



Unheavenly Cities

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

The indignation of our friends the liberal Democrats at White House charges that their policies were responsible for the Los Angeles rampage was, I believe, sincere. The liberal Democrats are for the most part unaware of twenty years of economic and social analysis that demonstrates with the utmost cogency that the vast majority of Great Society programs begun in the 1960s and slavishly funded ever since have relegated many of the urban poor to hopeless, disorganized lives of extraordinary squalor and violence.

Since the late 1960s serious scholars such as Edward Banfield, James Q. Wilson, and Milton Friedman have analyzed liberal approaches to such diverse problems as poverty, crime, and dependency and come to the conclusion that with few exceptions liberal approaches only worsen these problems. Most of their research was unassailable and so liberals bereft of the boldness to rethink urban policies or the courage to cut off all the interest groups feasting off these policies stopped reading it. They have every reason to be angry with Marlin Fitzwater's assertion that "many of the root problems that have resulted in inner-city difficulties were started in the 1960s and 1970s, and they have failed."

The Democrats' most likely presidential nominee, Governor Bill Clinton, characterized Fitzwater's assertion as "scapegoating" and "unbelievable." I think Clinton's response is heartfelt. I doubt he has ever heard of Edward

Banfield's pioneering study of the modern urban condition, *The Unheavenly City*; and he probably has not even leafed through Charles Murray's more recent and equally trenchant analysis of liberal urban policy, aptly titled *Losing Ground: American Social Policy 1950-1980*.

While denouncing the White House, Clinton, that tribune of change and new ideas, called for vast new public works projects for the inner city and for annually raising the minimum wage to keep up with inflation. Professor Yale Brozen of the University of Chicago was the first economist to demonstrate that each increase in the minimum wage throws young people out of work. He published his research forty years ago. Since then, economists such as Milton Friedman and Finis Welch have made the case against the minimum wage law irrefutable. Yet Boy Clinton is oblivious. He would have us index the minimum wage and throw ever more young people out of work. Not surprisingly he is governor of one of the Republic's poorest states.

Urban policy is one of the many areas of public discourse where liberals stopped talking to conservatives years ago. Their consciences are clean when they brand those who would approach urban problems differently as "neglectful" (Clinton's term) or racists (Senator Jim Sasser's recent charge), because their minds are blank. Nonetheless, our cities have steadily declined since liberal Democratic "reformers" heaved out machine politicians so many years ago. And it is in precisely those areas where the "re-

formers" promised the most—race relations, education, crime, poverty—that the decline has been greatest. In fact, Los Angeles's tragedy is a liberals' fiasco. Most Americans perceived the injustice of the acquittal even as they perceived the crime of Rodney King's drunken, high-speed resistance to arrest. But it is the liberal "reformers" who have made it so difficult to convict brutes in a court of law. It is the liberal "reformers" who have allowed lawlessness to steadily increase on inner-city streets. It is the liberal "reformers" who have encouraged populations to adopt racial identities and unappeasable grievances, and it is the liberal "reformers" who justify violence.

Now along comes Secretary of Housing Jack Kemp. For years he has suggested urban reforms based on the scholarship of the aforementioned scholars. No one in government has been particularly interested. Eliminating capital gains for inner-city investment, encouraging the poor to work with tax reductions and other rewards, implementing educational choice, privatizing government housing, encouraging private industry into troubled areas—all these enlightened policies coming from Kemp are about as popular with liberal Democrats as closing military bases in their districts. Yet they are the only plausible ideas left. Before the liberal Democrats took over the cities, life for the urban poor was hard but steadily improving. Then the federal government began its ministrations, costing \$2.6 trillion since 1965. If Bill Clinton is really for change he ought to read up on Kemp's policies and take a look at Yale Brozen. □

Adapted from RET's weekly Washington Times column syndicated by King Features.

THREE OF THE MOST OUTSTANDING INVENTORS IN THE UNITED STATES.

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James Versalovic — Baylor College of Medicine

Mark Harper — Ohio State University

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Erratum

I am very interested in reading the remainder of Joe Queenan's "Reality Check" (*TAS*, June 1992)—or is this a ploy to find out how many people read *TAS* cover-to-cover?

—Bob Lee
Powell, Wyoming

Wladyslaw Pleszczynski replies:

The last sentence of Joe Queenan's piece should have read: "I'll be starting the session with Barney Frank, and I *think* we're going to be in there awhile." The article was intact when it left our offices, but the printer inadvertently allowed the

last paragraphs to "reflow" on his computer, resulting in the dropped line. Profuse apologies to Mr. Queenan and to our readers.

The Odd Couple

After having read the movie review of *Medicine Man* in your April issue, we can honestly say that we've never been more offended and disgusted by an article before in our lives. James Bowman's comments about Lorraine Braco [sic] and the "native chicks" are racist as well as sexist. His attitude toward women is a little more than outdated. If all he wanted from the film was to see a woman's chest, he should have stayed home and rented a porno!

It is obvious that Mr. James Bowman is abusing his privilege as a journalist, if he should even be given that status. It is enough of a disgrace that he should actually feel this way, but why is he being given the opportunity to have his perverted thoughts published?

Obviously Mr. Bowman did not like this movie. Fine. But, it is disgusting that he feels that it would have been worthwhile at least if Lorraine Braco [sic] had shown some skin. So what your movie critic is really saying is that a bad movie can be salvaged simply by having the female actresses undress for the camera. If this were even meant to be some kind of joke, it still would be in very poor taste.

We think you should reconsider Mr. Bowman's position with your magazine. But, seeing as this was edited and printed, we must conclude that you do not find this appalling. Are you all that sexist in Virginia? Please let us know.

—Olga Courtois
Irene Vassilopoulos
Montreal, Quebec

Guns or Roses

Brock Yates's "Guns for the Home" (*TAS*, April 1992) brings a point to mind that Yates, curiously, does not mention. With all the emphasis in the article on scaring away (rather than plugging) the attacker, either by showing him the muzzle of the gun, letting him hear it being loaded, or shooting it out the window, why not solve the kiddie-access problem

(continued on page 14)

You Are Cordially Invited to Plague the Locusts

during the

Senator Joe McCarthy Memorial New Enemies List 3rd Annual Readers' Update

Drop your John Lockes and pick up your 9mm Glocks. It's time to plink liberal icons and totems. Imagine what fun a liberal shooting range would be—spring-loaded traps throwing Toni Morrison novels, cartons of Ben and Jerry's ice cream, and Midnight Oil CDs across the skeet field; indoor targets made of Benetton sweaters, spotted owls, Native American handicrafts, tie-dye T-shirts, *Thelma and Louise* movie posters, healing crystals, and solar-powered automobiles, and, on weekends, driven hunts featuring live members of the Modern Language Association.

Alas, we'll have to make do with mere pen and ink for the time being. But let's make it count. This year—instead of criticizing specific geeks, shills, fat ladies, bunko steerers, and clip merchants—let's go after the carnival itself. Who is funding left-wing activity in the United States? Who is sponsoring liberal nonsense? Who is footing the bill for the Luddism, anti-individualism, socialism, and atheistic antinomianism that permeate our culture? Who pays the piper? Who feeds the horde of rats he leads?

TAS readers are invited to submit the names of institutions, trade associations, corporations, government departments, churches, charities, universities, labor unions, crime syndicates, U.N. programs, and deep-pocketed men and women who give money to fools. The name of each person or organization should be accompanied by examples of eleemosynary folly. Also welcome is information about how groups of bad people finance themselves (e.g., the various Naderite safety lobbies that raise money by abetting liability lawyers in the abuse of tort law). And let us not forget to list those companies—such as television networks and movie studios—that have made a capitalist industry out of pinko opinions.

Individuals *per se* will not be the theme of this year's New Enemies List, except in one category. A special "Peter Ueberroth Gold Medal for 100-Meter-Dash-Carrying-a-VCR" will be awarded to public figures who praised, encouraged, downplayed, excused, or called for "understanding of" the murder, assault, arson, and theft that took place in Los Angeles this spring. Yes, Spike Lee, you sawed-off Iago, this means you. And you, too, George Bush.

—P.J. O'Rourke

Send your nominations by August 15, 1992, to: Enemies List, *The American Spectator*, P.O. Box 549, Arlington, VA 22216-0549.