

Guilt Sanctified

by Murray N. Rothbard

Earlier in this century, left-liberalism came to Americans preaching the alluring gospel of Liberation from Guilt. Americans, they boldly proclaimed, are repressed, inhibited, guilt-ridden for giving in to their natural desires and impulses. We come to preach you a joyous removal of guilt, hammered into you by repressed ministers and priests. We preach hedonism, the end of guilt, following your desires, and to put it in a common rebarbative phrase of the 1960s Sexual Revolution: "if it moves, fondle it." Sex, furthermore, is "only a drink of water," natural and harmless.

The era of guiltlessness under our left-liberal culture lasted, as I remember, about six months. Now, the entire culture is characterized by massive collective guilt, and if anyone fails to give due public lip-service to a long list of solemnly avowed guilts, he is literally driven from public life. Guilt is everywhere, all-pervasive, and brought to us by the same scoundrels who once promised us easy liberation. A brief rundown: guilt for centuries of slavery, guilt for the oppression and rape of women, guilt for the Holocaust, guilt for the existence of the handicapped, guilt for eating and killing animals, guilt for being fat, guilt for not recycling your garbage, guilt for "desecrating the Earth."

Note that this guilt is never confined to the specific individuals, say, who enslaved or murdered or raped people. (There are, I dare say, very few enslavers left in America today – say a Southern slaveholder aged 150?) Effectiveness in inducing guilt comes precisely because the guilt is not specific but collective, extending throughout the world and apparently for all time.

In the old days, we reviled the Nazis for their doctrine of collective guilt; now we embrace the same Nazi concept as a vital feature of our ethical system. For confining guilt to specific criminals would not do, because it would not fit with what Joe Sobran has brilliantly called our doctrine of Accredited Victimology. Some groups are accorded the status of Official Victims; everyone not in the Victim groups are, therefore, criminals and Official Victimizer. The Victimizer are expected to feel guilty about the victims, and therefore – because there is no point to guilt without a payoff – to pay through the nose in

money, privileges, and "empowerment" forever and ever without end. Amen.

There is never a way of getting out from under. And this is what our liberators have brought us. In return for old-fashioned Christianity and guilt about sex, they have brought us a new religion of Victimology and of the Goddess Nature. And even sex, the last bastion of hedonism, is no longer guilt-free; with the onslaught of "sex exploits women," and ravening condomania in the interest of "safe sex," it might be better to scrap the whole thing and go back to Christian guilt. Certainly it would be simpler and more peaceful.

As in all other aspects of our rotten culture, the only way to save the day is to raise the banner high and engage in a frontal and all-out onslaught against the left guilt-inducers. In such an onslaught lies the only hope of taking back our lives and our culture from these malignant pests and tyrants.