

sovereignty to the state, to ignore his existential obligation to take full responsibility for his material and social welfare, and to empower government officials as his guardians.

His neurosis is evident in his ideals and fantasies; in his self-righteousness, arrogance and grandiosity; in his self-pity; in his demands for indulgence and exemption from accountability; in his claims to entitlements; in what he gives and withholds; and in his protests that nothing done voluntarily is enough to satisfy him. Most notably, the radical liberal's neurosis is evident in his extravagant political demands, in his furious protests against economic freedom, in his arrogant contempt for morality, in his angry defiance of civility, in his bitter attacks on freedom of association, in his aggressive assault on individual liberty. And in the final analysis, the irrationality of the radical liberal is most apparent in his ruthless use of force to control the lives of others.

In a competent society the principles of ordered liberty guide the citizen throughout the life cycle. They inform him and his children and the community of the rules by which human beings make good lives for themselves. Because the rights, laws and duties of the competent society are all of a piece and reflect the bipolar nature of man, the entire ensemble of individual citizen, family, community, society and institutions forms a coherent whole in support of life, liberty, social cooperation and the pursuit of happiness. Under the rules that govern ordered liberty, the human organism and its physical and social environment are in harmony to the maximum extent possible given the turbulent nature of man.

By contrast, a society organized under radical liberalism comes into immediate conflict with the bipolar nature of man and with the rights, laws and duties needed for human beings to live in peace and freedom. Rather than coordinating the life of the individual citizen with the institutions of his society, radical liberalism sets individuals and institutions into perpetual conflict with each other through its rhetoric of class warfare and victimization, its violations of personal freedom through confiscatory

taxation and invasive regulation, its attacks on family integrity, and the endless bungling of government bureaucracy.

With an incomparable record of flawed analysis, faulty solutions and destructive consequences, liberal government grandly proclaims itself indispensable and presumes to regulate and administer our lives from the business office to the bedroom. The inherent potential for madness in all human beings--our tendencies toward grandiosity, overestimation and extravagance; our impaired judgment, distortions of fact, misunderstanding of cause and effect and resistance to learning from experience; our lack of perspective and obsession with irrelevant details; our foolish goals, paranoid fears and irrational counter-aggression; our power-grabbing and criminality--all are writ large in the madness of liberal government. Its policies and operations are a study in the psychopathology and sociopathology of human nature.

**Excerpt from: *The Liberal Mind: The Psychological Causes of Political Madness*, by Lyle H. Rossiter, Jr., M.D.**

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Pamphlet 502

## **The Liberal Mind: The Psychological Causes of Political Madness**

Lyle H. Rossiter, Jr., M.D.

**On the Madness of Modern Liberalism:** The egalitarianism and welfarism of modern liberal government are incompatible with the facts of human nature and the human condition. But the rise to power of the liberal agenda has resulted from the fact that the people of western societies have irrationally demanded that governments take care of them and manage their lives instead of protecting their property rights. This misconception results in massive violations of those rights while permitting government officials to act out their own and their constituents' psychopathology. The liberal agenda gratifies various types of pathological dependency; augments primitive feelings of envy and inferiority; reinforces paranoid perceptions of victimization; implements manic delusions of grandeur; exploits government authority for power, domination and revenge; and satisfies infantile claims to entitlement, indulgence and compensation.

Modern liberalism rejects, to one degree or another, the competence and sovereignty of the common man and subordinates him to the will of governments run by liberal elites. The western world's twentieth century capitulation to this philosophy is obvious--and the implications for liberty are ominous. But the history of the world also documents the heroic struggles of human beings to escape from tyrannies of all types, whether imposed by the brute force and declared entitlement of a dictator, or falsely justified by economic, religious or political sophistries. The science fiction of Marxian economic evolution, the grandiose fantasy of a New World Order, the utopian dreams of The Great Society, the myth of the divine emperor, have all had their turns on center stage in irrational man's attempts to legitimize government control and deny individual liberty. The realities of

the human condition, especially the inherent sovereignty of individuals and their inevitable differences in choice and preference, render all collectivist doctrines absurd. A rational biologist will not transport a mountain goat to a prairie and declare a match between organism and environment. A rational social policy theorist will not create an environment of rules for human action that dismisses individual differences, ignores the critical roles of free choice, morality and cooperation, and otherwise distorts and violates the nature of man, and then announce that utopia has arrived in a workers' paradise.

Like all other human beings, the modern liberal reveals his true character, including his madness, in what he values and devalues, in what he articulates with passion. Of special interest, however, are the many values about which the modern liberal mind is not passionate: his agenda does not insist that the individual is the ultimate economic, social and political unit; it does not idealize individual liberty and the structure of law and order essential to it; it does not defend the basic rights of property and contract; it does not aspire to ideals of authentic autonomy and mutuality; it does not preach an ethic of self-reliance and self-determination; it does not praise courage, forbearance or resilience; it does not celebrate the ethics of consent or the blessings of voluntary cooperation. It does not advocate moral rectitude or understand the critical role of morality in human relating. The liberal agenda does not comprehend an identity of competence, appreciate its importance, or analyze the developmental conditions and social institutions that promote its achievement. The liberal agenda does not understand or recognize personal sovereignty or impose strict limits on coercion by the state. It does not celebrate the genuine altruism of private charity. It does not learn history's lessons on the evils of collectivism.

What the liberal mind is passionate about is a world filled with pity, sorrow, neediness, misfortune, poverty, suspicion, mistrust, anger, exploitation, discrimination, victimization, alienation and injustice. Those who occupy this world are "workers,"

"minorities," "the little guy," "women," and the "unemployed." They are poor, weak, sick, wronged, cheated, oppressed, disenfranchised, exploited and victimized. They bear no responsibility for their problems. None of their agonies are attributable to faults or failings of their own: not to poor choices, bad habits, faulty judgment, wishful thinking, lack of ambition, low frustration tolerance, mental illness or defects in character. None of the victims' plight is caused by failure to plan for the future or learn from experience. Instead, the "root causes" of all this pain lie in faulty social conditions: poverty, disease, war, ignorance, unemployment, racial prejudice, ethnic and gender discrimination, modern technology, capitalism, globalization and imperialism. In the radical liberal mind, this suffering is inflicted on the innocent by various predators and persecutors: "Big Business," "Big Corporations," "greedy capitalists," "U.S. Imperialists," "the oppressors," "the rich," "the wealthy," "the powerful" and "the selfish."

The liberal cure for this endless malaise is a very large authoritarian government that regulates and manages society through a cradle to grave agenda of redistributive caretaking. It is a government everywhere doing everything for everyone. The liberal motto is "In Government We Trust." To rescue the people from their troubled lives, the agenda recommends denial of personal responsibility, encourages self-pity and other-pity, fosters government dependency, promotes sexual indulgence, rationalizes violence, excuses financial obligation, justifies theft, ignores rudeness, prescribes complaining and blaming, denigrates marriage and the family, legalizes all abortion, defies religious and social tradition, declares inequality unjust, and rebels against the duties of citizenship. Through multiple entitlements to unearned goods, services and social status, the liberal politician promises to ensure everyone's material welfare, provide for everyone's healthcare, protect everyone's self-esteem, correct everyone's social and political disadvantage, educate every citizen, and eliminate all class distinctions. With liberal intellectuals sharing the glory, the liberal politician is the hero in this melodrama. He takes credit for providing his constituents with whatever

they want or need even though he has not produced by his own effort any of the goods, services or status transferred to them but has instead taken them from others by force.

Radical liberalism thus assaults the foundations of civilized freedom, and for that reason it is a genuine evil. Further, given its irrational goals, coercive methods and historical failures, and given its perverse effects on human development, there can be no question of the radical agenda's madness. Only an irrational agenda would advocate a systematic destruction of the foundations on which ordered liberty depends. Only an irrational man would want the state to run his life for him rather than create secure conditions in which he can run his own life. Only an irrational agenda would deliberately undermine the citizen's growth to competence by having the state adopt him. Only irrational thinking would trade individual liberty for government coercion, then sacrifice the pride of self-reliance for welfare dependency. Only an irrational man would look at a community of free people cooperating by choice and see a society of victims exploited by villains.

The liberal agenda urges the citizen to place his basic trust in government, to see it as the mother of all providers, and to mistrust those with whom he would have to trade voluntarily in order to get what he wants. In doing this, the politician seeks to redirect to government offices the trust which can and should empower the individual to run his own life through voluntary cooperation with others. Government programs appeal to the citizen's passivity by implying that he need not provide for his own health care, housing or retirement. And he need not cooperate with his fellows for these purposes either. Instead, he is told, he need only trust the government to make available to him whatever he needs and to implement that trust by ceding to its officials the power to tax the people and regulate them for his benefit. In short, the government invites the citizen to vote for the candidate who promises what a parent gives a child. It invites him to assume the dependent role of the child, to surrender his personal