

PART 6: ORIGINAL LIBERALS

History 0: Western Society Before, During, and After some Big Changes

Did it start out like this? What happened? How did it all get like this?

Idealized European society before about 1750: a big group of peasants tied to the land, many towns, a few cities, nobility with control over the land and with rights to a big portion of the crops of peasants, crafts people, merchants, king, the Church which was both a spiritual and worldly power, and remaining forests and wild lands. Europe was not the same all over. In some places this system hurt the mass of people and hindered later development. In some places this system protected most people including peasants. It did not stimulate socio-economic mobility for talented people but it did support some change later. I cannot here describe which places were like what. It can help to think of England as basically a good place where the social classes helped each other and to think of France and Spain as bad places where upper classes oppressed lower classes and inhibited development. You can see this good version of England and (by insinuation) bad version of France in movies about Robin Hood and in the movie "Ivanhoe" from the novel by Walter Scott. The movies "Monty Python and the Holy Grail" and "A Knight's Tale" offer a darker picture of England and Europe. Chaucer's poems offer a fair picture of people who were well-off enough to travel and of the society that supported them. The "Musketeer" movies offer a picture of France that gets across the classes. The books are better. It helps neither to romanticize nor describe European feudal society.

Europe began to develop economically and intellectually well before the Renaissance (1500s). Western Europe "took off" economically about 1700. The changes created a new middle class and upper middle class based on commerce and services, and changes gave new status to crafts people, artists (Vivaldi, Bach, Rembrandt), and to non-aristocrat leaders. At first, the changes caused more harm than good for common people even if the changes helped merchants and aristocrats. The changes polluted the land and water, made cities into cesspools, increased crime, dispossessed people from ancestral land, turned farmers into short-lived grubby mine rats, caused strife between capitalists and aristocrats, and reduced life expectancy so that cities had a higher death rate than birth rate. Eventually, after about 1840 in Europe, the common people had more food, wealth, health, and security. Life got overall better and has stayed better. The changes sanctioned upward mobility for people with talent such as Michael Faraday. Some aristocracy guided change and even promoted good change by investing in ventures, education, and art. Charles Dickens is biased against commerce but he is accurate enough for the period before things got better for the common people. The Brontë sisters get across lingering class society, how the changes affected class society in their time, and coming improvement.

The American Revolution in 1776 was an extension of changes in Europe. The French Revolution came in 1789. The American Revolution ended well but the French Revolution ended badly. Europeans of all social levels, who knew some real facts about the revolutions, were cautiously intrigued by America yet horrified by France.

The American Revolution and what followed was not typical of other socio-political revolutions and the rapid changes that come after them. The American Revolution was more orderly and beneficial. It was more of a revolt than a revolution in that the basic order of society was fairly egalitarian to begin with, the basic order did not change much, the group in power before the Revolution (English aristocracy and merchants) was replaced by a similar group of elected officials and powerful merchants, there was little violence by subgroups against each other, and little property was confiscated or lost.

The French Revolution was more typical. The novella "Animal Farm" uses Russia as a model but it applies to France; see the animated version from about 1960. Much blood was shed. Aristocrats were murdered. Whatever guidance they had given was gone. Aristocratic property was confiscated. Social groups fought. Groups accused other groups of being for the old order and against the new order not because other groups had done anything wrong but as ways to avenge grudges, hurt other groups, take their property, and get ahead. The property of merchants and the middle class was taken. Even non-aristocratic local politicians were killed because they had once worked with the aristocracy, even if they had once worked to benefit the common people. Scientists of all politics were murdered as elitists. Economic chaos ensued. Politically adept people arose to take as much power as the aristocracy ever had. They murdered and purged to consolidate their power and-or to take revenge. This is the chaos that Emperor Darth Sidious, and Adolph Hitler, created so as to take power. A glimpse of this small hell is in Dickens' "Tale of Two Cities". Generations passed before calm and some sorting out. Then France got Napoleon, and then later France got the monarchy back.

To the English, the French Revolution was a worse case of what had happened in England in the 1600s with the Civil War and Oliver Cromwell; listen to the song "Oliver's Army" by Elvis Costello. English "Roundheads" murdered the king and some aristocracy, caused chaos, and began their type of religious repression in the name of religious freedom. Subgroups in England accused each other of bad acts and bad faith, so as to hurt the group accused, whether the accusations were true or false, and to gain from hurting the accused group. Subgroups fought. The Roundheads seized the land of the aristocrats and the Churches. After the fighting, the English had to restore the monarchy. Then the roundheads went to America to begin their version of godly society wherever they could. The English already had tasted French-style chaos and they knew that this chaos was much worse than the modest inequality and lack of socioeconomic mobility that England had in 1789. Revolution is not worth the chaos unless conditions are horribly bad already.

From the late 1700s to now, people who have feared change have blamed Liberals for all bad ideas that lead to social unrest, for bad revolutions such as the French Revolution, and for the deterioration of life in general. Republicans now still blame all social unrest and distress on Liberal ideas and programs. Rather than blame ideas that you don't know, and blame the people who espouse them, it is better to look into the ideas and then judge their value. See where your ideas are not as good as they should be or are outright bad (the big chunk of wood in your own eye). Promote useful ideas to the extent that they are still useful and don't push any ideas too far. "Only a Sith deals in absolutes".

All ideas have people who misuse them; the New Testament and the ideas of Jesus are misused. Don't blame Liberal ideas and Liberals for all misuse of ideas. Look to good versions of Liberal ideas as offered by sane reasonable people. Then understand how their ideas are misused by people who have agendas. The same is true of Conservative ideas and Conservative people.

If you want a good dose of reality and want to know what Liberals and other good people feared, read Machiavelli's work, including the famous "The Prince", and read Charles Dickens' "A Tale of Two Cities". Liberalism began even before the Renaissance but you can start in the 1600s with John Locke and Thomas Hobbes, who contributed to both Liberal and Conservative ideas. The papers of the American Revolution, including the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the (supposedly rightist) Federalist Papers, are textbooks on Liberalism. By 1776, the Liberal ideas given in this essay were well known. Many anthologies on Liberals and Conservatives have been done; search the Internet.

Make Sense.

Originally Liberalism was about putting Reason over non-Reason, in particular over mere custom and mere superstition, even more particularly over bad custom and bad superstition. Liberals wanted society and its institutions to make sense. Liberals wanted society and its institutions to make sense in terms of desires, morality, and practicality. Original Liberals wanted to balance ends and means. They wanted to balance practicality and morality. In their way, original Conservatives did too. This big view, and the drive to balance, is what America lost from both sides in the 1970s, with horrible results.

Anyone who has ever seen a bad economic, political, or religious outcome, and imagined what to do better, based not on partisanship but on reasoning including facts, is a Liberal in this way. When you see the waste caused by terrorism, and know that money both causing terrorism and defending against it could be better spent if only terrorists would stop being stupid, then you are a Liberal in this sense. If you have seen the state spend money in one way when you knew the money could be better spent in another, such as when the state fixes the street only to tear it up again a month later, then you are a Liberal in this sense. In this sense, almost everybody is a Liberal sometimes. If you have ever seen a church use money on a big building, beautiful garments for clergy, or a big car for the minister, when the money could have been spent educating the poor, you are a Liberal. When you see people spending money to go long distances to venerate the bones of a saint, when they could educate their children, you are a Liberal. If you see the poor spend money on booze and bad fast food instead of education, and see the ghetto dotted with small stores to enable bad habits and to exploit the poor, you are a Liberal. If you see that old programs such as welfare, Affirmative Action, and vast sums on the military-industrial-complex, are not cost effective, not meeting their goals, lead to moral irresponsibility, and we would be better off with something else, you are a Liberal. When you say "but that doesn't make sense, here's what does", then usually you are not just a critic but a Liberal.

Liberals could see that some old social conventions, such as that only the children of the aristocracy get a good education, did not make sense and should change. Liberals could see that merchants, artisans, or even farmers could know better how to run a government, and Liberals wished to change governing

so that the best qualified governed. Liberals knew that government should be fair to make sense. Liberals wanted to think through many conventions, beliefs, practices, customs, and etc. of society and religion to make them fairer, more effective, and responsive.

This Liberal approach was like what Socrates did when he wanted Athenian beliefs and institutions to make sense and what Plato did when he carried on Socrates' quest to make sense. People don't usually think of Socrates and Plato as Liberal; Plato's thought led to authoritarian institutions. Still, in seeking to make Athens make sense, and in their willingness to get rid of traditional ideas that did not make sense, they were both Liberals.

"Liberal" is the same root as "liberty" and same sense as "freedom" or "free person". A "Liberal" was a person who was as free as humanly possible of non-rational thinking and mere tradition. A Liberal was free to use his-her own mind to think through individual roles, individual lives, social relations, political relations and institutions, government programs, and religion, to come up with better patterns, patterns that better served values, principles, individuals, and society. A Liberal was free to consort with similar individuals to come up with better solutions and try to put them into place. A Liberal opposed attempts to muzzle free thought, free speech, and free responsible action. A Liberal opposed attempts to stop people from gathering to think of better ways and to implement them. If you do not have a free mind in this sense then you cannot be a Liberal, and, if you do have a free mind in this sense, you are a Liberal. Ben Franklin and George Washington were Liberals. Get used to it.

Reason Is Enough or Not Enough (1).

Original Liberals believed Reason is enough to tell us what makes most sense and what leads to the best (most good). This is the best humans can do, and this is good enough. It will work. This view does not necessarily rule out God or sometimes getting help from God. I mostly agree.

This belief that Reason will work, Reason is sufficient, and only Reason can lead to the most good (best ends), cannot be found in Reason alone. Guarantee that Reason alone will lead to the best conclusion cannot be found in Reason alone. Reason cannot justify itself. The belief in Reason is not arrived at by Reason and is not itself a reason. The belief in Reason is merely a belief. Likewise, the desire to make sense cannot be found in making sense alone. The belief that working to make sense really will lead to making sense and to the best outcome cannot be found in the idea of making sense. Belief in Reason as the best way to make sense to find good is merely a belief. It is not Reason. All this quibbling sounds like gobbledygook but it actually makes some differences.

This situation does not bother me but does bother some people. I cannot take the space here to explain why I am alright with this situation or why other people are unhappy. Original Liberals understood this problem and simply worked around it, as I do. You should look at yourself to decide what you think and how you feel.

It helps to think of Reason not as the ultimate value but as a tool. To use a tool correctly, you need an end in mind, and you have to be sure this tool is the tool best suited to the end. If you want to repair a bicycle, usually an awl and a corkscrew are of little use; you need pliers, hammer, and screwdriver.

To make sense of Reason using only our limited human intellects, we need a prior set of principles by which to use the Reason as a tool and to use it as the best tool for making social life make sense, such principles as fairness, truth, goodness, order, justice, power, mercy, and freedom. Spock alone is not enough; we need Kirk and McCoy as well.

As we cannot use Reason to justify Reason, we cannot get our principles from Reason alone. We can use Reason to argue about principles, especially about particular principles in particular cases. We can use Reason to arbitrate among principles. But we cannot use Reason to make principles. Likewise, we cannot get our principles from experience directly or from experience alone. Principles come prior to Reason and prior to experience. I do not here say where we get them. If you have the temper for a long trying task, it is fun to see if you can use Reason or experience to generate principles without already first having principles. This has been a favorite pastime of philosophers and theologians for millennia.

With the correct principles (values), and correct reason, it is possible to Reason usefully. It is possible to make more sense and to make society make more sense. It is not possible to reason as accurately or to succeed as well in any other way.

Thinkers differed on what the principles should be and what they are. They differed on how principles should relate to each other, and do relate to each other, as, for example, which principle should take precedence in what situation. Should fairness or mercy ever supersede justice? For a list of candidates for "first principle", and a longer list of other possible principles, see the next section below.

It makes a difference which principles you use and how you arrange them. "Make sense" differs greatly if you use power or good as a basic principle.

Liberals saw they could go off track if they weren't careful about the framework within which to make sense. Using examples of previous thinkers who had gone off track, and of people who had done a good job, Liberals came up with a general procedure. The procedure is not logically watertight or completely proof against error, it requires ongoing discussion and re-thinking, and it requires interaction with other people, but usually it works. The various religions also think this procedure requires the unquestioned basic principles of each particular religion, but that is a debatable question that I avoid here. Refer to past thinkers and their thought. Use common sense. Use what you know of human nature and society. Take the advice of people who have more experience than you and-or are smarter. Consult tradition. Consult old institutions such as Churches and religions. Make a set of principles. Let people argue about them. Measure your principles against experience, yours and others, hopefully without doing much harm. Revise as needed. Repeat as needed. Ideally, this is what courts of law, legislatures, councils of Churches, and kibitzing neighbors, all do.

This procedure mixes having a prior set of principles with getting principles from experience and with modifying principles from experience. It tries to keep the best features of both before experience and after experience. I don't explain how we do that and I don't explain the reservations of some thinkers.

This procedure is what the adept successful Liberals of the American Revolution did, even the Liberals who tended toward one or a few somewhat unusual principles as their main principle such as absolute political freedom or economic order. It worked.

France, Russia, and China, among others, got into trouble because their thinkers did not follow this way and their thinkers tended to fix on one-or-a-few glamorous ideas that did not work in real life and that led people into trouble. See below. Good Liberals try hard not to make the same mistake. Some Conservatives, and some Republicans, accuse Liberals of always making this same mistake. You will see the accusation in what Republicans say about Democrats, even if Republicans don't know they echo the accusation, as when Democrats are "bleeding hearts", wish to "soak (fleece) the rich", and "demand rights but neglect responsibilities".

Liberals don't have to make this mistake and good Liberals don't. As humans, they still make mistakes. I focus on Liberals who mostly follow this procedure but do make some mistakes, partly because they get locked into principles such as absolute ethnic parity and partly because they are human and succumb to appeals such as to help all adults as if the adults were children.

Conservatives and Republicans use a similar procedure and make similar mistakes. They are as prone to mistakes as Liberals. For example, they say "a rising tide floats all boats", more wealth automatically solves all problems without the need to think or to use principles such as fairness, when, in fact, as we have seen often, this quip is clearly false. If you understand the situation from examples about Liberals, you should be able to figure out Conservatives and Republicans for yourself.

Reason is Enough or Not Enough (2).

Only with a prior belief in Reason, and only by using Reason in the context of human communication, only by following the procedure outlined above, can we have democracy. Without belief that Reason can guide us well enough, we cannot have democracy. The fact that this belief in Reason-as-a-trusty-guide arose at the same time democracy arose is not a coincidence. I do not guess which caused which or if both were caused by something else such as the rise of capitalism or rise of science and technology. If you do not accept that human Reason, as conducted above, often can be enough, then you cannot accept democracy. You have to reject democracy.

I stress that not accepting human Reason as enough requires a person to reject democracy because Conservatives explicitly rejected that human Reason is enough. Conservatives did not reject trying to make sense, trying to make society make sense, reasoning, or reasoning in groups, but they did not think such procedures necessarily led to the greatest good. Humans need more than faith in Reason to find the greatest good. Original Conservatives usually did not explicitly reject all democracy, for reasons

I don't go into here, but they did insist on placing democracy in contexts that were just as important in reaching the greatest good and making the most sense. The contexts contained the basic principles of Conservatives and promoted the use of Reason in accord with those basic principles.

Conservatives used two major contexts, often blended together, and often fused as one. I mention the contexts here and describe them in more detail in the part of this essay on original Conservatives.

First, original Conservatives used social history, conventions, institutions, and order. These must guide reasoning or the human mind will stray into the harmful wilderness. The two most important social forces are the Church and aristocracy. The American Senate is heir to this view. Original Conservatives did not see modern legislatures such as Congress as being as important as old institutions. They did not see democracy as important in the same way that they saw old institutions.

Second, original Conservatives trusted God to provide the correct principles (values) and provide proper social context to guide humans. Also, original Conservatives trusted God to intervene directly in human deliberations, if needed, to guide us to the best solution. Some original Conservatives might have seen the rise of limited-and-only-limited-democracy in this way, as direct intervention by God to guide us to the best, but I wish not to go into this topic here. We use Reason to see and accept what God has urged us toward.

Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, and Hindu churches (religious bodies) take the same stance when they trust in their councils to come to the best conclusion and trust the Holy Spirit (or Allah directly, an angel, the Dharma, or an avatar) to guide humans to the best understanding and best conclusion. Jews, Christians, and Muslims claim their holy books were written this way. I recall as a child in the Greek Orthodox Church learning of the great honor given to general councils of the Church, especially ones that set important dogma such as the Creeds. They were the hand of the Holy Spirit made obvious. Confucians are similar but would say that living in accord with Heaven is the best guidance. The view with Buddhists and Hindus is fuzzier because some believe the Dharma guided their religious leaders directly while some would not make such a claim, and I am not sure of orthodoxy. I omit comment on Taoism.

Modern Conservatives echo claims of original Conservatives when they say they get their values from God; God guides them as individuals, groups, churches, communities, and legislatures; their way must find the most good; and any other way must come up so far short as to fail.

Modern Conservatives also echo the above view of the Church, and the role of tradition in the Church, when they insist that they are correct because they are guided by God. Modern Christian Conservatives usually do not know they echo the Christian Church and its traditions, or they repress knowing because they link this view to the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches. They accept the view but reject where it came from.

Of course, different groups of modern Conservatives come to different conclusions, and this conflict casts doubt on the claim that social institutions and-or God eventually necessarily lead to the one-and-only greatest good. Different groups of Conservatives hold different basic values or interpret the same basic values in different ways, naturally leading to different supposedly God-given conclusions. Modern Conservatives and modern Republicans only dimly understand the claim of original Conservatives. They often abuse it by simply declaring their values are correct, God is on their particular side "for sure", and He will punish all their evil opponents sooner or later.

People other than original Conservatives saw that the Liberal method required a belief in Reason that could not be founded in Reason alone. More is needed than merely Reason, and this more makes the context within which Reason operates. So, some people found other basic bigger principles, principles that differed from Christian Conservatives of the early 1800s. In systems with other principles, Reason could still play a large role but it could not play the same part as it did in the thinking and conversations of original Liberals. Reason had to reside beneath another principle; Reason had to serve only as the tool of another principle even if Reason was the greatest instrument. Buddhism and Hinduism also see Reason this way. Systems founded on other basic principles could not support democracy in the same way as Liberalism does.

One of the most common alternatives is glorified Passion or Emotion: "trust your heart", "the heart has reasons that Reason cannot know", and "the heart wants what the heart wants". We see echoes of this view in "The Force" and in every Rom Com. We see that George Lucas and his successors recognized that trusting emotion alone to be the final arbiter was dangerous because it led to bad Sith (apparently not all Sith were bad). More alternatives: Progress, Evolution, Society, the Race (ethnicity), Culture, Family, Transcendence, Freedom, Self Realization, the Journey of Great Discovery, the Self, the Spirit, Bliss, the Great Journey of the Spirit, the Game, the Self as the Spirit as revealed in the Great Journey of Discovery, Selfishness, Greed, the Market, Free Enterprise, Business, Power, Art, Grace, Beauty, the People, Great Leaders, the State, the modern mistaken idea of Conservative, and Communism.

The Romantic Movement fuses many of these alternatives. It relies on the idea of the Spirit, the Journey of the Spirit, and the Self as expression of the Spirit. It might be the strongest belief system worldwide now. I wrote about Romanticism elsewhere so I ignore it in this essay.

Another alternative is populist democracy, especially of the kind that we saw after President Reagan in the United States and even more especially with the rise of Donald Trump. The People represent the Spirit, and the People are always correct through their Great Leaders. Democracy is only a vehicle for the expression of the People and their Great Leaders.

In the 1970s through 2000s in academia, in a roundabout way through the idea of culture, some people used the idea that Reason cannot justify itself and is a mere belief to say that science cannot justify itself and is a mere belief. So we need not follow science, and we should do what the clever academics tell us to do. This view is quite wrong and quite harmful. It is an ugly caricature of thoughtful analysis from religion that seeks a foundation for deep moral and religious principles and for all the relations between

good religion and science. It is an ironic way in which the extreme Left and extreme Right (Creationists) overlap through denying science. Science is as correct as mere humans can get. We cannot make sense better than with science and Reason. Science is one of the best ways in which we mix principles, Reason, experience, and making sense. It would take too long here to go into why science works so well and why it cannot be dismissed. Science does not, and does not aim to, tell us about morality or religion but only about the world in which we have to exercise morality and religion. Science does a really good job of its task. This wrong self-serving faddish hurtful anti-scientific view is an example of why I went through in detail the ideas of making sense and using Reason.

I believe in the ability of Reason. I know the limitations and I also know how to get around in the empty space. These days, my belief in Reason and science makes me a Conservative in the sense that I look to thinkers of the past, original Liberals, for guidance but my belief does not make me a Conservative in the sense of original Conservatives or of present day Republicans who wrongly call themselves Conservative. Mass populist democracy as in America now is not what original Liberals wished for, and it is not a good way to use Reason to make sense and to arrive at the most good. I wish God did guide America and the other groups that I hold dear but I know that usually he does not. Mostly, we are on our own, and I think that is what God wants now.

I commented on Conservatives here because the topic came up naturally. The topic comes up naturally again in parts of the essay on Conservatives but I do not repeat the points then. Please remember the points here for use later.

Keeping Ourselves Merely Human

A good original Liberal did not put his-her own particular mind, or his-her decisions made by talking with other people, above every other mind including the mind of God. A good Liberal knew other people thought too, often thought more adeptly than him-herself; and a good Liberal accepted the conclusions of other people when their conclusions made better sense. A good Liberal accepted the conclusions of another group of thinkers when that group made more sense than did his-her own ideas and the ideas of his-her own group. A good Liberal knew that he-she did not know everything and was not an expert on all. A good Liberal knew that good thinking of the past lay behind institutions such as Churches and behind customs such as the limited authority of the King. So he-she was happy to look at the ideas in Churches, customs, and institutions to see where their preserved thought surpassed his-her own. A Liberal sought the sound thinking of other good thinkers and the sound thinking of books and tradition. Only when the ideas of other people and when traditions obviously made less sense than his-her own thinking, caused obvious harm, were grossly unfair, and-or other people tried to force him to act as they wished, did a Liberal insist on his-her own thought.

In Christian myth, Hell is to be forever separated from God and from other Godly people, isolated, alone, depending on yourself alone, believing you are always right, you are the standard for all thinking, you are sufficient unto yourself, you don't need anyone, and everyone should follow you – as Tom Riddle (Voldemort) acted and as Harry Potter and Neville Longbottom told Tom Riddle about how he acted.

C.S. Lewis described this myth in "The Great Divorce". In contrast, the good guys know how much they need each other and they take joy in friendship and help. The Christian myth is true enough. Liberals knew of this trap of holding yourself alone and above, of worshipping your own mind, and knew of the bad result. Good Liberals avoided the trap. Leaders of the American Revolution consulted friends, colleagues, and rivals. Even superior minds such as Jefferson, Franklin, Madison, and Hamilton did so. Later, Abraham Lincoln did so.

Sadly, not all Liberals are good Liberals in this sense. Too many people, including many Conservatives, put their schemes above the ideas of all others and above the good ideas that have come down to us through books and institutions. They worship their own mind, own self, their church, their party, the doctrines of their party, and some ideology. Too often, when this happens, not only do the people who would put themselves above fall down into a personal hell but they drag us down with them, as did Tom Riddle, Voldemort, a staunch Rightist pseudo-Conservative.

Partisan "us versus them" "tribal" politics has dominated the United States since about 1970, especially since Reagan in the 1980s, and more especially since Republican backlash against Obama and the rise of Trump. Both sides, but especially Conservatives, commit this sin of pride and of worshipping yourself and your own mind. The sin of "us versus them" is self worship in disguise and is much greater than any sin of which Conservatives accuse Liberals. It is greater than supposed sins of tolerating homosexuality and abortion and of coddling ethnic groups. America as a whole pays the price for this sin.

At bottom, everyone has to decide for him-herself what is right and wrong, or decide which Church to accept as the authority on right and wrong. "Churches" include political parties, intellectual schools, and even gangs. So, ultimately, you do have to be your own authority to a big extent. That is a big part of what it means to choose and to accept responsibility. This required choice makes it hard not to hold yourself above and alone. Pause to think how you can be your own authority in this one way yet not fall into the trap of worshipping your own self and mind, and not drag others down. How can you join an "us" without falling into the trap of worshipping the self that is the group and worshipping yourself in disguise in that group? We do have examples of a few people who were right when others were wrong yet did not fall into the trap, and, in the end, helped much more than harmed. Often we see religious heroes in this way. You may use them as examples without saying that you rival them in quality. Nearly all of them deliberately, and I think genuinely, subordinated themselves before greater authority, and asked for help. That is a good start.

Conservatives say Liberals always fall into this trap, always make more bad crazy ideas than good useful ideas, always go for bad crazy ideas instead of good useful ideas even when both are available, always create social chaos, and always drag others down with them. Pause to think if this charge is true. Is chaos more likely when people try to think things out and to make things make sense, when people rely only on past authority, or when people "let things slide"? Use the Supreme Court and use political correctness of both Left and Right as case studies. How do you think things through and make sense without falling into this trap, even if you are a Conservative?

Conservatives say Liberals might have good intentions but, when you push any idea too hard, the real practice is a bad perversion or the bad reflection of what you intended. "The road to Hell is paved with good intentions". In bad revolutions, striving for equality led to huge gaps in power. Taking wealth and redistributing it led eventually to great differences in wealth and to more poverty. Imposing fairness leads to unfairness. Striving for freedom of personal expression leads to "political correctness". Striving for sexual liberation leads to date rape and sexual malfunction. This reversal is true not only of Liberal ideas but of Conservative ideas too. Promoting some inequality of wealth to get investment, economic growth, and overall improvement, in fact leads to: great difference in wealth, a big mass of poor people who are all the same, desperation, and stagnation for the whole country. Imposing one religion such as Christianity leads to violent tyranny in the name of peace and love.

Why, when pushed, do ideas backfire and lead to not-that, perverse that, or the opposite of that? How can we implement ideas and live in institutions to the best extent but not much more? How do we seek counterbalancing ideas without falling into the same trap from the other direction? Neither Liberals nor Conservatives have good answers. I don't expect any from politicians, TV preachers, TV news analysts, Right Wing pundits, or most (otherwise good willed) academics, so it's up to you and your friends.

Missing Examples.

Originally in a section below I gave examples of how good ideas go bad but the exercise took too much space so I moved it to another essay. Again, "Animal Farm" and "1984" explain "new speak" quite well. Remember that Republicans do the same thing in their ways. Here is a sample with no comments:

From "Animal Farm": "All animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others."

The ideas of Political Correctness (PC) can be wonderful but the practice is horrible. It is new moralistic harrying, a way to get power in disguise, especially on college and university campuses.

"Rights", including Civil Rights and the rights of women and LGBTQ people, began as a defense of the downtrodden but led not only to shirking responsibilities but to not even feeling responsibilities.

Social Justice began as a correction to bad laws and obvious discrimination but became a way to attack any person or group with any power or wealth slightly above average.

Social Justice began as a way to help other groups that could not help themselves enough but became a way to feel justified and good about yourself by crusading, like anti-abortion.

Being critical, analytical, and speaking the truth ("the truth shall set you free") turned into finding fault with other people, even when fault might not have been the most important fact in the case, so as to make yourself feel justified and good, a way of crusading by finding fault. If you can't figure out what good to do, and you can't find a solution, or the solution requires you to be critical of your group and to

work hard, then you can always forget all that and simply find fault with your supposed oppressors. PC is a good set of guidelines for this practice.

"Egalite" (equality) originally aimed to reduce unfair and harmful differences such as differences from inheriting great wealth and power but became like PC. It was the historical predecessor to modern PC and the modern misuse of Social Justice.

"Egalite" became, "Take it all away from them and give it all to us. We might share among ourselves so as to be somewhat equal among ourselves, although likely not, but they will have nothing. That serves them right".

Fairness turned into saying "but that's not fair" so as to ignore reality and the vicissitudes of life to make sure you always get the long end of the stick, and make sure all unfairness goes to the other person and never to yourself.

Free Speech became "free speech for me but never for thee" as when anybody who is not a strong Lefty is shouted down, especially on college and university campuses.

Equal Opportunity became forced over-compensation forever and forced equal outcome forever.

"Each person has to seek and find the truth for him-herself" became "I alone know truth and I know the full truth. I alone am always correct. I never need counsel. You are often confused. You have to listen to me and follow me or we will both meet with disaster".

"Each person has to seek and find the truth for him-herself" became "My group, we, are always right and your group, you, are always wrong."

"No man is an island" and "you cannot find the truth by yourself" became "the group is always correct and, when you as an individual go against the group, you are always wrong. Do what the group says. Learn to think properly, to think as the group says to think. Learn what is really right and wrong. Learn how we are right and they are wrong. Because we understand these truths in our hearts, we are the best speakers for the group, so you should listen to us."

"Your ancestors did my group a wrong, we should recognize and accept that fact, we should understand what happened, so we can never do it again, and so we can work together" became "your people did us wrong, your people still do us wrong, it seems to us that you can never stop doing us wrong, and, even if you could stop you can never make up for what you already have done, so your group must make up for then and now, now and for always, by giving to us." Of course, often both groups have wronged the other at some time.

"Truth and Justice before Order" became "There is always more truth in chaos than in order. Nice order is always false and misleading. I am the agent of truthful disorder. I can do what I wish, when I wish,

and take what I want, because that is really only truth, justice, and the right order asserting themselves through me. When I am done being the agent of truth, justice, chaos, and the right order, then we will have correct peace and order in the Galaxy, and it will last a long time."

In the next four paragraphs, I do not ask you to become a psychologist or a crime investigator. I do not ask you to get far into the head of a criminal. I ask you to think of ideas from Left and Right that help set up the mindset of a criminal but that do not necessarily make up the whole mind set of a criminal. What ideas might have originated with Liberals-Democrats or Conservative-Republicans that helped a person to think wrongly and to act wrongly?

Beginning about in 2015, through social media and then through mainstream media, we got stories and images of police violence toward Blacks. The clips stirred up resentment by Blacks against Whites, authority, and the police. The clips brought up bad memories of blame toward Blacks, higher conviction rates of Blacks, longer sentences, Blacks as constant scapegoats, "search and frisk" applied too often and without good reason, and the assumption that a young Black person is always guilty unless proven innocent. Shortly after the clips and the bad feelings, some Black people, mostly men, began to target police officers. Sometimes Black men simply attacked officers without provocation while the officers were in their cars or standing. Black men set up ambushes such as by putting in a fake call of domestic violence. What ideas might go into setting up such an attack in the mind of an attacker, or rationalizing an attack once the attacker thought seriously about doing it? Where did an attacker get the idea that a change in society could result from killing individual representatives of authority? Where did the person get the idea that local violence against individual people would solve a social problem? Where did he get the idea that guns solve problems? How was he able to forget that police officers are people too? It is easy to see how Republicans can blame bad Democratic ideas for these attacks on police officers but ideas that Republicans commonly hold contribute too.

In my opinion: In the large majority of cases, the acts by the police were fully justified. These attacks are detestable beyond my ability to write. They are evidence of profound deliberate misunderstanding and deliberate bad will. They are evidence of a profound problem within a community. They show how people can seek short term personal gratification through twisted ideology and propaganda instead of trying to solve problems.

What ideas allow Black people, and sympathetic White people, to focus on violence against Blacks by Whites and the police, and, at the same time, to overlook Black-on-Black violence and the vastly greater harm it does to Blacks and the Black community? Why not put your energy where it is most needed?

I don't have to give background for school shootings and other mass murder in America. What ideas from the Left or Right might have helped a person to think mass murder, of mostly innocent people, is an acceptable action or is a commendable action? What ideas might have helped to rationalize once the shooter seriously considered acting? Why these targets? What makes strong violence decisive? What makes decisive violence a solution? To what problem is it a solution? If it is not a solution, then it might

be a symbolic statement. What does the symbolic statement say? It is easy to see how a Democrat can blame Republican ideas but I think ideas commonly held by Democrats contribute too.

Back to Making Sense and to Reasons; Most of the Major Points.

When a person says "make sense", he-she wants reasons for what he-she does and he-she wants to be able to explain by using reasons. We want basic principles and we want to use them correctly. When we want a social institution to make sense, we want the institution to have purposes such as managing a forest, and want the institution to work efficiently to meet its goals. We want criteria to explain what the institution does to further its mission and want criteria for success and failure. An institution is like a big rational person but it gets its goals not from human nature, God, morality, what is good, or society, but from particular people who give it goals such as legislators. When Liberals said "make sense", they thought of logic and reasons (rational, reasonable), they liked to use logic and reasons, and they wanted institutions to be logical and reasonable in the same way. They were like Mr. Spock. Their institutions were like the Enterprise and its missions. Liberals thought they made better sense, were more logical and reasonable, than others, especially more so than people who defended religion and the aristocracy without being able to give good reasons.

Many institutions in the 1700s and early 1800s did not make obvious sense, and their defenders did not make obvious sense. Many institutions made bad sense in that they acted against their supposed goals and against the better interests of the people. They were illogical. The aristocracy and the churches said they helped the people but, in fact, they took a lot of resources from the people and gave back too little. "Taxation without representation" was illogical. These days, business firms say they help all the people but it is clear they do not. Liberals in the 1700s correctly used reason to cast doubt on the claims of many people and institutions. Liberals took pride in doing so. Some Liberal analyses were wrong, and some overlooked how people and institutions help, but, on the whole, original Liberals usually made good points. We still follow their logic and make the same points today. We follow the Liberal goal to make sense and we use the same arguments that original Liberals used. When a Conservative says that Affirmative Action does not make sense in the original way the program was intended or in any clear way for overall benefit, he-she really uses a Liberal mode of arguing.

If the original Liberals did make sense some of the time, some existing institutions did not measure up, and Liberals could imagine better, then the issue becomes "how do we get there from here?" How do we make local justice, national legislatures, churches, and the economy better, not just in our fantasies, but in the real world? We would like to use the same logic to find how to get there that we used to figure out sense and not-sense. Usually that is hard. Sometimes it is practically impossible to get from here to there without big damage, more damage than the gain of there. Most revolutions caused this big damage. Liberals knew of this problem but never could offer good general solutions and still can't. It is one thing to know an institution doesn't measure up and other things to know how to fix it and how to fix it without making more problems. Especially it is one thing to know an institution doesn't measure up or that the economy has a problem and another thing to use the state to fix the situation.

Beginning with the French Revolution, Conservatives showed that Liberals overlooked much of the good that old institutions do, and Liberals overlooked the damage that comes of trying to get there from here. You have to make sense not only in some idealistic do-gooder mode but in a way that can be applied to the real world of what exists now and what already has strong social inertia.

Original Liberals took pride in logic. Yet now, Conservatives say Liberals suffer from excess emotion that swamps their Reasoning and Conservatives call Liberals "bleeding hearts". Conservatives say Liberals cannot assess costs and benefits, so Liberals are illogical in terms that Liberals originally used. Liberals offer moral imperatives such as "feed the poor" but they do not offer logically sound ways of meeting goals. Conservatives claim to rely on cost-benefit and so say they are now more logical than Liberals. In fact, neither Liberals nor Conservatives rely on logic nearly as much as they claim to, both rely on low emotional appeals to frightened angry voters, and they do not make sense in the way original Liberals wished or in any way that a simple voter, like me, would wish for.

If original Liberals relied on logic and on practicality for making sense of institutions, programs, cases, and society, then how did it happen that Liberals now often do rely on emotional appeals and on moral appeals that seem impractical? Why do Liberals now avoid practical analysis and seem immune to practicality? How do Conservatives now claim to be more logical? If neither are as logical as they claim, and both appeal more to passion than to logic, why do people believe what Conservatives say about Liberals and about themselves? What happened? What is the modern mix of logic and passion, and how did we get here? Understanding this change goes a long way toward explaining Democrats and Republicans. That is what the middle parts of this essay are about.

An original Liberal was not always against central control of some aspects of life, social life, and political relations. A Liberal in 1790 could believe in courts, Congress, the police, and the army. A Liberal could believe in a central bank, a big church, or the Post Office. If central authority was the best way to get things done, then that was the Liberal solution. If central authority is not needed, or is too dangerous, then avoid it. See more below.

A Liberal is not often a "Libertarian". Libertarianism is a doctrine that developed after World War 1 and that tries to maximize individual free action and minimize state action. Libertarians are more likely to ally with Conservatives than Liberals because Libertarians want a minimal state while Conservatives say they wish to do that (but don't really). I do not discuss Libertarianism.

A Liberal is not often a "libertine". A libertine is like a "hedonist" or a self-indulgent and narcissistic person. A libertine indulges his-her senses and likes to use drugs and alcohol to increase pleasure. A libertine goes to places designed to lower inhibitions and to get people to act self-indulgently such as brothels, casinos, and political meetings. In contrast, Liberals were often sober, thoughtful, and demur such as Washington. When they had fun, they did not harm others, as with Franklin enjoyed sex and alcohol but did little harm. They reasoned there was no point in banning fun if fun did not hurt other people or society, and they believed in letting people do as they wished as long as it did not hurt other people or society. Liberals often preferred coffee to booze, which is why coffee houses were banned for

a time in England. The state did not a big group of wide awake smart people asking what made sense and what did not, and what to do about it.

After Liberal ideas were available, Libertines did use Liberal ideas as excuses, just as ruthless people use Conservative ideas as excuses. Hitler did not run as a Liberal. He murdered homosexuals and gypsies. He repressed swing music. Libertine short-term fun, combined with Libertine twisting of Liberal ideas into excuses, surely has seduced some young people who otherwise would have had better lives. Like generations of children hiding under the covers, read "Fanny Hill" and Playboy. Conservative ideas, mixed with the chance to oppress your fellows, have hurt some young people who otherwise would have lived better. The mix of Libertine acts and any kind of excuse has been seducing young people and ruining lives at least since cities were invented 8,000 years ago, long before Liberalism. Prostitution in religious temples used to be common in the Middle East and likely in India too. Even if we grant that the mix of Libertine acts and twisted Liberal ideas has caused more damage than repressive acts and twisted Conservative ideas, still we not should blame Liberal ideas alone. Condemning Liberal ideas will not save young people from seduction and bad lives. You have to know some history, think clearly, and be able to explain to young people clearly too. And still people, even adults, will get lost.

(A) Liberals insisted individual people are the best judges of their own welfare and we should let people do as they wish, within limits. Original Liberals were not as doctrinaire as modern people tend to be because Liberals recognized that all rights entail responsibilities and entail giving up some things, and they were as likely to stress responsibilities and giving up to stress rights. (B) Original Liberals believed in personal autonomy in contrast to old-fashioned society where most people had set roles and people had to fulfill social duty no matter their personal talents or their personal character. Liberals wanted people to sort themselves into the best roles and sort themselves out of roles that other people did better. (C) Liberals could see that many people are not good judges of their own welfare, could be taken advantage of, and that actions based on ignorance or on limited ability led to hardship for themselves and society. Liberals could see that uneducated and unintelligent people were systematically taken advantage of. In those cases, it is better to have uneducated and unintelligent people do their social duty and to be protected by people who do know better. (D) But we should not let those cases blind us to the bigger need for individual freedom of choice, action, and self-determination. We need freedom for the people who can do better. Society is better off with too much freedom than not enough.

Liberals were against undue constraint, including repression, because undue constraint doesn't make sense either morally or as a practical way to run a country. Repression goes against what it means to be a human. Undue constraint means that the best talent does not come forward, institutions are run by mediocre or bad talent, the best ideas do not prevail, mediocre or bad ideas prevail, institutions do not have well-defined good goals, there are no standards by which to judge institutions, institutions perform badly by common sense standards, bad people take advantage of bad ideas and bad institutions to take power and wealth at the expense of better people and the nation as a whole, the state does worse than it should, our nation cannot compete with other nations, our business firms cannot compete with the business firms of other nations, and our people go backwards. Liberals were for as much freedom as is

practicable because it does make sense morally given what people are and freedom is a good way to run a country if done within a system of the correct laws and institutions.

Original Liberals were not against all constraint simply because it was constraint and it came from the state. They were against undue constraint including repression. As it turned out, most of the countries of Europe suffered from undue constraint, and so it would seem as if Liberals were against all aspects of traditional government, and even against all government, when they were not. Eventually some Liberals took a stance against all constraint and-or all government but that was not the original idea and should be avoided. Because there was not nearly enough personal freedom in Europe in 1750, original Liberals promoted individual freedom almost wherever they could. But they were never for unbridled freedom. They always knew that freedom and a system-of-order-for-freedom must come together. Eventually some Liberals took a stance for all freedom always everywhere without constraint, and took the stance that somebody ("the man") is always trying to destroy freedom, so they always had to fight for freedom. But that was not the original idea. Originally, you fight for freedom and against constraint when you have to, and stop when you have gained the right amount of freedom.

Individual autonomy does not mean selfishness, immorality, amorality, or no sense of duty. Nearly all the original Liberals had a strong sense of duty to their political offices, the nation, and the morality of their faith or to general morality. A feeling of duty is part of human nature that original Liberals took for granted. Once you accept a role, you are bound to carry out that role for the good of the whole or you must make clear that you release the role, and you must make clear your reasons. It is hard to read about George Washington, Ben Franklin, or Thomas Jefferson and to say that individual freedom leads to avoiding duty, lack of caring about society, amorality, or immorality.

Liberals did say that individual autonomy allowed people to differ on questions of religion and morality. To differ on questions of religion and morality is not a Liberal disease. Even people within one narrow Church, as any Christian Church, with Islam, or Judaism, differ considerably on questions of religion and morality. Liberals made differing with fellows acceptable and within the norms of humanity. To differ does not mean to fight. That we differ does not mean I am human and you a demon. Differing opinions make life interesting and fun. Do not fear differences as long as the other person does not take the right to force you to believe and act as he-she does. What matters is that we can agree enough to run society well for the next few decades.

The Liberal tolerance of differences, different opinions, different religions (or at least different versions of the Judeo-Christian religions), and different people, is at the root of why we cherish diversity today in America, Europe, and many other parts of the world. This is good.

Liberals made mistakes, and, when they did, hopefully acknowledged the mistakes and changed course. Liberals began the Continental Congress, saw that it did not work, and changed to the Constitution and Federalism. Liberals in America passed the Prohibition against alcoholic beverages, and, when it did not work, they repealed Prohibition. One problem with Liberals today is that they don't acknowledge their mistakes because they are afraid of losing voting blocs.

Liberals tend to have an overly idealized view of human nature but they also try to correct their overly idealized view. The idea that people are persons, are the kind of being that should be free and that can choose, is part of the Liberal idea of human nature. As with most of us, Liberals tend to see all humans as versions of themselves as they would like to be: moral, well-intended, trying to put the greater good ahead of their own group, rational, able to make any kind of choice no matter how complicated, and willing to take responsibility ("my dog sees me as I would like to be"). Liberals give people the benefit of the doubt. This view gets Liberals into trouble because people are not nearly as good as Liberals wish we were. Liberals wanted people to be naturally as good as widespread democracy requires yet people are not naturally that good. That is why we got representative democracy - but we might not be even as good as required for representative democracy. This view that people are naturally angelic if only we can remove repression got Liberals into trouble in the French Revolution and with Communism.

This Liberal view of human nature is inspiring but it is not complete, it is wrong because it is incomplete, and it is not enough to show how social institutions would work well or would not. Liberals did not have a systematic realistic reliable view of human nature that they could use to construct social institutions that work as intended and work well. Instead, Liberals substituted ad hoc views of human nature. Ad hoc views tend to serve the needs of the presenter rather than reflect the truth and so serve the real needs of society. If you want something, paint all people as creatures who want it too and who would benefit from it. To someone who wants a sports stadium, everyone is a sports fan who can afford the tickets; to an oppressed person, everyone can see social injustice, everyone has empathy, and is willing to give up enough to achieve social justice for all; people who want to control others paint others as good natured but stupid and so in need of guidance by the select smart few. This lack of a good realistic theory of human nature, and so leaving society vulnerable to bad self-serving ideas, has always plagued Liberals and continues to plague Liberals today. Liberals simply cannot see that people, and groups of people such as ethnic groups and socio-economic classes, will not live up to Liberal schemes, and, in fact, might do some really bad things using Liberal ideas as an excuse. Conservatives suffer from their version of a wrong view of human nature even if they have more accurate views of human nature.

These points, when brought together, produce tension that allows Liberalism to be abused: (1) people and society should be rational, should make sense; (2) people are people because they are rational, they can give good reasons; (3) people are the best judges of their own welfare and interests, nobody should judge for us, this is part of being rational; (4) thus people should be free to follow their own wishes as long as they do no harm to others or society; (5) yet we know that a lot of people are not fully rational and are not good judges of their own best interests or the best interests of society; (6) people have a nature other than being rational but we Liberals do not have a good theory of human nature and of how human nature and society interact; (7) some people should be the guides and judges for the people who cannot do it themselves; (8) because we are so rational and astute, we Liberals should be the judges and guides; and (9) social institutions should be set up so rational reasonable sane moderate experienced Liberal people are the leaders, judges, and guides. The people who believe in human autonomy and freedom should control the others.

A lot of this Liberal view makes sense. Don't rush to judge because you see how Liberals set themselves up to control others. That abuse happened in the bad revolutions but it does not happen everywhere. People fight back against tricky ideologies. Figure out what makes sense in this assemblage and how to make sure we stay within good sense. Conservatives have their version of this set of points including the idea that Conservatives should be the leaders, judges, and guides.

The tension comes in wobbling back and forth between seeing people as autonomous versus seeing them as victims of social injustice who need big help fast. (10) Liberals like to make themselves feel better by being champions of social justice for people who can't help themselves. (11) Liberals look for causes to champion so they can feel good and Justified. (12) This view opens up Liberal political parties, such as the Democratic Party, to being used by groups who portray themselves as victims so as to get benefits. (13) Because Liberals have no steady realistic view of human nature, they can't say when their help is needed and a real benefit or when they are enabling people, or a group, that will not stand up for themselves and are taking advantage. We saw much of this in American beginning in the late 1950s.

(14) When Liberals first help people, such as Blacks or women, they aim to get freedom from current oppression. (15) To do so, they have to repeal bad laws and often have to make some good new laws, as in the amendments to support civil rights and the amendment-that-should-have-been to support gender equality. (16) When laws go on too long, they tend to become ever more elaborate, and they tend not toward liberation but toward enabling dependence and opening the door for privilege. (17) When some groups see that other groups get protection and privilege, they want in on the bandwagon, and we get the situation that developed after the 1950s. (18) Because Liberals don't have a solid view of human nature, they can't decide when they have given just enough help and when help is not help but is bad enabling. (19) Then they become more the party of giving privilege to clients than the party of helping to achieve liberation.

Liberty does need protection through some laws, as in the Second Amendment that guarantees the right to keep and bear arms. But too many laws, even to support liberty, erode liberty. Sooner or later, to be free, people have to stand on their own. There are no good guidelines for when we have too many laws. We can't have good guidelines because we don't have a solid view of human nature and likely never will have a view of human nature on which we can decide about too few or too many laws. We have to "wing it". If we realize that we have to go "by feel" then we might be more sensitive. I don't know if it is better to err on the side of too many laws and risk the erosion of freedom or on the side of too few laws and so risk sliding back into prejudice and repression.

To anticipate material below: Conservatives have their own version of this tension and weak spot. (a) Conservatives look for causes so they can feel good and Justified. (b) Conservatives accept that some people cannot choose for themselves and so need guidance. Conservatives accept that some people are good leaders and should guide. Especially Conservatives are good leaders. (c) When Conservatives lead people out of a moral or economic dilemma, they feel good and feel Justified. (d) Yet, since the middle 1800, Conservatives also stress that people should have as much choice as possible, and Conservatives hold choice as gift from God. To take away choice is to take away a gift from God and diminish us as

humans. (e) These two views are not compatible. (f) So, in practice, Conservatives give people enough choice to confuse them, as when people have too many detailed choices among economic products, as with health insurance. (g) Then Conservatives hold up strong leaders to save the people from confusion. In so doing, Conservatives nullify choice and effectively enslave people through confusion, debt, and bad policies. (h) This scheme is similar to what the Emperor Dath Sidious did when he created a fake trade war so he could institute repression. I think most Conservatives don't see this is what they do.

Again: (a) People have to apply both practical criteria and moral criteria. There is no absolute resolution to this dilemma. (b) In theory, Conservatives should stress morality over practicality. They do that when they champion the unborn and stress the roots of America in Christianity. (c) In practice, they stress morality when it suits them and stress practicality when that suits them. (d) Jumping back and forth between the poles, and trying to have it both ways, confuses people. It opens the door for the dilemma noted above. (e) Conservatives enjoy conflict between morality and practicality, and enjoy confusion, because they can step in to save the day and so can feel good and feel Justified. (f) When groups see that Conservatives want to have it both ways, and that Conservatives like to feel like the champions in a moral cause or practical cause, then groups see that they can appeal to Conservatives for support and for power. They use Conservatives. Conservatives willingly go along. This too happened many times beginning in the 1950s. Among groups that use Conservatives in this way are the NRA, the insurance lobbies, people opposed to helping nature so that they can make a profit without worry, and people opposed to abortion.

Please keep in mind these comments on Conservatives for below because I mention them there but I don't repeat them in detail.

Liberals do not object to all authority or to authority as such. Some authority is needed and some is reasonable and rational. Liberals want authority to make sense. They want authority to explain itself in terms that make sense to thinking people, working people, and business people. They don't want to rely simply on "because it has always been like this", "it works for now so go along with things as they are", "don't rock the boat", "because we said so", or "oh, I just know I am right and that is the right thing to do". The American Constitution provides many places where authority exerts itself and the Constitution, and the Federalist Papers, give pretty good reasons why in each arena. The Constitution also provides limits to authority.

Summary of Liberal Ideas about Self and Society.

You cannot decide apart from a framework. The answers that Liberals give about the framework for making sense define Liberalism, define kinds of Liberals, give a view of human nature, and give a view of society. Over time, Liberals developed a set of ideas common to most Liberals and that most Liberals use to claim that something they say, a critique that they give, or a program that they propose, makes sense in terms of these common ideas. This subject requires a long essay in itself. I don't do that here. I give some generally agreed upon Liberal ideals and standards. The order does not necessarily reflect importance. Liberals are not fully consistent nor should we expect that among mere humans. Liberals

use the ideas as much to rationalize ideas that they have come up with for other reasons as because they developed an idea directly on the basis of these ideas - another human failing as common among Conservatives and Republicans. You need practice to use the ideas correctly and to see through misuse by other people.

-ALL people are persons with innate value and dignity. In religious terms, all people are souls. But you do not need to believe in a religion that stresses the soul to understand the innate value of people.

-Anything that debases people debases the innate value and dignity of people. Anything that debases people debases souls. In religious terms, anything that debases people debases the cherished creation of God and-or Heaven, Dharma, and the Tao.

-Self autonomy and self determination.

-You are able to decide for yourself what you like and dislike, and what you will do or not do.

-You may decide for yourself. The state must allow you to decide for yourself.

-People have a big ability to assess situations. People are able to choose in complicated and new cases. People are able to look at social, business, and natural options to choose. People can make mistakes and can be confused but not usually often and not usually for too long.

-You may not hurt other people or society as a whole when you exercise autonomy, self-determination, and choice. You are not more privileged than others. They are persons too.

-We must seek a balance between the expression of autonomy, self-determination, and choice, among the whole group of people. We must seek the best balance especially given that conflicts arise. Some theorists derive the state, or the need for the state, from this situation but I don't have to go that far into theory for the idea of conflicts and balance to make sense.

-Fairness.

-Each person, and the state, should strive for the good of the whole when the apparent good of the whole does not interfere too much with individual personhood and autonomy.

-Each person has a duty to respect the personhood of others, to avoid hurting the personhood of others, and to support the personhood of others as long as to do so does not undermine personhood.

-Each person has a duty to support the compromise agreement that insures the ability of people to well-express their personhood, autonomy, self-determination, and choice. If the state and its institutions are the manifestation of that agreement, then each person has a duty to support the state.

Mike Polioudakis, from "Democrats and Republicans", Part 6

-The duty to the state may not completely overcome personhood, autonomy, self-determination, and ability for choice. If personhood etc. erodes too much, another arrangement must be sought.

-There is a general sense of morality and a general sense of order. People must respect those.

-No group has the right to impose its sense of morality or order as the general sense of morality and order.

-The state has the duty to guard the general morality and general order.

-Rule of Law.

-Laws Apply Equally.

-Not everybody is required to work directly for the general good, not everybody is a saint, politician, priest, or police officer; but some people must do this, and you should do it if you can to the extent that you can. Some people need to fill the offices of institutions and the state. Some people can and may ignore the general good as long as they do not hurt general good, hurt others, and hurt the personhood, autonomy, and self-determination of others. Some people simply sell beer and cars.

-You may not undermine the general good for selfish reasons such as to pollute. You do not have that much autonomy and self-determination. Your autonomy and self-determination does not automatically take precedence over the personhood, autonomy, and self-determination of others. You must be able to control yourself, your actions, and their results.

-There are no hereditary classes of privileged people or underprivileged people. There is no aristocracy. There are not hereditary classes of suppressed or repressed people. There is no anti-aristocracy. There are no scapegoat classes.

-Due process of law.

-Rights of property and rights to fruits of labor. If you own something, not the state, a privileged person, or a business firm can (may) take it from you without due process of law. If you make a thing, or you get a return, as the result of your labor, you are entitled to keep your fair share of the return.

-People should get a return from their labor (effort, work, business) according to their natural abilities, how well they have developed their natural abilities, and their effort.

-People should not get a return more than they deserve.

-People have the right to make mistakes and be stupid. Nobody has the right to compel another person simply because they disagree with the decisions of that person. Some people do have the right to watch

over minors and mentally disabled people. Your stupidity and mistakes may not hurt the personhood, autonomy, and self-determination of others. You may not hurt other people through your right to be stupid.

-As far as possible, the state should get the most qualified people into offices and should prevent less qualified people, or unqualified people, from holding office simply because of personal connections or considerations of politics, wealth, power, or social rank.

-Equality of opportunity, as far as is practical. Equality of opportunity does not entail equality of outcome.

-Differences in wealth and power are acceptable if they arise due to differences in natural ability, in how natural ability was trained, and in effort.

-Right to pass on wealth and power to descendants, kin, and others of your choice.

-Since about 1900, rights to a basic education.

-Each citizen has the duty to remain informed and to make informed reasonable decisions.

-In a democracy, each citizen has the right to vote and each citizen has the duty to vote on the basis of sufficient accurate information and reasoning. You should not vote if you are not informed.

-An office is a sacred trust. You must carry out your office honestly, fairly, according to the goals of your office, and to the best of your ability. If you cannot meet these requirements, you should leave your office in favor of someone who can.

-Any person or group which feels it has been treated unfairly, or has suffered greatly as a result of "how the system works", the actions of other groups, or natural disaster, has the right to petition the state for redress of grievance, that is, for justice and help. The state should listen seriously but it does not have to agree and does not have to give any aggrieved group what that group wishes for. The state need not make the rest of the people suffer in order to make up for the hardship and-or injustice done to the petitioning group. The state should try to address what caused the problems originally.

Liberals want authority to support general good and fairness. Most of us have enough intuitive sense of general good and fairness so that this Liberal framework seems reasonable and appealing. We all want more general good and we all want fairness.

But we do not have enough shared intuitive feel so we always can agree on what does make sense, what does give general good, and what is fair. We do not have enough shared intuitive feel of how to carry out what makes sense. We do not have enough shared intuitive feel to judge between Conservatives and Liberals and between their programs. We need information and rules. Liberals and Conservatives

don't help us by giving enough information to reliably use our shared intuitive feel of general good and fairness. Rather than do that, now they deliberately obscure issues to take advantage of our intuitive sense of general good and fairness. It is up to us to find out for ourselves, use our intuitive sense of general good and fairness, and think of how to get there from here.

Conservatives also held most of the ideals above, at least in theory. They too felt the state should make sense. They did differ on how to achieve these ideals, on how to recognize what makes sense, and how to know when we make sense enough.

Not all the ideals are compatible. It is just true that different people have and want different things, and there is only so much wealth and power in the world, and people conflict. For example, the right to pass on gains to your children leads to a self-sustaining upper class with wealth and power, even when upper class children are not as qualified as children of other classes. We also have a self-sustaining lower class, out of which the children cannot rise very far no matter their innate abilities and how hard they educate themselves. These outcomes are unfair. These outcomes erode what it means to be an autonomous person. "Stuff happens".

Yet working to overcome bad outcomes usually leads to other unfairness. Then we have to decide if the cure is worse than the disease, if the bad that comes from trying to overcome unfairness is worse than the bad that comes from the original unfairness. Especially we have to worry if using the state as the instrument to address fairness causes more harm than good. The unfairness from working to overcome the unfairness-of-class might be worse than the unfairness-of-class, as when we try to insure equality of outcome rather than equality of opportunity.

Liberals have never come to grips with all the contradictions inherent in what makes sense. They have not given us a solid foundation in which ideal comes first in a particular situation. The conundrums open the door for individuals and groups to use Liberal ideals and Liberal political parties for their own selfish ends regardless of the general good. Of course, individuals and groups do the same with these ideals when Conservatives offer their version.

More about Original Liberals.

Liberals clash with authority when authority does not make sense in terms that Liberals accept. America fought a Revolution because English authority did not make sense in American terms. To be American means to clash with authority sometimes and to be able to give really good reasons why.

The ideals above led Liberals to clash with established authority in many places at many times as they did in America during the Revolution. Because Liberals clash with authority sometimes, they can seem anti-authoritarian in general, rebelling for the sake of rebelling ("What are you rebelling against? What have you got?"), and can seem like petulant children who just discovered "no". This criticism is justified in too many cases and with too many people. David Bowie on American posed rebellion: "Rebel, rebel, you've torn your dress; rebel, rebel, your hair is a mess".

Still, you cannot dismiss all complaints as mere self-serving disingenuous carping. Not all Liberals are selfish whiners with an extended adolescence who buy into myths about rebels. That stereotype fits modern Southern Conservatives, Working Class White Conservatives, and many Black activists, just as well. You can't dismiss all complaints as bad attitude fostered by a self-serving social group. Some complaining is based on real problems. You can't defend all authority. Some authority is abused. You can't defend all systems or every quirk in every system. Some systems are unfair. You have to take the complaints and arguments seriously.

The posed liberal-rebel stance gets in the way of the need for real challenges to real bad authority, real bad institutions, real bad programs, and real bad policies, and it blocks real rebellion against real deep problems. When Liberals are stupid, they are their worst enemies.

The Liberal view on more government or less government is complicated, often contradictory, and got reversed a few times. On the one hand, Liberals recognize the need for state authority. Liberals usually don't want to end all state programs but to make them better. Liberals do propose new programs and new actions. They want state programs to make sense in Liberal terms. All new programs should make sense in Liberal terms. After the failure of the American Continental Congress, Liberals championed the Constitution. On the other hand: ,

(a) If the state was rational enough and worked well enough to begin with, there would be no need for the Liberal view. So, some things are wrong with the state, which means it has more programs than it should and some programs are worse than they should be; and it is up to Liberals to show so. It is up to Liberals to say which programs should change, which go altogether, and which stay. "That government is best which governs least" is a Liberal slogan. Liberals have to offer new programs and institutions.

(b) See below with Adam Smith. Business always thinks the state does too much that annoys business, the state has too many programs that interfere with business, and the state limits business too much. Because of ties between Liberals and business, Liberals took that view as well.

(c) Economic theorists stress the need to let individuals choose and do what they want, that the most good arises spontaneously this way, and that the state cannot improve on the good that arises this way. Because of ties to business, and ties to this individual-based economic theory, Liberals also thought the state interferes with individuals and business too much. The state is too big.

(d) Regardless of any ties with business and economics, Liberalism, in England, developed along with political analysis founded on individuals, as in Hobbes and Locke. Individual rights should always take precedence over state rights and sometimes over state needs. If there is a conflict, and individual rights do not pose an imminent danger to the state, then the individual must prevail. The state always encroaches on individual freedom. Individuals must always be on guard to stop the state from eroding and destroying freedom.

It is worth repeating that Liberals not only stressed individual rights, they also stressed responsibilities and stressed what people give up to get a right. When the state is too big, and then the state recedes, individuals must step up to fill gaps. That includes duties and responsibilities. Rights, responsibilities, duties, and giving up some things go together. You cannot have rights without responsibilities and without giving up some things. To get representative democracy and the freedom of representative democracy, we have to give up making all decisions personally, we have to agree to live by laws, and learn how to get along in a nation of laws and representatives. One big responsibility for a person in a modern state is good citizenship, which means educating yourself and making sure you understand candidates, officials, offices, parties, and issues. Your ethnic, gender, age, or religious group not only has rights but responsibilities and it has to give up some things such as the idea that its religion-and-morals must dominate the group. The Declaration of Independence is as much about what individuals must take on their shoulders and must give up as about how the state must allow individual freedom. The Constitution is even more about assuming responsibilities and giving up some things. Even the Bill of Rights requires giving up some things and taking on duties and responsibilities.

These three ideas mixed to make a big motif in pop culture: (a) society always is too authoritarian and always needs watching, (b) the Liberal watchdog and activist, and (c) Romanticism. The state is never mostly good, it is always mostly the evil Empire of Darth Sidious, whether it is a Liberal or Conservative state. Truly free people are always rebels, only rebels are free, and all rebels are free, Conservative or Liberal. All rebels are good rebels; all rebels are Obi-Wan Kenobe and Luke Skywalker; all rebel Luke Skywalkers and Obi-Wan Kenobes are good rebels against an evil state, Liberal or Conservative; and only rebels are legitimate critics of the state and can make it better. I have criticized this stance elsewhere. It can be fun but it blinds us to real problems and to needed realistic actions.

In trying to figure out their position toward authority, Liberals never settled the following contradiction in their ideals, in the role of the state: Suppose there is a real problem such as inherited differences in opportunity. Is the state the best way to solve this problem and other similar problems? What if any solution that goes through the state quite likely causes more problems and hardship than the original problem? Then Liberals have to learn to live with the original problem and have to learn how to explain the situation to the victims of unfairness. I think original Liberals would have understood this hurtful bind and would have dealt with it more honestly than modern Liberals. They would have allowed some problems for which the state is a poor solution. They would have expected limits on authority not just to compel but to solve. For reasons we see, modern Liberals pretty much insist this can never happen. They insist the state can solve all problems well enough, at least as well as any solution through private action. On the one hand, Liberals suspect all authority. On the other hand, they trust authority to solve all problems about as well as the problems can be solved.

Liberals got a reputation for first (1) being against all traditional religion and then (2) against all religion. This view of Liberals is partly true but only partly. In fact, both (a) the stereotype of the skeptic Liberal and (b) the anti-Liberal (Conservative) backlash in support of traditional religion, do more damage to true religion than do any doubts by Liberals. Any sane rational calm person has doubts about his-her own religion and religion in general. Mother Teresa had doubts. Augustine had doubts. Anybody who

has seen religiously-based idiocies such as terrorism by people who call themselves Muslims (they are not), by the American Religious Right, or by militant atheism, has to doubt strong belief and its link to goodness. Doubts make us think about our religion and should lead us to appreciate what is good and likely true about it. They should lead you to reject what is false and bad. If you never doubt, then you are only a poorly programmed robot, vulnerable to attack by others, and prone to backlash when you cannot defend your religion. Violent backlash is against all good religions.

Liberals also can affirm religion when it accords with their ideas of morality. Ben Franklin was a religious opportunist who held pews in several churches for political reasons but he also believed in God and he believed Jesus was a great moral teacher. Franklin praised Jesus and accepted Jesus as his moral guide. Thomas Jefferson did not think Jesus was God but he believed in God and he also followed Jesus' moral teachings. A lot of religion makes sense, and large churches such as the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches have put effort into showing the sense of Christianity. Ultimately, some of religion need not make sense, and those are usually the most important parts. But that does not mean religion as a whole is necessarily stupid, illogical, or half-crazy. If the part that requires faith also makes intuitive sense, the rest of the religion follows fairly reasonably, and the believer is honest in presenting his-her religion and his-her mindset, then a religion as a whole can make a lot of sense. All the major religions can be presented this way, including non-Christian religions. Many Liberals hold to religion in this way. Logic alone cannot tell us what to live for and cannot tell us how to live in any satisfying detail. We need to get somewhat beyond logic to live as really full humans, and religion is one of the best ways to do so. Liberals recognized this fact. To really get into this topic requires getting into relations of belief and logic, that topic is too big for here, and we don't need to settle the topic to see how Liberals need not be against religion and can be for it.

Liberals were skeptical about religion for the same reason that they were skeptical about aristocracy. Liberals did recognize that many clergy and many aristocrats did useful work in local government, local life, and in guiding the country as a whole. Liberals appreciated "The Vicar of Wakefield" and portraits of clergy in books such as by Jane Austen and the Bronte sisters. Liberals also saw that aristocrats and clergy got their "cut" regardless of how well or ill common people did, and that many clergy and most aristocrats did not do useful work for the people despite being supported by the people. They lived off the people, and they directed the church and the state for their own self-interests rather than for the interests of the country as a whole or the people. This is similar to how many Americans see rich people and large business firms now; and there is still quite a bit of truth in this class relation. Fewer people now see churches as living off the people. To undo the harm done by the clergy and aristocrats, and to substitute a more rational, sensible, and beneficial order, Liberals had to undermine some authority of clergy and aristocrats. To do that, Liberals sometimes attacked specific points where religion bolstered undo authority, as when religion gave total power to the king or arbitrary power of sentencing to an aristocrat.

Sometimes some Liberals attacked a large religious institution as a whole such as Confession, attacked a Church such as the Roman Catholic Church, a religion such as Christianity, or attacked religion in general. Sometimes the attack not only undermined bad authority but lived on its own momentum. Once some

Liberals got going against religion, they couldn't stop even if they knew better. The critique attacked all particular religions and religion in general. That going too far happens also when one religion "starts up" against another or one political party "starts up" against another. It happens when neighbors who were once friends "start up" on each other. I have not studied old Liberal opinions about religion to see how much they were reasonable and how much excessive. My impression is that they were not often crazy and were often accurate. People still got the impression that Liberals were-and-are against all religion, Churches, and religious institutions. It is not true. I suspect that, once some Liberals got this reputation, they tried to live up (down) to it. I saw that in academia a lot.

Original Liberals, Business, Practicality, and Cost-Benefit.

In this section, I use cost-benefit as an example of practical reasoning, partly to make clear the contrast with moral reasoning.

Surprising to modern people: At first, Liberals and business had a close association. Business was often hampered by the state, aristocracy, and churches. The state and the aristocrats took their "cut", and made sure business did not do anything to subvert the authority of state, church, and aristocrats. The churches could not tax business directly but they could make business look bad and they could hinder some activities such as enclosing the land for sheep farms and building factories. SCA restricted how, when, and where business firms could do what business. Business leaders resented this control and resented paying fees and taxes – like now. Business leaders liked Liberal ideas because Liberals stress the activities of individuals. Liberals derived social order from the interaction of individuals rather than from God or the group. Because business in 1776 was important in the nation, and particular individual business leaders were driving business, business people felt they were the driving force behind national wealth, success, and power. So, they should lead. Liberals said individuals should be free to decide and act and individuals were usually adult enough and well-informed enough to make the best choices for themselves. So business people could buy land and goods, and hire labor, without feeling that business was taking advantage of anybody. Liberals said individuals should be able to get the benefits of their own labor and ideas. Liberals also stress responsibility but business leaders did not always apply that idea to themselves. Liberals were champions of the free market.

Likely due to influence from the business mentality, at least one big branch of original Liberals was also champion of what we now call cost-benefit analysis. Their first leader was Jeremy Bentham in the early 1800s. He founded the London School of Economics. One of his most active followers was James Mill, the father of John Stuart Mill. J.S. Mill was indoctrinated as a follower of Bentham before carving his own niche. If you want to know whether an institution makes sense, think of what good comes from it and what bad comes from it. Sum up the good and the bad, and see which is bigger. Also think of the good and bad of doing nothing, and the good and bad of alternatives. Sum up the good and bad of those, and see in which case the good most outweighs the bad. Choose that. Comic writers on TV and in movies make fun of this procedure when they have somebody try to do to decide whether to fall in love or marry a particular person. More realistically, you own a piece of land near a college town. What do you do with it? Leave it as semi-wild, make a park, sports fields, or movie complex? This analysis has

to be applied not only to the profit and loss of the owner of the land but to the gain and harm of all the local people, and to all local subgroups such as "townies" versus "schoolies", to society as a whole. This calculation is hard to do for a group but it can be done. This calculation is hard to do for an institution such as a local church or school but can be done, and, in fact, is done for schools all the time. Churches do it when they decide that the attendance at a local church is so low that its congregation should be absorbed into another local church. This calculation is hard to do for something like a religious holiday, such as Christmas, or for a whole society, but it can be done in theory. It is hard to apply to a form of governing such as populist democracy versus representative democracy versus monarchy but it can be done. This is one way to put practicality and "make sense" into practice. Even if we can't agree on a tally, thinking in this way helps us to think out what is going on.

Thinking in terms of cost-benefit points out the distinction between business-like thinking versus moral thinking. I return to practicality versus morality below. Liberals and Conservatives see a difference even if they do not agree on the details and on whether practicality or morality wins out in which situations. Highlighting the roles of morality and of cost-benefit practicality is an unintended benefit of business thinking. Sometimes we do have to put practicality ahead of morality. But nearly all people feel there are moral considerations that should not be subject to cost-benefit analysis. Those moral considerations come first almost regardless of practicality. These days, people think of the small family that way. That "coming first" is much of what makes moral points moral. Only some die-hard ideological Liberals tried to put all human goals in a cost-benefit framework. Original Liberals worked to find the line between practicality and morality and to give reasons for why the line should be here and not there.

It is important to stress early ties between Liberals and business, Liberal support for the free market, Liberal support for cost-benefit practicality analysis, and Liberal balancing of morality with practicality, because now the situation often is reversed. Now, the stereotype is that Liberals dislike business while Conservatives are champions of business and of cost-benefit analysis. Liberals consider only the moral pleas of fringe victims and do not consider the results on the whole society of working to redress the grievances of all particular victim groups. Liberals want equality of outcome rather than of opportunity. The stereotype for modern Conservatives is more complex. Yes, they are the champions of business, practicality, and cost-benefit analysis but they are also champions of (their ideas of) morality, religion, ethnicity, patriotism, and gender. They are both wooden-headed rationalists and emotional moralists. All people are somewhat this way but Conservatives have the reputation for being crazy in both ways, extreme both for business and for their version of morality. Modern Conservatives selectively apply cost-benefit when that helps them and thwarts Liberals, and selectively apply emotional morality when that helps them and thwarts Liberals. The key is to see where Modern Conservatives apply practicality or morality, which is the subject of later sections. Of course Liberals do this too but the Conservative abuse seems somehow worse because they make such a show of their morality. This conundrum is one of the major topics of later parts of this essay.

Liberals and Centralized Authority.

When the revolutions of the late 1700s through 1800s happened, the aristocracy, King, and Church were the state. The revolutions did not change the idea that the state is the primary agent to get things done. There was no new sense of doing things apart from the state. When Liberals took power, they did not thereby think the state should not be the major player in social life or should be only one player among many. Instead of the aristocracy, King, and Church pulling the strings and offering programs, it became legislators, ministers (cabinet members), and President (Prime Minister) who did the job. If a problem arose, the state was still the first agent work on a solution. The revolutionaries in America specifically referred to the right of the people to petition the STATE for redress of any grievances, not to petition a chamber of commerce, a Protestant Church, or an NGO.

At the same time, the newfound feel for human autonomy, the new business mentality, the success of revolutions, the rise of scientific societies, the rise of literary groups, the many independent churches, the frontier in America, the autonomy of the separate states (e.g. Virginia) in America, and the abuses of the former British central state, made it clear that people and groups apart from the central state could undertake significant action and succeed. Groups apart from the central state could redress grievances, start new programs, and even set up new institutions.

There is weight to the idea that Liberals ideally stressed the individual and de-centralization over the centralized state while later Conservative stressed the centralized state over individuals; but the idea does not stand much pressing. The "wimpy" Continental Congress was a Liberal institution, and it deliberately made the federal state weak. But it did not necessarily make the states weak and it did not really help individuals. The new Constitution was somewhat more centrist but it is still a blend of Liberal and then-Conservative ideas. Worries over the power of the central state led to the Bill of Rights, which showed the importance of safeguarding the individual over the central state.

So where is the line between what the state should do versus what private people or private agencies should do? How do we make sense of the line? How big and powerful should the state be in general and in relation to power through private persons and power through non-state organizations? These questions did not have a definite answer then and still don't despite current Rightist ideology about a small state. These questions could not be answered in the original way that people thought about them because of drastic changes that were about to come on America during the 1800s through now. I return to this question below after first introducing a point of view through Adam Smith.

Liberals could see that common people did not always benefit from actions of aristocracy, church, and state. Liberals could see that differences in wealth and power made differences in how well persons could realize their innate value as autonomous valuable individuals. Liberals argued for institutions and programs that helped common people and business people and Liberals argued against privileges of the upper classes. Americans saw themselves as a beset minority victimized by the bigger British nation, which had economic, political, military, and police power. Liberals identified themselves with outsiders, the common people, people who had an issue, and people who needed help. Other people began to see Liberals that way, as primarily champions of the downtrodden and the "small" person. Liberals who spoke well and wrote well were also often well educated, such as Jefferson. Thus the pattern developed

Mike Polioudakis, from "Democrats and Republicans", Part 6

of well-educated, somewhat elite, Liberals, being on the side of the underdog, even if they did not have personal experience with the hardship faced by the underdog. At the time this pattern arose, business in America was one of the underdogs compared to business in England.