Rhetorical tide drowns conservativism's prosperity

health and continued prosperity of conservativism as a via- municated is the fact that the ble political alternative. Even civil government enforces its dethough apparent counter exam- crees through violence or the ples exist to such a claim - with threat of violence. Imprisonment the continued popularity of is the dominant form of govern-President Reagan as the most ment violence today. forceful counter example - it is obvious that conservativism has failed to draw and inspire many adherents among Third World nations, minority groups and intellectuals.

The rarity of converts among these groups does not bode well for the continuation of the impressive recent gains of the political right.

Rogers

The problem lies in the rhetoric of the right. One of the striking distinctions between the rhetoric of the right and that of the left is the inclusion of the powerful term "justice." This term is within the popular vocabulary of the left; however, its absence is noticeable within the popular vocabulary of the right.

Simply reflecting on the number of times Democrats used the term in their convention speeches, in contrast to its rare use in Republican convention speeches, demonstrates the point.

The rare use of the justice metaphore among conservatives can be traced to economic justifications for conservative beliefs rather than political justifications. Or, utilitarian justification replaced the natural rights justification. This emergence occurred in the late 19th century and obscured the conservative political tradition that inherited its thought from philosopher John Locke. (Although Locke's concern with justice and the unwarranted use of government violence can be traced through theologians of the Protestant Reformation and ultimately to arguments produced because of the papal revolution of the 11th and 12th

centuries. It is within the Lockean tradition that conservatives may rediscover the strong affirmative vision of justice. When properly articulated, the vision of justice will provide the force of belief

One idea that must be com-

The basis for a truly just society exists only within the historical tradition of American conservativism, causing a society that does not sanction the initiation of violence against anyone.

The term "initiation" is understood in the sense of origination in a series of violent events. Thus, the state does not "initiate" violence when it punishes a criminal. The state merely responds to the criminal's initiation.

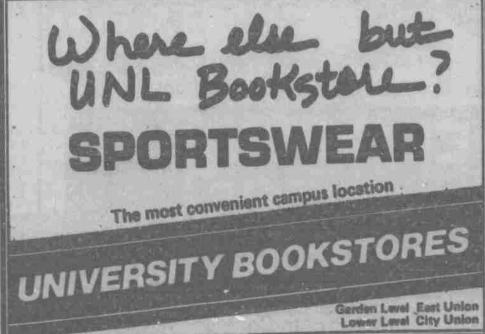
This understanding of justice underscores the perversity of the left's use of the term "social justice" or "economic justice," because the term is attached to what in reality is the massive and continuing use of state-initiated violence against people who are not morally responsible for harming anyone.

This reaction to leftest claims does not mean that conservatives should ignore the injustices of the past. Rather the distinction between the left and the right is the picture of the continuing and massive violent intervention of the state. This is the picture of the socialist state or even the state with a mixed economy as currently understood.

In contrast is the approach outlined by Harvard philosophy professor Robert Nozick in his



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Utopia," where he advanced a of the state:

"Although to introduce socialism as the punishment for our sins would be to go too far, past injustice might be so great as to make necessary in the short run a more extensive state in order to rectify them."

Conservative social theorists thus must be concerned with ad-

and the vision of an immoral and nity and liberty. violent egalitarian society.

vancing claims of rectification for powerful secular ideologies of so-gence.

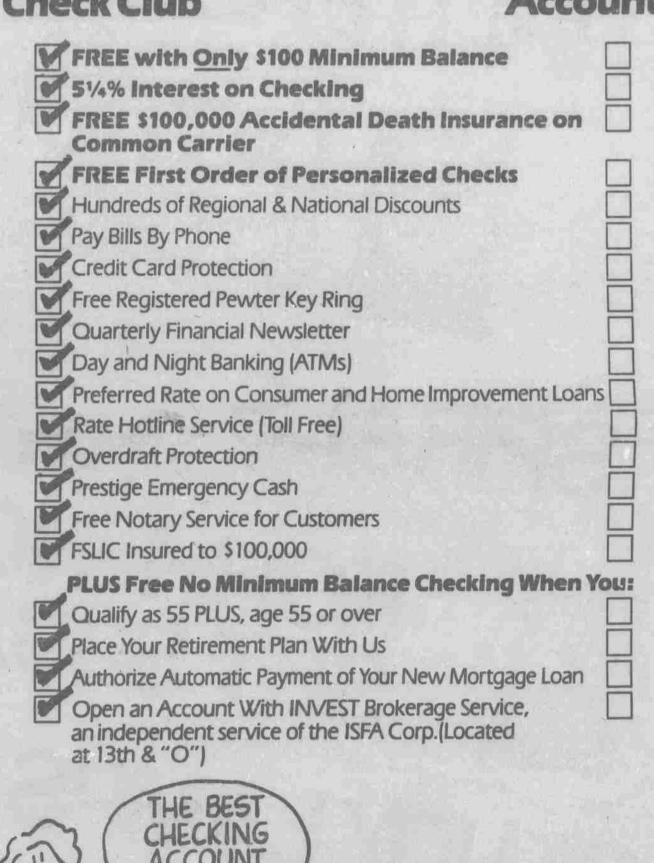
he tide of history currently strong enough to resoundly de-opposed the long-term feat leftest ideologies. Seminal work "Anarchy, State, and past injustices that may justify a cialism and Marxism. Rarely has Utopia," where he advanced a larger state in the short run. This the world seen more continual generally Lockean understanding is opposed to continuing inter- bloodshed than where the words ventionism of the leftist state ad- of the French Revolution have vanced by the claims of equality been repeated: Equality, frater-

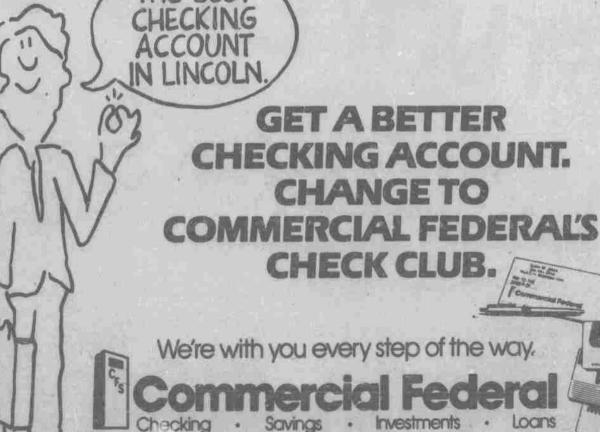
> Justice, not a violently imposed Our culture — the culture of econmic equality, is the way of Western Europe — has been a vio- lasting peace. It is this peace that lent culture. The legacy that the exists in conservativism's for-West currently is leaving to the gotten heritage. If rearticulated, non-Western world is the legacy this justice will insure continued of violence as encapsulated in the prosperity of conservative resur-

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