
"The same pattern of radically increasing equality that occurred in incomes can be also found in the distribution of wealth," Gilder says. "The largest increases in real wealth in the 1980s accrued to mostly middle-class holders of corporate and public-employee pension plans." Badly in the red in 1980, these plans gained some \$2 trillion in real worth during the rest of the dec-

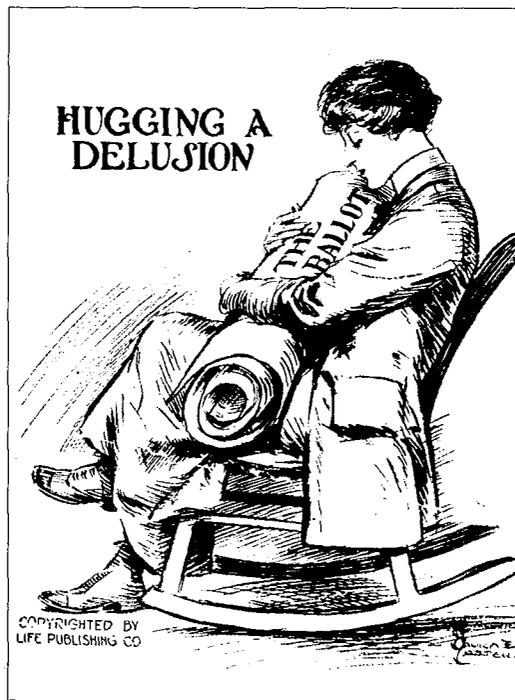
ade. Meanwhile, the creation of more than 20 million new jobs "was crucial in wiping out" the Social Security system's \$4-trillion deficit. Focusing on stock and real estate gains by the rich but neglecting this \$6-trillion windfall in middle-class net wealth, Gilder says, is like making "a topographical survey of the American continent that leaves out the Rocky Mountains."

SOCIETY

Women Against Suffrage

"'Better Citizens without the Ballot': American Anti-Suffrage Women and Their Rationale During the Progressive Era" by Manuela Thurner, in *Journal of Women's History* (Spring 1993), History Dept., Ballantine Hall 742, Indiana Univ., Bloomington, Ind. 47405.

Writing under the spell of late-20th century feminism, most recent scholars have depicted



Some women who fought against female suffrage did suggest that a woman's place was in the home.

the Progressive-era women who fought against women's suffrage as backward-looking adherents of the notion that a woman's place is in the home. Thurner, a doctoral candidate at Yale, says that this picture needs radical revision.

Committed to public activism by women and to social reform, most of these women thought that gaining the vote would hurt, not help, female reformers, Thurner says. The unofficial creed of the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage was articulated by its president, Josephine Dodge, in 1916: "We believe that women according to their leisure, opportunities, and experience should take part increasingly in civic and municipal affairs as they always have done in charitable, philanthropic and educational activities and we believe that this can best be done without the ballot by women, as a non-partisan body of disinterested workers."

Casting ballots, the antisuffragists reasoned, meant that women would have to align themselves with political parties. Thus robbed of their nonpartisanship and their position of moral superiority above the fray, women would lose much of their considerable influence with legislative and other governmental authorities—and much-needed reform legislation would go unenacted. "For me," declared social worker Mary Ella Swift in a 1913 issue of the *Woman's Protest*, "the vital argument against suffrage for women is that it would hamper them in their more effective work in social and political lines."

Leading suffragists, such as Anna Howard

Shaw, president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association from 1904 to 1915, refused to take their female adversaries or their arguments seriously. The antisuffragists, Shaw declared, "were like vultures looking for carrion" and were the dupes of powerful male forces—"liquor interests, food-dopers, child-labor exploiters, white slavers, and political bosses." Many later historians, when they have troubled to notice the antisuffragists at all, have echoed the suffragist line.

Contemporary sketches of the antisuffrage movement, however, indicate that it was "founded, staffed, and led by women," Thurner says. Most of the leading antisuffrage tracts—including Helen Kendrick Johnson's *Woman and the Republic* (1897), Ida Tarbell's *The Business of*

Being a Woman (1912), and Grace Duffield Goodwin's *Anti-Suffrage: Ten Good Reasons* (1915)—were penned by women. The role of men in the movement appears to have been marginal.

Suffragists portrayed the women who worked against their own enfranchisement as "a little band of rich, ultra society women," and "butterflies of fashion." In fact, the antisuffragists were not all that different socially from their opponents, Thurner says. Most "would have had no difficulty in embracing the label of the 'New Woman' as an appropriate designation for themselves. A college education, professional employment, and a life without a husband and children were not necessarily infallible indicators of a woman's prosuffrage stance."

Multiculturalism For Fun and Profit

Real-world multiculturalism, says Harper's (Aug. 1993) contributing editor David Rieff, is just the opposite of what its academic advocates imagine.

For the multiculturalist, notions such as 'quality' are tainted; their real purpose is to preserve the privileges of a dominant group: in the American context, dead white males. And the multiculturalists are in command—sort of—of a couple of truths: Western culture has excluded many things; art in the traditional sense is anti-egalitarian, in that it demands that people judge a given work to be not only subjectively but objectively superior to another. It is the innately hierarchical nature of art, or even, as they used to say, art appreciation, that sets the multiculturalists' teeth on edge. . . .

The mistake the multiculturalists make is in imagining that their efforts are in some crucial way bound to undermine the fundamental interests of capitalism. The contrary is surely closer to the truth: the multiculturalist mode is what any smart businessman would prefer. For if all art is deemed as good as all other art, and, for that matter, if the point of art is not greatness but the production of works of art that reflect the culture and

aspirations of various ethnic, sexual, or racial subgroups within a society, then one is in a position to increase supply almost at will in order to meet increases in demand.

Instead of being a rare and costly thing, culture becomes simultaneously a product, like a car—something that can be made new every few years—and an abundant resource, like, well, people. The result is that the consumption of culture can increasingly come to resemble the consumption of goods. . . .

Are the multiculturalists truly unaware of how closely their treasured catchphrases—"cultural diversity," "difference," the need to "do away with boundaries"—resemble the stock phrases of the modern corporation: "product diversification," "the global marketplace," and "the boundary-less company"? . . .

The market economy, now global in scale, is by its nature corrosive of all established hierarchies and certainties, up to and including—in a world now more than 50 percent non-white and in which the most promising markets are in Asia—white racism and male domination. If any group has embraced the rallying cry "Hey, hey, ho, ho, Western culture's got to go," it is the world business elite.