

LIBERTY
AND
TYRANNY

A CONSERVATIVE MANIFESTO

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ON LIBERTY AND TYRANNY

THERE IS SIMPLY NO scientific or mathematical formula that defines conservatism. Moreover, there are competing voices today claiming the mantle of “true conservatism”—including neo-conservatism (emphasis on a robust national security), paleo-conservatism (emphasis on preserving the culture), social conservatism (emphasis on faith and values), and libertarianism (emphasis on individualism), among others. Scores of scholars have written at length about what can be imperfectly characterized as conservative thought. But my purpose is not to give them each exposition, as it cannot be fairly or adequately accomplished here, nor referee among them. Neither will I attempt to give birth to totally new theories.

Instead, what follows are my own opinions and conclusions of fundamental truths, based on decades of observation, exploration, and experience, about conservatism and, conversely, non-conservatism—that is, liberty and tyranny in modern America.

To put it succinctly: Conservatism is a way of understanding life, society, and governance. The Founders were heavily influenced by certain philosophers, among them Adam Smith (spontaneous order), Charles Montesquieu (separation of powers), and especially John Locke (natural rights); they were also influenced by their faiths, personal experiences, and knowledge of history (including the rise and fall of the Roman Empire). Edmund Burke, who was both a British statesman and thinker, is often said to be the father of modern conservatism. He was an early defender of the American Revolution and advocate of representative government. He wrote of the interconnection of liberty, free markets, religion, tradition, and authority. The Conservative, like the Founders, is informed by all these great thinkers—and more.

The Declaration of Independence represents the most prominent, official, consensus position of the Founders' rationale for declaring independence from England. It states, in part,

When in the Course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation. We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. . . .

The Founders believed, and the Conservative agrees, in the dignity of the individual; that we, as human beings, have a right

to live, live freely, and pursue that which motivates us not because man or some government says so, but because these are God-given natural rights.

Like the Founders, the Conservative also recognizes in society a *harmony of interests*,¹ as Adam Smith put it, and rules of cooperation that have developed through generations of human experience and collective reasoning that promote the betterment of the individual and society. This is characterized as ordered liberty, the social contract, or *the civil society*.

What are the conditions of this civil society?

In the civil society, the *individual* is recognized and accepted as more than an abstract statistic or faceless member of some group; rather, he is a *unique, spiritual being* with a soul and a conscience. He is free to discover his own potential and pursue his own legitimate interests, tempered, however, by a *moral order* that has its foundation in *faith* and guides his life and all human life through the *prudent* exercise of judgment. As such, the individual in the civil society strives, albeit imperfectly, to be virtuous—that is, restrained, ethical, and honorable. He rejects the relativism that blurs the lines between good and bad, right and wrong, just and unjust, and means and ends.

In the civil society, the individual has a *duty* to respect the unalienable rights of others and the values, customs, and traditions, tried and tested over time and passed from one generation to the next, that establish society's *cultural identity*. He is responsible for attending to his own well-being and that of his family. And he has a duty as a *citizen* to contribute voluntarily to the welfare of his community through good works.

In the civil society, *private property* and liberty are inseparable. The individual's right to live freely and safely and pursue happi-

ness includes the right to acquire and possess property, which represents the fruits of his own intellectual and/or physical labor. As the individual's time on earth is finite, so, too, is his labor. The illegitimate denial or diminution of his private property enslaves him to another and denies him his liberty.

In the civil society, a *rule of law*, which is just, known, and predictable, and applied equally albeit imperfectly, provides the governing framework for and restraints on the polity, thereby nurturing the civil society and serving as a check against the arbitrary use and, hence, abuse of power.²

For the Conservative, the civil society has as its highest purpose its preservation and improvement.³

The Modern Liberal believes in the supremacy of the state, thereby rejecting the principles of the Declaration and the order of the civil society, in whole or part. For the Modern Liberal, the individual's imperfection and personal pursuits impede the objective of a utopian state. In this, Modern Liberalism promotes what French historian Alexis de Tocqueville described as a *soft tyranny*,⁴ which becomes increasingly more oppressive, potentially leading to a hard tyranny (some form of totalitarianism). As the word "*liberal*" is, in its classical meaning, the opposite of authoritarian, it is more accurate, therefore, to characterize the Modern Liberal as a *Statist*.

The Founders understood that the greatest threat to liberty is an all-powerful central government, where the few dictate to the many. They also knew that the rule of the mob would lead to anarchy and, in the end, despotism. During the Revolutionary War, the states more or less followed the Articles of Confederation, in which most governing authority remained with the states.

After the war, as the Founders labored to establish a new nation, the defects with the Articles became increasingly apparent. The central government did not have the ability to fund itself. Moreover, states were issuing their own currency, conducting their own foreign policy, and raising their own armies. Trade disputes among the states and with other countries were hampering commerce and threatening national prosperity.

Eventually the Articles were replaced with the Constitution, which granted the federal government enough authority to cultivate, promote, and “secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity,”⁵ but not enough authority to destroy it all. James Madison, the most influential of the Constitution’s authors, put it best when he wrote in “Federalist 51”:

But what is government itself, but the greatest of all reflections on human nature? If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary. In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself.⁶

For much of American history, the balance between governmental authority and individual liberty was understood and accepted. Federal power was confined to that which was specifically enumerated in the Constitution and no more. And that power was further limited, for it was dispersed among three federal branches—the legislative, executive, and judicial. Beyond that, the power remained with the states and ultimately the people.

The Framers recognized that the Constitution may require adjustments from time to time. Therefore, they provided two methods for proposing amendments, only one of which has been used in adopting all current amendments. It requires a supermajority of two-thirds of the members of both Houses of Congress to propose an amendment to the states for ratification, and three-fourths of the states to successfully ratify the proposed amendment. In all our history the Constitution has been amended only twenty-seven times—the first ten of which, the Bill of Rights, were adopted shortly after the Constitution was ratified. Clearly the Framers did not intend the Constitution to be easily altered. It was to be a lasting contract that could be modified only by the considered judgment of a significant representation of the body politic.

But in the 1930s, during the Great Depression, the Statists successfully launched a counterrevolution that radically and fundamentally altered the nature of American society. President Franklin Roosevelt and an overwhelmingly Democratic Congress, through an array of federal projects, entitlements, taxes, and regulations known as the New Deal, breached the Constitution's firewalls. At first the Supreme Court fought back, striking down New Deal programs as exceeding the limits of federal constitutional authority, violating state sovereignty, and trampling on private property rights. But rather than seek an expansion of federal power through the amendment process, which would likely have blunted Roosevelt's ambitions, Roosevelt threatened the very makeup of the Court by proposing to pack it with sympathetic justices who would go along with his counterrevolution. Although Roosevelt's plan failed, the justices had been effectively intimi-

dated. And new justices, who shared Roosevelt's statism, began replacing older justices on the Court. It was not long before the Court became little more than a rubber stamp for Roosevelt's policies.

The federal government began passing laws and creating administrative agencies at a dizzying pace, increasing its control over economic activity and, hence, individual liberty. It used taxation not merely to fund constitutionally legitimate governmental activities, but also to redistribute wealth, finance welfare programs, set prices and production limits, create huge public works programs, and establish pension and unemployment programs. Roosevelt used his new power to expand political alliances and create electoral constituencies—unions, farmers, senior citizens, and ethnic groups. From this era forward, the Democratic Party and the federal government would become inextricably intertwined, and the Democratic Party would become as dependent on federal power for its sustenance as the governmental dependents it would create. Ironically, industrial expansion resulting from World War II eventually ended the Great Depression, not the New Deal. Indeed, the enormous tax and regulatory burden imposed on the private sector by the New Deal prolonged the economic recovery.

The significance of the New Deal is not in any one program, but in its sweeping break from our founding principles and constitutional limitations. Roosevelt himself broke with the two-presidential-term tradition started by George Washington by running for four terms. His legacy includes a federal government that has become a massive, unaccountable conglomerate: It is the nation's largest creditor, debtor, lender, employer, consumer, con-

tractor, grantor, property owner, tenant, insurer, health-care provider, and pension guarantor.

And yet, the Statist has an insatiable appetite for control. His sights are set on his next meal even before he has fully digested his last. He is constantly agitating for government action. And in furtherance of that purpose, the Statist speaks in the tongue of the demagogue, concocting one pretext and grievance after another to manipulate public perceptions and build popular momentum for the divestiture of liberty and property from its rightful possessors. The industrious, earnest, and successful are demonized as perpetrators of various offenses against the public good, which justifies governmental intervention on behalf of an endless parade of “victims.” In this way, the perpetrator and the victim are subordinated to the government’s authority—the former by outright theft, the latter by a dependent existence. In truth, both are made victims by the real perpetrator, the Statist.

The Statist veils his pursuits in moral indignation, intoning in high dudgeon the injustices and inequities of liberty and life itself, for which only he can provide justice and bring a righteous resolution. And when the resolution proves elusive, as it undoubtedly does—whether the Marxist promise of “the workers’ paradise” or the Great Society’s “war on poverty”—the Statist demands ever more authority to wring out the imperfections of mankind’s existence. Unconstrained by constitutional prohibitions, what is left to limit the Statist’s ambitions but his own moral compass, which has already led him astray? He is never circumspect about his own shortcomings. Failure is not the product of his beliefs but merely want of power and resources. Thus are born endless rationalizations for seizing ever more governmental authority.

In the midst stands the individual, who was a predominate focus of the Founders. When living freely and pursuing his own legitimate interests, the individual displays qualities that are antithetical to the Statist's—initiative, self-reliance, and independence. As the Statist is building a culture of conformity and dependency, where the ideal citizen takes on dronelike qualities in service to the state, the individual must be drained of uniqueness and self-worth, and deterred from independent thought or behavior. This is achieved through varying methods of economic punishment and political suppression.

The Statist also knows that despite his successful usurpations, enough citizens are still skeptical and even distrustful of politicians and government that he cannot force his will all at once. Thus he marches in incremental steps, adjusting his pace as circumstances dictate. Today his pace is more rapid, for resistance has slowed. And at no time does the Statist do an about-face. But not so with some who claim the mantle of conservatism but are, in truth, neo-Statists, who would have the Conservative abandon the high ground of the founding principles for the quicksand of a soft tyranny. — — — —

Michael Gerson, formerly chief speechwriter for President George W. Bush, has written in his book, *Heroic Conservatism*, that “if Republicans run in future elections with a simplistic anti-government message, ignoring the poor, the addicted and children at risk, they will lose, and they will deserve to lose.” Gerson argues for a “compassionate conservatism” and “faith-based initiatives” in which the federal government plays a central role.⁷

Gerson all but ignores liberty's successes and the civil society in which humans flourish, even though he is surrounded in his

every moment by its magnificence. So numerous are liberty's treasures that they defy cataloguing. The object of Gerson's scorn is misplaced. Gerson does not ask, "How many enterprises and jobs might have been created, how many people might have been saved from illness and disease, how many more poor children might have been fed but for the additional costs, market dislocations, and management inefficiencies that distort supply and demand or discourage research and development as a result of the federal government's role?"

Liberty's permanence in American society often makes its manifestations elusive or invisible to those born into it. Even if liberty is acknowledged, it is often taken for granted and its permanence assumed. Therefore, under these circumstances, the Statist's agenda can be alluring even to a former advisor to a Republican president. It is not recognized as an increasingly corrosive threat to liberty but rather as coexisting with it.

Columnists William Kristol and David Brooks promote something called "national-greatness conservatism." They coauthored an opinion piece in which they exclaimed that it "does not despise government. How could it? How can Americans love their nation if they hate its government? But the way to restore faith in our government is to slash its flabbiness while making it more effective."⁸

The Conservative does not despise government. He despises tyranny. This is precisely why the Conservative reveres the Constitution and insists on adherence to it. An "effective" government that operates outside its constitutional limitations is a dangerous government. By abandoning principle for efficiency, the neo-Statist, it seems, is no more bound to the Constitution

than is the Statist. He marches more slowly than the Statist, but he marches with him nonetheless. The neo-Statist propounds no discernable standard or practical means to hem in the federal power he helps unleash, and which the Statist would exploit. In many ways, he is as objectionable as the Statist, for he seeks to devour conservatism by clothing himself in its nomenclature.

The Conservative is alarmed by the ascent of a soft tyranny and its cheery acceptance by the neo-Statist. He knows that liberty once lost is rarely recovered. He knows of the decline and eventual failure of past republics. And he knows that the best prescription for addressing society's real and perceived ailments is not to further empower an already enormous federal government beyond its constitutional limits, but to return to the founding principles. A free people living in a civil society, working in self-interested cooperation, and a government operating within the limits of its authority promote more prosperity, opportunity, and happiness for more people than any alternative. Conservatism is the antidote to tyranny precisely because its principles *are* the founding principles.

ON PRUDENCE AND PROGRESS

EVEN WHEN DECLARING INDEPENDENCE from England, the Founders recognized the dangers of imprudent change as it relates to governing. As the Declaration of Independence states,

That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, that whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accus-

tomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security. . . .

The Founders were very careful to explain that revolution is a last resort compelled only by the imposition of an absolute despotism. No right-thinking Conservative today would encourage overthrowing the United States government, for he does not toil under the iron fist of absolute despotism, even though the Conservative is alarmed at the Statist's growing success in substituting arbitrary state power for ordered liberty.

However, the Conservative does not reject change. Edmund Burke wrote that "a state without the means of some change is without the means of its conservation."¹ What kind of change, then, does the Conservative support?

Burke explained,

There is a manifest, marked distinction, which ill men with ill designs, or weak men incapable of any design, will constantly be confounding,—that is, a marked distinction between change and reformation. The former alters the substance of the objects themselves, and gets rid of all their essential good as well as of all the accidental evil annexed to them. Change is novelty; and whether it is to operate any one of the effects of reformation at all, or whether it may not contradict the very principle upon which reformation is desired, cannot be known beforehand. Reform is not change in the substance or in the primary modifica-

*tion of the object, but a direct application of a remedy to the grievance complained of. So far as that is removed, all is sure. It stops there; and if it fails, the substance which underwent the operation, at the very worst, is but where it was.*²

For Burke, change as reform was intended to preserve and improve the basic institutions of the state. Change as innovation was destructive as a radical departure from the past and the substitution of existing institutions of the state with potentially dangerous experiments.³ Furthermore, the Statist often justifies change as conferring new, abstract rights, which is nothing more than a Statist deception intended to empower the state and deny man his real rights—those that are both unalienable and anchored in custom, tradition, and faith. Burke wrote, “By this unprincipled facility of changing the state as often, and as much, and in as many ways, as there are floating fancies or fashions, the whole chain and continuity of the commonwealth would be broken. No one generation could link with the other. Men would become little better than the flies of a summer.”⁴

The Conservative believes, as Burke and the Founders did, that prudence must be exercised in assessing change. *Prudence is the highest virtue for it is judgment drawn on wisdom.* The proposed change should be informed by the experience, knowledge, and traditions of society, tailored for a specific purpose, and accomplished through a constitutional construct that ensures thoughtful deliberation by the community. Change unconstrained by prudence produces unpredictable consequences, threatening ordered liberty with chaos and ultimately despotism, and placing at risk the very principles the Conservative holds dear.

However, the Conservative seeks to preserve and improve the civil society, not engage in a mindless defense of the status quo inasmuch as the status quo may well be a condition created by the Statist and destructive of the civil society—such as 1960s cultural degradations, which are all too prevalent today. It is the Statist, then, who rejects even minor change if such change promotes the civil society, thereby challenging his authority.

The Conservative understands that Americans are living in a state of diminishing liberty—that statism is on the ascendancy and the societal balance is tipping away from ordered liberty. In these circumstances, the Conservative should not confuse prudence with timidity. If anything, certainly since the New Deal, the Conservative has too often lacked the confidence and persistence to defend the civil society.

Even the most dedicated Conservative acknowledges, however, the daunting challenge ahead. The Founders were right when they observed that man has a high tolerance for suffering.

The Conservative must accept that the Statist does not share his passion for liberty and all the good that flows from it. The Statist does not acknowledge the tremendous benefits to society from the individual pursuits of tens of millions of others. The Statist rejects the Founders' idea of the dignity of the individual, who can flourish through ordered liberty, for one rooted in unpredictability, irrationality and, ultimately, tyranny.

It is observed that the Statist is dissatisfied with the condition of his own existence. He condemns his fellow man, surroundings, and society itself for denying him the fulfillment, success, and adulation he believes he deserves. He is angry, resentful, petulant, and jealous. He is incapable of honest self-assessment and rejects

the honest assessment by others of himself, thereby evading responsibility for his own miserable condition. The Statist searches for significance and even glory in a utopian fiction of his mind's making, the earthly attainment of which, he believes, is frustrated by those who do not share it. Therefore, he must destroy the civil society, piece by piece.

For the Statist, liberty is not a blessing but the enemy. It is not possible to achieve Utopia if individuals are free to go their own way. The individual must be dehumanized and his nature delegitimized. Through persuasion, deception, and coercion, the individual must be subordinated to the state. He must abandon his own ambitions for the ambitions of the state. He must become reliant on and fearful of the state. His first duty must be to the state—not family, community, and faith, all of which have the potential of threatening the state. Once dispirited, the individual can be molded by the state.

The Statist's Utopia can take many forms, and has throughout human history, including monarchism, feudalism, militarism, fascism, communism, national socialism, and economic socialism. They are all of the same species—tyranny. The primary principle around which the Statist organizes can be summed up in a single word—*equality*.

Equality, as understood by the Founders, is the natural right of every individual to live freely under self-government, to acquire and retain the property he creates through his own labor, and to be treated impartially before a just law. Moreover, equality should not be confused with perfection, for man is also imperfect, making his application of equality, even in the most just society, imperfect. Otherwise, inequality is the natural state of man in the

sense that each individual is born unique in all his human characteristics. Therefore, equality and inequality, properly comprehended, are both engines of liberty.

The Statist, however, misuses equality to pursue uniform economic and social outcomes. He must continuously enhance his power at the expense of self-government and violate the individual's property rights at the expense of individual liberty, for he believes that through persuasion, deception, and coercion he can tame man's natural state and man's perfection can, therefore, be achieved in Utopia. The Statist must claim the power to make that which is unequal equal and that which is imperfect perfect. This is the hope the Statist offers, if only the individual surrenders himself to the all-powerful state. Only then can the impossible be made possible.

President Barack Obama made this point when lecturing the Wesleyan University graduating class of 2008 during his campaign: "[O]ur individual salvation depends on collective salvation."⁵ But salvation is not government's to give. Indeed, it is not a grant to mankind from mankind. Under the wrong conditions and in the wrong hands, this deviant view is a powerful tool against humanity. The difficulty if not impossibility is in containing the soft tyranny so it does not metastasize into a more absolute tyranny, since the diminished and then vanquished civil society is the sole anecdote.

American history and traditions make the transformation from civil society to tyranny more complicated for the Statist than in Europe and other places, which helps explain its slower pace. As French philosopher Raymond Aron wrote in 1955, "[In America] there is no sign of either the traditions or the classes

which give European ideas their meaning. Aristocracy, and the aristocratic way of life, were ruthlessly eliminated by the War of Independence.”⁶ Still, tyranny is a threat that looms over all societies, preventable only by the active vigilance of the people. The Statist in America is no less resolute than his European counterpart but, by necessity, he is more cunning—where the European lurches and leaps, the American’s steps are measured but steady. In America, the Statist understands that his counterrevolution must at least appear gradual and not revolutionary—sometimes even clothed in the flag and patriotism—lest his intentions become too obvious and thus alarming to his skeptics.

For the Statist, the international community and international organizations serve as useful sources for importing disaffection with the civil society. The Statist urges Americans to view themselves through the lenses of those who resent and even hate them. He needs Americans to become less confident, to doubt their institutions, and to accept the status assigned to them by outsiders—as isolationists, invaders, occupiers, oppressors, and exploiters. The Statist wants Americans to see themselves as backward, foolishly holding to their quaint notions of individual liberty, private property, family, and faith, long diminished or jettisoned in other countries. They need to listen to the voices of condemnation from world capitals and self-appointed global watchdogs hostile to America’s superior standard of living. America is said to be out of step and regressive, justifying the surrendering of its sovereignty through treaties and other arrangements that benefit the greater “humanity.” And it would not hurt if America admitted its past transgressions, made reparations,

and accepted its fate as just another aging nation—one among many.

The Statist must also rely on legions of academics to serve as his missionaries. After a short period of training and observation, academics receive a sinecure—a personal stake in the state via lifetime employment through a system of tenure. The classroom is turned into a propaganda mill, rather than a place for education, to shape the beliefs and attitudes of successive generations of malcontents and incubate the quiet revolution against the civil society. Academics help identify the enemies of the state, whom their students learn to distrust or even detest through distortion and repetition—corporations as polluters, the Founding Fathers as slave owners, the military as imperialist, etc.

Academics claim to challenge authority but, in truth, preach authoritarianism through various justifications for and approaches to deconstructing the civil society. They talk of individual rights but promote collectivism. They talk of enfranchisement and suffrage but promote judicial and administrative usurpation of republicanism. They talk of workers' rights but promote the heavy taxation and regulation of labor. Indeed, academics portray Utopia as a kind of heaven on earth but have a high tolerance for the hell of widespread misery. The academic knows from history, and better than most, the destructive power of the Statist's way. But he believes it is the price humanity must pay to pave the way for Utopia—or, conversely, he dismisses Statist-caused misery as a misapplication of utopian ideals resulting from the poor performance of a particular Statist or the nefarious doings of the enemies of the state.

The academy's first cousin is Hollywood, which uses enter-

tainment to besmirch the civil society. Why would actors who are celebrated for freely practicing their profession do the Statist's bidding?

Writing not just of actors but all those who "pretend to themselves that they are still pushing envelopes and slashing away at bourgeois complacency," University of Tennessee professor Wilfred M. McClay observes, "There is profound self-deception at work in people who luxuriate in the fruits of worldly success while disdaining the personal habits and cultural conditions that make such success possible. There is also a strangely hidden compulsion behind the need for such condemnation. Yet somehow even the most incongruous social conventions can take hold for a time, and in our era, the conjunction of a dutiful other-directedness with a dutiful rebelliousness seems by now so entrenched and commonplace as to be almost natural. Its existence would make it very challenging to be *truly* countercultural if one is of a mind to be."⁷

The late Eric Hoffer, the blue-collar philosopher, provides a compelling answer: "Those who see their lives as spoiled and wasted crave equality and fraternity more than they do freedom. If they clamor for freedom, it is but freedom to establish equality and uniformity. The passion for equality is partly a passion for anonymity: to be one thread of the many which make up a tunic; one thread not distinguishable from the others. No one can then point us out, measure us against others and expose our inferiority."⁸

The actor thirsts for attention. But he lives in the world of make-believe. Once he achieves fame, he wishes for his fame to be used to achieve relevance. Attention and fame would appear to be at odds with anonymity, but the actor finds anonymity in

the larger fraternity that is Hollywood and relevance in its causes—Marxism in the 1940s to global warming today. It is the rare actor who challenges the fraternity.

The Statist is also assisted by the media, for the media are parasites of the Statist—not the government per se but the Statist. They gather information produced by the Statist and regurgitate it to the masses. The relationship between the Statist and media is symbiotic. The Statist protects the media and enhances the media's clout by censoring the speech of others, usually at the insistence of the media. Today, campaign finance laws restrict the amount of resources individuals can use to speak about candidates to their fellow citizens during political contests. And even if the necessary resources are raised, the Statist prohibits their use for broadcast communications in the crucial days running up to the election. Hence, the individual must rely inordinately on the media for disseminating information.

To the extent there are pockets of independence that challenge the Statist, they are treated like tumors that need to be isolated and excised to achieve the purity of the body politic. There are current efforts to resuscitate the so-called Fairness Doctrine and similar connivances—which would circumscribe the content of speech on talk radio—simply because the forum is generally hostile to the Statist.⁹ The media decry alternative information outlets on the Internet, which do not vet their content through the media's editors. There are now rumblings about regulating the Internet, which occurs in places like China. Of course, these neutering strategies are said by the Statist to actually promote speech, or responsible speech, thereby disguising his real motives.¹⁰

The media sing like a nay-saying Greek chorus, amplifying the

mantra for greater statist authority. No matter how robust the economy, they claim the imminent threat of a recession or depression. And when economic hardship exists, often at the hand of the Statist, they join the Statist in condemning the free market and advocating for more government. No matter the progress in race relations, they insist racism is rampant. In the weeks leading up to the election of President Barack Obama, the media reported repeatedly of the racist citizens who would deny Obama his victory should he lose. No matter the advances of the health-care system, the media paint it as inferior to all others, with anecdotal stories of incompetence and services denied to help promote statist health-care proposals. Rarely do the media report of the nightmarish, systemic failures of the British or Canadian national health-care experiments. For the most part the Statist's enemies are the media's enemies, as reflected in their hostility to individuality and private property, and the Statist and the media have kindred spirits in academia and Hollywood. Their effect is to soften up the population to become receptive to the counterrevolution—or at least lessen resistance to it.

Support for the Statist ought not be confused with support for the state as is. The Statist himself will criticize the state, not for the purpose of reforming it or reducing it, but for changing it in the name of reforming it. The counterrevolution is a constant revolution, since the Statist can never rid the individual or state of imperfection and inequality, no matter how hard he tries. He is obsessed with the task nonetheless and is credited with deep compassion for the effort.

The British writer-philosopher C. S. Lewis wrote, "Of all tyrannies, a tyranny sincerely exercised for the good of its victims

may be the most oppressive. It would be better to live under robber barons than under omnipotent moral busybodies. The robber baron's cruelty may sometimes sleep, his cupidity may at some point be satiated; but those who torment us for our own good will torment us without end for they do so with the approval of their own conscience."¹¹