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Perplexed Americans

● 褚东伟 孙奕东 编译

困惑的美国人



世界图书出版公司



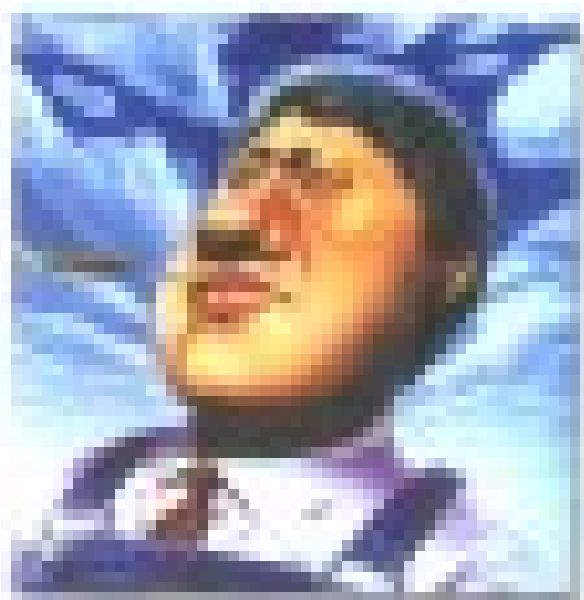
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60607

Perplexed Americans

by Jeffrey H. Needell

困惑—美國人



with an introduction by

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世界图书出版公司

广州·上海·西安·北京

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

困惑的美国人/褚东伟等编译. —广州: 广东世界图书出版公司, 2002.12
(网络原文快读系列)
ISBN 7-5062-5884-6

I . 困... II . 褚... III . 英语—对照读物—汉、英
IV . H319.4

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2002) 第 100380 号

困惑的美国人

出版发行: 广东世界图书出版公司
(广州市新港西路大江冲 25 号 邮编: 510300)
电 话: 020-84451969 84453623
<http://www.gdst.com.cn>
E-mail: pub@gdst.com.cn
印 刷: 中国人民解放军第四二三二工厂
(湛江市霞山区某塘路 61 号 邮编 524002)
版 次: 2003 年 3 月第 1 版
2003 年 3 月第 1 次印刷
开 本: 787mm × 1092mm 1/32
印 张: 4.25
印 数: 0 001 ~ 5 000 册
书 号: ISBN 7-5062-5884-6/H·0375
出版社注册号: 粤 014
定 价: 7.50 元

如发现因印装质量问题影响阅读, 请与承印厂联系退换。

前 言

美国是个“大熔炉”，里面聚集着各色人种；同时，各种思想也在这里交锋、碰撞。在这变幻莫测的社会中，有些人开始迷茫、困惑。

美国是个“民主”的社会，可是经过马拉松式的选举之后，总统却不是人民选出来的。美国也是一个“自由”的社会，有些人的确拥有完全的自由，可有些人却要为此付出沉重的代价，难道这就是自由的本质吗？美国是个经济强国，然而，并不是每个人都过着丰衣足食、安居乐业的生活，还有那些无家可归的人们在迷茫地等待。尽管靠着远远低于美国人的微薄的收入；尽管被冠上“非法”的名声；尽管受到黑人的痛恨，他们在这块不属于他们的土地上仍顽强地生活着，他们就是来自世界各地的非法移民。在美国这个“大熔炉”里，亚裔美国人靠自己的勤劳智慧扎下根来。可是，美国人仍延续着祖辈传下来的陈词滥调，令这些为美国做出巨大贡献的亚裔美国人大为失望。美国依靠军事的优越地位，横行霸道，为非作歹，不仅让本国国民不解，更令世界人民不解。美国的科技同样走在了世界的前列，日新月异的科技发展，他们不知这给他们带来的是福音，还是不幸。

美国社会缤纷万象，各色人种、各种疑惑林林总总，不一而足。本书限于篇幅，也只能截取冰山的一角，从政治、经济、文化、教育和军事等层面，了解美国社会和生活在其中的人们的所思所想，特别是他们的困惑。我们力求选材生动有趣，使广大读者在阅读原汁原味的英语的同时能够增长知识，开阔视

野。

我们衷心希望广大读者能够喜欢这本书并从中受益。

编译者

于广东外语外贸大学

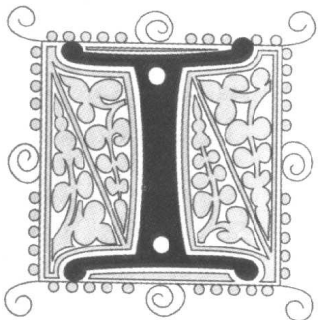
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1. Are Americans Free Enough?



In an online discussion about American freedom, Stevens says,

Society becomes conscious about freedom when there is a strong impetus within that society also to take away the freedoms. So freedom is a conscious and collective expression against the negation of freedoms.

What differentiates freedom from anarchy is the purpose of freedom. When expressions are guided by higher moral principles and carried out within the framework of personal responsibility, it is called freedom.

One person's freedom could be another person's hell. Just as imposing one man's freedom on another can be called negation of freedom, imposing the responsibility for one man's freedom on others can also be called negation of freedom.





Person should exercise only those freedoms that one is able to take responsibility for. One cannot shift all freedoms to individual and all responsibilities to a collective or state.

Freedom should not be state-sponsored but individual sponsored. When state sponsors freedom, it directs freedoms only in certain areas in what it considers to be a politically correct. Thus freedoms are politicized and become subject of partisan special interests. All is fair in politics. When freedoms are politicized, they become a fair game in politics.

In a genuine democracy, freedoms of people cannot be taken away. Conformity should not be enforced by any including state. State should not have such an absolute right to demand conformity. State should not force people to foot the bill for other people's freedoms. Let people make choices and pay for them. Imposition of responsibility on others is worse than imposition of one person's freedom on others. One person's freedom ends where someone else's freedom begins. Keep your freedom to yourself and keep the consequences of your freedom to yourself. Freedom can remain viable only within such a discipline.

Nation is not just made up of individuals. Nation is an expression of so many entities, groups, institutions,





and spheres—past, present and future. They all should have the same right to freedom. Nation has to administer them all and make sure that they also survive, propagate and prosper. When state directs the individual freedoms only in such directions so as to negate the freedoms at other levels and spheres, state becomes a hostile steward of the nationhood. Sooner or later, such state apparatus has to be discarded by the nation in order for nation to remain healthy. State is devised to serve the nation. State cannot become a master of nation. It cannot use individual freedom as bait and do the nation from within.

Are individual freedoms absolute? Then why do we criminalize freedoms that are exercised against the laws? This means we accept that freedoms cannot be absolute. Individual freedoms must be censured by the collective good, which is expressed through the laws. It is OK to take away individual freedom if there is a collective good involved. And who has the freedom to define what is collective good? Not individuals. Only state and collective process have got the right to define collective good. Once again, the totalitarian state has granted itself a total monopoly here. Why not let all institutions and spheres and groups arrive at their own set of common good for their effective functioning?



Just as individual is allowed to arrive at his/her own common good/self-interests. Just as Individual freedoms have to conform to individual's self-interests. Just as state arrives at its common good and tries to make everybody including individuals conform to that. Why should this right to determine self-interest not be available to all other institutions, spheres and groups? They all should have the same right to subordinate individual freedoms for greater good and self-interests of each institution, sphere and group. Individuals should have the right not to be part of any institution, sphere or group but their politics should also not be directed at those individuals who want to be part of such institutions, sphere or group. Only spirit of non-interference and non-encroachment by each entity, by each sphere and each group in the affairs of others could make such freedoms viable. Such a spirit is missing precisely because of evil designs of secular democratic state. Individual freedoms are granted and directed only towards negation of such a spirit.

Let there be a free for all freedoms at all levels. Let each be responsible for ones own freedoms. People will patronize only those freedoms that are best for them. Freedoms that cannot be sustained by people will die away. Freedoms will prosper or die on their own merit.



Nobody will be able to blame others for ones choices. People will become extra conscious about their freedoms and choices. It will elevate the exercise of freedom from lowest denominators to ones that truly serve higher purpose. People will freely shun choices that bring pain and adopt freedoms that bring happiness. When people can get away by blaming others or by shifting responsibilities to a collective, it makes even painful and victimizing freedoms and choices and pleasures viable. Let them live or die on their own feet, on their own merit or demerit. Secular democratic state has to move over in order to make this happen.





美国人真的自由吗？

(美国人真的拥有自由吗？他们的自由没有任何制约吗？读完本文，你就会有所了解。)

在一次网上讨论美国自由这一问题时，史蒂文这样说：

当有一股强大的力量要取消你的自由时，人们才感到自由的重要。所以自由是对不自由的反抗，是一种有意识的、集体的表达行为。

把自由和专制区别开来是自由的目的。只有表达行为由比较高的道德准则来引导，由高度责任感来约束，才叫自由。

一个人的自由对另一个人可能意味着灾难。正如把一个人的自由强加于另一个人是对自由的剥夺，你把对自由应负的责任推托于别人，同样是在剥夺自由。我们只能享受那些能对其负责的自由。把所有的自由给了个人，而把所有的责任推给集体或国家来承担是做不到的。

自由不应由政府定义，而应由个人定义。政府定义自由就会引导自由到一个它认为从政治角度考虑正确的领域，自由因此政治化并且成为党派特殊利益的一部分。政治上一切都是合理的，自由政治化后，自由也就成了政治中的公平游戏。

真正的民主体制下人们的自由是不能被剥夺的。任何政府都不能强求统一，政府不应有要求统一的绝对权利，政府不应强迫一些人为其他人的自由做出牺牲，而应让人们做出选择并为此付出。把责任推给人比把自己的自由强加于人更糟。一个



人自由开始之日，正是另一个人的自由结束之时。把自由留给自己的同时也把自由的后果留给自己。只有靠这样的准则，自由才能延续。

国家不只由个人组成，国家是很多实体、组织、机构和领域在过去、现在和将来的表现形式。他们都该拥有对自由的权利。国家要对他们进行管理并确保他们也能生存、繁殖和繁盛。当政府对个人自由的指导引起在某些其他层次和领域丧失个人自由时，政府就成了国家的有恶意的管家，国家要保持健康发展，这样的政府机构迟早要淘汰。政府是用来为国家服务的而不能成为国家的主人，它不能以个人自由为诱饵从内部来欺骗国家。

个人自由是绝对的吗？为什么我们使用自由却犯了法？这表明我们承认自由不是绝对的。个人自由要受法律所示的集体利益制约，如涉及集体利益就可取消个人自由。然而谁有权解释集体利益？显然不是个人，只有政府和集体才有权解释集体利益。这样极权政府又给自己独断的机会。为何不能让所有的机构、领域和团体有效运作获得共同利益呢？这就如同允许个人获得共同利益或个人利益；如同个人自由要同个人利益相一致；如同政府为了共同利益而试图使所有人包括个人去遵守该共同利益。为什么决定个人利益的这种权利不为其他机构、领域和团体所有呢？他们该有同样的权利，以使个人利益服从每个机构、领域和团体的利益，个人也应有权不从属任何机构或团体；即使有些人想成为他们一部分，也不该受到他们政治倾向的影响。每个实体、团体都应本着不干涉、不侵犯别人的事务的准则才能使自由长久。世俗的民主政府用心不良，导致了



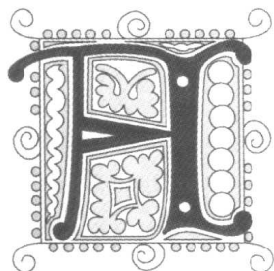
这种精神的缺失。所谓个人享有自由实则政府的骗局，因为一切的一切都是对这种精神的否定。

希望在各个层次都能得到自由，希望每个人都对自己的自由负责。人们会保护那些对他们最有益的自由；不被人支持的自由终会消亡。自由靠自身的价值繁盛或消亡。无人能够责备他人的选择。人们特别了解他们的自由和选择。人们会从低层次使用自由上升到真正为更高目的服务的高层次自由。人们自由地避开带来痛苦的选择而采纳带来幸福的自由。通过怪罪别人或把责任推给集体而逃脱，这会带来更大的痛苦，一切自由、选择和快乐会荡然无存。让他们独自靠他们本身的优缺点要么生存下来，要么消亡，世俗民主政府要让位来让自由自然发生。





2. Liberalism Is the Problem



After thinking more about all that mess in Yugoslavia I understand the following: the problem is neither American stupidity and arrogance, nor European

servile blindness.

The problem lies rather in philosophical field than in economical, military, and political—whatever. The problem is liberalism itself—all those free market, free speech, human rights and so on.

I do not mean to imply those mentioned things as values—they are great, but as a standard. The one that is being established by the West as the only right and just, as the comprehensive wisdom. The one that all the World must obey. And the one that has become an excuse to kill.

All the “brilliant theories” always lead to tyranny. It doesn’t matter whether it is a tyranny of a person or a tyranny of a flock. Actually, I never could imagine that western liberalism might have ended with the same result. Now let you look at the most elaborated model