

I think anybody selling anything patriotic should donate the proceeds to everyone affected by September 11.

I've seen auctions where people donate to benefit the families of September 11. I think that's a good idea and it is definitely in the Christmas spirit, but everyone needs to be aware of where the money is going, like the Red Cross' original divergence of money donated for September 11 survivors and victims' families.

DEAC GUIDI

Capitalism does not equal patriotism.

JUDITH NILAND

I don't buy it.

LEE MILLER

My parents lived through World War 2, the last war to be conducted according to the U.S. Constitution. My uncle Clair survived as a platoon sergeant during the island hopping campaigns in the Pacific. When this conflict began, the nation was still in the grip of the Great Depression. The folks at home were forced to ration necessities, and were encouraged to spend and consume less, the only true and reasonable response to a national emergency.

The encouragement to spend during wartime has the ring of deceit and hypocrisy. Either we are in a deadly struggle which calls for forced rationing and personal thrift, or this "police action" isn't as serious as the politicians and media portray it.

I feel that the military action in Afghanistan is as unconstitutional as previous undeclared wars. If Bush had gone to Congress on September 12, 2001 as FDR did on December 8, 1941, for example, new laws would not be necessary to try our enemies by military tribunal. This would eliminate a lot of legerdemain, both in regard to the Constitution and the economy.

DEBORA CONNAWAY

'Patriotic shopping' tags the most vulnerable because the people who have no other satisfaction in other areas of their life try to find it through accumulation of material goods. This society doesn't provide a sense of safety or sustenance; it does not fill that deep hole in the psyche.

You don't have a job that pays enough to allow you to live your life in satisfaction—so if you have to struggle, why not satisfy your needs short-time with 'Master Credit'?

Credit is pre-approved; it will take about 20 years to pay off this Christmas.

I walked into Lloyd's Center in Portland and walked right back out. It was filled with a mass of confused lemmings.

We all buy into it. It's like a sucker bet.

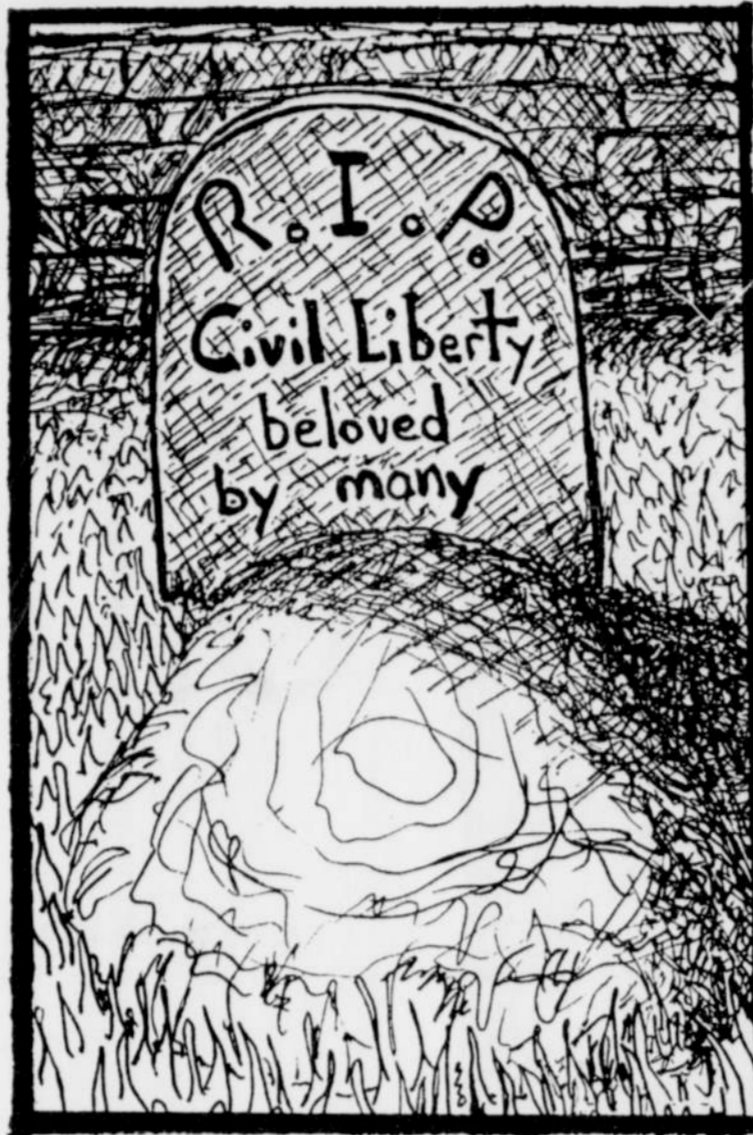
PATRICK KEEFE

All I can say is buy locally. I shop in Astoria.

SHARON KLAUSER

It's just scary. A person wants to show love for family and friends and that they care. Now it's like a rule of society: shop for America, not for family or friends.

Down in Baja California where I often live, Christmas is a very different thing. The people celebrate several weeks before Christmas. There isn't a lot of money spent, but they sing and dance. I talked to a priest. He said he talked to people about 9/11. He said the war coming down to a religious thing between Christians and non-Christians is very frightening to people in



Mexico. He said Americans might be big jerks as to how they project themselves in the world, but the Mexican people think we are their jerks and they are taking it personally.

This pre-Christmas flagwaving frenzy of buying gifts and somehow mixing politics up with religion is disconcerting to me because this is a very secular nation but also very spiritual. We are confusing issues in a way that is not necessarily something you can get your mind around and hold onto. It is more a scattering of our energy rather than a gathering together.

I feel we should regain a level of calm and reverence for what Christmas is about. Instead we are making Christmas into something like political jingoism.

I find it much better to make gifts or buy them from local artists and artisans.

'HIPPI' JIM HEDFORD

Albert Einstein said: "A majority of the stupid is invincible and guaranteed for all time. The terror of their tyranny is only alleviated by their lack of consistency."

I use this insightful observation into human nature often when confronted with society. In terms of the specific question regarding the separation of church and state in a capitalist society, I don't think there is one. We are allowed to choose but we are not allowed to participate, otherwise we are labeled non-patriotic atheists. Consume or be consumed. I think it is depicted well by the Jesus fish eating the Darwin fish. Beware of smiling predators bigger than you.

JASPAR DEVEREAUX

I think world patriotism comes before American patriotism. America consumes around 40% of the world's economic resources. There is no need to spend, we've already spent enough.

PATRICIA LONGNECKER

I've never been a shopper. I could never afford it when I was young in the 1950s and '60s, when it was the norm. I never got into the habit.

There is so much garbage coming from abroad that shopping has become a pastime. Americans don't care what they buy. It's like Disneyland: it's just for recreation. It does not matter what you get, the family is entertained. It's just a question of how many plastic bags you take home.

Since World War 2 we have been schooled that people need jobs so that they can buy homes and everything else for sale. The GI Bill made it possible for war veterans and their wives to live in the new suburbs without a down payment.

We became conditioned to believe that it was important to support your own economy, which was a major part of the Cold War. When credit cards appeared it became patriotic to incur heavy debt. The trend was to spend, go into bankruptcy, reestablish credit and do it all over again.

Everything has snowballed. We are being deluged with inferior products from abroad as a result of switching our manufacturing overseas, and our own production has never been known for high quality consumer goods. Now American corporations like Nike have figured they can pay somebody \$2 a month to make stuff in places like India where enslaved orphan kids are treated like chattel 14 to 18 hours a day. They don't go to school. They work long days and get tired and don't tie off the end tuft in the rug you buy.

People aren't aware of how the economy is changing. It has to do with NAFTA and the New Age China Trade. Nike can go overseas and pay nothing to make tennis shoes and sell them for \$100 in this country. American corporations are making fortunes on overseas slave labor. You can't bring people across borders but products made by the same people at slave wages cross them every minute.

I contend that the problems with NAFTA can be solved with equitable salaries in all three countries (The USA, Mexico and Canada), which would solve our own production problems. The emphasis has to be put on quality rather than on quantity. The capitalist theory is to sell the most at the least cost. If we switch production to quality goods we don't have to make as much stuff to make a profit and also pay good wages.

Communism and Christianity both promise prosperity. Christianity after you die as well as when alive. Communism promised that the state would make everyone prosperous but only on this side of the grave.

DISSENT & DIVERSITY

There is nothing so frightening as a nation without dissent, particularly one that boasts of its great diversity and freedom. There is never a more fitting moment for dissenting voices to speak up than a time of national emergency. The entire benefit of diversity is that it gives a plethora of creativity, reasoning and options to draw from. It is a supermarket of ideas and possibilities that we should not ever lock up, yet alone in a time of trouble. The idea that a few Americans can think more creatively and generate better solutions than 400 million Americans is the kind of attitude one expects in a dictatorship, not a republic.

It is the President's job to execute the will of the people. People have a right and even a duty to speak out so their representatives can represent them and the government of the people, by the people, and for the people can get on with its job.

Everyone who loves freedom ought to be outraged that anyone's First Amendment right would be censored or attacked, for if one attacks the freedom of speech, one cuts at the very trunk of liberty.

~MICHAEL MILLER

THE NEW SEASON

Last summer's rich blackberry vines
Trail in the mud of alley rain.
It is the season of grit and thorns
Catching at whatever happens by,
Giving back nothing but our own blood.
It is the season of flood and tears.

Nothing is ours, nor has ever been.
Flesh ripped from loving flesh,
We hear the rattle-song of war.

~ELIZABETH HOBBS

**BIPOLAR DOGMATA
THEY**

Fighting against is to enter the other's arena of facts where THEY have long entrenched and fortified the boundaries and mined the field.

THEY have claimed privileged access to highest power on heaven and earth.

THEY have claimed to be agents of highest power on heaven and earth.

THEY have claimed this anoints them with infallibility to:
dictate human behavior
take human life
make war
use all means to their ends.

Their belief system/fact fortress is virtually impregnable, their arena a place to be crushed and die.

Their belief in their infallibility makes it so: THEY are one of the most Powerful forces on earth.

THEY are the fearful and deadly human collective thought GROUP-MIND entity.

It feeds and is nourished by those who are against its arena of facts.

O.E.D.

~VALERIE LINDHOUT

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