

Max Lerner: Again?!

by Murray N. Rothbard

Drat! I thought I had [disposed](#) of Max ("Slapsy Maxie") Lerner once and for all. But the guy simply doesn't know when he's licked. His syndicated column is called "Civilization Watch," and I guess it figures, because as the neocon's 2000-year-old man, he's seen every human civilization come and go. Now (Feb. 28) he's back at the old stand, trumpeting about how he, Max, stood side-by-side with FDR in their heroic battle against the "menacing isolationism" of the 1930s, against Lindbergh, Father Coughlin, the German-American Bund (as if all these had about equal weight!), and, especially against the "original sinister "America First" movement out of which Patrick Buchanan's new one has arisen. Max and FDR, shoulder to shoulder, were fighting, Max says, for Woodrow Wilson's foreign policy, and for "collective security." Then, after the war, Megalomaniacal Max "joined with" Dean Acheson to battle against the equally sinister "opponents of the Marshall Plan."

Well, I'll tell you, Max. All those battles that you and the other lesser guys, like FDR and Acheson, fought together, I was there too, every time, on the other side, trying my best to kick you in the shoulder. (Max's shoulders are about on a level with other people's shins.)

On the basis of his 2,000-year perspective, Max has some sage advice for all of us American youngsters. What is it? Surprise: that we should once again follow this path of what he calls "the fusion of Wilsonian idealist ends with realistic Hamiltonian means." Sure: as someone who has never been able to make up his mind about who is the single most evil politician in American history: Hamilton, or Wilson, that's a real appealing combination. Myself, I prefer a counter-fusion: isolationist ends (Borah? Nye? Lindbergh?) joined to Jeffersonian means. Now how does *that* grab you, Max?

Now comes the concrete applications of Max's fusion for today's world. First, Max urges *both* parties to embrace his fusion: "Only thus can they show they are 'presidential'." That's it, Max: above all, the dice must be loaded in this wonderful "democratic" game you're always prating about: make sure that the dumb American masses get no choice. Right?

And what does this fusion entail? First, "heroic alliance measures" (English translation: massive subsidy and control) "to shore

up the new Russian republics" (well, only *one* republic is "Russian," but Max can't allow petty details to disturb the grand sweep of his strategic vision). "Shore up" against *what*, exactly? Here it comes: "against plunging into a 'Russia first' ethnic and anti-Semitic nationalism." Ahh. I guess, in his own heavy-footed way, Max Lerner has outlined for us with great clarity the neocon version of the New World Order: an order where not only any America First trend is stamped out, but also any "Russia first" or anyone else first movement everywhere in the world, in order to eradicate all nationalisms and "anti-Semitism." Does this mean that the United States is supposed to run the world in order to crush all nationalism and anti-Semitism throughout the globe? Can this foreign policy doctrine be sold, in all its candor and clarity, to the American public? Is Max willing to take a democratic vote on this issue?

All nationalisms must be stamped out, it seems, but one. For Israel must be supported to the hilt and beyond. Of course, bipartisan all-out support for Israel would mean, in Max's words, "a rejection of Patrick Buchanan and America's most dangerous isolationist movement since the dark days on the eve of World War II." But Max admits he's got a tough row to hoe. For President Bush is persisting in terrible anti-Israel policies, "his petty personal grudge against Yitzhak Shamir" (who, knowing Shamir, could possibly have a personal grudge against this lovable character?); his "false realism" in courting "terrorist" Arab countries (Hey, Max, your pal Shamir has no mean terrorist record himself); and Bush's "indifference" to the "plight" of new immigrants to Israel (English translation: Shamir's urge to settle these immigrants in Arab areas). And behind Bush, says Max, is the even more terrible "James Baker and his media clique" (Go ahead, say it, Max: his "amen corner"). Well, how about the Democrats? No, because none of the Democratic candidates are denouncing Bush and Baker for their "betrayal of the American-Israeli alliance" (alliance against *whom* exactly, Max?).



Sorry, methinks the chances for Max's bipartisan fusion are dwindling every day. The glory days of you and those other guys battling the German-American Bund are long gone, Max. Face it, and come on, for Heaven's sake. Max, shut up already.

Frankly, I prefer the wisdom of Mel Brooks's 2000-year-old man. Any day in the week.