Leslie Lenkowsky

A Nation of Deadbeats?

The welfare state has not made Britons lazy. But in providing the public services that Britons have wanted, it has put them to work in economically unproductive jobs.

The welfare state is, in a sense, a British invention. Although social insurance originated in Imperial Germany, the goals and methods adopted elsewhere were more likely to be those of Edwardian England. To careful observers such as Lord Bryce, New Zealand seemed "the social laboratory of the world," but the research and writings of British social reformers have had a wider influence. The Scandinavian nations proved more able to fashion durable social reforms out of the economic slump of the 1920s and 1930s; yet it was the British wartime plan of Sir William Beveridge that captured the imagination of the world. Indeed, the term "welfare state" first came into widespread usage to denote the postwar programs for social security and health care established by Britain's Labour Government.

A generation later, one might well wonder whether the bill for this burst of national ingenuity has at last come due. Is the price of leadership in providing "cradle to grave" security a steady decline in economic vitality, of which the current crisis is the latest and most severe instance? Has the "namby-pamby state," to use Andrew Shonfield's term, turned Britain into a country of deadbeats, "floating through life on a kind of giant mattress provided by the state, consisting of a combination of cottonwool and old-fashioned down"? Was Beatrice Webb right to object to the wave of Liberal reforms that culminated with the establishment of unemployment and sickness insurance in 1911 and 1912 because, as she later wrote:

> The fact that sick and unemployed persons were entitled to money incomes without any corresponding obligation to get well and keep well, or to seek and keep employment, seemed to us likely to encourage malingering and a disinclination to work for their livelihood.

Would it not be ironic if the germs of the "English sickness" were to be found in the National Health Service, and its kindred enterprises!

During the relative affluence of the 1950s and early 1960s, it would have been ridiculous to think so. There was a great debate then over reforming the welfare state, but the critics addressed themselves to entirely different concerns. To some Conservatives and a few liberal economists, the continuing expense of the health and social services was simply unnecessary. They argued that, contrary to Beveridge's assumption of high postwar unemployment, the average Briton was prosperous enough to pay directly for whatever help he needed, and that the resulting competition among providers would improve its quality. The Fabians and some Socialists thought an increasingly affluent Britain would become an "irresponsible society" if it failed to give a larger share of a bigger pie to those most in need. And some of the country's fiscal and monetary policy experts, recognizing that sustained economic growth was far from assured, worried about the welfare state's claim on aggregate demand. Few souls troubled about its impact on individual initiative and self-reliance.

But even economists have been hard-pressed to explain Britain's calamitous record in the 1970s, and so, once again, there has been a revival of interest in the pampering theory. A key plank of Margaret Thatcher's platform is her claim that the welfare state has mollycoddled the nation and given rise to a "progressive concensus" that scoffs at self-help and hard work. The support for these views by Sir Keith Joseph, who had presided over the health and social services during the administration of Edward Heath, endows them with the credibility of a penitent. With its proposed "new industrial strategy," the current Labour Government moved in a similar direction, promising to give lower priority to social programs and higher to identifying and supporting manufacturing firms likely to grow. "Productivity" has become a fashionable word among economic planners. A Downing Street "think-tank" report on the automobile industry, for example, asserted:

> With the same power at his elbow, and doing the same job, a continental car worker normally produces twice as much as his British counterpart.

The report blamed overmanning, restrictive work rules, low investment, and similar industrial conditions for British sluggishness. Yet these alone may not be sufficient to explain how the nation, conserving energy by a three-day work week in the winter of 1974, could still manage to produce nearly four days of output; many observers suggest that, except in emergencies, British workers have simply become lazy.

Such evidence as can be gathered, however, does not easily fit the notion that the welfare state has contributed to Britain's plight by reducing the incentives to work harder. For one thing, other countries have devoted as much or more of their resources to welfare programs without sharing Britain's economic weakness. For another, the growth of Britain's welfare state has not stopped private spending from increasing throughout most of the postwar era. And in the presumably central matter of income redistribution, the impact of the British welfare state has so far been rather mild. What the welfare state has done is expand in such a way that the services sector of the British economy has grown much faster than the manufacturing and industrial sector; the welfare state has hurt Britain not so much by dampening its energies as by channelling them into less productive endeavors.

The Welfare States

Except in its health service, Beveridge observed at the beginning of his 1942 report,

> British provision for security, in adequacy of amount and in comprehensiveness, will stand comparison with that of any other country; few countries will stand comparison with Britain.

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Thirty years after the adoption of his major proposals, the reverse is more nearly the case. Among comparable nations, Britain's welfare provisions are apt to seem relatively stingy. If there is an exception, it is health care, where the comprehensiveness of the National Health Service (if not its adequacy) usually exceeds that of medical arrangements elsewhere. In social programs as well as economic growth, Britain now finds its European compeers in the two least industrialized nations, Italy and Ireland.

One measure of this change is the proportion of money allocated to the welfare state. In 1972 (one of the last years of "normalcy"), Britain used 22 percent of its national income for social security and medical care. Except for Ireland, every member of the Common Market devoted a higher proportion of its income for such uses, with Germany leading the way at 29 percent. Only Italy and Ireland spent less per capita for social programs. Even the United States, not usually pictured as generous in these areas, devoted 14 percent of its national product to public expenditures for health and welfare programs. Adding private spending would bring the total still closer to the proportion used by the one-time "exemplar" of the welfare state.

Nor has Britain been notably liberal in particular programs which might be thought to "pamper" its citizens. Its pensions for disabled workers amount to less than half the earnings of average industrial employees; so do its benefits given in sick pay. Again, save Ireland, the other EEC countries do better. Indeed, if any nation encouraged malingering, it would be Germany, which replaces more than 90 percent of the wages lost due to illness. A person out of work in Britain could expect to receive no more than 85 percent of his normal weekly salary in unemployment pay; in France, Denmark, and the Netherlands, he is apt to receive no less. Even the initial advantages of the National Health Service compared with medical care elsewhere have steadily diminished. The maligned American health care system has, in fact, been growing *more* rapidly.

Of course, international comparisons such as these can be misleading. Countries may face different social conditions and have different objectives for social policy. Public assistance in Britain, for example, has been among the most generous in Europe; benefit-levels are higher and eligibility requirements less stringent. The reason is that British social insurance has sought to provide a minimum pension for all. Since the same benefits go to those with other resources and those without, they have typically lagged behind rising standards of living. As a result, in 1970, more than a quarter of the nation's elderly obtained supplementary assistance and another fifteen percent were thought to be eligible, but not claiming. In contrast, only three percent of Germany's old people were on relief. An insurance plan geared to maintaining pre-retirement earnings, combined with a dynamic economy, provided pensions that could prevent destitution in old age. Though the cost of the German scheme would be higher, its impact on self-reliance might well be less pronounced.

Countries also differ in how they pay for these programs. Through social security contributions, the British taxpayer in 1973 supplied only 16.3 percent of total revenues. American taxpayers raised 24 percent of public receipts in this fashion, while the proportion in some of the European countries was even higher, reaching nearly 40 percent in France and the Netherlands. More than any other Common Market member except Denmark, Britain disperses the cost of the welfare state by charging it to general levies, such as income, sales, and corporate taxes. As a result, the penalties for making too many visits to the doctor or for prolonging sick leave are felt indirectly, if at all. The temptation to malinger is obvious, though whether or not any other arrangement can effectively control demand for these programs is an open issue.

Perhaps the main conclusion to be drawn from this comparison is that the relationship between the welfare state and economic vitality is a complex one. Some countries, like Germany, are both generous and prosperous. Others, like Ireland, have managed to be neither. Britain falls in between, though it is tending toward Ireland in both attributes. It may be that self-reliance and social programs are mutually reinforcing, although the simpler explanation is that the forces affecting national dynamism are broader than a particular set of welfare policies. Insofar as pampering has affected growth, the important matter would seem to be not the scope of the welfare state, but rather, how it operates.

The Perspective from Britain

In virtually all the major industrialized nations, political debates about the welfare state have raged during the last few years. In the French elections of 1973 and 1974, "social welfare versus growth" was a main point of contention between Gaullists and Socialists. In Denmark, where the welfare state is financed mostly by general revenues, an anti-tax party became the second largest bloc in parliament in 1973. The Swedes, reportedly, have become concerned about the price in personal freedom extracted in return for Europe's most extensive social programs. Germany and Belgium have undertaken major efforts to overhaul their social security systems, as has distant New Zealand. And in the United States, welfare reform—in one or another meaning of the term—has been high on the national agenda since 1968.

In short, whether stingy or moderate by international standards, social policy may still look rampantly profligate at home. And perhaps with good reason. Why, after all, should Britain spend as much of its national income on social programs as, say, Germany does? A lesser amount could, conceivably, purchase as much "welfare" as a higher sum would in a different country. By the same token, the smaller figure could even be too much for a particular nation to bear without harming its potential for economic growth. Regardless of the scope of social programs elsewhere, a country might still be pampering its citizens more than it should.

Is this the case in Britain? Because of its early leadership among welfare states, might Britain have aspired to preserve a stature it could neither afford nor attain? And in so doing, has it created the conditions of economic decline? Although open to argument, the evidence suggests not.

There is no question that welfare spending in Britain has increased prodigiously during the last two decades. Between 1953 and 1973, public expenditures at constant prices rose by 506 percent for the social services, 275 percent for education, 159 percent for social security, and 141 percent for the health service. Not all of this growth was controllable. A longer life-span inevitably means that more money is needed for pensions, just as a bigger school-age population requires extra amounts for teachers, classrooms, and the like. Particularly in education, some of the increase was a consequence of underinvestment in the period between the wars. Still, both Conservative and Labour governments have also made deliberate efforts to expand the welfare state. The vast rise in public expenditures testifies to Harold Macmillan's commitment to a home-owning democracy, Harold Wilson's to a university-trained technocracy, and both parties' to a well-fed gerontocracy.

But as Rudolf Klein has observed, the real handmaiden of these spending increases has been prosperity, not political ideology. Over most of the last two decades, the British economy has been growing, sometimes in fits and starts, but nonetheless at an annual rate only slightly below 3 percent. Despite the huge increases in social spending, public expenditure on goods and services went only from 29 to 31 percent of the gross national product, while the increase in income transfers had a similar impact. Offsetting the expansion of the welfare state was the contraction of the garrison one; from 25 percent of the budget in 1953, defense outlays fell to 10 percent in 1973. This, together with the nation's brief periods of affluence, lessened the financial burden of a generous social policy.

To be sure, the combination did not leave much room for reducing taxation. On the contrary, in growing slightly faster than the economy as a whole, the welfare state pre-empted a larger share of each year's new resources. By 1970, more than 40 percent of the gross national product was being taken in taxes, the second highest ratio in the Common Market. In personal income and national insurance taxes alone, the share rose from 12.7 percent of total income in 1963 to 17.1 percent in 1970, before declining to 16.1 percent in 1973. The average male employee usually did not have to pay direct taxes before World War II, but by 1963, 8.8 percent of his income was taken and a decade later, a swingeing 21.1 percent. What was not purchased by raising new revenues was, of course, eventually paid for by an inflated currency.

Yet remarkably, the living standards of most Britons suffered only modestly, if that. The average wage-earner paid more in taxes because he had become prosperous enough to enter the higher tax brackets. Except for the recession year of 1962, not until 1974 was there a year in which the net real income of the typical Briton declined; previously, it had grown at a rate of two percent or more (though from 1964 to 1969, under the Labour Government, the annual increase averaged one percent). As the welfare state expanded, disposable income shrank from 74 percent of gross national product to 69 percent. Likewise, consumption fell from 73 percent to 63 percent, although part of this reflected a major rise in personal savings during the 1950s. But rising personal prosperity was evident both in the vastly increased ownership of goods like televisions, refrigerators, and washing machines, and in a flourishing private sector, even in areas of social spending. Though public housing drove many landlords out of business, the proportion of British families who lived in their own homes went from 29 percent in 1950 to 52 percent in 1973. Private health insurance, particularly in group plans, has been expanding rapidly, and although the number is declining, nearly half of all medical specialists still have a part-time practice of their own. Half of the British work force participate in occupational pension plans, which have become a major source of new investment capital. Perhaps most surprising, private charities, instead of disappearing in the face of so much public benevolence, have altered and enlarged their role.

Undeniably, less social spending and more consumption would have made for a more desirable economic policy. The average Briton, at least, would have obtained a larger share of the country's prosperity. *The Economist* estimates, for example, that between 1964 and 1967 government took 85 percent of the new growth, leaving little incentive for improving productivity. But this was not a typical period, for since the end of the War the average Briton has not done that badly. In any event, there is no evidence that he strongly opposed using more national resources for social purposes or that he obtained no benefits from them. Whether he would have done still better with a smaller welfare state depends upon what other means (if any) would have been used to perform the same tasks.

Thus the real problem of British social spending is not that it expanded too quickly while the nation grew, but that it continues to expand while the economy has all but stopped. Between 1974 and 1975, the per capita amount devoted to pensions, education, and the like rose by 12 percent in real terms, with a large share of the gain due to the introduction of a program of food subsidies. New claims for unemployment benefits placed an additional demand upon the Treasury, which sought to cut back where it could. The Treasury could exercise little control, for the fastest growing programs were those of local governments; the personal social services, for example, increased by 13.8 percent, a rate only slightly below that of preceding years. Since the economy generated little new revenue, high rates of taxation and double-digit inflation were inevitable, devouring disposable income. Like the sorcerer's broom in the fairy tale, the British welfare state, a manageable instrument in normal times, has proven to be a demonic one in the strained conditions the nation now confronts.

The Services State

The irony is that as the welfare state has made Britons more secure, it has made their nation less so.

There is nothing mysterious in this. Britain may indeed have spent no more on social programs than comparable countries have. It may have been moderate in committing its resources to these activities. It may even have managed to provide adequate incentives to earn and to save. Yet it has done all this while its industries have been contracting. The result is that the welfare state has been the growth sector of the British economy, especially in recent years. Britons have increasingly become employed in "doing good." And that has meant that the nation was almost certainly less likely to do well.

In all countries, the pattern is similar. As they become wealthier and more highly developed, jobs in agriculture and manufacturing decline, while those providing services—insurance, banking, law, health care, education, and the like—increase. Only indirectly, if at all, will the latter add to national income. An educated worker presumably can produce more valuable goods than an uneducated one. But in the process of schooling, resources are diverted which might be worth more than the return due to increased skills. If a nation is to remain prosperous, its industries must make good at least some of the loss. In most of Europe and in the United States, that is what has occurred. In Britain, it has not.

In most Common Market countries, the growth of the services sector has been offset by a decline in agricultural employment, but in Britain, the decline has instead been in manufacturing. Thus, from 1960 to 1973, while the services sector was expanding from 47 percent to 54.7 percent of the labor force, the percentage of British workers employed in agriculture dropped from 4 percent to 3 percent, and that in industry from 49 percent to 42.3 percent. In France, during the same period, industry's share of the labor force remained constant at 39 percent, even as the share of services rose from 38.6 percent to 48.4 percent. Likewise, about 48 percent of West German workers were engaged in manufacturing or related areas in 1960 and again in 1973; meanwhile services had grown from 37.8 percent to 43.6 percent. Only in Belgium, the Netherlands, and Denmark did the proportion of industrial jobs decline at all, and in these, the rate was appoximately half that in Britain.

One has to look to Sweden or the United States to find a performance similar to Britain's. In both, the growth of the services sector has been accompanied by a sharp decline in the proportion of the work force in manufacturing. But there is also an important difference. During the 1960s and early 1970s, industrial employment in the two countries increased absolutely while it decreased proportionally. In Britain, the decline was absolute as well as relative. By 1971, the textile industry employed 200,000 fewer workers than a decade earlier; shipbuilding, 66,000 fewer; leather, clothing, and footwear, 88,000 fewer; automobiles and other vehicles, 27,000 fewer. If these trends continued, the Department of Employment predicted that another half million jobs in manufacturing would disappear in the 1970s, while the rest of the economy would add more than a million. The nation's current condition suggests this may be an overly optimistic forecast.

Not all of this loss in output went unreplaced. Some industries became more efficient and some services made real contributions to the economy. In banking and insurance, for example, Britain added nearly one-quarter million workers during the 1960s. For a nation chronically in need of capital, this would not appear to be an unwise use of its resources. Indeed, London's financial community is a major asset, despite the diminished role of sterling in international commerce.

But these types of services did not grow as rapidly as education, health care, social services, and public administration. From 1961 to 1973, the work force in central government increased by 14 percent and in local government, by 53 percent. By 1981, the Employment Department's survey projected, a total of two million new jobs will have been created in the public sector.

These probably added something to national income, but it is not easy to say how much. For one, the expansion of the public services brought more women and part-time workers into the labor force. But if they could have been employed in industry, their worth might well have been greater. Public spending also stimulated demand for certain goods, both directly through the purchase of textbooks, medicines, and the like, and indirectly, as a result of steady (and higher) pay for teachers, doctors, and the providers of other services. This presumably had some value in sustaining the British economy, but whether investment elsewhere would have been still more productive is another matter. Indeed, given the low return to spending in education, health care, and similar programs, it is hard to imagine that a different pattern of growth would not have done better. Even if these services had enhanced the health, education, or well-being of Britons, the payoff could not have been great. Healthier and better educated workers, no less than their opposites, confronted a shortage of opportunities in the industrial sector. Whatever its personal value, the welfare state could not yield much in the way of economic rewards (except, of course, to those countries fortunate to receive British emigrants.) For the jobs that were most likely to be available were those which could, perhaps, increase "human" capital, but little else.

Thus, the British predicament. As in Sweden and the United States, providing services is now the occupation of a majority of the labor force, including the one out of six who work in the public sector. Britain differs from Sweden and America (and even more from other countries still moving in the same direction) in that industrial growth has been laggard. More Britons are employed in tasks which add little or nothing to national output; fewer have jobs which could generate greater income, and even these usually do not do very well. In essence, Britain has evolved into a poor man's version of the post-industrial state.

How this came about is a complex tale. It involves changes in the competitive position of British firms, in the availability of capital, and in government industrial policies. And, of course, it also involves productivity. According to the National Economic Development Office, Britain obtains a smaller increase in output from each unit of capital invested than any other industrialized country. Numerous reasons might be suggested: obsolete plant and machinery, formal and informal work rules, misdirected investments, and so on. I have made no effort to determine which (if any) are most important.

What I have done is argue that the programs of the welfare state deserve relatively little of the blame. Based on the indirect evidence presented here, they do not appear to have pampered the British worker nor to have drastically cut his financial incentives. (At least no so far; the rapid increase in social spending of the last few years may be changing the situation.) Moreover, such damage as might have occurred could well have been offset by improvements in the quality of the labor force. Though unlikely to have hampered the performance of industry, nonetheless, the welfare state has diverted the careers of many Britons away from it. And in this way, it has helped make an already weak economy even weaker. For Britain is now a specialist in producing welfare, a commodity that will do little to improve the balance of trade or myriad of problems with which the nation is beset.

Was—is—there an alternative? On the premise that there is, the Labour Government's latest industrial policy is founded. It would restrain the growth of social programs, while encouraging the expansion of productive industries. The Conservatives, should they return to office, would pursue a similar course, though perhaps with more fervor. Neither is likely to have much success.

This is partly due to the difficulties in assisting, let alone identifying, potentially viable firms. Success depends upon the ability to foresee changes in demand, the price of raw materials, and the products of competitors. For Britain, the problems are compounded by the country's dependence upon international trade. Past industrial policies provide few grounds for optimism.

In any event, government actions can rarely be based on economic criteria alone. Preserving jobs, regional prosperity, or a symbolic presence in an industry (such as automobiles) will also be considered, in addition to any political calculations. Thus, despite its own internal reports, the Labour Government helped "bail out" the Chrysler Corporation, just as the previous Conservative Government aided such "lame ducks" (to use the term of the Cabinet minister responsible) as Rolls Royce. Perhaps inevitably, industrial policies will be more protective than ruthless, creating a Quasi-nationalized enterprise out of one otherwise apt to founder. To achieve growth in manufacturing, there is no real substitute for making sound fiscal and monetary decisions.

That, too, is difficult, since British governments have consistently over-estimated their abilities to reduce public spending. This is not because it is uncontrollable, in the sense that the amount expended on pensions is determined mainly by the number who claim them. Even then, benefit-levels can be adjusted to lower costs or eligibility, as by revising them annually instead of semi-annually. Moreover, since their major outlays are for facilities and staff, most other programs can be budgeted. Rather, the problem is that even in the midst of an economic crisis, no British government will be able (or think itself able) to muster support for doing so.

The welfare state expanded because most Britons wanted what it provides. It resists contraction because they want still more. These include public jobs that are better paying than equivalent ones in the private sector; votes that sustain politicians in government (the February 1974 elections, which returned Harold Wilson to office, resulted in a prompt L10 hike in aid to the elderly, who gratefully increased their support for him the following October); and most importantly, services which are generally deemed proper and useful. In one of those rare instances where political language reveals almost as much as it conceals, the term "social wage" has lately come to stand for the per capita amount of welfare spending. Presumably, out of take-home pay, one buys a car, a home, and holidays abroad; out of the "social wage," one purchases health care, education, and a decent retirement. The latter, as the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) has proposed, might be more efficiently bought out-of-pocket, but would it matter? Given an additional L1500, a 1970 IEA survey showed, a sample of Britons would have used more than half to obtain "welfare" goods. At the time (and still today), the proportion of national income actually being spent on social programs was much smaller.

So long as such demand persists, it is hardly surprising that the real issue is not how to limit the welfare state, but how to finance it. Except for the occasional imposition of user charges, there has been little interest in letting consumers pay directly. (Even then, payment of a small fee for drugs or school milk is unlikely to have much impact upon demand.) Instead, British governments have tried, with decreasing success, to expand the nation's capacity for social spending. For Conservatives, this has meant advocating cuts in taxation; for Labour, a range of measures, including applied technology, devaluation, a "social contract," and most recently, a tax reduction linked to a ceiling on wage increases.

While curbing the welfare state was often threatened, it was rarely accomplished. Just as the Heath Government's efforts yielded almost invisible results, so too, one would predict, will the much-heralded "austerity" plan of the current administration. Indeed, most of the proposed reductions amount to postponing projects still on the drawing board or nót filling positions in the civil service as the become vacant. In case even these measures prove too restrictive, the Labour Government is committed to modify them "as the general course of the economy and the most important needs of the community require." Until more factory hands are seen to be at least as necessary as having extra playleaders, group workers, and program coordinators, no real trimming of the welfare state will occur.

One doubts this will happen soon. Understandably, hard times make retrenchment difficult; the memory of the inadequacy of social services during the Depression is still strong. In addition, no substantial political force appears ready to take on the task. The social reforms of Disraeli give British Conservatives as good a claim to the patrimony of the welfare state as Labour has; indeed, the postwar history has largely been one of Socialists expanding programs while in office, and Tories preserving or improving them. (Lest it be thought change is in the offing, it is worth recalling that one of Margaret Thatcher's major acts as Minister of Education was to call for a massive increase in public nursery school enrollment.) With a firm hand in the Treasury, North Sea oil, and good luck, Britain's economy may pick up again, thereby making social spending nearly as manageable as it was even a decade ago. If the services themselves become more productive, further improvement might follow. But the basic problem is one of choice. Precisely because the British attached great value to welfare programs, the nation has been a world leader in social policy. Because it continues to do so, Britain will remain less prosperous as well. □

Stephen R. Maloney

The Lavender Menace

Though many homosexuals are harmless and even goodly, the "gay liberation" movement is tawdry, libertine, and barbaric. What is more, its ambience is not especially gay.

In the happy days before the turn of the twentieth century, Americans called their decade "Gay." If our times deserve that epithet, however, it is a sign not of our social mirth, but rather of our swelling preoccupation with homosexuality. The vulgar Marxism of our public discourse, with its chatter about collective identity, class struggle, and "liberation," has granted homosexuals new status as an embattled minority with as righteous a grievance against the hetero majority as that of downtrodden blacks in the Jim Crow South. And the homosexual life, once kept shadowy and furtive for fear of discovery, is now so much in the open that it has become for some an avocation: the "gay activist" of the '70s has replaced the civil rights leader of the '60s as a fixture on the trendy cocktails-and-talk-show circuit.

As a conservative—and indeed a closet libertarian—I am not one to begrudge homosexuals their civil liberties or their privacy. The Supreme Court's recent ruling upholding Virginia's sodomy laws, and permitting the enforcement of such laws by raids on private residences, left me with mixed feelings. I sympathize with the discreet homosexuals who must endure governmental incursion into their most intimate affairs. The strongest enforcers of laws regulating consensual, adult sexual activity, it seems to me, are the same legal pecksniffs that recently tried to proscribe mother-daughter and father-son school functions; the types that found an all-male elementary school choir *in flagrante delicto*, that is, singing without female accompaniment.

If an aging eccentric solicits the services of a consenting adult, ties him (or her) up naked, and then rolls hard-boiled eggs at the hireling, all the while shouting "Bombs Away!" we do not need to call out the SWAT squad and the National Guard lest these United States go the way of Heliogabalus' Rome. The Constitution surely allows us to make, as the homosexuals might say, perfect asses of ourselves.

We do need to distinguish, however, between behavior that should be prohibited and behavior that should be disapproved. As Charles Soccarides, perhaps the greatest living expert on homosexual behavior, has said, we must recognize, if we "hope to survive," that mating with a member of the opposite sex is not only natural but also necessary. Libertinism undermines libertarianism by ignoring the rights of others; the shared judgment among thoughtful people in all vital and humane civilizations has been that sexuality finds its highest fulfillment in the connubial union of man and woman and that society builds its achievements on the foundation of the family.

The historical picture, in particular, must be brought back in focus. Just as revisionist historians have claimed to discover that Harry Truman started the Cold War in order to make the world safe for Smith and Wesson, so "Gay" revisionists would have us believe that history is a veritable procession of fuchsia chariots, emperors in drag, poets pining for the lad next door, and the boys in the band composing unforgettable symphonies. But as anthropologist Marvin K. Opler shows, that just isn't so. Very few lands have openly tolerated homosexuality. Opler lists the ancient Greeks, the beraches (search me?), Nata slaves, "one category of Chukchee shamans"—and "the top echelons of Nazi Germany." Not exactly, as Archie Bunker might observe, "your mainstream of Western civ."

Gordon Rattray-Taylor subtracts ancient Greece from the list of worthies: the common notion of the Athenian statesman, orating by day, fellating by night, is a myth; the adult male-young boy relationship so often confused with modern pederasty was

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