

# Liberal Democracy and the End of Mankind

A review of *The End of History and the Last Man* must face an unavoidable paradox. On the one hand, it was one of the most discussed books of the past year, as representing the thinking in Washington in the era of an emergent "New World Order."

Yet during the same year, the mood of triumphalism about the "irreversible historical victory of liberal democracy over all possible alternatives," which followed the Gulf war and then the collapse of the Soviet Union, has become untenable. An anti-"liberal democracy" backlash has begun sweeping Ibero-America, Eastern and Central Europe and the former U.S.S.R., and parts of Africa and Asia, while the nations of Western Europe and North America are swept with profound crises that have called into question the axiomatic premises of liberal democracy.

What has become obvious is that liberal democracy, as meant by Fukuyama, does not have the benevolent connotation in practice, that the media like to convey. Liberal democracy in practice has become associated with a new totalitarianism.

## State Department View

Fukuyama, a former deputy director of the U.S. State Department's policy planning staff, has been patronized by some of the chief institutions and ideologues of the American "neo-conservative" movement, including the RAND Corporation, Irving Kristol of the American Enterprise Institute, and the recently deceased professor Allan Bloom.

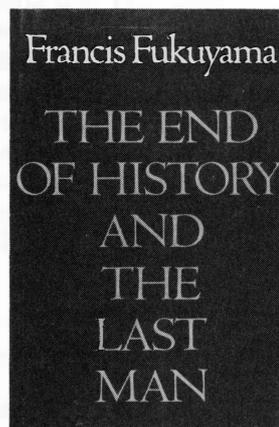
His predominant thesis draws upon the intellectual tradition that produced fascism. The first half of the thesis is what the first half of the book title says: "the end of History." Most commentaries have only drawn attention to this part of the thesis, the essence of which is as follows:

"As mankind approaches the end of the millennium, the twin crises of

authoritarianism and socialist central planning have left only one competitor standing in the ring as an ideology of potentially universal validity: liberal democracy, the doctrine of individual freedom and popular sovereignty. . . . Indeed, the growth of liberal democracy, together with its companion, economic liberalism, has been the most remarkable phenomenon of the last four hundred years. . . . There is a fundamental process at work that dictates a common evolutionary pattern for *all* human societies—in short, something like a Universal History of mankind in the direction of liberal democracy. . . . If we are now at a point where we cannot imagine a world substantially different from our own, in which there is no apparent or obvious way in which the future will represent a fundamental improvement over our current order, then we must also take into consideration the possibility that History itself might be at an end."

That mouthful is bad enough, but it gets worse when one takes into account what the commentaries generally ignore, namely the second half of the book title, "the last man," which is a term taken directly from Friedrich Nietzsche. What it signifies, as per Nietzsche, is that once liberal democracy of the form envisioned by Hobbes, Locke, Hegel, and others takes hold, the human type produced by that culture will inevitably be a satisfied, smug bourgeois. That "last man" can, in Fukuyama's analysis, either revert "peacefully" to a state of an "animality in harmony with nature," or, as Nietzsche preferred, produce a counter-reaction, that brings about wars, chaos, the destruction of all Christian values, and the emergence of the "*Übermensch*." But either way, Nietzsche's "last man" is the ultimate product of "the end of History" and the triumph of "liberal democracy."

Were this analysis to be written as a warning, Fukuyama's book might have merit. But it is not. Fukuyama



**The End of History and the Last Man**  
by Francis Fukuyama  
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is *lauding* what he asserts to be the inevitable end result of a so-called historical process.

## 'What Disappears Is Man'

Citing his adored mentor Alexandre Kojève, Fukuyama states how he envisages the "end of History" and the arrival of the "last man" to evolve: "The disappearance of Man at the end of History, therefore, is not a cosmic catastrophe: the natural World remains what it has been from all eternity. And, therefore, it is not a biological catastrophe either: Man remains alive as animal in *harmony* with Nature or given Being. What disappears is Man properly so-called. . . ."

Fukuyama then writes: "The revolutionaries who battled with Ceausescu's Securitate in Romania, the brave Chinese students who stood up to tanks in Tiananmen Square, the Lithuanians who fought Moscow for their national independence, the Russians who defended their Parliament and President, were the most free and therefore the most human of beings. They were former slaves who proved

themselves willing to risk their lives in a bloody battle to free themselves. But when they finally succeed, as they eventually must, they will create for themselves a stable democratic society in which struggle and work in the old sense are made unnecessary, and in which the possibility of their ever again being free and as human as in their revolutionary struggle had been abolished." The reader is then referred to a quote from Leo Strauss, the late

University of Chicago "conservative" philosopher: "The state through which man is said to become reasonably satisfied is, then, the state in which the basis of man's humanity withers away, or in which man loses his humanity. It is the state of Nietzsche's 'last man.'"

The swinish Fukuyama has forgotten a few things, however. The students in Tiananmen, like the Lithuanians and others, fought their fight

to the sounds of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. If, today, a demoralized Lithuanian population is voting communists back in power, it is not because the promises of liberal democracy have brought them "satisfaction," but because of the ravages of liberal economics. When the revolutionary spirit is rekindled, the sounds of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony will be heard again.

—Mark Burdman

## Doing Evil and Calling It Good

In this book, Catholic neo-conservative Richard John Neuhaus fraudulently claims that Pope John Paul II's encyclical *Centesimus Annus*, which celebrated the hundredth anniversary of Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, is an endorsement of Neuhaus' fellow liberal capitalist Michael Novak's concept of "democratic capitalism."

Neuhaus bases his argument not only on an erroneous history of capitalism, but also on a selective reading of both this encyclical and others written by Pope John Paul II, which he bolsters by appending to the end of the book a "condensation" of *Centesimus Annus* which censors the Pope's own words.

To indicate the fraud which underlies Neuhaus' book, one must merely point to the fact that not once does Neuhaus mention the problem of Third World foreign debt in the entirety of the text of his book. This omission of what the Pope has repeatedly identified as one of the primary causes of both poverty and war in the world today, is crucial to Neuhaus' attempt both to portray *Centesimus Annus* as a significant break from Pope Paul VI's *Populorum Progressio* and Pope John Paul II's other encyclicals, such as *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*.

### 'Structures of Sin'

What Neuhaus wants us to ignore in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, is the Pope's explicit denunciation of the "structures

of sin" which are thwarting the development of the less developed countries.

In *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, the Pope says that both liberal capitalism and Marxist collectivism are "in need of radical correction." He says, "Each of the two blocs harbors in its own way a tendency towards imperialism, as it is usually called, or towards forms of neo-colonialism." He argues that "structures of sin" arise from the "all-consuming desire for profit" and from the "thirst for power." He explicitly calls for reform of the international trade system and of the world monetary and financial system, the very "structures of sin" he has identified.

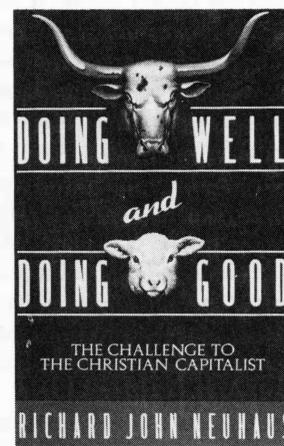
A comparison of Neuhaus' condensation of *Centesimus Annus* with the Pope's text shows that he has systematically eliminated those statements by the Pope which, as in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, call for such international reform.

### Economics apart from God

Neuhaus' misrepresentation of the arguments of *Centesimus Annus* stems from his severing economics from Christian theology. The book starts by stating that "The Latin word *economicus* refers to divine dispensations or the general arrangement of everything that is. Christian theologians, for example, refer to the 'divine economy,' meaning both the internal life of God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—and the external way in which God

has arranged the whole creation." However, Neuhaus rejects this theological definition of economics and instead follows Adam Smith in reducing economics to the "considerably more modest" concept of household "stewardship."

In so doing, he rejects the rooting of economics either in natural law or in the Trinitarian concept of equality, derived by St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, and Nicolaus of Cusa from Christ, the second person of the Trinity, and from which the Pope's thinking proceeds. Thus, when St. Augustine writes in *On Christian Doctrine*, "[u]nity is in the Father, equality in the Son, and in the Holy Spirit is the concord of equality and unity," Pope John Paul II writes in *Sollicitudo Rei*



### Doing Well and Doing Good: The Challenge to the Christian Capitalist

by Rev. Richard John Neuhaus  
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