

all sorts of ways, they will be stricken from the approved list. The result, then, of vouchers or tax credits will be, *in the name of expanding parental choice*, to destroy the current private school system and to bring it under total governmental control. Parents who want to send their kids to *really* private schools, schools which may be Politically Incorrect in many ways, will then have to pay tuition to a *third* set of genuinely private schools, after paying taxes to support two sets of schools, the public and the Officially Approved Private.

I had only to hear this argument to be converted. It's not that I had never *thought* of the problem of approved private schools before, it's just that I had not given it sufficient weight. One argument that paleoconservatives make about libertarians is that we tend to become so enamored of our "abstract" though correct theory that we tend to underweigh concrete political or cultural problems, and here is a lovely example. Once we focus on the question, it should be clear that, *in our present rotten political and cultural climate*, there is no way that the State would allow parents to choose genuinely private schools in a tax credit system. So the problem with tax credits is not the Subsidy Question, but granting the state any right to rule over our choices.

So do we have any transitional demands left in education, short of abolishing the public school system? Sure we do. In addition to abolishing compulsory schooling (*i.e.* school truant laws), we can battle against every school bond issue, every

expansion of public school budgets, and in favor of all attempts to cut and restrict them, and *within* those budgets to slash away at federal and state budgets, and to try to decentralize and localize as much as possible. Is that enough to do? ●

Diversity, Death, and Reason by M.N.R.

Has anyone noticed how the Modals, despite their blather about cultural and sexual diversity, *can't stand* difference of opinion, especially from libertarians? They go bananas, they flip out. Oh, they don't mind abstruse differences in libertarian theory; they can and do chew the cud endlessly, for example, about whether utilitarianism or natural rights is the proper groundwork for libertarian doctrine. I mean differences about social and cultural values, about fundamental strategy, about the petty racketeering endemic to the movement.

We have already pointed out gleefully in these pages how Sarah Barton's revealing pin-pricks have driven all the *pomposo* Left-nihilos, especially those in power positions in the movement, totally bananas.

But there is more, far more. Take Lew Rockwell, for example, who has a treasured capacity to get under the skin of the Modals. Hardly had they begun to recover from his *Anti-Environmental Manifesto*, when Lew's dissent from the fashionable ACLU-Al Sharpton line on the videotaping

of the arrest of one Rodney King sent every Modal in the country into orbit, twanging with shock and hatred. So far, *Reason* magazine, rousing itself from its umpteenth treatise on local garbage disposal, has devoted an editorial plus an article by a Rick Henderson to fulminating against Rockwell on this issue. What's the matter, guys? Can't stand some dissent? [Consider, incidentally, the double standard indulged in by the ACLU. That outfit, which would demand "due process" for Genghis Khan, leaps to judgment and takes out ads demanding L.A. Police Chief Gates' instant dismissal!]

The newly Postrelized *Reason*, by the way, has polarized itself into a truly lovely position: neocon and pro-war on foreign policy, and Left-nihilo-Modal on everything else. *Reason's* new position is epitomized by assistant editor Jacob Sullum, who was ardently in favor of the mass murder of the Gulf War, and equally ardently in favor of the revived cryonics movement, along with its systemic practice of "assisted" suicide. The cryonics movement, in fact, strikes me as the Ultimate Modality. It is remarkable that here we have Modals, to a man aggressive atheists who scorn Christians as credulous "mystics," paying some characters to freeze their heads—in the libertarian-oriented Alcor group, indeed, to freeze them "pre-mortem"—in the trusting faith that these guys will keep those heads properly frozen for centuries, that there will be no power outage or failure to pay electric bills, and that, some centuries in the future the god

Science will enable their heads to be thawed out and attached to a glorious new live body. And further, that a bunch of unpaid scientists of the future will, gratis and altruistically, do the requisite thawing and repairing and resurrecting.

Here are the Ultimate Modals: militant atheists, computer programmers, science fiction fanatics, guys who took seriously those grand old 1950s science fiction movies about the diabolic preserved Head setting out to conquer the world—except that they were a lot more fun than this grisly gang. Take Jacob Sullum's admiring article about this group featured in *Reason's* April 1991 issue: "The group is overwhelmingly male...The atmosphere is earnestly intellectual. There seem to be a lot of computer specialists, space enthusiasts, science fiction fans, and libertarians of various stripes. One woman is selling parodies of those little Jesus-in-a fish emblems...She says they went over big at the Objectivist meeting last week. The [meeting] is sort of a cross between a 'Star Trek' convention and an Ayn Rand discussion group." Need I say more?!

The next month's *Reason*, Sullum is back, with chilling consistency, in support of still broader forms of "assisted" suicide. Sullum refuses to balk at applying this "right" (of suicide) to children, the mentally retarded and the senile. "Come, my dear, wouldn't you like to go bye-bye in Lotus Land?" But Sullum does not shrink at such an extension of rights. "Mistakes," he declares, "even fatal ones, are a price of

liberty." New libertarian doctrine: murder as the inevitable price of liberty?

One thing can be said for the new Sullum-Reason line: it is nothing if not consistent. In the name of "rights," it favors "assisted" death, across the board, from head-freezing to Dr. Kevorkian's suicide machine, to several hundred thousand inhabitants of Iraq. Except that the Iraqis weren't given the choice to pay some bunco artists to get their heads frozen; oh well, I guess they just didn't have the money.

The cryonics movement comes down to a grotesque parody of Christianity. As Jeff Tucker writes: "In effect, cryonics promises the following: I am the Resurrection and the Life. He who believes in me, and pays \$120,000, will have everlasting life."

To pick up on the exhortation of Sarah Barton: Go, go, do it, Modals, don't wait, Get Frozen Now! ●

Peace on Earth

by H.L. Mencken

The uplifters who try so violently to downpull war are very earnest folk, and some of their arguments are so powerful that no answer to them has ever been discovered. But meanwhile war continues to be popular. Who, indeed, is really against it—that is, honestly to God against it, as every one is against smallpox and work? Probably not five percent of the human race. Perhaps another five percent may be induced, under pressure, to sign petitions against it, and even to swear solemnly that they will

not serve the next time war comes. But let the bugles blow a few sharp blasts, and the second squad will be howling for blood instanter, and in a little while all save a corporal's guard of the first squad will be howling too.

As for the rest of the people, they are for war all the time, whether for good reasons or for bad. They delight in it as a cat delights in catnip, or a dry congressman in radiator alcohol. There is no easier way to get their confidence and their votes than to start honing the sword and talking darkly of Huns at the gate. In the whole history of the United States I can't find a single example of a politician who ever lost anything by advocating going to war. But on the other side I can show you almost countless examples of politicians who were ruined by talking incautiously of peace.

Go back, for instance, to the War of 1812. If there ever was a senseless bloodletting on this earth, it was that one. England had a magnificent war machine in full operation. The United States had next to nothing.

Moreover, the reasons advanced for going to war were of the flimsiest. Some of them were downright imaginary, and most of the rest were obliterated by a neat English backdown before the war actually began. But by this time the plain people were aflame with military libido, and there was no containing them. Poor little Jimmy Madison, trying to hold back, was greeted with angry roars, and in a little while, like any other enlightened politician, he allowed himself to be converted, and plunged the country into the carnage with pious hosannas.