

ALSO BY P. J. O'ROURKE

Modern Manners

The Bachelor Home Companion

Republican Party Reptile

Holidays in Hell

Parliament of Whores

All the Trouble in the World

Age and Guile Beat Youth, Innocence and a Bad Haircut

The American Spectator's Enemies List

Eat the Rich

The CEO of the Sofa

GIVE
WAR A
CHANCE

*Eyewitness Accounts of
Mankind's Struggle
Against Tyranny, Injustice
and Alcohol-Free Beer*

P. J. O'Rourke



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INTRODUCTION

Hunting the Virtuous—

and How to Clean

and Skin Them

This book is a collection of articles about—if I may be excused for venturing upon a large theme—the battle against evil. Not that I meant to do anything so grand. I was just writing magazine pieces, trying to make a living, and evil is good copy.

Various types of evil are battled here. Some are simple. Iraq's invasion of Kuwait is a case of bad men doing wrong things for wicked reasons. This is the full-sized or standard purebred evil and is easily recognized even by moral neophytes. Other malignities—drugs in America, famine in Africa and everything in the Middle East—are more complex. When combating those evils people sometimes have trouble deciding whom to shoot. And in this book there is at least one evil, involving the kill-happy Irish, which is being fought whether it exists or not.

Anyway, it's a book about evil—evil ends, evil means, evil effects and causes. In a compilation of modern journalism there's nothing surprising about that. What does surprise me, on rereading these articles, is how much of the evil was authored or abetted by liberals.

Now liberals are people I had been accustomed to thinking of as daffy, not villainous. Getting their toes caught in their sandal straps, bumping their heads on wind chimes—how much trouble could they cause, even in a full-blown cultural-diversity frenzy? (I mean if Europeans didn't discover North America, how'd we all get here?) But

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every iniquity in this book is traceable to bad thinking or bad government. And liberals have been vigorous cheerleaders for both.

“Liberal” is, of course, one of those fine English words, like lady, gay and welfare, which has been spoiled by special pleading. When I say *liberals* I certainly don’t mean openhanded individuals or tolerant persons or even Big Government Democrats. I mean people who are excited that one percent of the profits of Ben & Jerry’s ice cream goes to promote world peace.

The principal feature of contemporary American liberalism is sanctimoniousness. By loudly denouncing all bad things—war and hunger and date rape—liberals testify to their own terrific goodness. More important, they promote themselves to membership in a self-selecting elite of those who care deeply about such things. People who care a lot are naturally superior to we who don’t care any more than we have to. By virtue of this superiority the caring have a moral right to lead the nation. It’s a kind of natural aristocracy, and the wonderful thing about this aristocracy is that you don’t have to be brave, smart, strong or even lucky to join it, you just have to be liberal.* Kidnapping the moral high ground also serves to inflate liberal ranks. People who are, in fact, just kindhearted are told that because they care, they must be liberals, too.

Liberals hate wealth, they say, on grounds of economic injustice—as though prosperity were a pizza, and if I have too many slices, you’re left with nothing but a Domino’s box to feed your family. Even Castro and Kim Il Sung know this to be nonsense. Any rich man does more for society than all the jerks pasting VISUALIZE WORLD PEACE bumper stickers on their cars. The worst leech of a merger and acquisitions lawyer making \$500,000 a year will, even if he cheats on his taxes, put \$100,000 into the public coffers. That’s \$100,000 worth

*It was that talented idiot Percy Bysshe Shelley who first posited this soggy oligarchy when he said, “Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world.” Modern liberals are no poets, however, and are hardly satisfied with legislating in the unacknowledged manner. Today’s liberals love politics as much as they love disappearing rain forests, homelessness and hate crimes, because politics is one more way to achieve power without merit or risk.

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of education, charity or U.S. Marines. And the Marine Corps does more to promote world peace than all the Ben & Jerry’s ice cream ever made.

Liberals actually hate wealth because they hate all success. They hate success especially, of course, when it’s achieved by other people, but sometimes they even hate the success they achieve themselves. What’s the use of belonging to a self-selecting elite if there’s a real elite around? Liberals don’t like any form of individual achievement. And if there has to be some, they prefer the kind that cannot be easily quantified—“the achievement of Winnie Mandela” for example. Also wealth is, for most people, the only honest and likely path to liberty. With money comes power over the world. Men are freed from drudgery, women from exploitation. Businesses can be started, homes built, communities formed, religions practiced, educations pursued. But liberals aren’t very interested in such real and material freedoms. They have a more innocent—not to say toddlerlike—idea of freedom. Liberals want the freedom to put anything into their mouths, to say bad words and to expose their private parts in art museums.

That liberals aren’t enamored of real freedom may have something to do with responsibility—that cumbersome backpack which all free men have to lug on life’s aerobic nature hike. The second item in the liberal creed, after self-righteousness, is unaccountability. Liberals have invented whole college majors—psychology, sociology, women’s studies—to prove that nothing is anybody’s fault. No one is fond of taking responsibility for his actions, but consider how much you’d have to hate free will to come up with a political platform that advocates killing unborn babies but not convicted murderers. A callous pragmatist might favor abortion *and* capital punishment. A devout Christian would sanction neither. But it takes years of therapy to arrive at the liberal point of view.

Since we’re not in control of ourselves, we are all vulnerable to victimization by whatever *is* in control. (Liberals are vague about this, but it’s probably white male taxpayers or the Iran-contra conspiracy). Liberals are fond of victims and seek them wherever they go.

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The more victimized the better—the best victims being too ignorant and addled to challenge their benefactors. This is why animal rights is such an excellent liberal issue. Not even a Democratic presidential candidate is as ignorant and addled as a dead laboratory rat.

The search for victims of injustice to pester explains why liberals won't leave minorities alone. "The minority is always right," said that pesky liberal Ibsen. And, when it comes to minorities, there is none greater—or, as it were, lesser—than that ultimate of all minorities, the self. Here the liberal truly comes into his own. There is nothing more mealy-mouthed, bullying, irresponsible and victimized than a well-coddled self, especially if it belongs to a liberal.

Liberal self-obsession is manifested in large doses of quack psychoanalysis, crank spiritualism, insalubrious health fads and helpless self-help seminars. The liberal makes grim attempts to hold on to his youth—fussing with his hair, his wardrobe, his speech and even his ideology in an attempt to retain the perfect solipsism of adolescence. He has a ridiculous and egotistical relationship with God, by turns denying He exists and hiding in His skirts. Either way—as God's special friend or as the highest form of sentient life on the planet—liberal self-importance is increased. The liberal is continually angry, as only a self-important man can be, with his civilization, his culture, his country and his folks back home. His is an infantile world view. At the core of liberalism is the spoiled child—miserable, as all spoiled children are, unsatisfied, demanding, ill-disciplined, despotic and useless. Liberalism is a philosophy of sniveling brats.

There! It was good to get that off my chest. Now that I've had my say, however, you may be wondering—don't I sometimes get called a Nazi? Yes, name-calling, in which conservatives such as myself are so loath to indulge, is a favorite tactic of the liberals. I have often been called a Nazi, and, although it is unfair, I don't let it bother me. I don't let it bother me for one simple reason. No one has *ever* had a fantasy about being tied to a bed and sexually ravished by someone dressed as a liberal.

THE BIRTH, AND SOME OF THE AFTERBIRTH, OF FREEDOM