

LOS ANGELES

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Liberals vs. conservatives

Bill Starr's definition of liberals as those who "hate things as they are and want them changed," while overstated, is fundamentally accurate ("Liberals, pro and con," Public Forum, July 14).

Liberals hated slavery and worked to eliminate it. In the early days of America's industrial expansion, liberals hated that thousands of workers were sickened or died unnecessarily in dangerous work environments, and worked for occupational safety laws.

In the '60s, liberals hated the racism that still plagued America, and initiated the civil rights movement. Liberals hate a polluted environment, and work for controls on the emission and disposal of dangerous substances.

While it is true that the side effects of liberal-minded changes have sometimes been less than ideal, they have been far outweighed by real social progress.

Starr's suggestion that the goal of the "real" liberal has always been "hate, racism, and government interference with everything we think and do" reveals a serious misreading of American history.

— Bill Becker
Woodland Hills