

# The Genius of Forrest Gump

By Warren L. Hahn, CEP

I recently had the awesome pleasure of attending my first Infinite Banking Seminar presented by R. Nelson Nash. It was enlightening to say the least! Nelson's anecdotal information was truly mesmerizing (I wish I could clone him). Anyway, sometime during the seminar he told a joke (a story, really) about the movie character Forrest Gump and I plan to use it to start my first seminar.<p>

It goes something like this: Forrest had passed away and was at the Pearly Gates about to enter when St. Peter addressed him and said that they were glad to see him, but before he could enter heaven he must first answer three questions. Forrest was nervous, but braced himself for the first question. St. Peter asked, "What two days of the week start with the letter 'T'?" Forrest said, "That would be today and tomorrow." St. Peter laughed at the response and said the answer was correct, but he was thinking of Tuesday and Thursday.<p>

Now, St. Peter fired off the next question, "How many seconds are there in a year?" Forrest rubbed his chin and paced back and forth. Finally he said, "12." St. Peter sadly said that the answer was completely wrong and that Forrest could not enter. Forrest said he really thought that he had it right -- "January 2<sup>nd</sup>, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, ----" At this point St. Peter relented and said he would give him full credit for his answer.<p>

The final question St. Peter said was the hardest of all. "What is God's first name?" Forrest said, "Golly, St. Peter, that's the easiest of all -- his first name is **Andy**." St. Peter threw up his hands and said, "Where did you come up with Andy as God's first name? Forrest smiled and sang, "Andy walks with me, Andy talks with me, Andy tells me I am His own." St. Peter opens the gates and says, "Run, Forrest, run!"<p>

I think this a great story because Forrest's mind was open to all possible answers and that is what I want my audience to do -- open their minds and free themselves from the restriction of conventional wisdom. In fact, I want them to think about that movie. Forrest was considered to be slow and dim witted, but everything he did was either good, pure, heroic, and successful. <p>

Do you remember what his mother told him to say when somebody called him stupid? He was to say, "Stupid is as stupid does." Think about that statement and what it means ... you are only stupid if you do something stupid! Forrest was brilliant by his actions. <p>

Let's carry this analogy a little further. He became a wealthy shrimp boat captain. But, when he first started he was laughed at because he knew nothing about catching shrimp. He went out sailing every day and dropped his nets and came back with the holds of the boat empty. It wasn't until he went out in the face of a huge storm when all the other boats stayed in port tied to the docks that he became successful. You see, he fought that storm and continually maneuvered his boat on headings that kept it afloat. When he got

back to port his was the only boat afloat. The entire shrimp boat fleet had been destroyed by the storm. They had no way to maneuver -- they were in port tied to the docks. They suffered the same fate as the 401-K wonks that tied their future to the tech stocks, IPOs and bought companies that never made a profit, but had market share. They laughed, too, at the Forrest Gump investors who held on to the beliefs that companies were valued based on their profitability, and that fixed income assets and real property were part of a successful portfolio that could maneuver in any storm. <p>

I want an audience full of Forrest Gumps who are willing to set sail on the winds of the Infinite Banking Theology.<p>

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"Beware the leader who bangs the drums of war in order to whip the citizenry into a patriotic fervor, for patriotism is indeed a double-edged sword. It both emboldens the blood, just as it narrows the mind. And when the drums of war have reached a fever pitch and the blood boils with hate and the mind has closed, the leader will have no need in seizing the rights of the citizenry. Rather, the citizenry, infused with fear and blinded by patriotism, will offer up all of their rights unto the leader and gladly so. How do I know? For this is what I have done. And I am Caesar."<p> - - Julius Caesar

## **Rewriting History,American Style<p>**

**by Thomas J. DiLorenzo<p>**

In his book, *Lincoln Reconsidered*, Pulitzer prize-winning Lincoln biographer David Donald remarked that, after Lincoln's death and "reincarnation" as a secular political saint, politicians of all stripes began attaching themselves to his legacy. Men who were his bitterest political enemies during his lifetime all of a sudden claimed to have been his closest friends and associates. The Communist Party U.S.A. adorned its New York City headquarters, writes Donald, with huge portraits of Lincoln and held annual Lincoln-Lenin Day parades. <p>

No one, of course, has taken the worshipping of Abraham Lincoln to greater extremes than the Republican Party and some of its affiliated foundations and think tanks. The Republican Party has long sought to give its political agenda moral authority by reminding us all that it is, after all, "The Party of Lincoln." That is certainly true but, unfortunately, the Republican Party and some of its associated think tanks have apparently found it necessary to do what they once accused the Soviet Union of doing: rewriting history in order to enhance its prestige and power. <p>

Take, for instance, a Washington, DC, outfit known as the "Declaration Foundation" that is purportedly devoted to the principles embodied in the Declaration of Independence. It does so by lionizing Lincoln (as though he still needs more lionizing) and constantly reminding Republican politicians to do this or that because "Lincoln would have done it." One of its slogans is the Lincolnian phrase, "Liberty and Union *Forever*" (emphasis added). <p>

The Declaration Foundation does some good work, judging by its Web site, but its very name is somewhat Orwellian. Consider the one principle of the Declaration of Independence that Thomas Jefferson is most noted for, the idea that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed, and that whenever governments become destructive of liberty it is the *duty* of citizens to abolish that government and replace it with a new one. <p>

The Declaration, after all, was a *Declaration of Secession* from England. The American Revolution was a war of secession, just as the War for Southern Independence was. Massachusetts Senator Timothy Pickering, who served as George Washington's adjutant general, Secretary of War, and Secretary of State, once said that secession was "the" principle of the American Revolution – the very right that the revolutionaries fought for. The Declaration Foundation, on the other hand, preaches exactly the opposite with its "Union Forever" philosophy. <p>

Lincoln's political triumph was, if anything, a *repudiation* of the Jeffersonian philosophy of government and a victory for his political adversaries, the Hamiltonians, who by 1861 had morphed into the Republican Party. Like all the founding fathers Jefferson wanted the Union to thrive, but he also agreed with his colleague Timothy Pickering that secession was a fundamental right. In his First Inaugural Address he declared, "If there be any among us who would wish to dissolve this union . . . let them stand undisturbed as monuments of the safety with which error of opinion may be tolerated where reason is left free to combat it." He was championing the right of free speech here, but also the right of secession. <p>

In a letter to James Madison in 1816 Jefferson reiterated his support of the right of secession by saying, "If any state in the Union will declare that it prefers separation . . . to a continuance in union . . . I have no hesitation in saying, let us separate." <p>

Alexis de Tocqueville, whom everyone regards as a brilliant observer and chronicler of the American system of government, wrote in *Democracy in America* that "The Union was formed by the voluntary agreement of the States; and in uniting together they have not forfeited their nationality . . . . If one of the states chooses to withdraw from the compact . . . the Federal Government would have no means of maintaining its claims directly either by force or right." (Tocqueville could never have imagined that barely thirty years later an American president would commit the barbaric act of having his armies murder 300,000 fellow citizens and destroy their economy to deny them the right of secession). <p>

Even Abraham Lincoln voiced support for the right of secession when it served his political purposes. He enthusiastically embraced (and orchestrated) the secession of western Virginia (a slave state) when it joined the Union. And on January 12, 1848, he announced that "any people anywhere, being inclined and having the power, have the right to rise up and shake off the existing government, and form a new one that suits them better. . . . Nor is this right confined to cases in which the whole people of an existing government may choose to exercise it. Any portion of such people, that can, may revolutionize, and make their own of so much of the territory as they inhabit." Don't look for this quote, though, in any of the materials produced by the Declaration Foundation.<p>

As of 1860 most *Northerners and Southerners* believed in the Jeffersonian right of secession as enshrined in the Declaration of Independence. In *Northern Editorials on Secession* Howard Cecil Perkins surveyed about 1,000 Northern newspapers and found that the majority of them agreed basically with what the *Bangor Daily Union* wrote on November 13, 1860: "The Union depends for its continuance on the free consent and will of the sovereign people of each state, and when that consent and will is withdrawn on either part, their Union is gone." A state that is coerced to remain in the Union becomes a "subject province" and can never be "a co-equal member of the American Union."<p>

*New York Tribune* editor Horace Greeley, a prominent Republican, editorialized on December 17, 1860, that if tyranny and despotism justified the Revolution of 1776, then "we do not see why it would not justify the secession of Five Millions of Southrons from the Federal Union in 1861." On February 5, 1861, Greeley continued on that "The Great Principle embodied by Jefferson in the Declaration is . . . that governments derive their just power from the consent of the governed." Therefore, if the Southern states want to secede, "they have a clear right to do so." At this time, Northerners knew that if there was to be a war it was not a war "to free the slaves," but to deny Southerners the right of secession. In an 1862 letter to Horace Greeley Lincoln himself declared that his "paramount objective" in the war was to destroy the right of secession or, as he rephrased it, to "save the Union," and that if he could do that without freeing a single slave he would gladly do so. <p>

The Declaration Foundation, the Claremont Institute, and other self-proclaimed beacons of the Lincolnian philosophy, preach exactly the opposite. They perpetuate the preposterous myth that there was never any such thing as a right of secession – in a country that was formed by a war of secession. In doing so they rewrite history to legitimize the highly centralized welfare/warfare state that Lincoln, more than anyone else, helped bring about in America. The Declaration Foundation, in other words, *repudiates* the principles of the Declaration of Independence while trying to convince the public that it is actually championing them.<p>

The second most notable principle of the Declaration is the notion that "all men are created equal." The Declaration Foundation and the Claremont Institute portray Lincoln as an almost Christ-like figure because of his supposed embrace of this principle, but this is hard to square with many of Lincoln's own lifelong beliefs and clear, unambiguous

statements. In his 1858 Ottawa, Illinois debate with Stephen Douglas, for example, he stated that "I have no purpose to introduce political and social equality between the white and black races . . . . I . . . am in favor of the race to which I belong having the superior position. I have never said anything to the contrary."<p>

Lincoln went on to declare that he had *never* been in favor "of making voters or jurors of Negroes, nor of qualifying them to hold office, nor to intermarry with white people." He literally *mocked* the Jeffersonian dictum that "all men are created equal" by claiming that, with the possible exception of Siamese twins, "I am sorry to say that I have never seen two men of whom it is true."<p>

On the topic of emancipation Lincoln said, "Free them, and make them politically and socially our equals? My own feelings will not admit of this . . . . We cannot, then make them equals." <p>

It doesn't get any clearer than that. Lincoln unequivocally denounced the principle of the Declaration of Independence that all men are created equal, especially when it comes to men of the white and black races. Ever the slick politician, he rhetorically defended the "natural rights" of all people, but blacks could never enjoy such rights if they were denied all the rights that Lincoln would deny them. In his 1852 eulogy to Henry Clay Lincoln stated that he agreed with Clay that slavery was regrettable, but ending it would produce "a greater evil, even to the cause of human liberty itself." Don't look for this line, either, in any of the Declaration Foundation's publications.<p>

Lincoln's career-long goal, which he clung to until the day he died, was colonization – to send every last black person in the U.S. to Africa, Central America, Haiti – *anywhere* but the U.S. This, said Lincoln, would be a "glorious consummation." They could be "equal" all right, but not here. This led America's most prominent abolitionist, William Lloyd Garrison, to denounce Lincoln as "the President of African Colonization" and to declare that he "had not a drop of anti-slavery blood in his veins." Again, don't look for this in any Declaration Foundation or Claremont Institute publications. <p>

Although the Declaration Foundation and the Claremont Institute are "conservative" organizations, they join hands with prominent hard-core leftists in distorting the real meaning of the Declaration of Independence. In *Lincoln at Gettysburg* the far-left journalist Garry Wills celebrates this "open air sleight of hand" and Lincoln's use of military force to "remake America" in a way that made egalitarianism, rather than liberty, the prevailing political philosophy. <p>

Left-of-Center Columbia University law professor George P. Fletcher concurs with Wills in *Our Secret Constitution*, where he praises Lincoln for "reinventing the United States" government from one whose main goal was the defense of liberty to "nationalism, egalitarianism, and democracy." <p>

Over the past century nationalism has been the chief source of the wars that have killed millions of civilians; egalitarianism has helped create socialist and welfare states that

have destroyed economy after economy; and unbridled democracy has decimated liberty. The Republican and Democratic parties have championed all of these things over the past century, and they use what Joseph Sobran has called the "Fantasy Lincoln" to help prop up their corrupt regimes<p>

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## The Elements of Leadership<p>

by Gary North<p>

Yesterday, I lectured half a dozen high school students on the elements of leadership. These were pre-screened students at a small but rapidly growing Christian school. They had already demonstrated leadership abilities. They were coming out for half a work day to shelve a few of my books.<p>

What could I tell them of value in 45 minutes? Not much. <p>

Here are some of the basics. Maybe these will be interesting to you.<p>

### ***SELF-IMPROVEMENT***<p>

There are fewer leaders than followers. Over and over, we see Pareto's 20-80 rule in action. About 20% of a particular group will account for 80% of the productivity, or trouble, or whatever it is you're considering. Leadership involves gaining access to the 20%, and then, over time, the top 4% (20% of 20%).<p>

The fact is, most people don't want to lead in most areas of life. But 80% of them do want to lead in some area. They want to be respected for something. Leadership is a sign of respect. People feel ill-equipped in most areas, but in some area that they know something about, people are willing to lead the 80% who don't know what's happening in this area.<p>

I think almost anyone can be turned into a leader, if he or she wants to become one. This person won't be a leader in every area, but in one area, yes. But the person must pay the price.<p>

The greatest book I have ever read on leadership is Douglas Hyde's *Dedication and Leadership*. It was published in 1956 – a long time ago. It's still in print. Hyde had been a leader in the Communist Party in England during the 1930's and 1940's. He rose in the CP to become editor of the CP's daily newspaper. He converted to Catholicism in the late 1940's, as he records in his autobiography, *My Story*. In seminars, he began teaching Catholic priests about the techniques used by the Communists in gaining influence. *Dedication and Leadership* is a short version of his seminars on leadership techniques.<p>

In the book, there is a remarkable chapter, "The Story of Jim." Hyde had given a speech in which he said that he could make anyone into a leader. After the lecture, an overweight, stuttering man came up and asked him to make him a leader. His name was Jim. Hyde knew he had his work cut out for him. He went to work.<p>

He had Jim dedicate himself for a year to mastering his trade. He was a factory worker. He told Jim to show up at every trade union meeting, set up chairs, do the grunt work, and keep his mouth shut. In other words, he told Jim to make himself useful in simple ways. But, most important, would be Jim's commitment to doing the best job he could on the production line. He had to show his fellow workers that he was competent. Actions speak louder than words.<p>

Jim did as he was told. Within two years, he had become a leader in the union. He had worked on controlling his stuttering. His confidence level was much higher. He was, of course, even more dedicated to the Communist Party, because Hyde had delivered on his promise.<p>

Why does this strategy work? Because of two things: (1) men's respect for work well done, which in turn reflects on the worker; (2) the service principle.<p>

The Communists stole the second point from Jesus. The disciples had been squabbling over which of them would exercise leadership.<p>

But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many (Mark 10:42-45).<p>

With respect to the first principle, Leonard E. Read of the Foundation for Economic Education used to say, "When I'm on the golf course, people don't come up to me for advice. They prefer to ask Arnold Palmer." Yet Read had hit half a dozen holes-in-one in his career. He kept at it, always trying to improve his game. Read's point was simple: self-improvement is the key to leadership. Read had never gone to college, yet, through FEE, which he began in 1946, he almost single-handedly created the libertarian movement. He even wrote its original how-to manual, *Elements of Libertarian Leadership*, which is in fact a self-improvement manual.<p>

These two books are the ones I would use in any class or seminar on leadership. The third would be Frank Meyer's *The Moulding of Communists*.<p>

***STICK TO YOUR KNITTING***<p>

You can't be a leader in every area. You must acknowledge the reality of the division of labor. You must specialize.<p>

Find out what you really love to do, and concentrate your efforts on this. Pick that area of your life in which you want to excel for a lifetime. Then devote time, effort, and money to mastering it. The key is mastery. You must become so proficient that people who are interested in this area come to you without your having to ask or recruit anyone – like Arnold Palmer on the golf course.<p>

If you will devote 5,000 hours to almost anything, you will become an expert if you have any innate ability at all. You will be so good at it that you can distinguish poor performance from good performance, and understand how to avoid the poor and deliver the good. If we are talking about a 40-hour week, 5,000 hours is two and a half years. If you devote an hour a day, it will take you 15 years. If you start at age 20, by 35 you will be an expert. For something that takes an hour a day, that's not too long to wait.<p>

That's why starting young is so important. It leaves you time to exercise leadership.<p>

What hurts people is that they don't stick with it. <p>

They flit from interest to interest. They lose interest. <p>

They get bored. They cease to work on self-improvement. It just isn't worth it any more. This leads to the next principle. <p>

### ***DON'T GET BORED***<p>

Jack La Lanne, the 80-something expert in exercise, says that you should devote 90 minutes a day to exercise. But he also says that you should vary your routine. Boredom is what keeps people from continuing. The key to sticking the program is to avoid getting bored.<p>

If you are constantly working on self-improvement, you should not get bored if the field you have chosen is worth pursuing. There is always more to learn. At some point, you will become a teacher. That will pressure you to get even better.<p>

One of the techniques used by the Communists was to give a new member a stack of *Daily Worker* newspapers and send him out to sell them. This sold newspapers and gained income, but it also got the new member into trouble. He would be challenged verbally by anti-Communists. He would not know the answers. This would pressure him to take evening seminars on Communist theory.<p>

The Black Muslims (Nation of Islam) adopted this technique in the mid-1960's. They would station their people at supermarkets frequented by whites and blacks, and have them sell *Muhammed Speaks*. (The technique ceased to work in the 1970's.) <p>

That's why it's important to select something really worth doing early in your career. I decided at age 18 what my area would be: biblical economics. No one taught it. There was no textbook. There was basically nothing. There was no money in it, either. So, I knew I would have to do some hard plowing, but I also knew that I could become the world's expert if I stuck with it long enough, because there was no one else doing it. As I have said for years, I now have a monopoly. Unfortunately, demand is still low.<p>

I have never gotten bored with the project. I plan to devote at least another decade in doing the research, and then write an Adam Smith-sized book on it. The Web has arrived, and also publishing-on-demand technology, so it's a lot easier to write a book and get it published than when I started the project in 1960.<p>

You can keep plugging away if you don't get bored. That's why picking the right topic or area of service is so important. First, it has to be worth doing. Second, it has to offer a lifetime challenge. If it lacks either element, you probably won't stick with it.<p>

### ***IT SHOULD BE WORTH DOING FOR FREE***<p>

When leadership brings applause, fame, and a chance of making a lot of money, the competition gets stiff. There are a lot of people trying to climb their way to the top. Not many will make it. Of those who do, not many will keep the top position. In Hollywood, there are only a few John Waynes, Henry Fondas, or Jimmy Stewarts who hold the top for decades. A Clint Eastwood shows up, but not often.<p>

But if there is not much public applause or positive sanctions, you can stake out your territory and become a major player. If the area is important, but inherently a non-profit activity, your competition will be mostly amateurs. This allows a dedicated person to become a leader.<p>

If you want an example of the consummate modern master of such service, study the career of Mother Teresa. She helped orphans in Bangladesh. With full-time dedication and a manual typewriter, she quietly created an international service organization that helped tens of thousands of people. I think it was Peter Drucker who said that if any profit-seeking business was equally large, the director would require a multi-story building and a support staff. She ran it from Bangladesh with a manual typewriter. She even replied to me in a letter. <p>

How did she do it? By sticking with it. The project was worth doing. No one else was doing it. In a Muslim nation, a Catholic nun was respected and even loved. She performed a crucial service for which there was no money in Bangladesh to pay, so she raised money from the West. She received thanks by the end of her career – acclaim and fame beyond what most fame-seekers ever dream of. That's because she did it without any intention of seeking fame.<p>

I doubt seriously that she ever took a management course. She probably never read Dale Carnegie's *How To Win Friends and Influence People*. If she did, she did not take it

seriously. When the Clintons invited her in 1994 to appear with them at the National Prayer Breakfast, she gave a talk in which she mentioned the evil of abortion.<p>

She saw a need and went out to fill it as best she could.<p>

It is worth noting that her organization has a waiting list of volunteers who are willing to spend their lives in selfless service, while other liberalized, modernized Catholic orders are shrinking from a lack of replacements.<p>

### ***DIG IN***<p>

The average American Protestant pastor stays at one congregation for about 5 years. Then he moves on. He never builds up what the Communists called a cadre. The members know that he will move on if he is successful, or if he gets bored, or if he confronts problems that don't go away rapidly. <p>

A congregation's lay leaders dig in and wait out the pastor, who come and go. Pastors find that they face roadblocks in their ministries because the laymen in the boards know that they hold the hammer, long-term.<p>

A pastor who sticks for a decade begins to get his way. He wears out the laymen. If the pastor is both patient and prudent, he can outlast the opponents. He has the pulpit. They don't.<p>

Liberals in the mainline denominations figured this out over a century ago. If they could gain control the denomination's national boards, which were full-time paid positions, they could outlast the laymen and pastors at the General Assemblies. What they forgot was attrition. When old members died, they were not replaced by young members. Because the liberals made the church seem more like the world, outsiders figured that they could keep their tithes and offerings for themselves, and use their Sunday mornings for amusement. The mainline denominations wound up with too many chiefs and not enough braves: leaders with a declining number of followers. But this took a century. The liberals dug in; their opponents came and went. The liberals had a long-term plan. The conservatives didn't.<p>

Pick a geographical location and dig in. Don't leave. Don't answer the call of more money elsewhere. Become a fixture in the community. Become reliable people who are called on, year after year, to show up at meetings. Most people will not show up. Those who do will wind up in the positions of leadership. Woody Allen once said that 80% of success is just showing up. He was right.<p>

A familiar face is a trusted face. A person can get away with almost anything if he is one of the town's good old boys. The smaller the town, the truer this is. As Hyde's book shows, a person who has shown up for years can slowly move an organization in almost any direction he chooses unless there is someone else on the other side who is equally faithful organizationally and equally self-conscious. There rarely is.<p>

## ***RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTHORITY***<p>

For years, I have told people, "Authority flows to those who take responsibility."<p>

Most people do not want to take responsibility. They are risk-averse. They would rather not succeed than risk failing in public. The person who wants to lead can take advantage of this preference on the part of most people.<p>

Accept responsibility where no one else wants it. Along with responsibility comes authority. It is a package deal. <p>

A person who is willing to accept the blame for failure, but allow others to gain the credit for any success, can run the show from behind the scenes. The old line is true: "Success has many fathers. Failure in an orphan." If a person is willing to claim responsibility for the failure, he gets to make policy.<p>

The man who, more than anyone else, was responsible for the American libertarian movement, was a master of this strategy. He never took any credit, but he extended a lot of it. He wrote the checks. He did this for decades, invisibly. He would fund a project for three years. If it worked, the project's director would get all credit. If it failed, he would fund another project. After the man's death, his nephew followed the same policy. The nephew put up the loan money in 1946 to allow Leonard Read to start FEE. The fund's money also financed Ludwig von Mises' graduate students. It funded Murray Rothbard when Rothbard could not get a teaching job. It funded F. A. Harper, who used the fund's money to publish Rothbard's masterpiece, *Man, Economy, and State* (1962). In her later years, it funded Laura Ingalls Wilder's daughter, Rose Wilder Lane, who was a dedicated libertarian. It funded me in the crucial summer after my graduation from college. If you were to trace back the conservative/libertarian movement before the Hiss-Chambers case in 1948, most roads lead to his checkbook. But nobody ever follows the money. <p>

He avoided publicity like a plague. For four decades, he was one of the most influential private citizens in Kansas City, Missouri. Yet you have never heard of him. His name was William Volker. The civic leaders in Kansas City had no awareness of his work in libertarianism. The libertarians had no awareness of him at all.<p>

<http://www.kclibrary.org/sc/bio/volker.htm><p>

There is a biography of him titled, appropriately, *Mr. Anonymous*. Almost no one has ever read it, which would have pleased him. If you read any history of American conservatism, there will be no reference to the work of the Volker Fund. That, too, would have pleased him. (The Fund's papers are in the Hoover Institution, which received the distribution of the Fund's assets a quarter century ago. The Fund's story would make a very useful doctoral dissertation, a rare item indeed.)<p>

***CONCLUSION***<p>

I call my strategy the dogcatcher strategy. You have heard the phrase, "I wouldn't elect him for dogcatcher." So, run against him. Start at the bottom. Scrub the toilets. Do the work that nobody else wants until the system depends on you. Keep learning. Keep improving yourself. Stick to your knitting.<p>

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## **The Government Is Free! (After Tax Freedom Day) <p>**

by [Steven Yates](#)<p>

Michael Gartner is the sort of journalist bound to receive accolades and applause within today's dominant media. That is to say, not only do his views exemplify unquestioned and unqualified statism, but the very hint of questioning statism or setting limits on the powers of the central government, say, on its power to tax its citizens, brings forth not a thought-out, carefully argued response but a torrent of ridicule. <p>

Take for example his column in the April 23 *USA Today*. Gartner observes that today some Americans are celebrating Tax Freedom Day – the day we all stop working to support government and start working to support ourselves. Gartner inverts this by telling us that as of today, "The government is free!" Whatever can this mean? I'll let him explain it: "For the rest of the year, you pay nothing for police protection. You pay nothing for the military. You pay nothing for Medicare or Medicaid. You pay nothing to keep our rivers navigable, our air paths clear, our highways patched. You pay nothing to keep our courts open, our campgrounds safe, our water clean. You pay nothing to house the poor or feed the hungry or clothe the needy. You pay nothing to finance our wars on cancer or poverty or terrorism. You pay nothing to finance government – local or state or federal." <p>

This is Gartner's representation of Tax Freedom Day. We are, of course, supposed to find it ridiculous. But "no more ridiculous than the reverse, which is to say that until Saturday every penny you earned this year has gone to pay taxes." <p>

What follows is a continuation of all the good government supposedly does – "even after Tax Freedom Day." According to Gartner, we are actually getting a bargain: the millions of miles of roads and streets governments (federal, state and local) maintain, the millions spent in medical benefits, the millions spent on the poor, the billions spent on job training, the millions spent on Social Security, and so on. In light of this, Gartner wonders why anyone would have cause to complain about yielding "one third of our income" to government. "Why isn't it Tax Bargain Day?" he concludes with the rhetorical flourish of one who clearly believes he has dispatched an opponent unworthy of his journalistic prowess. <p>

Perhaps one reason is the belief at least some Americans still have in their inherent right to keep and dispense with their earnings as one sees fit, without reporting every penny to a government agency that had no hand in producing the wealth that actually makes the economy flourish. Perhaps Gartner believes, along with all other statist, that individuals and their earnings both belong to government, to dispense with as politicians and bureaucrats see fit. According to statist, after all, politicians and bureaucrats know better how to spend the individual's money than the individual himself does. "Do I own my life, or do I belong to the State?" is unasked, therefore, but certainly answered. <p>

The use of phrases like tax burden by conservatives is supposed to be ridiculous, in light of all this, as are the calls for tax reform. (Lord only knows what kind of verbal apoplectic fit Gartner would serve up against anyone suggesting tax elimination – or against [those wondering if the IRS is even a Constitutionally legitimate agency!](#))<p>

Gartner's screed illustrates a point many of us already knew: one does not have to have even the most rudimentary grasp of economics to be a respected journalist in today's America. (In fact, a grasp of sound economic principles is more likely to hold you back in today's newsroom and editorial environment.) This, of course, leads to what is missing from Gartner's stance: the very idea that anyone other than government is suitable to fulfill the tasks listed. This is, indeed, Gartner's stance, that without the heavy, intervening hand of government, food would be inedible, water would be too dirty to drink, planes would fall out of the sky, our homes and workplaces would be unsafe, our streets and roads would disintegrate, our elderly neglected, our sick untreated, our children unschooled, etc., etc., *ad nauseam*. <p>

If Gartner actually had any grasp of economic reality, he would realize that this is a losing proposition, and that his "bargain" is one of the great illusions of our time. <p>

For if we look at certain of the endeavors only government is supposed to be able to do, we find it is doing them poorly, and there may well be valid reasons for thinking the private or nonprofit sectors can do them better. For example, many of the streets and roads it supposedly maintains are in shambles. This is minor league stuff, however. After 9-11, federal power took a quantum leap. The new reigning dogma became that only the federal government could run airport security. People continue to get weapons through the checkpoints staffed by illiterates who are searching 80-year old grannies and confiscating nail-clippers from bespectacled computer nerds. This sort of thing has done incalculable damage to the airline industry. Many people are simply refusing to fly if they can drive – not because they fear more terrorism but because they don't want to put up with procedures that in all likelihood wouldn't have stopped 9-11. <p>

And then there are those activities that arguably the federal government shouldn't be doing at all. Social Security is now the most longstanding coercive federal program for redistributing wealth in U.S. history. Couldn't its purposes be far better served by allowing more individuals to keep the fruits of their labors and place part of them in private IRAs or similar interest-drawing accounts? After all, many of us under 50 have

paid dearly into it – it isn't as if we had a choice! – and are unconvinced it is still going to be there when we get older. <p>

Or consider the plight of the poor and the impoverished, about which collectivists such as Gartner profess such great concern. Without the heavy hand of the welfare state and the dependency it has created over several decades, perhaps there wouldn't be so much poverty. There would be more incentives to work – and more good-paying jobs. It is a cinch that if welfare handouts are available, there are people who will have their hands out. Moreover, without the family-destroying tendencies of radical feminism, easy divorce, both parents having to work to pay their expenses after taxes, probably more families would have stuck together over the past half century, and those that have stuck together would be somewhat less dysfunctional. There would be fewer neglected elderly, and fewer neglected “latchkey” children. <p>

In the last analysis, we suffer economic woes because government (and the Federal Reserve) labor under the illusion that the economy can be micromanaged from a central point. If this idea were abandoned, the economy would begin to flourish as never before. For if businesses both small and large were not also being taxed to the cleaners, perhaps their owners would be in a better position and have a better incentive to create more and better jobs. Prices would be lower, because there would be fewer taxes passed on to consumers. This would mean more sales, greater profits for the companies, more expansion and still more jobs. Entrepreneurs could thrive without fear of the heavy hand of the IRS. All these factors, and more besides, would result in fewer poor. Not to mention more freedom for everyone, rich, middle-class or poor. <p>

Finally, consider the military spending that Gartner trumpets. One reason the federal government spends so much on the military is the need by our global-minded elites to police as much of the rest of the world as possible, whether in the name of the “war on terrorism,” oil, simply because the elites like power, or (what is most likely) all of the above. <p>

Statists, of course, take not just the necessity but the fundamental benevolence of huge, expansive government for granted, and we are supposed to find contrary views ridiculous – worthy only of the Menckenesque horselaugh. The real howler in Gartner's commentary, however, is this statement: “[Government] spends \$360 billion a year on educating 47 million youngsters in public elementary and secondary schools.” Countless observers and commentators have shown that government schools are abysmal failures, and continue to fail despite one quick fix after another. There is abundant and growing evidence that homeschooled children and youth are outpacing their government-schooled counterparts in every subject, including the mere ability to think. This latter should be no surprise. Government schools do not teach thinking but rote conformity – the fruits of progressivism, outcome-based education, and other fads of the sort that only state-worshippers are capable of producing. Now, with school-to-work programs everywhere, a vocationalism aimed at producing human worker bees is quietly burying the sort of traditional education that once produced citizens. <p>

It is completely beyond statistics that if government at all levels were out of the education business altogether, the result might be not just citizens who are employable but citizens who are employable, literate and independent-minded. Citizens capable of evaluating for themselves the role they wish government to play in their lives, that is, which may be very little or none at all. <p>

On the other hand, maybe the Michael Garters of the world of contemporary journalism do realize this, and it scares the dickens out of them on a subliminal level. After all, they must know that many of us are getting nearly all our national and international news from the Internet, not the print editions of *New York Times* or *USA Today*. They must know on some level that Christian homeschooling is now the fastest growing independent educational movement in the country. They must know that we would be laughing at the Ionesco-comedy antics of airport security personnel – except that the destruction of our liberties is not funny. They must know that some of us have very grave doubts about Bush's war, as we wonder why people are still dying in Afghanistan even though Bush declared "victory" months ago. <p>

One may, finally, ask where the U.S. Constitution authorizes the activities Gartner lists. Gartner, of course, never mentions the Constitution. (Surprise, surprise!) But he is hardly alone on that score. There are no mentions of the Constitution in any recent eulogies to large, expansive government written by major journalists today, or any sign that major journalists have even read it. In today's dominant media culture where statist rule supreme – which includes nearly every major outlet – the Constitution is a dead duck. Unless, of course, some upstart questions their right to spread disinformation and untruths to the public, whether the subject is the economy, government schools, or the "war on terrorism." Then they go scampering under the security blanket supposedly provided by the First Amendment.<p>

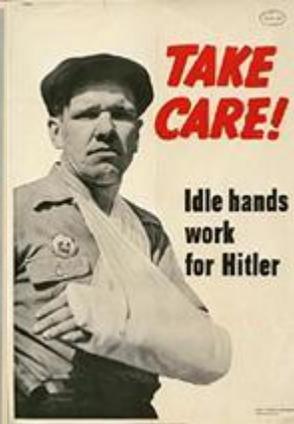
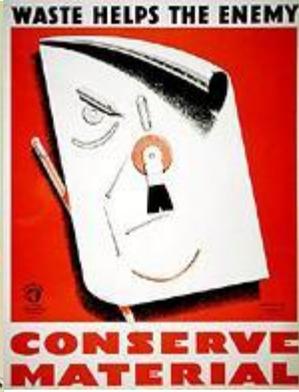
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A bureaucrat is the most despicable of men, though he is needed as vultures are needed, but one hardly admires vultures whom bureaucrats so strangely resemble. I have yet to meet a bureaucrat who was not petty, dull, almost witless, crafty or stupid, an oppressor or a thief, a holder of little authority in which he delights, as a boy delights in possessing a vicious dog. Who can trust such creatures?

~ Cicero

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## anda's Fools<p>

by [Karen De Coster](#)<p>

Statism parades itself in various forms. Most noticeably, it puts a chokehold on individuals through its progressive taxation policies, micro-lawmaking, and ultra-regulation of everyday lives. Yet one of the most creeping ways in which statism affects us directly is in the form of its propaganda. <p>

Every act of state propaganda requires a cause to make it necessary. That cause needs a catchy theme that conveys how one should think about it. As with political polls, the simplified purpose of propaganda *is* to tell us *what* to think. Each cause, therefore, requires a crisis – or a perceived crisis – in order for the masses to more readily accept the symbolism disseminated in the name of that cause. And with crisis, fear may be a factor. And currently, in the midst of such disquieting geopolitical volatility, what could be more fear-provoking than the crisis of war?<p>

For instance, the new patriotism that is sweeping the nation is unyielding in its grip on Americans anxious to show their love of country. Terrorism at home and the looming threat of war with insurrectionary jihad makers begets a massive anxiety. And fear, as a rule, tends to be assuaged via a sense of coming together. From the mass-produced "God Bless America" signs to pro-USA T-shirts and lapel pins and hats, folks are snapping up this merchandise like mad. They do so because they are told that such actions help to overcome adversity and serve to support the affected. And the state is highly successful in promoting such thoughts. However, all the symbolism proves to be pointless rah-rah that intends support for the government's actions, whether they are actually sanctioned by the electorate or not. <p>

Nowadays, the "patriotic" lip service promoted by the State is eerily reminiscent of that during World Wars I and II, when the Wilson and FDR administrations and their assorted government entities gave rise to a tide of mind-numbing posters meant to instill a sense of duty among citizens devastated by war. WWII propaganda is perhaps more compelling because of its ultimate goal in promoting outright socialism and the building of foreign alliances abroad. <p>

The horrible statism symbolized by WWII-era posters sometimes harped on feel-good themes of doing one's part and being useful, or they may have even exploited fear by



inflating crises and threatening impending disaster. The feel-good propaganda, in particular, played upon the natural inclination people have toward participation and accomplishment, and it boasted of individuals playing in the war effort; those roles for

their proper role participants being that of conserving rubber, lumber, petroleum, paper, food and other items that are typically in high demand during times of war. A smiling housewife boasting about her family's food rationing was intended to provoke a general submissiveness on the part of families toward government diktat. And conserving one's tires or lumber was a way of having a hand in helping to provide supplies for the boys overseas. All the while, the citizenry was unknowingly mocked into surrender of their individuality and family-first guiding principles. Immediately, one can understand how a move away from such docility could spark a rising independence in society that might no longer mandate a government's full-blown war. <p>

Other good behavior included abiding by price controls and believing in the ultimate value of such, and certainly, avoiding black markets to serve one's daily needs. A good American would rather "do without it" was the message. And the offices of War Information, Price Administration, and War Food Administration were adept at conveying that meaning.<p>

Another form of efficacy was portrayed in the form of constant production, with hard work being the means to the end of winning the war. After all, who could possibly be against a good work ethic? Increased production called for women to sacrifice domestic bliss for the sake of her men and country. And non-war-bound men were made to sense that they couldn't work hard enough to overcome the lack of a draft card and military uniform. And the most outlandish State propaganda always assured that those not meeting the demands of the day were, in fact, working for the enemy. <p>

Then there was crisis and disaster. This was always portrayed in the sense of "you can do something to prevent it." This theme preyed on the natural human instinct to do all that one could in order to stave off calamity. Loose lips sink ships, we were told, and blabbermouths ultimately killed men directly. And of course, the ultimate catastrophe was for evil to encroach upon American shores and strike us right here at home. WWII propaganda posters are perhaps most memorable in this sense because of the availability of pop-culture villains from which to draw motivation. Mussolini, Stalin, and especially Hitler provided a heap of fodder for the statist. <p>

In 1942, the War Production Board released a series of posters that depict how Hitler was everywhere. According to the propaganda cretins he was in our neighborhoods if we didn't support the war and in our car if we didn't carpool. After all, in times of such profound suffering and despair, there had to be ends that individuals and families could



strive for to justify the means. The evil images of a Hitler gone mad in our personal spaces conveyed the most deliberate messages of all. <p>

our homes was portrayed were often represented as willingly giving their men to the State to die for its war. After all, without the propaganda of encroaching horror to engender absolute fear into a nation of peace-loving people, the State could not possibly expect to be able to clutch loved ones from the home and toss them into harm's way. Without this ultimate goal from which to convey the necessity of the ultimate sacrifice, a warmaking State would have few subjects from which to garner enough support for ongoing war. Imagine the average American being asked to die for Churchill, or to serve the purpose of U.S. imperialist adventures promoting puppet governments abroad? <p>

Because this crisis of Hitler in as bona fide, American women

Hence, the notion of sacrifice was perhaps the most compelling of all during this time because of the corollary that was presented as the alternative: the squashing of the entire nation by its global enemies. Therefore, the life of one man within the ambit of a gigantic whole was devoid of any parallel worth. FDR socialism was hard at work.

And in a less compelling sense, families were to sacrifice their vacations and save resources for the greater cause. Staying home was said to be beneficial toward the war effort. In fact, it was a great way to contribute by simply doing nothing. An oxymoron, but patriotic nonetheless. In addition, people were convinced to sacrifice laissez-faire commuting plans for car pools. Individuality was entirely eschewed in favor of collective ambitions, as is always the case within the framework of statism.<p>

And lastly, perhaps the most common type of WWII propaganda abounding was that pushing war bonds. Of course, financing a war presented more than just conventional money-raising problems; it also meant that government first needed to acquire a gainful approval rating – from an already overtaxed public – for spending the populace into further debt. Once again, people were instructed how to behave via posters produced by, typically, the United States Treasury or the War Finance Division. Purchasing bonds meant directly supporting the husbands and sons overseas, and spending ten-percent of one's weekly paycheck was a minimum criterion in order to meet the standards of sufficient patriotism.<p>

All in all, WWII successfully marketed its persuasion upon a willing American audience just waiting to be coerced into thinking something, believing anything, and merely following the Head Persuader. <p>



However, the propagandists must always first build a reputation and credibility, even if they merely feign it as opposed to actually possessing it. After all, persuasion is one of the keys to the democratic process, hence, the revulsion that some of us have to "democracy" and governing by the politicized masses.<p>

Interestingly, Aristotle noted that propaganda (or persuasion) was to be only used by those of good character or good moral standing, otherwise, it ceased to be trustworthy or to have credibility. Modern propaganda as practiced by the State gains its "credibility" because, as a precursor to its persuasion tactics, the State has – through its Cradle-to-Grave-role – already exercised a seemingly legitimate form of rule in that they are the final arbiter of all that is significant, from taxes to the military to monopolized goods and services. Therefore, the pre-conditions have been set for a massive campaign of telling people how to think, act, and carry out their daily tasks. <p>

Be aware that the pre-WWII era was a time of isolationist impulse; a time when an entire generation had already experienced world war, and afterwards, only desired to stay home and tend to their domestic lives instead of being dragged off into another series of foreign entanglements. In spite of this, FDR's various agencies proved masterful in their endeavor to shift the opinions of an entire nation from coveting peace to supporting war. <p>

For war, it seems, had become the norm for the maintenance of a healthy and growing State, and hence, the same propaganda lives on today in a similarly effective role. On balance, shouldn't we all pull together to prop up our government's wars?<p>