

How Much Do You Know About Liberty? (a quiz)

Try your hand at answering the following questions:

1. What method of resolving disputes did trial by jury replace?
2. Which great American patriot was called the “Prince of Smugglers”?
3. What bulwark of American liberty do we owe to the Antifederalists?
4. How many slaves were liberated by Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation?
5. After the Civil War, how did the federal and state governments oppress black people?
6. Why did states establish compulsory government schools?
7. What was the primary reason for the Sherman Antitrust Act?
8. When was the last time an American president responded to a depression by cutting government taxes and spending—and what were the results?
9. When and why did organized crime get started in the United States?
10. Which powerful U.S. government agency was established to assure monetary stability—but became a major factor responsible for the Great Depression?
11. Why did 61 nations raise their tariffs on American products after 1930?
12. How did government devastate farmers during the Great Depression?
13. Name three New Deal policies that destroyed American jobs.
14. What effect did the New Deal have on the Great Depression?
15. Which three twentieth-century presidents promised to keep America out of war—but maneuvered in?
16. About how many laws do U.S. legislative bodies, from city councils to Congress, enact each year: 10,000, 50,000, 100,000, 150,000?
17. About how many tariffs (import taxes) are there in the U.S. Tariff Code: 100, 500, 1,000, 5,000, 8,000?
18. Every year, Americans spend an estimated five billion hours unproductively wrestling with which U.S. regulations?
19. About how much do government regulations cost Americans each year: \$100 billion, \$200 billion, \$400 billion, \$600 billion?
20. What do these cherished pleasures of American life have in common: cowboys, hamburgers, movies, oranges, bowling, frankfurters, tomatoes, swimming, pizza, libraries, peas, onions, railroads, potatoes, salsa, picnics, symphony orchestras, and Christmas trees?

Answers appear on pages 470–472.

BOOKS

Do the Right Thing

by Walter E. Williams

Stanford: Hoover Institution Press • 1995 •
83 pages • \$15.95 paperback

Reviewed by John Robbins

Dr. Walter Williams, Chairman of the Department of Economics at George Mason University in Virginia, a syndicated columnist for the past 15 years, has collected his best newspaper columns from 1990 to 1994, sorted them into seven categories, and published them under the title *Do the Right Thing*.

Young Walter Williams grew up in a North Philadelphia housing project in the 1930s and '40s. He thanks his mother, who "having been abandoned by her husband, raised two children by herself through difficult times. She is the one who gave me a spirit of rebelliousness [and] taught me hard lessons about independence and discipline. . . ." He later went on to earn his doctorate in economics from UCLA. Dr. Williams also thanks Providence "that enabled him to have teachers in high school and professors in college who didn't give a damn about what color I was and held me accountable to high standards."

The title *Do the Right Thing* reflects Dr. Williams's political philosophy in two important respects: it is not enough to think the right thing—though all right action must start with right thinking—it is necessary to do, to act. Faith without works is mere lip service. Second, when one does act, one must do the *right* thing, the *moral* thing, not the expedient thing or the politic thing. Dr. Williams sees the source of American decline in the twentieth century as moral rot, in both our private lives and our public institutions.

In an age of philosophical and moral relativism and BOMFOG (the ubiquitous and false platitudes about unity in the broth-

erhood of man and fatherhood of God), Dr. Williams's honesty and analysis may be painful for some delicate souls. "Regardless of whose sensibilities are offended," he writes, "I do not hesitate to call things as I see them. Why? Because I care about our country and fear for its future as a free and prosperous nation." More importantly, Dr. Williams cares about truth.

Williams is controversial, but then anyone worth listening to is controversial. Long before William Safire thought of characterizing Hillary Clinton as a congenital liar, Williams recognized the political class, especially Congress, as "charlatans, either ignorant or contemptuous of the Constitution." Williams does not exaggerate. As one who worked on Capitol Hill for several years, I can attest to the accuracy of his observation. About the only thing sure to call forth more ridicule on the floor of Congress than a serious reference to the Constitution is a serious reference to the Bible as the Word of God. That means, of course, that many Congressmen cannot do the right thing, since they do not know or do not want to know what the right thing is.

Dr. Williams groups his essays topically: "Race and Sex," "Government," "Education," "The Environment and Health," "The International Scene," and "The Law and Society." A final collection, "Potpourri," contains those columns not easily classifiable.

On race, Dr. Williams writes: "I consider myself fortunate to have had virtually all my education before it became fashionable for white people to like black people. That meant that my educators were free to challenge whatever nonsense I uttered without fear of accusations of racism." Now, he writes, "The grossly fraudulent education received by a majority of black students in government-owned schools is a major problem. . . ." Dr. Williams makes it clear, however, that the problem is not one of racism, but of socialism: White students are also getting a "grossly fraudulent education" in the government schools.

One of Dr. Williams's most important essays is one in which he defends the