

# The Democracy Worshipers

Russell Kirk saw it coming. As the Cold War was winding down, the father of modern conservatism was invited to the Heritage Foundation to lecture on America's

brightening prospects. As he celebrated with his friends the "death of Marxist ideology," Dr. Kirk pointedly warned us against a new "ideology of democracy."

"Various American voices have been raised these past few months to proclaim enthusiastically that soon all the world ... will embrace an order called 'democratic capitalism,'" said Kirk. "It seems to be the assumption of these enthusiasts — many of them members of the faction called Neoconservatism — that the political structure and the economic patterns of the United States will be emulated in every continent, for evermore."

"Democratic capitalism" is "neoliberal cant," said Kirk. It is an ideological folly to attempt to recreate in foreign lands with utterly different cultures what 200 years of American history produced here. Said Kirk, this manic drive by democratists to do so in Saigon led to the murder of Diem and the loss of South Vietnam.

Kirk hailed as a peerless Cold War leader that "elderly and eminent conservative," Ronald Reagan. Reagan's foreign policy, said Kirk, was "wondrously successful, with the exception of his failure in Lebanon." Just so. In Lebanon, Reagan intervened in a civil war where no vital interest was at risk, and 241 Marines paid the price.

Kirk also noted the gathering disaster in Africa. Democratists in Europe and America had helped strangle the Rhodesian regime of Ian Smith and were pressing sanctions to bring down Johannesburg.

Was Kirk not prophetic? Was he not right? Today, Marxist-racist Robert Mugabe is seizing white-owned farms in Zimbabwe, and starvation looms. South Africa is a crime-ridden and AIDS-infested nation slowing sinking toward failed-nation status.

Like all ideologues — be they Marxist, socialist, or Wilsonian — democracy worshipers attribute their disasters not to a flawed ideology but a lack of energy. We should, they argue, have gone back into Lebanon in force after the bombing at the Marine barracks and occupied Somalia after U.S. Army Rangers were massacred. But this is folly. There was never any vital U.S. interest at risk in Beirut or Mogadishu worth sending any U.S. soldiers to die for.

Today's democratist prattle about converting a post-Saddam Iraq into an Arab model of "American values" calls to mind LBJ's burling on about "building a Great Society on the Mekong."

Not long ago, America stood for freedom. When was our love of freedom replaced by this cult of democracy? What do we mean by democracy? Orwell said he might be more enthusiastic about democracy if only he could find someone who opposed it.

What has one-man, one-vote produced in Africa? Virtually all the fifty-odd African states have reverted to tyranny, tribalism, or genocide. Africa was better off under colonial rule.

Look at South America. After repeatedly electing Peronists, Argentina is a bankrupt country whose citizens come out in Buenos Aires at night to scour

garbage cans for food. Brazil, \$264 billion in debt, just elected a Marxist to solve an economic crisis. In Caracas, the elected president is a Castroite who earlier attempted a beer-hall putsch and is busily immiserating his middle class.

From Algeria to Pakistan, Islamists are winning elections. In democratic Europe, liberated by America, defended by America, free nations are voting away their sovereignties to the socialist super-state EU. Anti-Americanism is rife. Not one European nation has a birth rate that will keep it alive as a true European state through this century. If this is what democracy produces, why should U.S. soldiers die to impose it on Arabs and Muslims? Why should Arabs and Muslims not resist it to the death?

The mark of a "soundly conservative foreign policy," said Dr. Kirk, is prudence. "Its object should not be the triumph everywhere of America's name and manners under the slogan of 'democratic capitalism' but ... the preservation of the true national interest and acceptance of the diversity of economic and political institutions throughout the world. Soviet hegemony ought not be succeeded by American hegemony."

Dr. Kirk was an authentic conservative. Is George W. Bush? In his campaign he echoed Kirk: "The United States must be humble ... in how we treat nations that are figuring out how to chart their own course." Today the President brays like a neocon: "The 20th century ended with a single surviving model of human progress."

This is the hubris of the best and brightest of the Sixties, and we know what became of them. As Proverbs reminds us, "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall." ■

[the call to mercy]

## *Dominion: The Power of Man, The Suffering of Animals*

A Bush speechwriter makes a conservative argument for the humane treatment of animals.

**By Matthew Scully**

IT BEGAN WITH ONE pig at a British slaughterhouse. Somewhere along the production line it was observed that the animal had blisters in his mouth and was salivating. The worst suspicions were confirmed, and within days the borders had been sealed and a course of action determined. Soon all of England and the world watched as hundreds, and then hundreds of thousands, of pigs, cows, and sheep were taken outdoors, shot, thrown into burning pyres, and bulldozed into muddy graves. Reports described terrified cattle being chased by sharpshooters, clambering over one another to escape. Some were still stirring and blinking a day after being shot. The plague had meanwhile slipped into mainland Europe, where the same ritual followed until, when it was all over, more than ten million animals had been disposed of.

More than a year has passed since the last ditch was covered over. But probably you can still recall your own reactions because it was one of those events that made us all pause and ques-

tion basic assumptions. One felt that something had gone terribly wrong, something deep and serious and beyond the power of vaccines or borders or cullings to contain. We saw in all of their simplicity the facts of the case: here were innocent, living creatures, and they deserved better, and we just can't treat life that way. We realized, if only for an instant, that it wasn't even necessary, that we had brought the whole thing upon them and upon ourselves. Foot-and-mouth disease is not lethal to humans or to animals. They were all killed only because their market value had been diminished and because trade policies required it—because, in short, under the circumstances it was the quick and convenient thing to do. By the only measure we now apply to these creatures, they had all become worthless. For them, the only difference between what happened and what awaited them anyway was one of timing. And for us the only difference was visibility. This time, we had to watch.

Silent while all of this was unfolding in early 2001 were people usually quick to caution against “sentimentality” toward animals. Looking out upon those fields of burning pyres, no one could claim that mankind is going soft. The images bore witness, if anything, to an incredible hardness and abandon. It was an “economic disease,” as one writer put it, revealing attitudes there all along and now, in desperation, grimly carried out to their logical conclusion.

The drama had a familiar feel to it, for in a strange way mankind does seem to be getting more sentimental toward animals and also more ruthless. No age has ever been more solicitous to animals, more curious and caring. Yet no age has ever inflicted upon animals such massive punishments with such complete disregard, as witness scenes to be found on any given day at any modern industrial farm. Those places are hard to contemplate even without the crises that now and then capture our attention. Europe's recurring “mad-cow” scares have all come about from the once