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# EDITORIALS

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## LIBERALS IN THE DARK

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

What is happening in the Great Republic? Has the average Americano lost his mind? Is he actually against tax increases and opposed to all the other perfumed desiderata heaved up in recent months by the doughty Walter Mondale? Throughout the campaign we were told that according to the polls the citizenry agreed with Mr. Mondale on "the issues." Then came November 6, and he lost every state in the Union save Minnesota. How is the mystery to be explained?

After profound cerebrations and scholarly consultations with learned professors I am now in a position to vouchsafe the explanation: The "issues" were liberal issues. They are issues that evoke vast displays of bathos and bilge from the public moralizers of the Republic. As pieties go they tyrannize us all. But as issues go they are dead issues—at least with the majority. This is not to say that the average Americano is against that nub of truth that rests at the center of these issues, but most Americans feel that they have done enough on such matters as civil rights and welfare. Now they want to pass on to other public matters and the only citizens who disagree are stoneheaded reactionaries and those charlatans who exploit these issues for their own gain.

Naturally, the average Americano

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

felt Walter Mondale would be more sympathetic toward such pious concerns as welfare, the environment, and civil rights. A more illuminating question for the pollsters to ask would have been: *Should* Mr. Mondale have been more sympathetic? From all I can tell the answer would have been in the negative. It is not that the American people are against welfare and civil rights, for instance. It is that the American people feel they have gone as far as they can with government solutions to these problems. They oppose any more coercive social engineering. They are against affirmative action. They have spent hundreds of billions of dollars on welfare and they doubt that hundreds of billions more will turn the dependent into free and self-reliant citizens. They find life in America a very expensive proposition, and they are tapped out.

What remains a mystery is how such a smart fellow as Walter Mondale became so confused about the concerns and needs of his fellow Americans. Did he know during the late campaign that most Americans found him irrelevant when he droned on about the poor and the suffering? Did he know that there is a growing body of scholarship suggesting that the very programs that Mr. Mondale would fatten are now afflictions for the poor and suffering? My guess is that Mr. Mondale remains completely oblivious

to the average Americano's state of mind and to the real problems facing those who voted against him. Mr. Mondale is now, most probably, warming himself in the same waters of self-love as all those other liberals who lay the recent electoral results to the selfishness of the electorate.

Such liberals have vast influence in the media, the educational establishment, and other such realms. They are employed in positions that assume intelligence, education, and sophistication. The tasks they perform are integral to modern life in the late twentieth century. And it is very amusing to observe that they are almost as ignorant of the forces at work around them as an eighteenth-century peasant scratching away at the soil and wearing an old sock around his neck to ward off the ague.

For such liberals these are dark days. What do the Reaganites have in mind? Bible readings on the evening news? For the menfolk, mandatory coats and ties in public? For the ladies, dresses and skirts all the way down to the ankle? All the ominous claptrap about the rising powers of the Rev. Falwell

suggests that there are liberals out there expecting such reforms and worse. Off in the hills of West Virginia at the fag end of campaign '84, the Hon. Mondale was heard uttering such weird stuff as "Have you noticed that in the past four years, we haven't heard the words 'compassion' or 'decency' or 'sharing?'" And he concluded: "That's not America."

Well, it now appears that Ronald Reagan understands America better than do Mr. Mondale and his fellow liberals. Times have changed as have the issues. The Ronald Reagan of twenty years ago has moved a bit to the left. Sensible liberals and other members of the Roosevelt coalition have moved somewhat to the right, while Democrats like Mr. Mondale have found themselves trapped by left-wing extremists. The questions for the future are: Can the Democrats free themselves from the extremists, and do the new Republicans have the acuity to gain at least equality in the media and the universities? Otherwise American politics will remain a mystery, and an apparent injustice—at least to our elites.

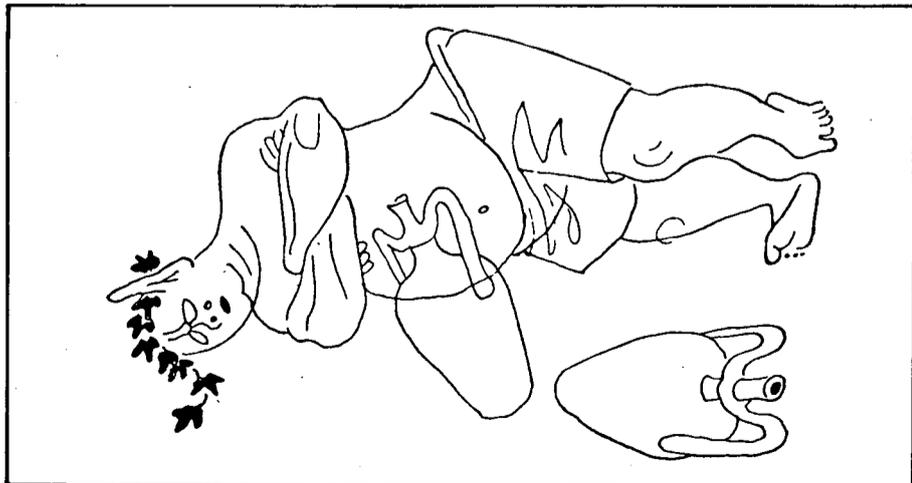
## WITH THE YUPPIES

*San Francisco*—American society continues to churn out its multitude of contradictions, some of which are contradictory to the point of stupefaction. Here I am, in a city that in this year's elections went heavily for the party of compassion & decency. Everywhere I go I speak seductively of the wisdom that I have interred in my latest tome, *The Liberal Crack-Up*, and keep a weather eye out for the constituent elements of that crack-up, particularly Yuppies. They did not expire with the expiry of Senator Gary Hart's campaign. They slog on, climbing ever upward, buying BMWs, fretting over American materialism, acquiring fine wines, and welcoming progressive pastoral letters from contented American bishops.

Theirs is a movement to watch, and

in San Francisco one of the best vantage points for watching Yuppies is the Washington Square Bar & Grill, a congenial eatery run by two life-long Democrats, Ed Moose and Sam Deitsch. I have spent useful hours in their establishment and it is my unhappy duty to report to the American bishops that in all the Yuppie yakking I have heard very little expended on the bishops' exhortations about Third World poverty. Actually, I heard considerably more palaver about the prodigies being wrought by California's winegrowers.

Yuppies, of course, are supposed to be very *au courant* with progressive America's moral conscience. But there is grave confusion among the progressives in this department. The bishops, for instance, lecture us on the



obvious—our responsibility to our neighbors—while prescribing failed panaceas, to wit: socialism or at least a welfare state without limits. Others, such as Yuppies, are absolutely convinced of their own moral superiority over other productive members of the Republic and go on about their business, consuming madly—and at the Washington Square Bar & Grill the Yuppies' staple was California wine. Is this bad?

I think not. As hypocrisies go, the Yuppies are bound to have a more salutary influence than many of the other hypocrites at work in the land. In their hankering for consumption they are galvanizing enterprise. In their bustle to get ahead they are providing goods and services. Moreover, sometimes their mundane appetites in-

crease the amenities of American life prodigiously. Consider that California wine.

I have personally reconnoitered through the Napa Valley above San Francisco, where some of the very best California wines are produced. The area is quite beautiful, putting one in mind of those gentle regions north of Rome where some of Italy's best wines are produced. Two very contemporary currents are encouraging growth in this California region: Yuppies' high-toned tastes and post-1960s entrepreneurship. The result is the fastest improving wine industry in the world.

**H**ow those Catholic bishops who now harangue capitalism will take this news is as inscrutable to me as their

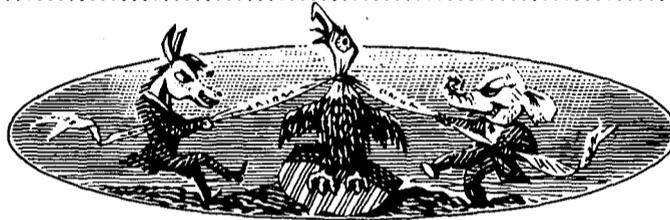
cure-alls for poverty. Yet in the Napa Valley jobs are being provided where once there were few. And those jobs are no drain on our natural resources at all. They demand only soil, sun, hard work, and ingenuity.

Consider the Joseph Phelps Vineyards. Begun only in 1970, they now produce 60,000 cases yearly, all of it comparing favorably with some of France's and Italy's most ancient wine-growing regions or my palate is deceiving me. The vineyards were begun by Mr. Phelps after he had spent years at the head of a successful construction company. The endeavor was a gamble. A considerable sum was necessary to buy the land and to transform it into a prestigious winery. Vast knowledge was needed, but the University of California at Davis has been turning

out first-rate students of the grape for years and so the area has its talented oenologists. All these elements Mr. Phelps whipped together and in the spirit of enterprise created a product that is first class. All of us know that in Silicon Valley Yankee ingenuity is creating high-grade products that the world has never seen before. To the north of the valley that same ingenuity is turning out one of the oldest products known to the species *Homo sapiens*, and it is equally welcome.

As I am wont to say these days, liberalism has cracked up. The bishops go their way. The Yuppies go theirs. If I have to choose I shall go with the Yuppies. Their wine may not be blessed but in northern California it has created economic growth, the surest way to alleviate poverty. □

## CAPITOL IDEAS



### HILTON SPIRITUALITY

by Tom Bethell

**T**he U.S. Catholic bishops, by now famous for their denunciation of capitalism, stay at the Capital Hilton when they come to Washington for their fall annual meeting. It has become a tradition, you might say, for all except the progressive Auxiliary Bishop Thomas Gumbleton of Detroit, who won't stay at the place. And if this is a portent of things to come, then I should imagine that within a few years the bishops may very likely be sharing lodgings with the street people—furnished courtesy of Mitch Snyder and the Community for Creative Non-Violence.

For the moment, however, the bishops unpack their bags at the Hilton—price range: \$68 to \$140 for single rooms. Then they can go downstairs to Twigs, the chic restaurant on the 16th Street side of the building, with its bamboo basket chairs, recessed spot lights, suspended ferns, and attentive waiters, for a little pick-me-up: lump crab and walnut salad, say, or a glass of Franciscan *fume blanc* (\$16.00 a bottle) or amarelle and chocolate soufflé cheesecake dessert. Gumbleton may have withheld his business, but

during the recent anti-capitalist get-together Twigs did a roaring episcopal trade, apparently. Sometimes, it seemed, the whole restaurant was full of black suits and clerical collars.

Within the United States Catholic Conference the objection has been raised that maybe the Hilton is a bit worldly, a bit capitalist and maybe the bishops should meet in a monastery or a retreat house. But the counterargument has been: It is also conveniently located. I mean, a couple of blocks from the White House, and a couple of blocks from the *Washington Post* offices; perfect for blowing a raspberry at one end and accepting a bouquet at the other.

One has to consider the media in this day and age. They have to be catered to, don't they, if one is to get one's message to the public? And at the Hilton there are news-center facilities on the mezzanine; telephones aplenty, reference books and telecopiers. The media will not only be on hand, they can get pretty impatient at times. The Working Press! So, messenger service to Western Union is available. The Weakland press conference, the main event, would be held in the chandelier-laden Congressional Room. Then, later on, the cocktail party for the media would be given at the deco-decorated

Embassy Room, right next door to Twigs. At this function a member of the working press was heard to announce that the bishops were progressing, but that John O'Connor of New York was something of an embarrassment. (An atavism.)

**I** arrived in time for Archbishop Rembert Weakland's Sunday press conference. There were to be found press

kits, plastic labels, free coffee, and an utterly devout media flock; at one end of the room was a whole forest of TV cameras perched on tripods, and at the other a dais, a lectern, a long table, and five concerned bishops illuminated by megawatts. Archbishop Weakland delivered his indictment from center stage.

Outside, down in the foyer, there was the inconsequential palm-court tinkling of a cocktail party piano: Guests



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