

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

# Islands of Anarchy



The origins of the Colorado high school massacre go back many decades. They go back to the 1960's when youth culture emerged as distinct from American culture,

which is to say a culture shared by all age groups. They go back even further to the 1920's and 1930's when loony theorists—usually from continental Europe—theorized about zoo sex, violent individuality, psychic flumdidle, all the nonsense that found its way into Nazi thought, left-wing thought, and other aberrant notions. The origins of Columbine high school's unspeakable massacre go back to the nihilism and evil of earlier centuries. Yet it is in the twentieth century that nihilism and evil found their proper marketers.

Perhaps now, in light of the grisly expression of adolescent individuality at Columbine High School, some adults will agree that high school might be a more congenial place were the major battles between teachers and students still fought over hair length and suitable dress. That struggle was lost long ago, and so now the battle is over boom boxes, cellular telephones, weapons, and God knows what else students want to bring to school. Today many a local high school is an island of anarchy in youth culture's sea of chaos.

There is no one reform that will pacify either. Not Hollywood violence, guns, lax parents, or foolish high school administrators can explain this massacre. The anger demonstrated by the murderers is an anger that is socially approved by enlightened opinion when it is displayed by polit-

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Adapted from RET's weekly Washington Times column syndicated by Creators Syndicate.

ically fashionable aggrieved groups. Some Americans are supposed to be "enraged." Why not adolescents? Is it only when they kill someone that enlightened opinion expresses alarm? Even then you will find some idiot writer with an "interesting" explanation for the carnage.

One of the sensible things that we might expect to be said about such violence is that it is cowardly. It is an act of cowardice to shoot an unarmed person. But if anyone has mentioned this in public in the aftermath of the Colorado massacre I have not noticed it. To recognize cowardice one has to have a code of honor. Honor, unfortunately, is hopelessly passé. It has been replaced by feelings. The boys with the guns and the bombs felt angry. Now we all feel sad.

As I say, there is no one cause for this brutality. It has to be laid to a whole culture that goes back many years. The Clintons speak of a "culture of violence." Well, if you are going to lift a line from the Pope, do not shirk from his complete thought. John Paul II speaks of a "culture of death." The challenges and complexities of life in the moral setting of our Judeo-Christian experience are sufficient to overwhelm both cultures of violence and of death. Yet the crank thoughts and the utopian thoughts of the aforementioned loony theorists are given dominance in America.

A British observer, Hugo Gurdon, writing in London's *Daily Telegraph*, notes with arresting optimism that violence in American schools is declining. He suggests that we review the excess committed under the First Amendment. He would not limit the First Amendment but urges that Americans "should not accept any longer that freedom of speech disqualifies demands for decency."

The Pope's "culture of death" brings to mind his opposition to abortion and to capital punishment. These are grave breaches of life. Curiously, what Gurdon would call

breaches of decency are also absorbed with death and suffering. Consider the laughter over there on the "shock jock" radio show. In the *Wall Street Journal* the other day columnist Dorothy Rabinowitz tells us that  1967 Howard Stern, the "shock jock" philosopher, has been laughing it up about rape in Kosovo. "The Serbs are just having a good time," his fatuous sidekick quips. "Right, says Stern. "Those Albanian women are hot." In the same hilarious show Stern joked it up about the Holocaust. A few days before I heard some comic genius on the "Imus in the Morning" show making jokes about MSNBC interviewer John Hockenberry's reliance on a wheelchair. And then there is the idiotic Greaseman. Before he was fired that "shock jock" saw humor in the gruesome murder of a black man dragged behind a truck in Jasper, Texas.

There is not any one thing we can do to liberate aberrant youth culture from the culture of death. And to liberate the rest of America from the culture of death is an even vaster undertaking. Yet Gurdon's notion of speaking out for decency is not so difficult. There is a growing number of thoughtful Americans who recognize the cheap humbug of such frauds as the "shock

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On the other hand, and far more common there are also madmen who find it impossible to disentangle dreams from reality—and of this kind of madness we have had alas, far too much experience. Indeed, it would not be an exaggeration to say that a good part of modern history takes place under the sign of this second kind of madness, which we familiarly call "utopianism."

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—Irving Kristo  
"Utopianism, Ancient and Modern"  
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55	\$ 385	\$ 440	\$ 600	\$ 956	\$ 1,065
60	\$ 535	\$ 690	\$ 865	\$ 3,140	\$ 3,140
65	\$ 883	\$ 1,015	\$ 1,733	\$ 4,100	\$ 4,100
70	\$ 1,430	\$ 1,637	\$ 3,035	\$ 5,270	\$ 7,220
75	\$ 2,797	\$ 4,770	\$ 6,560	\$ 10,370	\$ 10,370

Age	10 YEAR	15 YEAR	20 YEAR	25 YEAR	30 YEAR
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40	\$ 185	\$ 210	\$ 260	\$ 385	\$ 383
45	\$ 260	\$ 335	\$ 395	\$ 548	\$ 585
50	\$ 378	\$ 500	\$ 600	\$ 863	\$ 915
55	\$ 568	\$ 758	\$ 865	\$ 1,805	\$ 2,810
60	\$ 908	\$ 1,130	\$ 1,365	\$ 4,100	\$ 4,100
65	\$ 1,530	\$ 1,845	\$ 2,923	\$ 5,270	\$ 5,270
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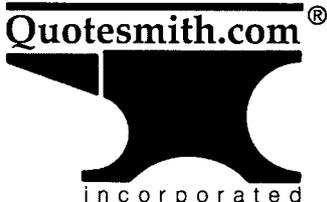
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jocks." Let us expose them for the fools that they are. Anyone who finds rape, genocide, physical disability, and murder amusing deserves scorn and derision. And it might be

reassuring for the surviving members of the Trenchcoat Mafia to know that there is a place for them on radio, once Howard Stern decides to report from Kosovo. ❀

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# No-Kill Compassion

**N**ow that the euthanasia militant Jack Kevorkian has been sentenced to ten to twenty-five years one wonders where he will do his time. Moreover, will he take a dose of his own medicine, namely a sniff of carbon monoxide or an injection of lethal chemicals? For a 70-year-old, his life as a free man is over. Not long ago Kevorkian threatened a hunger strike if he were sentenced to prison. It is a threat he did not repeat during his trial, but on which he now plans to make good. We shall see. My guess is that Kevorkian is about to discover how dearly most people hang on to life even when life has lost much of its joy.

So where would be a fitting place for Kevorkian to do his time? Allow me to make an unusual suggestion. I suggest that this famed champion of happy dispatch be incarcerated at the extremely plush animal shelter established by the visionaries of the San Francisco Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. They have already offered rooms to homeless humans so the place is probably a lot more comfortable than a Michigan jail cell, and the solicitude shown in San Francisco for stray dogs and cats might cause Kevorkian to rethink his case for death.

Thanks to the members of the San Francisco Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, this shelter has a "no-kill" policy. In fact, thanks mainly to the efforts of the Society's leader, Richard Avanzino, the entire city of San Francisco is—at least for pets—a "no-kill" city, the

first such city in America. Kevorkian has assisted in the deaths of 130 people. Whether any of his funereal ministrations were committed in San Francisco I do not know, but would it not be ironic if Doctor Death were incarcerated in a city where—at least for household pets—a "no-kill" policy had been adopted? All San Francisco boasts of being a "no-kill" city thanks to its peerless Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Actually, even as Kevorkian has become famous for euthanizing humans, Avanzino has been quietly pushing his case for ending the "euthanizing" of homeless pets. In San Francisco his shelter costs \$7 million. Now he has found a kindly couple of Silicon Valley billionaires who have donated \$200 million to make every animal shelter in the country a "no-kill" shelter. Incidentally, that \$200 million donation is larger than any political donation in history. It is enough to run either of the national political parties for years.

"We believe that killing is not an acceptable management tool for us to use as stewards of our nation's animals," Avanzino says. "Given that, we're going to do everything we can to provide a creative resource to help shelters develop their goals of finding homes for every adoptable animal." If no one adopts San Francisco's homeless animals, each will live very well in Avanzino's shelter, right there with Kevorkian. For I am not suggesting inhumane conditions for Kevorkian. The San Francisco shelter's

quarters are spacious. For the dogs there are glass-walled apartments with televisions, throw rugs, and portraits of distinguished dogs hanging on the walls. Cats have jungle gyms to play in and fish videos to watch for intellectual stimulation. This is not to say that Kevorkian should be treated like a homeless dog or thrust into the cats' section to languish among the jungle gyms and fish videos. Kevorkian is a human being and doubtless so humanitarian a fellow as Avanzino will find suitable comforts and divertissements for him.

Since 1990, when Kevorkian began his grisly campaign for euthanasia, he has blithely skirted over many of the complexities that separate killing humans from killing God's lesser creatures. He actually sees himself as existing on some sort of progressive continuum with the civil rights movement and, who knows, maybe even the consumerist movement. One indication that there are complexities that Kevorkian overlooks is the opposition to his work displayed by disabled people. Some were there in Pontiac, Michigan, cheering his sentence. Doubtless many of the nation's aged also view him with alarm. In fact, anyone who sees life as a moral drama lived by every one of us has reason to be glad that this idiotic grandstander is about to be removed from view. In solitude he can contemplate his hunger strike. He can choose between life and death. ❀

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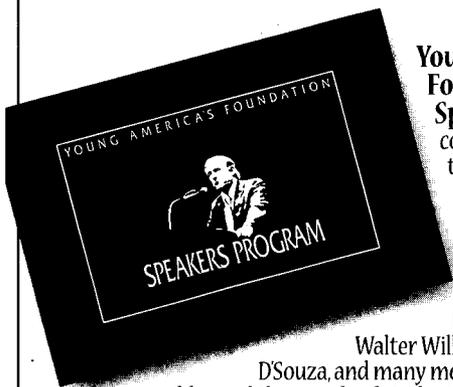
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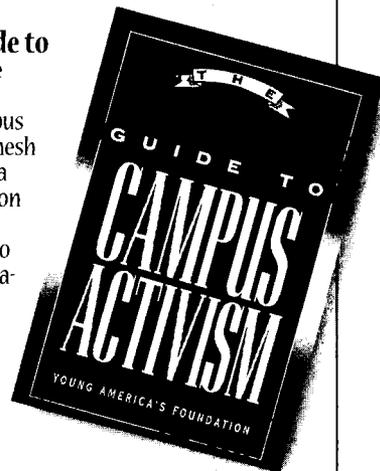
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# Freedom and Its Enemies

**Property protects freedom, but the state is unchained.**

**R**ichard Pipes, a professor of history at Harvard, has written many books on Russia and is perhaps the pre-eminent historian of the Bolshevik revolution. His new book on a much broader theme—property—will no doubt come as a surprise to many. It is a wide-ranging study of the institution of property in different countries and different ages, with special attention to England and Russia. Decades ago, he writes, it occurred to him that property, broadly defined, was the guarantor of liberty or, as it has been said, property is the “custodian of every other right.” Ever since then, I can only assume, he must have accumulated material on property and political institutions. Having covered some of the same ground in my book on property published last year, I can attest that his reading has been wide indeed. Many were his references to books that I had not come across. And I thought I had overturned whole libraries in search of relevant material.

Pipes had no idea how difficult a subject it would turn out to be, he writes. But he concluded that the project he first had in mind “would require teams of historians.” He limited its scope, but it is still vast. He offers his findings “with some trepidation,” for expert eyes may find grounds to quibble. But he need not have worried. Construed broadly, property sprawls across many disciplines—history, politics, economics, philosophy, psychology, and sociology are only the first that come to mind—and so wide ranging a project can

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only be undertaken in a spirit of boldness. The search for large truths should not be deterred by the fear of small errors. It turns out that *Property and Freedom* (Knopf, \$30) is a most stimulating and original book, shedding light wherever the author ventures. His vast research, compressed into 300 pages, has yielded one of the most valuable volumes on property yet written.

His thesis is that without private property there can be no liberty, and this he amply demonstrates. It might almost seem superfluous to insist upon this connection, were it not for the frequency with which intellectuals over the past 200 years have disparaged property without grasping the consequences for freedom. Some, to be sure, may have grasped it but not minded, for they have no doubt held liberty in as low regard as property. For most native-born, twentieth-century Americans, however, the blessings of property and freedom tend to be taken for granted. The ACLU’s longtime support of “civil liberties” was always belied by its indifference or antagonism to property; suggesting an undisclosed agenda tangential (at best) to liberty.

It was not until a society without private property was realized, under Communism, that many intellectuals recognized property’s true role. They, it turned out, were particularly vulnerable. Federal appeals court judge Alex Kozinski has noted how easily an unruly intelligentsia in a Communist regime can be denied access to printing presses, ink, and paper. He was born in Romania. Ayn Rand saw that “without property rights, no other rights are possible”; she was born in Russia. Richard Pipes grew up in Poland. Their origins were not incidental to their interests. Here,

perhaps, is a rarely formulated argument for immigration: Those who have tasted something else, and something worse, often have a better understanding of the American way of life than those who were born here and attended the best schools.

The nineteenth-century disciples of progress believed that socialism could one day replace an economy based on private property, but first, human nature would have to be changed. Thus, as I see it, the Soviet Union became the experimental venue for the formation of the New Man, in whom both Marx and Trotsky had believed. In 1991, Boris Yeltsin spoke of the Soviet experience precisely as an “experiment.” For Pipes, the Russian Revolution was not so much the fulfillment of an intellectual fantasy, as it was the continuation of Russia under the old regime. For centuries, in patrimonial Russia, sovereign power ignored the boundaries of property. “In the age of absolutism Russia’s sovereigns exercised authority in a more absolute manner than their Western counterparts; in the age of democracy Russia clung to absolutism longer than any other European country. And during the seven decades of Communist rule, she deprived her people of liberties to an extent previously unknown in world history.” Lenin “had no clue of the function that property and law perform in economic life,” but expropriated it with fanatical zeal because he had been persuaded by Marx “that all previous attempts at social revolution had failed by stopping halfway.”

Pipes’s brief history of Russian property is of great interest. At a key moment in 1785, a charter of rights and freedoms was promulgated by Catherine the Great, who understood property’s role as the foundation of prosperity. Now the ruling class owned their estates outright and enjoyed civil rights. So why did civil society no