

MEMO OF THE MONTH



Paul Rakiey
SUPERINTENDENT

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Department of Correction

Northeastern Correctional Center

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Michael S. Dukakis
GOVERNOR

Michael V. Fair
COMMISSIONER

January 10, 1989

TO: ALL INMATES
FROM: Martin Doto, Sergeant/Work Officer
RE: Toilet Paper

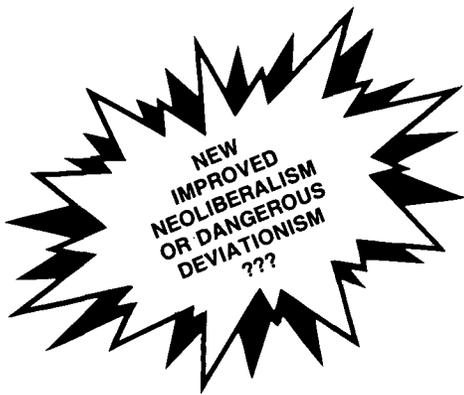
Effective immediately, toilet paper will be distributed on a weekly basis. Each inmate will be allowed one roll per week, and he will be responsible to monitor his own use.

Will be distributed on Wednesdays.

MD:mlo

cc: File

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THE GOSPEL RECONSIDERED

Over the years, this magazine has become identified with a core of ideas—from drafting the affluent into the military to taking away their Social Security to making them pay higher income tax—jokingly referred to in-house as the “Gospel.” Longtime Monthly readers would be surprised to see an issue go by without mention of at least some of the Gospel. They would be equally surprised to find those ideas under attack. Some magazines consider themselves roundtables for discussion; not the Monthly. “Why should I publish something I don’t agree with?” has been the philosophy of Charles Peters, the editor in chief, since he founded the magazine 20 years ago.

Not surprisingly, this philosophy has been a source of occasional frustration among the editors who have worked here, who inevitably find themselves disagreeing with parts of the party line. This issue lets them have their say. As part of our effort to mark our 20th anniversary year, we’ve asked our contributing editors to tell us where they disagree with the Gospel. Eleven of them weighed in. Charles Peters responds on page 52.

The Rich Don't Serve

by Michael Kinsley

One chapter of the Gospel According to *The Washington Monthly* that I have some trouble with is Charlie Peters’s enthusiasm for a military draft. This bad idea in its own right also reflects two characteristic defects of the Peters Gospel generally. First, a slight authoritarian streak: a too-casual willingness to say that something ought to be required just because it would be nice (such as Charlie’s notorious proposal for a law banning banks from the ground floors of office buildings). Second, an occasional failure to think through the practical difficulties of achieving some desirable end through a seemingly simple policy initiative (such as the idea of giving a capital gains break to “new” and “productive” investments only).

It certainly would be nice if the armed services represented a cross section of the population; if every citizen made a patriotic contribution to America before going off on his or her own life course; if there were one guaranteed occasion of social class mixing in our increasingly stratified society. These are the advantages Charlie sees in a draft, based on his own experience in World War II. (These, plus saving the government money.) But telling people they must give up two years of their lives is a major infringement on freedom, for which there ought to be a major reason. “The defense of our country” is, of course, a major reason, but the defense of our country is not at stake. It is being defended adequately without a draft, by people who are in the military because they wish to be there. The people who make defense policy are not merely satisfied with current arrangements—they actively prefer a volunteer force to a draft, for obvious reasons. Are the genuine but amorphous spiritual reasons for bringing back a draft more important?

Nicholas Von Hoffman put the practical case against a draft in a nutshell many years ago when he wrote: “Draft old men’s money, not young men’s

Michael Kinsley, the editor of The New Republic, is on sabbatical in London where he is working for The Economist. He was an editor at the Monthly in 1975 and 1976.