

# **A manifesto for a new liberalism, or How to be a humane libertarian**

## 1. Libertarians are liberals

I make the case here for a new and humane “libertarianism.” Libertarianism is not conservative. It stands in fact somewhere in the middle of the road, often a hazardous location, being tolerant and optimistic and respectful. It’s True Liberal. When people come to actually understand it, most like it. Give it a try.

Outside the United States libertarianism is still called plain “liberalism,” as in the usage of the middle-of-the-road president of France, Emmanuel Macron, with no “neo-” about it. That’s the L-word I’ll use here. The political philosopher John Tomasi calls its alliance with modern democracy “the liberalism of the common man.” One thinks of Walt Whitman singing of the democratic and liberal individual, “I contain multitudes.” Such people, it turned out, actually did, containing multitudes of abilities for self-government and for economic and spiritual progress never before tapped – something which is disbelieved still by conservatives and progressives. Our friends on right and left wish to rule and to nudge their fellow adults. They see people as disgracefully barbarous or sadly incompetent. We liberals don’t.

The American economist Daniel Klein calls what Tomasi and Whitman and I are praising “Liberalism 1.0,” or, channeling the old C. S. Lewis book on the minimum commitments of faith, *Mere Christianity* (1942-44, 1952), “mere Liberalism.”<sup>1</sup> David Boaz of the liberal Cato Institute in Washington wrote a lucid guide, *Libertarianism – A Primer* (1997), reshaped in 2015 as *The Libertarian Mind*. I wish David had called it *The Liberal Mind*.

In Canada they call it “red Toryism,” tolerant of diversity yet careful in spending compelled taxes. In desperate summary for Americans, humane Liberalism 1.0 is (post-LBJ) Democratic in social policy and (pre-Trump) Republican in economic policy and in civil discourse and (pre-McKinley) non-interventionist in foreign policy.

Humane liberalism is in fact mainly against “policy.” The word usual for “policy” in the time of the Blessed Adam Smith’s was “police.” That’s about it. For a policy to be effective it has to be implemented, of course, through the government’s monopoly of physical force, exercised if there is resistance violently by the police. Paying taxes, for example.

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<sup>1</sup> See his lecture at <http://econfaculty.gmu.edu/klein/Assets/Liberalism%201.0%20version4.pptx>. David Boaz uses a similar locution at Boaz 2015, p. 145. On the US/UK definition as against the Continental definition, Schlesinger 1962.

No scandal there. The government, said the German sociologist Max Weber in 1919, can claim “the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force” (*das Monopol legitimen physischen Zwanges*). The monopoly is by no means entirely bad. We would hardly prefer competing *oligopolies* of physical force, mafiosi running around leaning on shopkeepers and lemon growers, a war of all against all.

And of course we need police to handle the numerous thieves, murderers, con men, rapists, and other private users of force and fraud. When guardians do it with integrity, as in the few well-managed countries they usually do, the police and prosecutors and jailers do a noble job protecting us. No objection there, either. Hurrah for the guardians.

But Weber’s violent monopoly when applied to an expansive agenda of policies, ruling the barbarians or nudging the incompetents, enforced by police, has of course dangers, even in the few well-managed countries, and certainly in the badly managed countries governing 87 percent of the world’s population. Right and left along the usual spectrum, contrary to the true liberals perched above it, want to give the government more and more powers of physical force in order to implement their beloved policies, or tyrannical, policies.

The total expenditure in GDP of all levels of American government, local, state, and federal was in 1913 about 7.5 percent. By 1996 it was 32 percent, and the governments regulated much of the rest, through what the economic historian Robert Higgs labels the increasing “scope” of governments.<sup>2</sup> The figure is higher in most other rich countries. The increase in scope has happened with popular support. Let the government have “programs” to help out us nice people, the people declare. And do regulate those other, less nice, people, for safety, by all means. Do not rely on courts and a free press to keep restaurants from poisoning us, for instance. Instead assign an inspector to swing by once a year with police powers (and a hand out for a bribe).

Our rightest or leftist friends ask indignantly, concerning, say, Russian interference in elections via Facebook, can Facebook regulate itself in the public interest? Obviously not, they reply. No business, they suppose, ever did a public spirited thing. Well, then, bring on the experts and their police from Washington. Does Whirlpool falter in the washing-machine business? All right (as Whirlpool in fact pleaded in 2017 and achieved in 2018), have the government erect tariff barriers against competition from the foreigners LG and Samsung. Most people in a post-liberal age approve of such “protection of US jobs.” They don’t grasp that protection takes from Peter to pay Paul, and then from Paul to pay Peter. It protects 10 Americans by hurting 1,000. Consult Argentina, 1946 to the present.

If you are on the left or the right, a Democrat or a Republican, a Labourite or a blue Tory, and if therefore you view the government as an instrument for doing the good things that we good folk want, such as the Hoover Dam or the War on Drugs or the Royal family, you may object to Weber’s definition. And certainly you will object to Tolstoy’s definition in 1857, of the government as “a conspiracy designed not only to exploit, but above all to corrupt its citizens.”<sup>3</sup> Or the anarcho-capitalist Murray Rothbard’s more recent definition, which few before 1857 would have disagreed with, of the government as “a band of robbers into whose clutches we

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<sup>2</sup> Higgs 1996.

<sup>3</sup> Tolstoy’s letter to a friend, having just witnessed in Paris an execution by guillotine. Quoted in Wilson 1988, p. 146. Wilson remarks that such sentiments “were to be crucial elements in his mental furniture.” Tolstoy became, slowly, a Christian anarchist.

have fallen.” At any rate, you will object nowadays, if you are among the 13 percent of world population living under governments at least as reputable as Spain’s. The talk of “violence” and “corruption” and “robbing” as the basis of government is over the top, yes?

No. To test your disbelief in the centrality of violence to government, I suggest you try not paying taxes, perhaps giving voluntarily contributions in strict proportion to the share of the government’s budget you judge is effective and ethical. Left or right on the conventional spectrum, you will have plenty of corrupting items in mind to *not* give to. The new fighter jet that doesn’t work. The corporate subsidy that does. Then try resisting arrest. Then try escaping from prison. Then try resisting re-arrest.

After release, if ever, you will observe the contrast with the non-policy, non-police arenas of society that we call trade or persuasion. Try buying an iPhone rather than a Samsung. Or, in a free society, going to the *other* synagogue. Or marrying the other person. Or speechifying in Bughouse Square or on Hyde Park Corner against the government. You will observe a difference from your experience with the entity possessing the monopoly of violence, even in a reasonably well-governed place, such as Sweden or Minnesota.

Liberals 1.0 believe that a good policy would be having little or no policy. Liberals 1.0 do not sit anywhere along the conventional one-dimensional right-left spectrum. The spectrum stretches from a compelled right-conservative policy of, say, foreign wars to a compelled left-U.S.-“liberal” policy of class warfare. Anywhere along it the government exercises compulsion backed by violence, and the policies now penetrate more and more into our lives. To be governed in such a regime is to be taxed, drafted, rousted, beaten, watched, overseen, inspected, prohibited, licensed, regulated, expropriated, propagandized, and jailed.

The real liberal, by contrast, sits happily up on a second dimension, the non-policy apex of a triangle, so to speak. That is, we Liberals 1.0 are neither conservatives nor socialists. As the liberal economist and political philosopher Friedrich Hayek put it in 1968, both conservatives and socialists believe, with most lawyers and soldiers and bureaucrats, that “order [must be] . . . the result of the continuous attention of authority.”<sup>4</sup> Both ends of the conventional spectrum, and the middle, “lack the faith in the spontaneous forces of adjustment which makes the liberal accept changes without apprehension, even though he does not know how the necessary adaptations will be brought about.”<sup>5</sup> The humane liberal economist Donald Boudreaux, commenting on common law vs. statute law, writes: “Many people believe that we human beings left undirected by a sovereign power are either inert blobs, capable of achieving nothing, or unintelligent and brutal barbarians destined only to rob, rape, plunder, and kill each other until and unless a sovereign power restrains us and directs our energies onto more productive avenues. . . . [Nowadays] it is believed that the beneficent sovereign power must be ‘the People,’ usually in the form of democratic majorities.”<sup>6</sup>

A humane Liberal 1.0, to put it another way, really, really does not like the sometimes necessary monopoly of violence, even if exercised in aid of a democratic majority. Though she readily admits that a little violence is required for some limited governmental purposes, she is a friend of the non-governmental, voluntary order of art or market or science or journalism—trade, invention, and persuasion. She dislikes the necessarily violent and police-heavy feudal

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<sup>4</sup> Hayek 1960 (2011), p. 523

<sup>5</sup> Hayek 1960 (2011), p. 522

<sup>6</sup> Café Hayek (26 Nov 2017)

order, or bureaucratic order, or military-industrial order. She belongs, as Hayek also declared, to "the party of life, the party that favors free growth and spontaneous evolution," against the various parties of right and left that wish "to impose [by violence] upon the world a preconceived rational pattern."<sup>7</sup>

The conservative admires evolution up to a couple of decades before the present, but is fearful and angry about any recent or, God help us, future evolution. Gay marriage, say.

The social democrat does not admire many evolutions up to the present, yet is quite sure she can lay down a better future--on your behalf, dear. Industrial policy, say.

The true liberal, by contrast, admires some old evolutions – English common law, for instance, if not its enslaving doctrine of *femme couverte* – and looks with a cheery confidence to future unforced evolutions in a polity of liberated people, whatever in the world the evolutions might turn out to be.

At root, then, a humane Liberal 1.0 believes that no one should push people around, standing over them with gun or first to force them to do his will. The liberal abhors hierarchy of men over women, masters over slaves, politicians over citizens. The great liberal philosopher David Schmidtz argues that above all each person should have the right to say no. "I would prefer not to," said Bartleby the scrivener. As a free man and no slave, he could say no, whether or not it was good for him. He was an adult, and as one was owed respect, if not a job. The nineteenth-century English liberal Herbert Spencer noted that the only alternative to contract or agreement or free will is the violence of superior status and pushing around: "as fast as the régime of contract is discarded the régime of status is of necessity adopted. As fast as voluntary co-operation is abandoned compulsory co-operation must be substituted. Some kind of organization of labor must have; and if it is not that which arises by agreement under free competition, it must be that which is imposed by authority."<sup>8</sup> "The key functions of the legal system," writes the liberal legal theorist Richard Epstein, "can be neatly summarized in four words: aggression no, exchange yes."<sup>9</sup> As Boaz puts it at the outset of *The Libertarian Mind*, "In a sense, there have always been but two political philosophies: liberty and power."<sup>10</sup>

## 2. Liberals care about the poor

Real, *humane* Liberals 1.0 believe, further, that people should help and protect other people when they can. We liberals care. We really do. The philosophers John Tomasi and Jason Brennan call themselves "neoclassical liberals," contributing to a lively website created by the philosopher Matt Zwolinski, "Bleeding-Heart Libertarians." The "bleeding-heart" refers to the conservative sneer against weepy leftists, and indeed to the Christian pity for Our Savior on the cross. We humane liberals say that so should we all have hearts, not stony hearts but bleeding.

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<sup>7</sup> Hayek 1960 (2011), p. 531.

<sup>8</sup> page 14 of Herbert Spencer's 1891 "Introduction" to *A Plea for Liberty*. (Thomas Mackay, editor, 1891); the page number is to Liberty Fund's 1981 edition of this collection. Donald Boudreaux's blog, Café Hayek (14 November 2017) directed me to the passage.

<sup>9</sup> Epstein intro to Bruno Leoni book, find

<sup>10</sup> Boaz 2015, p. 1.

That is, we humane liberals are far from standing against poor people. On the contrary. Nor are we ungenerous, or lacking in pity. Nor are we strictly pacifist, willing to surrender in the face of an invasion by, say, Canada, or extortion by Russia. But we believe that in getting such goods as help for the poor and security for the nation, our polity should not turn carelessly to violence at home or abroad. Governments should not use violence as a first choice for leftist or rightish purposes, risking thereby the subordination of the poor or the policing of the world. People should depend chiefly on voluntary agreements among adults, such as commercially-tested betterment, or peaceable treaties of free trade, or civil conversation, or soulful charity, or the gift of grace, with majority votes constrained strictly by civil rights for the minority. Above all people should respect the other person and her liberty to say no.

Daniel Klein draws attention to the distinction Adam Smith made between the passive and the active sentiments. Emotion is passive, passion active. An emotion is our first, unreflective moment, sometimes ethically sufficient. We see a child about to fall down a well. Anyone, even a gorilla, is moved to intervene. But the passive emotion, what the economists call maximizing utility, is not enough to be fully human. Smith noted in 1759 that contemplating the extermination of the Chinese would give one less emotional pain than the loss of one's little finger. On such an occasion the passive emotion is "so sordid and so selfish" that it cannot satisfy the ethical opinion of oneself. The generous and noble path, of caring more about the mass of Chinese than about one's little finger, requires an active passion, in this case a passion for justice. In his egalitarian and liberal way, Smith draws attention to "the real littleness of ourselves. . . and the natural misrepresentations of self-love."<sup>11</sup>

But wait. Klein draws the humane liberal conclusion against the spectrum left to right: "The governmentalization of social affairs throws us into the passive position. That is what [true] liberalism understands."<sup>12</sup> We need to get off the spectrum entirely, and into the generous and noble and un-coerced space of a liberalism suitable for free adults. We need to reject the little-fingerism of massive government, which makes us into emotional pigs motivated only by self-interest, or into arrogant farmers tending the pigs.

To use a surprising word, we liberals, whether plain-vanilla 1.0 or leaning more to humane, want a society that relies chiefly on a much-misunderstood word, "rhetoric." Liberalism is deeply rhetorical, the exploration (as Aristotle said) of the available means of non-violent persuasion, sweet talk. After being for two millennia the basis of education in the West, and having parallel forms in much of the East and South, the art of rhetoric came to be despised by the hard European men of the seventeenth century such as Bacon and Descartes, Hobbes and Spinoza. They knew The Truth. Since then rhetoric has been disreputable – as though there is some other path to truth outside of human talk. Rhetoric is in fact a practice anciently fitted to a free society. We have only two ways of initiating change in the behavior of others, violent threats or amiable sweet talk. Rhetoric in sweet talk, for example, is what I'm doing for you now. *For* you, understand, not *to* you. It is a gift, not an imposition. (You're welcome.)

Yes, I know, and concede again: *some* imposition by violence is necessary. Got it, and said it. Perhaps we can move on to the question of how much violence? A big, modern government depends too much on violence – bombing foreigners, jailing people for smoking pot, protecting favored occupations and Whirlpool, seizing property by eminent domain for

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<sup>11</sup> Cite TMS

<sup>12</sup> Klein 2017 He is referring to Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, III.1.46. Klein, Daniel.

private projects, breaking into homes in the middle of the night to enforce the tax laws. A little, non-modern government depends on it, too. Any government tends to, because of the tempting monopoly of violence, the direct way to results. The economist Yoram Barzel calls even a rule-of-law government the “violence-wielding enforcer” (Barzel 2002, pp. 3, 268, and throughout). It’s so much easier to *force* people directly to stop polluting than to, say, *charge* them for it by establishing property rights or to *persuade* them by discussion in a free press. It is so much easier to bring in the police to fine and jail people than to reason with them. Policy, police.

By contrast, the market for goods, like the markets for art and science and ideas, as I noted, relies on persuasion, sweet talk. “Here’s \$3.” “Thank you, ma’am. Here in turn is your de-caf caramel macchiato grande.” Or: “Let me make a painting by dripping colors on a big canvas and see if you like it.” “Wow! A late Jackson Pollock! I’ll give you \$32,645,000 for it.” Or: “Libertarianism is in truth the original theory of liberalism.” “Oh, I get it.” No pushing around. Mutual benefit. Positive sum. Win-win.

Smith recommended in 1776 “the liberal plan of equality, liberty, and justice.”<sup>13</sup> The first in Professor Smith’s triad is a hoped-for equality in social standing, which he favored. Smith, contrary to the attitude of the country club, was an egalitarian. A man’s a man for a’ that.<sup>14</sup> The second item he hoped for—equal *liberty*—is the economic right he judged you should have, equal to anyone else’s, to open a grocery store or enter an occupation when you want. Especially occupations. Smith was outraged by the licensing and passports and other restrictions on the ability of a working man to use his powers harmlessly, indeed helpfully. He would have been appalled, for example, by the fine-enforced rule in Oregon nowadays that you cannot publish remarks about engineering matters, such as the timing of traffic lights, without being a duly *government*-licensed engineer, even if you are in fact trained as an engineer.

The third hoped-for item, justice, is another equality, your standing equal to any other person before the executive powers of the government, and before the courts of the government when used by other people against you. Smith was concerned in the economy with what philosophers call “commutative” justice—a justice in the procedures for getting stuff. It is to be contrasted with “distributive” justice, namely, how the stuff after it is gotten will be “distributed,” as it were (the very word “distributed” is an illiberal metaphor, because the distribution imagined is seen as being achieved by force, not commutative agreement). Commutative justice is summarized in the modern idiom by Klein and Boaz as the just procedure of “not messing [without consent: the right to say no] with other people’s stuff.” We should all be so constrained in justice, equally.

The theme in liberalism, you see, is equality, derived from the equal natural rights of each, or from the somewhat self-contradictory ruminations of utilitarians, or, best, from the “analytical egalitarianism” so characteristic of eighteenth-century social thought.<sup>15</sup> Though a commonplace now, the liberal idea that every person regardless of age or gender or ethnicity or position in the hierarchy should have equal rights was in the eighteenth century entirely new, at

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<sup>13</sup> Smith 1776, V.9.3.

<sup>14</sup> The phrase is of course from Burns in the 1790s, but Smith had showed in all his writings decades before that he was just such an egalitarian.

<sup>15</sup> “Analytic egalitarianism” was labeled and explored by Levy and Peart (2008) with numerous examples. It seems to me a fault in the book by Hayek I have quoted that he depends on instrumental reasons for liberty (such as economic productivity; for example, on pp. 84-85) rather than the natural and equal right we should all have to liberty, regardless of payoff.

any rate on a large scale in big polities. It was to most people shocking. In earlier centuries of agriculture and the accompanying hierarchy of stationary bandits in charge, a liberal equality was held in fact to be ridiculous, and dangerous. In 1381 the Lollard priest John Ball was drawn and quartered for asking "When Adam delved and Eve span, / Who then was the gentleman?" In 1685 Richard Rumbold, an English Leveler condemned to the scaffold under James II, declared – to the amusement of the crowd standing by to mock him – "I am sure there was no man born marked of God above another, for none comes into the world with a saddle on his back, neither any booted and spurred to ride him." In 1685 such an egalitarian notion was deemed madness.

In northwestern Europe a century or so after Rumbold the idea that no man was born marked of God above another was well on its way to becoming a commonplace, at any rate among advanced radicals and Old Whigs. Smith and his avant-garde allies of the eighteenth century from John Locke and Voltaire to Thomas Paine and Mary Wollstonecraft were recommending a voluntaristic egalitarianism. They were in a word liberals. They were persuaders, not enforcers. They recommended sweet talk, not guns. (Well, perhaps a *few* guns, at the Boyne and Saratoga and Valmy, in aid of equal liberty for free male citizens, especially those espousing an approved religious and political rhetoric.) Mainly when the new liberals heard the word "guns" they reached for their rhetoric.

Smith's first paid job was teaching rhetoric to Scottish boys, and he retained his conviction that "everyone is practicing oratory on others through the whole of his life."<sup>16</sup> A liberal society practices oratory constrained by ethics, not physical violence in aid of mastery. The Patriots of the American Revolution were very willing to use violence to tar and feather Loyalists. The Patriot leaders we call the Founding Fathers assumed that social hierarchy would continue to rule, a society of gentlemen over commoners, masters over slaves.<sup>17</sup> Masters in the eighteenth century routinely beat their wives and their apprentices and their servants and their sailors. Then the liberal evolutions after 1776 increasingly stayed their hands, down to the #MeToo movement.

In its fitful development such a liberalism, from a *liberalitas* long understood by the slave-holding ancients as "the leading characteristic of a non-slavish person," came to mean the theory of a society consisting *entirely* of free people. No slaves at all. No pushing around. Sweet talking. Persuasive. Rhetorical. Voluntary. Minimally violent. Humane. Tolerant. No racism. No imperialism. No unnecessary taxes. No domination of women by men. No casting couch. No messing with other people's stuff, or persons. Liberalism recommended a maximum liberty to pursue your own project, if your project does not use your own or the state's physical violence to interfere with other people's projects.

The pioneering management theorist of the 1920s, Mary Parker Follett, defined democracy not merely as majority voting (and then perhaps after the vote a bit of violent messing with the minority's stuff, or persons), but as the program of discovering, in her coinage, "win-win." It is the best version of being a liberal and pluralistic human, such as the theoretical ideal of an American since 1776, if only very gradually fulfilled, and always under contestation. In 1935 the African-American poet Langston Hughes got it right: "O, let America

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<sup>16</sup> Smith 1762-66, (A) 6.56, p. 352.

<sup>17</sup> AlanTaylor

be America again — / The land that never has been yet / — And yet must be — the land where *every* man is free.” The result? Flourishing humans.

### 3. Liberalism raised up the poor

Such a humane liberalism, under sharp challenge nowadays internationally, as always it has been by authoritarians of left and right, inspired by Hegel. has for two centuries worked on the whole astonishingly well.<sup>18</sup> For one thing it produced increasingly free people, which (we moderns think, most passionately if we are true liberals) is in itself a great good. Slaves, lower-class voters, women, Catholics, Jews, colonial people, gays, handicapped, and above all the poor from which most of us come have been increasingly allowed since 1776 to pursue their own projects consistent with not using physical violence to interfere with other people's projects. As someone put it: In the eighteenth century kings had rights and women had none. Now it's the other way around.

And — quite surprisingly, being an unanticipated if very welcome consequence — the new liberalism, by inspiring a great mass of ordinary people for the first time in human history, produced a massive explosion of economic betterments. Common people did contain multitudes.

How massive? What multitudes? Liberalism resulted in a fully 3,000 percent increase in the goods and services for the poorest among us. Listen to it. Out of liberalism, the economic historians tell us, came a three *thousand* percent betterment. The liberal plan gave voice and permission to the Ben Franklins and Isambard Kingdom Brunels and Nikola Teslas and Albert Einsteins and Coco Chaneles otherwise mute and inglorious, as much as to the ordinary worker able in liberty to move to a new job, or the ordinary shopkeeper able in liberty to open her own shop. The liberating gave us steam, rail, universities, steel, sewers, plate glass, forward markets, universal literacy, running water, science, reinforced concrete, automobiles, airplanes, washing machines, antibiotics, the pill, containerization, free trade, computers, and the cloud — and in the list of thousands upon thousands of commercially tested betterments the less spectacular multitude of free lunches prepared by the alert worker and the liberated shopkeeper pursuing their own little projects for profit and pleasure. It has given us by now an increase in real income per head by a factor, I said, of *thirty*, and a startling rise in the associated ability to seek, too, the transcendent in Art or Science or God or Baseball.<sup>19</sup>

It was a stunning Great Enrichment, materially and culturally, well beyond the classic Industrial Revolution, 1760-1860. Such revolutions as the Industrial Revolution had been rare but not unheard of in history, as in the domestication of plants and animals, or the surge of northern Italian industrialization in the *quattrocento*. But the follow-on of the Great Enrichment was unique, and world making. The Enrichment in liberal countries was, I say again in case you missed it, 3,000 percent per person, wholly unprecedented. The goods and services available to even the poorest rose by that astounding figure, in a world in which mere doublings, rises of merely 100 percent, had been rare and temporary, as in the glory of fifth-century Greece or the vigor of the Song Dynasty. In every earlier case the little industrial

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<sup>18</sup> Fascism book

<sup>19</sup> For the factual evidence for these remarks, and for much else, consult McCloskey 2006, 2010, 2016.



revolutions had eventually reverted to a real income per head in today's prices of about \$2 or \$3 a day, the human condition since the caves. Not after 1800 or 1860.

Consider living on \$2 or \$3 a day. Many people still do, though during the past forty years their number has fallen like a stone. The Green Revolution made India a grain exporter. Liberalization in China made its cities modern. And since 1800, or 1973 or whatever year you like, there has been no hint of reversion. On the contrary, in every one of the forty or so recessions since 1800 in the United States the nation's real income per head after the recession has exceeded what it had been at the previous peak. Up, up, up. Even including the \$2-a-day people still crushed by their illiberal governments in Chad and Zimbabwe, *world* real income per head has increased during the past two centuries by a factor of ten – and by that factor of thirty I said, in countries such as Hong Kong, South Korea, Botswana. The material and cultural enrichment bids fair now to spread to the entire world. Hallelujah.

And the enrichment has been massively equalizing. The poorest have been the greatest beneficiaries. Nowadays in places like Japan and the United States the poorest make more, corrected for inflation, than did the top ten percent two centuries ago. In material terms Jane Austen lived more modestly and with less material security than does the average resident of East Los Angeles. Equality of real comfort for the poor in adequate food, housing, clothing, education, health, entertainment, and most other goods and services has steadily increased peak to peak since 1800. In countries fully experiencing the enrichment the average (and with it the median and the comfort of the poorest) has increased from the \$3 a day in 1800 to over \$100 a day now.

As the Austrian-American economist Joseph Schumpeter (1883-1950) put it in 1942, "Queen Elizabeth owned silk stockings. The capitalist achievement does not typically consist in providing more silk stockings for queens but in bringing them within the reach of factory girls in return for steadily decreasing amounts of effort. . . . The capitalist process, not by coincidence but by virtue of its mechanism, progressively raises the standard of life of the masses" (Schumpeter 1942, pp. 67-68). By 2018 the standard of life for the American masses was four times larger than in the early 1940s, when average American real income was about what it is now in Brazil. Washing machines. Antibiotics. Cheap air travel. A bedroom for every child. An education for most people. Better.

Recently in China and India a new economic liberalism has enriched their poor in spectacular fashion. China and India are still poor on average by European standards. But wait for a generation or two. In the next century – and sooner if conservatives and socialists will abandon their schemes for pushing people around – everyone on the planet will be U.S.- or Swedish-rich. The museums and concert halls will be filled, the universities will boom, a full life will be open to the poorest.

#### 4. The clerisy doubted

Yet, alas, late in the nineteenth century even in the Anglosphere a clerisy of artists and journalists and professors commenced rebelling against such splendidly productive liberalism. Flaubert wrote to George Sands in 1867, "*Axiome: la haine du bourgeois est le commencement de la vertu*," which is to say, it is an axiom that hatred of the bourgeois is the beginning of virtue.<sup>20</sup> The Great Enrichment didn't come

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<sup>20</sup> Flaubert (May 10, 1867), in *Oeuvres complètes et Annexes. Correspondance*, p. 5883.

fast enough, they declared. It was a project of our vulgar and commercial fathers. It was not governed by our preconceived rational patterns. Dark money is behind it. Let us use the government's monopoly of violence to better the poor or glorify the nation. By the time in 1942 that Schumpeter wrote *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy* most of the clerisy expected comprehensive socialism to prevail. Even Schumpeter, a liberal enthusiast for a business-respecting civilization, did so. And most of the clerisy had long welcomed the prospect. In 1919 the American journalist Lincoln Steffens, returning from the nascent Soviet Union, declared, "I have seen the future, and it works."

By 1910 at the latest the New Liberals in Britain and the new Progressives in America, for what they assured us were the best of motives, had redefined the L-word to mean its opposite, a slow socialism. (The various post-Great-War soviet and spartacist uprisings in Bavaria, wider Germany, Russia, Hungary, Bulgaria, and northern Italy, were the *fast* sort of socialism, as was fascism and national socialism.) Slow socialism was supposed to raise up the working man by slow compulsion of law, backed by the monopoly of violence – though without the sanguinary violence urged by the hard-left and hard-right socialists in a hurry.

Jason Brennan among other observers adopts the terminology for the resulting version of slow socialism in the United States as "High Liberalism."<sup>21</sup> In High Liberalism the equal and liberal liberty I have to make a voluntary arrangement with you was extended to a novel and socialized liberty of mine to seize with violence, through the government's monopoly, your goods in order to give me a set of "positive" liberties. I am to have a liberty from want, for example, regardless of my supply of goods to you. "Every man a king," declared Huey Long in 1934, and his way of achieving it was that of both Bad King John and his enemy Robin Hood, characteristic of the feudal and now the socialist or welfare-state order under a theory of zero sum, win-lose. "It is necessary to scale down the big fortunes," said Huey, "that we may scatter the wealth to be shared by all of the people."<sup>22</sup> Scale down by violence the one person's earnings by trade and betterment to give to another voter for Huey, and all will be well.

Under High Liberalism, as under feudalism or crony capitalism or any number of illiberal regimes, I am to have also a liberty to regulate through the government's monopoly of violence your trade in ways beneficial to me, and a liberty to prevent your entry into my trade, forcibly backed by police, and a liberty to wage a war to end all wars, financed by your goods appropriated for the purpose. In short, the New or High or Progressive "Liberal" woman, however one names her, advocated a régime of pushing people around, as in for example Prohibition in the United States. As implemented in the twentieth century her régime had little of voluntary agreement about it, and a good deal of violently illiberal rhetoric, a disdain for the pitiable poor, and a zero-sum economics, and not much of a search for win-win.

Our friends on the left (I have many, and do not condescend: listen up Jack and David and Nancy ) would do well to reflect on the authoritarian cast of European social democracy since 1900 and of American Progressivism c. 1910 and of High Liberalism c. 1960 and of so-called U.S. Liberalism now.<sup>23</sup> Our friends on the right, too, should reflect on the authoritarian cast of their conservatism or Republicanism, most extreme in the capture of the G.O.P by

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<sup>21</sup> Brennan 2004.

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/hueyplongking.htm>

<sup>23</sup> When I use, as I will, the locution "our friends on the left" (or right) I am speaking sincerely. I have many good friends on the left (and the right), whom I love . . . but whom I believe are mistaken, and lovingly wish to persuade.

Trump. The very word "liberty" in the rhetoric of both left and right has reverted to its medieval and violent meaning, in the plural, "liberties" — "a liberty," such as "the liberty of the City of London," being a special and distinct privilege to this or that person or group, enforced against any who would presume to claim it without the gracious permission of the government. It is the government-enforced protection for tire companies in Ohio or the relaxed policing of drugs in white suburbs or the closing of private schools lest anyone get a better education. It contradicts the core liberal criticism of "liberties" articulated by Thomas Paine, "Give to every other human being every right that you claim for yourself — that is my doctrine."<sup>24</sup>

Slow socialism recommended, and eventually achieved, an astonishingly high share of national income spent by the government out of coerced taxes, a higher and higher share taxed out of personal income — often higher than the most appalling tyrannies of the past. Slow socialism achieved also medieval standards of regulation of one's stuff by experts imposed on more and more people, more governmental intervention in the wage bargain, more eugenic sterilization of undesirables, more economic protection offered to this or that group, more police-enforced licensing of occupations, more electronic inspection of the residents, more armies and empires and aggressive alliances, more nationalizations of the means of production. It resulted in the stagnant growth of the 1970s in the United Kingdom and the arrogant policing of the world since 1945 by the United States. The slow socialist motto is, "I'm from the government, and I'm here to help you, by messing with someone's stuff. . . maybe yours." Or, "Don't tax him, / Don't tax me: / Tax that man / Behind the tree."

Such, then, is "liberalism" as misdefined in these latter days in parts of the Anglosphere. Boaz quotes Schumpeter's witticism about the theft of the word "liberal": "As a supreme, if unintended, compliment, the enemies of private enterprise have thought it wise to appropriate its label."<sup>25</sup> The appropriation was not "mere" rhetoric. It vividly illustrates the non-mere-ness of how we talk to each other. The historian Kevin Schultz has written a dual biography of that odd couple, William Buckley the conservative (1925-2008) and Norman Mailer the radical (1923-2007), *Buckley and Mailer: The Difficult Friendship That Shaped the Sixties* (2013). Schultz documents how both men revolted against the High Liberalism of the 1950s and 1960s. Yet in policy, High Liberalism has won, with a good deal of conservative approval, crowding out the old adult projects of a free people, such as families as ethical schools or self-provision for old age or a trade-union insurance against unemployment or a prudent wariness about foreign entanglements. Mailer and Buckley, each in his flamboyant fashion, sought a civil discourse of a liberty-loving society. They lost.

The left-right quarrel has yielded at last the fact-free dogmatism of left and right we hear daily, even among otherwise adult and benevolent folk. One hears: "If there is *any* spillover, then the government of the United States should step in with police powers to stop it." Or: "If there are *any* bad people in the world, then the government of the United States should drop bombs on them." When someone asked Michael Bloomberg, the brilliant businessman and three-time mayor of New York City, what he thought about legalizing marijuana, he brought out the fact-free line that marijuana is a "gateway drug." When someone challenged Lindsey Graham, the brilliant senior senator from South Carolina, about America's

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<sup>24</sup> cite

<sup>25</sup> Boaz 2015, p. 34.

over-reach abroad, he brought out the fact-free line that "if we don't fight them in Syria, we'll have to fight them in Charleston."

The slow-socialist, New-High-or-Progressive "liberals" of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century such as Lloyd George and Woodrow Wilson, and then also their supposed enemies the Burkean Conservatives such as Bill Buckley and Lindsey Graham, seized what they imagined to be the ethical high ground. It turned out to entail coercion by governmental violence. The New Liberals and the Progressives have been declaring since around 1900, joining in this the Conservatives since Thomas Carlyle (who had long made a similar declaration), that, in effect if not in so many words, "Our motives for extending the scope of governmental violence are pure and paternalistic. Our policy of physical coercion is designed to help the pathetic, childlike poor and women and minorities, so incapable of taking care of themselves. To leave the business of the citizens to themselves and to their peaceful markets would be highly dangerous, unlike our proposals for coercion at home and abroad. You so-called Humane Liberals 1.0 criticize our splendid policies. You must hate the poor and women and minorities, or indeed all the ordinary citizens, and love only the rich, by whose pay by Koch or Soros we suppose you are corrupted. You do not sufficiently love our king and country, the Land of Hope and Glory, the Land of the Free. For shame, for shame! Why should we listen to such evil people?" Thus Senator Elizabeth Warren or Senator John McCain or the Honorable Jeremy Corbyn, bless 'em all, espousing governmental violence in aid of policy.

The great (American-definition) liberal Lionel Trilling wrote in 1950 that the danger is that "we who are liberal and progressive [or indeed Burkean and conservative] know that the poor are our equals in every sense except that of being equal to us."<sup>26</sup> The "us" are the natural governors, graduates of Columbia University, New York, or of Trinity College, Dublin, or of Sciences Po, Paris. In 2016 such arrogance among the elite was detected and punished by the Trump voters, and worldwide by populists from Britain to the Philippines. High Liberals and conservatives suppose that the poor and the rest are incompetent to manage their own affairs. Therefore we of the clerisy – a regiment of which Boaz calls "court intellectuals" gathered in the District of Columbia, with a lively regiment of Eurocrats stationed in Brussels – are supposed to guide the poor and the mere citizens. The clerisy strolls proudly in the glittering courts of Washington or Brussels, from Springfield Illinois or Chicago City Hall. "We will do so much better," they say to each other, "than the poor or the mere citizens can do for themselves from their homes."

Beyond the surface implausibility of the supposition, its paternalism has grave dangers. Elsewhere Trilling wrote that "we must be aware of the dangers that lie in our most generous wishes," because "when once we have made our fellow men the object of our enlightened interest [we] go on to make them the objects of our pity, then of our wisdom, ultimately of our coercion."<sup>27</sup> Every mother knows the dangers. And when she loves the beloved for the beloved's own sake, she resists them.

## 5. Apologia pro vita sua

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<sup>26</sup> The late James Seaton (1996, p. 35) alerted me to Trilling's worry. The references are to Trilling's essay on Henry James, "Princess Casamassima," and "Manners, Morals, and the Novel," both reprinted by Trilling in 1950.

The progressives and the conservatives kindly left the word "libertarian," a coinage becoming common in the 1950s, for the mere Liberals 1.0, who in a collectivist age remained loyal to Smith and John Stuart Mill, Tocqueville and Bastiat, Lord Acton and Macaulay. The mere liberals were people like Hayek (1899-1992) and Milton Friedman (1912-2006) all their adult lives, the philosopher Robert Nozick (1938-2002) in his early middle age, and Deirdre McCloskey (1942- ) in her maturity. Deirdre's father was an eminent political scientist (1915-1969), a New-Deal Democrat drifting rightward, and she vividly remembers him around 1960 using "libertarian" as a term of contempt. For a long time it kept her from taking humane liberalism seriously.

I was in fact age 16 or 17 a Joan-Baez socialist, singing the labor songs. I dreamt I saw Joe Hill. Then in college in the early 1960s, the better to help the poor and disadvantaged – which remains my sole political object, as it is for all us humane liberals (though we want to *actually* help, rather than rest at signaling how superior in pity we conceive ourselves to be) – I majored in economics and became a standard-issue Keynesian. I was making my fellows the object of my pity, then of my newly acquired wisdom, ultimately of my coercion.

One of us three college roommates, a brilliant electrical engineer, used to read the liberal Ludwig von Mises' *Human Action* (1949) in breaks from solving second order differential equations. I remember David leaning perilously back in his swivel chair, his feet up on the desk, smoking Galoises cigarettes, with Castro's speeches from Cuba via shortwave set at low volume to serve as a droning background, the old tan-bound Yale-Press edition of Mises perched on his knees. The other roommate and I, both leftish Democrats, both studying economics à la Harvard College out of Paul Samuelson's elementary textbook in those happy days, scorned the engineer's non-orthodox, voluntaristic, and "conservative" economics. We favored instead a pity-driven coercion in the style of Keynes and Samuelson and Stiglitz. Yet in reading Mises during work breaks, our David undoubtedly learned more of the economics of a free society than the two of us did attending hundreds of hours of classes in Keynes and slow socialism.

A couple of years later, beginning in graduate school still at Harvard, I intended to join the other proudly elite economists down in Washington as a *social* engineer, "fine tuning" the economy, as we put it. At the time only a handful of graduate programs, such as those at UCLA, the University of Virginia, and above all the University of Chicago, doubted the Ivy-League and slow-socialist theory of expertise. Yet a year or two into my graduate studies it began to dawn on me what the core of economics actually said – see *Human Action* and its Liberalism 1.0. The core denied the premise of social engineering, left and right, the notion that a social engineer (as again the Blessed Smith put it) "can arrange the different members of a great society with as much ease as the hand arranges the different pieces upon a chess-board."<sup>27</sup> About then the most prominent piece of social engineering on display, the American invasion of Vietnam, didn't seem to be working out as planned. By the time in 1968 I got my first academic job, ironically at that same University of Chicago, a version of humane liberalism, as against coercive social engineering, was beginning to make sense.

Chicago was then notorious in the Ivy League for being "conservative." (We of the left did not distinguish conservatives from liberals 1.0.) Back as a senior at college, in the fall of 1963, still a vaguely Keynesian leftie, I had not so much as considered applying to Chicago's

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<sup>27</sup> Smith 1759 (1790), Part VI, Section II, Chapter II, pp. 233-4, para 17.

large and distinguished graduate program in economics. Why listen to such bad people? My undergraduate essays were denunciations of the Chicago School for its lack of pity, and for its idiotic misunderstanding of the theory of monopolistic competition devised by my teacher Edward Chamberlain. Yet a dozen years after spurning the Chicago School, I became its director of graduate studies. A textbook on Chicago-style microeconomics I subsequently wrote contains a showing that monopolistic competition is self-contradictory.<sup>9</sup> As the Dutch say, *Van het concert des levens krijgt niemand een program*: In the concert of life no one gets a program. You're telling me.

By the late 1960s and early 1970s, then, age 30 or so, I had become a Chicago-School economist, and in the uses of supply-and-demand analysis I remain one. As a rough guide to the flourishing of ordinary people in market economies such as those of Sweden or Japan or the United States, the supply-and-demand arguments have never been overturned scientifically, despite what you may have heard from Paul Krugman or Robert Reich.<sup>28</sup> My earliest big paper in economic history, entitled "Did Victorian Britain Fail?" (1970), was an early "supply-side" rejection of using the Keynesian demand-side economics for the long run. Krugman might want to have a look at it. Another paper a few years later, "New Perspectives on the Old Poor Law" (1973), distinguished the distorting effects of intervening in the wage bargain from the effects of giving a tax-supported cash subsidy to the poor in order to bring them up to a respectable standard. Reich might want to have a look at it. The cash subsidy as against the numerous ill-advised interventions in the wage bargain is what economists left and right have been calling since the 1950s the "negative income tax," or nowadays the "earned income tax credit," such as the \$9 a month the Indian government proposed in 2016 to replace its hundreds of corrupt and cumbersome subsidies. It is Liberalism 1.0, made "Christian" (or Hindu or "bleeding heart" or humane) by a preferential option for the poor.

## 6. Illiberal arguments are weak

The essence of real, humane liberalism, in short, is a small government, honest and effective in its modest realm, with a hand up for the poor. Mainly leave people alone to pursue their non-violent projects voluntarily, *laissez faire, laissez passer*. Yet do not ignore the disadvantaged, or disdain them, or refuse to help them, issuing a country-club sneer of "I've got mine." Humane liberalism is not atomistic and selfish, contrary to what the High Liberals believe it to be – and as some misled libertarians talk in their boyish ways, as if they actually believed such things, too. It is, on the contrary, an economy and polity and society of equal dignity.

The routine arguments against such a humane liberalism are, as I gradually came to realize after the 1960s, mostly feeble. For example, it is not true, as slow socialists argue, that the taxation and spending and regulation by big governments are innocuous because, after all, they are voted on by "us" and anyway "give back services." The humane liberal will inquire mildly of the High Liberal: did you vote for the 81,640 pages of new regulations promulgated by the Federal government during 2016? Or the 70,000 pages of the Internal Revenue Code? Did your representatives in Congress or the White House know what was in them? Did you or they properly understand the economic consequences, as against what the lawyers will have claimed such taxes and regulations were "designed" to do? (Design is good for furniture and

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<sup>28</sup> McCloskey 2017.

autos, and market designs face the salubrious test that people pay for them directly and therefore value them at their price – but not if the design is governmental.) And do you actually want the exact fixed-price menu of national parks and government licensing requirements and local schools that government now provides, or would you rather order à la carte, at a lower price and higher quality?

Another feeble objection to *laissez faire*, even in some true-liberal theory after Locke, is the notion that the government is composed of highly ethical philosopher-monarchs, who can be trusted therefore to run a government kindly, giving us stuff out of taxes (taxes gently, democratically extracted from the stuff we made). Yet the government now spends and redistributes, I noted, 30 percent and more of what we mere citizens make, and regulates much of the rest. In France the governmental share is higher, 55 percent. (Henry Kissinger once joked that France was the only successful communist country). And regularly it does not do so kindly or even democratically. Ask any Italian.

When the Commissioner of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Margaret Hamburg, retired in 2015, she was introduced on National Public Radio as having regulated fully a fifth of the American economy. The statistic is surprising, but accurate.<sup>29</sup> Food. Drugs. Was Hamburg a wonder woman – a wholly ethical and wholly wise philosopher queen? It's unlikely, though I am sure she is very nice. Therefore the cancer treatment that works in Berlin, Germany is not accessible to you in Boston, Massachusetts, and you will die in agony, because it awaits a certified finding by the FDA, after ten years of delay, affirming that the drug or medical appliance has "efficacy," tested in unethical but "gold standard" double-blind experiments guided by meaningless tests of statistical significance, and going far beyond the original brief of the FDA to test merely for safety, not for an elusive efficacy, regularly modified in fact by discoveries by doctors in the clinical use of the drug or appliance.<sup>30</sup>

A supposition that government is in the hands of philosopher kings and queens seems on its face naïve, which is what the economist the late James Buchanan's notion of "public-choice" avers. The naïveté is well illustrated by the perils of the U.S. Constitution, from the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798 down to Trumpism. Furthermore, the royal governor, whoever she is, does not have to be careful with other people's money, or with other people's lives. She waxes proud in her "program" to spend your money to coerce you, and she waxes proud, too, in her power to enforce her decisions concerning one fifth of the U.S. economy. Power, you might say, tends to corrupt.

As Paine wrote in the liberal birth year of 1776, "government even in its best state is but a necessary evil, in its worst state an intolerable one." Better keep the power to coerce modest. By 1849, at the first maturation of liberalism 1.0, Henry David Thoreau declared, "I heartily accept the motto, 'That government is best which governs least'; and I should like to see it acted upon more rapidly and systematically." In that same year in far Torino the liberal economist of Italy, Francesco Ferrara, wrote that "taxation is the great source of everything a corrupt government can devise to the detriment of the people. Taxation supports the spy,

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<sup>29</sup> <https://blogs.fda.gov/fdavoices/index.php/2016/11/consumer-expenditure-on-fda-regulated-products-20-cents-of-every-dollar/>

<sup>30</sup> On the FDA see Briggeman 2015 and Bhidé 2017, p. 28. On the meaninglessness of tests of statistical significance see Ziliak and McCloskey (2008), and the report of the American Statistical Association 2016.

encourages the faction, dictates the content of newspapers."<sup>31</sup> As Donald Boudreaux wrote recently, "The only sure means of keeping money out of politics is to keep politics out of money."<sup>32</sup> The bumper sticker on my little Smart car reads, "Separation of Economy and Government."

Even at this late hour, reducing the size and power of government, and letting free people have a go (in the British phrase), is practical. It is achievable by parts whether or not a Painean or Thoreauesque or Ferrarite ideal is finally achieved. To note another feeble argument against *laissez faire*, our coercion-minded friends are mistaken that the more complicated an economy is, the more regulatory attention it needs from the governors. On the contrary. A correspondent of Boudreaux complained that "to offer the counsel 'Let the market handle it' is . . . simplistic and pollyanish." Boudreaux replied (on his website Café Hayek, April 6, 2017): "Quite the opposite. To let the market handle matters is to allow as many creative minds as are willing to put their own efforts and resources on the line in their quests to address whatever problems exist, and it is to use the most effective and reliable of tests – market competition – to judge and to monitor the efforts. What is simplistic and pollyannaish is to say 'Let the government handle it.'" Let the highly ethical philosopher-monarchs handle it. Let Margaret Hamburg govern one fifth of the American economy.

A complicated economy far exceeds the ability of any collection of human intellects to govern it in detail. A person's own life might be so governed, or her little household or maybe even her big company – though any adult knows that even little societies are hard to plan in detail, offering endless surprises. You get no program. But governing in detail from the center the trillions of shifting plans daily by the 324 million individuals in the American economy, much less nation-building abroad, is impossible – because, as Smith again put it, "in the great chess-board of human society, every single piece has a principle of motion of its own."<sup>33</sup> The principles of motion are idiosyncratic, because people are motivated in varying proportions by prudence, temperance, courage, justice, faith, hope, and love, together with the corresponding vices. By way of such principles of motion, you and I pursue our endlessly varied projects. The a liberal plan is appropriate to a society in which people are taken as free and equal – equal even to the Columbia/Trinity-College/Sciences-Po graduates of the clerisy.

## 6. A positive program for *laissez faire*

What to do, then, in leashing the power to coerce? The practical proposals are legion, because illiberal policies are by now legion, as they also were during the feudalism that the early liberals overturned. Cut the multiple levels of corrupt government in Illinois. As many liberal billionaires propose, against their interest, kill off the vast programs of corporate welfare, federal and state and local. Close the agricultural programs, which allow rich farmers to farm the government instead of the land. Sell off "public" assets such as roads and bridges and street parking, which in an age of electronic transponders can be better priced by private enterprise. Close the American empire. Welcome immigrants. Abandon the War on Drugs. Give up eminent domain and civil forfeiture and armored personnel carriers for police departments. Implement the notion of Catholic social teaching of "subsidiarity," placing modest

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<sup>31</sup> Ferrara 1849 in Mingardi 2017, p. 29.

<sup>32</sup> *Cafe Hayek*, 3/6/17, <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#inbox/15aa3aaaff0f6676>

<sup>33</sup> Smith 1759 (1790), Part VI, Section II, Chapter II, pp. 233-4, para 17.



but essential responsibilities such as trash collection or fire protection down at the lowest level of government that can handle them properly. Then outsource the trash collection and the fire protection. To finance K-12 education—socially desirable but often out of reach of the poor—give families vouchers to cash in at private schools, such as Sweden has done since the 1990s and as Orleans parish has done for poor families since 2008. To achieve such universal K-12 education, and a select few of other noble and otherwise privately unfundable purposes, such as handicapped-friendly buildings or rational policies against global warming or armaments in a war of survival, by all means tax you and me, not only the man behind the tree. But eliminate the inquisitorial income tax, replacing it with a tax on personal consumption declared on a one-page form, as has long been proposed by economists such as Robert Hall and Arthur Laffer. Still better, use only an equally simple value-added tax on businesses, to reduce the present depth of personal inquisition. Eliminate entirely the so-called "corporate" income tax, because it is double taxation and because economists have scientifically speaking after 70 years of inquiry achieved very little idea about which people actually end up paying it. (The old bumper sticker of the 1970s saying "Tax corporations, not people," when you think about it, doesn't make a lot of sense.) Give a poor person cash in emergencies, from those modest taxes on you and me. Quit inquiring into whether she spends it on booze or her children's clothing. Leave her and her family alone. No pushing around.

A government does of course "have a role"—as in indignant reply to such proposals my progressive and conservative friends put it to me daily, predictably, relentlessly. George Romney, the automaker and conventional 1950s Republican, opposing the Liberal-1.0 and conservative Barry Goldwater in 1964, declared, "Markets don't just *happen*. There must be some role for government."<sup>34</sup> Well, yes, of course, government has "some role," though contrary to Romney's assertion most markets do in fact "just happen," because people find them mutually beneficial, with or without governmental action. Markets "just happen" inside jails and prisoner-of-war camps, for example, with no government in sight, or among pre-contact Australian aborigines buying their boomerangs from better-skilled bands hundreds of miles distant.<sup>35</sup>

Anyway, only briefly, at age 15 or so, did I think of myself as a literal "anarchist," (which properly does not mean "bomb-throwing nihilist" but *an-archos*, Greek "no ruler at all"). Government has an essential role in those wars of survival, for example, in which a singular purpose is exactly what's needed, and can be achieved for the duration with justified if often over-applied coercion. Then after the victory we can hope that we can get rid of the coercion of a larger role for government—without a great deal of hope, actually, as the economist Robert Higgs has shown.<sup>36</sup>

And yes, by all means let us have a government, a small one, to protect us from force and fraud by fellow Americans—though of course such private arrangements as door locks and high-reputation suppliers and competition in markets get the protections in most cases much better, to speak quantitatively, than does their alleged "ultimate" backing by governmental courts and police and inspectors. Protect us especially from government itself, from its habit of

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<sup>34</sup> Quoted in Schultz 2015, p. 77.

<sup>35</sup> Radford 1945 and Berndt and Berndt 1964, p. 302-305.

<sup>36</sup> Higgs 1987.

abridging the right to vote or spying on civil-rights leaders or enforcing bedroom-and-bathroom norms or suspending the right to habeas corpus or beating up on sassy citizens.

## 7. Protection is pernicious

But the government should leave off giving *economic* "protection," such as President Trump promised against the nefarious plot by Chinese and Mexicans to sell us at low prices very long ties for men and very good parts for cars. Let us have instead separation of economy and government. As in Mafia usage, governmental "protection" is regularly corrupted for the benefit of the rich. It is a tax on enterprise and violates the equal liberty of other people – Americans or foreigners or non-Mafiosi – to compete without physical violence in offering good deals to us American consumers. Such taxation is of course the very purpose of the Mafia, extracting an income from protection money by making an offer you can't refuse. And it is the purpose, too, of the Chicago City Council, encouraged by well-placed bribes . . . uh . . . campaign contributions to prevent by ordinance the poor-person-supplying Ikea or Wal-Mart from opening in town. Extortion and protection and rent seeking by elites, exercising the monopoly of violence, puts a fatal drag on betterment, stopping people with new ideas from competing for our voluntary purchases. In the extreme it stops economic growth cold, as it did during the grinding millennia of poverty before 1800, and before liberalism.

Would you want governmental "protection" from new ideas in science or music or cooking? Probably not. Would you always "buy American" in spices or medical innovations? No. Consider: if you really do think protection and buying American is a good idea, to be enforced by governmental tariffs and jail terms, why not still better buy Illinoisan or Chicagoan or even Printers' Rowian? Or for that matter why not make everything you want yourself in your own home, achieving thereby true self-sufficiency and plenty of "jobs"? Grow your own wheat. Make your own accordion. Invent your own internet. Bravo.

Or ask this: do you so fear the multinational corporation, which is trying in its evil way to sweet-talk you into buying its running shoes, that you are willing to erect a comprehensive socialist monopoly, backed by guns, to prevent you from getting any shoes but government-issue? Witness the third of the world ruled once by communism, or the recent history of Venezuela. As another Italian liberal, and anti-fascist, Benedetto Croce, put it in 1928, "Ethical liberalism abhors authoritarian regulation of the economic process [equally from the left as from the right, from socialism as from fascism], because it considers it a humbling of the inventive faculties of man."<sup>37</sup> In order to protect the Postal Service's monopoly, inspectors in trench coats used to go around in December putting the arm on little children distributing Christmas cards for free in neighborhood mailboxes. In Tennessee by law nowadays, to open a new company for moving furniture, two men and a truck, you must get permission from. . . wait for it. . . the existing moving companies.<sup>38</sup>

Economic protection as actually implemented – contrary to the sweet if culpably naïve theory that the implementers are wise and ethical philosopher kings and queens, such as is imagined on the blackboards of Cambridge or New Haven or Princeton, or (without the lovely mathematics) on the political stump nationwide – regularly hurts the helpless more than

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<sup>37</sup> Quoted in Mngardi 2017, p. 25.

<sup>38</sup> I believe I learned this fact from the sainted John Sossel in one of his TV shows.

it helps them. But it always favors the few protected, who are easy to see up on the stage, to be favored over the unseen multitudes damaged off stage. Protect *this* job, even though annually in the United States nearly 14 percent of jobs disappear forever, as must be the case in a dynamic economy enriching of the poor. In 2000 over a hundred thousand people worked in, well, video stores. Now, not. In the late 1940s, there were 350,000 manual telephone operators working for AT&T alone. In the 1950s elevator operators by the hundreds of thousands lost their jobs to passengers pushing buttons and listening to sweetly recorded messages announcing the floors. Typists have vanished from offices--the lawyers or their assistants write the briefs direct. And the big, worldwide example is farming. In 1880 80 percent of Americans were on farms, now 2 percent and falling. Yet the farm-state senators demand protection, such as laws for gasoline from corn. Often the tiny group protected have made a nice contribution to a congressperson's welfare, or anyway given a vote for her. Thus we get useless tanks and planes to stop the Canadian invasion, built with parts made in every congressional district, and garnering votes for every congressperson.

Tariff protection, for example, pushing up profits and wages in American-made steel, will of course at the same time, if off-stage, hurt American consumers of steel. Obviously. That is what it designed to do, and --unusually for "designed" policies--what it actually achieves. (Let us pass over in silence the hurt to foreigners. Yet since when is a cosmopolitan concern for foreigners not to be recommended ethically? And what sort of childish nationalism thinks that hurting Mexicans is good for Americans?) Regularly in dollar terms such off-stage damage imposed on the *unprotected* Americans is many times larger in economic terms than the on-stage favor granted to the few protected Americans. In 2017 the American government agreed with Mexican sugar producers to restrict imports of Mexican sugar. It kept the price of sugar at the high, protected American price, double the world price. The jobs saved in U.S. sugar production, however, were a tiny fraction of the jobs destroyed in sugar-using production. When it comes to protecting sugar, the four senators from Florida and Louisiana are very, very interested, with the six from Texas, Hawaii, and North Dakota also expressing an opinion on the matter. Odd, yes?

When in the 1970s the American government imposed quotas on Japanese automobiles, the additional cost each year to American consumers of autos outweighed the annual wages in Detroit thus protected by a ratio of ten to one. The net beneficiaries were United Auto Workers accustomed to receiving a share of the monopoly profit extracted from Americans buying their cars from the lonely and then-protected Big Three. The other beneficiaries were of course the stockholders of the Big Three, and, less obviously, a Toyota Company in far Japan enabled to capture still more of its very own monopoly profit, by restricting its supply to the U. S. and thereby pushing the U. S. price above the world price of Toyotas. Swell.

A worse case, still deemed sacred on the left, is the worldwide assault on young or unskilled seekers of any job at all, through job protections. Job protections in slow-socialist régimes have created in Greece and South Africa and the slums of the U.S. a dangerously large class of unemployed youths. A quarter of French people under 25 years of age and out of school are unemployed, and the rest are employed mainly on monthly temp contracts, because regular jobs in France are fiercely protected. The employers in such a system are terrified to hire in the first place, because they cannot dismiss a worker who steals from the till or insults the customers or is in other ways unproductive. And even the honest and productive workers in France cling in terror to the wrong jobs, because they are unlikely to get the correct ones. The protection-caused unemployment is higher still in Greece. It is appalling in South Africa.

In the U.S. the protections have caused the ghettos to require armed occupation. The south and west sides of Chicago should be hives of industrial activity, employing at low starter-wages the unemployed youths now standing on street corners and joining gangs to enforce local monopolies of drug distribution. Interventions in the wage bargain in Chicago such as the governmentally enforced minimum wage, and interventions in the location of economic activity such as zoning, and interventions in consumption such as the war on drugs itself, make such places economic deserts. No factories, no grocery stores, no non-violent incomes.

## 8. How to actually help the poor

Yet we are speaking of a *humane* liberalism. Helping people in a crisis, surely, or raising them up from some grave disadvantage, such as social or economic or physical or mental handicap, by giving help in the form of money to be spent in unprotected markets, is a just role for the government, and is still more admirable for people donating effective help voluntarily on their own. Give the poor in Orleans parish the vouchers for private schools. Give money to the very poor of Chicago to rent a home privately. Turn over your book royalties from *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* to an effective charity.

Yet do not, please, supply schooling or housing directly from the government, because governmental ownership of the means of production, a literal socialism, is usually a bad way to produce anything except, say, national defense (and even then it is commonly done badly and corruptly). Governmental provision makes the poor into serfs of the government, or of the government's good friends the teachers' union in the public schools and the bureaucrats in the public housing authority. The Swedes, whom Americans think are socialists, gave up their government monopoly of pharmacies, which any elderly Swede can tell you were maddeningly arrogant and inefficient.

Liberals 1.0 have a reputation for not being charitable, as being mere apologists for rich people. Not so. Look at what Liberals 1.0 actually do. And anyway the indictment from the left depends on an implausible psychological theory. It supposes that a whole class of political thinkers claim disingenuously that it *does* have the poor in mind, but secretly wants to make the rich even richer. But why would anyone want such an outcome? What would be her motive? Corrupting pay from the corporations? Fellowships from a humane-liberal billionaire? Profitable association with a constitutional liberal professor? Joining the Mont Pelerin Society in order to damage the poor? If that's how psychology works, as a simpleton's version of an economic-and-social Cash Nexus, consider the pay from the government to teachers in government schools and universities, or fellowships from the slow-socialist George Soros or profitable alliance with the leftists Naomi Klein or Jane Mayer or Nancy MacLean. On such a psychological theory they all would be corrupting. But surely not. Instead of making up dark conspiracies posited on childish theories of why people say what they do, let's actually listen to the arguments of our supposed enemies.

Admittedly, a certain strain of conservatives and the more brotherly as against sisterly liberals exhibit just such a lack of sympathy for the disadvantaged. It is too often, I repeat, the attitude of the country club. William Buckley's startling defense back in the 1960s of the tyranny directed at the poor among African-Americans exhibited one version of it. But a lack of concern for the less fortunate of our brethren is by no means intrinsic to humane liberalism. On the contrary. Dr. Adam Smith was much given to acts of secret charity. John D. Rockefeller

gave substantial shares of his income to charity right from his beginnings in Cleveland. On a somewhat smaller scale, I myself supported two homeless people for many years living in my own apartment with me., and tithe at my Episcopal church, which then gives it to the poor. A lack of concern for others is not at all implied by humane liberalism, or by Christian libertarianism, or by neoclassical libertarianism, or by a Liberalism 1.0 of the bleeding heart.

Ayn Rand had here a bad effect, with her masculinist doctrine of selfishness, and her uniformly male, self-absorbed, and reckless heroes in her novels, ever-popular with college freshmen. Especially fresh-men. Senator *Rand* Paul in his run for the Republican presidential nomination in 2016 got disproportionately fewer votes from women than from men. Yet his policies of stopping the drug war against Black and Hispanic families and reducing the flow of body bags filled with Appalachian whites fighting distant wars, like most of his proposals, were the most family-friendly on offer from any candidate, including (in their actual as against their "designed" effects) the proposals from the frankly socialist Bernie Sanders. As for charity, Dr. Paul regularly contributes his skill as an eye surgeon to sight-saving operations in poor countries. I urge Dr./Senator Paul, for the good of our shared humane liberalism, to ditch that misleading "Rand," and change his first name to, say, Adam.

Mainly let people create by themselves a growing economy, as they did spectacularly well from 1800 to the present, as liberalism inspired the masses to devise betterments and to open new enterprises and to move to new jobs. The stunning Great Enrichment of a fully 3,000 percent increase since 1800 in real wages, which was especially important I have noted for the poorest, happened not because of the nudging and protecting and regulating and subsidizing and prohibiting and unionizing and drafting and enslaving by politicians and organizers and bureaucrats and thugs armed with a monopoly of violence. Mostly it happened despite them, by way of an increasingly free people. The government's rare good deeds in the story were the passing of laws to make people free, as in the Civil Rights Acts of 1866 and of 1964 – passed in the interludes between the government's enslaving or re-enslaving or manhandling of people in the Dred Scott decision or Plessy v. Ferguson or the Palmer Raids or Bull Connor's dogs or the deportation of Dreamers.

The Enrichment and its associated liberation, that is, did not arise chiefly from government, beyond its modest role of the prevention of some portion of force and fraud and the few cases of genuine defense from foreign aggression, such as the unsuccessful War of 1812-14 and the successful Pacific War of 1941-45. Yet strangely the economists since around 1848 have mainly made their scientific reputations by proposing this or that pro-governmental "imperfection in the market," to the number of over one hundred imagined, almost all of them proposed without evidence that they matter much to the economy as a whole.<sup>39</sup> Monopoly. Spillovers. Ignorant consumers. The economists have claimed again and again that a brilliant government of philosopher-monarchs, advised by the very economists, can offer simple solutions to the alleged imperfections in supply and demand. Anti-trust. The FDA. Industrial policy. And yet the most important fact about modern economic history, occurring at the very time that the economists were bemoaning our "disgrace with fortune and men's eyes/ Alone beweeeping our outcast state" from the horrible imperfections in the market, was that the wretchedly distorted and imperfect commercially tested betterments were

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<sup>39</sup> McCloskey 2017, again.

delivering a Great Enrichment to the poorest among us of thousands of percent. Some imperfections.

For instance, the governmental choosing of winners in the economy, an industrial policy, is designed to repair the shocking imperfection of foresight in private investment, so obvious to the economists, without the bother of measuring whether the imperfection is actually large or whether the industrial policy actually works. Industrial policy in fact seldom works for our good. Why, in sober common sense, would such choosing of winners work? Why would an official high up in the government, stipulating even that she is equipped with wonderful economic models and is thoroughly ethical, being an extremely bright if recent graduate of Harvard College, know better what would be a good idea to make and sell and buy than some ignorant hillbilly out in the market facing the prices registering the value ordinary people place on goods and services and facing the opportunity cost in their production, and going bankrupt if he chooses badly? Why would it be a good idea to subsidize wind power in advance of a showing that spending on it in fact makes us better off, net of opportunity costs? As the economist Don Lavoie concluded from a detailed study in 1985 of such governmental planning, "any attempt by a single agency to steer an economy constitutes a case of the blind leading the sighted."<sup>40</sup>

The hubris of industrial planning is an old story. An instance was the Europe-wide mercantilism that Adam Smith deprecated. In Sweden the Göta Canal was built 1810-1832 by military conscripts, before Sweden adopted liberalism. It was a singularly ill-advised project, immensely expensive in real costs, eventually used chiefly for a bit of pleasure boating. In the United States in the nineteenth century the "internal improvements" financed by the government were mostly bad ideas (such as canals in Pennsylvania and Indiana started during the 1830s, built like Sweden's on the eve of railways that made most of the canals unprofitable, the longest one being the Wabash and Erie, built at great cost 1832-1853) and were of course corrupted into favors for the few.<sup>41</sup> The tariff became quickly a political football, doing little or nothing for U.S. industrialization.<sup>42</sup> Under the Obama administration the Solyndra fiasco gave away a \$535 million "loan" from the government to subsidize U.S.-made solar panels, promptly undersold by the Chinese. Both big political parties do it. A humane liberal party would not.

## 9. Quit worrying about inequality

Worry not at all about inequality if it is achieved by smart betterment. Such inequality pretty much dissipates within a couple of generations, and often within a couple of years, through the entry of imitating betterments. Meanwhile we poor slobs get the betterments. The imitation of Henry Ford's assembly line or Steve Jobs' smart phone spreads the benefit to us all, soon, in lower prices and higher quality and frenetic, on-going improvements.

Such a result of entry is not hypothetical. It has been the economic history of the world since the beginning, when not blocked — as until 1800 it routinely was blocked — by monopolies supported by the ur-monopolies of governmental violence, and now again increasingly under High Liberalism by the government. The economist William Nordhaus reckons that inventors

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<sup>40</sup> Lavoie 1985, p. 4.

<sup>41</sup> Larson 2001

<sup>42</sup> Irwin 2017, p. 158.

in the U.S. since World War II have kept only 2 percent of the social value of the betterment they produce.<sup>43</sup> Look at your computer. Two percent of the social gain arising from Wal-Mart's early mastery of bar codes and mass purchasing — great betterments compared with the older and worse models of retailing — left a lot of money for the children of Sam and Bud Walton. But the rest of us were left with the 98 percent.

Local fortunes a century ago were built on local banking and local department stores. The banks were protected by government regulations preventing branch banking. By contrast the unregulated department stores were soon imitated, and at length bettered, and anyway their profits eroded from the beginning by rapidly falling transport costs. Sears Roebuck and Montgomery Ward competed with the brick-and-mortar general store charging high prices, shipping the new mail orders at low prices, as Amazon is doing again a century on. United States Steel's share in national sales by all American steel companies attained its highest level, fully two thirds, on the day it was founded in 1901. The share fell steadily thereafter, with Bethlehem and other companies entering. Look at the thirty companies in the Dow-Jones industrial average. Only five of the thirty date from before the 1970s. The twenty-five others have been replaced by such "industrials" as Visa and Verizon and Coca Cola.

The sheer passage of human generations works, too. How many rich Carnegies have you heard of? Andrew might have made his daughter and her four children and their children, or for that matter his cousins back in Scotland, fabulously wealthy, down to the fourth generation and beyond. But he didn't. Instead he built the library in Wakefield, Massachusetts in which I found and devoured at age fifteen Prince Peter Kropotkin's anti-capitalist anarchist classic, *Mutual Aid* (1902). If you want to see how the dissipation of wealth through families works, look at the Wikipedia entry for "Vanderbilt Family," noting that old Cornelius (1794-1877), the richest American at the time, had thirteen children (pity Mrs. Sophia Johnson Vanderbilt). His great-great-granddaughter, Gloria Vanderbilt (born 1924), made her own money, by providing goods and services that people were willing to pay for. Her son Anderson Cooper of CNN does, too.

But you should indeed worry about inequality if it is achieved by using the government to get protection for favored groups. It is what a large government, worth capturing to get the protection, is mainly used for, to the detriment of most of the people off-stage. We humane liberals agree with the slow socialists about the evil of an inequality caused by rent seeking, that is, using the powers of the government to extract profitable favors for, say, big oil companies. But we liberals are then startled that our friends the slow socialists advocate. . . well . . . giving still more power of extraction to the same government. Put the fox in charge of the hen house, they cry. Surely Mr. Fox is a good and honest civil servant.

Guilds with governmental protection such as the American Medical Association, and government regulations in building codes to favor plumbers, obviously protect the well-off, who in turn fund the politicians enforcing the guilds and regulations. Neat. How many Huey and Earl and other Longs have dominated Louisiana politics since the 1920s? Look at Wikipedia for that one, too. Such inherited political power allied to corruption is ancient. Political candidates in the late Roman Republic routinely bought votes, and anyway the rich of Rome had more power in the system of voting itself. There is nothing new about politicians and businesspeople and billionaires buying Congress for special protection, and

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<sup>43</sup> Nordhaus 2004.

gerrymandering the voting system to boot. Mark Twain said "It could probably be shown by facts and figures that there is no distinctly American criminal class except Congress." Better keep it under parole.

## 10. The great challenges

Understand that the greatest challenges facing humankind are *not* terrorism or inequality or crime or population growth or climate change or slowing productivity or recreational drugs or the breakdown of family values or whatever new pessimism our friends on the left or right will come up with next, about which they will write urgent editorials until the next "challenge" justifying more governmental coercion swims into their ken.

The greatest challenges have always been poverty and tyranny, which have their cause and their effect through the governmental violence of not allowing ordinary people to have a go. The use of the word "liberal" is a language game, but not therefore "mere."<sup>44</sup> It has consequences, in allowing or not allowing people to have a go. If you eliminate poverty through liberal economic growth, as China and India are doing nowadays, and as did the pioneering instances of liberalism back to Holland during the seventeenth century, you will get equality of real comfort, the educating of engineers to control flooding (and latterly to lessen global warming), and the educating of us all for lives of flourishing. If you eliminate tyranny, replacing it with liberalism 1.0, you will get the rise of liberty for slaves and women and the handicapped, and then still more fruits of the Great Enrichment, as more and more people are liberated to seek out commercially tested betterments. You will get stunning cultural enrichments, the end of terrorism, the fall of the remaining tyrants, and riches for all.

How do I know? Because it happened in northwestern Europe gradually from the seventeenth century on, accelerating after 1800, and now happening at a headlong pace in large parts of the globe. It can happen soon everywhere. World real income per head, corrected for inflation and purchasing power parity, grew from 1990 to 2016 at about 2 percent per year. At such rates (and all the more at the 4.5 percent of India or the 8.6 percent of China), income per person will double every 36 years. In three generations it will quadruple, pulling the wretched of the earth out of wretchedness.

By contrast, keep on with various versions of old fashioned kingship, or with slow or fast socialism, with their betterment-killing policies protecting the favored classes, especially the rich or the Party or the cousins, Bad King John or Robin Hood – in its worst forms a military socialism or a tribal tyranny, in its best a stifling regulation of new cancer drugs – and you get the grinding routine of human tyranny and poverty. The agenda of humane liberalism, ranged against tyranny and poverty, is achieving human flourishing in the way it has always been achieved. Let my people go. Let ordinary people have a go. Stop pushing people around.

I realize that you will find many of the items we humane liberals propose hard to swallow. You've been told by our progressive friends that we need to have policies and programs and regulations or the sky will fall. And you've been told by the conservative side that we need anyway to occupy and govern by the gun all sorts of communities of poor people, among them the lesser breeds without the law east and west of Suez out of the 800 American military bases worldwide. You may view as shocking the contrary proposals to let people be

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<sup>44</sup> Skinner 1969, esp. p. 37



wholly free to flourish in a liberal economy – right-wing madness, you will say, enriching the rich; or left-wing madness, leading to chaos. You will say from the left that liberalism has allowed monopoly to increase. (It has not. Illiberalism has, when captured regulators of taxicabs and power companies could get away with it – although monopoly in fact has been dramatically reduced since 1800 by liberty of movement and by free trade, by the railway and the telephone and the internet.<sup>45</sup>) You will say from the right that liberalism has allowed terrorism to increase. (It has not. Illiberalism has – although in fact terrorism in the West has *declined* rapidly in the past few decades.<sup>46</sup>) If you cannot actually think of any fact-based arguments against a humane liberalism, you will assert anyway with a sneer that it is impractical, out of date, old-fashioned, nineteenth-century, a dead parrot. (It is not. The illiberal national socialism practiced by most governments is.)

But you owe it to the seriousness of your political ideas, my dear misled friends, to listen a little, and to consider. Lavoie noted "the impossibility of refuting a theory without first trying to see the world through its lenses."<sup>47</sup> Try out the lenses, too.

## 11. Liberal essays

I have revised the essays that follow to clear out repetitions, unless they are good repetitions. To make a consecutive reading smoother I've arranged the essays into a moderately coherent argument, the skeleton of which you can discern by reading slowly through the table of contents. But the book was not through-written. The trilogy *The Bourgeois Era* [2006, 2010, 2016] was so written, as was the book by Art Carden and me [2018] written as a popular and airport-book-stall version of the trilogy, *Leave Me Alone and I'll Make You Rich and Wise: How the Bourgeois Deal Enriched the World*. (All are available on amazon.com. Cheap.) The present book, on an explicitly political theme (though it uses some of the facts and argument in the other books), is a collection of previously published essays. Part of the thrilling drama here is watching the rather obvious ideas seep into my slow-thinking mind, during my mad, program-less life from my 50s on, changing gender, becoming a Christian, embarking on explaining the nature and causes of the wealth of nations, seeing the eighteenth-century light.

My historical and political ideas about liberalism, developing piecemeal over the past two decades, have found varied expression. Consequently the prose is not uniform in tone, though I've edited it here and there to approach uniformity. The essays are "occasional," that is, occasioned by this or that invitation to sound off. They range from popular journalism, in such similar outlets as *The New York Times* and *The New York Post*, to academic pieces defending what I'm trying to persuade you are the foundations of a free society. In other words, each essay has its own little arc of argument, and often its own style, about political philosophy, or gay rights, or economic history, or economic growth, or Thomas Piketty. To imagine the occasion, the beginning of each provides a few sentences of context.

Disparate though they are in occasion, the essays point repeatedly to a single theme, namely, the continuing desirability of the liberalism born in the eighteenth century (so original am I), an idea slowly implemented, with many false turns, after 1776. And the essays exhibit

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<sup>45</sup> McCloskey 2017 yet again.

<sup>46</sup> Mueller 2006.

<sup>47</sup> Lavoie 1985, p. 8.

my realization, which arrived in 2005 or so, that the *rhetorical* implementation explains most of the good features of the modern world – its economic success and its arts and sciences, and especially its consequent liberations.

It is an optimistic book, piercing the sky-is-falling gloom which seems always to command a ready market and which is routinely re-used by populists and other tyrants to justify their tyrannies, and anyway is used even by good-hearted slow socialists and moderate conservatives to push people around. . . by first absolutely terrifying them. Terrorism works with more than guns and bombs.

On the contrary, we are *not* doomed by the New Challenges. If we can avoid shooting ourselves in the feet – such shooting is a lively possibility, since we have done it before, by way of traditionalism and nationalism and socialism and national socialism – we will rejoice over the next fifty or a hundred years in the enrichment through humane liberalism of the now-poor, a permanent liberation of the miserable, and a cultural explosion in arts and sciences and crafts and entertainments beyond compare.

I try to be even-handed, and try not to preach too much to the choir. My motto was articulated in 1983 by the philosopher and anthropologist Amélie Oksenberg Rorty. "What is crucial is "our ability to engage in continuous conversation, testing one another, discovering our hidden presuppositions, changing our minds because we have listened to the voices of our fellows. Lunatics also change their minds, but their minds change with the tides of the moon and not because they have listened, really listened, to their friends' questions and objections" (Rorty 1983, p. 562).

Rorty's is a lofty standard, which I apologize for not always attaining. But we can agree that it is a standard to be aimed at – as against resting comfortably in our sneering and dogmatism and party passion and Russian disinformation campaigns. The point here is to convert you to a humane liberalism, which you probably harbor anyway. You don't *really* love pushing people around with a prison-industrial complex or with collateral damage from drone strikes, do you? I'll bet not. Yet I try to listen, really listen, to your questions and objections. To that end, for example, the book includes a few interviews by journalists giving voice to the well-intentioned but often illiberal objections you imagine you have to a free society.

You will judge the degree of success. I urge you to reconsider. I want you to become less self-satisfied in your progressivism or your conservatism or even your amiable middle-of-the-road-ism. I want you to realize that they all depend to a greater or lesser degree on an exercise of the monopoly of violence. I want you to come to rely on sweet talk, liberal rhetoric, peaceful exchange. I want you above all to become much less certain than you are now that The Problem is "capitalism" or the Enlightenment, or that liberty can be Taken Too Far, or that government programs, protections, regulations, and prohibitions are usually innocent exercises by wise bureaucrats to better the lives of Americans.

With an open mind and a generous heart, my dears, you will tilt towards a humane real liberalism, 1.0. Welcome, then, to a society held together by sweet talk rather than by violence.