

## “Saving the West”: The New Jacobins

Claes G. Ryn

PLATO CITES VARIETY, movement, and color as attributes of democracy. Having adopted the silly and destructive assumption that all individuals and preferences have equal claim to attention, democracy exhibits a measure of tolerance as it caters to the whim of the moment. Though certainly not without application to today's Western democracies, Plato's comment regarding freedom and diversity in democracy is contradicted by another and increasingly prominent feature of today's Western societies, their element of conformity and thought-control. Through government, mass media, education, and entertainment a plebiscitary, democratist orthodoxy is promulgated and enforced which changes somewhat depending upon the fortunes of particular pressure groups. Violation of its tenets is grounds for grave suspicions about the offender and cause for ostracization, or worse. Professions of liberal tolerance and free speech somehow interfere not at all with the enforcement of ideological assent. Describing these democratist doctrines in their most recent form is beyond the scope of this essay. Suffice it to say that they lie opposite the views that people keep to themselves or express only in whispered conversation while looking anxiously over their shoulder to see who is listening. The vigilance and moralistic righteousness of those who watch over adherence to the prescribed democratist views and behaviors call to mind the French Jacobins. De Tocqueville comes closer than Plato to capturing this feature of modern democracy in his warnings about “soft” democratic despotism. Unlike older, non-democratic despotism, de Tocqueville writes, the new despotism “would degrade men without tormenting them.”<sup>1</sup>

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There are signs that with the fading of the ethos of constitutionalism democratic despotism could turn less “soft.” Individuals who find sources of personal power in the present state of democracy may become more ambitious and aggressive. They can draw for justification upon an already influential democratist ideology that invests democracy with a noble and world-wide mission. This ideology rejects what it calls moral relativism and claims to represent timeless and universal principles that should everywhere prevail. Since these principles are in substantial, if not unqualified, agreement with the beliefs of today's democracy, a new moral legitimacy is conferred upon it. The diligent promotion of these principles is seen as the way to overcome social fragmentation. Replacing diversity with unity is for many today an appealing vision. So is national assertiveness abroad in behalf of allegedly universal principles. Many speak and act as if the virtuous course is to impose an artificial,

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external order of principles on a disintegrating society while giving that society a moral mission beyond its borders. The moralistic language often masks strong political ambitions.

Among those who advocate a morally unified and internationally ambitious democracy it is common to draw prestige to their own preferences by ascribing them to various historical figures of moral and intellectual stature. Often a loosely defined “Western tradition” is invoked. Various of its great books are reinterpreted as

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offering support for the cause. Even thinkers like Plato and Aristotle, whose ideas might appear to have little or nothing in common with modern democratism, are used to boost its reputation. So are the Framers of the U.S. Constitution. The Framers are said to be enacting the ideas of others, John Locke prominent among them, who are interpreted with emphasis on the egalitarian strains within their thought. According to Allan Bloom, the American form of government recommends itself as the implementation of a moral plan. "Our story," he writes in glowing language, "is the majestic and triumphant march of freedom and equality." Bloom interprets "the American project" as advancing essentially the same plan as the French Revolution. Edmund Burke, the critic of the latter, sees arrogance and superficiality and great potential for tyranny in the idea that society should be made to conform to an abstract moral plan, but Bloom applauds that idea and attributes it to the Framers. For him the appeal of America is that it is a "great stage" on which the theories of philosophers and their students have been acted out. "There are almost no accidents." Bloom ascribes to the American Framers a wish, similar to Rousseau's, to phase out social diversity and particularity and to unify human beings in their common denominator. To recognize man's "natural rights," Bloom writes, is to have "a fundamental basis of unity and sameness." In America, he argues, people are asked "to give up 'their cultural individuality' and make themselves into that universal, abstract being who participates in natural rights."<sup>2</sup>

In Bloom's interpretation, the U.S. Framers are egalitarians and exponents of "majoritarianism." Like Rousseau, they are also disposed against a diversity of groups and interests. "For the Founders, minorities are in general bad things, mostly identical to factions, selfish groups who have no concern as such for the common good." Bloom's disparaging of social diversity and pluralism stems from a type of abstractionism that regards moral universality as separate from particularity. Like Rousseau, he associates political virtue with human sameness. Bloom describes the moral basis of the "American project" as follows: "Class, race, religion, national origin or culture all disappear or become dim when bathed in the light of natural rights, which give men common interests and make them truly brothers."<sup>3</sup> In Bloom's strained and even frivolous interpretation of the American Framers, they become virtually indistinguishable from the French Jacobins with their passion for spreading *liberté, égalité, and fraternité*.

Bloom's understanding of American principles is fairly typical of a spreading democratist ideology. This ideology shares essential features with the thought of Jean-

Jacques Rousseau, the quintessential plebiscitarian. It is fittingly called the new Jacobinism. This ideology does not agree with contemporary Western democracy in all particulars, but neither does it offer much support for constitutional democracy as here understood. That its representatives sometimes invoke Locke does not change the picture, for it is a Locke that is not dissimilar to Rousseau. Louis Hartz once pointed to the Locke in question: "Locke has a hidden conformitarian germ to begin with, since natural law tells equal people equal things."<sup>4</sup> The ideas of Bloom and others like him have far more in common with such figures from America's past as Thomas Paine and Thomas Jefferson, who had

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strong egalitarian and plebiscitary leanings, than with the authors of the U.S. Constitution.

What is often offered as a moral tonic for America thus includes a Jacobin passion for equality and virtuous unity that is likely to add to the push for uniformity and central control. The new Jacobinism buttresses the pressures to conform with a kind of moral rigorism. The belief that political virtue is summed up in specific "principles" or "rights" and that these are also best known by an intellectual elite with special powers of discernment breeds not only arrogance in those who consider themselves in the know but intolerance of those who deviate from the presumed moral prescriptions. Why, indeed, should the complexity and messiness of society not yield to the direction of the virtuous?

The potential for tyranny in this moral abstractionism is apparent, for example, in the attacks on historical thinking by many of its intellectual exponents. The belief that human life is inescapably historical and that the pursuit of good must be adjusted to time and place is rejected as a threat to moral universality and rectitude. To think of moral universality as affected by historical circumstance is, so it is asserted, to dissolve moral universality; a real moral standard must exist apart from the historical phenomena for which it is to be the standard. Besides revealing philosophically rather amateurish habits, this advocacy of a historically pure moral vantage point discloses the grounds for denying to individuality, particularity, and diversity as such any

moral legitimacy. Let pure virtue rule!<sup>5</sup>

At a time of socio-political disintegration the new Jacobinism offers the prospect of moral politics. It plants the idea that a reign of virtue could be imposed from above by the insightful. Like Rousseau, the new Jacobins see politics as a choice between right and wrong. If power could be acquired by those who champion right, there is no reason, except pragmatic considerations, to respect or accommodate a diversity of views and interests. Unlike the old virtue of character, the new virtue does not aim primarily at controlling self but at controlling others. One likely avenue for the attempted expansion of virtuous power is a vigorous presidency. Here the long-standing liberal-leftist glorification of a strong presidency to do the people's will, exemplified by a James MacGregor Burns, blends with the notion of presidential leadership advocated by a Harvey Mansfield.<sup>6</sup>

International adventurism is often a distraction from pressing domestic difficulties. In America today expansionism is fueled by moral-ideological passion. Allan Bloom makes clear that what he calls "the American project" is not just for Americans. "When we Americans speak seriously about politics, we mean that our principles of freedom and equality and the rights based on them are rational and everywhere applicable." World War II was for Bloom "really an educational project undertaken to force those who did not accept these principles to do so."<sup>7</sup> If America is the instrument of universal right, the cause of all humanity, it is easily understood that it has every reason to be diligent and insistent in imposing its will. Since the principles for which it stands are portrayed as supra-national—for Bloom they are actually opposed to national identity—nationalism may not be quite the right term for America's missionary zeal. As America spearheads the cause of universal principles, it should presumably efface its own distinctiveness. Although countries confronted by this power are certain to see it precisely as a manifestation of nationalistic ambition, it should perhaps be regarded as nationalism only in a special sense.

But it is patriotism even less. The patriot's pride of country is indistinguishable from moral self-restraint and a sense of the flaws of his own country. The new Jacobinism is not exactly uncritical of today's American democracy. Bloom and others complain that it is too relativistic and insufficiently faithful to the principles of its own "Founding." It should be noted, however, that since those principles are "rational and everywhere applicable" and thus monopolistic, greater dedication to American principles would increase, not reduce, the wish of Americans to dictate terms to others.

Speaking of the United States and its principles as

models for all peoples is today a recurring theme in some American intellectual and political circles. Sometimes the will to power behind this refrain is barely able to keep up ideological appearances. Writes Ben Wattenberg, "It's pretty clear what the global community needs: probably a top cop, but surely a powerful global organizer. Somebody's got to do it. We're the only ones who can." Advocating a "visionary" American foreign policy, Wattenberg proclaims: "The idea of spreading democratic and American values around the world is visionary." With moralistic righteousness he adds, "It's the right thing to do."<sup>8</sup>

The new Jacobins are justifying a grasp for power in the midst of glaring moral, intellectual, and cultural problems in the Western world. Investing today's democracy with a world-wide moral mission signifies either a slipping hold on reality or a cynical exploitation of Western moods of escapism. The new Jacobins present their ideology as a moral response to the crisis of "liberalism" and relativism, but it is likely to hasten rather than slow the already advanced deterioration of constitutional democracy. Its abstract virtue of "principles" or "rights" bypasses the real problem of character and inspires an arrogance of power. A salutary defense of constitutional government and nationhood today would deflate, not fan, democratist ambitions. What is sorely needed is realism and frankness about the acute

and life-threatening problems of Western democracy and heavy stress on the need for moral self-control and discrimination. It may be retorted that Western democracy is beyond saving and that it is too late for remedies that require a long time: that ways now have to be found to hold back chaos. Let it be said in response that, whatever the case, a reluctance of leaders to subject their ambition to ethical self-control is the source of tyranny.

**A**MONG THE CAUSES espoused by some of the new Jacobins is what they call "capitalism." Unfortunately, that term is as mired in philosophical confusion as "democracy." The way in which advocacy of capitalism can be an outlet for the Jacobin spirit may be explained by demonstrating that there are major moral and theoretical connections between the ideas of the French Revolution and certain modern notions of capitalism.

The French Jacobins combined a belief in abstract principles with moralistic righteousness in the effort to bestow their noble insights on all humanity. Warnings from others, including Edmund Burke, that in the reform of society concrete circumstances had to be taken into account and historical experience respected seemed to the French revolutionaries morally perverse and reactionary. No other guide was necessary than their own universal principles. To liberate mankind from oppression and enact freedom, equality, and brotherhood, a clean break with the past was necessary. Jean-Jacques Rousseau had shown the need to abandon not only old beliefs but all of the social and political structures from which they were indistinguishable. Western civilization could not be dismantled without destroying the concrete institutional and other arrangements through which it expressed itself.

The notion that all historically existing societies are full of exploitation and other evils and that a society of justice and well-being can be created only through sweeping and radical change has appeared in many versions since the time of the French Jacobins. The words "left" and "right" used to indicate the extent to which particular individuals and movements were drawn to that notion—the "left" finding it morally appealing and intellectually persuasive, the "right" finding it both morally repugnant and philosophically untenable. Today, utopian and radical sentiment of this kind is common across the political-intellectual spectrum. Indeed, some people called "conservative" are in the forefront of those who offer panaceas for the world's ills. Although these "conservatives" propose political and economic programs that appear quite different from those advocated by the conventional "left" and although they speak a

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different language, they sometimes share with the old "left" a belief in the salvific power and universal applicability of their programs. Even more important, the ultimate goals for society envisioned by them bear a stronger resemblance to those of the old Jacobins than might first appear.

One of the most radical expressions of the Jacobin spirit is Marxism. Since Karl Marx believes in the destruction of capitalism and the triumph of socialism, it might seem that a defender of capitalism must have little in common with Jacobinism. It is again time to insist on the need for distinctions and to point out that, like "free market" (and "democracy"), the term "capitalism" can have sharply different meanings. It should not be forgotten that among the impulses behind the French Revolution was a desire among the middle classes to be rid of various old restrictions on commerce. In today's Western society the wish for economic freedom has been taken to an extreme by various radical "libertarians." It should be carefully noted that there is a sense in which a free market would become really free only when the movement of goods and services is wholly unrestricted, unfettered not only by "external," legal or institutional checks but by the many "inner" restraints represented by the inhibitions and tastes of civilized persons. A Rousseauistic, Jacobin desire to destroy traditional ethical and cultural restraints and socio-political structures can thus be said to aid in the creation of a truly free market. It is not far-fetched but entirely consistent to be a moral, intellectual, and cultural radical and a strong proponent of the free market—by a certain definition of the free market.

Of those in the West today who are passionate advocates of capitalism and want it introduced all over the world, many are former Marxists. The shift from being a Marxist to becoming a missionary for capitalism may be far less drastic than commonly assumed. Depending on the definition of capitalism, there can be very considerable continuity between the first and the second position.

It should be recognized, first of all, that, although Karl Marx predicted the replacement of capitalism by socialism and then by the stateless society of communism, he was a great admirer of capitalism. Like today's proponents of capitalism he credits it with unleashing enormous productive power. In the words of *The Communist Manifesto* (1848), "The bourgeoisie, during its rule of scarce one hundred years, has created more massive and more colossal productive forces than have all preceding generations together." Far from opposing the spread of capitalism, Marx believes, again like today's most enthusiastic champions of capitalism, that it must expand across the globe. It will lift mankind to a new level of

development. For Marx, capitalism makes all peoples partakers of the historical progress that will finally end the suffering of mankind. "The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all, even the most barbarian, nations into civilization." By "civilization" Marx here means the productive potential of modern society.<sup>9</sup>

The parallels between Marx and some of today's missionaries for capitalism are thus evident. An obvious difference is that Marx sees capitalism as also causing great travail and regards the revolution of the proletariat and the overthrow of capitalism as necessary for mankind's final liberation. An important question to ask about particular proponents of capitalism in the Western world today is whether they reject the doctrines of Karl Marx because of fundamental disagreements with his view of man, society, and history, or because they share much of his moral pathos and believe that the desirable society of the future is more efficiently achieved by avoiding socialism as he envisioned it. Is capitalism espoused because the revolution of the proletariat and the socialist state are seen as blind alleys, quite unnecessary for realizing an essentially egalitarian society freed of the prejudices, injustices, and constraints of traditional civilization? Is capitalism endorsed because letting it do its work is the best way of uprooting backward beliefs and related socio-political structures? Note carefully that for Marx himself one of the most important features of capitalism, as he conceives of it, is that it completely destroys traditional civilization, not just in the Western world, but wherever it takes hold.

**A** JACOBIN IN SPIRIT could thus become an enthusiastic advocate of capitalism—provided it is capitalism understood in a particular way. The destruction brought by capitalism in this sense is similar to the one effected by plebiscitary democracy. In the end, the old decentralized and group-oriented society and the ethical, intellectual, and cultural beliefs that fostered it are left in ruins. It is the possibility of capitalism of this kind that created unease about the free market not just in the old Roman Catholic Church and among Christians generally but among all who wanted to preserve and develop the heritage of humane civilization.<sup>10</sup>

The Jacobin spirit can align itself with that set of potentialities in capitalism that are most destructive of the ways of traditional society. It seizes upon and gives wider circulation to vague, nice-sounding, but sophistical notions like "equality of economic opportunity," "equality at the starting line," or "a level playing field."

Because most people, especially in the United States, spontaneously oppose obstacles to opportunity that are unreasonable, irrelevant to tasks to be performed, or otherwise artificial, it is easily overlooked that, if taken quite seriously and literally, equality of economic opportunity requires a radical transformation of society. It requires the removal of all those considerations which, in traditional civilization, limit and structure economic activity so as to make it compatible with or supportive of humane values that lie beyond supply and demand. Equality of opportunity, taken literally, means treating all persons—moral and immoral, noble and ignoble, crude and refined—equally as long as they can be expected to perform adequately by some narrowly economic, utilitarian standard. Other types of criteria should be set aside.

But civilization depends on *not* letting purely economic considerations dominate society. The logic of equality of opportunity is to drive out extra-economic standards, to remove premiums and penalties that nudge or force individuals to be people of one kind rather than another. A couple of random examples may suggest the practical consequences of carrying equality of economic opportunity to its ultimate conclusion. The tax codes of all countries favor and disfavor some social arrangements. This is to slant economic opportunity, to make it unequal. Real equality would require, for instance, that families and homeowners should have no tax benefits not available to all others, including young singles and those uninterested in the rootedness of home ownership. In business, decisions to hire and promote should not favor the slick, ill-mannered, sloppy person except insofar as the difference might affect productivity. In professional sports, the personally odious player should have the same chance to play and make money as the one who sets an example for others, as long as his professional skills are comparable. The list of needed changes could be extended indefinitely until society is drained of every civilized preference and civilization ceases to exist.

The phrase “a level playing field” as a description of capitalism (or democracy) may seem rather innocuous. As loosely used by some, it can mean simply that no one should have an unfair advantage over another. People of privileged position should not be able to deny others the advancement and the rewards to which they are entitled by natural ability and hard work. Clearly, a soundly traditional society needs counterweights to social inbreeding, stagnation, and snobbery. All societies need the revivification of institutions and behavior that comes from challenges to old ways. Balancing the need for continuity and the need for change is the great task of

civilization. But what is unfair advantage? Civilization attempts to enact its preferences precisely by giving advantages and encouragement to some, namely to those who come closest to embodying the values that are central to civilization, and placing obstacles in the way of others, namely of those who deliberately and egregiously threaten those values. Except in a special, limited sense, civilization does not aim to treat people equally. Doing so would be unjust, for no two individuals are the same. The aim of civilization is to structure life so that, to the greatest extent possible, those who enjoy or acquire advantages and influence are also, by the highest standards, deserving of them. What is appealing to the Jacobin about “the level playing field” is that it suggests the

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absence of traditional socio-political patterns that encourage some types of behavior and discourage others. As used by the modern Jacobin, the phrase speaks of a society swept free of the historically evolved discriminations between high and low through which civilization defines, manifests, and preserves itself.

Ensuring real equality of economic opportunity by these standards would obviously require much interference with the economy as it exists in actual societies. Taken literally and seriously, the mentioned notions of equality of opportunity must, in practice, result in great expansion of the administrative state and in the eventual blending of capitalism and socialism. If “equality at the starting-line” is assumed actually to mean what it says, capitalism requires, among other things, the abolition of inheritance, which gives the children of the well-to-do an advantage over others. A certain kind of advocacy of capitalism turns out to have much in common with the Jacobin passion for an egalitarian, homogeneous society.

But capitalism, or the free market, can be understood in a very different manner. It is possible to distinguish between different forms of the free economy along lines similar to the distinction between constitutional and plebiscitary democracy. A free market of goods and services may exist in a decentralized, group-oriented society in which the outlook and behavior of individuals and firms are leavened by ethical and other discipline and in which both supply and demand are structured by

corresponding civilized desires. In this economy relations between competitors may be softened by mutual respect and consideration. A free market of this type would share in the ethos characteristic also of constitutional government. It would be an integral part of the civilized society with its institutionally expressed likes and dislikes.

**T**HE VITAL IMPORTANCE of the social setting of the market is stressed by the economist Wilhelm Röpke. "The market economy is one thing in a society where atomization, mass, proletarianization, and concentration rule," in which moral rootlessness robs competition of traditional ethical restraints, and in which producers cater indiscriminately to consumer demand. The market is quite another thing, Röpke insists, in the kind of decentralized, group-centered society capable of fostering the character on which constitutionalism depends. "In such a society," Röpke writes, "wealth would be widely dispersed; people's lives would have solid foundations; genuine communities, from the family upward, would form a background of moral support for the individual; there would be counterweights to competition and the mechanical operation of prices; people would have roots and would not be adrift in life without anchor."<sup>11</sup>

What should be understood is that the distinction here developed is not between slightly different versions of one and the same economic system but between opposed potentialities that are no more compatible than are constitutional and plebiscitary democracy.

Critics of capitalism typically identify it with its worst possibilities: ruthless competition, exploitation, greed, crude commercialism, social atomism, etc. These are said to be of the very essence of a free economy. In reality, the prominence of such phenomena is a sign that capitalism is operating within a society in which people lack ethical, aesthetical, and other inhibitions and strong communal ties, a society in which institutional structures do not embody civilized purposes and in which neither supply nor demand recognizes any higher standards. Critics of democracy similarly identify democracy with its worst potentialities: unchecked majoritarianism, political irresponsibility, demagoguery, rule by pandering to the lowest common denominator, etc. Here, too, the alleged essence of the phenomenon in question is how it performs in a society where civilized restraints are weak. Both points of view are unhistorical and reductionistic. In reality, capitalism and democracy have no single definition or "essence." They exist only in particular historical manifestations. These can be sharply different

depending on the ethical and cultural health of the particular societies in which they operate. They can be compatible with the ends of the good society, in which case their institutions and practices are integral to the structures and practices of civilization. But they can also be destructive of higher values, in which case they manifest the structures and practices of the deteriorating society.

The social setting of an acceptable free economy has been described by Röpke in a way that shows its connection with the ethical and cultural context of constitutional popular government.

Self-discipline, a sense of justice, honesty, fairness, chivalry, moderation, public spirit, respect for human dignity, firm ethical norms — all of these are things which people must possess before they go to market and compete with each other. These are the indispensable supports which preserve both market and competition from degeneration. Family, church, genuine communities, and tradition are their sources. It is also necessary that people should grow up in conditions which favor such moral convictions, conditions of a natural order, conditions promoting co-operation, respecting tradition, and giving moral support to the individual. . . . It is the foundation upon which the ethics of the market economy must rest. It is an order which fosters individual independence and responsibility as much as the public spirit which connects the individual with the community and limits his greed.<sup>12</sup>

It has been argued here that constitutional democracy has demanding ethical and cultural prerequisites and that it is not easily created and maintained. In a morally and culturally deteriorating society it threatens to transform itself into a plebiscitary regime. This will begin to give democracy a bad name among people with discriminating standards. A similar argument can be made with regard to the free market. If the latter ceases to exhibit the discipline and responsibility characteristic of a civilized society, it will, even if it continues to produce goods and services, begin to give the free market a bad reputation among people who look beyond quantitative standards.

When the Roman Catholic Church expressed reservations about the free market, these were, in the final analysis, concerns about more general developments in Western civilization. Warnings about the possible dangers of the free economy could have been directed against parallel dangers posed by other social freedoms, and by popular government. The dangers did not inhere in the free market "as such," for no such thing can exist. They inhered in the free market in a particular historical period marked by shaky moral and other standards.

As aligned with and shaped by a spirit of radicalism, capitalism can do much to obliterate traditional ethical and cultural standards and uproot traditional communi-

ties. For some of today's proponents of capitalism one of its appeals may be precisely that it can accomplish a task of destruction. Praise for capitalism can be, among other things, an outlet for resentment against traditional elites and a desire to sweep from positions of influence people seen as upholding old-fashioned, more aristocratic standards. Simultaneous advocacy of capitalism and majoritarian democracy reinforces and broadens the attack upon the old society. As adjusted to changing historical circumstances, the spirit of Rousseau and Marx can here find plentiful new opportunities.

That so much of today's discussion about capitalism, democracy, and related subjects ignores or glosses over distinctions of fundamental importance is a source of major intellectual and practical confusion. Sound and unsound ideas, destructive and constructive, are mixed in sometimes very odd combinations. Some rather curious intellectual and political alliances are formed. Were it not for the dominant underlying trend and the lack of philosophical discipline, this theoretical and practical commotion might seem a promising opportunity for a badly needed intellectual and cultural reconstitution and realignment. But ideological passion drives out or discourages serious thought as well as deeper sensibility. It is indicative of the influence of the Jacobin spirit in the Western world that a fondness for abstract general schemes and utopian visions should today have attraction even for people said to be "conservative" or on "the right." This development says a great deal about the scope and depth of the Western flight from reality.

#### Notes

1. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (New Rochelle: Arlington House, undated), Fourth Book, Ch. VI, 336.
2. Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), 97, 30-31. For an extensive analysis and assessment of Bloom's book, see Claes G. Ryn, "Universality or Uniformity?," *Modern Age*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (1988).
3. *Ibid.*, 31, 27. Bloom wants an exception to society's majoritarian

regime in the universities, where the insightful should guide disciples toward enlightenment.

4. Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1955), 11.

5. In the United States, much of the contemporary hostility to a philosophical concern for historical particularity is derived from Leo Strauss, who in turn relies on German sources (e.g., Ernst Troeltsch). See, for example, Strauss, *Natural Right and History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), esp. 294-323. A recent example of this brand of thinking, which is sometimes simplistic and reductionistic, is Fred Baumann, "Historicism and the Constitution," in Allan Bloom, ed. *Confronting the Constitution* (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, 1990). For a critique of the contemporary attacks on historical thinking, see Paul Gottfried, *The Search for Historical Meaning* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1986); and Claes G. Ryn, *Will, Imagination and Reason* (Chicago: Regnery Books, 1986), which defends historical consciousness as not only compatible with but indispensable to a defense of ethical and other universality.

6. See James MacGregor Burns, *The Deadlock of Democracy* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1963) and Harvey Mansfield, *Taming the Prince* (New York: Free Press, 1989).

7. Bloom, *Closing*, 153.

8. Ben Wattenberg, *The Washington Times*, Aug. 8 and Aug. 1, 1990.

9. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1974), 84-85.

10. For examples of official Roman Catholic concern about the moral dangers of capitalism before the Church was influenced by a socialistic view of capitalism, see the Papal encyclicals *Rerum Novarum* (1891) and *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931).

11. Wilhelm Röpke, *A Humane Economy* (Indianapolis: Liberty Press, 1971), 35.

12. *Ibid.*, 125. For a brief but philosophically lucid and incisive discussion of the relationship between ethics and economics, see Joseph Baldacchino, *Economics and the Moral Order* (Washington, D.C.: National Humanities Institute, 1985).

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