Force and Opinion

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In his study of the Scottish intellectual tradition, George Davie identifies its central theme as a recognition of the fundamental role of "*natural beliefs* or principles of common sense, such as the belief in an independent external world, the belief in causality, the belief in ideal standards, and the belief in the self of conscience as separate from the rest of one." These principles are sometimes considered to have a regulative character; though never fully justified, they provide the foundations for thought and conception. Some held that they contain "an irreducible element of mystery," Davie points out, while others hoped to provide a rational foundation for them. On that issue, the jury is still out.

We can trace such ideas to 17th century thinkers who reacted to the skeptical crisis of the times by recognizing that there are no absolutely certain grounds for knowledge, but that we do, nevertheless, have ways to gain a reliable understanding of the world and to improve that understanding and apply it — essentially the standpoint of the working scientist today. Similarly, in normal life a reasonable person relies on the natural beliefs of common sense while recognizing that they may be parochial or misguided, and hoping to refine or alter them as understanding progresses.

Davie credits David Hume with providing this particular cast to Scottish philosophy, and more generally, having taught philosophy the proper questions to ask. One puzzle that Hume posed is particularly pertinent today. In considering the First Principles of Government, Hume found "nothing more surprising" than "to see the easiness with which the many are governed by the few; and to observe the implicit submission with which men resign their own sentiments and passions to those of their rulers. When we enquire by what means this wonder is brought about, we shall find, that as Force is always on the side of the governed, the governors have nothing to support them but opinion. 'Tis therefore, on opinion only that government is founded; and this maxim extends to the most despotic and most military governments, as well as to the most free and most popular."

Hume was an astute observer, and his paradox of government is much to the point. His insight explains why elites are so dedicated to indoctrination and thought control, a major and largely neglected theme of modern history. "The public must be put in its place," Walter Lippmann wrote, so that we may "live free of the trampling and the roar of a bewildered herd," whose "function" is to be "interested spectators of action," not participants. And if the state lacks the force to coerce and the voice of the people can be heard, it is necessary to ensure that that voice says the right thing, as respected intellectuals have been advising for many years.

Hume's observation raises a number of questions. One dubious feature is the idea that force is on the side of the governed. Reality is more grim. A good part of human history supports the contrary thesis put forth a century earlier by advocates of the rule of Parliament against the King, but more significantly against the people: that "the power of the Sword is, and ever hath been, the Foundation of all Titles to Government." Force also has more subtle modes, including an array of costs well short of overt violence that attach to refusal to submit. Nevertheless, Hume's paradox is real. Even despotic rule is commonly founded on a measure of consent, and the abdication of rights is the hallmark of more free societies — a fact that calls for analysis.

The Harsher Side

The harsher side of the truth is highlighted by the fate of the popular movements of the past decade. In the Soviet satellites, the governors had ruled by force, not opinion. When force was withdrawn, the fragile tyrannies quickly collapsed, for the most part with little bloodshed. These remarkable successes have elicited some euphoria about the power of "love, tolerance, nonviolence, the human spirit, and forgiveness," Vaclav Havel's explanation for the failure of the police and military to crush the Czech uprising. The thought is comforting, but illusory, as even the most cursory look at history reveals. The crucial factor is not some novel form of love and nonviolence; no new ground was broken here. Rather, it was the withdrawal of Soviet force, and the collapse of the structures of coercion based upon it. Those who believe otherwise may turn for guidance to the ghost of Archbishop Romero and countless others who have tried to confront unyielding terror with the human spirit.

The recent events of Eastern and Central Europe are a sharp departure from the historical norm. Throughout modern history, popular forces motivated by radical democratic ideals have sought to combat autocratic rule. Sometimes they have been able to expand the realms of freedom and justice before being brought to heel. Often they are simply crushed. But it is hard to think of another case when established power simply withdrew in the face of a popular challenge. No less remarkable is the behavior of the reigning superpower, which not only did not bar these developments by force as in the past, but even encouraged them, alongside of significant internal changes.

The historical norm is illustrated by the dramatically contrasting case of Central America, where any popular effort to overthrow the brutal tyrannies of the oligarchy and the military is met with murderous force, supported or directly organized by the ruler of the hemisphere. Ten years ago, there were signs of hope for an end to the dark ages of terror and misery, with the rise of self-help groups, unions, peasant associations, Christian base communities, and other popular organizations that might have led the way to democracy and social reform. This prospect elicited a stern response by the United States and its clients, generally supported by its European allies, with a campaign of slaughter, torture, and general barbarism that left societies "affected by terror and panic," "collective intimidation and generalized fear" and "internalized acceptance of the terror," in the words of a Church-based Salvadoran human rights organization. Early efforts in Nicaragua to direct resources to the poor majority impelled Washington to economic and ideological warfare, and outright terror, to punish these transgressions by destroying the economy and social life.

Enlightened Western opinion regards such consequences as a success insofar as the challenge to power and privilege is rebuffed and the targets are properly chosen: killing prominent priests in public view is not clever, but rural activists and union leaders are fair game — and of course peasants, Indians, students, and other low-life generally. Shortly after the murder of the Jesuit priests in El Salvador in November 1989, the wires carried a story by AP correspondent Douglas Grant Mine entitled "Second Salvador Massacre, but of Common Folk," reporting how soldiers entered a working class neighborhood, captured six men, lined them up against a wall and murdered them, adding a 14-year-old boy for good measure. They "were not priests or human rights campaigners," Mine wrote, "so their deaths have gone largely unnoticed" — as did his story, which was buried.

"The same week the Jesuits were killed," Central America correspondent Alan Nairn writes, "at least 28 other civilians were murdered in similar fashion. Among them were the head of the water works union, the leader of the organization of university women, nine members of an Indian farming cooperative, ten university students,…. Moreover, serious investigation of the Salvadoran murders leads directly to Washington's doorstep." All "absolutely appropriate," hence unworthy of mention or concern. So the story continues, week after grisly week.

The comparison between the Soviet and U.S. domains is a commonplace outside of culturally deprived sectors of the West, as illustrated in earlier Z articles. Guatemalan journalist Julio Godoy, who fled when his newspaper, La Epoca, was blown up by state terrorists (an operation that aroused no interest in the United States; it was not reported, though well-known), writes that Eastern Europeans are, "in a way, luckier than Central Americans": "while the Moscow-imposed government in Prague would degrade and humiliate reformers, the Washington-made government in Guatemala would kill them. It still does, in a virtual genocide that has taken more than 150,000 victims… [in what Amnesty International calls] a 'government program of political murder'." That, he suggested, is "the main explanation for the fearless character of the students' recent uprising in Prague: the Czechoslovak Army doesn't shoot to kill…. In Guatemala, not to mention El Salvador, random terror is used to keep unions and peasant associations from seeking their own way" — and to ensure that the press conforms, or disappears, so that Western liberals need not fret over censorship in the "fledgling democracies" they applaud.

Godoy quotes a European diplomat who says, "as long as the Americans don't change their attitude towards the region, there's no space here for the truth or for hope." Surely no space for nonviolence and love.

One will search far to find such truisms in U.S. commentary, or the West in general, which much prefers largely meaningless (though self-flattering) comparisons between Eastern and Western Europe. Nor is the hideous catastrophe of capitalism in the past years a major theme of contemporary discourse, a catastrophe that is dramatic in Latin America and other domains of the industrial West, in the "internal Third World" of the United States, and the "exported slums" of Europe. Nor are we likely to find much attention to the fact, hard to ignore, that the economic success stories typically involve coordination of the state and financial-industrial conglomerates, another sign of the collapse of capitalism in the past 60 years. It is only the Third World that is to be subjected to the destructive forces of free market capitalism, so that it can be more efficiently robbed and exploited by the powerful.

Central America represents the historical norm, not Eastern Europe. Hume's observation requires this correction. Recognizing that, it remains true, and important, that government is typically founded on modes of submission short of force, even where force is available as a last resort.

The Bewildered Herd And Its Shepherds

In the contemporary period, Hume's insight has been revived and elaborated, but with a crucial innovation: control of thought is *more* important for governments that are free and popular than for despotic and military states. The logic is straightforward. A despotic state can control its domestic enemy by force, but as the state loses this weapon, other devices are required to prevent

the ignorant masses from interfering with public affairs, which are none of their business. These prominent features of modern political and intellectual culture merit a closer look.

The problem of "putting the public in its place" came to the fore with what one historian calls "the first great outburst of democratic thought in history," the English revolution of the 17th century. This awakening of the general populace raised the problem of how to contain the threat.

The libertarian ideas of the radical democrats were considered outrageous by respectable people. They favored universal education, guaranteed health care, and democratization of the law, which one described as a fox, with poor men the geese: "he pulls off their feathers and feeds upon them." They developed a kind of "liberation theology" which, as one critic ominously observed, preached "seditious doctrine to the people" and aimed "to raise the rascal multitude…against all men of best quality in the kingdom, to draw them into associations and combinations with one another…against all lords, gentry, ministers, lawyers, rich and peaceable men" (historian Clement Walker). Particularly frightening were the itinerant workers and preachers calling for freedom and democracy, the agitators stirring up the rascal multitude, and the printers putting out pamphlets questioning authority and its mysteries. "There can be no form of government without its proper mysteries," Walker warned, mysteries that must be "concealed" from the common folk: "Ignorance, and admiration arising from ignorance, are the parents of civil devotion and obedience," a thought echoed by Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor. The radical democrats had "cast all the mysteries and secrets of government…before the vulgar (like pearls before swine)," he continued, and have "made the people thereby so curious and so arrogant that they will never find humility enough to submit to a civil rule." It is dangerous, another commentator ominously observed, to "have a people know their own strength." The rabble did not want to be ruled by King or Parliament, but "by countrymen like ourselves, that know our wants." Their pamphlets explained further that "It will never be a good world while knights and gentlemen make us laws, that are chosen for fear and do but oppress us, and do not know the people's sores."

These ideas naturally appalled the men of best quality. They were willing to grant the people rights, but within reason, and on the principle that "when we mention the people, we do not mean the confused promiscuous body of the people." After the democrats had been defeated, John Locke commented that "day-labourers and tradesmen, the spinsters and dairymaids" must be told what to believe: "The greatest part cannot know and therefore they must believe."

Like John Milton and other civil libertarians of the period, Locke held a sharply limited conception of freedom of expression. His Fundamental Constitution of Carolina barred those who "speak anything in their religious assembly irreverently or seditiously of the government or governors, or of state matters." The constitution guaranteed freedom for "speculative opinions in religion," but not for political opinions. "Locke would not even have permitted people to discuss public affairs," Leonard Levy observes. The constitution provided further that "all manner of comments and expositions on any part of these constitutions, or on any part of the common or statute laws of Carolines, are absolutely prohibited." In drafting reasons for Parliament to terminate censorship in 1694, Locke offered no defense of freedom of expression or thought, but only considerations of expediency and harm to commercial interests. With the threat of democracy overcome and the libertarian rabble dispersed, censorship was permitted to lapse in England, because the "opinion-formers…censored themselves. Nothing got into print which frightened the men of property," Christopher Hill comments. In a well-functioning state capitalist democracy like the United States, what might frighten the men of property is generally kept far from the public eye — sometimes, with quite astonishing success.

Such ideas have ample resonance until today, including Locke's stern doctrine that the common people should be denied the right even to discuss public affairs. This doctrine remains a basic principle of modern democratic states, now implemented by a variety of means to protect the operations of the state from public scrutiny: classification of documents on the largely fraudulent pretext of national security, clandestine operations, and other measures to bar the rascal multitude from the political arena. Such devices typically gain new force under the regime of statist reactionaries of the Reagan-Thatcher variety. The same ideas frame the essential professional task and responsibility of the intellectual community: to shape the perceived historical record and the picture of the contemporary world in the interests of the powerful, thus ensuring that the public keeps to its place and function, properly bewildered.

In the 1650s, supporters of Parliament and the army against the people easily proved that the rabble could not be trusted. This was shown by their lingering monarchist sentiments and their reluctance to place their affairs in the hands of the gentry and the army, who were "truly the people," though the people in their foolishness did not agree. The mass of the people are a "giddy multitude," "beasts in men's shapes." It is proper to suppress them, just as it is proper "to save the life of a lunatique or distracted person even against his will." If the people are so "depraved and corrupt" as to "confer places of power and trust upon wicked and undeserving men, they forfeit their power in this behalf unto those that are good, though but a few."

The good and few may be the gentry or industrialists, or the vanguard Party and the Central Committee, or the intellectuals who qualify as "experts" because they articulate the consensus of the powerful (to paraphrase one of Henry Kissinger's insights). They manage the business empires, ideological institutions, and political structures, or serve them at various levels. Their task is to shepherd the bewildered herd and keep the giddy multitude in a state of implicit submission, and thus to bar the dread prospect of freedom and self-determination.

Similar ideas have been forged as the Spanish explorers set about what Tzvetan Todorov calls "the greatest genocide in human history" after they "discovered America" 500 years ago. They justified their acts of terror and oppression on the grounds that the natives are not "capable of governing themselves any more than madmen or even wild beasts and animals, seeing that their food is not any more agreeable and scarcely better than that of wild beasts" and their stupidity "is much greater than that of children and madmen in other countries" (professor and theologian Francisco de Vitoria, "one of the pinnacles of Spanish humanism in the sixteenth century"). Therefore, intervention is legitimate "in order to exercise the rights of guardianship," Todorov comments, summarizing de Vitoria's basic thought.

When English savages took over the task a few years later, they naturally adopted the same pose while taming the wolves in the guise of men, as George Washington described the objects that stood in the way of the advance of civilization and had to be eliminated for their own good. The English colonists had already handled the Celtic "wild men" the same way, for example, when Lord Cumberland, known as "the butcher," laid waste to the Scottish highlands before moving on to pursue his craft in North America.

One hundred and fifty years later, their descendants had purged North America of this native blight, reducing the lunatics from 10 million to 200,000 according to some recent estimates, and they turned their eyes elsewhere, to civilize the wild beasts in the Philippines. The Indian fighters to whom President McKinley assigned the task of "Christianizing" and "uplifting" these unfortunate creatures rid the liberated islands of hundreds of thousands of them, accelerating their ascent to heaven. They too were rescuing "misguided creatures" from their depravity by

"slaughtering the natives in English fashion," as the New York described their painful responsibility, adding that we must take "what muddy glory lies in the wholesale killing til they have learned to respect our arms," then moving on to "the more difficult task of getting them to respect our intentions."

This is pretty much the course of history, as the plague of European civilization devastated much of the world.

On the home front, the continuing problem was formulated plainly by the 17th century political thinker Marchamont Nedham. The proposals of the radical democrats, he wrote, would result in "ignorant Persons, neither of Learning nor Fortune, being put in Authority." Given their freedom, the "self-opinionated multitude" would elect "the *lowest of the People*" who would occupy themselves with "Milking and Gelding the Purses of the Rich," taking "the ready Road to all licentiousness, mischief, mere Anarchy and Confusion." These sentiments are the common coin of modern political and intellectual discourse; increasingly so as popular struggles did succeed, over the centuries, in realizing the proposals of the radical democrats, so that ever more sophisticated means had to be devised to reduce their substantive content.

Such problems regularly arise in periods of turmoil and social conflict. After the American revolution, rebellious and independent farmers had to be taught by force that the ideals expressed in the pamphlets of 1776 were not to be taken seriously. The common people were not to be represented by countrymen like themselves, that know the people's sores, but by gentry, merchants, lawyers, and others who hold or serve private power. Jefferson and Madison believed that power should be in the hands of the "natural aristocracy," Edmund Morgan comments, "men like themselves" who would defend property rights against Hamilton's "paper aristocracy" and from the poor; they "regarded slaves, paupers, and destitute laborers as an ever-present danger to liberty as well as property." The reigning doctrine, expressed by the Founding Fathers, is that "the people who own the country ought to govern it" (John Jay). The rise of corporations in the 19th century, and the legal structures devised to grant them dominance over private and public life, established the victory of the Federalist opponents of popular democracy in a new and powerful form.

Not infrequently, revolutionary struggles pit aspirants to power against one another though united in opposition to radical democratic tendencies among the common people. Lenin and Trotsky, shortly after seizing state power in 1917, moved to dismantle organs of popular control, including factory councils and Soviets, thus proceeding to deter and overcome socialist tendencies. An orthodox Marxist, Lenin did not regard socialism as a viable option in this backward and underdeveloped country; until his last days, it remained for him an "elementary truth of Marxism, that the victory of socialism requires the joint efforts of workers in a number of advanced countries," Germany in particular. In what has always seemed to me his greatest work, George Orwell described a similar process in Spain, where the Fascists, Communists, and liberal democracies were united in opposition to the libertarian revolution that swept over much of the country, turning to the conflict over the spoils only when popular forces were safely suppressed. There are many examples, often influenced by great power violence.

This is particularly true in the Third World. A persistent concern of Western elites is that popular organizations might lay the basis for meaningful democracy and social reform, threatening the prerogatives of the privileged. Those who seek "to raise the rascal multitude" and "draw them into associations and combinations with one another" against "the men of best quality" must, therefore, be repressed or eliminated. It comes as no surprise that Archbishop Romero should be assassinated shortly after urging President Carter to withhold military aid from the governing

junta, which, he warned, will use it to "sharpen injustice and repression against the people's organizations" struggling "for respect for their most basic human rights."

The threat of popular organization to privilege is real enough in itself. Worse still, "the rot may spread," in the terminology of political elites; there may be a demonstration effect of independent development in a form that attends to the people's sores. Internal documents and even the public record reveal that a driving concern of U.S. planners has been the fear that the "virus" might spread, "infecting" regions beyond.

This concern breaks no new ground. European statesmen had feared that the American revolution might "lend new strength to the apostles of sedition" (Metternich), and might spread "the contagion and the invasion of vicious principles" such as "the pernicious doctrines of republicanism and popular selfrule," one of the Czar's diplomats warned. A century later, the cast of characters was reversed. Woodrow Wilson's Secretary of State Robert Lansing feared that if the Bolshevik disease were to spread, it would leave the "ignorant and incapable mass of humanity dominant in the earth"; the Bolsheviks, he continued, were appealing "to the proletariat of all countries, to the ignorant and mentally deficient, who by their numbers are urged to become masters, …a very real danger in view of the process of social unrest throughout the world." Again it is democracy that is the awesome threat. When soldiers and workers councils made a brief appearance in Germany, Wilson feared that they would inspire dangerous thoughts among "the American negro [soldiers] returning from abroad." Already, he had heard, negro laundresses were demanding more than the going wage, saying that "money is as much mine as it is yours." Businessmen might have to adjust to having workers on their boards of directors, he feared, among other disasters, if the Bolshevik virus were not exterminated.

With these dire consequences in mind, the Western invasion of the Soviet Union was justified on defensive grounds, against "the Revolution's challenge…to the very survival of the capitalist order" (John Lewis Gaddis). And it was only natural that the defense of the United States should extend from invasion of the Soviet Union to Wilson's Red Scare at home. As Lansing explained, force must be used to prevent "the leaders of Bolshevism and anarchy" from proceeding to "organize or preach against government in the United States"; the government must not permit "these fanatics to enjoy the liberty which they now seek to destroy." The repression launched by the Wilson administration successfully undermined democratic politics, unions, freedom of the press, and independent thought, in the interests of corporate power and the state authorities who represented its interests, all with the general approval of the media and elites generally, all in self-defense against the "ignorant and mentally deficient" majority. Much the same story was re-enacted after World War II, again under the pretext of a Soviet threat, in reality, to restore submission to the rulers.

When political life and independent thought revived in the 1960s, the problem arose again, and the reaction was the same. The Trilateral Commission, bringing together liberal elites from Europe, Japan, and the United States, warned of an impending "crisis of democracy" as segments of the public sought to enter the political arena. This "excess of democracy" was posing a threat to the unhampered rule of privileged elites — what is called "democracy" in political theology. The problem was the usual one: the rabble were trying to manage their own affairs, gaining control over their communities and pressing their political demands. There were organizing efforts among young people, ethnic minorities, women, social activists, and others, encouraged by the struggles of benighted masses elsewhere for freedom and independence. More "moderation in democracy" would be required, the Commission concluded, perhaps a return to the days when

"Truman had been able to govern the country with the cooperation of a relatively small number of Wall Street lawyers and bankers," as the American rapporteur commented.

The fears expressed by the men of best quality in the 17th century have become a major theme of intellectual discourse, corporate practice, and the academic social sciences. They were expressed by the influential moralist and foreign affairs adviser Reinhold Niebuhr, who was revered by George Kennan, the Kennedy intellectuals, and many others. He wrote that "rationality belongs to the cool observers" while the common person follows not reason but faith. The cool observers, he explained, must recognize "the stupidity of the average man," and must provide the "necessary illusion" and the "emotionally potent oversimplifications" that will keep the naive simpletons on course. As in 1650, it remains necessary to protect the "lunatic or distracted person," the ignorant rabble, from their own "depraved and corrupt" judgments, just as one does not allow a child to cross the street without supervision.

In accordance with the prevailing conceptions, there is no infringement of democracy if a few corporations control the information system: in fact, that is the essence of democracy. The leading figure of the public relations industry, Edward Bernays, explained that "the very essence of the democratic process" is "the freedom to persuade and suggest," what he calls "the engineering of consent." If the freedom to persuade happens to be concentrated in a few hands, we must recognize that such is the nature of a free society.

Bernays expressed the basic point in a public relations manual of 1928: "The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society… It is the intelligent minorities which need to make use of propaganda continuously and systematically." Given its enormous and decisive power, the highly class conscious business community of the United States has been able to put these lessons to effective use. Bernays' advocacy of propaganda is cited by Thomas McCann, head of public relations for the United Fruit Company, for which Bernays provided signal service in preparing the ground for the overthrow of Guatemalan democracy in 1954, a major triumph of business propaganda with the willing compliance of the media.

The intelligent minorities have long understood this to be their function. Walter Lippmann described a "revolution" in "the practice of democracy" as "the manufacture of consent" has become "a self-conscious art and a regular organ of popular government." This is a natural development when public opinion cannot be trusted: "In the absence of institutions and education by which the environment is so successfully reported that the realities of public life stand out very sharply against self-centered opinion, the common interests very largely elude public opinion entirely, and can be managed only by a specialized class whose personal interests reach beyond the locality," and are thus able to perceive "the realities." These are the men of best quality, who alone are capable of social and economic management.

It follows that two political roles must be clearly distinguished, Lippmann goes on to explain. First, there is the role assigned to the specialized class, the "insiders," the "responsible men," who have access to information and understanding. Ideally, they should have a special education for public office, and should master the criteria for solving the problems of society: "In the degree to which these criteria can be made exact and objective, political decision," which is their domain, "is actually brought into relation with the interests of men." The "public men" are, furthermore, to "lead opinion" and take the responsibility for "the formation of a sound public opinion." "They initiate, they administer, they settle," and should be protected from "ignorant and meddlesome outsiders," the general public, who are incapable of dealing "with the substance of the problem."

The criteria we apply to government are success in satisfying material and cultural wants, not whether "it vibrates to the self-centered opinions that happen to be floating in men's minds." Having mastered the criteria for political decision, the specialized class, protected from public meddling, will serve the public interest — what is called "the national interest" in the webs of mystification spun by the academic social sciences and political commentary.

The second role is "the task of the public," which is much more limited. It is not for the public, Lippmann observes, to "pass judgment on the intrinsic merits" of an issue or to offer analysis or solutions, but merely, on occasion, to place "its force at the disposal" of one or another group of "responsible men." The public "does not reason, investigate, invent, persuade, bargain, or settle." Rather, "the public acts only by aligning itself as the partisan of someone in a position to act executively," once he has given the matter at hand sober and disinterested thought. It is for this reason that "the public must be put in its place." The bewildered herd, trampling and roaring, "has its function": to be "the interested spectators of action," not participants. Participation is the duty of "the responsible man."

These ideas, described by Lippmann's editors as a progressive "political philosophy for liberal democracy," have an unmistakeable resemblance to the Leninist concept of a vanguard party that leads the masses to a better life that they cannot conceive or construct on their own. In fact, the transition from one position to the other, from Leninist enthusiasm to "celebration of America," has proven quite an easy one over the years. This is not surprising, since the doctrines are similar at their root. The critical difference lies in an assessment of the prospects for power: through exploitation of mass popular struggle, or service to the current masters.

There is, clearly enough, an unspoken assumption behind the proposals of Lippmann and others: the specialized class are offered the opportunity to manage public affairs by virtue of their subordination to those with real power — in our societies, dominant business interests — a crucial fact that is ignored in the self-praise of the elect.

Lippmann's thinking on these matters dates from shortly after World War I, when the liberal intellectual community was much impressed with its success in serving as "the faithful and helpful interpreters of what seems to be one of the greatest enterprises ever undertaken by an American president" (New Republic). The enterprise was Woodrow Wilson's interpretation of his electoral mandate for "peace without victory" as the occasion for pursuing victory without peace, with the assistance of the liberal intellectuals, who later praised themselves for having "impose[d] their will upon a reluctant or indifferent majority," with the aid of propaganda fabrications about Hun atrocities and other such devices. They were serving, often unwittingly, as instruments of the British Ministry of Information, which secretly defined its task as "to direct the thought of most of the world."

Fifteen years later, the influential political scientist Harold Lasswell explained in the Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences that when elites lack the requisite force to compel obedience, social managers must turn to "a whole new technique of control, largely through propaganda." He added the conventional justification: we must recognize the "ignorance and stupidity [of] …the masses" and not succumb to "democratic dogmatisms about men being the best judges of their own interests." They are not, and we must control them, for their own good. The same principle guides the business community. Others have developed similar ideas, and put them into practice in the ideological institutions: the schools, the universities, the popular media, the elite journals, and so on. A challenge to these ideas arouses trepidation, sometimes fury, as when students of the 1960s, instead of simply bowing to authority, began to ask too many questions and to

explore beyond the bounds established for them. The pretense of manning the ramparts against the onslaught of the barbarians, now a popular pose, is scarcely more than comical fraud.

The doctrines of Lippmann, Lasswell, and others are entirely natural in any society in which power is narrowly concentrated but formal mechanisms exist by which ordinary people may, in theory, play some role in shaping their own affairs — a threat that plainly must be barred.

The techniques of manufacture of consent are most finely honed in the United States, a more advanced business-run society than its allies and one that is in important ways more free than elsewhere, so that the ignorant and stupid masses are more dangerous. But the same concerns arise in Europe, as in the past, heightened by the fact that the European varieties of state capitalism have not yet progressed as far as the United States in eliminating labor unions and other impediments to rule by men (and occasionally women) of best quality, thus restricting politics to factions of the business party. The basic problem, recognized throughout, is that as the state loses the capacity to control the population by force, privileged sectors must find other methods to ensure that the rascal multitude is removed from the public arena. And the insignificant nations must be subjected to the same practices as the insignificant people. Liberal doves hold that others should be free and independent, but not free to choose in ways that we regard as unwise or contrary to our interests, a close counterpart to the prevailing conception of democracy at home as a form of population control.

A properly functioning system of indoctrination has a variety of tasks, some rather delicate. One of its targets is the stupid and ignorant masses. They must be kept that way, diverted with emotionally potent oversimplifications, marginalized, and isolated. Ideally, each person should be alone in front of the TV screen watching sports, soap operas, or comedies, deprived of organizational structures that permit individuals lacking resources to discover what they think and believe in interaction with others, to formulate their own concerns and programs, and to act to realize them. They can then be permitted, even encouraged, to ratify the decisions of their betters in periodic elections. The rascal multitude are the proper targets of the mass media and a public education system geared to obedience and training in needed skills, including the skill of repeating patriotic slogans on timely occasions.

For submissiveness to become a reliable trait, it must be entrenched in every realm. The public are to be observers, not participants, consumers of ideology as well as products. Eduardo Galeano writes that "the majority must resign itself to the consumption of fantasy. Illusions of wealth are sold to the poor, illusions of freedom to the oppressed, dreams of victory to the defeated and of power to the weak." Nothing less will do.

The problem of indoctrination is a bit different for those expected to take part in serious decision-making and control: the business, state, and cultural managers, and articulate sectors generally. They must internalize the values of the system and share the necessary illusions that permit it to function in the interests of concentrated power and privilege or at least be cynical enough to pretend that they do, an art that not many can master. But they must also have a certain grasp of the realities of the world, or they will be unable to perform their tasks effectively. The elite media and educational systems must steer a course through these dilemmas, not an easy task, one plagued by internal contradictions. It is intriguing to see how it is faced, but that is beyond the scope of these remarks.

For the home front, a variety of techniques of manufacture of consent are required, geared to the intended audience and its ranking on the scale of significance. For those at the lowest rank, and for the insignificant peoples abroad, another device is available, what a leading turn-of-the-

century American sociologist, Franklin Henry Giddings, called "consent without consent": "if in later years, [the colonized] see and admit that the disputed relation was for the highest interest, it may be reasonably held that authority has been imposed with the consent of the governed," as when a parent disciplines an uncomprehending child. Giddings was referring to the "misguided creatures" that we were reluctantly slaughtering in the Philippines, for their own good. But the lesson holds more generally.

As noted, the Bolshevik overtones are apparent throughout. The systems have crucial differences, but also striking similarities. Lippmann's "specialized class" and Bernays' "intelligent minority," which are to manage the public and their affairs according to liberal democratic theory, correspond to the Leninist vanguard of revolutionary intellectuals. The "manufacture of consent" advocated by Lippmann, Bernays, Niebuhr, Lasswell and others is the Agitprop of their Leninist counterparts. Following a script outlined by Bakunin over a century ago, the secular priesthood in both of the major systems of hierarchy and coercion regard the masses as stupid and incompetent, a bewildered herd who must be driven to a better world — one that we, the intelligent minority, will construct for them, either taking state power ourselves in the Leninist model, or serving the owners and managers of the state capitalist systems if it is impossible to exploit popular revolution to capture the commanding heights.

Much as Bakunin had predicted long before, the Leninist "Red bureaucracy" moved at once to dismantle organs of popular control, particularly, any institutional structures that might provide working people with some influence over their affairs as producers or citizens.

Not surprisingly, the immediate destruction of the incipient socialist tendencies that arose during the ferment of popular struggle in 1917 has been depicted by the world's two great propaganda systems as a victory for socialism. For the Bolsheviks, the goal of the farce was to extract what advantage they could from the moral prestige of socialism; for the West, the purpose was to defame socialism and entrench the system of ownership and management control over all aspects of economic, political, and social life. The collapse of the Leninist system cannot properly be called a victory for socialism, any more than the collapse of Hitler and Mussolini could be described in these terms; but as in those earlier cases, it does eliminate a barrier to the realization of the libertarian socialist ideals of the popular movements that were crushed in Russia in 1917, Germany shortly after, Spain in 1936, and elsewhere, often with the Leninist vanguard leading the way in taming the rascal multitude with their libertarian socialist and radical democratic aspirations.

Short of Force

Hume posed his paradox for both despotic and more free societies. The latter case is by far the more important. As the social world becomes more free and diverse, the task of inducing submission becomes more complex and the problem of unraveling the mechanisms of indoctrination, more challenging. But intellectual interest aside, the case of free societies has greater significance for us, because here we are talking about ourselves and can act upon what we learn. It is for just this reason that the dominant culture will always seek to externalize human concerns, directing them to the inadequacies and abuses of others. When U.S. plans go awry in some corner of the Third World, we devote our attention to the defects and special problems of these cultures and their social disorders — not our own. Fame, fortune, and respect await those who reveal

the crimes of official enemies: those who undertake the vastly more important task of raising a mirror to their own societies can expect quite different treatment. George Orwell is famous for Animal Farm and 1984, which focus on the official enemy. Had he addressed the more interesting and significant question of thought control in relatively free and democratic societies, it would not have been appreciated, and instead of wide acclaim, he would have faced silent dismissal or obloquy. Let us nevertheless turn to the more important and unacceptable questions.

Keeping to governments that are more free and popular, why do the governed submit when force is on their side? First, we have to look at a prior question: to what extent is force on the side of the governed? Here some care is necessary. Societies are considered free and democratic insofar as the power of the state to coerce is limited. The United States is unusual in this respect: Perhaps more than anywhere else in the world, the citizen is free from state coercion, at least, the citizen who is relatively privileged and of the right color, a substantial part of the population.

But it is a mere truism that the state represents only one segment of the nexus of power. Control over investment, production, commerce, finance, conditions of work, and other crucial aspects of social policy lies in private hands. Unwillingness to adapt to this structure of authority and domination carries costs, ranging from state force to the costs of privation and struggle; even an individual of independent mind can hardly fail to compare these to the benefits, however meager, that accrue to submission. Meaningful choices are thus narrowly limited. Similar factors limit the range of ideas and opinion in obvious ways. Articulate expression is shaped by the same private powers that control the economy. It is largely dominated by major corporations that sell audiences to advertisers and naturally reflect the interests of the owners and their market. The ability to articulate and communicate one's views, concerns, and interests — or even to discover them — is thus narrowly constrained as well.

Denial of these truisms about effective power is at the heart of the structure of necessary illusion. Thus, a media critic, reviewing a book on the press in the New York Times, refers without argument to the "traditional Jeffersonian role" of the press "as counterbalance to government power." The phrase encapsulates three crucial assumptions, one historical, one descriptive, one ideological. The historical claim is that Jefferson was a committed advocate of freedom of the press, which is false. The second is that the press in fact functions as a counterbalance to government rather than as a faithful servant, presented here as doctrine, thus evading any need to face the massive array of detailed documentation that refutes this dogma. The ideological principle is that Jeffersonian libertarianism (considered abstractly, apart from its realization in practice) would demand that the press be a counterbalance to government power. That is incorrect. The libertarian conception is that the press should be independent, hence a counterbalance to centralized power of any form. In Jefferson's day, the powers that loomed large were the state, the church, and feudal structures. Shortly after, new forms of centralized power emerged in the world of corporate capitalism. A Jeffersonian would hold, then, that the press should be a counterbalance to state or corporate power, and critically to the state-corporate nexus. But to raise this point carries us into forbidden ground.

Apart from the general constraints on choice and articulate opinion inherent in the concentration of private power, it also set narrow limits on the actions of government. The United States has again been unusual in this respect among the industrial democracies, though convergence toward the U.S. pattern is evident elsewhere. The United States is near the limit in its safeguards for freedom from state coercion, and, also in the poverty of its political life. There is essentially one political party, the business party, with two factions. Shifting coalitions of investors account

for a large part of political history. Unions, or other popular organizations that might offer a way for the general public to play some role in influencing programs and policy choices, scarcely function apart from the narrowest realm. The ideological system is bounded by the consensus of the privileged. Elections are largely a ritual form. In congressional elections, virtually all incumbents are returned to office, a reflection of the vacuity of the political system and the choices it offers. There is scarcely a pretense that substantive issues are at stake in the presidential campaigns. Articulated programs are hardly more than a device to garner votes, and candidates adjust their messages to their audiences as public relations tacticians advise. Political commentators ponder such questions as whether Reagan will remember his lines, or whether Mondale looks too gloomy, or whether Dukakis can duck the slime flung at him by George Bush's speech writers. In the 1984 elections, the two political factions virtually exchanged traditional policies, the Republicans presenting themselves as the party of Keynesian growth and state intervention in the economy, the Democrats as the advocates of fiscal conservatism; few even noticed. Half the population does not bother to push the buttons, and those who take the trouble often consciously vote against their own interest.

The public is granted an opportunity to ratify decisions made elsewhere, in accord with the prescriptions of Lippmann and other democratic theorists. It may select among personalities put forth in a game of symbolic politics that only the most naive take very seriously. When they do, they are mocked by sophisticates. Criticism of President Bush's call for "revenue enhancement" after having won the election by the firm and eloquent promise not to raise taxes is a "political cheap shot," Harvard political scientist and media specialist Marty Linsky comments under the heading "Campaign pledges — made to be broken." When Bush won the election by leading the public in the "read my lips — no new taxes" chant, he was merely expressing his "world view," making "a statement of his hopes." Those who thought he was promising no new taxes do not understand that "elections and governing are different ball games, played with different objectives and rules." "The purpose of elections is to win," Linsky correctly observes, expressing the cynicism of the sophisticated; and "the purpose of governing is to do the best for the country," he adds, parroting the necessary illusions that respectability demands.

Even when issues arise in the political system, the concentration of effective power limits the threat. The question is largely academic in the United States because of the subordination of the political and ideological system to business interests, but in democracies to the south, where conflicting ideas and approaches reach the political arena, the situation is different. As is again familiar, government policies that private power finds unwelcome will lead to capital flight, disinvestment, and social decline until business confidence is restored with the abandonment of the threat to privilege; these facts of life exert a decisive influence on the political system (with military force in reserve if matters get out of hand, supported or applied by the North American enforcer). To put the basic point crassly, unless the rich and powerful are satisfied, everyone will suffer, because they control the basic social levers, determining what will be produced and consumed, and what crumbs will filter down to their subjects. For the homeless in the streets, then, the primary objective is to ensure that the rich live happily in their mansions. This crucial factor, along with simple control over resources, severely limits the force on the side of the governed and diminishes Hume's paradox in a well-functioning capitalist democracy in which the general public is scattered and isolated.

Understanding of these basic conditions — tacit or explicit — has long served as a guide for policy. Once popular organizations are dispersed or crushed and decision-making power is firmly

in the hands of owners and managers, democratic forms are quite acceptable, even preferable as a device of legitimation of elite rule in a business-run "democracy." The pattern was followed by U.S. planners in reconstructing the industrial societies after World War II, and is standard in the Third World, though assuring stability of the desired kind is far more difficult there, except by state terror. Once a functioning social order is firmly established, an individual who must find a (relatively isolated) place within it in order to survive will tend to think its thoughts, adopt its assumptions about the inevitability of certain forms of authority, and in general, adapt to its ends. The costs of an alternative path or a challenge to power are high, the resources are lacking, and the prospects limited. These factors operate in slave and feudal societies — where their efficacy has duly impressed counterinsurgency theorists. In free societies, they manifest themselves in other ways. If their power to shape behavior begins to erode, other means must be sought to tame the rascal multitude.

When force is on the side of the masters, they may rely on relatively crude means of manufacture of consent and need not overly concern themselves with the minds of the herd. Nevertheless, even a violent terror state faces Hume's problem. The modalities of state terrorism that the United States has devised for its clients have commonly included at least a gesture towards "winning hearts and minds," though experts warn against undue sentimentality on this score, arguing that "all the dilemmas are practical and as neutral in an ethical sense as the laws of physics." Nazi Germany shared these concerns, as Albert Speer discusses in his autobiography, and the same is true of Stalinist Russia. Discussing this case, Alexander Gerschenkron observes that "Whatever the strength of the army and the ubiquitousness of the secret police which such a government may have at its disposal, it would be naive to believe that those instruments of physical oppression can suffice. Such a government can maintain itself in power only if it succeeds in making people believe that it performs an important social function which could not be discharged in its absence. Industrialization provided such a function for the Soviet government…, [which] did what no government relying on the consent of the governed could have done… But, paradoxical as it may sound, these policies at the same time have secured some broad acquiescence on the part of the people. If all the forces of the population can be kept engaged in the processes of industrialization and if this industrialization can be justified by the promise of happiness and abundance for future generations and — much more importantly — by the menace of military aggression from beyond the borders, the dictatorial government will find its power broadly unchallenged."

The thesis gains support from the rapid collapse of the Soviet system when its incapacity to move to a more advanced stage of industrial and technological development became evident.

The Pragmatic Criterion

It is important to be aware of the profound commitment of Western opinion to the repression of freedom and democracy, by violence if necessary. To understand our own cultural world, we must recognize that advocacy of terror is clear, explicit, and principled, across the political spectrum. It is superfluous to invoke the thoughts of Jeane Kirkpatrick, George Will, and the like. But little changes as we move to "the establishment left," to borrow the term used by Foreign Policy editor Charles William Maynes in an ode to the American crusade "to spread the cause of democracy."

Consider political commentator Michael Kinsley, who represents "the left" in mainstream commentary and television debate. When the State Department publicly confirmed U.S. support for

terrorist attacks on agricultural cooperatives in Nicaragua, Kinsley wrote that we should not be too quick to condemn this official policy. Such international terrorist operations doubtless cause "vast civilian suffering," he conceded. But if they succeed "to undermine morale and confidence in the government," then they may be "perfectly legitimate." The policy is "sensible" if "cost-benefit analysis" shows that "the amount of blood and misery that will be poured in" yields "democracy," in the conventional sense already discussed.

As a spokesperson for the establishment left, Kinsley insists that terror must meet the pragmatic criterion; violence should not be employed for its own sake, merely because we find it amusing. This more humane conception would readily be accepted by Saddam Hussein, Abu Nidal, and the Hizbollah kidnappers, who, presumably, also consider terror pointless unless it is of value for their ends. These facts help us situate enlightened Western opinion on the international spectrum.

Such reasoned discussion of the justification for terror is not at all unusual, which is why it elicits no reaction in respectable circles just as there is no word of comment among its left-liberal contributors and readers when the New Republic, long considered the beacon of American liberalism, advocates military aid to "Latin-style fascists…regardless of how many are murdered" because "there are higher American priorities than Salvadoran human rights."

Appreciation of the "salutary efficacy" of terror, to borrow John Quincy Adams's phrase, has been a standard feature of enlightened Western thought. It provides the basic framework for the propaganda campaign concerning international terrorism in the 1980s. Naturally, terrorism directed against us and our friends is bitterly denounced as a reversion to barbarism. But far more extreme terrorism that we and our agents conduct is considered constructive, or at worst insignificant, if it meets the pragmatic criterion. Even the vast campaign of international terrorism launched against Cuba by the Kennedy administration, far exceeding anything attributed to official enemies, does not exist in respected academic discourse or the mainstream media. In his standard and much respected scholarly study of international terrorism, Walter Laqueur depicts Cuba as a sponsor of the crime with innuendos but scarcely a pretense of evidence, while the campaign of international terrorism *against* Cuba merits literally not a word; in fact, Cuba is classed among those societies "free from terror."

The guiding principle is clear and straightforward: *their* terror is terror, and the flimsiest evidence suffices to denounce it and to exact retribution upon civilian bystanders who happen to be in the way; *our* terror, even if far more extreme, is merely statecraft, and therefore does not enter into the discussion of the plague of the modern age. The practice is understandable on the principles already discussed.

Huge massacres are treated by much the same criteria: *theirs* are crimes, *ours* statecraft or understandable error. In a study of U.S. power and ideology a decade ago, Edward Herman and I reviewed numerous examples of two kinds of atrocities, "benign and constructive bloodbaths" that are acceptable or even advantageous to dominant interests, and "nefarious blood-baths" perpetrated by official enemies. The reaction follows the same pattern as the treatment of terrorism. The former are ignored, denied, or sometimes even welcomed; the latter elicit great outrage and often large-scale deceit and fabrication, if the available evidence is felt to be inadequate for doctrinal requirements.

Such devices as mass starvation have always been considered entirely legitimate, if they meet the pragmatic criterion. As director of the humanitarian program providing food to starving Europeans after World War II, Herbert Hoover advised President Wilson that he was "maintaining

a thin line of food" to guarantee the rule of anti-Bolshevik elements. In response to rumors of "a serious outbreak on May Day" in Austria, Hoover issued a public warning that any such action would jeopardize the city's sparse food supply. Food was withheld from Hungary under the Communist Bela Kun government, with a promise that it would be supplied if he were removed in favor of a government acceptable to the U.S. The economic blockade, along with Rumanian military pressure, forced Kun to relinquish power and flee to Moscow. Backed by French and British forces, the Rumanian military joined with Hungarian counter-revolutionaries to administer a dose of White terror and install a right-wing dictatorship under Admiral Horthy, who collaborated with Hitler in the next stage of slaying the Bolshevik beast. The threat of starvation was also used to buy the critical Italian elections of 1948 and to help impose the rule of U.S. clients in Nicaragua in l990, among other noteworthy examples.

A review of the debate over Central America during the past decade reveals the decisive role of the pragmatic criterion. Guatemala was never an issue, because mass slaughter and repression appeared to be effective. Early on, the Church was something of a problem, but, as Kenneth Freed comments in the Los Angeles Times, when "14 priests and hundreds of church workers were killed in a military campaign to destroy church support for social gains such as higher wages and an end to the exploitation of Indians," the church was intimidated and "virtually fell silent." "The physical intimidation ceased," the pragmatic criterion having been satisfied. Terror increased again as the U.S. nurtured what it likes to call "democracy." "The victims," a European diplomat observes, "are almost always people whose views or activities are aimed at helping others to free themselves of restraints placed by those who hold political or economic power," such as "a doctor who tries to improve the health of babies" and is therefore "seen as attacking the established order." The security forces of the "fledgling democracy," and the death squads associated with them, appeared to have the situation reasonably well in hand, so there was no reason for undue concern in the United States, and there has been virtually none.

Throughout this grim decade of savagery and oppression, liberal humanists have presented themselves as critical of the terror states maintained by U.S. violence in Central America. But that is only a facade, as we see from the demand, virtually unanimous in respectable circles, that Nicaragua must be restored to "the Central American mode" of the death squad regimes, and that the U.S. and its murderous clients must impose the "regional standards" of El Salvador and Guatemala on the errant Sandinistas.

Returning to Hume's principles of government, it is clear that they must be refined. True, when force is lacking and the standard penalties do not suffice, it is necessary to resort to the manufacture of consent. The populations of the Western democracies — or at least, those in a position to defend themselves — are off limits. Others are legitimate objects of repression, and in the Third World, large-scale terror is appropriate, though the liberal conscience adds the qualification that it must be efficacious. The statesman, as distinct from the ideological fanatic, will understand that the means of violence should be employed in a measured and considered way, just sufficient to achieve the desired ends.

The Range of Means

The pragmatic criterion dictates that violence is in order only when the rascal multitude cannot be controlled in other ways. Often, there are other ways. Another RAND corporation coun-

terinsurgency specialist was impressed by "the relative docility of poorer peasants and the firm authority of landlords in the more 'feudal' areas… [where] the landlord can exercise considerable influence over his tenant's behavior and readily discourage conduct inconsistent with his own interests." It is only when the docility is shaken, perhaps by meddlesome priests, that firmer measures are required.

One option short of outright violence is legal repression. In Costa Rica, the United States was willing to tolerate social democracy. The primary reason for the benign neglect was that labor was suppressed and the rights of investors offered every protection. The founder of Costa Rican democracy, Jose Figueres, was an avid partisan of U.S. corporations and the CIA, and was regarded by the State Department as "the best advertising agency that the United Fruit Company could find in Latin America." But the leading figure of Central American democracy fell out of favor in the 1980s, and had to be censored completely out of the Free Press, because of his critical attitude towards the U.S. war against Nicaragua and Washington's moves to restore Costa Rica as well to the preferred "Central American mode." Even the effusive editorial and lengthy obituary in the New York Times lauding this "fighter for democracy" when he died in June 1990 were careful to avoid these inconvenient deviations.

In earlier years, when he was better behaved, Figueres recognized that the Costa Rican Communist Party, particularly strong among plantation workers, was posing an unacceptable challenge. He therefore arrested its leaders, declared the party illegal, and repressed its members. The policy was maintained through the 1960s, while efforts to establish any working class party were banned by the state authorities. Figueres explained these actions with candor: it was "a sign of weakness. I admit it, when one is relatively weak before the force of the enemy, it is necessary to have the valor to recognise it." These moves were accepted in the West as consistent with the liberal concept of democracy, and indeed, were virtually a precondition for U.S. toleration of "the Costa Rican exception."

Sometimes, however, legal repression is not enough; the popular enemy is too powerful. The alarm bells are sure to ring if they threaten the control of the political system by the business-landowner elite and military elements properly respectful of U.S. interests. Signs of such deviation call for stronger measures, as in Central America through the past decade. The broader framework was sketched by Father Ignacio Martin-Baro, one of the Jesuit priests assassinated in November 1989 and a noted Salvadoran social psychologist, in a talk he delivered in California on "The Psychological Consequences of Political Terrorism," a few months before he was murdered. He stressed several relevant points. First, the most significant form of terrorism, by a large measure, is state terrorism, that is, "terrorizing the whole population through systematic actions carried out by the forces of the state." Second, such terrorism is an essential part of a "government-imposed socio-political project" designed for the needs of the privileged. To implement it, the whole population must be "terrorized by an internalized fear." Third, the sociopolitical project and the state terrorism that helps implement it are not specific to El Salvador, but are common features of the Third World domains of the United States. The reasons are deeply rooted in Western culture, institutions, and policy planning, and fully in accord with the values of enlightened opinion. But terror is constrained by the pragmatic criterion. Thus, Martin-Baro observes, the "massive campaign of political terrorism" in El Salvador declined when "there was less need for extraordinary events, because people were so terrorized, paralyzed."

In a paper on mass media and public opinion in El Salvador which he was to deliver at an International Congress in December 1989, the month after he was assassinated, Martin-Baro wrote

that the U.S. counterinsurgency project "emphasized merely the formal dimensions of democracy," and that the mass media must be understood as a mechanism of "psychological warfare." The small independent journals in El Salvador, mainstream and pro-business but still too undisciplined for the rulers, had been taken care of by the security forces a decade earlier in the usual efficacious manner — kidnapping, assassination, and physical destruction, events considered here too insignificant even to report. As for public opinion, Martin-Baro's unread paper reports a study showing that among workers, the lower-middle class, and the poor, less than 20 percent feel free to express their opinions in public, a figure that rose to 40 percent for the rich — another tribute to the salutary efficacy of terror, and another result that "all Americans can be proud of," to borrow George Schultz's words of self-praise for our achievements in El Salvador.

When Antonio Gramsci was imprisoned after the Fascist takeover of Italy, the government summed up its case by saying: "We must stop this brain from functioning for twenty years." Our current favorites leave less to chance: the brains must be stopped from functioning forever, and we agree that their thoughts about such matters as state terrorism had best not be heard.

The results of U.S. military training are evident in abundance in the documentation by human rights groups and the Salvadoran Church. They are graphically described by Rev. Daniel Santiago, a Catholic priest working in El Salvador, in the Jesuit journal America. He reports the story of a peasant woman, who returned home one day to find her mother, sister, and three children sitting around a table, the decapitated head of each person placed carefully on the table in front of the body, the hands arranged on top "as if each body was stroking its own head." The assassins, from the Salvadoran National Guard, had found it hard to keep the head of an 18-month-old baby in place, so they nailed the hands onto it. A large plastic bowl filled with blood was tastefully displayed in the center of the table.

Rev. Santiago writes that macabre scenes of the kind he recounts are designed by the armed forces for the purpose of intimidation. "People are not just killed by death squads in El Salvador — they are decapitated and then their heads are placed on pikes and used to dot the landscape. Men are not just disemboweled by the Salvadoran Treasury Police; their severed genitalia are stuffed into their mouths. Salvadoran women are not just raped by the National Guard; their wombs are cut from their bodies and used to cover their faces. It is not enough to kill children; they are dragged over barbed wire until the flesh falls from their bones while parents are forced to watch." "The aesthetics of terror in El Salvador is religious." The intention is to ensure that the individual is totally subordinated to the interests of the Fatherland, which is why the death squads are sometimes called the "Army of National Salvation" by the governing ARENA party, whose members (including President Cristiani) take a blood oath to the "leader-for-life," Roberto d'Aubuisson.

It has been a constant lament of U.S. government officials that the Latin American countries are insufficiently repressive, too open, too committed to civil liberties, unwilling to impose sufficient constraints on travel and dissemination of information, and in general reluctant to adhere to U.S. social and political standards, thus tolerating conditions in which dissidence can flourish and can reach a popular audience.

At home, even tiny groups may be subject to severe repression if their potential outreach is perceived to be too great. During the campaign waged by the national political police against The Black Panthers — including assassination, instigation of ghetto riots, and a variety of other means — the FBI estimated the "hard core members" of the targeted organization at only 800, but added ominously that "a recent poll indicates that approximately 25 per cent of the black population

has a great respect for the [Black Panther Party], including 43 per cent of blacks under 21 years of age." The repressive agencies of the state proceeded with a campaign of violence and disruption to ensure that the Panthers did not succeed in organizing as a substantial social or political force — with great success, as the organization was decimated and the remnants proceeded to self-destruct. FBI operations in the same years targeting the entire New Left were motivated by similar concerns. The same internal intelligence document warns that "the movement of rebellious youth known as the 'New Left,' involving and influencing a substantial number of college students, is having a serious impact on contemporary society with a potential for serious domestic strife." The New Left has "revolutionary aims" and an "identification with Marxism-Leninism." It has attempted "to infiltrate and radicalize labor," and after failing "to subvert and control the mass media," has established "a large network of underground publications which serve the dual purpose of an internal communication network and an external propaganda organ." It thus poses a threat to "the civilian sector of our society," which must be contained by the state security apparatus.

We can learn a good deal by attention to the range of choices. Keeping just to Latin America, consider the efforts to eliminate the Allende regime in Chile. There were two parallel operations. Track II, the hard line, aimed at a military coup. This was concealed from Ambassador Edward Korry, a Kennedy liberal, whose task was to implement Track I, the soft line; in Korry's words, to "do all within our power to condemn Chile and the Chileans to utmost deprivation and poverty, a policy designed for a long time to come to accelerate the hard features of a Communist society in Chile." The soft line was an extension of the long-term CIA effort to control Chilean democracy. One indication of its level is that in the 1964 election, the CIA spent twice as much per Chilean voter to block Allende as the total spent per voter by both parties in the U.S. elections of the same year. Similarly in the case of Cuba, the Eisenhower administration planned a direct attack while Vice-President Nixon, keeping to the soft line in a secret discussion of June 1960, expressed his concern that according to a CIA briefing, "Cuba's economic situation had not deteriorated significantly since the overthrow of Batista," then urging specific measures to place "greater economic pressure on Cuba."

To take another informative case, in 1949 the CIA identified "two areas of instability" in Latin America: Bolivia and Guatemala. The Eisenhower administration pursued the hard line to overthrow capitalist democracy in Guatemala but chose the soft line with regard to a Bolivian revolution that had the support of the Communist Party and radical tin miners, had led to expropriation, and had even moved towards "criminal agitation of the Indians of the farms and mines" and a pro-peace conference, a right-wing Archbishop warned. The White House concluded that the best plan was to support the least radical elements, expecting that U.S. pressures, including domination of the tin market, would serve to control unwanted developments. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles urged that this would be the best way to contain the "Communist infection in South America." Following standard policy guidelines, the U.S. took control over the Bolivian military, equipping it with modern armaments and sending hundreds of officers to the "school of coups" in Panama and elsewhere. Bolivia was soon subject to U.S. influence and control. By 1953, the National Security Council noted improvement in "the climate for private investment," including "an agreement permitting a private American firm to exploit two petroleum areas."

A military coup took place in 1964. A 1980 coup was carried out with the assistance of Klaus Barbie, who had been sent to Bolivia when he could no longer be protected in France, where he had been working under U.S. control to repress the anti-fascist resistance, as he had done under

the Nazis. According to a recent UNICEF study, one out of three Bolivian infants dies in the first year of life, so that Bolivia has the slowest rate of population growth in Latin America along with the highest birth rate. The FAO estimates that the average Bolivian consumes 78 percent of daily minimum calorie and protein requirements and that more than half of Bolivian children suffer from malnutrition. Of the economically active population, 25 percent are unemployed and another 40 percent work in the "informal sector" (e.g., smuggling and drugs). The situation in Guatemala we have already reviewed.

Several points merit attention. First, the consequences of the hard line in Guatemala and the soft line in Bolivia were similar. Second, both policy decisions were successful in their major aim: containing the "Communist virus," the threat of "ultranationalism." Third, both policies are evidently regarded as quite proper, as we can see in the case of Bolivia by the complete lack of interest in what has happened since (apart from possible costs to the U.S. through the drug racket); and with regard to Guatemala, by the successful intervention under Kennedy to block a democratic election, the direct U.S. participation in murderous counterinsurgency campaigns under Lyndon Johnson, the continuing supply of arms to Guatemala through the late 1970s (contrary to illusory claims) and the reliance on our Israeli mercenary state to fill any gaps when congressional restrictions finally took effect, the enthusiastic U.S. support for atrocities that go well beyond even the astonishing Guatemalan norm in the 1980s, and the applause for the "fledgling democracy" that the ruling military now tolerates as a means to extort money from Congress. We may say that these are "messy episodes" and "blundering" (which in fact succeeded in its major aims), but nothing more (Stephen Kinzer). Fourth, the soft line and the hard line were adopted by the same people, at the same time, revealing that the issues are tactical, involving no departure from shared principle. All of this provides insight into the nature of policy, and the political culture in which it is formed.

The Untamed Rabble

Hume's paradox of government arises only if we suppose that a crucial element of essential human nature is what Bakunin called "an instinct for freedom." It is the failure to act upon this instinct that Hume found surprising. The same failure inspired Rousseau's classic lament that people are born free but are everywhere in chains, seduced by the illusions of the civil society that is created by the rich to guarantee their plunder. Some may adopt this assumption as one of the "natural beliefs" that guide their conduct and their thought. There have been efforts to ground the instinct for freedom in a substantive theory of human nature. They are not without interest, but they surely come nowhere near establishing the case. Like other tenets of common sense, this belief remains a regulative principle that we adopt, or reject, on faith. Which choice we make can have large-scale effects for ourselves and others.

Those who adopt the common sense principle that freedom is our natural right and essential need will agree with Bertrand Russell that anarchism is "the ultimate ideal to which society should approximate." Structures of hierarchy and domination are fundamentally illegitimate. They can be defended only on grounds of contingent need, an argument that rarely stands up to analysis. As Russell went on to observe 70 years ago, "the old bonds of authority" have little intrinsic merit. Reasons are needed for people to abandon their rights, "and the reasons offered are counterfeit reasons, convincing only to those who have a selfish interest in being convinced."

"The condition of revolt," he went on, "exists in women towards men, in oppressed nations towards their oppressors, and above all in labour towards capital. It is a state full of danger, as all past history shows, yet also full of hope."

Russell traced the habit of submission in part to coercive educational practices. His views are reminiscent of 17th and 18th century thinkers who held that the mind is not to be filled with knowledge "from without, like a vessel," but "to be kindled and awaked." "The growth of knowledge [resembles] the growth of Fruit; however external causes may in some degree cooperate, it is the internal vigour, and virtue of the tree, that must ripen the juices to their just maturity." Similar conceptions underlie Enlightenment thought on political and intellectual freedom, and on alienated labor, which turns the worker into an instrument for other ends instead of a human being fulfilling inner needs — a fundamental principle of classical liberal thought, though long forgotten, because of its revolutionary implications. These ideas and values retain their power and their pertinence, though they are very remote from realization, anywhere. As long as this is so, the libertarian revolutions of the 18th century remain far from consummated, a vision for the future.

One might take this natural belief to be confirmed by the fact that despite all efforts to contain them, the rabble continue to fight for their fundamental human rights. And over time, some libertarian ideals have been partially realized or have even become common coin. Many of the outrageous ideas of the 17th century radical democrats, for example, seem tame enough today, though other early insights remain beyond our current moral and intellectual reach.

The struggle for freedom of speech is an interesting case, and a crucial one, since it lies at the heart of a whole array of freedoms and rights. A central question of the modern era is when, if ever, the state may act to interdict the content of communications. As noted earlier, even those regarded as leading libertarians have adopted restrictive and qualified views on this matter. One critical element is seditious libel, the idea that the state can be criminally assaulted by speech, "the hallmark of closed societies throughout the world," legal historian Harry Kalven observes. A society that tolerates laws against seditious libel is not free, whatever its other virtues. In late 17th century England, men were castrated, disemboweled, quartered, and beheaded for the crime. Through the 18th century, there was a general consensus that established authority could be maintained only by silencing subversive discussion, and "any threat, whether real or imagined, to the good reputation of the government" must be barred by force (Leonard Levy). "Private men are not judges of their superiors… [for] This wou'd confound all government," one editor wrote. Truth was no defense: true charges are even more criminal than false ones, because they tend even more to bring authority into disrepute.

Treatment of dissident opinion, incidentally, follows a similar model in our more libertarian era. False and ridiculous charges are no real problem: it is the unconscionable critics who reveal unwanted truths from whom society must be protected.

The doctrine of seditious libel was also upheld in the American colonies. The intolerance of dissent during the revolutionary period is notorious. The leading American libertarian, Thomas Jefferson, agreed that punishment was proper for "a traitor in thought, but not in deed," and authorized internment of political suspects. He and the other Founders agreed that "traitorous or disrespectful words" against the authority of the national state or any of its component states was criminal. "During the Revolution," Leonard Levy observes, "Jefferson, like Washington, the Adamses, and Paine, believed that there could be no toleration for serious differences of political opinion on the issue of independence, no acceptable alternative to complete submission to the

patriot cause. Everywhere there was unlimited liberty to praise it, none to criticize it." At the outset of the Revolution, the Continental Congress urged the states to enact legislation to prevent the people from being "deceived and drawn into erroneous opinion." It was not until the Jeffersonians were themselves subjected to repressive measures in the late 1790s that they developed a body of more libertarian thought for self-protection — reversing course, however, when they gained power themselves.

Until World War I, there was only a slender basis for freedom of speech in the United States, and it was not until 1964 that the law of seditious libel was struck down by the Supreme Court. In 1969, the Court finally protected speech apart from "incitement to imminent lawless action." Two centuries after the revolution, the Court at last adopted the position that had been advocated in 1776 by Jeremy Bentham, who argued that a free government must permit "malcontents" to "communicate their sentiments, concert their plans, and practice every mode of opposition short of actual revolt, before the executive power can be legally justified in disturbing them." The 1969 Supreme Court decision formulated a libertarian standard which, I believe, is unique in the world. In Canada, for example, people are still imprisoned for promulgating "false news," recognized as a crime in 1275 to protect the King.

In Europe, the situation is still more primitive. France is a striking case, because of the dramatic contrast between the self-congratulatory rhetoric and repressive practice so common as to pass unnoticed. England has only limited protection for freedom of speech, and even tolerates such a disgrace as a law of blasphemy. The reaction to the Salman Rushdie affair, most dramatically on the part of self-styled "conservatives," was particularly noteworthy. Rushdie was charged with seditious libel and blasphemy in the courts, but the High Court ruled that the law of blasphemy extended only to Christianity, not Islam, and that only verbal attack "against Her Majesty or Her Majesty's Government or some other institution of the state" counts as seditious libel. Thus the Court upheld a fundamental doctrine of the Ayatollah Khomeini, Stalin, Goebbels, and other opponents of freedom, while recognizing that English law protects only domestic power from criticism. Doubtless many would agree with Conor Cruise O'Brien, who, when Minister for Posts and Telegraphs in Ireland, amended the Broadcasting Authority Act to permit the Authority to refuse to broadcast any matter that, in the judgment of the minister, "would tend to undermine the authority of the state."

We should also bear in mind that the right to freedom of speech in the United States was not established by the First Amendment to the Constitution, but only through dedicated efforts over a long period by the labor movement, the civil rights and anti-war movements of the 1960s, and other popular forces. James Madison pointed out that a "parchment barrier" will never suffice to prevent tyranny. Rights are not established by words, but won and sustained by struggle.

It is also worth recalling that victories for freedom of speech are often won in defense of the most depraved and horrendous views. The 1969 Supreme Court decision was in defense of the Ku Klux Klan from prosecution after a meeting with hooded figures, guns, and a burning cross, calling for "burning the nigger" and "sending the Jews back to Israel." With regard to freedom of expression there are basically two positions: you defend it vigorously for views you hate, or you reject it in favor of Stalinist/Fascist standards.

Whether the instinct for freedom is real or not, we do not know. If it is, history teaches that it can be dulled, but has yet to be killed. The courage and dedication of people struggling for freedom, their willingness to confront extreme state terror and violence, is often remarkable. There has been a slow growth of consciousness over many years and goals have been achieved

that were considered utopian or scarcely contemplated in earlier eras. An inveterate optimist can point to this record and express the hope that with a new decade, and soon a new century, humanity may be able to overcome some of its social maladies; others might draw a different lesson from recent history. It is hard to see rational grounds for affirming one or the other perspective. As in the case of many of the natural beliefs that guide our lives, we can do no better than to choose according to our intuition and hopes.

The consequences of such a choice are not obscure. By denying the instinct for freedom, we will only prove that humans are a lethal mutation, an evolutionary dead end: by nurturing it, if it is real, we may find ways to deal with dreadful human tragedies and problems that are awesome in scale.

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