

WAR ON CULTURE L A G

Battle P4: The Progress Show

An original radio drama by

Dan Langhoff

Allan-Hayden Enterprises
2217 College Ave.
Modesto, CA 95350
(209) 522-8841
ahe@imabiz.com
CultureLag.com

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CAST

ANNOUNCER Episode titles, and other important stuff.

HOST Segment host.

 (Assorted brief appearances.)

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INTRO – THE PROMISE OF PROGRESS

1. MUSIC: PROGRAM THEME--UP. ESTABLISH. FADE UNDER.

2. ANNOUNCER: And now...Infinity Limited, L-T-D timidly presents another skirmish in the....

3. SFX: (ECHO ON)

4. ANNOUNCER: War...on...Culture.....Lag....

5. MUSIC: THEME SWELLS, PETERS OUT AFTER ENDING CHORD. CUT TO SOMETHING MORE PASTORAL.

6. ANNOUNCER: Sociologists, theologians, fiction writers, and other crackpots have observed that our society is failing to keep its mores and folkways in harmony with the exponentially increasing body of scientific and technical knowledge available to us. Once we figured out what this meant, a hardy band of us have been inspired to do something about this crisis, this "culture lag."

While few understand the menace, we all understand "war" as a means of "combating" threats. Thus, this "battle." But now, on with the show--there's a big lag out there!

7. MUSIC: UP, ENDS ON TRIUMPHAL CHORD, THEN OUT.

8. ANNOUNCER: Today's encounter we call "The Progress Show." And it's brought to you by ***Stereotypes 'R Us***: Keeping alive the lowest common denominator for over a hundred years. But now here's our host, McKinley Morganfield.

9. HOST: Back again, I see; well, as the Bonzo Dog Doo-Dah Band once said, even blue men can sing the whites.

But first—I'm sure you're dying for the answers to last week's Culture Quiz, so here they are: Fred Allen, the smash, root beer, and platypus.

Friends, if you're a product of 20th-century American schools you may well have acquired the notion that mankind is on a steady, upward trajectory of improvement—well, at least betterment-ness. 1989 may have been the high water mark of such cockeyed optimism, as international affairs seemed to be lining up for an extended period of peace and prosperity for all.

Unfortunately, you just can't keep reactionary forces down. The opening of this millenium has seen sizeable numbers of humans working feverishly around the planet to turn the clock dramatically backwards.

The correct perspective on all this can only arise from due deliberation. History and current affairs must be studied thoroughly, from multiple perspectives, and micro and macro patterns analyzed in the proper contexts. In short—hard work.

All too often, we cede this responsibility to our loudest voices and prettiest people. Thus, the same counter-productive behavior and mistakes repeat over and over, in shorter time periods.

Well, what say we take just a brief time for a thought experiment. Hasn't every generation likely thought theirs was the

greatest, the apex of humankind? Perhaps our own hubris might be tempered if we put ourselves in past shoes....

10. SFX: "WAY BACK" MUSIC AND EFFECTS....

ANCIENT PROGRESS

1. **SOUND: WAR ON CULTURE LAG STANDARD TRANSITION (TANK TREAD ROLLS FROM RIGHT TO LEFT CHANNEL, OVER CLASSICAL MUSIC AND PUNCTUATED BY SILLY NOISES).**
2. ANNOUNCER: The scene: Southern Europe, circa 40,000 years ago....
3. **SFX: "CAVEMAN" LANGUAGE NOISES UP, FADE UNDER.**
4. TRANSLATOR: Cave 12 took our woman? We fight!
5. **SFX: TRANSITION MUSIC OR EFFECT, TO SERVE AS SCENE BREAK.**
6. ANNOUNCER: Same region, 30,000 years ago....
7. **SFX: "CAVEMEN" UP, FADE UNDER.**
8. TRANSLATOR: They took our woman? Well, we have more...oh, *her*? This means war!
9. **SFX: SCENE BREAK.**
10. ANNOUNCER: 20,000 years ago....
11. MAN: The Something-ites invaded our swamp land? This insults every Anything-ite living or dead—we kill them!
12. **SFX: SCENE BREAK.**

1. ANNOUNCER: 5,000 BC, somewhere in the Fertile Crescent....
2. COURTIER: King Whatsis—the Egyptians have invaded our Western provinces. They're taking women and children as slaves!
3. KING: (A BIT ED WYNN-ISH) Gee, that's insulting. This means...war?
4. COURTIER: But Your Highness, Egypt has state-of-the-art battle chariots!
5. KING: And we have....?
6. COURTIER2: Old mules pulling planks on ropes.
7. KING: So...we...fight?
8. COURTIER2: They'd decimate any resistance.
9. KING: Ouch. Well, I think our people have progressed to the point where we can overlook these, ah, hijinks *this* time.... Oooh, tell you what—I'll emotionally blackmail my descendants to avenge us!
- 10. SOUND: MUTTERINGS OF APPROVAL.**
- 10. SFX: SCENE BREAK.**

MIDDLE AGES PROGRESS

1. ANNOUNCER: Europe, the year 1460.
- 2. SFX: CHOPPING WOOD, COWS, OTHER SOUNDS OF PRIMITIVE AGRICULTURE.**
3. GODWIN: Rowan, my boon companion, truly we live in a wondrous age.
4. ROWAN: Aye Godwin, that it be. For a hundred years my ancestors have died by the Black Death or failed peasant revolts, but now we have a respite from both.
5. GODWIN: The land we till is actually *ours*, and we are paid a decent price for our crops and wool.
6. ROWAN: Yet we owe all this to that mysterious scourge, the Plague. Half the kingdom has perished, their property abandoned to anyone healthy enough to claim it.
7. GODWIN: True, true, and methinks our rewards have something to do with so few being left to work the land. Still, we should prosper for the remainder of our days.
8. ROWAN: Verily; the next ten years will be great!
- 9. SFX: SCENE BREAK.**

RENAISSANCE PROGRESS

1. ANNOUNCER: England, around 1600.
2. **SFX: BACKGROUND CHATTER; HORSE ARRIVES, A DOOR IS THROWN OPEN.**
3. ARLEN: Well, well, what have we here? I, Lord Arlen, come home to find my wife abed with young Mattie Groves—my *servant*, no less.

In the good old days, I'd smite you both without another thought. But, in this age of enlightenment, I must give you a chance to defend yourself.

Naturally, young Mattie has no armament; no matter, form must be followed. Here, take the best of my swords.
4. MATTIE: (ALMOST CARTOONISH, "RUBE" VOICE.)
But...but...but....
5. ARLEN: Come, come, young lad, you've enjoyed my lady wife, my silken sheets—now you have a *truly* prized possession in your hand. Do not insult me further by tarrying.
6. MATTIE: (OFF-MIC) How do I work this?
7. **SFX: SLOW, INEFFECTUAL "SWOOSH" OF A SWORD.**
8. ARLEN: Classic. Slicing the drawstring from one's own breeches. How fitting....
9. **SFX: FAST "SWOOSH", THEN A "SPLAT."**
10. LADY: Good sir husband! You've cleaved Mattie's head from his body with a single blow, and snatched your weapon from his hand before he hit the ground.

1. ARLEN: (A BIT SURPRISED) Hmm, yes; I guess it's true what they say about English steel....
2. LADY: (BOLD AND MELODRAMATIC) Yet it was *I* who initiated this tryst. Dear Mattie Groves showed more tenderness in an hour than you have in a thousand! His breath was sweet, his touch light, his manner considerate, and his body odor practically non-existent. He was more of a man than you'll ever be....

(FADE UNDER AS COMPLAINTS CONTINUE.)
3. ARLEN: Hmmm, let me think. No, our culture says *nothing* about how I deal with my woman.
4. **SFX: FEMALE "ULP!", ANOTHER SWORD BLOW.**
5. ARLEN: Squire Cheney, you shall be rewarded for informing me of this matter. Now clean up this mess. Only one grave, I think—but make sure the lady is on top. She was of noble birth....
6. **SOUND: WOCL STANDARD TRANSITION.**

AD – STEREOTYPES 'R US

1. ANNOUNCER:

Just a reminder—all this progress is being brought to you by Stereotypes 'R Us (formerly, the John Alder Library). No matter what group of "us" you belong to, we can provide an exhaustive list of perceived traits, off-color jokes, and distracting tactics to weaken and discredit any group of "them" you choose. We don't hate to over-generalize, but our glittering generalities will take your breath away.

We take only the finest grains of classic half-truths, wrap them in recycled false analogies, and deliver them to you on a thin-entering wedge. Political campaigns are our bread-and-butter (especially—well, you know), but more and more we are trusted consultants to corporate board rooms, patriotic community organizers, and certain Canid-family broadcasters.

Things looked bleak for us in the 1970s, but S-R-US is bigger and badder than ever. If you still don't get how we can help you—well, your opponent probably does.

2. SOUND: WOCL STANDARD TRANSITION.

COLONIAL PROGRESS

1. ANNOUNCER: Philadelphia, 1787. Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson converse.
2. JEFFERSON: Franklin, this making a Constitution is not for sissies. Thirteen "states"? Heck, we have thirteen separate *countries*....
3. FRANKLIN: Accord is not easily won—especially when sequestered indoors during a Philly summer, wearing wool and powdered wigs.
4. JEFFERSON: No one will agree to one set of rules, let alone one central authority. Compromise is an art lost on our fellow citizens, I fear.
5. FRANKLIN: Take heart young Jefferson. Our desire—nay, *need*—for unity will win out in the end. Let us take refreshment....
- 6. SFX: PEOPLE ENTER, BEARING TRAYS OF FOOD AND DRINK.**
7. FRANKLIN: There now, some of your beloved French plonk—served by yon blackamoor Hemmings.
8. JEFFERSON: Ah, and here's my favorite serving wench Sally.
9. HEMMING: Missa Jefferson, any *my* people in your Constitution?
- 10. SFX: JEFFERSON AND FRANKLIN LAUGH.**
11. JEFFERSON: Hemmings, my good man, I love you like a brother, but you can't possibly think men of property and education would let your kind *vote*? We may need to count you as citizens so the South can be better represented in Congress, but let's not go crazy.

1. FRANKLIN: Hear ye, hear ye—that's news to me! You'd recognize them as people to increase your representatives and electors, but not for any other reason?
2. JEFFERSON: Ben, buddy...bubala! It doesn't have to be a one-to-one thing. Maybe seventy-five percent....
3. FRANKLIN: Frankly, any such usage of these poor wretches as political pawns is hypocritical to the point of affront.
4. JEFFERSON: Calm down, don't get your wig in a bunch. We'll talk....
5. FRANKLIN: Good sir, there are *many* more words to be spoken on this issue!
6. SALLY: Ahem. Good sirs, how does *my* sex figure in such calculations of citizenship?
- 7. SFX: ALL THREE MEN LAUGHING.**
8. JEFFERSON: Women? You *must* be joking. Good one, Sally.
9. SALLY: (SARDONICALLY) What an age we live in....
- 10. SFX: SCENE BREAK.**

GILDED AGE PROGRESS

1. ANNOUNCER: New Orleans, 1892. Two gentlemen converse.
2. **SFX: BACKGROUND BAR NOISES, FADE UNDER.**
3. MAN 1: Well, what do you think of our Citizens' Committee plan?
4. MAN 2: Seems foolproof. For the last twenty years, the South has blatantly rolled back every advancement brought by the Civil War, the 13th and 14th Amendments, and Reconstruction. This absurd Separate Car law is just typical, even though "whites-only" cars double the railroads' costs.
5. MAN 1: That's why it's so perfect—we have young Homer Plessey here deliberately board the "white" car. When they arrest him, we have a perfect test case to blow the lid off this mess.
6. MAN 2: Right? He sure looks white to me, but the state labels him "seven-eighths white." How is any judge not gonna take one look at him and see the folly of forcing this fine young man into those filthy "colored" cars?
7. MAN 1: And Homer's OK with this?
8. MAN 2: Sure. He doesn't want to be just a shoemaker all his life.
9. MAN 1: I don't know, I can just see them twisting the law around even more. Like, oh, promising equal facilities for *everything* as long as they can be separate. We could be fighting this *another* 50 years....

1. MAN 2:

You worry too much. No, it'll be a quick trial; the inherent fairness of our court system will sort this out and a new Golden Age of civil accord will be upon us Southerners.

Mark my words—this deliberate peaceful violation of a law to highlight its absurdity will work great, then we'll never have to do it again.

This tactic...well, I believe it's truly a *strategy*, deserving of a name. Hmmm....Polite Insubordination? Considered Disobedience? Civilized Inadherence? Well, it'll come to me.

Here's to Homer Plessey!

2. SFX: TEPID CHEERS THROUGHOUT THE BAR, RENEWED GLASS CLINKING.

3. SOUND: WOCL STANDARD TRANSITION.

OUTRO

1. HOST: Well, you get the gist, 'Laggers. Man has always struggled to define, let alone free, the "better angels" of his nature. One man's civil disobedience is another's anarchy. Even the quest to identify what "higher values" are becomes a kerfuffle at some point.

Seems like the more you know, the better chance you have of selecting a good path. *How* you know what you think you know...well, that's the rub.

Enough brain massage for today. Look for us again as we fight the good fight in the (ECHO) WAR...ON...CULTURE.....LAG....

2. MUSIC: THEME UP, THEN FADE OUT.

3: ANNOUNCER: *The War on Culture Lag* is an Allan-Hayden Joint.

THE END.