

Real Dissent-Tom Woods

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I. Overview

- 1) “Most of them [chapters of this book] challenge the narrow band of opinion that Americans are permitted to occupy. Should they stray from the spectrum running from Hillary Clinton to Mitt Romney—surely, citizen, any position you may want to take may be found within that compendious range!—they will be condemned, smeared, or ignored by the gatekeepers of permissible discussion....People whose minds have been formed in ideological prison camps for 12 years have learned to confine themselves within an approved range of possibilities. Tax me 35% or tax me 40%, but don’t raise the possibility that taxation itself may be a moral issue rather than just a matter of numbers. Either bomb or starve that poor country, but don’t tell me there might be a third option. The Fed should loosen, or the Fed should tighten, but don’t tell me our money supply doesn’t need to be supervised by a central planner. As always, confine yourself to the three-square inches of intellectual terrain the New York Times has graciously allotted to you.”
- 2) “According to Alte editor-in-chief Jacob Weisberg, the Tea Party Movement has two defining traits: status anxiety and anarchism....not real anarchism—that’s Weisberg’s emotional hypochondria at work—but merely a growing skepticism of authority. This won’t do at all. Americans were born to be ruled by people and ideas of which Jacob Weisberg approved, and they are supposed to like it, or at least shut up about it. If they absolutely must complain, their complaints and modes of resistance must be kept within bounds approved of by Slate, a division of the Washington Post Company. In other words, if these uppity peons would just stick to ideas and strategies chosen for them by their enemies, it would be easier for our betters to tolerate them.”
- 3) “This morning, while involuntarily subjected to FOX News, I heard a newscaster say, ‘You can’t get more anti-Mitt than Rick Santorum’. You know what? I’m pretty sure you can.”
- 4) “About 15 years ago a conservative columnist wrote that Americans are faced with a choice between the Stupid Party and the Evil Party. And that once in a while the two parties get together and do something that’s both stupid and evil, and that’s called bipartisanship.”
- 5) Note: economic history fraught, definitely susceptible to lots of shenanigans. “To portray a historical figure in a light exactly opposed to the popular impression and to how all other scholars have viewed him is far more exciting than repeating the boring conventional wisdom.”

II. War And Propaganda

1) Current state of affairs

- A. “Today, that debate takes place only between neoconservatives and ‘realists’, both of whom agree on the need for some kind of major U.S. military presence over much of the globe. Not only is nonintervention not even considered, but it is also enough to get you written out of polite society.”
- B. Rothbard: one can uncover the correct position on state action X by imagining a gang of thugs carrying out the state action in question.
 - a. “One of the great triumphs of the government propaganda machine in self-described democracies is the ‘we are the government’ line...for that reason...eliminate the pronoun ‘we’ from [your] vocabulary. ‘We’ did not kill those Iraqi kids... They did this.”
 - i. Elihu Burritt observes that the (relatively few) victims of misfortune (famine, shipwrecks, train accidents, etc.) receive more sympathy than the (many multiples larger) victims of war. Maybe a product of our ability to understand scale?
 - ii. “That’s what Voltaire meant when he said, ‘It is forbidden to kill; therefore all murderers are punished unless they kill in large numbers and to the sound of trumpets.’”
 - iii. “Conservatives, of all people, wind up supporting courses of actions that...are justified on the basis of propaganda they’d laugh at if it came from the mouths of Saddam Hussein or Nikita Khrushchev”

2) Interventionism and Who’s Conservative?

- A. Robert Nisbet (*Twilight of Authority, The Quest For Community*) along with Russell Kirk and Richard Weaver are 3 of most noteworthy conservative intellectuals between 1945 and 1975.
 - a. Identifies that most modern political philosophers “takes for granted the starting point of a unitary, all-powerful central state ruling over an undifferentiated aggregate of individuals, and which is legally and temporally prior and superior to all subsidiary associations....Every competing center of authority—family, local community, church, or any number of others (called intermediary associations)—was increasingly subordinated to the central state”. Here, reminded of Aunon Macintyre’s *The Total State*.
 - b. Abhors the “grotesque mystique that had come to surround the American president”
 - i. Woods traces “the modern-day cult of personality that surrounds the president probably originated with the ebullient and idiosyncratic Theodore Roosevelt.... [who] also brought with him a full-fledged philosophy of the presidency, not entirely dissimilar to that of his supposed archenemy, Woodrow Wilson”
 - ii. The number of executive orders explodes under TR. Hayes and Garfield each issued none. Chester Arthur 3, Grover Cleveland 6, Ben Harrison 4, William Mckinley 51. TR 1006 over two terms.

- c. Notes the reversal of political thought. “The most amusing, in a historical light, is surely the application of ‘conservative’ to great increases in military expenditures.”
 - d. “In the two world wars, in Korea, and in Vietnam, the leaders of American entry into war were such renowned liberal-progressives as Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman, and John F Kennedy. In all four episodes conservatives...we largely hostile to intervention; were isolationists indeed.”
- B. Observes that Reagan’s “deepest soul is not Republican-conservative but New Deal-Second World War Democrat. Thus his well noted preference for citing FDR and Kennedy as noble precedents for his actions rather than Coolidge, Hoover, or even Eisenhower. The world ‘revolution’ springs lightly from his lips...his passion for crusades...is scarcely American-conservative.”
- C. Current Conservative hate for their own founder?
- a. Russell Kirk makes the obvious point that the loudmouths today ridicule and condemn: perpetrating large-scale violence can make people angry. “We must expect to suffer during a very long period of widespread hostility towards the United States--
- In all of the world of Islam, the masses now regard the United States as their arrogant adversary.”
 - b. In response to David Frum’s National Review article in 2003 called ‘Unpatriotic Conservatives’ which attacked the few conservatives who oppose the war in Iraq.
 - c. Jeffrey Lord claim that noninterventionism is ‘liberal’ (nevermind that historically, ~no progressives opposed entry into WW1, and that support of recent interventions all cheerlead by Hillary Clinton, NYT, Wash Post, liberal establishment, etc.).
 - d. The replacement of conservative history with the cult of Reagan “Reagan has become the Right’s Obama: a man whose every action is to be treated as ipso facto brilliant, perhaps even divinely inspired. Critics are mere hereitics whose arguments need not actually be refuted; the mere fact that they have disagreed with the Great Leader is enough to condemn them forever.... Jeffrey Lord is more interested in someone’s loyalty to a man than he is in loyalty to the principles that the man was supposed to represent.”
 - e. Funny anecdote, Moorfield Storey, who was white, was the first president of the NAACP.
- D. Jonah Goldberg, in National Review: “Every 10 years or so, the United States needs to pick up some crappy little country and throw it against the wall, just to show we mean business.”(TW note: would Russell Kirk ever say something like this? What are the foreign-policy differences between people like Hillary Clinton and John McCain?)
- E. “[Max] Boot personifies every horrifying and jingoistic feature of what we laughingly call conservatism today. Boot famously observed in late 2001 that the United States had not suffered enough casualties in its War on Terror, and later called for a ‘Freedom Legion’ of foreign soldiers who could serve in that war. With the U.S. military increasingly strapped, Boot explained, we need to realize that there is a ‘pretty big pool of manpower that’s not being tapped: everyone on the planet who is not a U.S. citizen or permanent resident.’ This is a good idea, according to Boot, because (among other things) congressmen would have fewer scruples about sending non-Americans into battle than they would about sending their own constituents.”

- F. “And by the way, if I may be forgiven for stating the obvious, you are not a fiscal conservative—or any other kind of conservative, for that matter—if you think it’s a-okay to stay in Iraq for 100 years [John McCain had recently said that a 100 year occupation would be fine by him.]”
- G. “The misnamed ‘Defense’ Department (misnamed because after 9/11 the federal government created an entirely new department, Homeland Security, whose stated purpose was to in fact defend the country) is the one government program conservatives may never question.”
- H. “It says a great deal about the state of conservative thought in America that messianic utopianism could be confused with conservatism. To the contrary, such an ideology, whereby there exists some moral obligation to spread democracy and to ‘free’ the various unfree peoples of the world, is precisely what the great conservative Edmund Burke meant when he spoke of the ‘armed doctrines’ of the French Revolution. Mesmerized by the universalisms of the Enlightenment, the Jacobins were ready to spread revolution throughout Europe—for why should only the French enjoy the blessings of liberty?”
- I. Thought experiment regarding Iraq interventionism: Assume of the sake of argument that—democracy is best form of government, Iraqis will eventually reconcile themselves to the invasion, that U.S. will support a democracy in Iraq even when it becomes obvious that free elections will yield an anti-American government.... There are still some problems, namely Kurds, Sunnis, Shi’ites in Iraq are diametrically at odds.
- a. John C Calhoun warns that majority rule “which can be justified only on the basis of convention and utility rather than on any strictly moral foundation, can only work in places where there exists a basic commonality of interests among the people (e.g. same race, religion, creed, founding myth, etc.)”. Without that shared commonality, majority rule is another form of tyranny (people with mutually exclusive goals use strength to oppress each other)
 - i. Solution: concurrent majority (e.g. majorities in each group rather than aggregate majority)
- J. “He [Ron Paul] explained that foreign policy has consequences, and that political and military interference around the world has a tendency to stir up whole peoples against us... In sum, if you want to play empire, you cannot pretend that doing so will be costless. To the automatons of 2007 America, this is called ‘blaming America’ for 9/11. Detectives should bear that in mind the next time they seek the motive behind a murder. ‘You’re looking for motive? Are you saying the dead man had it coming?’”
- a. “What made Osama bin Laden’s message attractive, on the other hand, was precisely that it was defensive in nature, focusing on specific grievances that resonated with his Muslim audience. That, and not a war against the West over its decadence, is what won recruits. In other words, we may in fact be dealing not with comic-book villains but with actual human beings.”
 - b. “Then the talk of ‘they hate us for primary elections’ and ‘they hate us for gender equality’—that will go out the window, and maybe we can get down to brass tacks after we have multiple tens of thousands of dead Americans.”
 - c. “The radical Islam against which neoconservatives assure us they are protecting America by means of various kinds of interventions in Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Syria, Libya, and elsewhere has spread and grown stronger as the U.S.

government has demonized and destabilized regimes that had been keeping the crazies at bay. They's why I titled a recent blog post "Neocons Take Break From Spreading Radical Islam to Criticize Rand Paul."

- K. "Taft, known in his day as Mr. Republican, declared on the Senate floor in January 1951 that 'the principal purpose of the foreign policy of the United States is to maintain the liberty of our people... It's purpose is not to reform the entire world or spread sweetness and light and economic prosperity to peoples who have lived and worked out their own salvation for centuries, according to their customs, and to the best of their abilities.' Taft identified the second goal of American foreign policy as peace."
- L. "The Cold War apparatus gave birth to a military-industrial complex that is evidently impossible to rein in, and which is constantly in search of further justifications for ever-greater levels of spending. This is the one government program conservative may never question. This one is run by omniscient angels who don't need to be audited. This one has no entrenched interests of its own that it might pursue at the expense of the common good. That's true only of the farm lobby and the education bureaucracies. This is the Department of Defense, citizen. Trust them. USA! USA!"

3) Hierarchy of Concerns And Differences

- A. More imperative concern—hierarchy of concerns. Nathaniel Hawthorne: "a state was about as large an area as the human heart could be expected to love". The proper position is that of John Quincy Adams: "America has abstained from interference in the concerns of others, even when the conflict has been for principles to which she clings... she goes not abroad in search of monsters to destroy. She is the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all. She is the champion and vindicator only of her own."
 - a. Cicero: "The union and fellowship of men will be best preserved if each receives from us the more kindness in proportion as he is more closely connected with us."
 - b. 1 Timothy 5:8 "if any man have not care of his own, and especially of those of his house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."
 - c. Thomas Aquinas "Our parents and our country are the sources of our being...Consequently, after his duties toward God, man owes most to his parents and his country. One's duties towards one's parents include obligations towards relatives, because these latter have sprung from one's parents."
 - d. Edward Cahill (*The Framework of a Christian State*): "When St. Paul says that in the Church 'there is neither Gentile nor Jew... Barbarian or Scythian, bond or free, but Christ, all in all'... he does not imply that that the Church wishes to abolish or ignore the natural ties which bind individuals to their own country....He means rather, that the Church...receives and cherishes impartially the citizens of all nations, for all are equally dear to her Founder."
 - e. Robert Hayne in debate with Webster, speaking against false philanthropy "Their first principle of action is to leave their own affairs, and neglect their own duties, to regulate the affairs of the duties of others [e.g. John Lennon lecturing about peace while goes years without seeing his first son, or Jean-Jacques Rosseau who is devastated by news of earthquake in Lisbon, but places all five of his children in a founding asylum, or Woodrow Wilson speaking of 'high, disinterested purpose' for

entering WW1 despite no national interest (he viewed it as a way to create League of Nations)]

- f. Henry Clay, in explaining why America didn't contribute arms or funds to the Hungarian cause in 1800s despite American sympathy: "By the policy to which we have adhered since the days of Washington...we have done more for the cause of liberty in the world than arms could affect... far better is it for ourselves, for Hungary, and the cause of liberty, that adhering to our pacific system and avoiding the distant wars of Europe, we should keep our lamp burning brightly on this western shore, as a light to all nations."
- B. "The world really is filled with people who are really different, who really do think differently....In other words, imperialism has always been something of a losing proposition, especially in the modern international system, and our ruling class's attempt to nation-build the world in their own image is doomed to failure...Americans' like the rest of mankind, have an inalienable right to self-determination. Now that's not simply a theoretical statement. It's also a practical one. Because it is utterly impossible for one people to transfer its own ethos, its own notion of good and evil, its own way of doing things, to another. The Afghans, the Arabs, are who they are; they have grown up in a particular culture. It is what they know, what they love. As John Quincy Adams would have put it, who has appointed us as judges over them?"

4) Presidential war powers

- A. "He [John Woo] quotes Alexander Hamilton in the support of the idea that the colonists did not in fact repudiate the example of King George III, and did grant their president the power to initiate non-defensive military action without congressional approval (and non-defensive is precisely the issue here: no one in his right mind thinks the bombing of Syria involves saving Americans from an imminent danger)... Note that Woo has changed the subject. Now he's talking about 'conducting war'. No one disputes that the commander-in-chief power gives the president constitutional authority to conduct war...once Congress has declared it!" In fact, Hamilton writes in Federalist #69 that the president's power: "Would be nominally the same with that of the King of Great Britain, but in substance much inferior to it. It would amount to nothing more than the supreme command and direction of the military and naval forces, as first general and admiral of the confederacy; while that of the British king extends to the declaring of war, and to the raising and regulating of fleets and armies; all of which by the constitution under consideration would appertain to the Legislature"

III. Capitalism and Anti-Capitalism

1) Tom's Responses to Twitter critic

- A. In response to 'survival of the fittest': "The poverty rate in the United States fell from 95% in 1900 to around 12-14% in the late 1960s—a period in which government antipoverty measures were fairly trivial. By the late 1960s, when LBJ's War on Poverty programs began receiving substantial funding, the poverty rate stagnated. By 1994 it was about the same as it had been in the late 1960s, even though the federal government was by that time spending four times as much per capital as it had under LBJ."
- B. In response to the idea that freedom allows for aggrandizement of power and manipulation of will: "It is the government that does these things? Ever see the government propagandize for war? They manage to turn their populations against peoples they have never even heard of, much less actually met."
- C. In response to the idea that humans make decisions based on the short term rather than long term: "Assuming this dubious psychological generalization to be true, why would it not apply equally well to the political class itself? Why would it not apply equally to the voters who will elect the political class?"
- D. In response to the idea that shrewd individuals can manipulate the 'short-term' thinking of above for personal benefit, harming all: "We are left to wonder why the economy is not in a state of permanent recession. Aren't greedy manipulators everywhere? If so, why does greed manifest itself only in cyclical patterns?"
- E. In response to the idea that mass advertisement renders the 'invisible hand' useless: "If this critique were correct, we would have a hard time accounting for how much money firms devote to marketing research to try to ascertain whether consumer demand exists for the product they seek to develop. Why bother spending so much time and money figuring out what consumers want if a clever advertisement is enough to snooker them into buying almost anything?"
- F. In response to capitalism creates inequality: "The American poor take for granted amenities that the greatest kings and queens of Europe could scarcely have imagined" and "Most arguments about income inequality are based on static analysis....but fully 29% of those in the bottom quintile of income in 1975 had moved to the very top quintile by 1991"
- G. In response to capitalism doesn't alleviate all pain and suffering: "We are being much too ambitious if we think even the best economic institutions can transform human beings from flawed creatures into saints. The correction of human failings is the business of families, churches, and voluntary organizations of all kinds."

2) Things were awesome when taxes were higher?

- A. "John Kenneth Galbraith [1965] says there is no problem in New York that couldn't be solved by doubling the city's budget. By the 1970s the budget had been tripled, and the city's problems were worse than ever."
- B. "when our education system was supposedly 'the envy of the world', it was spending far less per capita, adjusted for inflation, than it does today....Moreover, there is no connection between higher education spending and higher SAT scores. In fact, some of the highest

scores are earned in states that spend the least on education. Washington D.C., which spends the most, is dead last.”

3) The misplaced fear of monopoly

- A. Burton Folsom in *The Myth of the Robber Barons* makes the point that “The political entrepreneur succeeds by using the implicit violence of government to cripple his competitors and harm consumers. The market entrepreneur, on the other hand, makes his fortune by providing consumers with products they need at prices they can afford, and maintains and expands his market share by remaining innovative and responsive to consumer demand.”
- a. “Andrew Carnegie almost single-handedly managed to reduce the price of steel rails from \$160 per ton in the mid-1870s to \$17 per ton in the late 1890s.”
 - b. “John D Rockefeller was able to reduce the price of kerosene from one dollar per gallon to ten cents per gallon.”
 - c. “Still another of the alleged robber barons was Cornelius Vanderbilt. In 1798 the government of New York had granted Robert Livingston and Robert Fulton a monopoly on steamboat traffic for thirty years. Vanderbilt was hired to run a steamboat between New Jersey and Manhattan in defiance of that monopoly. Vanderbilt evaded capture while at the same time charging only one-quarter of the monopolists’ fare. After *Gibbons vs Ogden* overturned New York’s steamboat monopoly, the fare for a trip from New York City to Albany dropped from seven dollars to three.”
 - d. “By the time the government got around to breaking up Standard Oil [in 1911], the normal operation of the free market [only competition goes from Pure Oil in 1900, to Associated Oil in 1901, to Texas Company in 1902 to....] had already reduced its market share from 80% to 25%.”
- B. “Mainstream economics identifies monopolists by their behavior: they earn premium profits by restricting output and raising prices. Was that behavior evident in the industries where monopoly was most frequently alleged to have existed?...During the 1880s, when real GDP rose 24%, output in the industries alleged to have been monopolized for which data were available rose 175% in real terms. Prices in those industries, meanwhile, were generally falling, and much faster than the 7% decline for the economy as a whole. We’ve already discussed steel rails, which fell from \$68 to \$32 during the 1880s; we might also note the price of zinc, which fell from \$5.51 to \$4.40 per pound, and refined sugar, which fell from \$0.09 to \$0.07 per pound. In fact, this pattern held true for...15 of the 17 supposedly monopolized industries, which the exceptions of castor oil and matches.”
- C. The answer to “what about xyz, that is an example of a non-government monopoly?”
- a. Often, dead wrong. For example “What about the DeBeers diamond cartel? Surely that is an example of free market “monopoly”....In fact, there has been no free market in diamonds. The South African government nationalized all diamond mines, even ones it hadn’t yet discovered. Thus, a property owner who discovers diamonds on his property finds ownership title transferred to the government.”

IV. Attacks on Liberty

1) In response to the question: “If your approach is so great, why hasn’t any country in the world ever tried it?”

- A. Akin to asking: “If your approach is so great why...”
 - a. “...doesn’t local law enforcement want to give up the money, supplies, and authority that come from the drug war?”
 - b. “...don’t big financial firms prefer to stand or fall on their merits, and prefer bailouts instead?”
 - c. “...don’t people want to try it out, after having been propagandized against it nonstop for 17 years?”

2) The slavish desire certain people have to be ruled.

- A. “You don’t trust the (so-called) experts?!?!?”
 - a. “Just two months before Fannie and Freddie collapsed and were taken over by the government, then Treasury Secretary Hank Paulson told not to worry: after all, he said, their regulator reported that they are adequately capiutalized.”
- B. “Nullification was settled in 1819 with McCulloch v Maryland”
 - a. “McCulloch held that when the federal government exercised a constitutional power the states could not interfere with it. That of course begs rather than settles the question, since a nullifying state contends precisely that the federal government is not exercising a constitutional power.”
 - b. “Spencer Roane, the chief judge of Virginia’s Supreme Court, completely dismantled Marshall and his reasoning in a series of unrelenting critiques. James Madison said Virginia would never have ratified the Constitution had anyone thought the federal government’s powers to be as expansive as John Marshall was proposing, given that exactly the opposite view of the new government was expressly promised to the people at the Richmond ratifying convention...Thomas Jefferson wrote the following year: ‘The judiciary of the United States is the subtle corps of sappers and miners constantly working under group to undermine the foundations of our confederated republic.’”
 - c. “I suppose someone forgot to tell Wisconsin it was violating ‘settled law’ when it declared the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 unconstitutional in 1859 and acted accordingly.”
- C. The enforcers of approved opinions
 - a. “To be attacked by a Gore Vidal, or an HL Mencken, one of the great wordsmiths of American criticism, while surely unpleasant, must have been oddly exhilarating for the poor souls on the receiving end. I, on the other hand, have the more dubious and prosaic distinction of being a regular target of Ian Millhiser. So you’ve never heard of Ian Millhiser. You’ve never seen him. But you only think you haven’t. You have. Ever met someone who’s dying to let you and the rest of the world know he holds all the approved opinions? Then you’ve met Ian Millhiser. In every hysterical reaction to dissident voices—i.e., voices that (gasp!) differ from both Barack Obama and Mitt

Romney!—you have seen him. You have seen Ian in every social climber who would die a thousand deaths before entertaining an unconventional thought.”

b. “Extremist is one of the commissar’s favorite words.”

D. 10th Amendment

a. “The modern consensus of law professors, to which Millhiser would undoubtedly point, does not count. There is no room in republican theory for it. The ratifying conventions, according to James Madison, are where we look for our understanding of the Constitution. Even before the 10th amendment codified the principle, we find one ratifying convention after another saying that the federal government would have only the powers ‘expressly delegated’ to it. This was the basis on which the Constitution was ratified. At Virginia’s ratifying convention, skeptics of the Constitution were even told that if the federal government took one step beyond the expressly delegated powers to impose ‘any supplementary condition’ upon the states, Virginia would be exonerated.”

b. “‘I don’t agree with their decision’ Millhiser says about sheriffs who won’t assist federal agents in enforcing new gun regulations. But then he says, ‘I don’t want to see state officials enforcing the federal marijuana laws.’ And he thinks nullification is incoherent? Yes, I’m sure he could explain himself. He likes the gun law but not the drug laws, so I guess the new rule would be that state officials should enforce only the federal laws Ian Millhiser likes...”

E. Matt Yglesias

a. “Instead of being impressed that thousands of people were economically literate enough to know something about the Mises-Hayek theory of the business cycle, which won the Nobel Prize in 1974, Yglesias is beside himself that so many people had adopted a view that neither he nor his friends had approved for them in advance...Ron Paul is so scary that Yglesias resort to the single-sentence paragraph [Today, Paul is the chairman of the House Subcommittee on Monetary Policy.] to dramatize for us just how scary he is.

b. “Greenwald—unlike Yglesias a genuine progressive whom Robert La Follette would have been proud of—notes how terms like ‘crankish’ or ‘crazy’ are used as weapons in our political culture, and how selectively people like Yglesias deploy them: Those who support countless insane policies and/or who support politicians in their own party who do—from the Iraq War to the Drug War, from warrantless eavesdropping and denial of habeas corpus to presidential assassinations and endless war in the Muslim world—love to spit the ‘crazy’ label at anyone who falls outside of the two-party establishment...forced to name the ‘craziest’ policy favored by American politicians, I’d say the multibillion-dollar war on drugs, which no one thinks is winnable. Asked about the most ‘extreme’, I’d cite the invasion of Iraq...the ‘kookiest’ policy is arguable farm subsidies for corn, sugar, and tobacco—products that people ought to consume less, not more...”

F. Left and Right problems

a. Conservatives readiness to hysteria

i. “To wit: just launch a military offensive, justifying it however you like—on behalf of national security, the liberation of an oppressed people, simple

revenge, whatever—and they’ll promptly leap to its defense. Everyone who supports to mission will be a great patriot, while opponents should be censored, jailed, or even executed (those people are probably in league with the terrorists anyway). Certainly anyone who believes in alternatives to large-scale violence will be dismissed as a deluded idealist who lacks the realism that our dangerous world demands. All too many conservatives will readily believe and defend the stupidest, crudest propaganda and sloganeering, and launch crazed attacks on people telling what later (and inevitably) turns out to be the truth.”

- b. Progressives desire to be ruled
 - i. “Yet so-called progressives aren’t much better. Except with them you simply need to say something is in the public interest, and that it helps restrain all the bad guys who would otherwise prey upon the public.”
- c. “The political center cheers both the foreign and the domestic aggression, of course, as evidence of its wise moderation.”

3) From within the house

- A. To the nonsense that opposition to the Lincoln regime=supporting slavery
 - a. “Lysander Spooner opposed it [the Lincoln regime], and Spooner supported John Brown (I suppose Spooner supported slavery?)”
 - b. The precedents set by Lincoln during the war have been exploited ever since by left-liberals and neoconservatives, who are all too glad to respond, when you object to some enormity of the War on Terror, ‘why, even Lincoln did these things!’”
- B. “Why does she [Borowski] rail against other women’s choices? Surely a core libertarian value is neutrality between different conceptions of the good?” Actually, no. I replied ‘The core libertarian value is nonaggression. Neutrality between different conceptions of the good’ has nothing to do with libertarianism. If you were truly neutral between different conceptions of the good, you wouldn’t be arguing against Julie’s conception of the good.”

4) Random

- A. “Now E.J. Dionne...has come along to remind everyone why we need our overlords. I will have plenty to say if I confine myself to this one Dionne paragraph...So Dionne repeats the ‘Hoover believed in laissez faire’ myth...Programs begun during the Hoover years, such as the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, were forerunners of the New Deal, and years later New Dealer Rexford Tugwell acknowledged that—even though no one would say so at the time--- ‘practically the whole New Deal was extrapolated from programs that Hoover started’. Hoover expressly said that laissez-faire was a thing of the past. He had said so all through the 1920s. He launched public works projects, raised taxes, extended emergency loans to failing firms, hobbled international trade, and lent money to the states for relief programs. He sought to prop up wages as prices were falling. His deficits, as a percentage of GDP, rivaled FDR’s”
- B. “That [individuals helping their fellow man] was exactly her [Margaret Thatcher’s] point. There is no such thing as a n abstract, disembodied blob called ‘society’. All that exists are

individuals, and it is up to those individuals—no ‘society’ to perform the great works of charity and civilization.”

V. The Remnant

1) Albery Jay Nock's *Isaiah's Job*

- A. Adapts the Lord's instructions to Isaiah into a modern vernacular: "Tell them what is wrong, and why and what is going to happen unless they have a change of heart and straighten up. Don't mince matters. Make it clear that they are positively down to their last chance. Give it to them good and strong and keep on giving it to them. I suppose perhaps I ought to tell you," He added, "that it won't do any good. The official class and their intelligentsia will turn up their noses at you and the masses will not even listen. They will all keep on in their own ways until they carry everything down to destruction, and you will probably be lucky if you get out with your life." Isaiah had been very willing to take on the job — in fact, he had asked for it — but the prospect put a new face on the situation. It raised the obvious question: Why, if all that were so — if the enterprise were to be a failure from the start — was there any sense in starting it? "Ah," the Lord said, "you do not get the point. There is a Remnant there that you know nothing about. They are obscure, unorganized, inarticulate, each one rubbing along as best he can. They need to be encouraged and braced up because when everything has gone completely to the dogs, they are the ones who will come back and build up a new society; and meanwhile, your preaching will reassure them and keep them hanging on. Your job is to take care of the Remnant, so be off now and set about it."
- B. "Isaiah preached to the masses only in the sense that he preached publicly.... He knew that the Remnant would listen; and knowing also that nothing was to be expected of the masses under any circumstances, he made no specific appeal to them."

2) Ron Paul doesn't have a cult following

- A. "Speak to a Ron Paul supporter and you'll find someone who knows much more than the average person about topics like monetary policy, the Constitution, U.S. history, economics, and much else. That person can give as many solid, substantive reasons for supporting Ron Paul as you have time to listen to. Contrast this to what we often see from supporters of other candidates. They like theirs because the candidate 'look presidential', 'seem like a leader', etc."
- B. "We are facing serious, long-term and systemic problems, and all the Cains, Gingrichs, Romneys, and Perrys of the world can come up with is a little regulatory tinkering and some tax reform. This is completely irrelevant to the problems we face right now. We need sweeping, systemic changes, carried out by a real supporter of the free market who sees the whole picture, not trivial tinkering by some empty suit."
- C. Millions of Republican voters [during the 2008 and 2012 presidential campaigns] insisted on being talked down to by plastic men straight out of central casting. What could they have been thinking? I came up with some possibilities:
- a. "Even though the Constitution had to be amended to allow for alcohol prohibition, and even though I claim to care about the Constitution, I don't mind that there's no constitutional authorization for the war on drugs, and I will punish at the polls anyone who favors the constitutional solution of returning the issue to the states."

- b. I am deeply concerned about radical Islam, so it was a good idea to depose the secular Saddam Hussein—who was so despised by Islamists that Osama bin Laden himself offered to fight against him in the 1991 Persian Gulf War—and replace him with a Shiite regime friendly with Iran, while also bringing about a new Iraqi constitution that makes Islam the state religion and forbids any laws that contradicts its teachings.”
- c. “Even though the war in Iraq was based on crude propaganda I would have laughed at if the Soviet Union had peddled it, and even though the result has been hundreds of thousands of dead Iraqis, four million people displaced, trillions of dollars down the drain, tens of thousands of serious injuries among American servicemen and an epidemic of suicide throughout the military, not to mention the ruination of America’s reputation in the world, I see no reason to be skeptical when the same people who peddled that fiasco urge me to support yet another war as my country is going bankrupt.”

3) Ron Paul was systematically excluded by his own party

- A. “After reading this [that Paul had been excluded from the Iowans for Tax Relief & Iowa Christian Alliance forum in 2007 despite polling in 3rd], I called Edward Failor myself. Failor explained that the event had been scheduled months ago, and that at that time they had made a decision about who the most ‘credible’ candidate would be.... ‘You thought Tommy Thompson was a more credible candidate than Ron Paul?’ I asked (can you imagine people gleefully sharing YouTube clips of Thompson with their friends, or holding up ‘Tommy Thompson Revolution’ signs?)...After our call, I got to thinking about this Failor character: what kind of person running a ‘tax relief’ organization would exclude the presidential candidate with—and this is no exaggeration—possibly the best record on taxation in all of American history...? Should this be the Iowans For A Little Tax Relief But Not Too Much? I did a little poking around, and it turns out that our Edward Failor was initially a supporter of...George Pataki. The New York Sun, writing about Pataki’s record, observed in 2006: ‘Mr. Pataki could be a hard sell to small-government conservatives, given that state spending in New York has grown to a projected \$75 billion in the coming fiscal year from \$43 billion in 1995.’ No problem for Edward Failor. According to the Sun, ‘Mr. Failor said the increases were the necessary result of growth brought on by aggressive tax cuts.’ Oh.”

VI. End The Fed

1) 'The Fed Prevents Recessions!'

- A. “The premise is familiar enough: why, without a central bank or its lesser cousin, a national bank, we had nothing but boom, bust, and sorrow—but since the creation of the Federal Reserve System, it’s been nothing but sunshine and lollipops. It really is that simple. People who believe in a free market in banking, as opposed to these cartel arrangements, are evidently so uninformed or so blinded by ideology that they have never heard or internalized this one-sentence encapsulation of 19th and 20th century monetary history.”
- B. “How does [Joseph] DiStefano account for the Panic of 1819, which contemporaries attributed to the inflationary and then rapidly contractionary policies of the Second Bank of the United States, the great stabilizer? That’s easy, he leaves it out. (He likewise leaves out the Great Depression from his discussion of the 20th century, an episode one might think would count against the Fed)”
- C. “Funny, the economy hadn’t crashed when the First Bank of the United States was shut down more than two decades earlier. When the charter of the original Bank of the United States expired in 1811, and the institution set about calling in its loans and closing its doors, the DiStefano’s of the world made wild predictions of bankruptcy and economic collapse.”
- D. “Samuel Tilden [hard-money New York senator] likewise wondered ‘how could a large bank, constituted on essentially the same principles, be expected to regulated beneficially the lesser banks? Has enlarged power been found to be less liable to abuse than limited power?’”
- E. “President James Buchanan engaged in no vain effort to reflate the economy in the wake of the stock-market crisis and bank run that constituted the relatively mild, six-month Panic of 1857—which DiStefano, who is in a bit over his head when it comes to 19th century economic history, calls a ‘howling depression’...Fashionable modern advice did not exist in Buchanan’s day, and it showed. The economy recovered within six months, even though the money supply fell, interest rates rose, government spending was not increased, and businesses and banks were not bailed out.”
- F. “Even during the pre-Fed panics, from the Civil War to 1907, the bank failure rate was small, as were the losses depositors suffered. Depositor losses amounted to only 0.1% of GDP during the Panic of 1893, which was the worst of them all with respect to bank failures and depositor losses. By contrast, in just the past 30 years of the central-bank era, the world has seen 20 banking crises that led to depositor losses in excess of 10% of GDP. Half of those saw losses in excess of 20% of GDP.”

2) Status Quo

- A. “Since the Fed was created in 1913 the dollar has lost at least 95% of its value...Under the Fed, therefore, people have lost an option they once had: accumulating savings in cash.”
- B. “The very existence of the central bank institutionalizes the problem of moral hazard, which involves an actor’s willingness to behave with an artificially elevated level of risk tolerance because he believes any losses he incurs will be borne by someone else.”
- C. Distribution effects: “The newly created money is injected at particular points. Whoever receives it first—that is, people who happen to be politically well connected—get to spend it

before prices have commensurately risen....when the government spends billions of dollars created out of thin air...on the defense industry, for example, defense firms get the money at the very beginning of this process, before prices have commensurately risen.”

3) Consequences

- A. “What would we do in such situations without the Fed? Under a more sound monetary system these fluctuations would be far less violent in the first place. And unsound firms would go bankrupt, as a former CEO of AIG later admitted would have been the best course of action after all. The world would not come to an end. If the market is freely allowed to re-price assets, which was the phenomenon we were terrified into not wanting to occur, that doesn’t change the amount of physical stuff in existence. The assets themselves may be redistributed....An important lesson is learned for the future.” Or we could be satisfied with DiStefano’s solution, which is to keep Wall Street just as it is, without this salutary purge of leadership and capital.”
- B. “As for our current economic mess, McBama agree with the president, who summed up his own business cycle theory in these words: ‘Wall Street got drunk.’ Their solution? For starters, hundreds of billions of dollars in bailouts to the alleged drunkards.”

4) The Government Can Save Us

- A. “In case you’ve ever wondered what it must have been like to read Prava, the American media’s treatment of the financial crisis and our wise leaders’ expert management of it all has given everyone a wonderful opportunity... the headline ‘Obama Would Regulate New Bubbles’. Yes, you read that right. ‘Bubbles’ just occurs spontaneously. They have no cause or explanation. We just need government to identify and destroy them. Sometimes I wish our overlords would get their stories straight. First, Alan Greenspan- whom the NYT once described, in its typical toadying, totalitarian fashion, as ‘the infallible maestro of our financial system’—told us it was impossible to tell if a bubble existed at any given time. Now we have Barack Obama insisting that not only can we detect bubbles, but we can also deflate them with sufficient dispatch to prevent them from causing any serious economic disturbances.”
- B. “Our present crisis was caused by excessive ‘leverage’ you see—though we won’t bother asking where major economic actors managed to get all this credit in the first place. That might lead people to ask hard questions about the Fed yet again.”
- C. “Yes, an institution created by act of Congress, whose board is appointed by the president, which could not survive without special monopoly privileges, and which does the government’s bidding, is for all intents and purposes a government institution.”
- D. “In progressive la-la land, the Federal Reserve was founded when the American people demanded reform of the banking industry....Anyone interested in living on this planet might be interested to know a fact that almost sounds too spooky and conspiratorial to be true: bankers in fact drafted the legislation that created the Fed themselves, in a private meeting in Jekyll Island, Georgia, in 1910.”

5) Random

- A. Great explanation: “Money in your possession amounts to compensation for some good or service you have provided in the past. When you buy a dozen apples, you do so with the proceeds from a good or service that you yourself provided in the past. So you are able to buy the apples because in the past you gave someone else something he needed....thus when these favored firms spend this money [that they get first by virtue of being closer to Fed printing], they are in effect taking goods out of the economy without providing anything themselves.”

VII. Historical Revisionism

1) Homestead Strike of 1892

- A. “1889 workers had asked for a contract by which their pay would vary with the price of steel...except after steel went below \$25 a ton, at which point their wages would not be allowed to decline any further. But the early 1890s, though, steel prices had fallen substantially, all the way down to \$22.5 per ton. In 1892 the company offered a new contract, stipulating that the new floor... would be \$22 per ton. Of the company’s workforce of 3800, only 800 members...failed to come to an agreement...and the strike began.”
- B. “So then what happened? According to LaFeber ‘In mid-1892 warfare erupted’. Notice the word choice. Warfare simply ‘erupted’. What actually happened is that the strikers surrounded Homestead to prevent nonunion workers from gaining access to the plant. When 300 Pinkerton guards approached the plant on two barges via a river that bordered the plant, strikers opened fire on them, killing one and wounding four others. Only then did the Pinkertons return fire.”

2) Nullification

- A. Nullification: “dates back to 1798, when James Madison and Thomas Jefferson drafted the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions, respectively. There we read that the states, which created the federal government in the first place, by the very logic of what they had done must possess some kind of defense mechanism should their creation break free of the restraints they had imposed on it. Jefferson himself introduced the word ‘nullification’ into the American political lexicon, by which he meant the indispensable power of a state to refuse to allow an unconstitutional federal law to be enforced within its borders.”
- B. “Today, politically decentralization is gathering steam in all parts of the country, for all sorts of reasons. I fail to see the usefulness of the term ‘neo-confederate’—whatever this Orwellian neologism is supposed to mean—in describing a movement that includes California’s proposal to decriminalize marijuana, two dozen states’ refusal to abide by the REAL ID Act, and a growing laundry list of resistance movement to federal government intrusion.”
- C. In response to the view that ‘Nullification violates the Constitution’s Supremacy Clause’. This may be the most foolish, ill-informed argument against nullification of all. It is the reply we often hear from law school graduates and professors, who are taught only the nationalist version of American history and constitutionalism. It is yet another reason, as a colleague of mine says, never to confuse legal training with an education.... What the Supremacy Clause actually says is: ‘ This Constitution, and the Laws of the United States which shall be made in pursuance thereof... shall be the supreme law of the land.’ In other words, the standard law-school response deletes the most significant words of the whole clause. Thomas Jefferson was not unaware of, and did not deny, the Supremacy Clause. His point was that only the Constitution and laws which shall be made in pursuance thereof shall be the supreme law of the land. Citing the Supremacy Clause merely begs the question. A nullifying state maintains that a given law is not ‘in pursuance thereof’ and therefore tha the Supremacy Clause does not apply in the first place.”

- D. In response to the view that ‘nullification is unconstitutional; it nowhere appears in the Constitution.’
- a. “Essentially nothing the states do is authorized in the federal Constitution, since enumerating the states’ powers is not the purpose of and is alien to the structure of that document.”
 - b. “The states preceded the Union. The COI speaks of ‘free and independent states’ that ‘have the full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all other acts and things which independent states may of right do....Article II of the Articles of Confederation says the states ‘retain their sovereignty, freedom, and independence’; they must have enjoyed that sovereignty in the past in order for them to ‘retain’ it in 1781.”
- E. In response to the view that ‘The Supreme Court declared itself infallible in 1958’
- a. “The obscure obiter dicta of *Cooper v Aaron* (1958) is sometimes raised against nullification. Here the Supreme Court expressly declared its statements to have exactly the same status as the text of the Constitution itself. But no matter what absurd claims the Court makes for itself... given that the whole argument involves who must decide such question in the last resort, citing the Supreme Court against it begs the whole question.”
- F. In response to the view that ‘nullification was the legal doctrine by which the Southern states defended slavery.’
- a. “This statement is as wrong as wrong can be. Nullification was never used on behalf of slavery. Why would it have been? What anti-slavery laws were there that the South would have needed to nullify? To the contrary, nullification was used against slavery, as when northern states did everything in their power to obstruct the enforcement of the fugitive slave laws, with the Supreme Court of Wisconsin going so far as to declare the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 unconstitutional and void. In *Ableman v Booth* (1859), the U.S. Supreme Court scolded it for doing so.”
- G. In response to the view that ‘Nullification would be chaotic’
- a. “It is far more likely that states will be too timid to employ nullification. But the more significant point is this: if the various states should have different policies, so what? That is precisely what the United States was supposed to look like.”

3) James Madison and the Making of America (Kevin Gutzman)

- A. Shows how it was actually Thomas Jefferson that drafted the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom.
- B. “Madison may be known as the father of the Constitution, but Gutzman is having none of it. ‘Far from being the ‘father of the Constitution’, Madison was an unhappy witness at its C-section birth...He certainly did not think of it as his own offspring. What emerged from the Philadelphia Convention was a federal government with enumerated powers, not a national government with plenary authority. At that point there were two ways forward for the nationalists. One way was the approach of figures like Alexander Hamilton and John Marshall, who simply spoke and acted as if the federal Constitution...had been the nationalist creation with broad powers they favored....Madison took a more honest route. Although he preferred a national government, he acknowledged that such a thing was neither

what had been drafted in Philadelphia nor what the people ratified in the conventions that followed”

- a. He spoke out against the incorporation of a national bank and in opposition to Alexander Hamilton’s use of the Constitution’s ‘necessary and proper’ clause in support of that bill.
 - b. When Hamilton and his allies tried...to derive powers from the Constitution’s preamble, Madison reminded them that preambles merely state the beginning of a document and do not assign powers.”
 - c. “Madison...opposed John Marshall’s seminal decision in *McCulloch v Maryland* (1819), which echoed the arguments of Alexander Hamilton for broad federal powers...The Court’s reasoning stood in defiance of the understanding by which Virginia had ratified the Constitution in 1788.”
- C. Thomas Jefferson’s endorsement of the Constitution.
- a. “In an era in which ‘Tenther’ (i.e. a supporter of the 10th Amendment) has, absurdly enough, become a term of derision, Jefferson’s approach to the union is a splash of cold water: ‘The true theory of our constitution is surely the wisest and best, that the states are independent as to everything within themselves and united as to everything respecting foreign nations.’”

4) Random

- A. Good point: “the conventional view that competition is a matter of the number of firms competing with each other, when a better definition involves the state of affairs that ensues when no violent barriers are placed in the way of entrants into an industry.”
- B. “Andrew Carnegie, LaFeber tells us, ‘later admitted that he used the 1873 to 1875 depression years to buy cheaply and save 25% of his costs.’ Note the choice of the word ‘admitted’, as if buying cheaply and keeping costs low were some kind of conspiracy against the public.”