

# Revolutionary America

**W**atching a poison cloud of crass commercialism blanket the Fourth of July celebrations tomorrow, it may be easy to forget that America remains the world's leading revolutionary nation.

Say the word "revolutionary" and most people at once think of Cuba, Nicaragua or perhaps even the Soviet Union. These self-proclaimed revolutionary states never miss a chance to accuse the U.S. of being reactionary. In reality, it is the communist states who are the epitome of reaction, backward thinking and don't-dare-rock-the-boatism.

Tomorrow's celebrations in the U.S. mean far more than a facelift for the Statue of Liberty. They recall the often forgotten fact that America was born out of revolt and its magnificent constitution, perhaps the greatest political document in history, was purposely framed to keep the nation in a permanent state of revolutionary ferment.

America is the world's only nation where citizens are educated and instructed to be wary of their governments, to actively resist bureaucratic intrusions into their lives. The geniuses who wrote the constitution ensured that checks and balances would help deter the real threat to personal liberty posed by powerful, callous central government.

That is why America has its federal system, two legislative houses, a powerful executive and a robust court system that champions individual rights against the state. The various bodies of government are placed in perpetual conflict lest any of them grow too strong.

America is the only nation in the world, apart from Switzerland, where citizens have an express constitutional right to bear arms. The writers of the constitution insisted the citizen have this right, as a last resort, to oppose state tyranny by force. America was to be a nation of armed freemen.

The founding fathers foresaw with uncanny accuracy that the greatest future danger to America's liberty would not come from King George's redcoats, but from bureaucrats, tax collectors, functionaries and politicians — in short, the modern centralized state. Today we see their wisdom confirmed.

They also gave America the unique ability to undergo major social, political and economic revolutions without changing its democratic system. Upheavals that would shatter lesser nations are absorbed by America thanks to the remarkable flexibility of the U.S. political system.

Think of the second emancipation of America's blacks; Martin Luther King's peaceful revolution. Or of the explosive growth in political and economic power of the sunbelt states and the decline of the once-paramount east. The mighty rock 'n' roll revolution of the '50s that electrified the world's

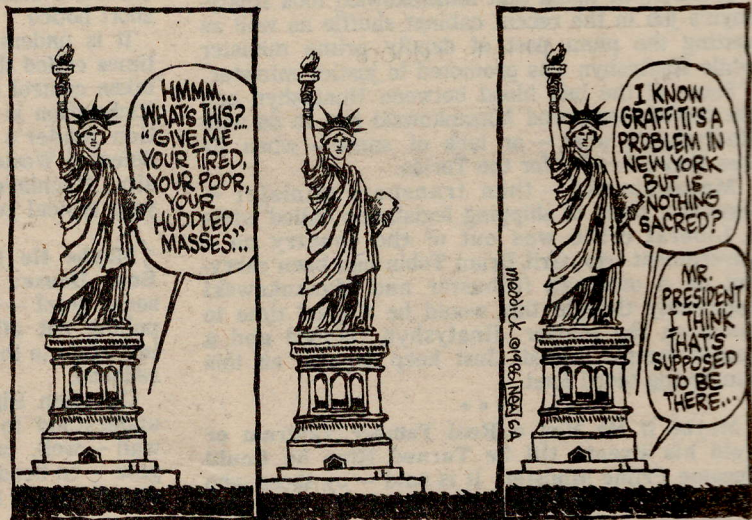
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youth and which still scares the communists silly. The flood of women into the workforce and their escape from centuries of domestication.

There was the Chicano revolution, gay and lesbian rights, animal rights, the ecological revolution. Americans revolted against the medical establishment and brought on the health food revolution that has become today's conventional wisdom. An 82-year-old man ignited a taxpayers' revolt that helped bring Ronald Reagan into the White House who, in turn, brought a renewal of America's revolutionary instincts.

These same revolutionary currents surged out of America to the rest of the world. The French



now speak of Reagan-style tax reform, the Japanese of health food, the Indians of women's rights, the Guatemalans of democracy. Even commissars behind the high Kremlin Walls tremble before the frightening twang of electric guitars playing that most revolutionary of songs, *Roll Over Beethoven*.

Out of this great bubbling pot of American society has come a permanent, bloodless revolution producing new ideas, advances for mankind, inevitable foolishness and much good. It all works because Americans don't like being told what to do and they don't like too much peace and quiet. Unlike other people, Americans know they can fight government — and win.

Two thousand years from now, when the bogus revolutionaries of communism will have been long forgotten, I suspect historians will still speak of revolutionary America with wonder and awe.