker die zij vreesde. Ze durfde het licht niet uit te doen en stelde de slaap zo lang mogelijk uit, bang om niet meer wakker te worden.

Wanneer ik 's morgens naar college ging had ze pas rust gevonden. Dan liep ik zachtjes door de gang naar buiten, om haar niet wakker te maken, nooit wetend hoe het met haar ging...

Telkens had zij meer moeite op te staan, iedere dag werd ze later wakker, ze zag er steeds slechter uit. Al lang maakte ze maximaal gebruik van poedertjes, pilletjes, zoutloos brood, vetloos voedsel, enz. Maar haar conditie was zo hopeloos dat de dokter het niet nodig vond veel tijd aan haar te besteden.

Er kwam een tijd dat ze helemaal niet meer op kon staan. Toen was het mijn beurt haar te verzorgen en een beetje te verwennen. Ze had niet veel nodig: Een glas water nu en dan, een beschuit, een paar woorden, verder niets.

Ik wond me met de dag meer op. Ieder ogenblik kon zij dood gaan, en ik was de enige die haar agonie gadesloeg. Ik drong erop aan haar huisarts op te bellen, maar zij weigerde zijn nummer te geven:

-Neen,... als 't U belieft niet...morgen! huilde ze bevend.

Uiteraard: De dokter, dat betekende ook de waarheid inzien. Ook dat wilde ze uitstellen. Ze begreep dat de dokter haar niet meer kon helpen.

- En Uw zoon dan?! vervolgde ik, bijna kwaad.

- Ach... die komt toch niet...Die heb ik zelf al opgebeld. Hij heeft geen tijd op het moment...

Dit duurde weken. Telkens wanneer ik thuis kwam verwachtte ik her ergste. Ik hoorde niets...liep vlug door naar mijn kamer zonder te kijken of ze soms...en plotseling hoorde ik zacht gekrab aan één van de deurknoppen, een deur die zich piepend opende, en haar bevende stem die mij toesprak. Iedere keer kwam ik een huis binnen zonder te weten of het door een levende of a dode bewoond werd, iedere keer verwachtte ik het ergste en iedere keer toch die verrassing, dat lugubere geluid, en dan de verschijning van mevrouw Altevogt, als een spook, met moeite staande, smekend om een praatje.

Na enkele zenuwlopende weken maakte mijn nervositeit plaats voor paniek. Niet dat ik het

erg vond met haar te praten, haar in bed te bedienen of met haar naar de televisie te kijken. Maar de kwelling was de onzekerheid, de onzekerheid telkens wanneer ik door de gang liep en niets hoorde. Iedere ochtend werd ik met dezelfde angstaanjagende gedachte wakker: "Zou het vannacht gebeurd zijn?"

'S nachts kon ik nauwelijks in slaap vallen, mij uren lang afvragend wat haar gedachten waren op dat ogenblik. Ik werd ook wat bijgelovig en was geneigd mijn deur voor de nacht te grendelen - alsof dit me zou beschermen. Het was een constante alarmtoestand. Ik woonde alleen, met een stervende die ik nauwelijks kende, en verder bemoeide niemand zich met on.

\* \* \* \* \*

Op een woensdag gebeurde het voor het eerst:

Ik had een paar borrels op en was bij mijn oom gaan eten. De avond verliep normaal, behalve dat hij een stukje dat ik onlangs geschreven had fel afkraakte.

Pas op mijn kamer merkte ik dat zijn kritiek mij veel meer pijn had veroorzaakt dan ik aanvankelijk dacht. Ik was onzettend opgewonden. Aan mevrouw Altevogt besteedde ik geen enkele gedachte. Op de gang kwam ze mij trouwens niet tegemoet, zodat ik niet eens aan haar werd herinnerd. Ze sliep waarschijnlijk al...

De kwestie van mijn schrijverschap was nu zo fel aan de orde gekomen dat ik onmiddellijk mijn manuscript tevoorschijn haalde. Het was nu een dwingende noodzaak er weer een blik op te werpen, zij het alleen om te zien of de tientallen bladzijden die ik al geschreven had, dan wel nog te redden waren.

Van 22 tot 5 uur werkte ik die nacht als een bezetene. In de vroege ochtend was ik uitgeput, maar ook een beetje voldaan. In bed dommelde ik gauw in. Toen ik aan de rand van de slaap was, aan de grens tussen denken en dromen, kwam het:

Een enorme schok, als het ware elektrisch, door mijn hele lichaam. Mijn middenrif scheen in elkaar te kruipen en mijn hersens leken voor een fractie van een seconde uitgeschakeld. Ik was net in slaap aan het vallen, een diepe, donkere, onbewuste slaap, waaruit ik nog net op tijd wakker geworden was.

Even staarde ik met wijd open ogen naar het raam, waarna ik mij omdraaide om weer de slaap te zoeken.

Enkele minuten later gebeurde het weer, zo mogelijk nog angstaanjagender. Nu werd ik bezorgd. Mijn aandacht vestigde zich op mijn kloppend hart, mijn adem werd zwaarder. Ik sprong uit bed, naar de schakelaar.

Ik begreep niet wat er aan de hand was, en op zoek naar een antwoord, naar een houvast, kwamen mijn gedachten uiteraard al gauw op mevrouw Altevogt. Ik had de obsessie van het stervende mens eindelijk voor een paar uren uit mijn hoofd gezet maar nu bestormde zij mijn gedachten met des te meer geweld.

-Ja! natuurlijk, dat is het!, concludeerde ik in paniek: Ze krijgt een hartaanval! Ze gaat er aan! En ik ben te lang met haar opgesloten gebleven! Tijdens al die weken zijn er bovennatuurlijke banden tussen ons ontstaan...ik voel het...we zijn geestelijk één geworden!!

-Ach shit! hernam ik mezelf: Dat kan allemaal niet. Onzin. Laten we niet ons hoofd verliezen. Ik ben gewoon een beetje gespannen, verder niets...

Een deel van mezelf probeerde de andere helft gerust te stellen.

Ik las een paar bladzijden uit een boek, maar kon mij niet concentreren. Ik rookte wat. Tenslotte probeerde ik weer te slapen. Het gebeurde weer, en mijn angst nam nog toe.

Ik durfde het toen niet meer te proberen. Ik verlangde naar iemand - het kon me niet schelen wie, als ik maar met iemand kon praten. Ik werd bang voor het donker, bang alleen te zijn, bang

dood te gaan. Ik kon mijn gedachten niet van mijn hart afbrengen. Het zou aanstonds stoppen. Mevrouw Altevogt en ik gingen samen dood, eenvoudig!

-Ach nee! zoiets gebeurt toch niet! de rationele Thomas probeerde me te kalmeren, maar zonder success.

Ik nam een paar zenuwpillen en kroop huiverig in bed. Ik hield mijn ogen breed open want ik wist dat de angsaanjagende schok weer zou komen als ik probeerde te slapen. Ik draaide me voortdurend heen en weer, krabde mijn benen, armen, mijn heel lichaam, ofschoon het helemaal niet jeukte. Maar ik was moe en mijn gedachten dwaalden af van de werkelijkheid, mijn ogen vielen dicht en ik werd dromerig.

Weer werd ik wakker gerukt door een ontzettende schok. Het waren inderdaad mijn middenrif en mijn hersens. Ik begon heen en weer te lopen in mijn kamer.

De dokter! Het was een dokter die ik nodig had! Er was iets mis met me, iets psychisch, dacht ik Ik was ziek. Ik dacht dat ik dood ging omdat mevrouw Altevogt dood ging, maar ik wilde dat niet. Laat ze alleen dood gaan, dacht ik.

Het was nog maar 6 uur, nog lang niet licht. Pas om een uur of 8 zou ik naar de dokter kunnen gaan. Ik telde elke seconde, de minuten waren eindeloos. Ik rookte, soms lopend, soms liggend. Ik had het gevoel dat mijn hart zou ontploffen. Ik probeerde iets te lezen, maar kon me niet concentreren. Maar ik was zo moe dat ik af en toe toch weer bijna in slaap viel, en dan kreeg ik weer elke keer een van die ellendige schokken.

Eindelijk, tegen 8 uur, werd het buiten wat licht. Ik mompelde, luid, "Dokter..we gaan naar de dokter...over tien minuten kan ik naar Dr. Voskuil gaan..."

Op dat moment viel ik eindelijk in slaap. Ik werd om 2 uur 's middags wakker, toen mevrouw Altevogt aan mijn deur kwam kloppen met een kop koffie. Het was te laat om naar de dokter te gaan.

Over dag was alles vrij normaal. Ik kon me niet meer voorstellen wat er gebeurd was. Ik probeerde het aan een paar mensen uit te leggen, en ze zeiden dat ze het ook kenden. Iemand zei dat het oververmoeidheid was. Anderen stelden voor dat het psychisch was, misschien een "anxiety" aanval, een probleem in mijn onderbewust, een innerlijk conflict, iets met mijn autonome zenuwstelsel. Men raadde mij aan 's avonds warme melk te drinken en vroeg naar bed te gaan. Iemand merkte op dat volgens Freud warme melk grote symbolische waarde heeft, vooral moeder's melk.

Ik durfde niets te vertellen over mevrouw Altevogt, want dat zou idereen zeker belachelijk vinden. Ik vond mezelf trouwens belachelijk. Hoe had ik in godsnaam kunnen denken dat ik, op een of andere telepatische wijze, psychische klappen zou krijgen terwijl mevrouw Altevogt een hartaanval kreeg? (die ze overigens niet eens had) Waanzin, dacht ik nu. Ik maakte me ook niet teveel zorgen meer, en 's avonds viel ik in slaap zonder teveel moeite.

Een week lang ging alles goed. Ik vergat het voorval en leefde op normale wijze door. Met mevrouw Altevogt ging het ietsje beter: Ze stond weer eens op, keek vooral naar de TV, enz. Ik leerde met de obsessie te leven, en ik bedacht ook dat ze misschien helemaal nog niet zo gauw zou sterven.

Tijdens het week-end maakte ik rouwe feesten mee, waar ik heel wat alcohol dronk. Maandag sliep ik mijn kater uit, en 's middags kwam Maarten Altena langs. Hij bood me een beetje marijuana aan, waarna we een vriend gingen opzoeken. Het was een gezellige avond, met Maarten en ik behoorlijk, maar niet te zichtbaar, high. We luisterden naar Lee Morgan en de Jazz Messengers, en Maarten pakte de bass van zijn vriend en toonde ons hoe je op een riff thema

improviseert.

Toen ik om een uur of 12 terugkwam op mijn kamer en naar bed ging begon het weer. Het verliep net zoals de eerste keer: Mijn grote vermoeidheid liet me niet toe wakker te blijven, maar mijn zenuwen lieten mij niet slapen. De schokken die me wakker maakten werden steeds heviger.

Ik kleepte me weer aan. Ik begon in de kamer rond te lopen, ik at boterhammen, rookte kettingen sigaretten, probeerde wakker te blijven. Ik dwong mezelf aan een film te denken, of naar Tamar te verlangen, maar het lukte niet. Ik kon weer alleen maar aan mijn kloppend hart denken, en aan de dood.

Toen besepte ik eindelijk wat er aan de gang was: Mevrouw Altevogt probeerde me met zich mee te slepen. Het was duidelijk. Zij hield van mij. Ik was het enige wezen in haar leven. Zij wilde me meenemen naar het hiernamaals. Wanneer zij nog gezond was kreeg ik geen schok aanvallen, maar telkens wanneer ze achteruitging en dichterbij de dood kwam kreeg ik ze wel.

Tenslotte hield ik het niet meer uit: op 6 uur liep ik naar buiten. Ik wilde mensen zien, het deed er niet toe wie. Als ik maar weg was uit dit vervloekte huis. Ik liep zo vlug mogelijk, het hagelde en het was koud, maar zolang ik liep voelde ik me goed. Na een uur kwam ik langs het huis van mijn vriend Rene Krol, een medische student. Misschien zou hij me kunnen helpen?

Ik wilde aanbellen, hem wakker maken. Hij zou misschien wel kwaad worden, maar dat kon me niets schelen. Als ik maar in god's naam met iemand kon praten! Toch drufde ik niet aan te bellen. Zijn licht was nog niet eens aan. Ik besloot naar mijn kamer terug te lopen, daar nog een half uur te wachten, en dan om een uur of acht naar de dokter te gaan.

Nadat ik nog een half uur voor de deur van de dokter gewacht had, steeds heen en weer lopend in ijskoud regen, ging de deur eindelijk open. Er kwam een zuster naar buiten met de aankondiging dat de dokter die ochtend naar een bevalling was en dat iedereen de volgende ochtend terug moest komen.

- Ja maar...zuster!zei ik, U MOET me helpen! Ik kan niet wachten...

- Wat heeft U dan? Komt u maar binnen.

Binnen vertelde ik haar dat ik niet kon slapen.

- Is dat alles? Vroeg ze

- Ja, maar het is geen normale slapeloosheid. Kijk...

En ik probeerde het uit te leggen, echter zonder te vermelden dat iemand probeerde me naar het hiernamaals mee te slepen, want ik wilde niet naat het gekkenhuis verwezen worden.

- Oh, zei ze, gaat U maar naar huis, neem een paar slaappillen en...

- Ja maar ik heb me juist al volgestopt met pillen. Het helpt niet!

- Nou, ik weet het niet. Probeer het nog maar eens. De dokter is er niet, dus U zult tot morgen MOETEN wachten.

Ik ging terug naar mijn kamer en op 9 uur viel ik eindelijk in slaap.

Om zes uur 's avonds werd ik wakker. Ik ging in de mensa eten in de Damstraat, en toen legde ik een bezoek af bij Ed, die vlakbij in de Koningstraat woonde. Ik beschreef mijn conditie aan Gerda, en ze zei dat zij het ook kende. Gebrek aan onrspanning, enz. Ze raadde me aan slaappillen te nemen en warme erwten soep te eten.

'S avonds werkte ik tot middernacht. Daarna gebeurde het weer. Ik probeerde te slapen, maar zodra ik mijn ogen sloot kwamen de schokken weer. Ik ben toen in een woedende huibui uitgebarst. Ik heb mij tot bloedens toe gekrabt, ik heb haren uit mijn hoofd getrokken. De angst was heviger dan ooit. Het kloppende hart, de nacht, de stilte, de afzondering. En mevrouw Altevogt

acher de muur. Wat deed ze? Sliep ze? Was ze al dood? Nee, blijkbaar nog niet, besepte ik, want anders was ik er zelf ook niet meer. Maar wat moet ik dan doen? Ik kan haar niet dood laten gaan, want dan neemt ze me mee!

Nu kwamen de schokken zelfs wanneer ik wakker was. Zodra ik mij even ontspande kreeg ik weer als het ware een elektrische schok door mijn hele lichaam. Ik dacht, "of ik ga dood of ik word gek."

\* \* \* \* \*

Om 8 uur 's ochtends stond ik weer bij de dokter. Vandaag was hij er, en hij gaf me een zeer sterk kalmeermiddel. Zodra ik weer op mijn kamer was nam ik de eerste pil. Het was wonderbaarlijk. Ik viel onmiddellijk in een diepe, droomeloze slaap.

De volgende dagen was ik ook in staat in slaap te vallen, maar alleen omdat ik elke dag een steeds sterkere dosis van mijn kalmeermiddel nam. Ik zou zeker binnenkort verslaafd raken.

Op het moment bleef ik dus gevrijwaard van de schokken, hoewel ik volgens Dokter Voskuil niet duurzaam zou kunnen genezen zonder psychiatrische hulp. Maar voorlopig volgde ik zijn advies niet op. Liever probeerde ik me te demerderen.

\* \* \* \* \*

En mevrouw Altevogt? Toen ik vorige week om een uur of 9 's avond thuiskwam, hoorde ik dat haar TV nog aan was. Dank zij de pillen van Dokter Voskuil was ik kalm. Ik deinsde er dus helemaal niet voor terug om aan haar deur te kloppen. Maar er kwam geen gehoor. Ik probeerde het nog eens, luider.. Toen riep ik:

- Mevrouw Altevogt? Bent U er?

Maar niets. Ze moest er toch zijn! De TV was nog aan!

Ik ging schuchter naar binnen,...Ze zat in haar fauteuille voor de TV... d.w.z. ze was weggezakt, haar benen languit op de grond, haar kin in haar borst drukkend, alsof ze sliep.

Ik riep nog eens. Zachtjes liep ik om haar heen. Op het tafeltje naast haar stond een kop thee...nog dampend. Ik durfde haar niet aan te raken, maar ik moest het weten...

Toen ik eindelijk haar pols aanpakte werd ze niet wakker. Ik begreep het. Ik ging naar de telefoon en belde haar zoon op. Zijn moeder was dood, en het was zijn taak het karweitje op te knappen.

\* \* \* \* \*

De begrafenis vond plaats drie dagen later. De zoon heeft het allemaal geregeld. Ik weet niet of ik aan de begrafenis had deelgenomen als het mogelijk was geweest, maar toevallig moest ik net die dag naar Den Haag. Toen ik 's avonds terug kwam vond ik al mijn bezittingen in dozen ingepakt en voor de deur van mijn kamer: De zoon had mij er uit getrapt, en hij legde me uit dat het moest, omdat de flat verkocht werd.

De volgende twee weken logeerde ik bij mijn vriend Rene, tot ik weer een andere kamer vond. Een paar dagen na de begrafenis had ik een droom: Ik werd door een wezen benaderd - het was niet duidelijk of het een man of een vrouw was, jong of oud. Het zei dat ik terug moest gaan naar mevrouw Altevogt's flat om daar iets af te halen. "Wat? Waar?" vroeg ik. "Ik will daar nooit

meer naar toe. Dat griezelige huis waar ik er bijna aan ging!"

Toen werd het wezen een prachtige jonge vrouw, met lang donker haar en diepe blauwe ogen. "Wees niet bang," fluisterde zij. "Er wacht iets moois op je - leven, vrijheid en liefde."

De eerstkomende dagen was ik absoluut vastbesloten nooit meer naar die ellendige woning te gaan, droom of geen droom. Maar toch dacht ik vaak aan dat prachtige verschijnsel van mijn droom een paar dagen eerder, en ik begon te aarzelen. Tenslotte besloot ik er toch nog maar één keer langs te gaan. Ik had mijn sleutel nog, en de woning was waarschijnlijk leeg. Als de zoon of iemand anders me betrapte, dan had ik een goed excuus: Ik was iets vergeten.

Toen ik in mevrouw Altevogt's woning was ontdekte ik dat al haar meubilair er nog was. De flat was helemaal niet leeg. Al haar oude antieke stukken zaten daar nog - grote, donker bruine houten armoires, zilveren antiquiteiten, enz. Zonder ook maar enigszins te aarzelen liep ik direkt naar een oude kast tegen de muur en opende de onderste lade. Ik haalde een grote beige enveloppe te voorschijn met mijn naam erop, en opende het.

De inhoud bestond uit een prachtige oude kamee omringd door ivoor, met een photo in het midden. De photo was een oud bruine *Daguerotype* genomen ca 1900. Het was een portret van de mooie jonge vrouw van mijn droom. Er was ook een nota: "Ik wist dat je terug zou komen. Mijn liefde voor je is eeuwig."

Ik stopte de kamee in mijn zak en verliet het appartement voor de laatste maal. Onder weg naar Rene op de fiets, pakte ik de doos zenuwpillen uit mijn zak en ik gooide het in een gracht. Ik had ze niet meer nodig, evenmin als een psychiater. Mevrouw Altevogt had mij mijn vrijheid en mijn leven teruggegeven.

## 2. Loneliness

*When I returned to America permanently in 1965, I was married. However, I soon became divorced. New in a strange and cold land (Minnesota), and now terribly lonely, I wrote the following poem on December 16, 1966. Loneliness hits the hardest during the holiday season, when others have family to see. My family was five thousand miles away.*

The snow is white, the sun is bright,  
The sky is blue and so am I

Americans do not make friends,  
They drive to work without a word

America is big and strong,  
It is my world (I think it is)

America looks beautiful  
To outsiders and crazy fools

But I am now an insider  
And wisdom has caught up with me

It's sad and dark inside this bag  
But I don't know if I can go

I am alone with no love left,  
No hate either, just loneliness

She did not leave, I made her go,  
And where she is I do not know

Is she as lonely as I am,  
As sad, as fearful, but alive?

Or will she never learn to love  
And will she die before she lived?

### 3. Hopelessness

*Five months later I was still unbelievably depressed. This is a poem I wrote on May 5, 1967, appropriately prefaced by Plato's famous statement.*

*(Panta rei, ouden menei; all is flow, nothing remains)*

Plato

It was fall already,  
Another year had gone by,  
One more year of sadness,  
One more year of emptiness  
Where did spring go?  
Did I miss it, or was it an illusion?  
Now a new cycle began,  
With less hope than ever.  
We were facing the coming winter,  
But what did it matter?

Time flows by monotonously,  
Winters hardly noticeable,  
Springs only a matter of words,  
Falls filled with tears.

Times goes by  
And nothing remains  
Then a brief anger  
And then just melancholy

Tell me what life is,  
Tell me about love,  
Tell me where they are,  
Tell me where she is.

Beauty and friendship are fun,  
They say

#### 4. Should I Commit Suicide?

What is life worth living for? I wake up early, not even the peace of sleep am I allowed to enjoy any more. The bright morning sun shines in and illuminates the ugly emptiness in which I live. Shit. Is this all that one is born for? Is my father's condition universal? I don't want to kill myself. I am afraid of dying. I don't know why, since sleep is the only thing I enjoy any more. And what was so bad before I was born? Dying would just be a return to that. Do I delay my death because I have hope? But my hope is wearing thin. What has happened to me? Does psychotherapy help? A year ago I was happily married. I was a successful graduate student, I had many friends, I had plenty of money, and a few minor emotional problems. Now there is nothing left, absolutely nothing. My life is a desert. I have no wife, no friends, no money, I can't work, I can't do anything worthwhile, I can't even get Marsha to go to bed with me. What has happened? Is this the road to happiness? Waking up every morning and being unable to face life, crying every morning from the depth of depression, being afraid of everybody, being mentally and physically impotent, being unable to read, to write, to eat, to study, to watch TV. Just thinking about my misery circularly, from morning till evening, 24 hours a day. Am I losing my sanity? Is it going to happen soon that I lose all sense of reality, all my ability to think about socially relevant matters? Am I going to keep digging into my own rot until...until I kill myself? At the age of 26, this is a depressing situation. I have little hope left, but obviously I have some. I fear the day when it's all gone. That will be the end.

I have been fighting this for weeks. My daily life is a fight, a constant fight against...against I don't know what, against loneliness and the feeling that the world rejects me. I try every day, over and over again. But God, how long can I go on like this, deluding myself, telling myself that one must keep trying, that there is nobility in trying. How long? How long can a man live without love and friendship, even superficial companionship?

Shit, I'm really pitying myself today, aren't I? But let face it, life this way is a real drag, and there is no philosophical redemption in living an alienated and miserable life, especially if the depression is so incredibly deep that it prevents me from creating anything of value. All the so-called existentialists have made it, despite their painful realization of the absurdity of life. Or was Camus' death in a car crash not an accident? Life is certainly less absurd for Camus or Sartre, with dozens of works published, fame, fortune and popularity. But for a guy like me, whose life is truly devoid of meaning and rewards, I don't see any alternative to suicide. Is this for me? I don't know.

#### 5. Sociology Teaches Us How to Get Along

*In time, I snapped out of it, I got remarried, I had a great career, a great family and a great life. As in everyone's life, getting along has had its ups and downs. Here are some notes I took in 2004, expressing my belief that sociology can teach us valuable lessons in how to get along.*

Today our daughter Dani came to visit, and to drop off her two-year old son Luc, whom we babysat overnight. Dani was not in the best of moods, and neither was my wife Anita. Anita and I bickered a bit in front of our adult daughter, and then Anita said - also in front of Dani - that I often humiliate her in public.

Later during the evening, I tried to compliment Dani by saying that she and her husband Mark seemed to be in a lot better shape financially than her mother and I were at that age. Her reply was a terse, "I don't want to talk about that!"

So my question is: How do I handle crabby people? I believe that the solution is to, first of all, act *neutrally* towards both Dani and Anita. The less I say, the better. I guess I'll just go to my office and get some work done. I'll wait until they become fuzzier, and if and when they do, I'll reciprocate. For now, I am not obligated to apologize or to be submissive. I did nothing wrong. When Anita gives me the silent treatment, it's often out of fear, not hostility. So I shouldn't get aggravated if she doesn't talk to me for a while. That would only make things worse. She only goes through spells of irrational fear. Let it subside. Let her deal with her inner demons. When it lifts, things will be okay again.

I am now reviewing the manuscript by Joel Charon for a publisher. It is the straight Symbolic Interactionist line, and it is so good and so relevant. There are so many lessons here for everyday life. For example:

1) When there is negativity in my social relationships, it is often because I and the other(s) do not share the same interests. If I then monopolize the conversation to my interests, is it any wonder that there is not much positive feedback, but instead there is inattention, boredom, disrespect and sometimes even ridicule? So it is important to talk less and to listen more. Role-take. Show interest in my interlocutor's subject matter.

2) Simple: Social Intelligence = the ability to role-take! This is the key, and it applies to all relationships. With my wife, my children, the Van der Lee family, my Iraqi colleague Al Qazzaz, my boss Landis, the entire Sociology Department, colleagues in other departments such as Chambers, people in Holland. It works well when I do this right with people like my neighbor Mike Mason, friends at the health spa such as Bryan Smyth and Henry.

3) Emotions: We *do* emotional work: We manipulate, we repress, we redefine, we control, we store for later. Emotions can dissipate, sometimes we snap out of it, etc. It is important to manipulate and to control one's emotions.

4) Negative thoughts are better kept to oneself. They create negative interaction.

## 6. The Transcendent God who Becomes Immanent

*There is as little religion in my life as there is in the modern secular world. I am an agnostic. Nevertheless, on a rare occasion I wonder about the "God question," as I did in the following essay written on March 19, 1992.*

I have been in a somber mood for many months. I suppose the main reason has been fear for my job - an ever-present worry since late January. More than ever, I tend to latch on to the most negative thoughts that swirl in my head, and then chew on them. It can be the latest perceived insult from a colleague, from a student or from a friend, it can be a perceived threat, or a mini-crisis. This happens first thing in the morning when I wake up, when I take my shower, it happens when I get to the bathroom at night.

I *ruminate* about the negative at every opportunity I get, during every waking hour. I go over every problem in my mind over and over again, exaggerating them, unable and *unwilling* to let go of them, even temporarily. This is very unhealthy. It is accompanied by chronic headaches, insomnia and sexual dysfunction. The simple word for it is depression.

\* \* \* \* \*

Recently, though, the situation has cleared up considerably. And even if it had not, time has come to put things in perspective. Today for example, several minor aggravations took place:

(1) When I arrived at the curriculum committee meeting, the first thing that pompous ass Howard Goldfried said to me was, “How on earth did *you* manage to get elected to this committee? Surely no-one would even want to second your nomination!”

Okay, so it was probably a joke. But it didn’t feel good. My rebuttal, by the way, was pretty good. I said, “Do you object to me being a member of this committee?”

Later, the woman who runs the committee with an iron fist was a bit snippy with me, but then another female professor came to my support. These are the to-be-expected dynamics of academic committee work, so I will not dwell on them.

More annoying was the long talk I had a few hours later with the chairman of my department. I expressed my concerns about the department’s future, in view of the severe pending budget cuts. His response was the same as what it has been for twenty years: He labeled me an over-reactor and a neurotic. In fact, he himself is a notorious *under-reactor*. And don’t take my word for it. My wife, my colleagues both within the department and outside (e.g. Victor) and many others agree that the chairman of the Sociology Department is appallingly passive in the face of problems. Contrast him for example with Claude Duval, the chairman of Foreign Languages. When his department is under the gun, he becomes a fierce warrior, lobbies the University administration for funds and for support, and he gets them. My chairman, on the other hand, doesn’t even show up at important executive meetings, and when he does, he seems to sleep through them.

Then there was a snippy impertinent female student in my class who told me that the University President probably doesn’t want to speak to me because he dislikes me and is getting ready to fire me - again, if this is an attempt at humor, it is in bad taste.

And then there was that other student in my other class (also happened to be a woman) who suggested that I was mentally unstable (We had been talking about suicide, and I mentioned that running is an effective anti-depressant, and that I am an avid runner).

So you see, every day at work is a series of insults, bad jokes and disrespect. Is it any wonder that I don’t enjoy going to work very much?

\* \* \* \* \*

But the object of these diary notes is not to whine, but the opposite: To remind myself that the good far outweighs the bad. There have been two immense recent victories: (1) My daughters were both admitted to the University of California’s elite campus. (2) The Sociology Department received major priority funding from the University administration. Compared to these enormous events, a few little insults by insignificant people are meaningless.

There are many additional positives: My teen-age children have been extremely good for a long time now. Family life is exquisite. My wife is an angel. I have good supportive friends such as Victor.

Within my own department, my stature has improved immeasurably in recent months, and I intend to keep it that way. My peers recognize the major contribution I made to solving the current budget crisis, and I don’t intend to let them forget it. It is thanks to my higher connections that our department received priority funding. I will continue to speak out forcefully on issues in the future, but I will not take extreme political positions which would alienate me from my colleagues.

\* \* \* \* \*

Finally, I have experienced a nascent belief in the transcendent. "God" is a limiting word, and I don't like to use it. However, I am discovering the power of prayer. There is a connection between the ego and the larger force outside. To recognize this is to grow stronger. There is a spirituality and a positive moral force which helps you live better, especially when living is problematic. It is important to recognize and to embrace this external force, and to transcend pure egocentricity, thereby becoming a better person. This adds a dimension to the human experience. Man is no longer alone, but he is accompanied by what can be called, for lack of a better term, the transcendent God who becomes immanent.

### 7. Please, Don't Fire this Good Man!

*My relationships at work were far less gratifying they were at home. Nevertheless, I did have friends among my colleagues. Sometimes, my friends needed my help. In 1995, my colleague Ayad Al Qazzaz was about to be fired as a result of (unfounded, it turned out) sexual harassment charges. I wrote the following letter to the President of the University on December 7, 1995, begging him not to fire Ayad, who was the only Iraqi faculty member at our University, an excellent scholar, teacher and a great intellectual asset to our community. After a protracted lawsuit, he kept his job.*

Dear Dr. Gerth:

This concerns the sexual harassment charges and disciplinary action against my colleague Ayad Al-Qazzaz. As you know, Ayad has already been suspended for half a year, and he is now threatened with outright dismissal. In my view, Ayad's dismissal would be a tragedy and an great loss.

Although still young and vibrant, Ayad has been a highly valued member of the university for *over 26 years*. It has been my privilege to know him as a friend and colleague for that amount of time, along with dozens of other faculty members in many departments, all of whom like him and respect him as a human being and a scholar.

Ayad has made many major contributions to teaching, research, sociology, service to the university, to the community, to Middle Eastern studies and to cultural and ethnic diversity. His contributions range from a long list of publications to extremely popular classes both in the regular term and in summer session, from organizing magnificent Middle Eastern events on campus to teaching across several disciplines. He is a leader in Sacramento's Arab-American community.

Ayad's forced departure would harm the university and the Sociology Department. He has taught many essential courses and he is even now scheduled to teach in the January intercession and in Spring 1996. His dismissal would force the cancellation of several highly enrolled classes. It would harm students, among whom he enjoys popularity and a unique following.

Those of us who know Ayad well have great difficulty imagining that he has done anything that could conceivably justify his dismissal. Whatever the charges against Ayad may be, we know him to be a person of *integrity* and a man with a high degree of *credibility*.

There are profound cultural differences between Middle Eastern and American cultural norms regarding male-female interaction. These differences may be at the root of some of Ayad's present difficulties. This should be taken into consideration, as we give the benefit of the doubt to other

subcultural differences in our society. I am absolutely convinced that Ayad is incapable of intentionally setting out to harm or humiliate another human being. He is a kind and gentle man who always looks at the positive side of life. If anything, he has -- as an Arab in America -- himself suffered victimization, discrimination and humiliation. His current situation causes him additional deep suffering (and harm to his health, I might add). He has been suspended for half a year already. He does not know whether his professional career is at an end. He has been languishing in the dark for an awful long time already, not knowing clearly what he is up against, and what to expect.

Outright dismissal would be tantamount to his *utter professional and financial destruction*. It would be very difficult for him to pursue his profession at another university. As a refugee from Iraq, he could face execution if he tried to return. Dismissal is the most severe sanction the university can mete out, and it should be reserved for the most heinous behavior. There should be proportionality between infraction and punishment.

In sum, Ayad has already suffered a great deal. I believe that whatever errors of judgement he may have committed, they cannot be so serious as to warrant his dismissal. Ayad is far too good a man to sacrifice on the altar of political correctness. His departure would be a great loss to the university.

Please exercise leniency, compassion and common sense when deciding on the fate of this valuable and competent colleague. Please do not apply the ultimate sanction, as you have less severe alternatives at your disposal.

Sincerely yours

#### 8. In Praise of a Great Intellectual

*I also wrote letters and articles to praise, comfort and support friends and colleagues and other universities. Here is one such piece I wrote in praise of Panos Bardis, a good friend and fellow-sociologist. It was written on October 24, 1993, and published in the International Journal of World Peace shortly thereafter.*

Dr. Panos Bardis is a sociologist who has specialized in family studies, *inter alia*. The recent wedding of his son Byron to Jacki Kadrovich prompted Dr. Bardis' free-floating and poetic rambling about the importance of the family, religion, love, poetry, beauty, etc. I use "rambling" in a complimentary sense: I have long known Bardis to be the quintessential *humanist*. Not humanist as in secular-humanist, but as the antithesis of the imbecile technocratic mind set that suffocates both sociology and society.

Bardis's diatribe is a brilliant ode to the dying values of spontaneous and erratic humor, sentiment, poetry, free association and love. He correctly takes on educrats like Anne Bryant and their outlandish statistics ("80% of all teenagers are the victims of sexual harassment"). I share Bardis' contempt for the now universally accepted medical approach to human behavior. I am sure that Bardis would agree that one of the central causes of the collapse of American culture is the substitution of a medical-therapeutic vocabulary for the former moral paradigm emphasizing free will and responsibility.

The family and religion - cornerstones of all good societies - are the two chief casualties of the cultural revolution. This revolution has abandoned human values and replaced them with a deterministic social science modeled after medicine. Universities spew off the new poison, while governmental bureaucracies carry out the ensuing deadly agenda. The ultimate outcome - envisaged by thinkers ranging from de Tocqueville to Orwell - is the dehumanization of man and his voluntary and happy enslavement to a group think which absolves him from the need to make

moral decisions, i.e. from the need to be free. This, in a nutshell, is at the root of the "dumbing down" of America. Phil, Oprah, Geraldo, Sally, Montel and all the other elixir peddlers in high schools, colleges, the media and government make it easy on us: They tell us what to think, and we all happily agree with their erroneous diagnoses of our social ills. How erroneous these majority views are should be obvious from the skyrocketing amounts of crime, divorce, AIDS, drugs, delinquency, adultery, illegitimacy, single-headed households, crack babies, alternative lifestyles, etc. But not to worry: the nation's self-esteem is at all-time high!

But I get carried away, and convey the wrong impression: Bardis' wedding speech is actually uplifting, not morbid like my previous comments. His speech is a humorous and erudite ode to love, marriage and the family. As a linguist and a Greco-American, Bardis can rely on a vast fund of cultural and linguistic knowledge. His humorous etymologies of names (e.g. the Michigan city of Muskegon) are brilliant, as are his linguistic observations: Have you ever wondered why some languages (say, Hawaiian) are mellifluous, i.e. simply beautiful, while other ones (perhaps Polish, or Dutch) are, well, in one word ugly? Simple: Hawaiian contains many vowels, notably vowels alternating with consonants. Think of words like wahine (=woman), or kane (=man), or Maui, or aloha. Then there is a typical Dutch atrocity like angstschreeuw (=a shout of fear). Wouldn't *you* shout in fear when hearing *eight* consecutive consonants?

While these are my examples, they lend support to Bardis' theory. His speech contains many other gems. His (fictitious?) autobiographical account of his name change when he started college as a fresh immigrant to America is hilarious. His name went from an original Greek appellation three times the size of the alphabet to simply Bardis. But his college mates *still* wondered what to call him *for short*. Already the dumbing down process, back then?

But to repeat, Bardis is not as bleak as I am about the world's leading society. America is a progressive, experimental, democratic and tolerant society, he writes. Quite so. I, too, came here as a young adult. I, too, am forever indebted to a country that is by and large generous and magnanimous, a society with less meanness in its bones than most. So let's pray for America - a country confused to be sure, especially within the ranks of its cultural elite, but a country that is fundamentally benign and good, especially among its rank and file (*International Journal on World Peace*, Fall, 1993).

## 9. The Lady Next Door

*In idealized form, a man has two great loves in his life - his wife and his mother. I risk getting in trouble here. In my case, there are four co-equal claimants to my love: my incomparable mother, my great wife and my two fantastic daughters. In my autobiography - see the very last reference in this anthology - I sing the praise of all four women. Here I reproduce an article about my mother Ata, which I published in the Gold River Scene in August 1997. At that time, she lived in an apartment a few miles away from us in Sacramento.*

*Since then, she has returned to Holland. Although I miss her dearly, the move has been for the better. For one thing, this enables her, as a Dutch citizen, to enjoy the generous retirement and health benefits of the Dutch system. Furthermore, the extended Kando family has done everything for mother's well-being. We bought her an excellent retirement flat in one of Holland's choice upscale communities, and each of us spends several visits with her each year, often staying there weeks at a time. Thus, she has her children and her grand-children with her several months every year. Finally, her return to Holland in 2001 caused her career to skyrocket. She has become Holland's best-know live female photographer, with countless books, exhibits, publications and awards to her name. She even has lunch with the Dutch Royal Family at their palace. This could*

*not have happened if she had stayed in provincial Sacramento, thousands of miles away from her cultural center.*

Psychologists bemoan the loss of community and the fact that more and more Americans live impersonal lives devoid of much contact with their neighbors.

You would be surprised at the great variety of interesting people living near you. Our neighbors include many people of all walks of life. Some of us are life-long Californians, others come from far away, with interesting stories to tell, a lifetime of experiences in 20th century world history and spectacular achievements.

A case in point is Ata Kando, the 84-year old lady living at the corner of Connecticut Drive in Sacramento. She is a widely published, world-class photographer, who retired here nearly twenty years ago from rainy Holland, living happily ever after in the California sun on her Dutch Social Security.

Holland was only the last country in which Ata lived before moving to America permanently. She was born in Hungary and lived in many other countries -- her life's vicissitudes reflecting the turbulence of our war-torn century.

At the turn of the century, Ata's family belonged to the upwardly mobile Jewish community in Budapest. Her grandfather had worked his way up from poverty to University President. He built himself the three-story mansion in the hills overlooking the city where Ata grew up.

For Central and Eastern Europe, the good life came crashing down with the onset of World War One in 1914. Nearly a century later, the misery continues. In the late 1990s, the Kando family mansion still stands -- a barely habitable ruin, still pockmarked with the bullet holes accumulated through World Wars, invasions and revolutions.

But what happened in the meantime? Of all the catastrophes to befall various groups of Europeans in this century, the holocaust was no doubt the worst. Ata's jewish background placed her in a high-risk category. However, her marriage to a gentile from one of the nation's prominent families may have contributed to her survival.

But events deteriorated only gradually. The aftermath of the first World War was no picnic -- for the nation or for individuals: As punishment for siding with Germany, the Treaty of Trianon dismembered Hungary and reduced it to one third of its previous size. On the personal side, Ata's dad was captured on the Eastern front, and sent to Siberia for **six** years. Since Ata was barely a few months old when her father left for the war, she of course didn't recognize him when he returned from Siberia, six years later.

Still, compared to the nightmare that was to befall Central and Eastern Europe later, the inter-war years were relatively placid. Ata married Jules Kando in 1932. They both went to the Academy of Fine Arts and then moved to centers of culture in Western Europe, working on their professional careers. Their skills were initially in the graphic arts, but Ata gradually moved into photography. For a while, they lived in Barcelona, Spain, and then settled (of course) in Paris.

Then came the second World War: Ata was one of the thousands of devastated spectators lining the Champs Elysees to silently watch Hitler's Wehrmacht parade down from the Arch of Triumph, after occupying France in 1939.

Soon thereafter, the Nazi authorities ordered Ata and Jules to return to Hungary, where the war had not yet begun. This turned out to be a jump from the frying pan into the fire: Soon, Hitler declared war on Russia as well. From 1941 onward, the Eastern front was, as most people know, even bloodier and more hellish than the war in the West.

In 1941, Ata and Jules had a son, and in 1943 they had twin girls. Surviving the horrors of the holocaust (unlike many of her relatives), the nightly aerial bombings, the sub-zero Eastern European winters, the German invasion and then that of the Soviets, the family of five moved back

to Paris in 1947, now fleeing Communism.

Life in France after World War Two was harsh, especially for refugees. After about two years of poverty, frustration, odd jobs, unemployment and discrimination, Jules threw in the towel and went back to Hungary, hoping to find better treatment in his own country. Ata stayed in Paris with the three children -- now by herself and worse off than ever. They were divorced.

By the early fifties, Ata finally found work with the *Magnum* photo agency. It should be noted that this was and remains the world's premier photo agency, founded by world-renown photographer Robert Capa (of Hungarian origin, like Ata) and other luminaries like Cartier-Bresson. Here, Ata worked in the lab, developing and printing the photos taken by famous photographers and published a few days later in *Life* and other world publications.

In 1954, Ata remarried. Her second husband was a Dutch photographer who also worked for Magnum. When he moved back to Holland, he took Ata and her three kids with him. So now Ata was living in her fourth country in as many decades.

Only after Ata's second marriage broke up, in the mid-fifties, did she finally have the chance to develop her own creative work -- no longer merely developing and printing the work of others.

As a free-lance photographer in Amsterdam, she first did a lot of family portraits, babies and such. Later, she "graduated" to high fashion photography. She often went to Paris, did jobs for Schiaparelli, Dior, Givenchy, Balmain, Yves Saint Laurent. She took photos of celebrities such as Gary Cooper, Orson Wells and Olivia de Havilland.

Some of her best work, though, consists of a number of books she did during the late fifties: In 1957, she published a photographic fantasy called *Dream in the Woods*, using her own children as models. The story is a modern-day version of *The Sleeping Beauty*. The pictures are taken on location in the forests and glaciers of the European Alps. They are pure visual poetry, exuding romantic longing, love rejected and love regained. A second book followed, again a children's fantasy: this one a re-enactment, again by Ata's children, of Ulysses's *Odyssey*. Once again the family went on location for the project -- this time to the ancient Greek temples of Sicily and the Roman cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum. How did Ata cover these thousands of miles? By hitch-hiking!

Perhaps Ata's most widely circulated book is the "*Red Photo Book Without Title*": In 1956, the Hungarian people rose up violently against the Soviet occupation. The revolution lasted a month. To crush it, the Soviets sent in 5,000 tanks and 200,000 troops. The result was an estimated 50,000 deaths and an exodus of half a million refugees. To cover these events, Ata traveled, at great risk, back to Hungary. There, she took a vast number of pictures of the thousands of refugees holed up in camps at the Hungarian border. Men, some wounded in battle, children, mothers, orphans, all living in squalor and poverty, desperate for a fresh start in a free land. The pictures reveal the palpable anguish, suffering and aspirations of the refugees.

There have been many other books, and parts of books. For example, an impressive series of pictures about the Dutch Steel Mills, various travel documentaries, etc.

However, the culmination of Ata's career had yet to come: In the 1960s, she was sent for a job to South America by the Dutch Overseas Gas and Electric Company. She took advantage of the opportunity to travel deep into the Amazon jungle to take pictures of several hitherto nearly unknown Indian tribes. Playing the multiple role of photographer-anthropologist-nurse-missionary, she canoed up the Orinoco River towards its headwaters, accompanied only by a missionary and aboriginal guides. These expeditions were repeated several times, and yielded Ata's most spectacular pictures. Her collections have been published in dozens of books, magazines, journals, newspapers and brochures. They have been exhibited in countless museums and galleries in seven different countries, including the US, the Netherlands, France, Britain and Hungary, as well as

locally in such places as Sacramento State University, Folsom's Western Traders, and the Crocker Art Gallery.

In 1970, Ata founded WISA, an activist organization dedicated to drawing attention to, and fighting against, the genocide perpetrated upon South American Indians.

As part of this project, Ata published a book, *Slave or Dead*, which was circulated around the world along with a traveling exhibition documenting the life and the problems of the Amazon tribes. Ata's anthropological work includes books on other cultures as well, for example Indonesian art. She also often writes the text for her photo books herself, as she did for a large illustrated book on South American society titled *From the Blood of the Moon*.

Ata is the recipient of many medals and distinctions. These include the silver medal at the Munich (Germany) contest for best fashion photo and the bronze medal for Hungarian Culture given by the President of Hungary in 1991.

Despite her impressive career, Ata considers her family her greatest accomplishment: Through war, poverty, discrimination and exile, she managed -- largely alone -- to raise three children to become successful professionals. Her son is a University Professor in California, one of her daughters is a well-known ballet dancer in London, the other one has her own charter school in Boston. Ata has seven grand children, and she crosses the Atlantic at least once a year to be with them as much as possible. She is the matriarch of a dispersed but loving and cohesive extended family. Thus, she has managed to combine the dual role so many modern women are struggling with -- family and career. Who says you can't have it all?

Before retiring in Sacramento, Ata taught photography at several Dutch institutions, including the Academy of Applied Arts. She is now only 84 years young, so she is not about to slow down: She is currently completing a book about Jack London and the country he loved so much. She has selected some of London's texts, and taken many photos of the author's stomping grounds in the Valley of the Moon, Oakland and the Sonoma area. This will be the first photographic art book about the great American writer, showing his memories and his love for the magnificent country in which he lived. Although she is in contact about this project with Ian Roger, Director of the Jack London Museum in Oakland, she is still looking for a publisher at this time.

Some of Ata's work can be seen on her own web page at:

<http://www.impactsitedesign.com/KandoGallery> (check this out!), or you might give her a call (332-4750) for an appointment, and she may even be willing to show you some of her work herself. (*Gold River Scene*, Aug. 1997).

## 10. Maman

*In April of 2006, I was on one of my frequent visits to my mother in Holland. I wrote the following piece about her at that time.*

I have been thinking again about the well-known and worn-out theory about Ata: The theory is that she is a "Blanche DuBois," at best always too trusting, and at worst not only too dependent on strangers, but even manipulative and someone who uses people without much returning favors, thus always losing her credit with people, after a while.

There is much that brings up this issue again: I am at the *De Rekere* retirement home with Ata for a couple of weeks. I have been talking to some of the people at *De Rekere*, for example Ata's neighbor Hans, and Bob Tusler downstairs. I hear for the umpteenth time the story about the cat debacle: Upon MY advice, Ata tried to have a cat. It didn't work out. The cat was defective, it

kept running away and it couldn't find its way back home. It was a constant problem for Ata and it became a problem for others at *De Rekere* as well, people who were sometimes kept awake by the ruckus, sometimes mobilized to track down the cat, etc. Now the cat is gone, but not before some of Ata's relationships became frayed.

The worst incident was when Lita, Bob's wife, verbally assaulted Ata, repeatedly, accusing her of being a "revolting person," a "different kind of person," a person who "doesn't belong with decent folks." After deeply offending Ata in a chance encounter in the hallway, Lita deliberately made it a point, three days later, to once again come up to Ata's apartment, knock on her door and insult her again. Since then, the Tuslers have made repeated overtures to Ata, trying to repair the relationship. For now, Ata remains aloof, while I do interact at least with Bob - who never fought with Ata - because it is politically important to not alienate him, as he is an important member of the leadership of *De Rekere*, and there are serious business and real-estate matters going on in which we have major interests.

I only bring the incident up because it is related to the life-long LABELING phenomenon of which Ata has always been a victim. Only an American sociology professor can fully understand what has been going on for decades. The labeling of Ata as "Blanche DuBois," even a cunning and selfish Blanche DuBois, has been happening for a long time, and it keeps happening over and over again. What's worse, Ata's own children - myself very much included - have been in the forefront of this process. In my auto-biography, I am quite guilty of this. And my sister Juliette, last night again over the telephone, and often before - on the Isle of Wight and on other occasions - thoroughly subscribes to the label of the cunning, manipulating Ata, a person who is extremely charming and cute and wonderful at first, so that everyone becomes promptly available to help her, but who in time uses up her credit because at bottom she is really only concerned about herself and her own interests.

Some people put it a little more mildly, for example Hans the next-door neighbor: They are aware of Ata's life-long odyssey of survival in war, poverty and misery, protecting her children, etc. and they "excuse" her behavior as a necessary survival strategy.

As I said, I have participated in this labeling process, but I have come to the conclusion that it is utterly wrong, that Ata is the victim of false definitions about her, and that the OPPOSITE of the label is true. Ata's only fault is that she TRUSTS people too much, because she has always remained an idealist. Thus, many of her encounters with people are like those of a child. Others are charmed, they offer their company to Ata, she sometimes accepts, often viewing this as the offer of friendship.

In reality however, friendship in the adult world is always conditional. In time, others turn away or expect some payment back, even though they never really did much for Ata, certainly nothing in the way of tangible gifts requiring re-payment.

Then the accusations start flying: "Ata is too dependent on others," "Ata does not return favors," etc. But these accusations are utterly false, and based on a total mis-reading of the situation.

\* \* \* \* \*

In fact, I know of no more independent person than Ata. Without re-hashing all the old war stories about how she single-handedly protected us, her children, in a dangerous world, let me just throw out some recent evidence:

When the crisis of her re-location happened in 2001, she moved back to Holland and then, living entirely on her own, she rebuilt - at the age of 87! - her entire photographic career to the

point where she is now THE premier woman photographer in the Netherlands (as well as some other countries, e.g. Hungary)! She did this all by herself, in her little flat. She contacted all the media, the Dutch world of photography, the publishers, the museums, everyone! No one did this for her, certainly not her family, thousands of miles away!.

In 2004, she single-handedly organized and put together her huge 90th birthday celebration, with 150 people from all over the world, the media, everyone, at a cost of thousands of dollars to herself. She never ceases to take new initiatives, and to bring them to fruition entirely on her own, by herself, at 93!

And what about the charge that she always works for herself? Again, the opposite is the truth: She is an unceasingly giving person. She wants NOTHING more than to receive people, to please people, to cook for them, feed them, to give them presents. Every time I am in Holland, she works herself into near collapse by inviting people to lavish Hungarian dinners which she prepares for 4, 6, 8 or more people.

Sometimes, in the middle of the ice cold Dutch winter, she takes the two-mile walk to the Post Office in Bergen to send Christmas gifts to her children, her grand-children and her great-grand children - presents which she has elaborately packed and tied up with ribbons. Imagine, a 93-year old woman risking catching her death in the snow in order to make sure 3-three old Luc in California or three-year old Leila in Spain gets her Christmas gift!

These are just a few examples. If people, even her own children, sometimes define Ata in the negative way I described earlier, it is because they are confused. They see a tiny, old, wonderful little woman doing all these incredible things almost always ENTIRELY by herself, and they think - my God, this cannot be! She needs help, someone must help her, I should help her. But most of the time people don't help, because Ata hardly ever asks for help.

Well, it doesn't matter, really. These are little minds. Ata's persona is now secure. She is a giant among people. She has spawned a worldwide family, has established herself as a historical figure. She is known, admired and respected in four continents. Even those who do not approve of her and criticize her cannot ignore her. Her presence is ubiquitous. She can bask in the certitude that thousands of people love her. The petty, hushed-up gossips go with the territory, and that territory is greatness.

### 11. The Science of Happiness

*Much of my career was devoted to leisure studies, including books and articles in that field and years teaching in recreations and leisure studies departments at Penn State and elsewhere. In April of 1979, I wrote the following notes (edited in 2007). They now seem amazingly pre-scient, in view of the fact that in 2007, the Claremont Graduate University initiated a doctoral program in "Positive Psychology," or in "Happiness Studies" (Sacramento Bee, March 16, 2007: A4). Far from being a hippie touchy-feely program, this new major will bring solid scientific evidence to bear upon the ingredients of human happiness, according to professor Mihaly Csikzentmihalyi. Here is what I wrote nearly three decades earlier:*

In a way, the field of Leisure and Recreations Studies is the scientific study of human happiness. The academicians who work in this field may be psychologists, sociologists or some other behavior scientists, but they work on the development of scientific knowledge as to what makes people *happy*.

For example, Professor *Mihaly Csikzentmihalyi* (my fellow Hungarian with the impossible

name) has become famous for his concept of *the flow*. This is a fundamental characteristic which human activity can have, and when it does, it renders the activity fun and rewarding and the actor happy. So it seems to me that the people in our profession today are beginning to develop a systematic and empirical *science of human happiness and fun*. What might be some starting points? Here are some random thoughts:

1) First, let me distinguish between *leisure* and *recreation*. I prefer to view this project as a *leisure project*. Why? Because the word recreation has the following negative connotation: It suggests that we re-create ourselves through non-work activity *in order to* be better prepared to return to work. Recreation is in the service of the economy. I reject the primacy of the economy. I do not believe that we should rest on weekends in order to be better workers on Monday. In fact, I believe the opposite: We should earn money in order to finance our favorite (leisure) activities - travel, sports, music or whatever.

1) As in all psychology, we assume that mental and physical health are strongly linked to happiness.

2) It is not true that what makes you happy is purely subjective, purely up to the individual. The Romans had it wrong when they said *de gustibus non disputandum* (matters of taste are not debatable). Scientific evidence to the contrary is accumulating.

3) We already know a great deal, and we will soon know much more, about what makes some activities and experiences more fun and more rewarding than others, and the things which make people happier.

4) For example, it is good for you to exercise, not only because it is healthy, but also because you will be happier. Run, swim, bike or do anything. Because this makes your body feel better, you will be happier.

5) It is the same thing with music. Music can make you happy, especially certain kinds of music.

6) Nature, too can make you happy. Mountains, trees, the ocean are not only beautiful. They also increase human happiness.

7) The city can make you happy too, with its art, its culture, its historical beauty.

8) To create is to be happy. You can paint or you can grow flowers or tomatoes. Creating makes you happy.

9) Relationships can make you happy. Love and friendship are essential to human happiness.

10) Thus, family can be a major source of happiness.

11) Happiness is not only found in leisure. Work can also provide happiness, if it is creative rather than boring and demoralizing

12) Celebrations and festivals are also important for human happiness.

13) Your psychological attitude is important. Being future-oriented is healthy, as long as it is in the anticipation of positive outcomes, and not in the form of worry about the future.

### 12. I Have Re-Invented Myself

*On May 20, 2006, I had the following thought:*

When I moved to America permanently in 1965, I was 24. During the subsequent few years, I re-invented myself. I underwent four years of psychoanalysis and experienced untold adventures. I was re-born. I became a new man. Whereas I had been a boy and somewhat weak, I became a man of great psychological strength. Whereas I had been a European, I became an avid American. Whereas I had been confused, I found clarity of focus. When I returned to Europe for the first time five years later, I was unrecognizable. Can I subtract 24 years from my current age, and think of myself as that much younger than my chronological age? God and my body say no.

### 13. My Autobiography

*To find out more about me, check out my website at [or google me.](#)*