

The Election: The Case for Pessimism

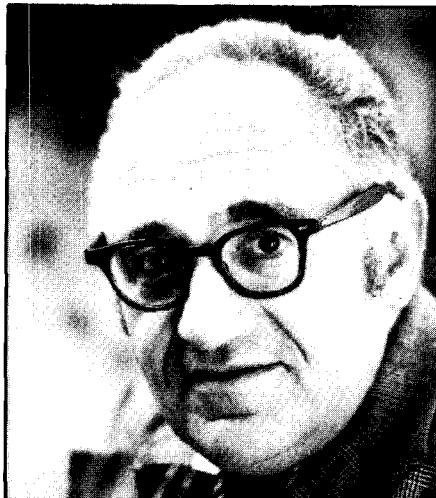
viewpoint

The optimistic view of the election has already been spread by those with a vested interest in optimism (Reagan supporters and Clark propagandists): the Reagan election will usher in the triumph of low taxes and a free market, while the 900,000 votes for Ed Clark demonstrate strong libertarian sentiment among the public. Optimism grounded in facts is exhilarating; but optimism in the face of the facts begins to sound like puffery and charlatanism. Since I founded the case for libertarian optimism in the mid-1970s, I have a moral obligation to be the first to announce its demise.

During the latter part of the '70s, the case for libertarian optimism seemed strong. The public was fed up with Big Government (Watergate), high taxes (Prop. 13 and the tax rebellion), inflation, and foreign interventionism (Vietnam) and realized that victimless crime laws are unenforceable (the spread of marijuana, pornography, prostitution). Conditions seemed ripe for a libertarian triumph, and the Libertarian Party began to grow at the polls.

In the last year or two, however, conditions and public opinion have experienced a sea change. On foreign policy, the lessons of Vietnam have been forgotten, and the militarists and war hawks of the Committee for the Present Danger and the CIA "B Team" have triumphed across the board, among Democrats as well as Republicans. The tax rebellion has not been stopped completely, but it has certainly slowed down: witness the thundering defeat in June 1980 of Prop. 9 ("Jarvis II") in California, which would have cut the state income tax in half. And, in the last year, we have seen the remarkable onslaught of the fundamentalist Moral Majority, yearning for the return of theocracy and the outlawing of all such "anti-family" actions as abortion, pornography, and homosexuality and calling for "bringing God back into the public schools." It was inevitable that the preceding advance of feminism, abortion options, and gay rights should have created a backlash, but no one anticipated its fervor and strength.

If we consider not simply the Reagan landslide but the remarkable Republican triumph in the Senate, we cannot comfortably interpret the election as merely a repudiation of the incredibly inept Jimmy



Murray N. Rothbard

Carter. The election was a resounding triumph for the Conservative Revolution, which consists of three basic parts: (a) tax cuts and more of a free market; (b) increased militarism and an ultra-hawkish foreign policy, ever seeking confrontation with an atheistic and literally "Satanic" Soviet Union; (c) a theocratic Moral Majority reinstallation of God and the family and a crushing of the infidel. Only part *a* can be considered in any sense libertarian; parts *b* and *c* are quite the opposite. And, furthermore, it already looks as if we are in for a chilling return to suppression of dissent and the "unleashing" of the FBI, CIA, and other intelligence agencies.

As for the Libertarian Party, as Uncle Walter Cronkite said contemptuously but accurately on election night, "it was nowhere." After an unprecedented hype and a highly expensive campaign, it managed to corral only one percent of the vote. It is nowhere near its goal of becoming a third major party, especially if the Anderson party continues, as it threatens to do. And Barry Commoner did better on his first try than the Libertarians did four years ago. In California, the LP slid backward alarmingly, with Clark getting only 1.7 percent of the vote, far from the 5.5 percent he gained in the race for governor two years before.

But may we not at least take comfort from the free-market part of the Conservative Revolution? No, because that part of the revolution has already been

thoroughly betrayed, even before the Reagan administration took office. As soon as Reagan was nominated, and Bush picked for vice-president, the gutsier and more radical economic advisers, such as Arthur Laffer, were unceremoniously thrown overboard, and in poured the same old Nixon-Ford crew of moderate Keynesians who brought us the inflation, the moderation (and even the wage-price controls!) of the Nixon-Ford years. The Burnses, Shultzes, Greenspans, Walkers, Weidenbaums, etc., have seized control. There will be no free-market revolution, no end to inflation, no balanced budget—just marginal tinkering with the status quo, as usual.

Libertarians can only take comfort from the likelihood that the other two major parts of the revolution have also been betrayed. There are already signs that the Moral Majoritarians are being shunted aside and that, in foreign as well as economic affairs, the hard-nosed ideologues and militants are being discarded on behalf of the oleaginous moderates and acolytes of the status quo. In this case, the war hawks are being shoved aside for the "realistic" spokesmen for the Trilateralists and the Rockefeller World Empire.

Okay; so it's far better to have our foreign policy run by more Metternichian Rockefeller-Kissinger types than by some fanatic who has lived for the day when diabolic communism can be nuked out of existence. But it is scarcely an optimistic state of affairs when we have to rely on the Rockefeller power elite to save the cause of liberty. For the hard truth is that the masses are no longer with us; for the time being, at least, they are conservatives, with all that that implies.

So—the optimistic hype is over. The quick victory model which the hyper-optimists have foisted upon us is seen to be nothing but a snare and a delusion. If liberty is ever to triumph, there is no substitute for patient education, for sticking to principles, and for life-long commitment. Libertarians had better wake up to this fact of life.

Murray Rothbard is a professor of economics at Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute of New York and the author of numerous articles and books on economics, history, and the libertarian movement.

health & welfare

Jet Lag, or How to Reset Your Internal Clocks

By Sandy Shaw and Durk Pearson

Circadian (24-hour) biological rhythms play an important part in human functioning and health. Scientists have only a very sketchy understanding of mechanisms controlling changes in biological rhythms as a result of traveling across time zones. But even at our present relatively crude levels of understanding, we know some causes of the most important phenomena and how to minimize some deleterious changes that can occur in long-distance travelers.

Acclimation to a new time zone doesn't happen instantly. In fact, most people require about one day at their destination for each one-hour time-zone change. Many large corporations forbid their executives to engage in the most critical of negotiations until this adaptation period is past. But what if you are flying between Los Angeles and New York and don't have three days to devote to the natural acclimation process?

Jet lag is a familiar phenomenon to many, if not most, frequent fliers. Waking up groggy or having a hard time getting to sleep, waking up frequently and finding it difficult to get back to sleep, and experiencing fatigue, depression, and inefficiency during the day are common. We have developed a way to prevent these symptoms in ourselves that is based upon a biochemical understanding of some of the day/night rhythms in the brain.

We know that sleep is induced by the release in the brain of the neurotransmitter serotonin (neurotransmitters are chemicals used by nerve cells to communicate with each other). The serotonin release cycle appears to be disrupted by a rapid change of time zones. Therefore, when we decide that we want to sleep (a decision that may be better made by logic than gut feelings under conditions of jet lag!), we take about two grams of the amino acid nutrient *tryptophan*, which in most people is rapidly converted to serotonin in the brain.

Since tryptophan has to compete with other aromatic amino acids to be trans-

ported into the brain through the finicky blood-brain barrier, best results occur when the tryptophan is taken alone and on an empty stomach immediately before going to bed. Exact dosage has to be individualized. It is helpful to take, at the same time, a 100 mg. supplement of *Vitamin B-6*, since B-6 is required for the conversion of the tryptophan to serotonin.

The time-shifted traveler often suffers from interrupted or restless sleep. The neurotransmitter acetylcholine plays a major part in controlling responsiveness to external stimuli as well as regulating nerve signals sent to muscles. In normal sleep, adequate acetylcholine is released to turn down response to the environment and to inhibit restless movements. These symptoms can be modified or eliminated in the insomniac traveler by taking the nutrient *choline* (which is converted by the brain into acetylcholine) before bed. A dose of three grams is reasonable. Since *Vitamin B-5* is required for the conversion of choline to acetylcholine, a supplement of 200 mg. of B-5 (pantothenic acid or calcium pantothenate) with the choline can produce superior results.

Some frequent travelers take Valium or Librium as sedatives to make it easier to sleep. Scientists have discovered that the brain receptors that respond to Valium and Librium also respond to the nutrients *niacinamide* and *inositol*. A gram of niacinamide and 3-10 grams of inositol before bed can be very helpful in producing drowsiness and sleep.

To increase alertness, motivation, and energy the next day, we often take a quantity of the amino acid nutrient *phenylalanine* early that day (or just before bed the night before). Phenylalanine, after transport into the brain, is converted into the neurotransmitter norepinephrine (the brain's version of adrenalin). This conversion requires *Vitamins C* and *B-6*. Norepinephrine is important for memory and learning as well as for primitive drives and emotions, long-term planning, and mood.

We invite questions of general interest from our readers. Send your query along to REASON Health & Welfare, Box 40105, Santa Barbara, CA 93103.

(A limited number of reader questions can be answered in print; personal replies cannot be made.)

Some popular stimulants, such as amphetamines and cocaine, cause the brain to release norepinephrine from its stores but, unfortunately, do not tell the brain to make more, eventually depleting the supply. Depletion of norepinephrine by excessive use of stimulants can result in severe depression. In one clinical study of people with various sorts of depression—including depression induced by amphetamine abuse, endogenous and schizophrenic depressions, etc.—most were entirely relieved of their depressions by taking 100-500 mg. of phenylalanine a day for two weeks.

Jet lag attenuation with phenylalanine is most important when flying from west to east. Doses have to be individualized. The dose required on the first night is generally larger than that required for chronic antidepressant use and is typically 250 mg. to 2 grams taken at lights out—not an hour earlier. (If you have high blood pressure, you should increase phenylalanine doses cautiously, while checking your blood pressure—some large doses can cause blood pressure elevation in a few susceptible individuals.)

The sensitivity of your nerves to norepinephrine is increased by several commonly used drugs, including *caffeine*, *theophylline* (in tea), *theobromine* (in cocoa), and, most selective of all, the prescription drug *Hydergine R* (Sandoz). These may be beneficially taken in the morning but probably should be avoided in the evening for travelers going from west to east.

Relieving the unpleasant symptoms of jet lag is more than just a matter of convenience, though, because we know that disrupted day/night neurotransmitter release patterns are hazardous to your health. When serotonin and norepinephrine release are disrupted, it affects the release of other important chemicals. Growth hormone is one of the most important. Without adequate growth hormone, the immune system does not function well. Since your immune system is your defense against viruses, bacteria, cancer, and atherosclerotic plaques, this is a serious matter. People who frequently travel long distances have been found to have higher rates of many illnesses, including cardiovascular disease and cancer, both of which largely result from inadequate immune-system surveillance.

There are a great many ways to stimulate the performance of the immune system with nutrients you can buy in any