

ACTON notes

Acton Institute Newsletter

September / October 2018, Volume 28, Number 5



“connecting good intentions with sound economics”

In This Issue

- Hank Meijer speaks at Acton Lecture Series event
- P.J. O'Rourke to speak at upcoming Acton event
- John McCain, the Hanoi Hilton and public virtue
- Walmart's T-shirt homage to mass murder

President's Message

By the time you read this message, summer will have already waned and we'll be in the thick of autumn. Cooler weather, colorful flora and a return of wool to our daily attire come with the transition from one season to the next.

"Our airwaves and mailboxes are littered with campaign literature that alarmingly indicates a resurgence of big-government advocacy."

Fall is a cherished time of year for me. Observing people walk from the crisp outdoor air into our institution, most of them eager to learn, engage with faculty and rekindle friendships while forging new relationships never grows stale. On the outskirts of town, farmers harvest their crops and prepare their fields for planting next spring's seeds.

"Autumn is a second spring where every leaf is a flower," writes the French philosophical novelist Albert Camus, and I couldn't agree more. Camus was not only depicting nature's beauty bestowed by God's hand but also providing a metaphor for what any educational institution should seek to aspire. The flowering of our efforts to perpetuate virtuous living and promote ordered liberty stands in contrast to the gray landscapes of statist enterprises.

The seeds we planted nearly 30 years ago in Grand Rapids have sprouted, boasted colorful petals throughout the years and matured into an international presence. Today Acton is an internationally recognized cornucopia of great ideas and a source of faith-based social and economic critiques of collectivist ideologies and political cronyism.

Fall is also the season of our state and national elections. Our airwaves and mailboxes are littered with campaign literature that alarmingly indicates a resurgence of big-government advocacy. Young politicians are unseating elders from their own party with promises of free college tuition and health care, for example. These propositions are unsettling.

What this indicates to me is that many of our educational institutions have failed not only their students but also the greater society they were intended to benefit. It also means the Acton Institute is more relevant and necessary today than when it was conceived. Some may consider this fall's recent turn of events as the harbinger of what Shakespeare might have dubbed a winter of discontent. However, I challenge readers to adopt Shakespeare's battle cry as expressed by his Henry V: "Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more!"

The mission of the Acton Institute is to promote a free and virtuous society characterized by individual liberty and sustained by religious principles.



Sincerely,



Rev. Robert Sirico, President

ACTONINSTITUTE

98 E. Fulton Street • Grand Rapids, MI 49503 • USA • www.acton.org

Hank Meijer speaks at Acton Lecture Series event

On September 20, 2018, the Acton Institute was very pleased to welcome Hank Meijer, executive chairman of Meijer, Inc., to speak as part of Acton's Lecture Series. The lecture, "Arthur Vandenberg: The Global Legacy of a Grand Rapids Boy," was largely based on Meijer's biography of *Arthur Vandenberg: The Man in the Middle of the American Century*.

Before his lecture, Meijer placed a plaque, given to him by one of Vandenberg's grandchildren, on his podium that read: "This too shall pass." He revealed that Arthur Vandenberg also kept a plaque with this phrase on his desk.

"This too shall pass" is a wonderfully descriptive phrase for events in the life of Arthur Vandenberg, a Michigan-born politician who experienced both great success and extreme opposition during his service in public office.

Meijer described Vandenberg's interest and rise in politics, beginning when he was a teenager with great appreciation for President Theodore Roosevelt.

Vandenberg became a senator in 1928, a year before the stock market crashed, and soon created legislation for the creation of the FDIC. At first known for his advocacy for isolationism, Vandenberg later altered those views and gave a famous "speech heard round the world," calling for an American commitment to an alliance with countries that had fought two world wars in the last three decades. Vandenberg's dramatic speech set the grounds for the creation of the United Nations and NATO.

Meijer ended his talk with a quote from a tribute to Vandenberg given by journalist Edward R. Murrow. "We are now divided bitterly, hysterically. Had [Vandenberg] lived he would've gloried in this conflict and steadied it. And he would've been confident that at the end of the day little men of loud voice and small faith will yield to the collective judgement of the American people."

Hank Meijer took the largely obscured legacy of Arthur Vandenberg and elevated it in the eyes of the audience.



Hank Meijer - January 2018; Credit: Slowking. Wikimedia Commons



Acton Institute was pleased to welcome Hank Meijer.

From Our Conference Participants

I am being exposed to ideas and books that I would not have found otherwise. I am now a passionate advocate for free markets and free societies.

—Lee B
Dallas, TX

Acton University has provided me with the insights and analysis that inform my teaching of macro- and micro-economics, helping me link the study of economics to morality and ethics.

—Charles M
Bridgeport, CT

P.J. O'Rourke to speak at upcoming Acton event

Mark your calendars! You are invited to an evening in Chicago at The Peninsula Hotel featuring best-selling author and leading political satirist P. J. O'Rourke on Friday, December 7. You do not want to miss this evening filled with humor and wit in what promises to be a memorable event. Known as a hard-bitten, cigar-smoking conservative, O'Rourke bashes all political persuasions. "Money and power to government," says O'Rourke, "is like giving whiskey and car keys to teenage boys."

With more than one million words of trenchant journalism under his byline and more citations in *The Penguin Dictionary of Humorous Quotations* than any living writer, P.J. O'Rourke has established himself as America's premier political satirist. Both TIME and the Wall Street Journal have labeled O'Rourke "the funniest writer in America." He began writing for 1960s underground newspapers, became editor-in-chief of National Lampoon, then spent 20 years reporting for Rolling Stone and The Atlantic Monthly as the world's only trouble-spot humorist.

ACTON News



Best-selling author P.J. O'Rourke will speak in Chicago December 7.

He's written 19 books on subjects as diverse as politics and cars and etiquette and economics. His book about Washington, *Parliament of Whores*, and his book about international conflict and crisis, *Give War a Chance*, both reached #1 on the New York Times best-seller list. O'Rourke's newest release, *None of My Business*, will be given to all dinner attendees.

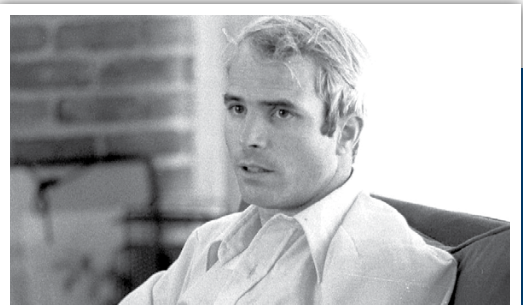
Sponsoring Acton's Evening in Chicago with P.J. O'Rourke is a great way to secure your own seat at the dinner and introduce clients, colleagues or friends to Acton's mission. There are many benefits to being a sponsor for this premier event. For more information on sponsorship of this marquee event, please contact

Nick Porter at event@acton.org or call 616.454.3080.

Kick off the holiday season by joining us for music, dancing, fine food and engaging dialogue. Be sure to secure your seat at Acton's Evening in Chicago with P.J. O'Rourke and register at acton.org/Chicago.

John McCain, the Hanoi Hilton and public virtue

Sen. John McCain, who passed away on August 25, is undeniably the most famous prisoner of war held captive and tortured by the North Vietnamese. McCain was one of 591 Americans returned by North Vietnam over several months during "Operation Homecoming" in 1973. But in our current politicized era, McCain's fame somewhat overshadows the leadership and lessons of many other great Americans tortured by their Marxist captors. Virtually all of them were aviators, and many never flew again, their bodies too twisted and ravaged for the cockpit. Many of them languished so long in North Vietnamese prisons that they came back to an entirely different America that, for them, offered up shocking images of moral and cultural decline.



John McCain shortly after his release from POW camp in 1973.

The legacy and witness left by these warriors are not about power or politics, but service and sacrifice. "Leading with honor is about doing the right thing, even when it entails personal sacrifice," writes former POW Lee Edwards.

In a country starving for truth, a new generation of Americans would be wise to acquaint themselves with the testimony of why such sacrifice produced unity and greatness against enormous odds. One can hope that much of the enormous outpouring of deserved gratitude and respect for McCain can transcend politics and move the nation towards a life of sacrifice in the service of something far greater.

Walmart's T-shirt homage to mass murder

The Day of Remembrance marks the infamous Molotov - Ribbentrop Pact on August 23, 1939, which divided Europe between Hitler and Stalin and paved the way to World War II. Many do not realize that both national socialism, or Nazism, and communism shared the idea that everything was permissible for the good of the cause – everything from martial law to confiscations, occupations, arrests, torture and murder

Some have excused the crimes of Stalin because he ultimately fought against Nazi Germany. Stalin and Hitler had much blood on their hands – basically two sides of one filthy coin – yet only one side seems to be etched into the memory of humankind.

Against this background it is extremely concerning and offensive to find Walmart and other retailers promoting what they call “cool shirts,” bright, red tees emblazoned with the Soviet hammer and sickle. Making light of the atrocities committed

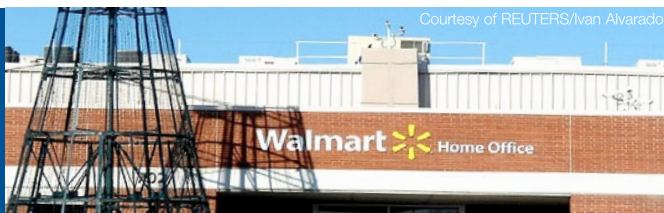
under and in the name of communism shows ignorance and callousness.

As an Estonian-American living in Europe, I am embarrassed and pained. It is impossible to explain such flippancy to people here, many of whom suffered under communism. People are beginning to think that it is true – Americans care only about making money. I have a hard time convincing them of the America and Americans I know and love, their values and principles, their bravery and willingness to help the downtrodden and oppressed.

The executioners killed their victims twice: first by taking their lives and second by erasing the memory of them and their fate. This is why it is important to remember. We cannot undo the first killing, but we can undo the second.

This essay was adapted from a recent Acton Institute commentary by Mari-Ann Kelam.

“Stalin and Hitler had much blood on their hands – basically two sides of one filthy coin – yet only one side seems to be...”



Walmart Home Office in Bentonville, AR.



ACTON in the News

“At a time when the Left seems hell-bent upon stigmatizing that civilization’s philosophical and religious roots, and even eradicating them in the name of ‘respect-tolerance-diversity-equality,’ the deepest messages of Wilhelm Röpke’s *A Humane Economy* seem more relevant than ever.”

—Excerpted from Samuel Gregg’s article
in *Law and Liberty*

Alejandro Chafuen

Title: Operation Finale: Nazis in Our Midst

Publication: Forbes

Date: 09.06.18

Alejandro Chafuen

Title: Moralists And Money: From Gold to Bitcoin

Publication: Forbes

Date: 08.22.18

Samuel Gregg

Title: How Politics Becomes Religion

Publication: Catholic World Report

Date: 07.15.18

Reminder

Help Acton Promote Freedom and Virtue!

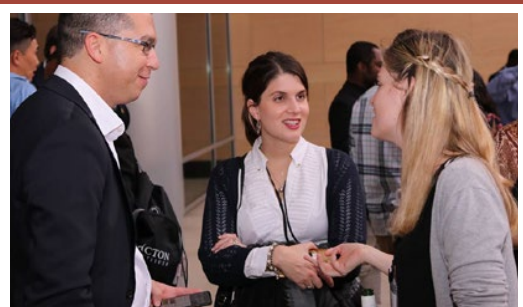
The Acton Institute depends on the generosity of supporters like you. If you have not donated to Acton but enjoy *Acton Notes*, please consider helping us meet our goals! Your help makes possible our mission to promote a free and virtuous society. You may choose to donate using the envelope provided, or you may visit acton.org/donate to make a secure donation online. We send our heartfelt thanks to those of you who have been so generous in the past with your strategic support, as well as your prayers. You have a broad vision and a generous heart.

INTRODUCE ACTON TO A FRIEND

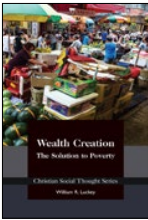
KNOW SOMEONE WHO WOULD BE INTERESTED IN THE WORK OF THE ACTON INSTITUTE? USE OUR WEBSITE TO SEND THEM AN EMAIL WITH INFORMATION ON OUR PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES. THANKS FOR PROMOTING FREEDOM AND VIRTUE!

Visit: www.acton.org/refer

ACTON UNIVERSITY



ACTON Book Shop

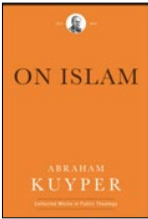


Wealth Creation: The Solution to Poverty

By William Luckey

Care for the poor has been a hallmark of Christianity since its beginning. Yet the economic world that provides the context for both Christianity and poverty has changed dramatically since the time of Christ. Professor Luckey helps us to understand that context by tracing the history of Christian thought.

Softcover 66 pages Sale \$6.50



On Islam

By Abraham Kuyper

On Islam compiles Kuyper's significant writings on Islam. It will be of particular relevance for today's readers—who live in a world where Islam's role on the global scene is visible and controversial, its future so significant, and its relationship with Christianity so decisive for both faiths.

Hardcover 363 pages Sale \$49.99



Foundations of a Free & Virtuous Society

By Dylan Pahman

Creative, quirky and always winsome, Dylan Pahman builds a systematic case for a positive relationship between a biblical understanding of the human person and the economic flourishing that freedom enables.

Softcover 168 pages Sale \$14.95



On the Law of Nature: A Demonstrative Method

By Niels Hemmingsen

In this treatise Hemmingsen argues that all particular rules of ethical conduct can be derived from immutable axioms or first principles. This important treatise looks both backward to classical and medieval philosophy and forward to developments in the 17th century and beyond.

Hardcover 256 pages Sale \$29.95

For our fastest service and a complete list of titles, visit store.acton.org

	PRICE	QUANTITY	TOTAL
Wealth Creation: The Solution to Poverty	\$6.50		
On Islam	\$49.99		
Foundations of a Free & Virtuous Society	\$14.95		
On the Law of Nature: A Demonstrative Method	\$29.95		

Make checks payable to "Acton Institute." For orders in the United States, Canada and Mexico: for the first item, add US \$6.75 for shipping, plus US \$1.00 for each additional item. Overseas orders: US \$8.75 for the first item, plus US \$1.75 for each additional item.

Michigan residents add 6% sales tax _____

(see rates at left) Shipping _____

(enclose check or credit card information) Total _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Country _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Credit Card Number _____ Security Code _____

☐Mastercard ☐Visa ☐Amex Signature _____ Expiration Date _____

Call 616-454-3080 **Fax** 616-454-9454 **Mail** Acton Institute, 98 E. Fulton St, Grand Rapids, MI 49503

ACTON notes

NONPROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
GRAND RAPIDS, MI
PERMIT 986

Acton Institute • 98 E. Fulton Street • Grand Rapids, MI 49503 • USA

ACTON notes

Calendar of Events

ACTON INSTITUTE EVENTS

Date	Event	Location
Oct 25	Acton on Tap: Was Jesus a Socialist? Speaker: Lawrence Reed	Atlanta, GA
Oct 25	The Human Advantage: Don't Get Replaced By a Robot Speaker: Jay Richards	Grand Rapids, MI
Oct 25	Dallas Luncheon Speaker: Rev. Robert Sirico	Dallas, TX
Nov 15	Liberty and Markets Series Colloquium on Liberty and the Intellectual Roots of Modern Market Economics	Grand Rapids, MI
Nov 29	Liberty in Equality or Constraint: What is the Future of Social Democracy?	Munich, Germany
Dec 4	Freedom, Virtue and the Good Society	Rome, Italy
Dec 7	An Evening in Chicago with P. J. O'Rourke	Chicago, IL