

Myth number three: "The press is the enemy." A corollary to myths one and two, this idea springs from the "living room war" experience of Vietnam. To a large degree, however, people were startled by Vietnam because they had been insulated from that ancient truth—that wars, even "good wars" fought by good men, are hell—and because nobody credibly explained what the point was. Having gone through the shock of rediscovery, people are now far more equipped to realistically assess the likely costs and potential benefits of military action.

Sam Donaldson may make a fool of himself in the Saudi desert, but the ability to reveal what's going on—and to make people who cover up look bad—works in favor of U.S. efforts, as long as those efforts in fact express Americans' values. Saddam's inept attempts to manipulate the media have backfired. Putting

hostages on TV hasn't made people eager to capitulate; it's made them mad.

And Iraq's refusal to let reporters into Kuwait or to let journalists talk with hostages casts doubt on whatever its representatives say. For Iraq's ambassador to tell Ted Koppel that journalists will of course be welcome to visit Kuwait "in due time" is to confess to atrocities.

Back before Saddam Hussein was daily news, he gave Diane Sawyer a bizarre interview. In it, he kept insisting that, just as in Iraq, it's a crime for Americans to insult their president. Finally, Sawyer politely informed Hussein that people who insult the president of the United States not only don't go to jail, "they get their own television shows."

It may be exasperating for presidents to tolerate Sam Donaldson, but they have an advantage over the world's Husseins. They're harder to take by surprise. ■

GOING GREEN?

CHARLES OLIVER

Over the last decade, Republicans have ridden the issue of taxes to electoral victory. Ronald Reagan and George Bush won three consecutive landslide victories, in part by painting their Democratic opponents as tax-and-spend advocates of big government. At the state and local level, other Republican candidates have emulated this strategy with only slightly less success.

Meanwhile, Democrats have been searching for a similar issue that will win for them the hearts, minds, and, most important, votes of the American people. The nuclear freeze, competence, the deficit, protectionism—all have been used by Democratic candidates, with little success.

The latest entry in the "Issue that will Define the Democrats in the 1990s" sweepstakes is environmentalism. But it isn't clear that this issue will be much more useful than any of the others in putting Democrats in office.

In the '70s, inflation had pushed many

middle-class taxpayers into high tax brackets, and the process showed no signs of slowing. Inflation was in the double digits by the end of the Carter presidency. Real people were suffering real harm. And the Republicans seized on the problem and offered a solution: cut taxes.

This solution imposed no costs on anyone, except possibly the government bureaucrats who found their annual budget increases cut. It was the perfect win-win electoral issue.

Further, making taxes the issue allowed Republicans to expand their constituency. When many blue-collar workers, small-business owners, and other traditionally Democratic voters found themselves pushed into high tax brackets, the Republican stand on taxes seemed more appealing than anything the Democrats had to offer. For the first time many Democratic households voted Republican.

By contrast, polls may show that

Americans are very concerned about the environment, but it's hard to find any major bloc of voters who are actually suffering. By all objective measures, the environment is cleaner than it was 20 years ago. Death rates for most types of cancer are down. The Environmental Protection Agency reports that the air quality in most major cities is remarkably better. Our fresh water supply has recovered from the brink of destruction. And despite economic growth and population increases, America's consumption of petroleum has remained constant for the last decade.

In the absence of any real harm, it isn't clear that a nebulous emotional concern for the environment can be turned into votes for costly environmental measures. And these measures will be costly. For example, California's "Big Green," a catchall environmental initiative on the November ballot, will cost citizens of the Golden State \$3 billion to \$12 billion. That's about \$1,000 to \$4,000 a person.

And the proposition no longer appears headed for a landslide victory. In a *Los Angeles Times* poll taken in late August, California voters were split 44 percent to 42 percent in favor of Big Green. So much for tapping into voters' concerns.

The initiative's dwindling support illustrates the hazards of relying on environmentalism as the ticket to surefire electoral success. This is a divisive issue with plenty of losers—many of whom make up traditional Democratic constituencies.

Big Green, for example, bans a number of commonly used industrial chemicals and calls for sharp reductions in carbon dioxide emissions. These provisions would make industrial production much more costly and undoubtedly lead to manufacturing layoffs. If Republicans could make this connection clear, they could speed up the exodus of blue-collar workers from the Democratic Party.

Big Green also bans a number of common pesticides—a requirement popular with environmentalists but not with farmers. Dianne Feinstein, the Democratic candidate for governor, originally resisted

NO ONE ELSE IN THE WORLD DOES WHAT IHS DOES

There are defenders of liberty among the top ranks of scholars and intellectuals today. The Institute for Humane Studies helped put them there. And IHS is working to ensure that more of them will be there for generations to come.

Talent scout. Developer.
Entrepreneur in the world of ideas. That's the Institute for Humane Studies.

For over a quarter century it has been tracking down budding opinion leaders who care about individual rights, private property, the rule of law, and free markets. Then, through formal programs and informal contacts all around the world, IHS works to:

- develop their appreciation of the interdisciplinary richness of liberty,
- keep them in touch with the worldwide network of like-minded people, and
- provide financial and moral support for their student and professional careers.

IHS knows that if the rich tradition of classical liberal thought is to be recovered, developed, and applied, it will require the highest standards of excellence in scholarship, reporting, writing, and every other enterprise that influences the way people think about their world.



Professors, pundits, novelists, cartoonists—these are the opinion shapers of tomorrow. Developing people who develop and promote the ideas of liberty is the work of IHS.

No one else in the world does quite what IHS does.

To find out more about IHS programs or how you could support the Institute, please call or write:

Institute for Humane Studies, George Mason University,
4400 University Dr., Fairfax, VA 22030, Tel: (703) 323-1055

IHS Europe: 35, avenue Mac-Mahon, 75017 Paris, France
Tel: 1.43.80.85.17

East European Outreach: M. Ševčík, Drěvná 2, 12800 Praha 2,
Czechoslovakia, Tel & Fax: 011-4-22-295-701

IHS The Institute for Humane Studies
at George Mason University

SPEAK SPANISH - ANY LANGUAGE - AS DIPLOMATS DO - AT UP TO 50% SAVINGS

Yes, with **Audio-Language and Knowledge Institute**, you can learn to speak the foreign language of your choice **QUICKLY, EASILY, INEXPENSIVELY, AT YOUR OWN CONVENIENCE**, using, the **SAME FOREIGN SERVICE** audio-cassette courses developed by **U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT FOR ITS DIPLOMATS**.

Each course has been **field tested** and proven by thousands of diplomats as well as the general public. **Why Pay Big** when now we offer you these **SAME COURSES** at prices that are **up to 50% lower** than any you have seen elsewhere. A total of 56 languages, so take this unique opportunity, fill out the coupon below and mail it **TODAY** for your **FREE catalogue** or call toll **FREE 1-800-722-6394**.

TO: AUDIO LANGUAGE AND KNOWLEDGE INSTITUTE RM10
516 Fifth Avenue Suite 507
New York, N.Y. 10036

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ ZIP _____

Libertarian Interns

Capitol Hill think-tank needs interns to assist with a wide variety of research and public affairs duties. Volunteer and paid positions available year-round. Contact Kristina Crane. **Cato Institute, 224 Second St., SE, Washington, DC 20003. (202) 546-0200.**



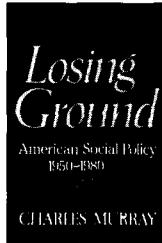
BOOKS ON CASSETTES

- ☛ The Conservative Classics
- ☛ Unabridged Recordings
- ☛ Purchase & 30 Day Rentals

☛ Books by Buckley, Gilder, Sowell, Mugggeridge, Paul Johnson, Friedman, Hayek, Tocqueville, Kirk, Mises, Podhoretz & scores of others.

CLASSICS ON TAPE
P.O. Box 969, Ashland, OR 97520

☛ For Free Catalog, Call



1 (800) 729-2665

EDITORIALS

backing Big Green and was doing well with California farmers. But after endorsing the measure under pressure from Democratic party activists, her popularity among farmers, says the *Los Angeles Times*, "appears to have withered."

Eliminating pesticides won't necessarily make the food Californians eat any safer (scientists estimate that our intake of natural carcinogens is 10,000 times greater than our intake of man-made carcinogens), but it will reduce the supply of food and push up prices. Some studies indicate that food prices in California could jump 30 percent because of Big Green. That's hardly going to attract the poor and lower-middle class to the measure or to the environmentalism it represents.

And since taxpayers still show no signs of supporting massive new tax increases, new environmental programs will inevitably vie with other programs for funding. Big Green mandates a minimum of \$40 million a year in new state spending. That money will undoubtedly come at the expense of family services, health care, and other programs important to Democratic voters.

Sherry Bebitch Jeffe, an analyst at the Claremont Graduate School's Center for Politics and Policy, notes: "To the California that is largely white and affluent, Big Green means an improved quality of life. To the one that is largely minority and poor, 'quality of life' issues include surviving economically and staying alive.... Among blacks, there appears to be some skepticism that Big Green is 'another Westside [of L.A.] liberal thing.' Said one black leader, 'The community feels kind of used and abused.'"

Still, many environmentalists continue to ignore or dismiss the economic impact of their proposals. Big Green supporter and UCLA professor Malcolm Gordon claimed at a September forum on the initiative, "The economics are irrelevant. It's how you *feel* about the issue."

But economics are very important to the backbone of the Democratic party—the working people of America. If the party starts basing its policies on the emotions of Hollywood celebrities and well-paid professors, it won't attract new voters. But it may well alienate some old ones. **■**

VOICES OF REASON

Is your group looking for provocative speakers?



LYNN SCARLETT
Research Director, Reason Foundation
Book Review Editor, REASON

Speaking topics include:

- "The Growth/No Growth Debate: Planning Fallacies and Market Solutions"
- "Dealing with Drugs: The Legalization Alternative"
- "Garbage Recycling: A Market Approach"
- "Surrogate Parenthood: Legal Dilemmas and Appropriate Responses"

Would you like to hear more about what you read in REASON? Our editors and writers are ready to sound off on a host of interesting topics. For more information, call Kevin Teasley, Director of Public Affairs, (213) 392-0443 or write REASON, 2716 Ocean Park Blvd., Suite 1062, Santa Monica, CA 90405.

Special rates available to college groups.

REALITY CHECK

JACOB SULLUM

We can thank Saddam Hussein for one thing, at least: The prospect of a real war in the Persian Gulf has diverted attention from the drug war at home. One year after the release of William Bennett's *National Drug Control Strategy*, the *New York Times* reserved a space at the bottom of page 14 for its story about President Bush's progress report on the antidrug campaign.

It's been a success, by the way. "I think a prudent and cautious judgment on our present circumstances would be that the drug problem—in general, nationwide—is no longer getting worse," Bennett said at Bush's news conference. "In some very significant respects [it] is now getting better—not victory, but success." Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Joseph Biden noted that casual drug use "appears to be plummeting" and praised the administration's efforts to promote that trend.

Yet the most-recent data on nationwide drug use come from a survey carried out in 1988, so it's a mystery how anyone can judge the impact of an antidrug campaign launched in 1989. Furthermore, drug use has been dropping since well before George Bush was elected; the household survey conducted by the National Institute on Drug Abuse has found a decline in overall use of marijuana since 1979 and of cocaine since 1982. In any case, unless the administration is prepared to accept blame for increases in drug use, it should not expect to receive credit for the continuation of trends that began a decade ago.

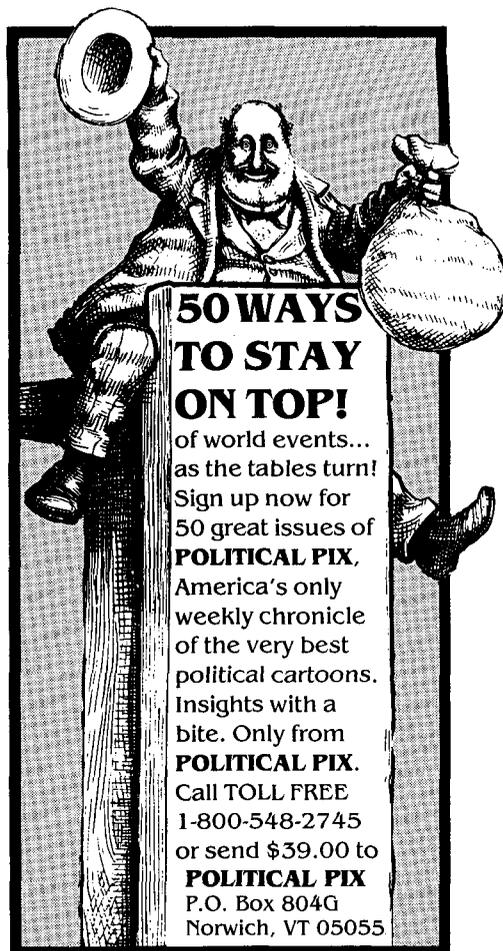
Bennett pointed to more-recent developments as well. Data from NIDA's Drug Abuse Warning Network indicate that the number of emergency-room patients who mentioned using cocaine (not necessarily those who suffered from cocaine-related problems) declined by 27 percent between the third quarter of

1989 and the first quarter of 1990. It's not clear what these figures mean. Furthermore, the DAWN sample is not random, so it's not even representative of U.S. emergency-room patients, let alone the general population.

Should Bennett come up with more convincing evidence of success, he may have difficulty finding an audience to impress with it. According to the *New York Times*/CBS News poll, the percentage of Americans who consider drugs the nation's number-one problem declined from 64 percent in September 1989 to 10 percent a year later. Analysts have reached a startling conclusion: If you bombard people with antidrug propaganda for a few months, they will tell you that drugs are a big problem. After a while, however, they will move on to other concerns.

Los Angeles Police Chief Daryl Gates is a little behind the curve. Testifying before the Senate Judiciary Committee on the first anniversary of Bush's baggie-of-crack speech, he called casual drug users traitors who "ought to be taken out and shot" for aiding the enemy in time of war. Although Bennett talks about beheading drug offenders only in theory (and even then, only dealers), Gates's statement—which he later repeated—is the logical conclusion to be drawn from the rhetoric of the drug warriors.

The police chief must have seemed especially out of touch to anyone who recalled a story that received wide publicity just a few days before his testimony. A 22-year-old tourist from Utah had been fatally stabbed on a New York City subway platform while trying to defend his mother against a gang of robbers. This is real crime, and citizens have a right to demand that law-enforcement officials devote their time and effort to fighting it, instead of waging phony wars against manufactured enemies. ■



50 WAYS TO STAY ON TOP!
of world events... as the tables turn!
Sign up now for 50 great issues of **POLITICAL PIX**, America's only weekly chronicle of the very best political cartoons. Insights with a bite. Only from **POLITICAL PIX**. Call TOLL FREE 1-800-548-2745 or send \$39.00 to **POLITICAL PIX**, P.O. Box 804G, Norwich, VT 05055

FAITH AND THE FREE MARKET

The DoubleTree Hotel
November 15-16

Hillsdale College's Shavano Institute for National Leadership Seminar
Co-sponsored by the Orange County Register



Faith and the free market – will the connection between these two concepts not only permanently reconcile traditional conservatism and libertarianism in American life, but provide the basis for an even stronger movement? Can it, furthermore, have a worldwide influence, by helping to put the final nail in the coffin of communism in Asia and Eastern Europe, liberation theology in Latin America, and the collectivist ideal where ever it is still in force?

Speakers include: Hillsdale College President George Roche, *Orange County Register* editorial editor Kenneth Grubbs, PBS film critic Michael Medved, Fr. Robert A. Sirico, Cato senior fellow Doug Bandow, and many more.
CALL 517-439-1524, ext. 318 for information on program and registration fees.