



Humanists Hawaii

NEWSLETTER

May 2005

May meeting at Krauss Hall, U of Hawaii

The Clash of Faith and Reason

A lecture (on video) by Sam Harris

May 29, 2005
10:30 a.m.

Krauss Hall
University of Hawaii

In this video from BookTV recorded February 6, 2005, Sam Harris talks about his book, *The End of Faith*, at the University Synagogue in Irvine, California. Mr. Harris argues that religion plays a major role in the increasingly dangerous world we find ourselves in today. He criticizes the influence of religion in both the United States and across the Muslim world and says that for peace to exist, reason must replace faith as the driving force in society. Mr. Harris takes questions from the audience following his remarks.

The End of Faith

This important and timely book delivers a startling analysis of the clash of faith and reason in the modern world. It offers a vivid historical tour of our willingness to suspend reason in favor of religious beliefs – even when these beliefs inspire the worst of human atrocities. Harris argues that in the presence of weapons of mass destruction, we cannot expect to survive our religious differences indefinitely. Most controversially, he maintains that “moderation” in religion poses considerable dangers of its own, as the accommodation we have made to religious faith in our society now blinds us to the role that faith plays in perpetuating human conflict.

While warning against the encroachment of organized religion into world politics, Harris draws on insights from neuroscience, philosophy, and Eastern mysticism to deliver a call for a truly modern foundation for ethics and spirituality that is both secular and humanistic.

Quotes from Reviews

Says Natalie Angier in the *New York Times Book Review* (9/5/4): “*The End of Faith* articulates the dangers and absurdities of organized religion so fiercely and so fearlessly that I felt relieved as I read it, vindicated, almost personally understood . . . Harris writes what a sizable number of us think, but few are willing to say in contemporary America . . . This is an important book, on a topic that, for all its inherent difficulty and divisiveness, should not be shielded from the crucible of human reason.”

Says a review in the *British Independent* (2/11/5): “*The End of Faith* launches a sustained nuclear assault . . . A bold and exhilarating thesis . . . *The End of Faith* is a brave, pugilistic attempt to demolish the walls that currently insulate religious people from criticism . . . *The End of Faith* is badly needed . . .”

Says *The Economist* (8/19/4): “This book will strike a chord with anyone who has ever pondered the irrationality of religious faith . . . Even Mr. Harris’s critics will have to concede the force of an analysis which roams so far and wide, from the persecution of the Cathars to the composition of George Bush’s cabinet.”

To end this introduction: Alan Dershowitz declares this book “A must read for all rational people.”

Consider Quality Health Care for All

The 2005 Hawaii State Legislature passed House Bill 1304, which calls for a study of how universal health care can be implemented in Hawaii. The bill now goes to the Governor for signature.

Congressman Jim McDermott (D-Washington), a longtime proponent of universal healthcare and

national president of Americans for Democratic Action (ADA), will be coming to Hawaii the first week of June.

ADA-Hawaii invites you to hear Dr. Jim McDermott speak about the state of Universal Healthcare Saturday, June 4, 2005 from 9am -11:00am at the ILWU Hall, 451 Atkinson Drive.

Something else to be concerned about . . . Transformation

from notes by Jim Bill and Dave Mielke

Last weekend a massive Christian conference called "Transformation Hawaii" took place in Honolulu. It was notable for at least two reasons: it attracted a large audience and it featured numerous high level politicians. Such conjoining of church and state traditionally worry Humanists, but this time it was so blatant that some in the mainstream press noticed.

Advertiser columnist David Shapiro listed local Christian attitudes the Wednesday before the event. He noted that Lt. Gov. James "Duke" Aiona had become a highly visible figure – honorary chairman actually – of Transformation Hawaii, the "evangelical Christian movement that aims to mobilize thousands of "marketplace ministers" to spread the gospel of Jesus in centers of influence such as businesses, government offices, schools, union halls, the media and the arts."

Aiona even sent invitations to church leaders on his official state stationary – a practice that was condemned when practiced by state legislators.

Shapiro recalled Aiona's performance at a "canopy of prayer," last December when the Lt. Gov. issued the amazing declaration that "Hawaii belongs to Jesus." And "Our schools will become God's schools; our community will become God's community; our city will become God's city; our Islands will become God's Islands; our state will become God's state; and our Hawaii will become God's Hawaii."

Scary stuff to Humanist ears. Also to members of other religions – and other less "evangelical" branches of Christianity. Shapiro quoted Rev. Alison Dingley, an Episcopal priest, as saying, "Officials who were elected to represent all of Hawaii, which is very diverse religiously, seem to be allied with something that appears to be entirely one brand of Christianity."

Rev. Dingley found Aiona's message "really inappropriate."

Although Aiona claimed to respect separation of church and state, "Transformation Hawaii" organizer Daniel Kaneshiro is quoted as saying, "You can't really separate church and state . . . Why not let God in?"

An *Advertiser* editorial on Saturday, after the conference began, called "Aiona's comments on God precarious." The editorial concluded People elected to public office must balance their religious beliefs and activities with their duty to serve the broad community. Aiona is walking a tightrope when he lets his personal faith intersect with his public persona. It's a precarious position, and he should watch his step."

Jim Bill invites us to poke around on the www.transformationhawaii.org website and see still more disturbing things. Be sure to click on the Prayer for City Hall link, he says.

Twelve Gates [from the website]

Twelve Gates is a reference to twelve key points within our Hawaii community. Just like a key, these Twelve Gates provide easy access to an area that, once opened, will lead to great transformation. It simply becomes a matter of opening these gates with prayer.

- a.. Arts/Performance
- b.. Business/Professionals
- c.. Churches
- d.. Education
- e.. Government/Political
- f.. Hawaiian Community/Culture
- g.. Homes/Communities
- h.. Labor/Unions
- i.. Media/Communications
- j.. Military
- k.. Non-profit
- l.. Youth

Transformation Hawaii is a key to unlocking these gates and unleashing Hawaii's people to do it. It is a matter of partnership and support. We partner with the local churches to support their members in the fullness of their unique ministries. United in that effort, many churches together become the Church. That's powerful!

Each of us is one person that can reach others. That makes each of us a marketplace minister, able to operate in the fullness of our calling as a priest of God. Yes, it's God's vision and power. It requires our partnership in action: through prayer, service and leadership.

For example, a housewife can touch the lives of her children, the clerks at the grocery store or other soccer parents at games. If you serve in the military, you can reach those under your command or supervision. These are your "gates", places where you can influence people and transform Hawaii for God's great plan.

Now is that far-reaching? Yes. Is it difficult? No! Transformation Hawaii unlocks the transformational plan that the Lord already has for you. He placed you in your community to reach that community. It's that simple.

Prayer for City Hall

Mondays (except holidays)

12:00-12:45 p.m. (Planning Commission

Conference Room, City Hall Annex Building)

Get connected with other marketplace ministers in the Government/Political gate as they pray for spiritual transformation in City Hall and in the city of Honolulu. For more information, contact (City Councilman) Gary Okino.

It's not only Christians

Religious propaganda at neighborhood board
from Jim Bill

A friend was at a neighborhood board meeting when information was handed out about the event below by people who "pretended" to be Honolulu City workers. The group also induced the moderator to make an announcement about the event that made it seem like the event was a special program put on by the city for the benefit of the neighborhood board elected members.

"ABLE" stands for "Association for Better Living and Education International."

Here is the edited message from my friend:

"They are putting on a "World Solutions Exhibit May 10-14 at Honolulu City Hall and Alii Place May 15 - May 24. VIP reception Alii Place on May 17 at 5 PM"

Applied Scholastics

Website www.able.org asserts that Applied Scholastics offers effective education solutions for anybody – using Study Technology developed by L. Ron Hubbard.

Website <http://www.studytech.org/asi.php> gives a detailed presentation of the relationship between the Church of Scientology, ABLE Incorporated, and Applied Scholastics.

"Intelligent design" & Ten Commandments in NYS

Humanist Network News, May 18, 2005

You're not in New York anymore, Dorothy – you're in Kansas.

Bills calling for equal time for "intelligent design" in public schools and allowing for the posting of the Ten Commandments on government property were introduced to the New York State Assembly on May 3.

Assemblyman Daniel L. Hooker, R-Saugerties, is the sole sponsor of both bills, which have been referred to committee. The Institute for Humanist Studies (IHS) opposes both bills.

Recently, Ten Commandments and "intelligent design" controversies have arisen in Kansas, Pennsylvania, Alabama, Tennessee and Texas.

Assembly bill A08036 requires that all students in New York state public schools, from Kindergarten through Grade 12, receive instruction in both "theories" of intelligent design and evolution. The bill also requires the board of education or the trustees of every school district to provide appropriate training and curriculum materials for the teachers.

Assembly bill A08073 would allow the Ten Commandments to be displayed as a historical document in public buildings and on public grounds in New York state.

HH's Meeting Place

Turn mauka on East West Road then ewa on Correa Road. Drive to the end and turn makai toward the circle with the big tree. There's free parking on part of the circle, on the other side of Krauss Hall and various lots around campus.

Enter the Krauss Hall area around the pool and find room 112 at the Diamondhead end of the pool. We'll have an HH sign by the door. Hope to see you all.

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HH Membership

HH dues are collected on a calendar year and are \$25 a year for individuals and \$40 a year for couples. Please submit your dues directly to Marcia Lambeth or by mail to the address on this newsletter.

We miss those of you who have been unable to attend. If you need a ride, please call another HH member or Andi.

The Volunteer Experience:

“Waxing” about being an IHS volunteer – “The Merci IHS Kitchen Diet”

by IHS volunteer Ed Corl

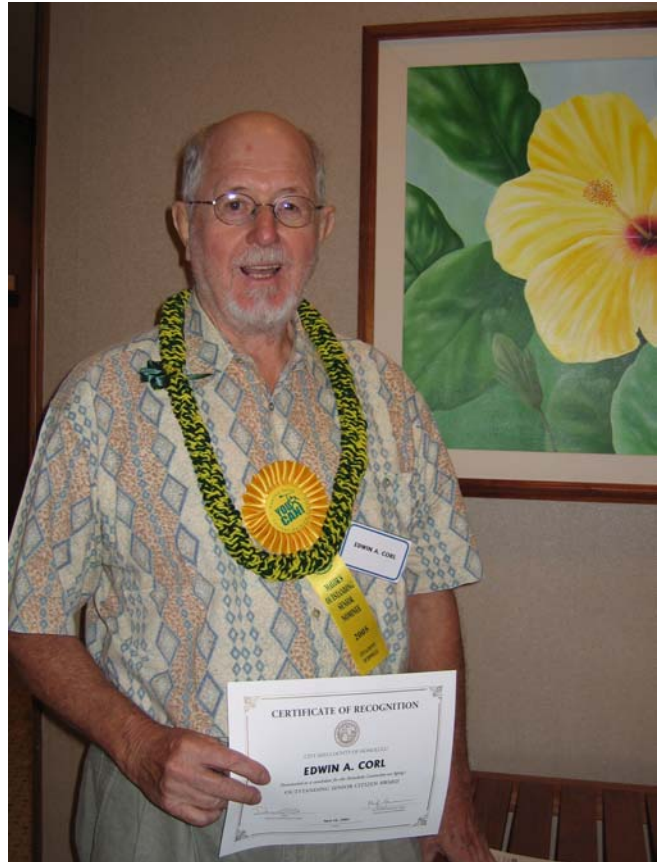
Why pay \$100/month to exercise at the local health club to loose weight, build muscles, and flatten your abs? I've been busy volunteering in the kitchen at the Institute for Human Services (IHS) for the past couple of years. Two years ago I weighed 222 lovely pounds and last month I got a physical and weighed in at 208. WOW, I was flabbergasted. Also, for the first time in about 30 years I can make a hard upper arm muscle. At 77+ that's pretty good. But for the abs part, so far not much progress.



Ed Corl having just received a commendation from Mayor Mufi Hannemann at the Senior Volunteer Recognition Awards at the Hilton Hawaiian Village Hotel before an audience of about 1,200 people.

There are several other reasons why being a volunteer at IHS is worthwhile. For example, if you are on a sabbatical, say, writing a book and you need a 180-degree break to get your mind off of what you are immersed in, try devoting some time in shelter chores for a while. You can get a good lesson in group dynamics in an operation that involves absolutely no

profit. The team I work with has amazing spirit and devotion to get out 300 meals, 3 times a day, with great interest in quality and on time delivery. A fine group with “*Esprit de Kitchen*”.



Ed displays his commendation in the Hilton lobby.

I worked for profit making industry for 40 years and had lots of experience in assessing various levels of motivation. Never have I seen a finer group at work than with those in our kitchen team.

You can appreciate music that you probably didn't have while working for ABC Corp., including “Golden Oldies” and Samoan Hip Hop, and sing along with the guests and staff. I got involved over 2 years ago when I saw an article in the *Honolulu Weekly* about the “Peanut Butter Sandwich Priest”. I was looking for a new adventure to keep me busy, in addition to the volunteering I was already doing at the Foodbank and Honolulu Botanical Gardens. I got in touch with Margot, IHS volunteer manager. After looking at my application form listing office skills, she suggested I help in the office, but I quickly declined. After working

as an engineer and manager, enclosed in an office for 4 decades I wanted hands on experiences, basic physical toiling. So, why would I have empathy for the folks that “nobody loves when they are down and out”? Well, Joan Baez had a song that went:

*Show me the prisoner
Show me the jail
Show me the young man whose life has gone stale
And I'll show you for so many reasons
Why, there but for fortune go you and I*

When I see the guests at IHS, that's what I think of. Additionally, approximately 26% of the men IHS serves are veterans. Many of the other guests struggle with mental illness and other challenges. For me, the philosophy of “Be happy here and now, and help others be happy” is why I sweat and slave under the watchful eyes of my good buddy Merci – a great cook. She is the IHS cook, a 4'11” powerhouse of a woman!

Albert Einstein sayeth unto us -- “Remember your humanity and forget everything else” (or something like that).



Margot Schrire, IHS volunteer manager, and Ed Cori at the Senior Volunteer Recognition Awards.

Mahalo to Margot Schrire for asking Ed to submit his story. This story first appeared in NOVL (Network of Volunteer Leaders) Newsline, Summer 2005.



Dena Ackerman, right, and friend Carolyn Golojuch urge drivers to slow down on Makakilo Drive. Ackerman's 15-year-old son, Na-than, was killed when he darted across a section of Makakilo Drive that didn't have crosswalks and was hit by a pickup truck. Photo by Jeff Widener, *The Honolulu Advertiser*.

The End of Oil?

by Wayne Luney in *Human Interest*, May 2005

According to the website, PeakOil.org, "Peak oil is the point in time when extraction of oil from the earth reaches its highest point and then begins to decline." There is some disagreement among experts about whether that moment has passed.

However, the most optimistic see it as happening, at the latest, within the next few years.

April 1 Meeting: Peak Oil

Kurt Vonnegut, noted author and Honorary President of the American Humanist Association, noted last year (in "The End is Near," *In These Times*, October 29, 2004) that we have "now all but destroyed this once salubrious planet by making thermodynamic whoopee with fossil fuels." He finishes the article with the following, "We have squandered our planet's resources, including air and water, as though there were no tomorrow, so now there isn't going to be one. So there goes the Junior Prom, but that's not the half of it."

Phil and Karla LaZier's talk dealt with the inevitable decline in crude oil production due to the rapid depletion of reserves. Phil showed a documentary produced by Mike Ruppert on this subject. Ruppert, whose website is at [http:// fromthewilderness.com](http://fromthewilderness.com), included interviews with Matthew Simmons and others.

He mentioned that N. King Hubbard, an oil geologist, predicted in 1956 that American oil production would peak in the 1970s and that world oil production would peak in the 1990s. Although ridiculed at the time, he turned out to be right about American oil production.

Hubbard's prediction of peak world production in the 1990s didn't come to pass, thanks to the oil shocks of the 1970s. In the subsequent question and answer period, we discussed the implications of the inevitable depletion of oil reserves.

In addition to the obvious effects on the transportation sector there are indirect effects in other industries. Fertilizers and pesticides are made from fossil fuels. Gasoline and diesel fuels are needed for the production and distribution of foodstuffs.

The scarcity will mean higher prices for whatever fuel is available and the effects will ripple through the economy.

Human Interest is the monthly newsletter of the Humanist Association of the Greater Sacramento Area (HAGSA). Wayne Luney is recorder of HAGSA.

Ed. Note: "Peak Oil" is another name for the "Hubbert Peak" named after geophysicist Dr. M. King Hubbert. Here's a wise quote from www.hubbertpeak.com/:

"We do not inherit the Earth from our parents, we borrow it from our children."

--- Antoine-Marie-Roger de Saint-Exupery

Patriot Act Needs

"Carefully Calibrated Changes"

ACLU Online

In a rare public oversight hearing on the Patriot Act in April, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) renewed its call for changes to the 2001 anti-terrorism measure to bring it back in line with the Constitution.

"Carefully calibrated changes to the Patriot Act are needed to protect our freedoms," Gregory T. Nojeim, Associate Director of the ACLU Washington Legislative Office, told the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.

Several key provisions of the Patriot Act are set to expire at the end of the year, and both chambers of Congress are holding hearings to examine the Patriot Act. The ACLU has led the national call for review and reform of the Patriot Act to ensure that law enforcement tools needed to prevent terrorism do not sweep up personal information about innocent Americans.

One of the more controversial provisions of the Patriot Act, section 215, expands the FBI's power to obtain records in national security investigations without any court review at all. These "national security letters" can be used to obtain financial records, credit reports, and telephone, Internet and other communications, billing or transactional records. The ACLU is also actively challenging this provision in court.

Also under examination is section 213 of the Patriot Act which authorizes "sneak and peek" searches that permit unlimited delayed notification to targets of search warrants. These warrants are available in all criminal cases where the federal government says notification would result in destruction of evidence, danger, flight from prosecution, intimidation of a witness, or serious jeopardy to a criminal investigation. The ACLU has long argued that this catch-all "serious jeopardy" clause is too broad and must be curtailed.

When the Patriot Act was passed, Congress made sure some of the most extreme powers would "sunset" this year unless Congress reauthorized them. While "sneak and peek" is not one of them, the ACLU and its allies have called for Congress to modify this power to ensure that proper checks are put into place.

In July 2003, the House adopted – by an extraordinary margin – an amendment that would bar federal law enforcement from implementing "sneak and peek" search warrants. Rep. C.L. "Butch" Otter (R-ID), with bipartisan allies in both chambers of Congress, has introduced the "Security and Freedom Enhancement Act" which would make corrections to the Patriot Act – including section 213 – to render it Constitutional.

"Security and liberty are not mutually exclusive," said Nojeim. "We hope that Congress can cut through the secrecy and see that the Patriot Act went too far, too fast, and must be amended to protect freedom."

Learn more about the ACLU and the Patriot Act at: <http://www.aclu.org/patriotact>.

Kraft attacked for backing Gay Games

by Larry Buhl, *PlanetOut Network*

Kraft Foods came under attack this week by the American Family Association, a Mississippi-based anti-gay group, which urges the food maker to drop its corporate sponsorship of the 2006 Gay Games in Chicago.

In an e-mail sent Monday, AFA encouraged its 500,000 members to make a personal call to Kraft and "tell them to pull their financial support from the 2006 Gay Games." The group is not, however, calling for an official boycott of Kraft or other corporate sponsors, according to Kathryn Hooks, AFA's director of media.

A staunch opponent of gay rights, the AFA regularly does battle against what it calls the "radical homosexual agenda" and is best known for urging boycotts of Disney and Procter & Gamble. The group regularly protests companies that advertise on shows such as "Will & Grace" and "Desperate Housewives."

"It's disappointing that a group would target something like an event that celebrates sports and healthy lifestyles," Boyer told the *PlanetOut Network*. "But AFA's efforts seem more about energizing their base and raising money than bringing about policy changes. Kraft is behind us 100 percent."

Boyer also noted that the Gay Games have broad public support in Chicago, including that of the mayor, Richard M. Daley, who is the honorary chair of Chicago 2006.

"Mayor Daley is committed to the success of the 2006 Gay Games because it is an expression of international goodwill and a celebration of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities, which are important to Chicago," said Bill Greaves, Chicago's liaison to the LGBT communities.

On Wednesday Kraft and other sponsors were attacked by another religious right group following AFA's lead. The Illinois Family Institute asked its members to target Kraft and five other Illinois companies that are sponsoring what it calls the "Homosexuality Games."

"By allowing their corporate logos to be used to promote the 'Gay Games,' Kraft, Harris Bank and other sponsoring companies are celebrating wrong and destructive behaviors, and showing their disdain for the majority of Americans who favor traditional morality and marriage," the group wrote on its Web site. Ironically, the site features a prominent bust of Abraham Lincoln, who has recently been regarded by some historians as gay.

Boyer said that a coordinated LGBT response to such attacks is not necessary, but he encouraged people who want to show their appreciation for Kraft's support of diversity to do so on their Web site, at Kraft.com, or through a link at gaygameschicago.org.

Humanists out of the closet and into the House

by Matt Cherry, *Humanist Network News*, 5/11/05

"I'm an atheist. So there you go right there. I can't be elected to anything because polls all say that people won't elect an atheist."

– Ron Reagan, replying to Larry King's question about running for president. June 23, 2004

Maybe Ron Reagan should move to Britain. In its recent general election – which Tony Blair's Labour Party won with a reduced majority – 17 members of the Parliamentary Humanist Group were re-elected to the House of Commons.

That's right. Seventeen openly non-religious politicians were re-elected to the legislative branch of government. And nobody paid any attention. Now if that happened in the U.S. it would make headlines.

While there are almost certainly members of Congress who do not believe in a Supreme Being, no-one has come out of the closet and publicly admitted it. And conventional wisdom is that it would be electoral suicide to run for major office as a non-theist.

The situation in Britain is very different. The Parliamentary Humanist Group is a cross-party caucus organized by the British Humanist Association (BHA). In the last parliament it had 45 members: 24 in the House of Commons and 21 in the House of Lords.

While Tony Blair is religious, two of his recent predecessors as Labour Party leader – Neil Kinnock and Michael Foot – were openly humanist. And Blair seems to get more criticism for his ostentatious piety than Kinnock or Foot got for their low-key non-belief.

US out-of-step with the West

Britain is not unusual in the Western world. It is common to see atheists, agnostics and humanists in positions of political power in Europe. In fact the current Spanish government is so pervasively non-religious that only one member of the cabinet is a church-goer! And Alexander Kwasniewski, the president of Poland who is a US favorite to take over as Secretary General of the United Nations when Kofi Annan retires in 2006, is also openly atheist. And the prime minister of New Zealand, Helen Clarke, describes herself as an agnostic.

When will America catch up with the rest of the world? It might be when the American public heeds the advice of President George W. Bush, who at a press conference April 28 said: "The great thing about America is that you should be allowed to worship any way you want. And if you choose not to worship, you're equally as patriotic as somebody who does worship."

Voters – and godless politicians – take note!

Matt Cherry is the executive director of the Institute for Humanist Studies.

“Their number is negligible and they are stupid”

from Snopes.com

"Should any political party attempt to abolish social security, unemployment insurance, and eliminate labor laws and farm programs, you would not hear of that party again in our political history. There is a tiny splinter group, of course, that believes you can do these things. Among them are [a] few other Texas oil millionaires, and an occasional politician or business man from other areas. Their number is negligible and they are stupid."

– Eisenhower in '54

Save for a few minor details, the quote from President Dwight D. Eisenhower cited above is accurate. It wasn't something he uttered (it was something he wrote), and the version reproduced above omits Ike's reference to a specific Texas oil tycoon (H.L. Hunt), but otherwise it's taken verbatim from a letter President Eisenhower penned to his brother, Edgar Newton Eisenhower, on 8 November 1954:

Now it is true that I believe this country is following a dangerous trend when it permits too great a degree of centralization of governmental functions. I oppose this – in some instances the fight is a rather desperate one. But to attain any success it is quite clear that the Federal government cannot avoid or escape responsibilities which the mass of the people firmly believe should be undertaken by it. The political processes of our country are such that if a rule of reason is not applied in this effort, we will lose everything – even to a possible and drastic change in the Constitution. This is what I mean by my constant insistence upon "moderation" in government. Should any political party attempt to abolish social security, unemployment insurance, and eliminate labor laws and

farm programs, you would not hear of that party again in our political history. There is a tiny splinter group, of course, that believes you can do these things. Among them are H. L. Hunt (you possibly know his background), a few other Texas oil millionaires, and an occasional politician or business man from other areas. Their number is negligible and they are stupid.

Politically, Ike was a classic small-government Republican. He was of the opinion that the federal government had grown too large at the expense of local and state authority since the advent of FDR's New Deal in the 1930's, a situation which had been exacerbated by the national emergency that was World War II. Since the Depression and the war were over by the time he took office in 1953, President Eisenhower felt it was time to return to the "middle way" – pruning federal subsidies of industries such as agriculture and power companies, which he believed no longer needed government assistance. At the same time, he wanted to sustain and even increase funding for programs he thought had good track records, and Social Security was paramount among these.



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