

Liberty

March 1990

Vol 3, No 4

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Panama:
The Ugly
Gringo Strikes
Back

Animal Rights, Human Rights and the Environment

by John Hospers

The Mencken Diary: Self-Portrait of an Anti-Semite?

by R. W. Bradford

Hong Kong: Capitalism Without Democracy — or Hope

by R. K. Lamb

The Case Against Isolationism

by Stephen Cox

Also: *James S. Robbins* on Heinlein the Dead Grumbler;
George H. Smith on Welfare Intellectuals;
A Dispute over Conservatism and Freedom;
plus other articles and reviews.

"Liberty is a more invigorating cordial than tokay." — William Shenstone

Letters

Reflections of Sexism

In the "Reflections" section of the January 1990 *Liberty*, JSS reflects on conservative and libertarian resistance to the use of gender-free language, and their defense of pseudo-generic terms such as *he* and *man-kind*. I applaud his condemnation of this point of view, but feel he did not go far enough: Libertarians and conservatives are not only showing resistance to language change, but also to the social change which underlies and motivates it.

Many feminists, myself among them, are wary of such neologisms as *waitperson* for *waiter* and *waitress*, when *server* can be used, or even *chairperson*, where *chair* provides the same information just as well or better, since it avoids gender bias and radicalism at the same time. But utterances such as 'the doctor . . . he' used when no particular doctor is designated only perpetuates the notion that doctors (or any other socially and financially privileged members of society) are always male. This is obviously more than a linguistic issue.

I should add that even though much about libertarianism attracts me, I would never become a libertarian—this kind of sexism combined with the naive notion (which I have heard from far too many libertarians) that once the state falls the sexes will be equal will keep me from aligning myself with the philosophical movement or the political party.

Margaret E. Winters
Carbondale, Ill.

Editors' note: "JSS" are the initials of Jane S. Shaw. Does not your use of the term "he" to identify her perpetuate the notion that editors of Liberty (or any other socially and financially privileged members of society) are always male?

"Pro-Life" Tyranny

R. W. Bradford's "The Death of Socialism" (January 1990) was the best discussion of the breakup of communism I've seen. But I have one complaint. Nowhere did he mention the important role that the abortion issue played in the battle against the communist powers.

The Communist government of Romania made abortion a criminal act, and unleashed its full powers against women who tried to control their own bodies. It even outlawed contraceptives, thereby becoming the only government in the world to embrace the entire position of the Roman

Catholic Church on reproductive rights.

According to Howard Witt of the *Chicago Tribune*, prior to the revolution, all women were forced to submit to periodic gynecological check-ups, and when pregnancy was discovered the police were called in to keep track of them. The monster Ceausescu even used his secret police, the dreaded Securitate, to investigate *miscarriages* for possible criminal prosecution!

The result was predictable: thousands of women dying each year as the result of botched abortions, the surreptitious but widespread occurrence of infanticide, a declining population, and absolute hatred of the government.

And so, when the people of Romania rose up and threw off the bonds of Communism, one of the first changes they made was to legalize abortion and contraception, rejecting the Catholic/Communist position in one glorious stroke. Perhaps there is a lesson here for those who seek to criminalize abortion in the U.S.!

A. K. Moore
Chicago, Ill.

Gorby & The Pope: Heroes!

R.W. Bradford's musings on the collapse of socialism ("Now the Real Struggle Begins," January 1990) left out the two keys that made the political demise of socialism possible: Mikhail Gorbachev and John Paul II. It was Gorbachev's repudiation of the Brezhnev doctrine, and his adoption of a non-interventionist position toward Eastern Europe, that signalled the masses to take control of the future of their countries. If they had had Soviet intervention to fear, the formal collapse might have been put off for years. Moreover, Gorbachev personally shoved history forward with his own hand in East Germany, Bulgaria, Romania, and probably elsewhere as well. In contrast to any U.S. politician in memory, Gorbachev actually succeeded in making people freer. With perfect justice, he is hailed as a liberator all over Europe and Asia, a true hero for our times.

And the Pope played a huge role, too. Bradford says that socialism began to unravel about a decade ago. That's right, but not, as he says, because the theoretical failings of socialism only then became established fact. Socialism *never* worked in practice. But something more significant occurred in 1979: John Paul II, another hero, made his first visit to Poland as Pope. In a triumphant speech in Warsaw's Victo-

ry Square, he called on the people of Poland to bring Christian morality to bear as the judge of history and worldly institutions.

That speech set in motion the changes in the East Bloc. Solidarity was formed in Poland, and the Pope's voice has had a powerful presence in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union ever since. His influence on world affairs has also demonstrated that Christianity has a unique power to unite the masses against any and all oppressors.

Jeffrey Tucker
Fairfax, Va.

Pro-choice

C.K. Rowley and R.E. Wagner's "Choosing Freedom: Public Choice and the Libertarian Idea" (January 1990) states: "We would agree that we have not chosen our government. But we would also note that none of us has chosen to be governed by the set of rules that would constitute a market economy. Both government and markets are coercive in that they represent rules or constraints that we must live by and that we have not chosen."

This indicates that the authors neither perceive nor understand the difference between a government and a free-market economy. I am appalled.

The most fundamental difference between even a "minimal-state" government and a free-market economy is the freedom to "opt out." Even in a mini-state, there must be some means of achieving compliance with the absolutely necessary constraints that apply to all. No one is exempt; otherwise, there really would not be a state or government as we normally think of it. *No one can opt out of government rules.* Just try to opt out of taxes.

The beauty of the free market is: no one can force you to participate. If you don't want to participate, you can opt out peacefully. In a free-market society, organizations and institutions are made up of people who freely choose to be members. If a church member, for example, has a disagreement with the rules of his church, he has at least three courses of action open to him: (1) He can accept the rules [go along with things and remain a member]; (2) He can negotiate with the powers that be and try to obtain a change in the rules (and if the rules change to his satisfaction, remain a member); or (3) He can opt out of the church and go elsewhere [or start his own church].

The (mini) state does not permit one to opt out. There is never any choice. You can always attempt to "work within the system" and attempt to effect change by persuasion, legislation (or bribery), but it is never in the interest of those who are in

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Liberty

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power to allow opting-out.

David Michael Myers
Martinsburg, W. Va.

Plugging Away at Morality

The brief review by Timothy Virkkala of David Friedman's *The Machinery of Freedom* ("The Machinery of Friedman," January 1990) contained the comment that Virkkala "found [Friedman's book] a lot more convincing than all the standard (and confusing) stuff about natural rights and morality."

As someone who has done a lot of work on natural rights and morality, I can appreciate how both could be confusing to some people. The theory of natural rights—not unlike many other theories in various disciplines—is not simple, nor is it a simple matter to grasp the relationship between morality and freedom.

I hope that Virkkala will keep at it—both of those areas of study are important and mastering them will help supplement the kind of work David Friedman and other economists are doing, work that by no means can stand alone in defense of the free society.

Tibor Machan
Auburn University, Ala.

Who the Heck is Ayn Rand?

You must stop doling out column inches to people who want to worry the bones of Ayn Rand in public. Is this because we should revere dem bones? Of course not; rather because most libertarians have never heard of Ayn Rand and don't care about the personal politics of her circle—insiders, outsiders, hangers on, the banished, the blackballed, etc.

Juicy, ridiculous, humorously-presented gossip about Ayn is okay because even we the uninitiated can enjoy it. However, whiners (here I won't name names; it's not Tibor Machan's fault that you published his piece) who need to explain what fine, independent Randians they are (despite exclusion from the group) do not even inspire enough pity to save us from boredom.

Michael S. Christian
Paris, France

Opportunity Cut

I strongly disagree with Michael S. Christian's "Against a Capital Gains Cut" (November 1989) for two reasons:

(1) It is not true that only initial stock purchases provide an economic investment in productive assets. One of the most important notions in modern economics is *opportunity cost*. The outstanding shares of common stock are priced by the market, and that price, in turn—in comparison to a

firm's earnings and dividends—determines the cost of equity capital. This gives the firm information about where to obtain capital: debt, preferred stock, or common stock (where capital obtained via common stock does not necessarily mean issuing new shares, but can also mean retaining part of the earnings and reinvesting it in the firm's capital projects).

(2) Any cut of improperly imposed taxes is good. Income taxes are not properly imposed, there is no exchange of values involved, citizens are taxed just for working, i.e., are treated as slaves. Any slave tax (not justified by a value provided in return and a voluntary character) should be cut, cut, cut, and eliminate.

Krzysztof Ostaszewski
Louisville, Ky.

Thanks for the Malleability

I would like to thank Mr Llewellyn H. Rockwell, Jr ("The Case for Paleolibertarianism," January 1990) for using the prefix "paleo" instead of "ancient" or "archaic." I like describing myself in words that few people will even bother to understand and that will change with time.

John Cralley Shaw
Houston, Texas

Libertarianism Grows Up

Finally! A published expression of what I believe are the feelings and beliefs of many.

Many people I know are completely turned off by the "freedom movement's" perceived libertine atheism. I have been largely unsuccessful in trying to explain that there is another view; that freedom, family, Christianity, culture and social order are *not* incompatible. I hope this new view of libertarianism will take root, grow, and prosper.

Julie Watner
Gramling, S.C.

Damned Christian Arguments

Llewellyn Rockwell attempts to base libertarian individualist arguments on "Christian Morality." Murray Rothbard, F.A. Hayek, Marshall Fritz and others have also tried this.

These men conveniently forget that the Bible treats women as second-class citizens (I Cor. 11:3 & 9, 14:34-35; Numbers 31:14-18, et al). Also, it's very difficult for libertarians to stomach Luke 19:27 where Jesus, The Prince of Peace says, "But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me." The Catholic Church took this very literally during the Inquisition, as does the current drug witch-hunt. And libertarian Christian apologists have trouble with Romans 13:1-7 "Government

servants are God's servants: honor and respect them. Pay your taxes gladly." (!)

stormy MON
Denver, Colo.

Put Up or Shut Up

Instead of just writing at length, Lew Rockwell should do one of these two things.

1) Get 5,000 or so of these unnamed individuals who are middle-class white men and love tradition and join the national LP. Then, instead of being on the outside looking in, you would have the controls.

2) If number one is too difficult, then get 50 to 100 of the same unnamed individuals to attend the Michigan Libertarian Party convention in April 1990. Michigan doesn't have to spend money on a ballot drive (Ron Paul's excuse for his poor showing in the 1988 election). All one has to do is attend the convention and get his or her name placed on the ballot. Then, in the real world of politics, use that vast amount of money, people, resources etc. to get the paleolibertarians *elected* in Michigan and you will have won your case.

For my friends in the counter-culture side of the party: let's cooperate with these paleolibertarians and give them their due. I did in 1988 and they lost. If they have two elections in which they lose or cannot find these middle-class folks, we will have the reality of their losses to judge them by and shut them up once and for all.

Bruce A. Smith
Douglas, Mich.

Cancer Ward

It is strategically sensible for Libertarians to keep their movement open to believers and non-believers alike. Anybody who renounces the use of force in politics ought to be welcome, regardless of his or her religious and lifestyle choices. Still, one has to wonder about people who reject political authority in public life while accepting the authority of scriptures or clergy in their private lives.

Llewellyn Rockwell wants to purge the movement of anybody who thinks for him-

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Letters Policy

We invite readers to comment on articles that have appeared in *Liberty*. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. All letters are assumed to be intended for publication unless otherwise stated. Succinct, typewritten letters are preferred. Please include your phone number so that we can verify your identity.

Who was Felix Morley, and why is the Institute for Humane Studies awarding \$7,500 in his honor?

Felix Morley was editor of the *Washington Post* from 1933 to 1944 and a winner of the Pulitzer Prize for distinguished editorial writing. In the *Post* and in subsequent writing, at the height of the New Deal and postwar anti-Communism, Morley emphasized private property, voluntarism, and a noninterventionist foreign policy.

The Institute for Humane Studies is pleased to announce the fourth annual Felix Morley Memorial Writing Competition. IHS will award

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to outstanding young writers whose work demonstrates an appreciation of free enterprise and individual liberty. In addition, five runner-up prizes of \$500 will be awarded.

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Application Deadline: June 15, 1990

Requests for application forms and completed applications with clippings should be submitted to: Morley Prize Secretary, Institute for Humane Studies, George Mason University, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax, VA, 22030-4444.

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self or herself in personal or cultural matters. Points number eight (social authority) and ten (Judeo-Christian tradition) of his manifesto would certainly outrage such people. Is Western culture worthy of preservation and defense (point nine)? Yes, in spite of the cancer of organized religion that has plagued it from the start.

Warren Gibson
San Carlos, Calif.

Paleo-Enforcer?

"Political freedom is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the good society," says Lew Rockwell in the January 1990 *Liberty*. No problem there. But he goes on to say that "neither is it sufficient for the free society. We also need social institutions and standards that encourage public virtue, and protect the individual from the State." Political freedom isn't sufficient for a free society?!? If we had political freedom, wouldn't that mean we wouldn't need protection from the state?

Maybe I'm missing something.

It's also strange to see Murray Rothbard joining Rockwell on this crusade to cleanse the libertarian movement of undesirables. Isn't this the same Rothbard who excoriated the "tinpot enforcers and petty despots" like Branden and Rand that crippled the Objectivist movement? They ruthlessly expelled anyone who didn't meet their standards of purity from their midst. Isn't Rockwell setting himself up as just such an enforcer?

As Rothbard wrote back in the March 1988 *Liberty*, freedom is for everybody—the "despised rightists" and those who refuse to let their individuality be cowed by social pressure from the assumed conservative, middle-class majority whose favor Rockwell is so anxious to curry.

Rockwell should watch what boat he jumps on in his attempt to reach the glorious shores of political success. As the Baby boom generation becomes America's most significant demographic group, I'd lay odds that most people's tastes in lifestyle, music and mores will not match those of Rockwell and his buddies like Thomas Fleming.

J. Mark Hardy
Gainesville, Fla.

Breathing Room

Gaaack! As a serious, responsible, capable party regular (and human being), I resent being labeled an egalitarian space cadet for disdaining Judeo-Christian traditionalism, irrationalism and its imperatives toward bland social conformity. In this article I can almost hear Murray Rothbard's infantile paroxysms contra "luftmenschen"

that were published in *Liberty* before the '87 LP convention in Seattle.

What is it about these guys that they feel it necessary to fabricate Libertarian stereotypes and beat up on them? I'm sure most Libertarians wouldn't consider themselves air people, but how derogatory is such an epithet? After all, the nice thing about air is it lets us breathe.

Brian Wright
West Bloomfield, Mich.

Waving the Black Cat

Llewellyn H. Rockwell Jr states that Christianity emphasizes "... reason, objective moral law, and private property ...". Yet religious faith is completely irrational, and the Church has long been a vehement opponent of science. As for property rights, the Church has a bloody history of taxation, often in league with the state.

Rockwell further claims that "The family, the free market, the dignity of the individual, private property rights, the very concept of freedom—all are products of our religious culture." His attempt to credit Christianity with the existence of these things is laughable. Humans who enjoyed family life, free enterprise, human dignity, private property, and liberty existed long before their lesser descendents invented God.

He calls animal and plant rights "mythical," but they are no more mythical than a Christian God, for at least there is plenty of evidence that animals and plants exist. This reminds me of a philosophy joke: A theologian, arguing with a metaphysician about their respective fields, said, "Metaphysics is like a blind man in a dark room trying to find a black cat."

The metaphysician responded, "At least the cat exists."

Michael Ross
San Pedro, Calif.

Throw Away the Molds

I must take strong issue with Llewellyn H. Rockwell, Jr.'s call for "Paleolibertarianism." He proposes to purge the movement of the group that Murray Rothbard has colorfully labeled "luftmenschen": the leftist, counterculturally-oriented libertarians.

Now, I'm not really in this group myself. After all, I have a fairly conventional, bourgeois, middle-class lifestyle, dress normally (if informally; I *hate* suits and ties), don't let my hair get too long, don't use illegal drugs or practice promiscuous sex, and have no opposition to mainstream culture except to the extent that statism is ingrained in it. On the other hand, I can't quite fit into the "paleolibertarian" mold, either; I am an agnostic with a strong dislike of organized religion, and generally

share the left-libertarian's dislike of authority, whether represented by parents, teachers, or nosy neighbors.

Actually, it turns out that I can't quite be fit into *any* conventional mold, whether it be leftist, rightist, mainstream, countercultural, or whatever. Isn't that what individual liberty is all about—the right of the individual to live his own life regardless of his level of conformity or nonconformity? What clothes I wear, what music I listen to, what I eat, drink, and smoke, is my own business.

Libertarianism is a political creed; unlike Objectivism, it does not propose to dictate a standard of morality beyond the nonaggression axiom. Libertarianism neither endorses nor opposes such private, noncoercive activities as worshipping God or smoking marijuana; it is up to people as individuals or in voluntary groups to establish standards and morals about such things.

The great thing about the Libertarian movement is its diversity; people of widely varying interests and lifestyles can get together to promote freedom for all. Rockwell dislikes this diversity, since it contains elements which disagree with mainstream positions held by the majority in the "real world." His ideal vision of a libertarian movement would be a group of people clothed in suits and ties who agree in principle, intellectually, to a political system that would permit a diversity of lifestyle, but God forbid they would actually *practice* any such thing. As far as I am concerned, the paleolibertarians are perfectly welcome in the movement, but so are the so-called "luftmenschen," and so are people like me with personalities containing elements of both. No litmus test should be made of potential members save that they agree to forgo the initiation of force. Any additional conditions turn the movement into a rigid cult rather than a libertarian movement.

Daniel Tobias
Shreveport, La.

De-lousing the Conservatives

Lew Rockwell's plan (or plot?) to meld the small libertarian movement with the increasingly lonely free-market conservatives requires a change among libertarians, he says. The good, decent "paleolibertarians" must be separated from the "louses" of the movement—those with libertine, atheistic values, wild heads of hair, and mystic notions of nonhuman rights.

Yes, the sale of the ideas of liberty to the general population, like the sale of anything else, is best accomplished by people with the look and sound of normalcy. State Libertarian parties should seek candidates who will not offend voters by their appearance, lan-

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H.L. Mencken's "Secret" Diary Now Revealed!

H.L. Mencken was a giant of American culture, a man of bold courage who flailed away at politicians, intellectuals, and the "booboisie." He was one of the most influential figures of his time.

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EDITED BY CHARLES A. FECHER



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guage, or social insensitivities.

Yet Rockwell suggests no reciprocal journey for would-be paleolibertarian conservatives, and there are several deficiencies conservatives must overcome. First is the not-unjustified public impression that conservatives are xenophobes who treat any new cultural value as a threat to civilization.

Tolerance is the virtue most lacking in conservatives. In order to fuse with libertarians, they must begin to wean themselves from the mystical notion that personal cultural taste is linked to ideological virtue, and begin to exercise their tolerance muscle with forays into the world of the strange and assumedly distasteful. (As often happens, a little exposure might broaden their perspective.)

Courses in cultural anthropology, comparative religion and science fiction appreciation would be fairly safe starting points, with bold visits to heathen churches, teen concerts and mud-wrestling matches reserved for the advanced adventurer.

Now to ask a question Rockwell assumed was already answered: "Why?"

Why should libertarians and conservatives join forces any more than, say, libertarians and taxi drivers? Will this merger convince Americans that they should have a consistent philosophy of liberty in their relationship with government? Would the conservatives be a hindrance to the resurgent Libertarian Party? Would they be even less tasteful to baby boomers than the Libertarian Party has proven to be?

And is this merger scheme just one more digression from the task Libertarians seem distressingly loathe to engage—the nuts-and-bolts, hands-on work of building their party in the tedious fashion of the Democrats and Republicans: knocking on doors, attending public meetings regularly, building lists, asking for money, signing up

members, producing visually acceptable publications, seeking appointment to commissions and committees, joining Rotary and the Chamber of Commerce, and engaging in coalition projects?

Without doing the necessary work, the Libertarians—coalesced with conservatives or not—will have to accept Rockwell's pronouncement of their irrelevancy as more truth than insult.

Yet as a Libertarian who has tasted political victory, I know that the recent signs of growth in the Libertarian Party can be magnified impressively with lots of hard work and determination. In time, the free market paleoconservatives will build up their nerve enough to try just one little exercise in tolerance—joining the upwardly-mobile Libertarian Party. There's no place else they can turn.

Jim McClarin
Cool, Calif.

Moderation in Principle

In "The Case for Paleolibertarianism," Llewellyn Rockwell expressed his anguish at the fact that the Libertarian Party does not have the proper public image to grow and succeed. I agree with his assessment. LPers are, in the eyes of many, part of the "lunatic fringe." I wince when I hear that term.

Although we both sense that something is wrong, I think that Mr Rockwell failed to hit the nail squarely on the head. He states that he believes the LP suffers because of the presence of what I shall call for lack of a better term "libertines." I have been a libertarian for 11 years. During these years I have become acquainted with many other libertarians in the Midwest, and never have I met any of these libertines.

No, libertarians are not libertines, but their radical proposals make them *seem* like libertines. To favor the repeal of age of consent laws is to be "libertine," no matter how you slice it. To favor abolition of the taxation necessary to keep the defense forces going is to favor unilateral disarmament and thus to favor nihilism. To favor the sabotage of the machinery of government is to favor the creation of chaos and thus favor the destruction of Western Civilization. Libertarians deny that they favor libertinism, nihilism, or chaos and claim that given 15 hours to explain, these misconceptions can be cleared up—which is 14 hours, 59 minutes and 30 seconds longer than most Americans are willing to give. *If libertarians do not wish for people to think of them as libertines, then they have no other choice but to moderate their views.*

The guardian of libertarian radicalism and hence the unwitting promoter of the

idea that libertarians are libertines has traditionally been Murray Rothbard, "Mr. Libertarian." It was always Professor Rothbard who watched like a hawk for any sign of ideological backsliding within the LP—backsliding such as the ideas that perhaps child labor laws ought not be repealed or that heroin should not be advertised on network television. Professor Rothbard would especially wax indignant toward the heresy of gradualism—hence his crucifixion of the supposedly diabolical Ed Crane and the Cato Institute.

It was thus a surprise to see Professor Rothbard write, in *American Libertarian*, that he had been trying to "carry the Libertarian Party, kicking and screaming, into the real world." This statement sounds very similar to one made a few weeks earlier by Ed Crane in a *Newsweek* article in which Mr. Crane stated that he had left the LP in 1984 after having failed to "drag it into the real world." Can it be that Professor Rothbard has renounced radicalism and embraced gradualism, known in former days as "classical liberalism"? If so, I wish he would reiterate this renunciation clearly and forcefully so that there is no confusion as to where he stands. He is very influential within the libertarian movement, and many party radicals, having learned their radicalism from Professor Rothbard, would then follow his example in adopting a strategy of moderation. It would then be possible to salvage the LP so that the Jeffersonians would not have to team up with the Hamiltonians as Mr Rockwell suggested in his article.

The LP should adopt the attitude and tactics of classical liberalism as Ludwig von Mises propounded them in his books *Liberalism* and *Human Action*. The "non-initiation of force" oath, the "abolish everything" attitude, and the stridency should be ditched. It can be claimed that there is no philosophical justification for classical liberalism. This may be correct. But classical liberalism is to be pursued primarily for *strategic* reasons, not philosophical.

If human beings were all perfectly rational and highly intelligent, then they would be able to swallow libertarian doctrine whole without reservation and without forming misconceptions about libertinism and nihilism. But since human beings have an emotional side, and since they generally have limited intellect, they are unable to do this. The gradualism and moderation of classical liberalism are thus necessary. When somebody states that he is trying to "drag the LP into the real world," he is stating that libertarians have yet to realize this fact.

David Hoscheidt
Belleville, Ill.

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Reflections

Quaylespeak — The most enjoyable spectacle these days is the apoplexy of public officials whenever someone prominent defects from the war on drugs. When Federal Judge Robert Sweet of New York said drugs should be legalized, the articulate Tsar William, Ph.D., philosophy, University of Texas, pronounced the idea "stupid." Presumably he was not also referring to Vice President Quayle, whose own remark was more revealing than the air-head could know. Quayle said through a smirk that Judge Sweet obviously had a lifetime job, implying that elected officials like himself must, before opening their mouths, think about their careers. Some mischievous reporter ought to remind Quayle of this whenever he speaks. —SLR

Gorby the hero!?!? — The progress toward liberty and democracy in Eastern Europe and the public relations campaign on behalf of Chairman Gorbachev have borne some strange fruit: many main line commentators and even some libertarians are hailing Gorby as a hero of liberty.

C'mon fellas, I'm as happy about the collapse of communism as anyone, but let's keep our wits about us. Gorbachev is no more a hero than is George Bush; he is just another politician looking out for his own hide, taking a course of action to maximize his personal power, security and wealth. Faced with the failure of socialism, Gorbachev has had little choice but to retreat from totalitarianism toward liberty. —RWB

Yasser, that's my baby — For years some libertarians have been telling us that Yasser Arafat is a force for moderation in the Arab world, that he is someone we can in good conscience support, at least within the context of Palestinian-Israeli affairs. Maybe they're right. It would be nice to believe so, if only because Arafat seems to be the only person who has enough authority among the Palestinians and their allies to negotiate and enforce a peaceful settlement in what seems a hopeless cauldron of strife.

But Arafat often makes it difficult to believe in his good will. The most recent example: a month before his dispatch to Stalinist heaven, Nicolae Ceausescu harangued for six hours on *glasnost* and other signs of softness emanating from the Socialist Motherland. Not a single foreign head of state attended his speech. But in the audience, occasionally panned by the television camera, was Arafat, gleefully applauding each new promise of unrelaxed totalitarianism. Arafat and Ceausescu had been mutual admirers for years, and the Ceausescu regime had strained its very slender resources to provide a modicum of aid to the PLO, mostly in the form of weapons training. Some of Arafat's "freedom fighters" were in fact caught in Romania at the time of the downfall, and were subsequently seen fighting side by side with the remnants of Ceausescu's paramilitary secret-police units.

Doesn't all this say *something* about the character of the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization? Romania isn't an Arab country. The relationship was not merely a formality. These forces sought each other out in a symbiotic dance of com-

mon interests and style. I'm sorry, but if anyone wants to convince me that Arafat is a positive element in the Middle East, he has his work cut out for him. —WPM

Leading edge, receding edge — Among the first acts of the new revolutionary Romanian government were the decriminalization of smoking, drinking, eating unrationed meat, typewriter ownership, abortion, private property and the possession of unlicensed firearms. It is interesting to note that several of these new freedoms are high on many an American's agenda for *abolition* . . . —JSR

Learning from the best — When does one finally decide it's all just a nightmare? How about this? "The Drug Enforcement Administration has proposed to begin training agents of the KGB to snare drug traffickers" (*The Washington Post*, Dec. 15). "We're looking at them [KGB agents] as policemen—these guys are cops with a mission similar to ours," said Paul Higdon, deputy assistant DEA administrator for international programs. "The other stuff—that's for spy novels." The Soviets are thinking over the proposal, but they'll no doubt agree. After all, Higdon is right. The KGB's mission is similar to the DEA's: crushing liberty. Meanwhile, the president has decided that U.S. military forces are legally able to arrest people overseas. The Justice Department advised him in November that the 111-year-old Posse Comitatus Act, which forbids the military from engaging in law enforcement, does not apply outside the country. So now the army can run around the world arresting drug dealers and terrorists. And it doesn't need the permission of foreign countries.

When these frightening developments are added to other things, such as the administration's refusal to remove its occupation army from Europe and its advising Poland on how to set up New Deal programs, one conclusion slaps you in the face: the United States remains the world's greatest threat to liberty.

—SLR

Tyranny is only skin deep — What is the most exhilarating aspect of the breakaway of one Eastern European nation after another from totalitarianism?

Surely it is the *depth* of the impulse to freedom. For 40 years the residents of East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and so on have had the vaunted virtues of statism drummed into them by every propaganda device. Millions of school children have learned it as a sacred dogma. And yet, in a few short weeks, like a snake's skin, it has all been shed, as if it had never existed. The millions of words of indoctrination have all been for nothing.

"Truth is on the march," said Emile Zola, "and nothing can stop it." That is an overstatement; lots of truths have been stopped and have not recovered for centuries. What is true, though, is that freedom can be suppressed and constricted time and again, but the moment it is given a chance to gain a foothold (à la Gorbachev), it asserts itself at once, without counter-

indoctrination.

To act in accordance with our choices is a fundamental impulse. Man may not be a *rational* animal, and he often makes the wrong choices, but he is first and foremost a *volitional* animal, always impelled to make his own choices and to act on them. —JH

A modest proposal — Gorbachev's task—that of bringing the Soviet peoples into the world markets all the while maintaining the power and prestige of the Russian elite—was never easy, and now, after the detotalitarianizing deluge in Eastern Europe, is more difficult than ever. The rise of *political* as well as *economic* liberalization in Europe suggests that support for the idea of simply kicking the Soviet elites out of power is growing, much to Gorby's dismay. But still, there may be hope for him yet, just so long as he can turn his chief problem into a solution.

Consider the horns of his dilemma. The Russian elites have only one real, proven talent: tyranny. In fact, their success in this area has given Gorby his other horn: they have so thoroughly tyrannized the Soviet peoples into a mass of demoralized sheep that the Soviets really have little to offer sophisticated Western markets other than their natural resources.

The key to the problem is to discover the comparative advantage of the Soviets in world markets. What are Soviets good at? Why, prison-keeping, of course. Solution: sell this service on the world market. Gorby should redirect his elite of Kafkaesque bureaucrats and wardens and transform the Gulag system into a prison system *for foreigners*. Charge Western nations a modest yearly sum for holding life-sentenced felons, and then work these felons in the slave labor camps—and other, more creatively constructed tyrannical institutions—and gain a modest surplus from the proceeds, as well.

This would give his elite something to do that they seem particularly gifted at. It would continue to provide them with work, money, prestige, and the general psychic benefits they find in bossing people around, channeling their anti-social

What goods or services can the Soviets offer on world markets at competitive prices? What are Soviets good at? Why, prison-keeping, of course. The solution to their problem: sell this service on the world market.

drives away from the poor Soviet masses. It would also take off Western hands a group of people who now cost millions of dollars each year, and out of the hands of lawyers and citizen action groups who are always on the watch for such rights violations as "prison overcrowding" and "marital deprivation," etc. And it would provide a steady source of income to the Soviets, thus allowing for a fairly stable entry into the world economy. But most importantly, it would allow the victims of Soviet tyranny some time to cope with increasing freedom. And, if some of these victims yearn for the old ways, perhaps Gorby should make his new and improved, profit-making Gulag *voluntary* for true citizens of the Revolution. —TWV

Snap judgments — During the 1989 cold snap, home heating oil prices in the Northeast rose about 20%. An outcry erupted from politicians, who voiced their concern over "undue profits" and asked President Bush to declare an energy emergency in New England. But this was typical grandstanding, ca-

tering to constituent complaints over higher heating bills.

Oil costs had gone up, of that there was no question. But this was a result of increased nationwide demand at mostly constant supply. The "undue profits" the oil companies were making actually reflected the increased costs they had to pay to get oil in the first place. A spokesman for Sun Oil defended the higher prices, saying that the company was in business to make a profit, and that this was the whole point of having a capitalistic system. Just words, and refreshing to hear. The spokesman might also have pointed out that of all energy consumers, those whose homes are heated by oil have more freedom of choice than others in shopping for bargains. If one's home is heated by gas or electricity, one is unable to change suppliers very easily. Those who use oil may call any oil supplier he desires (assuming he has not locked himself into a long-term contract), and thus get the lowest available price.

It is worth noting that heavily regulated gas and electric rates also rose significantly, but there was no similar outcry from legislators. Could it be that the politicians were using the increase in oil prices as a pretext for extending more control over the comparatively free market in home heating oil? It's possible. But if the government steps in to protect the public from "rapacious profit-mongers" in the oil industry, it will also learn the realities of the spot market. Oil costs money. Someone has to pay for it. Alas, in the end the costs will be spread out among taxpayers and non-oil users, who will have to pay not only for the increased costs of oil, but for the regulatory apparatus as well. Who then will be over a barrel? —JSR

What to do about South Africa — If progress in South Africa is too slow to satisfy us outside supporters of equal human rights, what should we do? First, we should learn lessons from U.S. attempts to control political affairs in other countries. Too often our government has sought results on the cheap—through words, economic sanctions, offers of aid or threats to withdraw it, and encouragement to opposition groups. Our proddings have helped displace Batista, Ngo Dinh Diem, the Shah of Iran, Somoza, and various colonial regimes in Africa; but they have seldom been coherent enough to determine the successor regimes and policies. Our incomplete actions have helped inflict the likes of Castro, Khomeini, Ortega, and Idi Amin on the supposed beneficiaries of our good intentions.

We Americans may feel virtuous as we ban imports of Krugerrands or urge disinvestment in South Africa. Such attitudes and policies seek change while shunning active responsibility for the nature of the change. As other African experiences should have taught us, supposed steps toward egalitarian democracy in South Africa risk bringing bloodshed, tyranny, and misery instead. As Ludwig von Mises explained in *Nation, State, and Economy* (1919, translated 1953), democracy simply will not work for an activist, economically interventionist state in a territory inhabited by mutually suspicious national groups. Under presently foreseeable circumstances, urging democracy on South Africa is callously irresponsible.

Any action by outsiders should be resolute enough to ensure the results desired. For example, the governments of the United States and other democratic powers might jointly *impose* a new constitution on South Africa. (A credible threat of armed invasion on the necessary scale would quite probably force the existing regime to give way, making it unnecessary to carry the threat out.) The imposed constitution should affirmatively establish equality before the law, contain a bill of rights, strictly

limit the powers of the government, including powers of intervention in economic life, and entrench an independent judiciary. Administration of the government, whose overriding task would be to maintain human rights through peace and security rather than to legislate actively, would be entrusted to a bureaucracy headed by a hereditary monarch. For psychological reasons, the new king (or queen) should probably be neither a South African nor anyone of European descent. Perhaps the King of Tonga or Bhutan or Nepal, the Sultan of Brunei, one of the sultans of Malaysia, a former rajah from India, or another member of one of their families could be persuaded to take the job. This solution should appeal to members of all ethnic groups as offering peace, security, personal freedom, and economic opportunity, all under an internationally guaranteed constitution.

The king should be ultimately responsible to and removable by some independent authority. Given the Swedes' propensity for worldwide moralizing, it would be poetic justice to thrust the burden onto their parliament. No doubt several Swedish politicians would find it useful to their careers to achieve expertise and fame in monitoring the South African king and his bureaucracy. A sustained record of abuses would be reason for the Swedish parliament to depose the king and, with the concurrence of the guaranteeing powers, to install either his heir or a freshly chosen dynasty.

After decades of domestic peace and capitalist prosperity had dissolved animosities among ethnic groups, South Africa might become ready for democratic home rule. Premature democracy is something quite different. Outsiders' efforts to get results on the cheap are immoral because irresponsible.

The details of the proposed solution are discussable, of course. It is the general approach that I insist on. Perhaps this approach will not be politically feasible any time soon; but something like it, in contrast with irresponsible gestures, is incumbent on anyone who preaches action concerning South Africa.

—LBY

Lies, damn lies — "It's official," CNN reported, "The rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer." This assertion was based on the results of a Congressional study of income distribution in the United States over the past decade. The study showed that the top 20% of earners increased their share of total wealth by 2.5%, while the share of the lowest 20% dropped by 1.5%. The implication is that the past decade of "Reaganomics," "tax cuts," and "supply-side policies" has steered the country towards the very sort of unfair imbalances of wealth which the venerable Karl Marx predicted over a century ago, and that for this trend to be reversed, the policies must be reversed as well.

Being faced with these sorts of statistics can place Free Marketeers in a bind. The first counter-argument that comes to mind is, "So what? What if the rich *deserve* to get richer?" It is a valid argument, but not expedient; the political culture is not ready to accept it. But neither can libertarians simply accept such studies, or their underlying assumptions. There are several grounds on which to contest them:

1. The base year fallacy: this study compared income levels from 1979 to 1989. Why was 1979 chosen? Perhaps because the authors of the study wanted to examine a decade. But while round numbers are convenient, there is nothing statistically significant about ten year periods, any more than 12 or 7.5 year periods. Furthermore, by choosing a base year cleverly, one may prove whatever one wants. If the base year of the study had

been 1985, for example, it would have shown wealth levelling, not becoming more disparate. Another example of clever use of base years was the recent argument about Congressional pay not keeping pace with inflation, if measured from 1977. If measured from 1969, however, Congressional pay had more than matched inflation. Which year is "correct"? Neither.

2. Yearly fluctuations: In addition to the base year fallacy there is the problem of yearly data fluctuations. To say that the share of an income group has changed 2.5% over ten years does not indicate a steady .25% change per year. Some single years might show changes in excess of 2.5%, which are "corrected" in subsequent years. Only by looking at change year by year can one know if a percentage shift is at all significant.

3. Measurement of income: In these studies, data show gross, not net, income. The inclusion of taxes would change the picture dramatically. Furthermore, transfer payments and non-cash benefits are also excluded. The "increased miseration" among the poor implied by the study is a misconception.

4. Non-dynamic data: The data show the standings of income groups over ten years, but says nothing about the movement of individuals within and between these groups. The

"The rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer," CNN concluded. But this would be true only if people never moved from one income group to another. This is not the case: studies on intergroup activity have concluded that many poor are getting richer and rich poorer.

study implies that those who are getting richer or poorer are the same people in 1989 that they were in 1979, that the "classes" are stagnant. This is not the case. The few studies that have been done that traced individuals have shown that there is substantial movement between income groups, both poor getting richer and rich getting poorer, as the free market model specifies. The dynamic data show that the United States is indeed a land of opportunity, something the non-dynamic data seem to refute.

5. Artificial class divisions: The definition of "rich" and "poor" by the top and bottom 20% of income is wholly arbitrary, and sometimes one will see studies using different "class" divisions (10%, 15%, top 20% vs. bottom 30%, etc.). If one works with the data long enough, one can find a favorable conclusion.

Studies of wealth striation are by their very nature an attack on the free market system of "wealth distribution." Not only do they imply that the polarization of wealth along the Marxist model is something to be expected and watched for, they say nothing at all about wealth creation, and treat all dollars as though they are equally deserved by all segments of the population and should be spread about based on that premise. These are both notions which libertarians know to be untrue. But libertarians must be able to show to the public at large that this is so, and parry those who would attempt to prove otherwise. —JSR

Hoppephobia — Loren Lomasky's frenetic and almost hysterical review of Hans-Hermann Hoppe's *A Theory of Capitalism and Socialism* ("The Argument from Mere Argument," September 1989) is an amusing if unwitting vindication of Hoppe's method of exposing "performative contradictions" among his opponents. Lomasky's actual *arguments* against Hoppe are meager, but the bulk of Lomasky's review consists, not in ar-

gumentation, but in making two angry charges: (1) that Hoppe is impolite with philosophers or economists he disagrees with; and (2) that Hoppe is unscholarly.

But in making both of these charges, Lomasky is a living contradiction. The reader of his review would never know it, but Hoppe's critiques of his opponents constitute a mere two or three footnotes in a several-hundred page book. The great bulk of the book sets out Hoppe's positive deductive theory of economics and political ethics. This accounts for Hoppe's not spending more time rebutting Nozick, Locke's proviso, etc., which calls down upon him Lomasky's wrath. It is actually *Lomasky* who is ranting and rude in his attack on Hoppe. Performative Contradiction Number One.

Lomasky's second charge against Hoppe is lack of scholarship, for which not spending time on Nozick is a typical—and irrelevant—charge. But what of Lomasky's *own* scholarship, as evidenced by his review? First, he is shocked and stunned that Hoppe is not simply a defender of existing capitalism; his book is "no less than a manifesto for untrammelled anarchism." Well, heavens to Betsy! Anarchism! One wonders where Lomasky has been for the last 20 years! Perhaps the knowledge has not yet penetrated to the fastnesses of Minnesota, but anarchism has been a vibrant part of the libertarian dialogue for a long time, as most readers of *Liberty* well know.

Lomasky then engages in a little trick. He quite correctly defines "socialism" as central planning and state ownership of the means of production, but then derides Hoppe as "idiosyncratic" for calling any government interference with free exchange "socialistic." The two, however, are not contradictory. Total government is socialism; partial government is socialistic. If Lomasky should ever read any comments on the dramatic events in Eastern Europe, for example, he will find them referred to, quite properly, as movements *away* from socialism and *toward* free markets.

Lomasky also writes as if the idea of an *a priori* of argumentation is a weird new *bizarrie* propounded by Hoppe. He seems never to have heard of the Habermas-Apel doctrine, of which Hoppe's is a libertarian extension. Comparing Hoppe's deductive arguments to Zeno's or Anselm's also misses the point, since these classic arguments are difficult-to-refute demonstrations of conclusions most of us consider absurd, whereas Hoppe's is a difficult-to-refute argument for a conclusion libertarians are supposed to *welcome*: a copper-riveted argument for the absolute rights of private property.

Absurdly, Lomasky attacks Hoppe's arguments against public goods (completely missing Hoppe's subtle and lengthy discussion) as stating that voluntary actions and exchanges are optimal, while coercive transactions injure people and are therefore worse than optimal. Again, Lomasky acts as if Hoppe has just come up with a bizarre thesis of his own, not seeming to have heard of many decades of libertarian and free-market thought that has concluded similarly. It seems, in short, that Lomasky has *never* heard of libertarian arguments or doctrines. Talk about lack of scholarship! Performative Contradiction Number Two.

The Lomasky review is an interesting example of what is getting to be a fairly common phenomenon: Hoppephobia. Although he is an amiable man personally, Hoppe's written work seems to have the remarkable capacity to send some readers up the wall, blood pressure soaring, muttering and chewing the carpet. It is not impolite attacks on critics that does it. Perhaps the answer is Hoppe's logical and deductive mode of thought and writing, demonstrating the truth of his propositions and showing that those who differ are often trapped in self-contradiction and self-refutation.

In the good old days, this was a common style in philosophy, employed by Kantians, Thomists, Misesians and Randians alike. In the modern age, however, this method of thought and writing has gone severely out of fashion in philosophy, where truth is almost never arrived at—and certainly never argued for in a deductive fashion. The modern mode is utilitarian, positivist, tangential, puzzle-oriented, and pseudo-empiricist. As a result, modern positivist types have gone flabby and complacent, and reading hard-core deductivists—to say nothing of hard-core libertarians!—hits these people with the force of a blow to the gut.

Well, shape up, guys! In argument as in politics, those who can't stand deductivist heat should get out of the philosophic or economic kitchen.

—MNR

Gaudy Days in Berlin — West Berlin has been my second city for the past decade, the only place other than New York where I feel comfortable and have many friends, and so it was only proper that on Wednesday, November 8, 1989, I entertained my Berlin publishers, Peter Gente and Heidi Paris, during their first visit to New York. Later that evening I telephoned them to advise that German politicians familiar to them were speaking English(!) on Ted Koppel's *Nightline*. The following night, which was incidentally the fifty-first anniversary of *Kristallnacht*, I joined the world in watching the party at the crumbling Berlin Wall, knowing full well that it would continue through the weekend, wishing that I was there, if only because, as I've often told friends here, "In West Berlin they know how to party." By Friday I found Peter-und-Heidi, both suitably pissed over missing the party, and told them about a Jewish orthodox sect who live in the northern Israeli city of

The people are getting the Wall down bit by bit with hammer and chisel, creating new businesses: hammer and chisel rental at five marks for fifteen minutes while the hammering kids sell chunks to tourists. Maybe one should propose for the new East German flag a hammer and chisel, instead of a hammer and sickle.

Safad. They believe that since the Messiah will return to Safad, they should never leave the place, for fear that they will be out of town. "You made the mistake," I told Peter-und-Heidi, "of picking the wrong week to be out of town." So did I.

☆ ☆ ☆

I spent most of Friday, November 10, with CNN, which I'd never watched before at length, and was favorably impressed. I began to understand that its reputation for honesty depends upon being less slick than the older networks and in taking more time with important stories, much as the live coverage of the San Francisco earthquake the month before reminded us of journalistic authenticity, of reporters trying to find the news rather than having it securely in hand. It was charming about 3:30 in the afternoon to see an interview in German with Marcus Wolf, a trim gray-haired man simply identified as a "reformer." Didn't the CNN reporter know who Marcus Wolf is, I said to myself? (The more cautious boys at ABC, NBC, and CBS would have done some homework.) Until recently he headed the East German external spy service, by common consent the second most successful in the world (after the Israeli) at planting informants right in the enemy's belly. Here on American television was Marcus Wolf,

whose photograph never appeared in print during his reign; how spontaneous it all seemed.

☆ ☆ ☆

Years ago I belittled Ronald Reagan's demand to tear down the Berlin Wall because I thought it would create grave economic problems for the West. According to West German law, all East Germans are *de facto* German citizens, entitled to all benefits of the West German state, including unemployment compensation, pensions, and welfare, as soon as they come west. If the Wall came down, I feared, West Germany would suddenly have 17 million more wards on its hands. There would be massive unemployment along with inflation, as more money had to be printed for the newcomers to use—in short, an economic morass that would be comparable to that afflicting Greece after World War I (when its populations were "returned" from the Turkish mainland). I figured that there was no purer way for the Soviets to sabotage West Germany, and by extension all Western Europe, than following Reagan's demand. (All that would be lost to the Soviets, I figured, would be another failing economy.) What I did not calculate, and what seems evident now, is how many East Germans really don't want to leave, simply because their lives are there, much as most Mexicans prefer to stay in Mexico.

Much depends upon whether East Germans will be allowed to work in West Germany and still live in East Germany. Prior to the building of the Wall, it was possible for an East Berliner to work in West Berlin, for *deutschemarks*, which would go a lot further in East Berlin than a comparable amount of *ostmarks* or a salary for a comparable job in East Berlin. Once the Wall went up in 1961, West Berlin lost its most immediate supply of cheap labor. Into the void came immigrants from Turkey who were willing to assume the less attractive Berlin jobs; by the mid-1980s some eight percent of the West Berlin population was Turkish.

Since West Germany grants citizenship by culture, rather than birth, not even those Turks born in West Germany have citizenship rights. Obviously, if East Berliners can work again in West Berlin, it is these guestworkers, as they are called, whose survival in Germany is most immediately threatened; it is they who are most likely to initiate destabilizing moves.

I once wanted to write a long essay about the Wall, which was a far more curious artifact than most Americans knew. As it ran around the circumference of West Berlin, it was more appropriate to say that the West was walled in while the East was walled out. Take, for instance, the graffiti, some of which was quite imaginative. If there is little graffiti anywhere else in West Berlin, where it is actually forbidden, why did it fill the Wall? The answer is that the Wall stands on *East* Berlin property. Indeed, every once in a while, the East Berliners would send over a car containing two guys with whitewash and two guys with guns, each instructed to shoot to kill should any of the others try to escape, and the West side of the wall would be temporarily cleaned. A few years ago, through a door one night came East Berlin police to arrest a West Berliner defacing their beloved wall. They took him to a jail back East, and the last I heard there was nothing West Berlin could do to spring him.

We all know the West Berlin explanation for the Wall—that East Berliners were emigrating at a rate that could not be tolerated. What is less known is the East Berlin side of the story. The Anti-Fascist Protection Barrier, as they call it, was built to protect against a military invasion from West Berlin. That accounts for why, as can be observed, the uniformed East Germans in the guard towers behind the Wall have their binoculars trained upon West Berlin. They are literally looking for the invasion, or signs of the invasion; that was their job for twenty-seven years, much as

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Media Notes

The Times they aren't a-changin' — The New York *Times* has it all sorted out. "The Soviet Union," it editorialized after the Malta summit, "suffers from excessive central planning. Economic signals are so screwy that farmers feed bread to their animals because it is cheaper than unprocessed grain. Consumer items are either nonexistent or shoddy. The system stagnates." What is the solution? Writes the *Times*: "Some central planning can be preserved. But a lot has to go."

Thus spake those sophisticated thinkers at America's venerable newspaper. After 70 years of Bolshevism, that's what they've come up with. But then, this was the newspaper whose Pulitzer Prize-winning Moscow correspondent during Stalin's terror famine in the 1930s, Walter Duranty, wrote that he could find no one starving.

The bureaucrats in Prague, Budapest, Warsaw, Sofia, and East Berlin seem to know more about how the world works than the dons on the *Times* editorial board. —SLR

The evolution of a magazine — A year or so ago, my colleague Steve Cox recommended I read *The New Republic*. I had given up on *TNR* about twenty years earlier. In those days it was a hopelessly dreary voice of establishment left-liberalism, as dull as a New York *Times* editorial.

Cox's recommendation was an excellent one. *TNR* still expresses left-liberal establishmentarian views more often than not, but it is hardly dreary. For one thing, it has opened its pages to a considerable array of opinion. For another, it is consistently the best written of the roughly ten dozen periodicals I read regularly.

An excellent example of the kind of article that makes *TNR* so valuable is Robert Wright's perspicacious review (Jan 29, 1990) of Stephen Jay Gould's new book, *Wonderful Life*. Gould is without a doubt the best known evolutionist in the world; in fact, he is the *only* well-known evolutionist. He has "starred" (if that word is appropriate in such an obscure medium) on public television, writes a regular column for *Natural History*, and periodically gathers his columns into books which sell fairly well.

The most interesting thing about Gould is that his writing about evolution is interesting: he writes engagingly and has a way of making his subject matter relevant to his readers. One way Gould makes it relevant is by aggressively debunking what he asserts to be the widely accepted views of prominent evolutionists. Another way is by drawing political and meta-political implications from it. (His conclusions conform to the politico-religion in which Gould was raised: "my daddy raised me as a Marxist.")

In the course of his review, Wright summarizes Gould's

thinking, and explores his politics and the economic pressures of appealing to the popular mind. The result is the debunking of Gould as a scientist. It would be pointless to recapitulate Wright's analysis here. But it is well worth reading for anyone with an interest in evolution, paleontology, the misuse of science for political ends, or the problems inherent in being a scientific pop star.

TNR also features Michael Kinsley, better known to millions as the voice of left-liberalism on *Crossfire* on CNN. Kinsley is a better writer than a TV star. He manages to transcend the doctrinaire limits of left-liberalism, often coming up with elegant arguments against leftist shibboleths. His recent criticism of the FCC's

Michael Kinsley, better known to the millions as the voice of left-liberalism on Crossfire on CNN, is a better writer than a TV star. He manages to transcend the doctrinaire limits of left-liberalism, often coming up with elegant arguments against leftist shibboleths.

affirmative action policy in distribution of broadcast licenses poses some very good questions: "Should the advantage being fought over exist in the first place? Wouldn't we be better off trying to reduce the hierarchies and inequalities, rather than quarreling over who gets the advantages of them?"

When James Buchanan won the Nobel Prize for his "public choice" approach to economics a few years back, Kinsley enraged many libertarians and delighted a few by subjecting Buchanan's career and ideology to public choice analysis.

Kinsley isn't the only TNR writer prominent on television. Fred Barnes and Morton Kondracke, both senior editors, are regulars on PBS's lively *The McLaughlin Report*. (Barnes is the conservative who can't restrain himself from laughing out loud when opinions he disagrees with are stated by others; Kondracke is the dorky liberal whom McLaughlin addresses as "Mor-TAHN!")

TNR's print ads frequently feature pictures of Barnes, Kondracke and Kinsley on television screens. Television stardom

as a means of expanding magazine circulation may be the wave of the future: scuttlebutt has it that when *Reason* was looking for new editors a year ago, it sought people who could do well on television.

Of course, the appeal of TNR is not that you get to read what TV stars have to say. TNR is worth reading because it consistently offers an array of provocative opinion with panache. —RWB

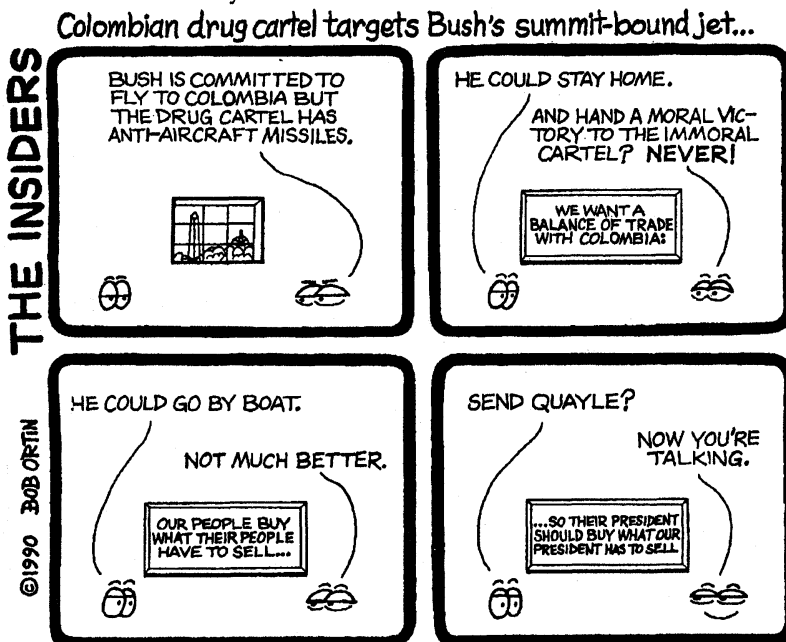
A sign of progress — On a recent broadcast of "All Things Considered" on National Public Radio, the Czechoslovak finance minister explained that the government is debating whether the economy should be transformed to a free market quickly, in the style of Ludwig Erhard in postwar West Germany, or gradually. The minister said he favored the "radical" approach because, "as Hayek has written," a gradual approach always has credibility problems. Neither the minister nor the commentator thought it necessary to identify Hayek. Of course, in the commentator's case it was because he doesn't know who Hayek is. —SLR

The culture of Chronicles — The attempt at a paleolibertarian-paleoconservative alliance may already be bearing fruit. The January 1990 issue of *Chronicles*, the "magazine of American culture" published by the Rockford Institute, the leading stronghold of paleoconservatism, features articles by Murray Rothbard and Lew Rockwell (both well-known, to say the least, in libertarian circles), and its lead piece by editor Thomas Fleming espouses a very old right exhortation of U.S. interventionism in Central America, concluding that "the old ideals of limited government and free enterprise . . . are still the best weapons against the banana republicans of both parties" and supporting a comment about how World War I was used by the government as an excuse to institute a command economy with a reference to the works of Rothbard. The same issue features a debate on free trade. Alan Reynolds provided a thorough, well-reasoned defense of international trade, pointing out that the fight against it is "essentially a theological dispute," concentrating on vague, mystical notions of an organic national character that must be preserved from foreign rot at any cost to freedom or prosperity.

On the other side, William R. Hawkins, a research director for something called The South Foundation (admiration for the folkways of the Old South is a basic tenet at *Chronicles*), begins his argument against "unfettered trade" by complaining that free trade didn't prevent World War I, and ends it by complaining that it puts "greater pressure on the U.S. to avoid conflict." Free trade is bad because it doesn't stop war, and also because it just might. Hmm. And Anthony Harrigan, the president of the United States Business and Industrial Council, after railing against "transnational" corporations, concludes that "American-based entities . . . have to serve the American national interest. We cannot allow them to do otherwise." As an American-based entity myself, I'm alarmed.

Even so, the debate is evidence of genuine progress among the paleos: *Chronicles* had previously championed a xenophobic protectionism. —BD

RIP: American Libertarian — While it lasted, *AL* provided something the libertarian movement needed: an independent news periodical. Although I sometimes disagreed with what I read in it, I never wanted to miss an issue. Its passage was a sad moment for libertarians. —RWB



Policy

Isolating the Error of Isolationism

by Stephen Cox

Of the notorious “gray” areas of libertarian thought, national defense and foreign policy seem least discussed in libertarian circles—perhaps because it is in these areas that actual political practice has been the *blackest*.

Are most libertarians isolationists? I don’t know. Unquestionably, however, isolationism has been a powerful tendency within libertarian thought throughout the twentieth century.

On isolationist grounds, libertarians of both rightward and leftward leanings opposed American imperialism in the Philippines and American involvement in the 1914–18 war. Libertarians of the Old Right opposed Roosevelt’s preparations for World War II, and libertarians of the latest generation opposed Johnson’s pursuit of the Indochina war. America’s Christmas invasion of Panama—a crusade undertaken to remove a dictator whom American intervention had helped to install—rightly strengthened many libertarians’ instinctive aversion to any extension of military force beyond the borders of this country.

No one should be surprised that current libertarian leaders often talk as if isolationism were as obvious a part of the libertarian creed as advocacy of free speech and free markets.

But the matter does not seem quite so obvious to me. Isolationism should, I believe, be regarded merely as one strategic option of a free society; it should not be elevated to the status of a political or moral creed.

Let’s review the grounds on which isolationist thinking may be based. I can think of three: religious, moral, and practical.

The Religious Ground

The idea that the threat or use of destructive violence is in all circumstances wrong is an ancient and honorable tenet of certain religions. I do not intend to argue against it. I wish merely to note that virtually all societies have regarded its practical consequences as disastrous. As a result, pacifism has never achieved substantial influence on the foreign policy of any nation. Clearly, however, a pacifist society (did such a thing exist) would never be anything but an isolationist society. It would never consider itself justified in projecting, or even threatening to project, a military force beyond its borders.

The Moral Ground

Here I *will* argue.

The moral theory of libertarianism is usually understood to be founded on the belief that all people have the right (as the prophet Micah puts it) to sit under their own vines and their own fig trees, with none to make them afraid—that they have the right, in other words, to enjoy their property, including their property in themselves, secure from the coercive influence of others.

We may argue about the source of this right, about the definition of coer-

cion, and about the structure of society that is most likely to maximize the first and minimize the second. While arguing about these things, however, we may easily find ourselves agreeing with the isolationist premise that the same standards that apply to individuals ought to apply to the countries they inhabit. If there is but one standard of morality in this world (and why should there not be?), the isolationist can feel secure in his creed, and view all libertarians who would countenance interventionism as cynical advocates of a double standard.

How, the creedal isolationist will ask, how on any theory of rights that pretends to be libertarian, can my country possibly be justified in coercing or threatening to coerce the people of other countries? If it is wrong for *me* to invade my neighbor’s house, how can it be right for *us* to invade our neighbors’ houses? And many of these “neighbors” aren’t neighbors at all! They’re thousands of miles away!

If the North Koreans invaded our property—so this argument goes—we might justly repel them: we are secular moralists, not religious pacifists. But we have no right to interfere in other people’s affairs.

Let's accept, for the moment, the faintly ludicrous analogy of houses and countries, and see where it leads. No libertarian will argue that I as a homeowner have the right to march, without provocation, into my neighbor's yard and imperialistically occupy his swimming pool. No libertarian will argue that I have the right to march into my neighbor's hall closet and confiscate his shotgun.

But suppose my neighbor sets his shotgun on his window sill and points it at my bedroom, meanwhile shouting

What made the difference between Finland's relatively easy fate—mere castration—and the fate of, say, Czechoslovakia? Finland's proven willingness to fight and fight hard.

that my property is not rightfully mine and that he intends to redistribute it among his poor relations. Suppose that my neighbor has been reported, on good authority, already to have liquidated several other people and seized their goods. Suppose also that no police force is available to protect me. May I now "aggress" upon my neighbor's land and seize his means of aggression? And may I go so far as to form alliances with other neighbors in the pursuit of my objective?

Common sense answers, yes! And do it right away!

Now suppose that my neighbor has, like bad neighbors the world around, a group of confederates, people known to give aid and comfort to aggressors such as he. Common sense indicates that I and my allies may justifiably consider neutralizing his allies, whether they live next to us, down the block, or merely (as we say in California) freeway-close.

The obvious question is now ready to be made explicit. What principle of libertarian morality prevents a society of free people (or *relatively* free people, since no libertarian will ever bring himself to regard any society as *truly* free) from intervening against societies beyond and perhaps far beyond its borders, breaking its isolation in order to prevent aggression against itself? The house-country analogy clearly authorizes such intervention, even the systemat-

ic intervention made possible by standing military and diplomatic alliances, even the systematic intervention made possible by *costly* alliances. What's the matter, in short, with NATO, so long as it responds realistically to real threats?

Here, of course, the creedal isolationist hastens to abandon the house-country analogy. And no wonder, since many a creedal isolationist is also a creedal anarchist, convinced that no government, however elected, checked, and balanced, will ever possess a legitimate authority that is even remotely similar to a private householder's property right. To the anarchist, interventionism is illegitimate because state power is illegitimate, even if it is used against another example of state power—even if it is used against a state that allows dramatically less liberty to its citizens than that allowed by the intervening state.

If one wishes to respond to the anarchist, one may simply ask why he thinks that states intervened against should be treated as any more sacred than states intervening. Why are the borders of Hungary and East Germany any more sacred than those of Holland and West Germany? Why must *these* illegitimate states be considered immune from interference? Why must *their* property rights be protected and *their* political arrangements be guaranteed absolute freedom from disruption by any outside force, even when they are demonstrably inimical to the liberties of their citizens, as well as to those of the citizens of other countries?

But there is another way of responding to the anarchist position, a way that raises issues perhaps more interesting. Suppose that America were both anarchist and libertarian. Suppose that its armed forces were actually the private defense forces of which anarchists dream. Would these forces be used only in the service of isolation? Would they never strike across national boundaries, hoping to destabilize threatening states? What absolute moral principle could be used to persuade an anarchist tactician, hired to direct the defense forces of a free society, to respect the integrity of any such threatening state—or, for that matter, of any *tyrannical* state, threatening or not? Why should an anarchist society not attempt to liberate other societies from oppression? A *practical* argument might be made that the battle might not be winnable in this or that sit-

uation. But what reasoning could impose isolationism as a moral absolute—upon anarchists?

Anarchists are opposed to the state's control of roads, schools, courts, and military intervention. It does not follow that anarchists are or should be opposed to roads, schools, courts, or military intervention *per se*. Rare is the anarchist who would prefer no roads to government roads. Rare also should be the anarchist who would prefer letting tyrannies thrive to uprooting them by the action of freer governments, if the intervention were successful in practice.

At this point, I am afraid, both my anarchist and my limited-government friends become outraged. "What! Don't you know what happens when you decide to throw your weight around like that? Think of Viet Nam! Think of the Bay of Pigs! Think of the military-industrial complex! These are the practical consequences of interventionism!"

This is exactly the kind of outrage I want to provoke, because it is an outrage stemming not from some arbitrarily imposed "moral" principle but from a concern for practical effects, a concern for—

The Practical Ground

In practice, intervention and isolation can each achieve success or failure, and almost any imaginable degree of success or failure. Everything depends on the context in which either intervention or isolation is adopted as a policy. To return to our equivocal "house" analogy: I could not really *protect* my house from a violent neighbor by a preemptive nuclear strike, but neither could I *protect* my house by boarding up all its doors and windows. In either case—that of an unwise intervention or that of an unwise isolation—I would ruin my property by employing the wrong means of protecting it. Although I might consider that I had a perfect right (as indeed I do) to break open the door of my neighbor's house to rescue a person inside who was screaming, "Help me! I'm being robbed!", I would not break down his door if I had reason to believe that my action would result in the death of either me or the robbery victim.

These are practical questions, and the correct answers to them can often be proven only in action. Would NATO have saved the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 by launching a military strike on the Russian forces closing in on Buda-

pest? We do not know; the tactic was not tried. An American-supported strike at the Bay of Pigs was tried with some possibility of success; it failed ignominiously. But this was a practical miscalculation, not a moral failure of the kind that would instance the universal truth of a non-interventionist creed.

Truly interesting philosophical debates can take place about the point at which failures of practical knowledge may become morally culpable. If I, with the "best intentions in the world," decide to remove my friend's appendix, but find that I cannot complete the operation because of my insufficient study of medicine, certain negative conclusions may be drawn about the ethical quality of my intentions. At the other extreme, no negative conclusions will be warranted in the case of a physician who has never failed in her attempts to remove appendixes, but who fails one time because an earthquake knocks out the lights during the most delicate procedure. Between the extremes lie many occasions for argument.

What cannot successfully be argued is the idea that the practical effects of interventionism are systematically (much less universally) threatening to the ethical goal of liberty. During the Jefferson and Madison administrations (and it was Jefferson who coined the famous anti-interventionist phrase about "entangling alliances"), the United States repeatedly attacked North Africa, with no significant ill effects except on the pirates who had been demanding tribute from U.S. vessels. The American occupation of Europe and Japan following World War II had, on balance, distinctly positive effects for economic and other liberties in the countries occupied, though it had mixed effects on the economic and certainly on the political life of America itself. American intervention in World War I, however, was wholly inimical to the evolution of libertarian societies everywhere.

No universal law decrees how intervention shall turn out. Can anyone doubt that a scheme on the part of France, Britain, and the United States to prevent, by force if necessary, the consolidation of a fascist regime in Germany could have proven helpful to the cause of liberty, if it had succeeded in its goal—or harmful, if it had provoked a still longer-lasting form of fascism than the one that Germany actually got? Such

a scheme would have been opposed, for quite plausible reasons, by libertarians of the Old Right, but they might have lost their bets.

The Current Issue

Well, so what? We aren't facing Hitler now; we aren't even facing Khrushchev. Americans in general are weary of supporting troops in prosperous and more or less free West Germany and Japan, and Americans of libertarian sympathies are of course still wearier of doing so. Some people fear that intervention in places like Nicaragua can drag us into another Vietnam. Why not, then, fly the banner of Isolation beside the banner of Liberty?

The reason is simple: A belief in Isolation as an eternal creed, rather than a strategy that may be useful at one time or another, leads us to say and to think some very silly things.

It leads us to confuse one particular tradition of the American republic with a policy by which all right-thinking people should live. There is no obvious reason to believe that the "entangling alliances" invoked by Jefferson should be viewed as entangling by the citizens of twentieth-century Denmark, or of twentieth-century America. The American tradition of isolation was, after all, an eminently practical tradition, one based on a sense of practical interests and not on an idealistic vision of how everything would turn out for the best if all good people stayed at home.

In the fourth number of *The Federalist*, for instance, John Jay takes quite a different slant on the moral issue from that taken by creedal isolationists. He decries the tendency of free peoples to be "flattered into neutrality by specious promises, or seduced by a too great fondness for peace to decline hazarding their tranquillity and present safety for the sake of neighbours."

Perhaps libertarian isolationists will reject Jay's counsel because he was a federalist arguing for a stronger government than that of the Confederation—though such libertarians are fond of quoting the *locus classicus* of isolationism, the Farewell Address of Washington, greatest of federalists. Very well: Washington in his Farewell Address urged Americans to have "as little political connection as possible with Europe," observing that "Europe has a set of primary interests which to us have none or a very remote relation. Hence she must

be engaged in frequent controversies, the causes of which are essentially foreign to our concerns." But do the proper concerns and interests of contemporary Americans have nothing in common with the interest of contemporary Europeans in economic and political liberty?

Only wishful thinking about life in some other world will justify the view that "just-let-them-destroy-themselves" is the right prescription for all foreign ills.

Creedal isolationism can easily lead us to mistake the practical interests of yesterday for the practical interests of today, especially if we assume that practice can never be at odds with creed. This assumption is endemic to libertarianism, largely (I suspect) because of the providential linkage between a free society and a good economy. We have excellent reason to think that the freedom we advocate on moral grounds really works in the economic sphere and in the wider social sphere so largely dependent on economics.

But even the best-founded moral principles (and I will not allow isolationism to have this status) sometimes fail to produce positive results. I may unwittingly kill my friend while attempting, with good probability of success, to push him out of the way of an oncoming truck. On the other hand, someone may save my life for the sole purpose of being able to swindle me out of my last dime and leave me to starve.

If we assume that isolationism is always right and always works, with the corollary that interventionism is always wrong and never works, we will be vulnerable to grossly fallacious readings of history. I have recently been startled by the number of otherwise well-informed libertarian scholars who are willing to maintain, at least in conversation, that Stalin's imperialism, from which Europe has yet to recover, was a reaction to an aggressive NATO, not to Western accommodations at Teheran and Yalta or to the willingness of the West to overlook his imperial adventures. Such scholars emphasize Stalin's alleged "conservatism" in pushing himself back from the table before he had swallowed

Greece, Italy, and France.

This kind of "revisionism" is useful neither to truth nor to liberty. Stalin annexed the Baltic states in 1940; he had mastered Albania and Yugoslavia by 1945 (though the latter was to escape in 1948), East Germany and Bulgaria by 1946, Poland and Romania by 1947, and Hungary and Czechoslovakia by 1948. NATO was formed in 1949—evidently not a moment too soon. But this the creedal isolationist will never grant. Since he regards American intervention in Europe as by definition morally wrong and practically unnecessary, he depicts Stalin as a "conservative" who

Isolationism should be regarded merely as one strategic option of a free society; it should not be elevated to the status of a political or moral creed.

never needed to be deterred; or he depicts the Western alliance as driven by "interests" no more important to liberty than those of the Marxists.

And as he underemphasizes the political and moral weight of the Western threat in keeping one part of the European peninsula more or less free in the late '40s, so he underemphasizes the weight of the West in bringing a measure of freedom to other parts of Europe in the late '80s. Thus, we hear progress described as emanating entirely from the Soviet government's longstanding concern for self-protective peace; we hear God thanked for ensuring that Reagan is no longer around to bother the Soviets with his cold warrior talk of an evil empire—as if the evil empire were actually the West.

A much more sophisticated expression of isolationist views has recently been advanced by Sheldon Richman, an editor of this journal. I respect Richman's work and have learned from it, but this time, if I read him correctly, I am sure he is wrong. He makes a laudable, but unsuccessful, attempt to base his isolationism on stern reality instead of creedal thinking. The argument that results from his attempt might be called the "accommodate now, triumph later" thesis—and it is one that is more congruent with creed than with experience.

In an article in the January 1990 issue of *Liberty*, Richman points out that in 1948 Finland agreed to a treaty of friendship with the Soviet Union, a course that brought the Finnish people "forty prosperous years of liberty, capitalism, and peace," instead of "the crushing of Finland and possibly another world war." And forty years have brought greater rewards with them, as Richman thinks: in the January 1990 issue of *The Free Market*, he uses communism's 1989 catastrophe as evidence that no one needed to intervene against the Soviet bloc, because its downfall was always ensured by the ineffectiveness of its social-economic system. The Cold War was useless, he believes, either to contain communism or to destroy it. If America had simply done nothing, practiced no intervention in Europe, the Soviet system would eventually have collapsed anyhow; in the meantime, America accomplished nothing but the strengthening of its own warfare state.

Unfortunately, the implications of Richman's brass-tacks realism are far from realistic. It encourages us to imagine that we inhabit a world in which old tyrants never aggress, they just fade away. Tyrants in this imaginary world can be depended upon to sink deeper and deeper into the political and economic hole, without ever deciding to distract their populace or replenish their funds by looting and enslaving their neighbors. Tyrants are, apparently, at once too smart and too dumb to require containment. They are dumb enough about economics to embrace the doomed policies of communism, but smart enough about economics to sense that aggressive war doesn't pay. Prudence, unaided by any external threat, seems to be sufficient to restrain them from annexing unprotected countries that might, one or two generations later, be seen as mere liabilities. Although they are savage to their citizens, they are respectful of their neighbors—much more respectful than the power-mad directors of the American military-industrial complex.

In such a curiously rational but unreal world, America's Cold War intervention would not have been justified. But the real world is that of John Jay's maxim: "It is too true, however disgraceful it may be to human nature, that nations in general will make war whenever they have the prospect of getting

any thing by it, nay that absolute monarchs [of whom the Marxist powers have offered many examples] will often make war when their nations are to get nothing by it, but for purposes and objects merely personal, such as, a thirst for military glory, revenge for personal affronts [such as the affront of other people's freedom and prosperity]; ambition or private compacts to aggrandize or support their particular families, or partisans."

If, as the isolationists often insist, "elite groups" in the United States are perpetually yearning to begin aggressive wars which are not, perhaps, in anyone's long-term interest but are very much in some people's short-term interest, then we must assume that officers of tyrant-states possess at least an equal readiness to get things by aggressive means. And many a tyrant-state has had time to destroy its neighbors before destroying itself. How persuasively could one argue with England not to contest Hitler's aggression in central Europe—because Nazism would eventually destroy itself? How persuasively can one argue with the American public that

I could not really protect my house from a violent neighbor by a preemptive nuclear strike, but neither could I protect my house by boarding up all its doors and windows. In either case—that of an unwise intervention or that of an unwise isolation—I would ruin my property by employing the wrong means of protecting it.

NATO was never necessary, because the Soviet Union may eventually implode? It hasn't imploded yet, and generations of central and eastern Europeans (not to mention Africans, Cubans, and Vietnamese) have paid the price of its failure to do so.

"Gorbachev seems to understand," Richman remarks, "that big-power status and prestige would be denied a country that cannot grow enough food for its own people. His solution is to begin to integrate the Soviet economy with the

world economy. He wants trade and technology, and to get it he must commence, however modestly, market reforms. The people have demanded change, and the rulers could not ignore it." But they did ignore—or brutally repress—it for many years, years during which they used military force to seize their neighbors' raw materials, strategic positions, technology, and technologists, years during which they lavished, on military competition with the West, resources that they might have spent in shoring up their domestic economies, at least for the comparatively short term that usually represents the effective horizon of political decision-making.

Certainly it is true, as Richman argues, that the Soviet "consumer economy would still have been starkly inferior to the West's" if the Soviets had not been "forced to spend resources on arms rather than consumer products." But this is a long way from proving the hypothesis that "given the inherent incompetence of bureaucratic economies, it would not have mattered if the Soviets spent *no resources* on arms." If they had spent *no resources* on arms, the Soviets would not now be running deficits of between 10% and 20% of GNP, and that is something that matters.

The current disintegration of communism in eastern Europe is not, as Richman asserts, the "spontaneous" product of internal problems. Communism was contained by Western armed forces, prevented from further expansion and looting; it was harassed by Western schemes of subversion; and it was taxed by competition with the West for military supremacy. It was this competition that rendered desperate the need for advanced "technology" to which Richman refers as a motive for Gorbachev's decision to change the Soviet Union's ways.

"In the broadest terms," Richman says, the people of the East Bloc "have awoken to what they've been missing. How long could people be expected to live under [communist] conditions if they have an inkling of what people in the West have?" The answer is, A good long time—70 years in the Soviet Union, 45 years in neighboring countries. During virtually all of that period, people had more than an inkling of what they were missing, and they often rebelled. The dramatic collapse of East Germany, where communism was arguably more

popular than in any other state, demonstrates how little the people needed to be "awoken." They had rebelled—but their rebellions had always been suppressed. The United States prudently decided that it would be counterproductive to attempt to liberate eastern Europe by force, but it could and did intervene in Europe and elsewhere to keep pressure on the tyrants. It did what Finland, for instance, could not do, and the policy accomplished its major objectives.

But it is unfair to use even Finland as an example of peaceful coexistence with tyranny. What made the difference between Finland's relatively easy fate—mere castration—and the fate of, say, Czechoslovakia? It was, quite simply, Finland's proven willingness to fight and fight hard; it was the military threat that Finland would surely pose in the event of a general Western move against the Soviets. And this returns us to the more important question: What

continued on page 76

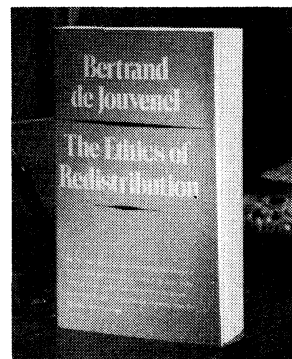
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"Gaudy Days in Berlin," from page 13

some of our own soldiers have been working around the clock anticipating a Soviet missile invasion.

★ ★ ★

The Wall made Berlin a showplace, not of Western achievements so much as the difference between East and West. You could inspect and feel the other world simply by taking public transportation or a short walk and come back before midnight. You could go from a city that had an abundance of consumer goods to one that did not, from homelessness to its absence, from efficient automobiles to noisy plastic mobile carts. You could see for yourself how "socialism" was deficient and why thought-control failed. I remember having dinner in East Berlin. At seven o'clock, my hostess excused herself to turn on her television. On the screen was a crawl announcing the evening's programs on the West Berlin station that East Berliners were officially forbidden to watch. Since the East Berlin newspapers didn't print the schedules of Western television, this was the best way for her to discover what might be worth watching that evening; a few minutes later she telephoned a friend about a program that would interest them both. I had an image of East Berlin telephone lines suddenly humming immediately after the schedule-crawl, much as American toilets are flushed almost in unison during the ads in the Super Bowl. I also remember crates of peaches stacked outside the grocery store on Sunday. East Berliners were rushing up and purchasing whole crates. Why, I asked. "The peaches come from Bulgaria only twice a year; and if you don't get them today, there'll be none tomorrow." When channels of demand and supply are clogged, many trivial things, taken for granted in the West, become persistently problematic. Living in West Berlin made me more of a libertarian.

★ ★ ★

The Wall was less of a problem for West Berliners than outsiders imagine. The post-war city was reconstructed to realize three great illusions—there was no war, there is no Wall, and the great cultural traditions continue; and all three artifices are persuasive while you live there. For one thing, in a city as spacious as Berlin you hardly saw the Wall, as it ran along places you didn't usually go near, much as New Yorkers rarely see the large garbage dump in Staten Island or most Manhattanites are hardly conscious of the surrounding rivers. Thus, you felt the Wall only indirectly, as in, say, the inferior air quality in neighborhoods along the Wall (reflecting lower East German emissions standards for both coal and gasoline) or in packed lakeside beaches during a summer day and then packed streets at night. (As I would joke, one of the charms of living in West Berlin was that no one ever invited you to spend a boring weekend at a country home.) Having accustomed myself to its peculiarities, I figured that West Berlin could survive forever as an island; and not unlike other West Berliners, I doubted if the Wall would come down in my lifetime. Indeed, I remember remarking more than once that, "I couldn't imagine what Berlin must have been like before the Wall." I remember a Jewish friend who had grown up in Berlin in the 1960s attributing the absence of anti-Semitism to the Wall—German anti-Semitism, she explained, usually comes from the provinces whose peasants, thanks to the Wall, were kept out of West Berlin. Now that censorship is relaxed, while Honecker's latest successor, Gisy, is identified as having a Jewish background, one fears provincial anti-Semitism will creep back into Berlin. One policy question now is whether East Germany, ever desirous of hard currency, will let West Berliners purchase second homes in the countryside?

★ ★ ★

Still out of town, I hear only secondhand what changes that

the Wall fall has brought to West Berlin. There have been immigrants, of course, but fewer than anticipated. Instead, there has been a massive influx of day visitors to a city that is accustomed to having visitors, but these newcomers differ from the visiting West Germans (called "Wessies") in having no money. It would be comparable to importing a million Mexicans into San Diego and turning them loose. Obviously, they would spend most of their time hypnotized before store windows and thus clog up sidewalks on the shopping streets (even on the Kurfürstendamm, where the sidewalks are fifty feet wide). It was reported here that the local soccer team, Hertha, invited all East Berliners to attend their games free. Anyone who knows Berlin would recognize this as a less magnanimous gesture than it seems. For one thing, it would get thousands of shabbily attired people off the Ku'damm. Second, Hertha has never been a good team, which means that it rarely packs more than a few thousand fans into the historic Olympic Stadium that was built during the 1930s to hold a hundred thousand. Inviting the East Berliners gratis was merely "papering the house," as they say in the NYC theater biz.

The demise of the Wall generates new problems for West Berliners. What do you do with all these visitors who don't have your money, whom you're obliged to accept as guests but would rather not have stay? One fact lost in current reporting is that a border remains, with fixed checkpoints, as they are called, whose restrictions can be tightened from either side. As I write, I hear that West Germany is no longer giving a hundred DM to every visitor, recognizing that some "incentives" are by now counter-productive. I hear that the annual Berlin Film Festival will be held in both parts of the city, which is not only clever, keeping some viewers at home, but remarkable, remembering, as my filmmaking partner Martin Koerber writes me, that, "It had been invented by U.S. intelligence officers as a weapon of the Cold War."

★ ★ ★

As a veteran of radically alternative politics, I've always been bothered by the piety "that's impossible." Recently talking with the New York correspondent for ARD, one of the German television networks, I argued that drugs will be decriminalized suddenly in America, much as alcohol prohibition, which was similar, ended suddenly a half-century ago. He replied, "That would be impossible." What would you have said, I replied, only a few months ago about East Germans opening their Wall. "That's impossible." The next political miracle in the coming years will be not greater effort/expense in the ever-failing "war on drugs" but simple surrender, for much the same reason as, everyone now agrees, the Wall had to come down—given human nature, it *didn't work*.

★ ★ ★

Martin Koerber continues, "If you want to see the Berlin Wall one more time, you'll have to hurry. Apart from wholesale on the international art market by the DDR-government, the people are getting it down bit by bit with hammer and chisel, creating new businesses: hammer and chisel rental at five DM for fifteen minutes while the hammering kids sell chunks to tourists. The most incredible part of it is the noise, audible all along the Wall. Maybe one should propose for the new DDR flag a hammer and chisel, instead of a hammer and sickle."

He also writes that instead of ignoring East Berlin television, as most Berliners on both sides used to do, he now watches it all the time: "fantastic *glasnost* news-shows, no reliable program pattern, but sudden broadcasts of unshelved films, etc." That's another way of saying that DDR-television succeeds with spontaneity, by being a genuine communications channel among people informing one another.

He continues, "Lots of topics for new journalism in Berlin, so come and look in 1990." I think I will.

—RK

Analysis

The Conquest of the United States by Noriega

"What else are you going to do with a man like Noriega?" George Schultz responded to a question about the appropriateness of the U.S. invasion and occupation of Panama.

Liberty's editors offer their answers to that question and others posed by America's Isthmusian adventure.

Making the world safe for democracy—

"Secretary of Defense Cheney said that the U.S. invasion of Panama does not point to a new policy, does not mean that the U.S. will invade Nicaragua if it doesn't like the results of the Nicaraguan election next month. *All options are open*, he said, but so far, no commitments have been made."

—dispatch from CBS Radio News, Jan 5, 1990

No wimps here — The worst thing about the invasion is that Bush got away with exactly what he accused Noriega of doing: flouting the law. Bush did so on a grand scale, thumbing his nose at U.S. law, international law, common decency, and morality. Many Republicans gleefully observed as Bush's popularity with the American rabble skyrocketed, no one will ever call Bush a wimp again. Nor did any Germans, who had suspected vegetarian Hitler of that same crime, call Hitler a wimp after *Kristallnacht*.

—R. W. Bradford

The ugly gringo lives — That's a fair summation of Operation Just Cause, the absurd Latin adventure launched by yet another president in search of his manhood. Maybe the man who is ultimately to blame for Bush's criminal activity is Gary Trudeau—a man can be expected to take only so much ribbing about being a wimp before he Does Something.

Bush once again got lucky. (I say "once again" because here is a man who should not have risen above middle management in the Customs Service.) He pulled off a two-bit military operation with aplomb—at least in the eyes of the somnambulant American population—by having as his bogey an untelegenic caricature of a Latin Strongman. We can overlook such clumsiness as ransacking the Nicaraguan ambassador's home and other peccadilloes.

The Bush regime craftily manipulated the highly-manipulable domestic herd in the days ahead of the invasion. For example, he and what passes for the news media trumpeted Manuel Noriega's impudent "declaration" of war against the United States. In fact, the Maximum Leader of Panama—or whatever the hell he dubbed himself—apparently had merely recognized a state of war between the two countries. That's how his pronunciamientos were interpreted throughout Latin

America. In this, of course, he was right. The United States had all but declared war on Panama, embargoing trade, freezing assets, oiling the campaign of the opposition candidate, etc. Change a little word like "recognize" to "declare" and you've got yourself a swell little war.

Then there was the "provocation" that the United States simply could not ignore. The shooting of that American soldier was a classic *casus belli* in official minds intent on invasion, but in fact it can be blown off as fraudulent. A car full of GIs ran a checkpoint near a strategic location in Panama City, resulting in the firing on the car and the death of a soldier. I wonder what might have happened had a bunch of Panamanian soldiers refused to stop as they drove by the White House one night. Moreover, there is no evidence that this was anything more than an *ad hoc* tragedy. Certainly no one ever produced an order from Noriega.

Oh, yes, there was another incident. As syndicated columnist Joseph Sobran, who has progressed from conservative to libertarian in record time, observed: "There was a sad absurdity in listening to him [Bush] explain, with all the macho he could muster, that when an American Marine is repeatedly kicked in the groin, then by golly, Mr Gorbachev, this President is going to do something. Is that how American foreign policy is made? And here I was picturing a lot of high-level strategists in some oak-paneled conference room."

American indignation at dictators and their treatment of American nationals is highly selective, so we might ask what lessons there are in the Panama invasion for other tinhorn Maximum Leaders. First, if you're on the CIA payroll, you had better be discreet about any double-dealing. Second, try to appear as though you are helping the Contras; we don't mind drug-running as long as some of the proceeds go to a good cause. Third, don't refuse when the United States leans on you to ease up on your bank-secrecy laws. If you do these things, you can probably stay in power for as long as you want. And don't take too seriously the American blather about respecting the democratic process. That swill was flowing from the State Department when the United States turned a successful unarmed Panamanian police force into an armed militia powerful enough to overthrow a constitutionally-elected government in

1968. And there was no shortage of it in 1984, when General Noriega stole an election and put his man in power—with bravos from the Reagan administration. And even as the Bush gang chanted hosannas to the Will of the People, it was installing top Noriega bludgeoner Colonel Eduardo Herrera as head of the new defense force and keeping lots of locals in prison camps without charge.

George Gilder once wrote that there was a compensatory logic to the cosmos. I doubt it (the rebuttal is that Nelson Rockefeller reportedly died instantly at the moment of ecstasy while in bed with a woman not his wife). George “Charles Atlas” Bush will suffer neither politically nor otherwise—as he assuredly should—for his intervention and killing of hundreds of civilians. His popularity is expectedly high because the American people like to kick posteriors, especially easy Latin ones. And as much as they like their Presidents to have a streak of barroom brawler in them, they dislike history. The last thing they want to hear about is how U.S. policy, with the help of Bush, created Noriega. Bush perfectly exemplifies this willful, enthusiastic ignorance: his magic words for dismissing any discussion of how the United States caused any mess are, “That’s history.” I would look forward to the day he’s history, except that I remember who stands behind him.

Even the worst situation has its good side. Because of the invasion, Peru has pulled out of the Colombian drug summit. We must be grateful for even the smallest of blessings.

—Sheldon L. Richman

Maybe the man who is ultimately to blame for Bush’s criminal activity is Gary Trudeau—a man can be expected to take only so much ribbing about being a wimp before he Does Something.

The cost of “justice” — Just a few weeks after Gorbachev had taken the “No More Invasions!” pledge toward the satellite countries, Bush urged him to renounce it by invading Romania to assist the anti-Ceausescu forces there, and in the process implying a sanction of the U.S. invasion of Panama. Why Gorby turned down Bush’s suggestion I do not know: maybe he figured intervention wasn’t necessary, maybe he feared the cost of such an invasion in terms of Soviet life and treasure, maybe he has become a sincere non-interventionist. But one thing is plain: the U.S. invades its satellite as the Soviets stand by and watch armed revolution in its satellites. Bush has voluntarily given Gorby the high moral ground.

In the long run, this may be the greatest loss in America’s humiliating defeat in Panama, greater than the cost in American lives, in Panamanian lives, in American property (already the Administration is talking about giving \$2,000,000,000 to Panama to help rebuild the country after the invasion), and in America’s reputation in Latin America.

—R. W. Bradford

Jurisdiction: moral and legal — If we as a nation are ever entitled to act collectively at all, then we are morally entitled to intervene to help depose a tyrant. This is especially true if we are guilty of having given the tyrant some support in the past and if, more recently, our half-hearted efforts against him have proved ineffectual and have only wreaked hardship on his subjects. Whether remedial interven-

tion is prudent on a particular occasion is another question. Anyway, I regret seeing the intervention in Panama linked to a supposed criminal case instead of being frankly defended for what it was. I have seen practically no discussion of what crimes Noriega is supposed to have committed *within the territorial jurisdiction of the United States*.

—Leland B. Yeager

Defending our women — It was embarrassingly obvious from his performance on TV that George Bush was prepared to put up with damn near anything in Panama except Messing Around With Our Women.

Noriega had been a dope dealing, dictatorial dacoit for years—probably going back to his collegial association with Bush himself at the CIA. The thing that Bush spoke of as the last straw, and with obvious, sincere passion, was that an American woman had been sexually harassed by Panamanians at a roadblock.

—Karl Hess

Advancing the rule of law — The jurisdiction of U.S. law enforcement agents extends throughout the world (and, presumably, the entire universe), the courts have ruled, but the requirement that law enforcement agents must recognize the rights of citizens guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution, the Bill of Rights and the laws of the land, do not extend beyond U.S. territory. Therefore, there was no need to inform Noriega of his rights until the plane hauling him to the United States had cleared Panama, and the warrantless search of his home is perfectly legal and the items seized there are perfectly admissible as evidence. So, presumably would be a confession made after Noriega’s finger nails were extracted, his genitals fried by electrodes, and the soles of his feet seared with a branding iron.

—R. W. Bradford

The Law and Mr Noriega — There are many legal dimensions to the case of *Uncle Sam v. Manuel* (Pineapple Puss) *Noriega*. Quite a few of them trouble me, but I am going to limit my observations to the most general one: can it really be argued that General Noriega owes faith, obedience, and observance to the statutes of the United States?

Our legal system rests on two bedrocks—Roman civil law and English common law. The former legal edifice centers on the concept of *civitas*, which was given its most profound analysis by Cicero. The great orator’s characterization of this civic virtue can be paraphrased as: an informed and spontaneous willingness to obey the law, derived from an acceptance of the protection and succor of the community. The Anglo-Saxon conception is analogous—the rule of law rests ultimately on an unspoken contract between statutory authority and the informed consent of the governed, to summarize Blackstone and others. (As a point of information, note that the Panamanian civil code is derived from Roman law.)

Is there any sense whatever in which Manuel Noriega owes obedience to the United States? He is not a citizen, not a national, not a resident. He is not under the protection of this country (except, obviously, in a very sinister sense at the moment). I realize that there are some legal theorists who argue that offenses which transgress the common prohibitions of civilized mankind may be punished by any lawful authority. But these are not relevant here. Noriega is not accused in this country of crimes against common law—murder, rape, theft—nor is he accused of piracy, which has a special status in that by international agreement it is regarded as an assault against civilization itself.

Rather, we are dealing with such charges as money launder-

ing, traveling (to Cuba) in furtherance of a criminal enterprise, allowing drug merchants to use Panamanian territory as a transshipment point, and assorted RICO offenses. Whatever these alleged transgressions are, they are definitely *not* crimes against the common legal heritage of mankind. Most of them weren't even crimes in the United States ten years ago.

This whole dubious matter reminds me of the allegation one often hears (usually from right-wing sources) that so-and-so (Ortega, Castro, the USSR) has "violated the Monroe Doctrine." Well, maybe so, but this "doctrine" is merely the unilateral demand of one American president. It isn't even a law in the United States. Why should Ortega or other non-Americans "obey" it? Is Lech Walesa obligated to obey the Brezhnev Doctrine?

—William P. Moulton

Arms and the revolution — One startling contrast between the U.S. invasion of Panama and the anti-communist revolution in Romania was in their treatment of gun ownership. The U.S. Army confiscated every gun it could find in Panama. The Provisional Government of Romania restored to the people their right to own weapons. Whether or not this relates to the fact that Romania experienced a democratic revolution and Panama experienced a foreign invasion I leave to the readers.

—R. W. Bradford

Barring catastrophe — Well, why not invade Panama? Presidents do seem to need an opportunity to flex their muscles, and George Bush picked his shrewdly. Not for him the derring-do of a Jimmy "Make My Day" Carter escapade that comes undone in Iranian desert sands. Improving on Reagan's Grenada sortie, this Republican president selected a banana republic whose name most Americans can correctly pronounce and which some are able to locate on a map. The timing, too, was impeccable. Not anticipating an American visit, Noriega was passing the evening in dalliance with one of his mistresses. In more than one sense of the term, the general was caught with his pants down. The entire event stands as testimonial to a self-professedly "cautious" president who never wanders far from the latest opinion poll tallies. How fitting that, within days of the invasion, figures were duly released showing that 92% of all Panamanians approved the operation. Pluralities like that are—oops, make that "used to be"—observed only in Soviet elections, so who can complain?

Noriega for one, but he is a thug. Having been a principal in a thriving commodity export business to Miami, by what right can he protest a summons to the scene of his operations? Bean counter types may complain at the costs incurred, but that is to quibble. A sum that amounts to no more than a blip in the total defense budget has allowed so many of us to feel good about ourselves ("We're number ONE! We're number ONE!") and afforded weeks of televised entertainment to a populace grown weary of Roseanne—who, by striking coincidence, is another personality sometimes captured in a state of pants-down merriment. The upcoming Noriega trial will represent a bonanza of Keynesian proportions for the legal industry via massive investment in machinery to break new jurisprudential ground. Those killed or seriously wounded during the invasion are, admittedly, losers, but presumably the reason young men join the all-volunteer U.S. forces is to kick some butt, not to draw endless rounds of dreary KP detail. That is not to minimize the adventure's significance to young women who, for the first time, have enjoyed an opportunity to fire live ammunition at live tar-

gets—a milestone for the feminist cause. One feels some lingering regrets for the Panamanian dead, but that is the price they must pay for the democracy we have conferred on them.

Let's not deny it: Operation Just Cause has been a success. Still, if Bush was itching to get his hands on Noriega, one wonders why he didn't simply accept the gift that leaders of the preceding abortive coup attempt tried to offer? Could that be the down side to having a cautious president? And might there be repercussions to picking up Teddy Roosevelt's big stick at precisely the moment when restive captives of the Soviet empire are endeavoring to release their bonds? If Panama is a legitimate target of our national interest, all the more so for the USSR are Lithuania, East Germany, and the rest of Gorbachev's precariously balanced dominos. Finally, it is difficult to overcome the nagging suspicion that Panama was invaded not because of its own intrinsic importance but because an administration whose policies in Central America have consistently become undone was in desperate need of a quick fix that could be labeled a "success."

Stepping back a bit from the current hoopla, one notes that there would have been no illicit millions stashed in Noriega's

If Panama is a legitimate target of our national interest, all the more so for the USSR are Lithuania, East Germany, and the rest of Gorbachev's precariously balanced dominos.

Swiss bank accounts, no call for American battle ships to be patrolling waters off the coasts of a civil war-ridden Colombia, no need to interrupt Bill Bennett's love affair with the Great Books, were it not for this country's declaration of war on drugs. Just possibly there is reason to reevaluate that commitment. Indeed, poor George Bush has become one of its inadvertent casualties. It cannot be good for his career prospects to be required on his resumé to list residence in a city whose mayor has been obliged to conduct municipal business from the local lockup.

—Loren E. Lomasky

Popular invasion — There is little surprise that the Panamanian people have shown some public support of the United States. The invading U.S. force of 26,000 men quickly conquered Panama, killing approximately 1,000 civilians in the process.

Panama has about 2.37 million residents; the U.S. has about 247.5 million. Simple extrapolation shows that a similar invasion in the United States would consist of an army of 2,715,000 soldiers, with U.S. civilian casualties totalling about 105,000. Besides the civilian deaths, the soldiers would have done hun-



"You shouldn't keep things like that bottled up inside yourself—go ahead and invade Austria!"

dreds of billions of dollars of damage, made thousands of summary arrests, searched virtually any piece of private property it pleased, and confiscated nearly all weapons it found.

If the United States were ever subject to such an invasion, wouldn't at least some Americans read the handwriting on the wall and "welcome" the invaders?

Given the magnitude of the U.S. invasion, the amazing thing is that more Panamanians don't take to the streets supporting it. It would be imprudent to do otherwise. —R. W. Bradford

Why Bush will not be impeached — The chief lesson of the Panama invasion and the surrender and imprisonment of Gen. Manuel Noriega is that the Constitution has very little influence on what is considered right or legal in these United States.

The Constitution gives the power to declare war to Congress. But presidents have always coveted this power, and in this age of the Imperial Presidency, Congress's power has devolved to the President in many ways—some by law, some less formally. Most of the arguments for this change in practice have rested on the problems of modern warfare, with the spectre of the Bomb and Instantaneous Armageddon as chief movers. Bush's war on Noriega, however, was a war that cried out for Congressional debate before it began; but Americans like a good show, full of independent—not debated—action, and Bush provided it in spades.

So what if the war on Panama was unconstitutional! So what if many innocent people were killed—they weren't Americans! So what if the new Bush doctrine of capturing criminals abroad without the agreement of foreign governments treats other nations as second-class—after all, America is No. 1! This sort of patriotism is coming back in its most ugly forms, these days, and nearly everyone, by jingo, has joined the parade.

What we are witnessing is not the beginning of a long, new age of American "police-keeping," but the last gasp of the American Empire.

Still, this depressing trend may reverse. Bush's bullying is out of place in our new world of rising powers. I suspect that what we are witnessing is not the beginning of a long, new age of American "police-keeping," but the last gasp of the American Empire. Third World countries are not going to take this sort of heavy-handed police action for long. We can expect a backlash of major proportions, maybe not this year, or the next, but soon.

Unfortunately, this backlash is apt to be very ugly, and will probably take the form of terrorism against Americans in America—modelled, perhaps, on American actions abroad. Rough justice, to be sure, but it may be the only thing that will put America in its place. Justice, not patriotism, is the last refuge of scoundrels—a class that unfortunately includes many Americans. —Timothy Virkkala

The logic of "Operation Just Cause"—

There is an obvious gap between the reasons Bush offered for the Panamanian invasion and the actual logic that lay behind it. Let's take a quick look at Bush's ostensible reasons:

1) Noriega is involved in drug traffic. Lots of other people in

the world are involved in the drug trade, including many whom the U.S. supports. In fact, the CIA itself has been involved in drug trade in both Asia and Latin America. So was the Afghan resistance, a fact that did not prevent our extending aid.

2) Noriega is undemocratic. Aside from Western Europe and North America, most of the world's governments are undemocratic. The USSR, for example, has been undemocratic for more than 70 years. Yet we plan no invasions elsewhere on this score.

3) Noriega threatened the security of the Panama Canal. This is pure conjecture. Neither Noriega nor any representative of his government ever suggested interference with the canal or took any threatening action. In fact, the U.S. closed down the canal for the first time in its history in the wake of the invasion.

4) Noriega threatened American lives. There is some reality to this charge: Noriega had made it clear that if the U.S. invaded, his forces would fight back, presumably killing the invading American soldiers. But by this criterion, so presumably has every country on earth threatened the lives of American servicemen.

Other statements from the Administration indicated that the invasion was justified because a Panamanian soldier had shot a U.S. soldier who had refused to stop at a military checkpoint (try running a checkpoint at a U.S. military base and see if you have better luck than the U.S. soldier did), that a group of Panamanian soldiers had roughed up an American soldier and threatened his wife (sometime earlier, El Salvador soldiers murdered a group of priests, one of whom was an American, with no invasion from the U.S.), that Noriega had "declared war" on the U.S. (he had acknowledged that in light the U.S. acts of aggression toward his government, a state of war apparently existed between the two countries), that Noriega has been indicted for a felony in the United States and an invasion was the only way to apprehend him (does this mean Bush would consider an Iranian invasion of England, which continues to harbor indicted felon Salman Rushdie, to be justified?).

The real explanation lies elsewhere. The first element can be found in the press reports that a close, but unnamed, associate of President Bush explained that the president was "tired of Noriega thumbing his nose" at him. While this is apparently a motivation of this particular invasion, I don't think it offers a full explanation.

It is plain from an examination of the record that Bush's logic for invading a small country is remarkably simple. The necessary and sufficient conditions for invasion are:

1) Bush's political power and popularity will be increased by the invasion; and

2) He could get away with it (i.e. win the battles at small cost in American lives and without the intervention of other countries).

Small countries of the world beware! —R. W. Bradford

Just say "Noriega" — When is the government of one nation justified in sending troops across the boundaries of another nation? Not when the rulers of the first nation happen to feel like it, or are on an ego-trip, or feel they can be successful in subduing that other nation. Not even when they think they can put the second nation's house in better order than the second nation can do itself—that's paternalism with a vengeance!

If there is to be any justification, there must be a clear and demonstrable threat to the first nation. For example, if a missile base were stationed in Tijuana and threatened the United

States, the United States might be justified in neutralizing that threat. (Even here, there are qualifications. Perhaps the base was constructed in response to a quite different danger; or perhaps in response to the United States having already done the same thing; and so on.) But not, for example, if the second nation threatened to become economically competitive with the United States and we were afraid of losing some of our markets to them.

If we were a small nation and a larger nation to the north periodically interfered with our internal affairs, to satisfy either its power-impulse or even its sense of justice, would we feel that such interference was justified? But surely that's the way Latin American nations feel toward us now. Decades of gunboat diplomacy have left them with a bad taste in their mouths about "Yankee imperialism." So even if we went in with a good reason, they would think we were going in with a bad one. Our track record doesn't particularly entitle us to their trust.

Was the safety of the citizens of the United States really threatened by what was going on in Panama? On the basis of everything we've been told so far, the answer seems to be No. And even if it were Yes, we should still hesitate because of our sorry record in the past. "When in doubt, don't."

—John Hospers

Overkill — It is shocking that the commander of arguably the finest commando-type troops on earth would have to stoop to a continent-crashing invasion in order to bust one lousy drug dealer. Just look at the specialists Bush now controls: the Navy SEALs, the several airborne special strike units, and the Marine Corps long range reconnaissance force. I know some of these people and as much as a libertarian may cringe at their very existence, the fact is that they are good at what they do and they were not given the job of grabbing Noriega on the quick. Once the American government had decided to get him, it seems mere foolishness to say that an invasion in the open was in any way morally superior to a kidnapping.

Think of the way Mossad has yanked people out of protected quarters, putting the ordinary Mafia hit squad to shame. All such invasive violence is abhorrent to libertarians, of course. And the lesser of two evils is still evil. But there is a detectable difference between a kidnapping and a town-shattering artillery barrage or an outright invasion.

Since we all know that the state is a killer and that George Bush seems as rabid a war fancier as any, and since there has not appeared, so far, a way to curb the murderous inclinations of state power, I hope I may be excused for wistfully complaining that along with the international lawlessness and immorality of the Panama invasion there also is a sad sort of incompetence in which so many lives were spent in doing what a few good men probably could have accomplished not only quickly but on the cheap.

I would have protested that also. But at least there would be more people alive and less of a nation ruined. Until the ideas of liberty and classical liberalism really spread in this land, that may be about the best we can hope for.

—Karl Hess

The war on banking — Less than eight hours after the invasion began, NBC News reported that, "Noriega was the man who provided a financial safe haven for the Colombian cocaine bosses. Much of the Colombian cocaine money was deposited in Panamanian banks. Bank secrecy was just a part of it . . . American authorities are saying this morning that this is a

good opportunity to go after some of those banks where much of the billions in cocaine profits from throughout the world are now located." On January 29, five weeks into U.S. occupation of Panama, Vice President Dan Quayle told Panamanian officials that they must do away with bank privacy in order to help in the War on Drugs. Panamanian puppet Endara responded that bank privacy must be retained, though he would seek ways to avoid drug money. But with Quayle representing a government that occupies his nation, the odds are that the Bush-Quayle war on privacy will prevail.

Is this the first time in history an invasion was undertaken in part to force a country to change its banking regulations?

—Brian Doherty

The power of a free press — This was the news media at its most servile. The only point at which they voiced any criticism during the first day's coverage was when a few U.S. reporters and producers were briefly arrested by Panamanian police forces, and the media responded by hectoring the Army for failing to provide better protection for their employees. The media dwelled on the tiny losses of the Army, while practically ignoring the massive loss of lives among Panamanian civilians. As late as Jan 5, two weeks after the Army destroyed several acres of densely populated housing in

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Panama City, the Army claimed that as few as 83 Panamanian civilians were killed. Latin American journalists estimate civilian losses at a thousand or more, but we may never know: the attack on the civilian housing was a holocaust in which bodies were incinerated, sometimes leaving only charred remnants of bones, sometimes leaving nothing.

—R. W. Bradford

More to come — David Gergen of *U.S. News & World Report*, commenting on the invasion on the MacNeil-Lehrer News Hour (January, 1990):

"I think it's been—in American terms—successful. Militarily, the affair is over, basically. It accomplished its political purpose, which was to depose the government of Noriega and to put in place a democratic government. Politically, here and at home, it has played extraordinarily well. It's surprising, in fact, how jingoistic the country has become about this. The press and everybody else seems to be celebrating.

"I do think what we're seeing evolve, interestingly enough, is possibly a new role for the United States military in the post-war era in this hemisphere. Increasingly, the military is going to be used for such police activities. The Bush Administration this week—in fact yesterday—the press spokesman has started talking about using U.S. military forces to cordon off, to draw a tight noose around Colombia and the drug exports that are coming out of Colombia.

"What we're seeing may be the first chapter of more to come."

□

Essay

Humanity vs Nature

Two Views of People and Animals

by John Hospers

Morality often requires us to support the "underdog"—but what about man's *real* underdogs, the animals? Prof. Hospers sharply contrasts two distinct rationales for giving animals special consideration, and shows how one of them refutes the other.

Most people today are likely to agree that killing and injuring other human beings is wrong, except when done under special conditions such as self-defense. Causing death or injury to others is something that requires a special justification. But concerning our behavior toward animals there is far less uniformity of opinion. People from time immemorial have killed animals and caused them suffering, and have done so without guilt, not questioning the morality of such actions.

In most Western nations it is considered wrong to mistreat those animals that are adopted as pets; but in other parts of the world, such as most of Latin America, the mistreatment of dogs, cats, and other domestic animals is a matter of indifference. Perhaps this is because they don't really view them as pets but only as things or property; once they adopt them they are there for the owners' convenience and can be disposed of at their convenience. We, on the other hand, feel responsible for their feeding and grooming and certain other creature-comforts. In poverty-stricken areas of the world it is not possible to give them food and sustenance when their owners do not even have these benefits themselves.

As for wild animals, millions of people hunt deer and grouse, and often leave injured creatures to die without any feelings of guilt about doing so. It is doubtful that they even think of these creatures as sentient beings capable of feeling pain, any more than it occurred to most slave owners that blacks and

Native Americans were human beings like themselves. But just as there was an increasing minority of whites who condemned the mistreatment of slaves and Indians, so there is an increasing number of people who have moral qualms about the mistreatment of animals and the use of animals to serve our ends rather than their own: for example, killing them for sport, killing them for food, and using them in medical experiments.

I. "Enlightened Humanism"

The 17th-century philosopher René Descartes wrote that animals are automata who do not really feel pain, but are wired up to act as if they do. (How he behaved toward his dog is not recorded.) A century later, Immanuel Kant wrote that the only reason we should not be cruel to animals is that this encourages us to be cruel to people: presumably if we were cruel to animals without the habit carrying over to people, this would be all right. Most philosophers, like most theologians and religious leaders, have been silent on the question. But today there is an upsurge of concern about the treatment of animals by humans. (The term "hu-

manism" is more closely related to *humane* than to *human*.) Books are devoted to it, and magazines such as *The Animals' Voice* contain not only articles but vivid and unforgettable photographs of human mistreatment of animals, especially in "factory farms," slaughterhouses, and experimental laboratories.

After so many centuries of not worrying much about the fate of animals, why should this concern for animals come into such prominence in our own day? One reason may be that we no longer need animals for food; agriculture is less than ten thousand years old, and before that (except for occasional wild fruits and berries) people lived largely on fish and game. Still, this condition is not peculiar to our century. The main reason, I suspect, lies elsewhere: we will always find reasons for eliminating what is a threat to us, and once the threat is past the need to protect ourselves against it dissolves. By and large, animals no longer threaten the human species (rather, humans are a threat to them). Unlike the pioneers, we no longer have to worry about bears and bison, having already exterminated almost all of them, and now we keep a

few of them around in national parks as a kind of decoration. There are many threats to the human race—war, pollution, holes in the ozone layer—but animal predation is no longer one of them. Having already vanquished most of the animal kingdom, however, we can now afford to be generous.

So much for the genesis of our shift in attitude. But what about the moral basis of our (however tentative) pro-animal stance? Here some distinctions must be made:

(1) Situations, or *states-of-affairs*, can be described as (among other things) *good* and *bad*; actions are described as (among other things) *right* and *wrong*. It is a basic premise of many ethical theories that pain, misery, and suffering are bad. Humane individuals try to minimize suffering, their own and that of others, and often devote their entire lives to this cause. A world containing large amounts of suffering would be a world less worth having, and certainly less worth creating, than one containing little or none. Pain and suffering are "just bad things to have around," and we try not to increase them.¹

(2) Pain may sometimes be *instrumentally* good—a necessary means toward a good or worthwhile end. For example, pain is often nature's warning signal that something is amiss in the body. If our feet were dangling in the fire and we felt no pain, we would soon find ourselves without feet. The world being as it is, pain is often a good thing to have as a *means* of correcting a situation (moving one's feet elsewhere; or going to see a physician about the pain). (The world would be still better if pain were not needed at all as a signal.) Much of the time pain is *not* instrumental to any good end, as in the case of terminal cancer when prolongation of the agony serves no purpose. Again, human nature being as it is, sometimes nothing less than one's own suffering is what it takes to appreciate the suffering of others. We should not conclude that suffering is always good if it leads to *something* worth-while: the end must be *worth* the suffering. It's not worth being tortured to death just so that someone else who is watching may say "It taught me a lesson." The existence of suffering must be *justified* by some overriding goal that it achieves and which cannot be achieved without the suffering.²

(3) The *infliction* of pain and suffering on others is wrong—again, unless some eminently worthy goal is achieved by it that can be achieved in no other way, such as a physician inflicting pain on a patient if this is necessary to save the patient's life. (If the physician could achieve the patient's recovery without inflicting the pain, but inflicted it anyway, he would be a sadist.) Since people have finite powers, they may sometimes be in such a situation. An omnipotent God would not have such an excuse for inflicting pain, for being omnipotent he could effect the cure without inflicting the pain, or create creatures that wouldn't have diseases at all.³

Such is the "enlightened humanist" position with regard to pain and its infliction. Throughout most of human history the view has been applied primarily to human beings. But of course pain and suffering are not limited to human beings. Animals, certainly mammals and some others as well, have nervous systems similar to ours, and exhibit pain-behavior very similar to that of humans. The dog whose leg has been cut off by a power-mower gives most of the same indications of pain that people do. Whether or not animals know that they are in pain, they are in pain.

Thus it is only a short and obvious step that takes us from "Do not inflict pain and suffering on *persons*" to "Do not inflict pain and suffering on *animals*" (or any sentient beings, that is, creatures capable of experiencing pain and pleasure). And the same for the somewhat vague proviso "... unless it is the only way to achieve an eminently worthwhile end that can be achieved in no other way." It is not capacity to *reason* that is our criterion here, but, as Bentham said, the capacity to *suffer*. Capacity to reason is relevant to some enterprises, such as signing contracts, but it has nothing to do with the reason for not treating our fellow-creatures cruelly. "Why should beings who reason or use speech (and so forth) qualify for moral status, and those who do not fail to qualify? Isn't this just like saying that only persons with white skin should be free, or that only persons who beget and not those who bear should own property? The criterion seems utterly unrelated to the benefit for which it selects."⁴

A. "Animal liberation"

The "animal liberation" movement, following upon the "women's libera-

tion" movement, came into prominence largely as a result of the publication of Peter Singer's very popular and compelling 1975 book *Animal Liberation*.⁵ In chapter after chapter he exposed the "factory farming" industry; in which people raise pigs, cows, and chickens for market, subjecting them to unbelievably unsanitary and uncomfortable conditions such as crowdedness and inability to move. The conditions themselves can be appreciated only after reading detailed descriptions such as Singer's. Farmers raise chickens, not in nature's dirt, but in wire netting that cuts their feet, with unremitting bright lights (so as to produce more eggs) in cages so crowded that the creatures can't turn around, and conditions so unsanitary as to be unbearable to smell.

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What is inflicted on pigs and cows (especially veal calves) is even worse. To inflict all this on animals, says Singer, is inexcusable. People's liking for beef and pork does not excuse it. Bentham's own example of 200 years ago is as good as any: if pigs that were whipped to death made far more succulent and delicious pork, we still would not be justified in whipping them to death.⁶

What is the solution? One solution would be to raise the animals in the good old-fashioned manner, with chickens picking worms out of the earth and living in uncrowded and sanitary conditions, and cows grazing in the pasture contentedly, able to go into warm clean barns when they want to. But factory-farm methods produce many more marketable animals, and old-fashioned methods cannot compete with factory farms in a competitive market. So the only solution, says Singer, is to stop raising these animals entirely. Perhaps this could be done by passing laws, but it would be vastly preferable for people to become vegetarian voluntarily: "don't eat anything that ever moved on

its own." If no one any longer ate meat, the market for it would dry up, and the animals would no longer be raised. Thus the crowded piggens and the slaughterhouses would perforce go out of business.

According to Singer, not only should we refrain from eating these animals, and raising them for food, we should never use them in animal experiments (e.g. for curing human diseases); nor should we ever hunt animals, either for

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food or for hides or for sport. But these, I suggest, are all *separate* assertions, which don't necessarily stand or fall together. Perhaps it's all right to raise them if we don't mistreat them; or perhaps we should become vegetarians, but still have occasional animal experiments, when needed to save human life (but not to manufacture new cosmetics). Or perhaps eating beef or chicken is justified because we need the high-quality protein we get from animal food (just as carnivorous animals require the flesh of other animals as food in order to stay alive, or to remain healthy) and thus using animals as food is "worth it"—though others reply that people have no need for animal protein (not even milk and eggs) and can get all they need from brown rice and beans and other vegetable substances. Is it that we need the meat or only that we desire it? Singer says we only desire it (and can easily overcome this desire), though others disagree: if he's wrong and we do need it, that would seem to change the picture as far as eating animal flesh is concerned (though it doesn't change the picture where mistreatment of animals is concerned).

There is thus a certain vagueness about the animal liberation view, which suggests a whole battery of questions. Here are a few of the main ones:

1. Singer is a utilitarian, and one practical problem always encountered with utilitarianism is that much of the

time in reply to the question "What shall I do?" we have to reply "I don't know, because nobody knows just what the consequences of doing this or that will be." The consequences differ from case to case even in actions of the same type. Thus utilitarianism, even combined with the view that animals are to be considered as well as people, does not entitle us to draw the conclusion that it is *always* wrong to use animals in medical experiments (even if most such experiments are useless and repetitive) or that it is *always* wrong to hunt and kill animals (even if one is hungry in the desert or the mountains), or that it is always wrong to eat meat (even if you're hungry and the deer is before you, already injured by a predator). What if a practice sometimes has good results and sometimes not? Without testing vaccines on animals, many cures for human diseases (as well as animal diseases) would probably not have been found. Is the result (cure of human diseases) worth the cost (the lives of some animals)? If you or a member of your family were about to die of a disease for lack of a cure, and if animal experimentation would have provided that cure, are you still sure that the experimentation should absolutely not under any circumstances be conducted? Utilitarianism at any rate would not entitle one to say so.

2. Apart from killing or hurting animals, what about just *using* them for various human purposes? Kant said we should treat all human beings as ends-in-themselves, not as means toward *our* ends. Should we follow the same precept in dealing with animals? Is it all right to use a horse for riding? Probably so, unless the horse is mistreated or in some way made worse off; still, you are forcibly subjecting the horse to your own will, not letting him have his. What about using horses to draw wagons or ploughs? Human civilization would not have got far had we not been able to do this. There may be some discomfort for the horse, who would prefer not to carry all this weight, but unless we whip the horses or engage in other cruelty, there seems to be no great "inhumanity" (inhumaneness) involved in this, though we are surely treating the horse as a means to our ends. What of horse-racing? It often involves discomfort for the horse, especially in the early stages; on the other hand, horses

often get in the spirit of racing and seem to enjoy it. (Is it "worth it" to *them* to go through all this for the exhilaration of the contest?) If that's all right, what about bull-fighting? No, this involves the animals' pain and death; even if people enjoy it, it's like Bentham's flogged pig. Presumably the same should be said of cock-fighting, which typically results in death, at least when the fight is engineered by human beings. Or do roosters, somewhat lower on the scale of sentience, perhaps not mind it all that much, and perhaps if human spectators enjoyed it *very* much . . . (but then perhaps they shouldn't?)

3. There is another angle from which to take a pot-shot at the animal liberation view. Let's agree that the infliction of pain is wrong. What if a hunter claims that by shooting the deer, resulting in the quick death of the deer, he is really sparing the deer protracted pain and suffering later? Almost no animals in the wild reach old age, and when signs of age, infirmity, or disease occur, the animal quickly becomes the victim of predators who eat it, or of starvation by slow degrees. Perhaps then the hunter is doing the deer a favor. The pain the hunter inflicts, let's say, is fleeting (though this isn't always so), at least compared with the prolonged agony involved in dying of hunger or thirst or cold.

Of course we cannot know, of any particular animal, that the rest of its life would have contained more suffering than we now propose to inflict on it. We can only be sure that we *are* inflicting some pain (however temporary) on it *now*. And that by killing it we are shortening its life—surely it's a speculative matter what that life would have contained had it been allowed to continue. (We shall pursue this point further in discussing animal rights, below.)

4. Again, let's agree that the infliction of pain and suffering is wrong; but we can kill without inflicting pain. What about killing an animal painlessly? Don't we already consider it right to do this to our pet, if the pet is hopelessly sick or injured? We *could* inflict painless death in slaughterhouses too (though as a rule this isn't done), thus removing one of Singer's objections to raising domestic animals for food. If conditions in slaughterhouses and chicken-pens were all ideal, and we saw to it that even in death they did not suf-

fer, would we *then* be justified in taking the lives of these creatures, at least if they first had a long contented life grazing in fertile and uncrowded pastures?

Is there a relevant difference here between people and animals? Racism is the preference for one race over another, in contexts in which race is not logically relevant (such as hiring whites but not equally or more qualified blacks). Sexism is the preference for one sex over another (again for irrelevant reasons). And "species-ism" is the term invented by Singer for preference for one species over another for irrelevant reasons. If you are nice to people and nasty to dogs, that is species-ism: if it's a dangerous or annoying dog, your behavior is justified because you'd have the same attitude toward people who were annoying or dangerous; but if it's just because he's a dog, you're guilty of species-ism. We should be as impartial as among species as we are (or are supposed to be) among races or sexes.

The view to which we now turn, which is a kind of extension of animal liberation, but still in the "humanist ethics" tradition, claims that animal liberation doesn't go far enough, particularly in giving equal rights to all species.

B. Animal rights

Consider for a moment our attitudes about other people. We consider it wrong to cause them needless pain and suffering; even more, we consider it wrong to kill them, even if we can do this painlessly. We *may* consider it right to terminate painlessly the life of a person who would otherwise die a slow and agonizing death—just as we would do for a pet dog or cat. That depends on our attitude toward euthanasia, which we shall not consider here. But suppose we had excellent evidence that a certain person, if he continued to live, would have far more misery than happiness in the rest of his life. We still do not consider it right to play God with his life and put him out of the way, especially not without his consent. Raskolnikov in Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment* was wrong to kill the old woman: it is possible that his killing her might have a high utility in cost-benefit analysis; she is a nasty, irritable, useless old woman, whose money is no source of enjoyment to her or to anyone else, and he is a poor

struggling student who has considerable intellectual ability and desperately needs the money. But his killing her is still murder.

Now, animal rights theory takes everything just said about killing human beings and applies it to animals. Human beings are centers of consciousness, *subjects of a life*; but so are animals. If people are killed, all chances for a satisfactory life are thereby sealed; the same is true of animals. Killing people is wrong, and killing animals is wrong. People and animals alike have a right to life, that is, a right not to be killed or injured. Killing them is a violation of their rights.

An animal, unlike a human being, cannot consent to its own death. And if euthanasia is permissible, it is only because the dying person consents. So it looks as if the scope of permissible killing with animals is even less than with people. At least it should be limited to those cases in which a life of pain or misery is clearly inevitable for the creature—as with a dog who has just been run over by a car—and where we are quite sure that if the creature could speak it would say "Put me out of my misery." (Maybe even that is granting too much: we can be sure of something and still be mistaken.)

Animal liberation provides a rather

insecure basis for the vegetarianism that it advocates, since it condemns only the infliction of pain and suffering on animals. But of course animals can be killed without suffering. If the cow had no "bad experiences" even to the moment of its death, it would be difficult on purely animal-liberation grounds to condemn raising such a cow and then painlessly killing it. However, if it is not merely the infliction of pain but *the act of killing itself* that is wrong, then we don't have this way out, since we obviously have to kill an animal before we can eat it. With regard to fellow humans, we believe that just killing them is wrong (without any calculations about the future, such as that we're "taking them out of their misery"); and, says the champion of animal rights, exactly the same is true of animals. They are on a par, which they never quite were in the animal liberation view.

Having presented the barest outline of the animal rights view, let's consider some of its possible implications, and ask some questions about it.

1. *The scale of sentience.* How far down the scale of life is the animal rights view supposed to apply? Apparently it doesn't apply to plants, for they are not sentient beings (to the best of our knowledge). Does it apply to halibut? to lobsters and crabs? to anglerworms? to



amoebae? Do fish feel pain when they are harpooned? Do worms when they are cut in half? The physiology of these creatures is so different from ours that it's hard to draw any conclusions about

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what, if anything, they feel. Maybe they exhibit avoidance-behavior and are genetically programmed to do so without feeling anything like what we call pain.

Tom Regan in his book *The Case for Animal Rights*⁷ limits his case for animal rights to mammals, whose neurophysiology resembles ours, but grants that it might be extended to creatures "lower" on the scale of life although we don't know this. Let's say then that mammals and a few others are subjects-of-a-life, and whom it is accordingly wrong to kill. But there is, he admits, nothing certain about this dividing-line, which in any case is extremely vague. Yet it is of the utmost practical importance that we should know about this, so as to gauge our actions accordingly. Some animal rights activists believe that killing fish is all right, but others condemn it as immoral. It would be important to know whether the lobster feels anything as it is heated to the boiling-point—particularly if we eat lobsters. The best way out of this may be to say "when in doubt, don't" and refrain from ever eating lobsters, no matter how much we might like them.

Even those who find fishing morally wrong, however, will not usually consider it wrong to kill an insect. If they swat a fly they will not feel pangs of guilt. But it would be useful to know

where to draw the line with this, and there appears to be no clear answer. It is all very well to "err on the side of caution" and refrain from eating fish, but should one also refrain from killing mosquitoes?

2. Killing and self-defense. In virtually every ethical system it is considered permissible to kill another human being if that person is demonstrably threatening one's life: if he's about to kill you, you can kill him in self-defense. Applying this rule to animals, we would say that we may not kill an animal unless we have to do it in self-defense. We may kill a poisonous snake if it threatens our lives, but not a harmless snake. (But the harmless snake is not harmless to rodents, and aren't rodents subjects-of-a-life too?) Moreover, the poisonous snake perhaps *would* kill a human being if it were left to live. Still, we don't justify killing a person because that person *if* left alive probably *would* kill someone—you don't kill a person on such a speculative basis. And if we follow the animal rights view, we should apply the same rule to animals as well.

We may kill a bear if it is a threat to our lives. (But then what are we doing wandering about on its turf? Do we have property rights over the wilderness that bears inhabit?) But practically every large animal in nature can be construed as a threat to us, even if it isn't attacking us *now*. Does that justify us in killing any animal we choose, under the heading of self-defense?

There is another aspect of the concept of self-defense that libertarians haven't particularly noticed. If two men in the wilderness are both starving, and one of them has some food, may the other take the food away from the first man, on the premise that without it he'd die? His life depends on having the food; but so does the other man's life depend on having it. We don't come across such situations much in civilized society, but they are often encountered in wild nature. Primitive man surely was in such situations all the time, and the beasts of the jungle are in them constantly. If this is self-defense, primitive man was perpetually in a state of defending himself.

When libertarians talk about killing in self defense, they usually are talking about defending themselves against *people* and about situations in which

someone is overtly threatening one's life or safety (not just peacefully enjoying something one needs). But it is worth considering whether there is a large gulf between "I kill him because *he threatens to kill me*" and "I kill him because *my life requires the food he's got*." The latter would enormously broaden the scope of actions done in self-defense. This extension (or fulfillment?) of the concept of self-defense deserves further attention, whether or not it is used in discussing animals.

In any case, it would be nice to know whether animal rights theory permits us to kill not only the crocodile before us that presents a present threat, but every other crocodile that might present a threat to us in the future. (And if not a threat to us, then a threat to others? If only to others, is it all right to kill them then?)

3. Predation and rights-violation. If you shoot the antelope, you are violating its rights. If a lion eats an antelope, aren't its rights being violated just as much as if you shoot it? No, say animal rights theorists. Animals are not moral agents and so can have none of the same duties moral agents have, including the duties to respect the rights of other animals. "The wolves who eat the caribou do no moral wrong, though the harm they cause is real enough."⁸ Still, isn't the damage the same? Isn't its right to life being violated by being killed and eaten, whether by people or by lions?

An utterly insane person may not be a moral agent either, but if he's clearly dangerous to the rest of us we don't hesitate to get him off the street and put him where he can no longer imperil others. We believe rights are violated by his assault whether *he* is a moral agent or not. Shouldn't animal rights advocates recommend the same policy with regard to lions? If we're not allowed to kill them, perhaps we should take them out of the bush, put them in parks (or cages), and let them live out their lives without reproducing (so as not to violate *their* right to life), and soon there would be an end of lions.

But there is a problem: what would the lion eat after being taken from the bush? The lion is a carnivore; he can digest only meat; for him to live, other creatures have to be killed, and *their* right to life has to be sacrificed. Nature has seen to it that there's no easy way

out of this one. Should we then just let him starve to death? That doesn't seem a very fair treatment of a creature who's just trying to live the only way he *can* live. And wouldn't purposely starving him be a violation of his rights too?

We find antelopes graceful and beautiful and we want to see them preserved, not torn to pieces by lions. At the same time we think that lion cubs are quite cute, and we want to preserve lions, especially if they are endangered. (Even if we don't find them cute, we are committed to their preservation by the animal rights view.) But isn't our attitude here somewhat at odds with itself? How can we be for the antelope and also for his killer? When we stock the game park with lion cubs, the antelope *ought* to view this as a death sentence (which it is), saying to us, "Whose side are you on, anyway?" But animal lovers tend to be on both sides: they want to preserve both antelopes and lions, even if they don't particularly want to see lions kill and eat antelopes (mostly they don't think about how those cute lion cubs are going to stay alive).

When we stock the game park with lion cubs, the antelope ought to view this as a death sentence (which it is), saying to us, "Whose side are you on, anyway?"

It certainly *seems* that according to animal rights advocates the world would be a much better place if there were no carnivores in it. The beautiful Bengal tiger that is now endangered, which we are trying to preserve for posterity, is a ruthless killer. From an animal rights point of view such carnivores "should be regarded as merciless, wanton, and incorrigible murderers of their fellow creatures, who not only kill, but cruelly toy with their victims, thus increasing the measure of pain in the world."⁹ Consider the immense amount of suffering and death wrought by these animal-killers—not to mention the snakes of the world, every one of them a carnivore. If we could wave a magic wand and get rid of them all, shouldn't we do so? Wouldn't that give the animal rights theorist more of

the world he wants?

But it wouldn't work. If their numbers are not kept in check by predators, the herbivore population would explode, and most of them would die of starvation, a slower and more painful death even than being torn to pieces by predators. The misery that is no longer inflicted by predators would now be inflicted by nature's other methods of controlling the excess population.

Is slow starvation more merciful? Is it wrong to kill them but all right to let them die on their own if we can prevent it (by allowing them to have their natural prey)? Must we do with them what Hindus do with sacred cattle—never kill them, but let them starve all around us? Nature is more easily conceived than described, as Dickens wrote in *Nicholas Nickleby*; and, we might well add, it is more easily described than controlled.

4. "Going against nature." Isn't the whole animal rights view so glaringly "against nature" that it is impossible to practice, even if one wanted to? Australians imported from Africa a species of large toad that was good at getting rid of insects that were destroying the crops. But the toads were apparently unusually well adapted to their new terrain, and having saved the crops, they started to multiply so fast—meanwhile eating all the vegetation—that in another decade there wouldn't have been many living things left in Australia. Surely it is absurd to say that the people should not kill the toads. Some years ago Australians killed by the millions the rabbits that had been imported; only massive killing kept them from taking over the continent and crowding out the native marsupials who could not compete with the more efficient species of mammals that had evolved on other continents.

The balance of nature is preserved through the deaths of countless individual organisms which come into conflict with others. The lion lives at the expense of the antelope, zebra, and giraffe, whom it kills in order to sustain its own life. The snake lives at the expense of rodents, and if the snakes were eliminated the rodent population would explode until most of them died of starvation. If you feed the birds, more birds will come into existence and soon there won't be enough for the newly hatched birds to live on, and they too will starve. Life lives at the expense of other life, amidst

endless pain and suffering. This is not much of a compliment to a Creator, but it's the way the system works, and we can't change it.

We should not do as nature does, say animal rights advocates; we should be better than nature, improve on nature. And one aspect of that improvement is that people should not kill their fellow subjects-of-a-life, the animals. But can we really live by this precept? Sometimes, if you don't kill some ani-

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mals, a much larger number of other animals will die: if you don't kill the toads, they will soon make survival of other species impossible in Australia.

And sometimes, if you don't kill animals, you will be in an impossible position yourself. Suppose there is an infestation of rats in your neighborhood. Rats are mammals, clearly subjects-of-a-life, and particularly intelligent mammals at that—rights-bearers if any animals are. But they multiply fast, and if they continue to do so for long you will soon have to move out of your house. Is it really wrong to fight the takeover by setting traps, or getting some De-con? Must the champion of animal rights hold that we should endure any degree of discomfort from rats, but never kill them?

Well, one may say, don't kill them yourself, get some cats and they will take care of the rats (if you keep them hungry). But does that really let you off the hook? Aren't you only letting the cats do your dirty work for you? After all it was you who obtained the cats to do the job. Cats are nature's way of controlling rodents—but should nature be assisted in this enterprise? Wasn't the whole idea to *improve* on nature? The fact is, life would soon become intolerable to you if you didn't do something

about the rats. It's you or them.

The number of deaths by snakebite in India closely parallels each year the number of deaths by automobile accident in the United States. But by many the cobra is viewed as a god, not to be killed. Thus the snake turns up at unexpected moments and kills villagers and their children. Does the reverence for life include reverence for these children? Albert Schweitzer was dedicated to the preservation of all life, of whatever kind: nothing must be killed. But it is impossible to take one step out of one's jungle hut without killing thousands of microscopic organisms. As small invertebrates, perhaps these aren't subjects-of-a-life, and thus escape the animal rights prohibitions. Perhaps the snakes do too. But there are lots of animals that do threaten people's lives that *are* subjects-of-a-life and thus rights-bearers according to the animal rights theory. Since we don't see these animals any more unless we go on a safari through the bush or the jungle, we live in a kind of dream-land, and give ourselves the luxury of theorizing about how wrong it is to kill animals. Yet the moment danger threatened, whether from swarms of locusts or herds of buffalo, a consistent advocate of animal rights would soon die and have no

Animal liberation provides a rather insecure basis for the vegetarianism that it advocates, since it condemns only the infliction of pain and suffering on animals. But of course, animals can be killed without suffering.

rights left to defend. "To consistently practice the reverence-for-life ethics would require a life style so quiescent as to be suicidal, as Schopenhauer clearly recognized and affirmed. To live is necessarily to exploit other living beings. Since we are integrated members of the terrestrial bioeconomy in which the life of one thing is purchased by the death of another, the exponents of the reverence-for-life ethics are caught in an unavoidable practical conundrum at every turn."¹⁰

II. Ecological ethics

But now another view emerges, which is often confused with the humanist view (either version) because they agree on so many things, though for different reasons. It is sometimes called the *environmentalist* view, but more accurately the *ecological* view, because everything in it flows from a central concept, the relation of organisms to their environment.

Animal rights emphasizes the individual life; ecology emphasizes the life of the species in relation to its total environment. Animal rights is concerned to avoid pain and suffering in sentient beings; ecology is concerned to keep the system of evolution and speciation alive and functioning on a healthy nonpolluted planet. Animal rights is primarily about animals; ecological ethics is not primarily about animals, but about preservation of the entire ecology: plants count just as much as animals, and soil and rocks and rivers count just as much as plants. All are combined into one "biotic community" which it is our primary duty to preserve. Ecological ethics does not talk of animal rights: if it did, we would also have to talk about the rights of plants, of soil, of rocks, of oceans, of atmosphere; all these are worthy of our consideration and objects of our moral choices. All are equally components of a healthily functioning environment.

An action is right, wrote Aldo Leopold, the founder of the contemporary ecological movement, "when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise."¹¹ Lest this not seem much of a principle on which to base one's morality, let us consider a couple of examples in his own words of the thrust of this ethic:

First, the importance of moral choices for the farmer, and the immorality of doing certain things with his land. "The farmer who clears the woods of a 75% slope, turns his cows into the clearing, and dumps its rainfall, rocks, and soil into a community creek, is still considered (if otherwise decent) a respected member of society. If he puts lime on his fields and plants his crops on contour, he is still entitled to all the privileges and emoluments of his Soil Conservation District . . . We have been too timid, and too anxious for quick success, to tell the farmer the true mag-

nitude of his obligations. Obligations have no meaning without conscience, and the problem we face is the extension of the social conscience from people to land."¹²

Second, the "managed" removal of wolves and other carnivores from the Kaibab Plateau in Arizona, and its catastrophic effect on the remaining wild life. "In the Kaibab and elsewhere animals have been 'managed.' Overabundant deer have been deprived of their natural enemies, and have made it impossible for deer-food plants to survive or reproduce: beech, maple, yew, hemlock and white cedar, mountain mahogany, are deer-foods threatened by the human implantation of deer without predators. The flora are impoverished, the deer then also dwarfed by malnutrition."¹³

Third, on the unfortunate effects of growing livestock in the American Southwest: "The impact of occupancy here brought no bluegrass, or other plant fitted to withstand the bumps and buffets of hard use. This region, when grazed by livestock, reverted through a series of more and more worthless grasses, shrubs, and weeds to a condition of unstable equilibrium. Each recession of plant types bred erosion; each increment of erosion bred a future recession of plants. The result today is a progressive and mutual deterioration, not only of plants and soils, but of the animal community subsisting thereon. The early settlers did not expect this: on the *ciénegas* of New Mexico some even cut ditches to hasten it. So subtle has been its progress that few of the residents of the region are aware of it. It is quite invisible to the tourist who finds this wrecked landscape colorful and charming (as indeed it is, but it bears scant resemblance to what it was in 1848)." Leopold writes of the misuse and misunderstanding of land and of man's dumping of species into it without understanding the implications, with all the zeal of a moral reformer—which indeed he was. The things of which he wrote had vaster implications for the future of man and the planet than most of the things moralists wax eloquent about, such as the ethics of promise-keeping. But it requires a considerable shift of focus to appreciate it.

Endangered species. According to animal rights theory, every animal has a right to its life and people have a duty to respect that right by not mistreating or killing the animal. It makes no difference

whether the animal belongs to an endangered species, whether it is a rat or a California condor, it should not be killed or injured. But according to ecological ethics, this is simply ludicrous: *of course* we should be more careful of the life of a condor than of a rat. There is an ecological niche occupied by the condor that is unique; if it disappears entirely the creatures that are its prey are likely to multiply faster than the environment can absorb. Again, the Greenpeace effort to "save the whales" is worthwhile from the animal rights point of view because it "prevents individual whales from being brutally harpooned and dying

It certainly seems that according to animal rights advocates the world would be a much better place if there were no carnivores in it.

slow agonizing deaths,"¹⁴ but not as a struggle for the preservation of a vital species. In the ecological ethic, the preservation of endangered plants is just as important as that of endangered animals, though since plants are not sentient beings the animal rights theory accords them no rights at all.

The death of a species is a sobering thing. Extinctions often occur in nature. But "in natural extinctions, nature takes away life when it has become unfit in habitat, or when the habitat alters, and supplies other life in its place. Artificial extinction shuts down tomorrow because it shuts down speciation. Natural extinction typically occurs with transformation, either of the extinct line or related or competing lines. Artificial extinction is without issue. One opens doors; the other closes them. Humans generate and regenerate nothing; they only dead-end these lines."¹⁵

Interference with nature. Much, but not all, of the ecological ethic consists of leaving nature alone. Human beings have destroyed vital species, polluted streams and oceans and air, and done more in one century to make life unlivable on this planet than has been done in all the millions of years before. The effect of removing carnivores from an area (and its effect on the herbivores), and the many ill effects of introducing livestock into wilderness lands, have al-

ready been noted.

Should people then never interfere with nature? Yes, they should interfere *at least* to rectify their own meddlesomeness. We should do what we can to prevent erosion and restore the soil we have allowed to wash away. By all means let us construct bird sanctuaries, since we have destroyed entire species of birds and inadvertently discouraged others, making songbirds a rare event compared with a generation ago. And yes, we should thin the herd of elephants when the elephants would otherwise starve—adding, however, that the reason we have to thin the herds is that they no longer have huge areas in which to roam. It is because people now occupy most of the savannah that the animals are restricted to a few national parks and can't get outside these boundaries, hence the limitation on their food supply when they can no longer go outside to obtain it.

And by all means we should preserve the carnivores. Predatory birds preserve the health of game by killing the weaklings, besides controlling rodents. When deer have no predators, they overproduce, and massive dyings occur. "Thou shalt not extirpate or render species extinct; thou shalt exercise great caution in introducing exotic and domestic species into local ecosystems, in exacting energy from the soil and releasing it into the biota, and in damming or polluting water courses; and thou shalt be especially solicitous of predatory birds and animals."¹⁶

Vegetarianism. As might be suspected, ecological ethics is not committed to vegetarianism. Nor is it opposed on principle to hunting animals for food or sport. Aldo Leopold was an avid hunter and at the same time an avid environmentalist. As long as we do not destroy the species, and as long as we leave intact the habitat (this is absolutely necessary if the species is to continue in the future), we can kill individual members for food, just as the lion kills the antelope. (The lion never renders an entire species extinct.)

Vegetarianism is in one way very efficient: it shortens the food chain. "It represents an increase in the efficiency of the conversion of solar energy from plant to human biomass, and thus, by bypassing animal intermediates, increases available food sources for human beings."¹⁷

Thus far, vegetarianism is all right. But what would happen if everyone became a vegetarian? "The human population would probably expand in accordance with the potential thus afforded. The net result would be fewer non-human beings and more human beings, who, of course, have requirements of life far more elaborate even than those of domestic animals, requirements which would tax other 'natural resources' (trees for shelter, minerals mined at the expense of topsoil and its vegetation, and so on) more than under present circumstances. A vegetarian human population is therefore *probably* ecologically catastrophic."¹⁸

Livestock. "One of the more distressing aspects of the animal liberation movement is the failure of almost all its exponents to draw a sharp distinction between the very different plights of wild and domestic animals . . . Domestic animals are creations of man. They are living artifacts, but artifacts nonetheless, and they constitute yet another mode of extension of the works of man into the ecosystem. From the perspective of the land ethic [Leopold's term for the ecological ethic] a herd of cattle, sheep, or pigs is as much or more of a ruinous blight on the landscape as a fleet of four-

Nature is more easily conceived than described, as Dickens wrote in Nicholas Nickelby; and, we might well add, it is more easily described than controlled.

wheel-drive off-road vehicles . . . "¹⁹

For one thing, domestic animals have been bred to docility, tractability, and dependency. They can no longer survive on their own as any wild animal can. "Imagine what would happen if the people of the world became morally persuaded that domestic animals were to be regarded as oppressed and enslaved persons and accordingly set free. Cattle and sheep would hang around farm outbuildings waiting forlornly to be sheltered and fed, or would graze aimlessly through their abandoned and deteriorating pastures. Most would starve or freeze as soon as winter settled in. Reproduction, which had been assisted

over many countless generations by their former owners, might be altogether impossible . . ."²⁰

They are also at odds without the environments into which they are introduced. Cattle became big business in Africa to satisfy an overseas market and repay the nations' loans. But unlike the native animals, cattle were not immune to the tsetse fly, and to protect it the landscape and waterways are extensively sprayed, polluting the rivers and sick-

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ening or killing off entire species of native animals and plants.²¹

They also represent a danger to health. As cattle are now grown, people who eat beef ingest also the anti-biotics that are fed the cattle to keep them alive in their filthy pens (which makes us progressively immune to the anti-biotics). And Eskimos who have eaten reindeer for hundreds of years do not get the cholesterol-related diseases that today's beef-eaters do. When nutritionists condemn the eating of meat, they mean (or should mean) the products of modern agriculture, not reindeer or caribou. It is solely the domestic animals whose use is condemned in passages such as the following:

We don't realize that in every Big Mac there is a piece of the tropical rainforests, and with every billion burgers sold another hundred species become extinct. We don't realize that in the sizzle of our steaks there is the suffering of animals, the mining of our topsoil, the slashing of our forests, the harming of our economy, and the eroding of our health. We don't hear in the sizzle the cry of the hungry millions who might otherwise be fed. We don't see the toxic poisons accumulating in the food chains, poisoning our children and our earth for generations to come.²²

In summary, then, there are intracta-

ble practical differences between environmental ethics and the animal liberation movement. Very different moral obligations follow in respect, most importantly, to domestic animals, the principal beneficiaries of the humane ethic. Environmental ethics sets a very low priority on domestic animals, as they very frequently contribute to the erosion of the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic communities into which they have been insinuated. On the other hand, animal liberation, if pursued at the practical as well as rhetorical level, would have ruinous consequences on plants, soil, and waters, consequences which could not be directly reckoned according to humane moral theory . . . The animal liberation/animal rights movement is in the final analysis utterly unpracticable. An imagined society in which all animals capable of sensibility received equal consideration or held rights to equal consideration would be so ludicrous that it might be more appropriately and effectively treated in a satire than in philosophical discussion.²³

The human population. In most eras of human history starvation and disease killed off most of the human population before the onset of old age, just as they still kill most animals in the wild today. But people have acquired the technology to increase their numbers vastly and still survive. What is now the United States could once sustain only about a million people (prior to modern technology). It now sustains 250 million, crowding ani-

mals out and extinguishing entire species of them.

For animal rights theorists, every human life is precious, and so is every animal life. It is just not clear what is supposed to happen when the one gets in the way of the other. "Don't kill them, let nature take its course" (presumably by letting them die) seems to be the watchword, since every creature has a right to pursue its life, but none has a right to be positively assisted by others in this endeavor. However, since every species produces more offspring than can survive, massive dyings, administered by nature rather than by man, would seem to be the result.

What, then, does the ecologist have to say about the human population explosion? There are more than five billion people now and already the environment is cracking. What will happen when, as predicted, this figure doubles in another forty years? He isn't very enthusiastic about it, to say the least. Such an increase in the human population as we have today is not possible without high technology, and this requires us to inflict huge scars on the face of the planet. Most of the war between nature and technology today is the result of the needs or desires of a vastly increased human population. One example: pesticides were not needed for farming in Iowa at the turn of the century, but today one has to farm for two to three times as many consumers, and must use methods that are ultimately self-destructing if one is to make any money

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at farming. Without doing so the farmer goes broke in the competition. Another example: we are constantly hungry for more electric power, gobbling it up in ever-increasing quantities for every conceivable kind of mechanical device. So we have to fill the wild spaces with huge concrete dams and towers and wires to make this possible, destroying in the process the habitat of the mountain goat and the prairie dog, and the spawning grounds of the salmon. Species are becoming extinct every day, but in every nook and cranny of this planet more human beings are to be found.

What, according to ecologists, should be the ideal human population of this planet? One estimate: "The population of human beings should, perhaps, be roughly twice that of bears, allowing for differences in size." A global population of more than 4 billion persons and showing no signs of an orderly decline presents an alarming prospect; it is at

What, according to ecologists, should be the ideal human population of this planet? One estimate: "The population of human beings should, perhaps, be roughly twice that of bears, allowing for differences in size."

present a global disaster (the more per capita prosperity, indeed, the more disastrous it appears) for the biotic community."²⁴

Final questions

1. If these population projections are true, what can be done about it? "If it is not only morally permissible, from the point of view of the land ethic, but morally required, that members of certain species be abandoned to predation and other vicissitudes of wild life or even deliberately culled (as in the case of alert and sentient whitetail deer) for the sake of the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community, how can we consistently exempt ourselves from a similar draconian regime? We too are only 'plain members and citizens' of the biotic community. And our global population is growing unchecked."²⁵ Others

have gone still further: "Massive human diebacks would be good. It is our duty to cause them. It is our species' duty, relative to the whole, to eliminate 90% of our numbers."²⁶

One wonders whether the author of these lines really means this and if he does whether he would be willing to put it into practice. Would he be willing to be killed off, along with his family and friends, as part of that eliminable 90%? And who would be the "we" that made the decisions as to which persons live and which persons die? and by what criterion would they be selected? This sounds like a nightmarish return to Orwell, with added horrors thrown in.

Anyway, most are convinced that such measures aren't necessary. We could voluntarily decrease our numbers, through birth control. But this is a very unlikely scenario, in view of the strong impulse of human beings to beget and bear children, which is often a person's greatest satisfaction in life. If that doesn't work, population reduction could be made compulsory through laws (as in China) forbidding every couple to have more than one child. With severe punishments for violation, this could be effective, though at a tremendous emotional cost.

"There may be too many of us," we may say, "but we are already *here*. We may be the products of overbreeding, but we can't help that, we had nothing to do with it, we didn't ask to be born. Why should we be eliminated for what isn't our fault? "But it is your fault—yours among others," someone may reply; "we have all done our bit to befoul the planet, and have now backed ourselves into a terrible ecological corner. You and I didn't individually have much to do with that, but together with a few billion others, we did. So we have to pay the price."

But nature does not operate on principles of justice such as these. It's not a matter of justice, it's a matter of what nature will do to us if we don't do something ourselves. Nature will exact a penalty from you and me even if the fault isn't yours or mine. A single famine, a single large drought, and millions will die—and there's no habitable spot left on the world where they can go to be safer. These lands are all occupied.

But perhaps nothing nearly that radical is called for. Every doubling of human numbers was accompanied by

dire warnings of famine and death. In general these predicted events have not taken place. Meanwhile, we are *here*, which is already some kind of success story. Unlike many species and countless individuals, we have survived. Shouldn't that tell us something?

But what it tells us is unfortunately far from clear. Surely it doesn't tell us that we are safe. Surely it doesn't tell us that human population can continue expanding indefinitely, 5 billion in 1989 and 10 billion in 2029, and so on. And

It's not a matter of justice, it's a matter of what nature will do to us if we don't do something ourselves.

of course people don't want merely to have offspring, they want to raise them with a higher standard of living than they themselves had—which means that it is necessary to keep growing economically. But others (usually from the left) have seen a fatal flaw in such indefinitely continued economic growth: "The biosphere will eventually be destroyed whether 5 billion or 50 billion live on the planet. Competing firms in a 'dog-eat-dog' market must outproduce each other if they are to remain in existence. They must plunder the soil, remove the earth's forests, kill off its wildlife, pollute its air and waterways—not because their intentions are bad . . . but because they must simply survive. Only a radical restructuring of society as a whole, including its anti-ecological sensibilities, can remove this all-commanding social compulsion."²⁷

It seems that we have violated the ecological ethic for so long that we are almost past recovery. But this of course remains to be seen. Meanwhile, another more theoretical, but more fundamental, issue should also be addressed.

2. Should we value the continued health of the biotic community as a means toward achieving our ends, or as an end in itself? Let's first make an important distinction.

(1) There is no value apart from a valuer. Value must be value *to* someone. An uninhabited planet has no value to anyone because there is no one there to observe it or enjoy anything in it. It has no more value than if it did not exist.

But animals can value things as well as people. To the giraffe, the water from the river has value. To the cat the cream has value. Not that the cat makes this statement to itself, of course; but we can observe by its actions what it values, what it forsakes, what things it prefers to what other things, what things it ignores. This is also the way we discover what other people value.

(2) Value, then, implies a valuer. But we should not confuse this with a different distinction: whether we value something *in itself*, for its own sake, or only as a means toward something else. Money, for example, is valued not for itself but only as a means toward getting things one wants. But children are (normally) valued for themselves by their parents—not merely as means for fulfilling the parents' needs or ambitions. Most of us would not abandon our children if they failed to fulfill the goals we wanted for them.

What about pets? "Are pets well treated, like children, for the sake of themselves, or, like mechanical appliances, because of the sort of services they provide their owners? Is a healthy biotic community something we value because we are so utterly and obviously dependent upon it not only for our happiness but for our very survival, or may we also perceive it disinterestedly as having an independent worth?"²⁸

The question seems difficult, and not everyone will venture the same answer. But the ecologist casts his lot with those who value the "prosperity of the environment" for its own sake, not simply as a means toward our ends.

Several billion years' worth of creative toil, several million species of teeming life, have been handed over to the care of this late-coming species in which mind has flowered and morals have emerged. Ought not those of this sole moral species do something less self-interested than to count all the produce of evolutionary ecosystems as rivets in their spaceship, resources in their larder, laboratory materials, recreation for their ride? . . . Ought not *Homo sapiens* value this host of species as something with a claim to care in its own right?²⁹

One could of course ask, for what or whom is this varied biotic community to be preserved? Not only for human beings. Why, however, should it be preserved at all? Is it really such a

wonderful system, filled as it is with pain and death and suffering? Why keep it going? One reason is: it's the only game in town; it's the only system we've got. The alternative is not a better one but universal death, a lifeless planet whirling through space. It's difficult (though possible) to believe that this would be better.

Suppose you knew for sure that the human race would not last long, thanks to our ecological sins. Suppose that you knew our species would very soon die out and that nothing could stop it; but that by taking some simple and easy action, you could ensure that all the other species and the environment in general would be preserved and continue, so that life could go on. The planet would no longer be endangered, with the human race out of the way. Should we do that simple action, not for our sakes but for theirs? Ecological ethics says without question that we should do it—partly no doubt to make it up to the other living things for what we have already done to them, but mostly because it seems worth-while (to most of us at least) for living things to thrive even after you and I are gone.

Perhaps, however, the question is moot: by doing our bit to help the environment we are also helping the conditions for human survival. If we destroy the environment, we destroy ourselves with it. Our fates are tied together. This much at least seems indisputably true.

A century ago, when the Indian chief, Seattle, was forced to abandon his reign in favor of the all-encroaching white man, his appeal to the whites was not for more food or horses or other things for his people; instead he spoke as follows:

All things are connected.

Whatever befalls the earth

Befalls the sons of the earth.

Man did not weave the web of life.

He is merely a strand in it.

Whatever he does to the web,

He does to himself . . .

The white man must treat the beasts of this land

As his brothers, For whatever happens to the beasts

Soon happens to man.

All things are connected.³⁰ □

Notes

1. One classical work (among many) on this is Hastings Rashdall, *Theory of Good and Evil* (2 volumes, Oxford University Press, 1924).
2. See John Hospers, *Human Conduct* (Harcourt Brace rev. ed. 1982), Chapter 2.
3. See John Hospers, *Introduction to Philosophical Analysis* (Prentice-Hall rev. ed. 1988), Chapter 7.
4. J. Baird Callicott, *In Defense of the Land Ethic* (State University of New York Press, 1989), p. 19.
5. Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation* (Avon Books paperback, 1975).
6. Jeremy Bentham, *Principles of Morals and Legislation*. First published by Oxford University Press, 1789.
7. Tom Regan, *The Case for Animal Rights* (University of California Press, 1983).
8. *Ibid.*, p. 357.
9. J. Baird Callicott, p. 21. He also mentions that "the alertness, speed, grace, and all the other qualities we most admire in herbivorous animals—all the qualities, indeed, which make them subjects-of-a-life and thus worthy of moral consideration and/or rights—were evolved in direct response to their carnivorous symbionts." (p. 57)
10. *Ibid.*, p. 264.
11. Aldo Leopold, *The Sand County Almanac* (Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 222-3.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 209.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 206. See also Norman Myers, *The Sinking Ark* (Oxford, Pergamon Press, 1979).
14. Callicott, p. 41.
15. Holmes Rolston III, *Philosophy Gone Wild: Essays in Environmental Ethics* (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1986), p. 216.
16. Callicott, p. 16. Many other examples could be cited. Should we remove ticks from the dog? We do, because we like the dog more than the ticks. But ecologically it would be difficult to make a case for this: the tick would seem as entitled to living the way it does (off dogs) as the dog is to living the way it does (in the wild, catching prey).
17. Callicott, p. 34.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 34-5.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
20. *Ibid.*, pp. 30-1.
21. See my paper "Liberty and Ecology," *Liberty*, September 1988.
22. John Robbins, *Diet for a New America* (Stillpoint Publishing, 1957), p. 379.
23. Callicott, p. 37.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 92.
26. William Aiken, "Ethical Issues in Agriculture," in *Earthbound: New Introductory Readings in Environmental Ethics*, ed. Tom Regan (New York: Random House, 1984), p. 269.
27. Murray Bookchin, *Green Perspective*, July 1988, No. 8, p. 4.
28. Holmes Rolston III, p. 215.
29. Callicott, p. 26.
30. Holmes Rolston III, op. cit., p. 218.
30. Quoted in John Robbins, pp. 380-1. Since the only indication we have of what Chief Seattle said is from notes taken by an observer, the authenticity of the quoted speech has been questioned. See J. Baird Callicott, "American Indian Land Wisdom? Sorting Out the Issues," in *Journal of Forest History*, January 1989, pp. 35-42.

Exposé

Scholarship as Leechcraft

by George H. Smith

The State's strangest subsidy: the scholarship of anti-statism.

Libertarianism's biggest challenge: weaning its intellectuals from the State.

The libertarian community has its own unspeakable truths. Through a tacit agreement not to offend or embarrass, these awkward truths are rarely mentioned in polite company. It is time to speak about the unspeakable.

Has anyone noticed that many libertarian intellectuals are on welfare? Of course, we're not supposed to call it "welfare"—that would be impolite. But these academics are paid by the state, often receiving handsome salaries for a few hours of work each week, not to mention three months off each year. Then there is the "sabbatical"—a *year* of paid vacation every six or seven years. Of course, we're not supposed to call this a "vacation"—that would be impolite.

Intellectuals tend to be smarter than the average welfare recipient, so they have devised "tenure"—*guaranteed* welfare. Think of it! A tenured professor will never lose his job, unless (as Michael Caine's character put it in the movie *Educating Rita*) he "buggers the bursar."

Quite a feathered nest this, and libertarian intellectuals flock to its comfortable warm security. The welfare-libertarian will never be rich, but he will never be poor, either. His government dole furnishes him with abundant free time, enabling him to think deep thoughts, sing hymns to the free market, and "double dip" by taking on additional projects in his spare time.

These truths bother some libertarian academics, who feel pangs of conscience from time to time. Such feelings are quickly suppressed, however, with a standard rationale: "The government has a virtual monopoly over higher education; it has so enmeshed itself in edu-

cation that it is impossible to make it 'out there' in the market. Yes, that's it—that's why I work for the government. Enough said. Now back to the struggle for liberty."

It is time to ask these conscientious libertarians some unspeakable questions: "Have you ever tried, even *once*, to escape the welfare system? Indeed, have you ever given the possibility serious thought? When you and your colleagues meet at conferences, do you discuss the vicious effects of the academic cycle of welfare—how (like all welfare) it saps your incentive, how it demeans you, how the government supports you not because it cares about you, but because it wants to *control* you? Granted, you are very busy congratulating each other on your latest unread scholarly article. Granted, you are very busy discussing *really* important issues, like how the market can save the snail darter. Granted, all this and more. But can't you find at least some time to discuss how to get libertarian intellectuals off welfare?"

That "libertarians on welfare" is an unspeakable topic was made clear to me many years ago during a seminar for libertarian philosophers. During my brief talk, I pointed out that modern philosophy is predominantly a creature of state-supported intellectuals, and that this may partially explain why the vast majority of philosophers are so fervent-

ly pro-government. After all, there is a natural and understandable tendency not to bite the hand that feeds you. Even libertarian philosophers, I suggested ever-so-delicately, might not be immune to this corrupting tendency, for we too are only human.

The response was swift and severe. "Are you suggesting," sneered one philosopher, his eyes filled with that credentialed 'Who are you?' look—"are you suggesting that we sell-out to the government?"

"No," I replied, "it's not that simple. We know the state breeds strong vested interests, and I don't see why this tendency shouldn't apply to state-supported philosophers—all of them. This doesn't mean a libertarian philosopher sells out overtly. But when deciding which subject to write about or which cause to defend, he might be reluctant to target universities for attack. After all, if philosophers were thrown out on the market, few would survive, because the market demand for philosophers is far less than the artificial demand created by the state. So why rock the boat? Why select a controversy which, if you eventually win, might render you unable to make a living as a philosopher? There are plenty of other legitimate topics that can keep a philosopher occupied for a lifetime. Plus, your colleagues aren't stupid. If they see you arguing that state universities are bad

things, they might ask an embarrassing question: So why are you here?"

My opponent was livid. "I am a philosopher," he intoned. "I am concerned only with truth." I don't think he got the point.

A few more philosophers joined the argument while others whispered and joked among themselves, clearly indicating that they regarded my thesis as too ludicrous for consideration. Not one of these libertarian philosophers came to my defense. Not one conceded that state-funding of philosophy might influence the outcome—at least not where libertarians are concerned. The problem of vested interests, it seems, affected everyone but themselves.

Such was their response to that unspeakable question, "What are the effects when libertarian intellectuals go on welfare?"

The welfare-libertarian will never be rich, but he will never be poor, either. His government dole furnishes him with abundant free time, enabling him to think deep thoughts, sing hymns to the free market, and "double dip" by taking on additional projects in his spare time.

Libertarian foundations operate on market principles; in dispensing their scarce resources, they want the best product for the least cost. Suppose they are looking for someone to do Project X. A welfare-intellectual will do it for \$500, because he receives full-time pay from tax funds for less than full-time work. The \$500 is gravy; it supplements his welfare payments.

The unsubsidized market-intellectual, on the other hand, requires \$1500 for Project X, because he must pay his bills from that money. Therefore, he cannot compete against the welfare-intellectual.

Then financial incentives set in. Young libertarians learn early that they can never make a living in the market, because even libertarian foundations will not help them. They will be dead in the water if they don't acquire establishment credentials and go on welfare. Thus does the vicious cycle of welfare perpetuate itself, as increasing

numbers of libertarians enter state universities.

Who is to blame for this disturbing trend? The administrators of foundations? Usually not, for they must justify their decisions to donors, and these donors want the most bang for their buck. If administrators hire market intellectuals, their higher price tag will mean that fewer projects can be funded. And donors don't like that.

What about the donors—those businessmen who contribute to foundations? Here the problem gets complicated. Libertarian donors want their contributions to accomplish something worthwhile. And, in a society spell-bound by the mystique of credentials and prestigious universities, welfare-intellectuals will be taken seriously and so are more likely to effect change than market-intellectuals.

The real problem here is one of priorities. The funding of welfare-intellectuals to the exclusion of market-intellectuals may achieve results more quickly, but it also creates incentives for libertarians to go on welfare rather than work in the market. In the long run, therefore, this policy threatens to create a libertarian overclass of intellectuals.

In addition, the businessman often falls prey to the myth of credentialism. He smiles knowingly at the consumer who purchases shoddy merchandise because of glitzy advertising—unaware that he, the businessman, may purchase shoddy intellectual merchandise because of the glitzy advertising called "credentials" and "university affiliation."

The businessman may be impressed by an article filled with stodgy prose—unaware that the article may have been written that way for no other reason than to impress the businessman.

The businessman may be dazzled by an article littered with hundreds of footnotes—unaware how easily an article can be padded in an hour or two (for example, by culling information from a secondary source and then duplicating the footnotes contained in that secondary source without ever consulting the originals).

The businessman may be impressed by the intellectual's promptness and diligence—unaware that an article may be old material that has been recycled (in slightly different forms) over and over again.

The businessman may be awed by the depth of scholarship—unaware that

the intellectual may have used a sophisticated version of that old ruse popular among school kids: You, a fifth-grader, have a half-hour before bedtime, and the essay assigned last week is due tomorrow morning. No problem. You run to that encyclopedia you talked your parents into buying. (Remember how pleased they were: those innocent souls really believed that you had developed an interest in school.) You know the rest—change some words, shift some paragraphs, and—whammo!—you have an essay with time to spare.

(Businessmen: do you remember how you always got caught, but there

If philosophers were thrown out on the market, few would survive, because the market demand for philosophers is far less than the artificial demand created by the state.

was one kid in class who always got away with it? Not only that—the teacher would actually read that kid's plagiarism as a model for you to follow. Do you remember how you wanted to beat the stuffing out of that kid, but at the same time, you were in awe of his mysterious abilities? Here was his secret: when he copied from the encyclopedia, he inserted one or two grammatical errors—three was pushing it, for it might lower the grade; he deliberately misspelled a couple of words; and he crossed out several sentences, scribbling revisions in the cramped spaces above. That kid knew that an essay shouldn't be too good; it had to be written like a kid really writes. You didn't think of that, did you? Nope. You thought the teacher must have memorized the whole damned encyclopedia. By the way, guess what that kid does for a living now?)

Contrary to popular opinion, the welfare-intellectual is by no means inferior to the businessman when it comes to making money. Rather, the welfare-intellectual lets the businessman earn the money; then he collects money wrested from the businessman through taxation; then he persuades the businessman to donate even more money to welfare-intellectuals so they can undertake projects valued by the businessman.

continued on page 76

Dissent

Capitalism Without Democracy, Hong Kong Without Hope

by R. K. Lamb

There is more to freedom than free markets. Because the people of Hong Kong do not realize this, their future is in peril.

The collapse of Communist authority in Eastern Europe has been all over the TV screens here in Hong Kong. But for the rich British city-state perched on the scrawny underbelly of the People's Republic of China, the main story is closer to home. China's democracy protesters were the first of the revolutionaries of 1989, and they lost. China's top economic reformer, Communist Party General Secretary Zhao Ziyang—who was bold enough even to meet with Milton Friedman—is out. China is in the grip of nervous old men, who are squeezing its economy of vitality, throttling its cultural life of any hints of deviant thought, and eying the freedom of Hong Kong like a mother who has just discovered her boy reading forbidden magazines.

Hong Kong is stuck. Its 5.5 million Chinese have been saddled with an agreement signed by Zhao and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in 1984 to give the colony back to China on June 30, 1997. Hong Kong's people had no say in it. Under the bizarre formula of "one country, two systems," China agreed that the colony could keep its capitalist ways and British law for a further 50 years, but under Beijing's ultimate control. Britain's colonial administrators would do right by their last great colony in Asia and retire to Sussex and Surrey with their honor and government pensions intact. China would get back the last European concession carved from its territory by nineteenth-century imperialists. It would have to put up with Hong Kong's capitalism, but it had been put-

ting up with it for a long time and knew the capitalists well. It had even become one of the colony's largest capitalists itself. Its Bank of China had the colony's tallest skyscraper, a bold tower of triangles by Chinese-American modernist I.M. Pei like no building in the People's Republic.

There were skeptics from the beginning. Many have already emigrated to Toronto, Vancouver, Sydney, or San Francisco. But as long as China was on the reformist path, the optimists set the public tone. By 1997, some said, China would not be very communist at all. Then came 1989, and the blood and tanks in Beijing. Hundreds of thousands of Hong Kong people, who never protested much of anything, flooded the streets and filled the Happy Valley racetrack to protest the brutality in China. It looked like the Hong Kong people's great political awakening.

But for the most part, it was not. The tanks in Tiananmen Square awakened a lot of individuals, but they did not awaken a genuine mass movement. The massacre strained the relations between the British, Beijing, and the Hong Kong people, but the 1997 agreement remains unchallenged. Everyone accepts that

Hong Kong is to be given back to China. That it is being done with so little protest and so little genuine pressure by the Hong Kong people is as much an indictment of them as it is of the obliging expatriate Brits.

Hong Kong has a unique system: laissez-faire but no democracy. Its plight shows how debilitating and unnatural that mix is—and is an instructive tale to supporters of capitalism who bad-mouth nationalist sentiment and swear off politics.

Milton Friedman once came here and proclaimed Hong Kong the most capitalist place on earth. He was probably right. A purist will find exceptions: public housing, public hospitals, and government ownership of undeveloped land. But the economy is in private hands, including even the two cross-harbor tunnels, the bus lines, and the antique electric tram. The paper currency, though pegged to the U.S. dollar by the government, is issued by the privately-owned Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank and the Standard Chartered Bank. Depositors can keep their funds in the currencies of the United States, Canada, Australia, Britain, Japan, or Germany. There are no antitrust laws,

few labor laws, no unemployment compensation and no Social Security. There is no withholding—not any!—from paychecks. There are no tariffs or import quotas, making Hong Kong one vast shopping center where an American can buy a man's shirt for less than half the price at home. Middle-class people can get a live-in Filipina maid for \$360 a month, because Immigration allows them in, and there are nearly 50,000 such maids. The government provides schools, but most of the middle class send their children to schools run by pri-

is much less consumer protection, building-code enforcement and court enforcement of strict liability, and more stories in the newspapers about children being crushed in automatic gates and falling out of buildings with inadequate railings. People feel much less assured about the purity of their air, their drinking water, and the ingredients in their food. There are no public drinking fountains because nobody would drink from them. And if you buy something, you can just about forget about getting a refund.

Economically, Hong Kong is a roaring success: It's annual per-capita GNP is \$10,950—about half that of the U.S. but 30 times greater than the \$355 in China. It is without question a triumph of capitalism and the entrepreneurial spirit and hard work of the southern Chinese.

The Chinese have been a merchant people for centuries. Like the Jews in old Europe and the Lebanese and Indians in Africa and the Caribbean, overseas Chinese are the capitalists of Asia—in the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Burma. They are not, by and large, a politically active people. Of the two Chinese "democratic" states, Singapore is a virtual dictatorship of Lee Kuan Yew and his People's Action Party, and Taiwan is ruled by the late Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang, which has just had its first partly-free election with a legal opposition party. In Hong Kong, the British rule unchallenged. The "Legco" (legislature) has little power, and its elected members are chosen by functional constituencies—professional groups—rather than by the popular ballot. There are no political parties because nobody has formed them. What rights the people have—freedom of the press unrivaled in Asia except for Japan—were given by the British, not achieved by any political effort here.

Its citizens like living here, but there is little Hong Kong nationalism. When the people had their one great protest march, in June 1989, the song they sang was, "I Am Chinese"—not "I Am Hongkongese." They were focused on showing their compassion for their brothers in China, not their determination to keep the Chinese communists out of Hong Kong. To be nationalist here is to be pro-China (or pro-Kuomintang), not pro-Hong Kong. Hong Kong is called

"the territory" (not "colony") and its people are "Hong Kong people." It has a flag that could easily be mistaken for the Union Jack-and-blue of Australia or New Zealand, and you hardly ever see it. Hong Kong is not a nation, but a place to do business.

The leader of the government, Sir David Wilson, is an official appointed by Margaret Thatcher. Hong Kong people have no leader, nobody like Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew or the Philippines' Corazon Aquino to speak for them. They watch demonstrators bringing down the governments in East Germany and Czechoslovakia on TV, but they would never do it themselves. They are sure that nothing they do could change either the Chinese communists or the British. In 1989, the British government ran a big publicity campaign about the Basic Law—Hong Kong's post-1997 "constitution" being hammered out by British, Hong Kong, and Beijing negotiators—and asked for public input. There was little. The British had asked once before and a lot of people wrote in, but nothing had seemed to come of it. Hongkongers are bored by the Basic Law, and feel that the Chinese will do

By 1997, some said, China would not be very communist at all. Then came 1989, and the blood and tanks in Beijing. The tanks in Tiananmen Square awakened a lot of individuals, but they did not awaken a genuine mass movement. The massacre strained the relations between the British and Beijing, but the 1997 agreement remains unchallenged. Everyone accepts that Hong Kong is to be given back to China.

vate organizations such as the Catholic Church.

The ethos here is a rawer capitalism than in America. In many ways, I'm not sure America's fans of laissez-faire would like it. Children are expected to take care of their parents in old age. The education system is inadequate, it's hard to get into the University, and many students go abroad. Competition in all walks of life is much keener: There is less "fair play" and getting your "share." Here you push to be noticed, push to get served, push to get all you can. Money is status, discounts and special deals the subject of boasts. Stores sell showy brands—Gucci, Yves St. Laurent, Saatchi, Dunhill, Cartier, Rolex. There are many more Mercedes-Benzes in the streets than in an American city, and reportedly the highest proportion of Rolls-Royces in the world; there are also poor people on the sidewalk selling deep-fried bean curd for 25 cents. There

There are no antitrust laws, few labor laws, no unemployment compensation and no Social Security. There is no withholding—not any!—from paychecks. There are no tariffs or import quotas, making Hong Kong one vast shopping center where an American can buy a man's shirt for less than half the price at home.

what they like after the British are gone. Who would stop them? What argument there is focuses on the details of Hong Kong's sluggish progress toward democracy—how many seats will be elected by popular vote by 1997 (probably less than half), and not on the larger issue of whether "one country, two systems" makes any sense.

Perhaps Hong Kong should have joined Taiwan. China, of course, would have opposed it. And there is little enthusiasm in freewheeling Hong Kong for the dour Kuomintang and their fan-

tasies of recovering the mainland. The logical solution to Hong Kong's problem is independence, not absorption by somebody else. Singapore did it; why not Hong Kong? I have asked several people, "What if Hong Kong people declared independence?" The answers: (1),

Hong Kong people would never do it; the question shows how naive you are; (2) China wouldn't allow it; they'd send in the tanks; (3) the British wouldn't allow it; they'd send in the cops. But a quarter of the globe has divested itself of British colonialism; this place could do it in a weekend. Just watch the Czechs on TV and do the same! As for China sending in the tanks, maybe they would and maybe they wouldn't. They could have sent them in any time in the past 40 years—indeed, they could have taken Hong Kong by merely cutting off the water supply. They did not. Perhaps at this late date, they would, if Hong Kong actually stood up for itself. I have not met one Hong Kong Chinese who thinks it's worth trying—which leaves the first answer, that people would never do it.

Hong Kong's capitalists are the first to kowtow to China. Their suppliers, customers, and even their employees (some 2 million) are in China. A few of the trading houses have reincorporated in Bermuda (and assured everybody it was just a formality), and a few businessmen made cautiously critical statements after the crackdown in Beijing. But generally business leaders are optimists about the 1997 arrangement. They are all for "boosting confidence" by spending billions on a new airport and other economic measures that have nothing to do with the confidence crisis. Publicly they are sure that they can "work with" China. Privately they are keeping plenty of money abroad and have no problem getting foreign passports. They are not much interested in democracy, or non-economic rights like freedom of the press. Like their counterparts in capitalist Singapore, where Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew has banned the *Asian Wall Street Journal* and keeps the *Straits Times* under his thumb, they couldn't give a damn as long as trade and money transfers are free of restriction. Hong Kong's press remains free and vigorous, but only because the British are here.

Hong Kong's middle class professionals, who have cars and condos and

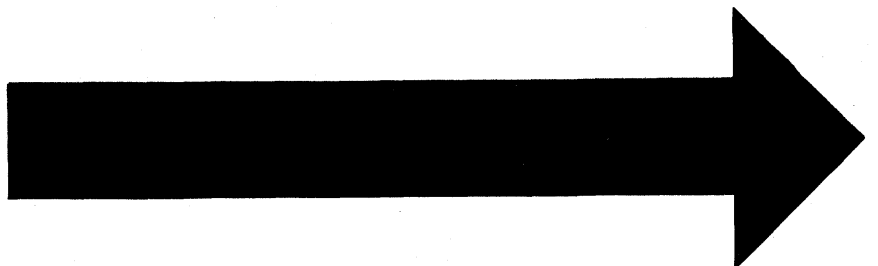
university educations, provide the base of support for the two outspoken liberals in the Legco, attorney Martin Lee and teacher's union president Szeto Wah. But too many are focused on emigration. To "maintain confidence," the British plan to offer passports to 50,000 Hong Kong families they don't want to lose down the "brain drain." These passports, unlike the U.S. and Canadian variety, would not require moving even temporarily out of Hong Kong, or making any kind of investment abroad. U.S. immigration generally requires that they

move to the U.S. permanently, and Canada's, that they move for several years or invest C\$250,000. Few Hongkongers want actually to live in Britain, which they see as a cold, dull, racist country that clearly does not want them. They are going to Canada, Australia and the United States at the rate of about 1,000 a week—and would be leaving much faster if those countries allowed it. The queue for family members (brothers and sisters of U.S. citizens) to get into the United States is ten years long. (Canada allows rich people to buy their way



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to the front of the line, which is why there's so many of them in Vancouver.) Of course, Hong Kong's middle class would rather not go anywhere at all. Ask them whether they would stay if they could live without the uncertainty of 1997, and they say, sure. But they have no faith in political action to provide security. The watchword here is to look out for yourself and your family—don't stand up, don't start a pressure group, don't make a stink. Keep quiet, make money and make plans.

Even their homes tell something of their mindset: they live behind barred windows and jail-like steel grates that

The logical solution to Hong Kong's problem is independence, not absorption by somebody else. Singapore did it; why not Hong Kong?

slide with a clang over their front doors. The place I rent has three locks on the door, a chain, a locked steel grate, TV cameras in the elevator, a key-code lock on the front door, and security guards. The laid-back people of Vancouver are being quite unreasonable if they expect their new neighbors to open their doors to kids selling Girl Scout cookies.

Hong Kong's lower classes, many of them refugees from China, are fatalistic. The taxi drivers and office workers say they don't think their lives would change that much under Chinese administration, and there is nothing they can do about it anyway. They don't have the money to get out. Their concern about immigration is the movement of people in, which would undercut the tight labor market that has been pushing up their wages. The average Hongkonger particularly resents the 55,000 Vietnamese "boat people" the British administration has penned up in concentration camps, and would shove them all back out to sea if he had anything to say about it. To him they are aliens and free-loaders, and suspiciously barbaric with their knife fights and outbreaks of cholera. The Hongkonger has no sympathy for them. Nor is he eager for his Cantonese compatriots to come flooding across the border, which they surely would do if the British removed the Gurkhas and barbed wire. In any case,

the Hong Kong office or factory worker is certainly not going to make a stink for independence, democracy or any other abstract political issue. He could get in trouble with the British. Friends of China might note down his name on a roster of troublemakers, and settle scores with him and his family after 1997. He could lose his job. It's just none of his business.

All this is not to say there is no politics here. There is a largely middle-class Hong Kong Alliance for Democracy in China, which recently held a candlelight ceremony for the casualties in Romania. There is the student-radical April 5th Action Group, which got its heads knocked for protesting outside of a ceremonial dinner on Oct. 1, the 40th anniversary of the People's Republic. China is pressing the British to ban both organizations. But such groups don't amount to much. The big political battles since the crackdown in Tiananmen Square have been between the British colonials and Beijing.

Item: Yang Yang, a Chinese swimmer, stopped in Hong Kong and asked for political asylum. China demanded him back. Hong Kong let him go to America. China immediately quit accepting back the 100 or so escapees caught each day crawling through the wire to Hong Kong. The refugees began piling up, creating demand for even more concentration camps. British officials assured the Chinese they would not allow Hong Kong to be a center of "subversion," and reminded them how police had roughed up the April 5 Action Group and confiscated a TV station's tape to identify protesters. They also reminded China of how Hong Kong police tore down some Taiwan flags on the Kuomintang's national day, Oct. 10. China accepted the kowtow, and began taking its refugees back.

Item: Hong Kong's video censors cut out a section of a Taiwanese documentary on the Chinese democracy movement. It was nothing people hadn't seen on TV or read in the *South China Morning Post* a dozen times—an interview with protest leader Wu'er Kaixi—but it was the first such act of political censorship under a new rule forbidding videos that "damage relations" with foreign countries. Authorities also turned back a U.S.-based democracy activist at Kai-Tak Airport. Both actions were clearly meant to mollify China. A few people protest-

ed, but there were no apologies from the British.

Item: Hong Kong activists demanded that China agree not to station Peoples Liberation Army troops in downtown Hong Kong after 1997. China refused: It was sovereign, and it would put them wherever it liked. Britain announced that it would move its Navy base in downtown Hong Kong to tiny Stonecutter's Island, and sell the immensely valuable land to private office developers. China protested: It wanted its troops to be right in the midst of the skyscrapers, not marooned on some dinky island, and the British base was the best piece of real estate to do it on. Britain has not backed down on that, yet.

Item: When Britain announced its scheme to grant 50,000 elite families British passports (far fewer than Hongkongers wanted), China said it violated the 1997 agreement. When Britain sent the word around other Western nations to do something similar (but NOT to increase their ordinary quotas, which require resettlement), China accused Britain of trying to "internationalize" a matter solely between the two of them. Britain has held its ground on that, too.

These kinds of battles are sure to continue, but only within the bounds of the 1997 giveback. They are battles about political freedom and democracy, not about capitalism. China has never backed away from its promise to allow capitalism in Hong Kong, though it remains a Communist's promise. But the experience of Hong Kong shows that there is more to freedom than the right to make money. Democratic institutions are crucial. So are a sense of public responsibility and political entrepreneurship. The leaders in Eastern Europe may inherit states that are socialist and bankrupt, but the people there have a rejuvenated "civic life," a consciousness of nationhood, a willingness to take to the streets and get their heads beat in to collectively create an independent, free republic. They have leaders who are willing to spend time in jail to defend freedom of conscience and national independence. Perhaps if Hong Kong people had done the same, they would have ejected the British long ago and would now be living in an independent republic. They did not, and probably will not. They have been too busy in Mr Friedman's capitalist paradise, making money. □

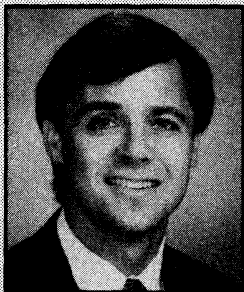


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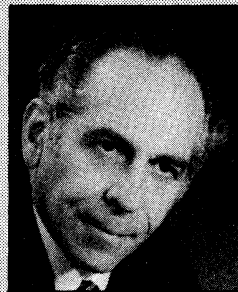
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Comments

Libertarianism: Paleo and Con

In the January *Liberty*, Llewellyn H. Rockwell, Jr, made "The Case for Paleolibertarianism," challenging the libertarian movement to "delouse" itself of anti-authoritarian and non-Judeo-Christian elements and form an alliance with Paleo-conservatives in the political arena. Several editors and readers of *Liberty* respond.

Cheers for Bourgeois Virtue

Leland B. Yeager

Rockwell is right: the "libertine muck" clinging to much of the libertarian movement not only discredits the movement but also indicates an unhealthy society. If, however, healthy values and standards prevail voluntarily and are supported by a wide range of social institutions, they reduce the need (or apparent need) for widespread policing by the government. Three cheers for the bourgeois virtues.

I wonder whether some of the libertine libertarians may not unconsciously harbor a curiously statist notion—that anything really important must be administered by the state and that if they do not want morality (for example) administered by the state, they must disparage it. □

Man is Part of the Environment

Jane S. Shaw

Given that his goal is "intelligent exchange and cooperation," Llewellyn Rockwell is unnecessarily divisive in his position on environmental matters. He draws two extremes—the radical eco-freak who treats humans as a scourge on the Earth and his paleolibertarian who views Man as the dominant being who has a God-given right to crush the Earth under his feet.

While I believe Rockwell is getting at something worthwhile with his paleolibertarianism idea, I don't believe most people in the Judeo-Christian tra-

dition consider the "dominant man" theme the full story about humans' responsibility to the Earth. In his article "The Christian and Creation" in *Chronicles* (February 1988), Peter J. Hill emphasizes that the key passage from Genesis needs to be "informed by other passages." One is Psalm 8, which, he observes, imparts "a sense of awe and wonder to us at our being made a part of God's magnificent creation," and another is the passage in Genesis that charges mankind to care for the Garden of Eden.

On the other side of the issue, those who don't feel mankind has a special God-given place in nature must recognize that humans have a niche within nature (as all creatures do) that allows survival. Humans' niche involves some shaping of the environment. While humans have done this quite extensively, they are not the only animals to change their surroundings—beavers, for example, change the environment when they build dams, and farmers and ranchers can attest to how significant those changes can be. There is a larger middle ground on this issue than Rockwell seems to think. □

Beyond Irrelevance

James S. Robbins

The potential breakdown of the anti-Communist alliance poses problems for conservatives and opportunities for libertarians. But Rockwell's approach to the opportunity, setting up alliances, defining who believes what, "cleansing," and

so forth, seems pointless and counter-productive.

Attempts to set up definitional schemes are by their nature exclusive, not inclusive. Rockwell's tone is adversarial; he wants to start a brawl. He welcomes the "nasty fight" ahead and the long past due "cleansing process." This is all very romantic, but hardly productive. Rockwell makes it sound like the libertarian movement (apart from the LP) is a well-defined group with a specific membership and a central infrastructure.

Rockwell seems to be attacking a part of the libertarian movement with which I've had little contact. Who doesn't oppose anti-merit anti-individual affirmative action programs? And what libertarian worth his salt has ever opposed the notion of non-state solutions to the problems of crime?

In fact, libertarianism is a loose agglomeration of freedom-minded people, none of whom have any control over any other. So just how is this "delousing" (what a silly word) to be undertaken? Are the libertines to be gagged, drummed out, shunned, not allowed to play with us anymore? If libertarianism is to take a new direction, and I think this is a good idea, it will only do so through persua-

sion and reasoned discussion. The combative concepts Rockwell introduces serve no one and only contribute to an atmosphere of spite.

Libertarian tactics could use some reform, but Rockwell seems to be attacking a part of the libertarian movement with which I've had little contact. Who isn't fed up with modern art, something which only persists because of Federal funding? Who *doesn't* oppose anti-merit anti-individual affirmative action pro-

If Rockwell wants to see a movement become irrelevant, let him go around talking about "the white thing!"

grams? And what libertarian worth his salt has *ever* opposed the notion of non-state solutions to the problems of crime? These simply are not issues within the movement. On the issue of public perceptions, a libertarian movement whose members are perceived as being dope-smoking, anti-religious and radically pro-environment will obviously get nowhere. On the other hand, if Rockwell wants to see a movement become irrelevant, let him go around talking about "the white thing!"

The point is not that the libertarian movement has the wrong ideas, but rather that they are expressed in a form too extreme for many Americans to tolerate. While most libertarians are political junkies, most Americans are not, and they don't understand those who are. If change is to come, why not let it be in the form of making libertarian ideas palatable, expressing them in a form easily understandable and non-threatening?

Finally, it is true that the LP is dominated by opportunists and absolutists, neither of which will ever lead the movement to any sort of political influence. Perhaps it is this group Rockwell intends specifically to reform. I wish him luck. His antagonistic approach will certainly bring him the fight he wants, and with luck the Party will split into a number of mutually competing and hateful factions, maybe even forming new Party organizations. It would be entertaining to watch, and would effectively bring about the "cleansing" Rockwell desires. Otherwise, if Rockwell admires the pale-

oconservatives (whoever they are) so much, maybe he should join them (whatever that means); I'll bet he won't have to take any foolish oath. □

Anarchism leads to atheism?

Sheldon L. Richman

Llewellyn Rockwell's January 1990 article on paleolibertarianism raises the question of why so few libertarian activists are theists, and he answers by suggesting that the palpable atheism of the movement turns off believers. I doubt it. For starters, I don't think the movement's (or the Libertarian Party's) attitude toward religion is very palpable. Since 1968 I've been to my share of libertarian conferences, conventions, seminars, shindigs, etc., and I don't recall antireligion being an issue at any of them. To be sure, none of these events had an ecclesiastical tint, but neither do baseball games or bullfights and I don't notice that keeping the devout away.

There's a better explanation for the preponderance of pagans that disturbs Rockwell. To be a libertarian is by its very nature to question bedrock beliefs learned almost in the cradle. Anyone rational enough to doubt and reject early-imbibed political beliefs is also a prime candidate to turn a skeptical gaze onto his religious beliefs. Thus, you'd expect to find a heavy representation of free-thinkers among the anarchists and near-anarchists. □

The Libertarian as Authoritarian

Timothy Virkka

At the 1987 Libertarian Party convention, I decided to get into the spirit of the event by wearing a political button. I was loath to support any of the candidates offered for my allegiance, so my choice of buttons was somewhat limited. I settled for an old stand-by: *Question Authority*.

Little did I suspect that this choice of buttons would cause one of my new acquaintances—one Llewellyn H. Rockwell, Jr—to dismiss me out of hand as a "leftist"! (See the section of his manifest-

to "Authority vs Coercion" for his opinion on this slogan.) Of course, my views are so far from being "leftist" that no one with a lick of sense could mistake me for anything but a libertarian. Perhaps what Mr Rockwell hates so much about that button is that any libertarian wearing it cannot be mistaken for a right-wing conservative either, *and this mistake is precisely what he wants to encourage.*

There is something about the concept "authority" that conservatives love—despite (or because of?) all the murkiness and confusion surrounding it. Though the meaning of "Question Authority" is slippery, "Support Authority" is an even worse slogan. In addition to the obscurity of its meaning, it suggests servility and the fear of reason. While it might be best to avoid the term altogether, philosophic-minded libertarians must respond to Rockwell's ostensibly libertarian *defense* of it. And the first challenge is to unravel some of the absurdities of Rockwell's (s)creed.

Unspeakable Practices, Unnatural Acts

Rockwell's most obvious error is, alas, one all too common in the libertarian movement. He states that "natural authority arises from voluntary social structures; unnatural authority is imposed by the State." Now, if there is one word that libertarians should avoid more than "authority," it is "natural." The old distinction between nature and convention—or nature and artifice—is one that, when applied to human action and social systems, becomes amazingly complicated.

The reason for this complication is that the conventional and the artificial



"Neolithic toys? — Oh, I suppose Paleolithic toys aren't good enough for you"

are what is "natural" for man. Man is the animal most prolific in evolving conventions, flouting conventions with "artifice," and then turning those "artifices" into new conventions. The distinction just made between "convention" and "artifice" is a subtle one, but one of the inevitable difficulties involved when bringing the terms wholly into social theory. An artifice is a deliberate, *purposeful* human construct, system, or organization, while a convention can be either (a) an artifice that has become habitual and expected among a group of people, thus requiring less forethought and deliberation to coordinate the activity that constitutes the convention, or (b) a "spontaneous" response to a common situation that is adopted with little thought, first by one person, then by

To the anarchist, though he be coerced and perhaps quelled, the State is not an authority. Because he does not sanction it, it is a mere criminal organization to him.

others. In human society, the tension is not between natural and "unnatural," but between the conventional and the artificial, with the possibility of unintended ["Hayekian"] coordination occurring in both categories.

To put it as politely as possible, Rockwell's use of natural and unnatural is a hold-over from outdated social theories. Less politely, it is naive and rather crude. (Ironically, this crudity is one that his paleoconservative friends are unlikely to make; they have long opposed this kind of facile theoretics. Paleocon Thomas Fleming's *The Politics of Human Nature*, though flawed, is a good antidote to this ploy.) But a dismissal of his terminology does not completely destroy his characterization of the "two authoritarianisms." His understanding of this distinction seems to rest on the idea of *imposition*. State authority—"unnatural" authority—is *imposed*, while social authority—"natural" authority—*arises*. He is undoubtedly thinking of the State's coercive practices, and yet reliance on the concept of coercion—another staple libertarian program—will not work.

When the State possesses authority it is not solely because the State uses brute force (or threats of force) to "impose" it; the State possesses authority only when the coerced accommodate the coercion in a particular way, by "sanctioning" it in some sense. To the anarchist, though he be coerced and perhaps quelled, the State is not an authority. Because he does not sanction it, it is a mere criminal organization to him. Archists, of whatever variety, usually grant to the State the legitimating support of authority, even though they recognize that it coerces them. But most (all?) such people will only let the coercion go so far, beyond which line they cease to regard the State as possessing authority and see it like the anarchist always sees it, as criminal. When enough disenchanted people realize that enough other people are likewise disenchanted, then they rebel and the State loses power as well as authority.

Thus the crucial element of political authority is not coercion but *accommodation to coercion*. And this accommodation can be said to "arise" as much as the authority of any of the "natural" institutions Rockwell praises. In every case the authority of these institutions arises from the accommodations of the "socially weaker." In the family, for example, parents gain authority only when the children acquiesce to their parents' demands for respect and obedience. Similarly in churches, in the Boy Scouts, etc. Authority is a bond between unequals in which the "lesser" nevertheless has a say. This pertains to domestic and ecclesiastical institutions as well as political ones.

An imposition thesis of authority will not cut it; authority is more like what Etienne de la Boetie explored—*voluntary servitude*. Libertarians still hankering after a bifurcated theory of authority must look elsewhere. The most obvious alternative is to concentrate even more on coercion, claiming that only State-authority is buttressed by coercion, while domestic institutions, for example, are not. This theory self-destructs, however, as soon as you acknowledge the great degree of coercion in the family!

The next try might be to construct a convention/artifice theory, claiming that while political authority must always be "engineered," natural authority arises without ideology, without contrivances,

without rhetoric, in small steps, with the ease of habit. But this also will not succeed: because man is a purposive animal, able to consider alternatives, *all* forms of authority require the occasional (sometimes constant) aid of moralizing and other forms of persuasion. The inertia of habit can carry convention only so far, and then it peters out.

A bifurcated theory of authority cannot be constructed on *a priori* grounds. This leaves, of course, a consequentialist, or utilitarian justification for Rockwell's distinction—something I suspect Rockwell would not care to elaborate. In any case, his distinction between natural and unnatural forms of authority collapses into the distinction between authority he does and does not like—and I, for one, will not accept this view of authority on Rockwell's authority. After all, who is *he* to tell me to accept his categories?

Towards a Qualified Equalitarianism

It may be noticed that I have reinforced Rockwell's contention that "Authority will always be necessary to society." This is correct, but because I have demolished his "two authoritarianisms" thesis, I have also reinforced the propriety of the slogan "Question Authority," which he abhors as "leftist"! All repositories of authority should be questioned, so as to discover which are appropriate and which lack respectable rationale.

By this point many libertarians will be rather impatient with me. How can we fight the State, they might ask, if there is no distinction allowed between the State and non-political institutions? My first and surest answer would be what I suggested at the outset: by means other than using the word authority. I told you that authority raises complications...

But perhaps complications are what we need. Too many libertarians yearn for the quick and easy solution to the theoretical problems they face. The most important lesson they have to learn is that in philosophy *quick and easy* usually means *quick and dirty*. Nevertheless, there is a common meaning of authority that does conform to a libertarian (and anti-conservative) perspective, and which flows fairly reasonably from a sophisticated analysis of the concept. I will try to present it here.

The place to start, of course, is with

Max Weber's theory. Weber believed that there are three forms of authority: traditional, charismatic, and rational-legal. Traditional authority is authority conferred by long practice—it is the most conventional of the three, with its most salient reason for acquiescence being that everyone knows what to expect from it, thus it requires the least amount of mental effort to sustain the social practice of accommodation. Charismatic authority, on the other hand, is characterized by reverence for a particular person, who is seen as having exceptional qualities. This can sometimes be interpreted as simply an acknowledgement of expertise (which could elicit the slogan: *Question Expertise—you may learn something*), and thus a recognition of a need for a division of labor, but is usually associated with less rational impulses, with allegiance growing out of love and adoration and taking the form of self-abnegation and faith. The rational-legal form of authority is in marked contrast to this; acts and offices possess authority only when they conform to rules or formal reasons—which seems to make this form of authority the most obviously "artificial" of the three.

If we want our society to be free, the moral values that families inculcate must not be "authoritarian," but rational, humane, and "libertarian."

Now at this point a number of thoughts immediately come to mind—

1) When people speak of an "authoritarian" personality, they are thinking especially of the "charismatic" and "traditional" types of authority. The authoritarian individual is one who expects to get compliance simply because he is "who he is," and that's just "the way it is."

2) Rational-legal rules are often accepted not because of any salience they may have, but simply because they are traditional. This is one of the many ways Weber's three categories overlap.

3) It is the rational-legal form of authority that most modern societies concentrate on in practice and in ideological battle. Libertarianism is part of this

modernist tendency.

4) To most moderns, the problem of the "authority" of some legal practice collapses into the problem of political obligation in general. Indeed, the authority of a legal system is often thought of in moral terms, and the moral foundation of the system is seen as rational, and thus in an important sense *not authoritarian*. The word "authority" is thus completely relegated to the traditional and charismatic forms, and an authoritarian approach to politics is seen as one eschewing explicit reasons and high moral principle.

And it is the cogency of this fourth point that explains why libertarians tend to be suspicious of paleolibertarians whoring after paleoconservatives, for paleoconservatives, being conservatives, are deeply suspicious of the whole modernist project of finding rational reasons for political obligations; in the modernist project, in theory, at least, *everyone* is supposed to have a rational reason to support the political order. Nearly all the various modern political theories built on consent, contract, or utility express a conception of man's essential moral equality. Man as seen by many conservatives, however (and this includes many paleoconservatives, no matter how suspicious they may be of the State), is radically unequal in the moral realm, and obligations are seen as arising from "my station and its duties" (in F.H. Bradley's famous phrase) rather than from a universalistic moral perspective.

Libertarianism—as indeed suggested by Rockwell, amusingly enough—is in at least one sense egalitarian: all people (or at least all adults) are seen as possessing the same basic rights and thus the same basic obligations, with all other *specific* rights arising from whatever particular acts they engage in. Authoritarianism, on the other hand, is understood by most people—especially those leftists and libertarians who wear "Question Authority" buttons—to mean an approach to politics diametrically opposed to the idea of equal rights. Obligations are ordered hierarchically, not from an even plane of humanity.

And it is from this very libertarian perspective that we should oppose Rockwell's defense of authority. His discussion of the "authority of the employer" is profoundly archaic, and, well, deeply offensive. "Every business re-

quires a hierarchy of command," he writes, "and every employer has the right to expect obedience within his proper sphere of authority." But we do not need to defend the employer's right to "command" his employees in a hierarchical system by reference to an essentially hier-

It is disturbing to note the values that he says families promote; they are the values most important to an authoritarian, hierarchical society, and are not balanced by the virtues of a modern, open society.

archical moral theory—in fact, we must defend it in reference to an essentially *egalitarian* one. All we have to do is defend the free contract; for at the "constitutional" level, the wage contract is an agreement between equals. To speak of the "authority" of the employer smacks of slavery and feudal theories of servitude, which no libertarian should advocate. Paleo, we note, means primitive or archaic; Rockwell has in this case gone way too far back.

I will skip Rockwell's discussion of religion, and move directly to the very controversial subject of the family. Now, families are obviously *inegalitarian*—the gulf in status separating parents and children is great. But the danger in speaking of "the authority of the family" is that it tempts us to interpret it as "the authority of parents" and this, in turn, as a defense of authoritarian disciplinary systems. And this would be disastrous. Though children and parents are not morally equal, the primary obligation of the parents is to prepare their children for adult society, to make them able to participate in it as moral equals. But few things scuttle this task more than does the practice of authoritarian discipline.

This is not to argue against the parental use of physical punishment; what I am arguing against is a particular moral style that can be aptly characterized as "authoritarian." When a child asks why he may not do something, the answer all too often given is "because I told you so," or, "because I am your father," etc. Though in our society—and, I believe, in a libertarian society—parents have special

rights and special obligations relating to their children, these rights must not be seen as grounded in a traditionalist or charismatic inegalitarianism. The rules that parents make for their children must be defended using the moral style appropriate to the rational-legal forms of normativity; that is, by appealing to the self-interest of the child, empathic imagination, and universalizability, and not solely on the threat of parental superiority or the enticement of parental "love."

Why? Because, as Rockwell states, "families encourage" the "moral behavior" necessary to society. If we want our society to be free, the moral values that families inculcate must not be "authoritarian," but rational, humane, and "libertarian." The style of moral suasion used in the family creates the style of moral imagination used by adults in the open society. One of the reasons for the eclipse of liberalism in the late nineteenth century may have been because the traditional styles of parental authority still used at the time trained people to regard individual liberty as unsatisfactory; people grew up still craving radically inegalitarian forms of governance, and many could not even *conceive* of the moral and political equality of all men. Unfortunately, as Bruno Bettelheim has observed, moral and disciplinary practices used by contemporary American families are still mired in archaic and stultifying practices that are inimical to a full life in an open society.

I am not sure just how authoritarian Rockwell really is on the family, because his account here as elsewhere is confused. But it is disturbing to note the values that he says families promote: "parental love, self-discipline, patience, cooperation, respect for elders, and self-sacrifice." Instead of mentioning "respect for others," he mentions "respect for elders"—the traditionalist-authoritarian preference, not the modern-universalistic one. He mentions self-discipline and self-sacrifice but not, interestingly enough, self-respect. And he includes cooperation—the fundamental necessity of social life—but not the will to *not* cooperate, or resist—the ability to "just say no" that makes individuality and independence possible. His inclusions are all virtues, I believe, but they are the virtues most important to an authoritarian, hierarchical society, and are

not balanced by the virtues of a modern, open society.

Nevertheless, I share with Rockwell the view that domestic and other non-political institutions can be countervailing forces arrayed against the State; my complaint with his account is his insistence on conflating this idea with "authority." Because authority is a bond between unequals, it cannot be taken as fundamental to libertarianism for the simple reason that libertarianism is, basically, egalitarian.

Of course, his own discussion of egalitarianism is completely beside the point: libertarians are not egalitarian in the sense that contemporary liberals (i.e., illiberals) are, and the evidence that some contemporary libertarians engage in "reverse racism" can be explained in other ways (which have nothing to do with a naive egalitarianism of outcomes). Rockwell's defense of Christianity as a source of freedom, particularly in that Christians have taught that "all men are equally children of God (although not equal in any other sense)," comes closer to the point. Most humanistic libertarians, however, express the same idea in reference to such philosophical constructs as Aristotelian essences, social contracts, veils of ignorance, states of nature and the like. All libertarians—including Rockwell—are egalitarians in this sense. More importantly, they are egalitarians in an additional sense as well: they advocate *equal liberty* for all people.

Which brings us back to the State.

According to the modern rational-legal tradition of political obligation, all political obligations must be grounded in general rules that recognize the fundamentally equal moral status of all. This project has, of course, been fraught with many difficulties. The libertarian contribution to this tradition has been to concentrate on coercion, seeing political obligation in the equal limits applied to its practice. Liberty is defined as the condition of

human beings when coercion is minimized and equalized. The State, which is in the business of practicing coercion in order to regulate coercion, is necessarily limited in the libertarian system.

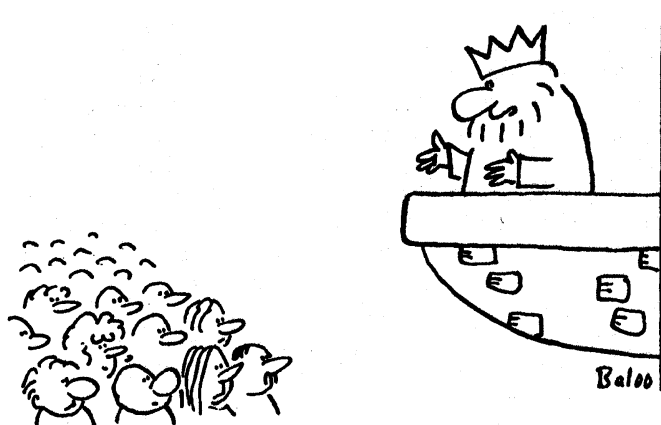
All of which has little to do with "authority." The authority of the State is justified if it conforms to the rational-legal principles of libertarianism. What this means, in practice, is that we should accommodate the coercions and demands of the State by the standards of libertarian justice as well as prudence, and we should encourage others to do the same. When enough other people begin to think as we do, the time will be ripe for change; power will devolve to the people; and, if we are careful, we might achieve a free society.

But to this task, preoccupation with authority yields us no help. Authority is too complicated and contentious a concept to aid in our emancipation. While it is a fine thing to use common language to approach conservatives with libertarian ideas, it is a serious mistake to abandon key libertarian insights in the process. The libertarian who is also an authoritarian is not a very good libertarian . . . *by definition*. □

Our Judeo-Christian-Moslem-Pagan Tradition

Richard N. Draheim, Jr.

It never occurred to me that one big reason for our lack of success at the polls is that our holy word, "libertarianism," has too few letters. So, Mr Rockwell suggests something even more polysyllabically monstrous. Is it just coincidence that his neologism, "paleolibertarianism,"



"Don't you people understand? — Tyranny and oppression are a part of our cultural heritage!"

sounds like something out of a Fred Flintstone cartoon? Ah, the paleolithic era; those were the good old days.

While we certainly must appeal to the conservative middle class to win elections, it is foolish to tailor our arguments and image in such a way that we appeal *exclusively* to them. There are many voters who classify themselves as liberal, moderate or otherwise non-conservative. It is one of the great strengths of libertarianism that we are beyond the unrealistic, two-dimensional, left-right paradigm. To become a major party, we must become inclusionist rather than exclusionist. We need more conservatives *and* more long-hairs.

Similarly, Rockwell's complaints about environmentalists in the movement are wrong-headed. The vast majority of voters are in favor of protecting the environment to one extent or another. Libertarians, as politicians and public policy analysts, must demonstrate how the protection of property rights (and the elimination of government subsidies for environmental destruction) can best do this. We won't get anywhere by telling voters that their desires to avoid pollution and have some parks are evil.

In fact, rather than being a destructive influence from the Left, the environmentalist movement could be a means of advancing libertarian ideas *on* the Left. If leftists can understand how large undesigned orders can arise on the planet and how particular species can develop by biological evolution and be interdependent with other species and the rest of the biosphere, maybe they can understand that the free market is also a spontaneous order, beneficial to its constituent parts (i.e., acting individuals).

Truths About Traditions

Intellectual history does not proceed in the kind of linear progression from Moses to the market order that Rockwell seems to think has occurred. The development of individual liberty was more of a dialectical process. Christianity both stimulated the growth of liberty (e.g. with its view of the individual soul) and interfered with its growth (e.g. with its condemnation of lending money at interest). The prevalence of non-believers (Rand, Mises, Rothbard, Mencken, LeFevre) among the developers of 20th century libertarianism suggests that far

more than Western Christianity went into the philosophy of individual liberty.

Hayek may sometimes formulate his views on religion as Rockwell quotes. But one should consider this in the context of the vast bulk of what Hayek wrote before concluding, as does Rockwell, that Hayek believes religion is the alpha and omega of the West. In Hayek's view, the essential moral traditions upon which our advanced civilization and our physical existence rely are

The Western Christian tradition is a mixed bag, and many of its best elements owe much to external influences and to internal developments that have little or nothing to do with, or even run contrary to, the major thrust of its theology.

not so much derived from religion, or any known singular source, but arose in an evolutionary process by such an obscure and undesigned way that they have come to be ascribed to religion out of a kind of naive rationalism that insists that important structures must have come from some directive intelligence, even a supernatural one. And in Hayek's latest work, *The Fatal Conceit*, he echoes the almost Randian argument that altruism, a major part of that Western religious tradition, can actually be destructive of the classical liberal social order.

Many of our own American revolutionaries were as much Deist and free-thinking as Christian, developing many of their ideas within the intellectual shelter of resurrected pagan mystery lodges. Ben Franklin, to name one, might as likely be found at the Hell Fire Club, mocking Christianity and drinking wine from a virgin's navel, than studying scripture. And the Japanese and other East Asians are doing quite well economically with barely the dimmest glimmer of Christian tradition.

What's important for the libertarian intellectual in all this is the insight that the ideas, moral principles, cultural attributes, legal rules, and political philosophies necessary for a free and prosperous society are so dispersed as to be unavailable to a single narrow tradition. You

can't insist that following one religious tradition should be a general rule for a whole society. To require that *all* individuals adopt a particular tradition will result in the stagnation and decay of the social order and impede the future development of culture.

Although despised by the conservative majority, the avant-garde must exist to keep culture healthy. Those who hate Western culture, religion, or modernism, no matter how deplorable their lack of historical and philosophical perspective and their poor manners, perform a valuable function in helping me broaden my perspective.

Of course conservatism has its value in preserving traditional principles and mores, even those whose importance are not fully understood. The Western Christian tradition is a mixed bag, and many of its best elements owe much to external influences and to internal developments that have little or nothing to do with, or even run contrary to, the major thrust of its theology. □

Point by Point

Timothy O'Brien

As a proud veteran of the sixties anti-war effort who retains his counter-cultural roots, I challenge Llewellyn H. Rockwell, Jr.'s paleolithic version of libertarianism.

Rockwell agrees with the conservative observations that "political freedom is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the good society." So do I. A politically free society might choose, for example, to abandon the efforts to find cures for debilitating and deadly diseases. That would certainly make it less good, though no less free.

Rockwell observes that "Most Americans agree that aggression against the innocent and their property is wrong." Would that that were true! I have yet to find a single non-libertarian American who, once the implications are made plain (i.e., no taxation, no drug laws, etc.), did not quickly back away from the non-aggression axiom and admit that the initiation of force is, in his or her opinion, required to maintain an orderly society.

And why is it that individuals should be free to choose the occupation of their choice, yet the California LP is derided for nominating a prostitute for lieutenant governor? Just who the hell are you,

Llewellyn H. Rockwell, Jr., to pass judgment on a person's choice of occupation? Norma Jean Almadovar is much admired by many of us because she had the courage to stand up to Leviathan. And the price of her courage was two years in an American Gulag. Just how much time have you spent in jail for having the courage of your convictions?

Rockwell summarizes Paleolibertarianism in ten propositions, the last four of which he claims would outrage "most activists." Indeed, I know of no libertarians of any stripe who disagree with any of these four. *All* of us reject the egalitarian ethic. *All* of us see various forms of social authority as (currently) helping protect the individual from the State. *All* of us see Western culture as eminently worthy of preservation and defense. *All* of us appreciate the importance of objective standards of morality to a civilized social order.

Libertarians are fond of pointing to political government as the greatest mass murderer in history, but belief by individuals and groups that they are on "a mission from God" is a worthy contender for the title. After conquering a variety of opponents, the Jews were instructed by their God (according to their own writings) to "kill every man, woman, child and piece of livestock" in the land. Christians, with their crusades and inquisitions, have a similarly bloody history (which is particularly ironic for the followers of an avowed pacifist). And who knows how many people Moslem sects have sent to Allah in their unremitting wars?

Rockwell's claim that "too many libertarians agree with the Left" in matters of culture is completely unsupported by my experience in the movement. With the exception of a few computer nerds who seem to admire the beehive culture of the Japanese, all the libertarians I know are practically obsessed with Western culture.

In addition, during the two years I edited the Libertarian Party of Michigan's newsletter, I received exchange copies of party newsletters from all over the country. I can't recall a single newsletter that was "far more upset with Jesse Helms' correct position on this outrage than with taxpayer funding for the National Endowment for the Arts."

Finally, Rockwell approvingly quotes Nock's statement that in a free society, "the court of taste and manners" should be the strongest institution. "In this court," says Rockwell, "many libertarians stand condemned." Oh, really? And just exactly whose ideas of taste and manners are to serve as the standard? I suspect that Rockwell thinks *his* standards should serve as the touchstone, like fundamentalist Christians stumping for censorship of television and music.

He blithely claims that "many libertarians are themselves egalitarians" without citing a single example or even telling us what he means. I know of no one in the movement who believes in State-enforced integration or affirmative action. I can't recall a single libertarian who criticized Ron Paul for his opposition to the tax-financed Martin Luther King holiday.

It is also strange that the same people who are attacked a few hundred words earlier for rejecting cultural norms of manners and taste are then indicted for "using the charge of racism to bash non-conformists."

"Some libertarians tell us to be soft on crime," says Rockwell. Once again, I would like to be introduced to even one of these. In what is, perhaps, the most telling line is his essay, Rockwell states that "crime must be punished swiftly and harshly," adding only as an afterthought, "although a libertarian criminal justice system would make use of restitution as well." But restitution is at the heart of libertarian criminal justice. The amount of restitution is, in most cases, fairly easy to calculate and agree upon. Severity of punishment is infinitely more nebulous—though apparently not to conservatives who are always eager to apply their own standards to any situation.

Rockwell is also wrong about the attitude of libertarians who care about the environment. Obviously, only man has rights. Only an idiot would argue that plants and animals have rights. The problem is how to protect the rights of some men to enjoy the benefits and potential benefits of plants and animals in the face of the rights of other men who may have no regard for the survival of those species.

If the U.S. Army wants to use the last remaining nesting site of the Kirtland's Warbler for artillery practice and it

owns the land, how can we balance my right to enjoy the song of this endangered bird on my land against their right to blow its nesting ground to kingdom come? If the people in Brazil want to chop down their rain forests to create cattle ranches, how can this be balanced against my right to seek medicines from the species of plants existing only on the same land? Clearly, we have competing interests which appear to be mutually exclusive, but the conflict is between the competing rights of human beings.

Freedom should be used

Rockwell reminds me of nothing so much as the personification of "Greed" in *Doctor Faustus*—sitting inside a cage with all his gold coins, taking delight in the simple contemplation of their potential and never even considering the fact that he has no opportunity to spend them. If we ever manage to achieve a free society in our lifetime, he and the rest of the bean counters would undoubtedly all sit around discussing the wonders and opportunities of the free market and never do anything.

It is ironic that after all the vitriol, the calls for a "purge," the claim that we should "cleanse" the movement and "dump that garbage," we are told that we "ought to welcome, in conservative middle-class America, libertarians who are cultural and moral traditionalists." This from a man whose intolerance is so extreme that he says the movement should be "deloused" of us? It is difficult to see how his attitude is advancing us toward Rothbard's "more comfortable and harmonious society." □

No Comment

Ron Paul

I hesitate to comment on Rockwell's article because I see the debate as being more divisive than productive. I prefer to use my energy attacking those who support statism, whether they do so intentionally or out of ignorance.

Having said this, I will make one comment: it's obvious to me that the Libertarian Party would be a lot bigger than it is now if its image were perceived as more libertarian and less libertine. □

Llewellyn H. Rockwell, Jr, declined our offer to publish his comments on these responses.

Profile

Pozner the Poseur

by Richard Kostelanetz

Don't be surprised to once again see Soviet P.R. flack Vladimir Pozner posing on every talk show in America, promoting his new book, *Parting With Illusions*. Richard Kostelanetz travelled to Moscow and back and learned much of what Pozner says about *himself* is an illusion.

On network news and feature programs ranging from *Nightline* to Phil Donahue's "A Citizens' Summit" to a response to a President Reagan address, American television has from time to time presented Vladimir Pozner, "a Soviet journalist" who appears from Moscow live via satellite, looks straight into the camera and then answers all questions from America without pause. He speaks in complicated sentences and absolutely flawless English, without accent. He uses such Americanisms as "the military brass," "a kind of political football," "on the sidelines," "jumping the gun," or "I hope to God war doesn't happen," and he says "yeah" and "yep" among other sounds characteristic of American mediamen.

Since American intermediaries customarily provide no biographical information other than Pozner's recent position as "Deputy Director of the State Committee for Radio and Television," viewers naturally wonder who he is, and how he learned to speak American English so well? Indeed, he talks like a New Yorker, not in the sound of his voice, but in his penchant for running his sentences together with "and" or "but" with scarcely a pause between them; so initially I imagined him either a child of a former Soviet diplomat here or, perhaps, a defector—a Lee Harvey Oswald, who never returned.

However, friends recently emigrated from Russia assured me that no defector would be allowed to talk *live* to America; he might say something that would embarrass the Soviet government. Pozner was, they suggested, a na-

tive Russian who had been thoroughly trained by the KGB to pass as an American, much as super-spies are trained. Another friend speculated that Pozner is a superior Soviet actor who has labored to appear like a U.S. newscaster largely by imitating videotapes gathered for him in New York City. Whenever Pozner appears, everyone stops to listen and look in awe, in part wondering where this guy came from.

With all these images in mind, during a trip several years ago to Moscow for something else, I planned a visit with the enigmatic "journalist." When I got there, I telephoned him. A voice first said "Dah," but as I spoke his name with an American accent, he replied, "Hello." Once I asked to interview him, he promised to pick me up in front of my hotel and, when he arrived, greeted me, American-style, by my first name. Out stepped a man 5'11" tall, slender, with thinning hair, broad nostrils, graying sideburns, and a face that resembled Richard Burton's. He wore an open-necked sports shirt revealing a golden horseshoe on a thin golden chain; and of course, he spoke familiar, pure American. Affixed to the dashboard of his four-door Lada, a Soviet car, was a metal U.S. flag. I asked directly, "Who are you?"

He told me that he was born in Paris, April 1, 1934, the son of a stateless Russian-Jewish father and a French mother who were then unmarried. Pozner's grandfather was an engineer who left Russia soon after the 1917 Revolution, settling first in the refugee colony in Berlin. In tow was his son, Pozner's father, also named Vladimir Pozner, who had been born in St. Petersburg in 1908. When the grandparents separated, the Pozner grandmother took her children to Paris, where young Vladimir worked in the film industry, initially as a sound engineer. He met a young Frenchwoman, Geraldine Lutton, also working in the film industry, and fathered her son whom they called Vladimir Gerald after themselves. Later that year, in 1934, the mother took the boy to New York, where she worked in the film industry. In 1939, the senior Vladimir Pozner, deciding he wanted to marry the mother of his child, came to New York City to fetch them both.

"I first met my father when I was five," Pozner told me, as we were driving to his house, "and I remember him distinctly. It was the summer of 1939. I was living with friends in the country. My mother used to come on Saturday and Sunday. One Saturday I was up-

stairs in a vile temper because I had a little boat with a string on it, and I could not get it untied, and so I was mad at the boat and mad at the string and mad at the world. My mother said there was a man downstairs who was very good at untying knots. And so I traipsed downstairs and there was this man. And I kind of said, you know, what about this knot? And he said, yes, I think I can do it. And you know, it's strange; I remember his hands. I remember that he had a kind of wart on his fourth right-hand finger. And he untied the knot, and I

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was very glad about that. And my mother said, 'That's your father,' and I can recall looking at him, appraising him, sizing him up and saying, 'Oh, I see.'"

By now we have arrived in Pozner's six-room apartment in a renovated building off the street, behind a courtyard, in an old part of Moscow. As a party was winding down in the kitchen, we went into Pozner's study, perhaps eight feet by sixteen, with its library of current American literature (securely locked in a glass case) and a desk graced with fresh flowers and a Smith-Corona portable typewriter with an American keyboard. As we settled into chairs before a window open to the noise of the summer courtyard, Pozner told me that his father took his wife and son back to France. When World War II began, the elder Vladimir enlisted in the French Airforce; but once France capitulated, his family went first to Marseilles in Vichy France. "They decided to leave France via Spain and Portugal for the United States. His elder sister married an American around 1926 and went to live in New York. Again it was difficult for my father, because he had no passport that was really valid. We had to find a way of buying a passport—the

Gestapo was corruptible but we didn't have the money. These were things I learned later, of course.

"But there was a brave rich woman of Jewish origins who did have the money, but didn't have the contacts. And she was agreeable to giving us the money if we would take her out as my nanny. And I very clearly remember that my mother told me that we are leaving tomorrow with your nurse. At that time I was six, but the war makes you somehow older than you really are. And I somehow understood that this was to be my nurse, if I were ever asked. And so we boarded the train and crossed the border into Spain with my nurse, who incidentally had diamonds on her fingers larger than my mother ever saw, let alone owned. We sailed from Lisbon to the United States, arriving early in 1941. That's where I grew up, really."

The senior Pozner went to work for Loews International, a division of MGM, in a unit dubbing films into Spanish for Latin America. As the son tells it, his father was earning "\$25,000 a year handling distribution of films to Latin America and Europe for Loews International, a division of MGM." They lived in a nine-room duplex at 24 East 10th Street, just off University Place. "I had my own bedroom, my own bathroom and my own playroom. I know what wealth can bring. It is not something I've heard about; I've experienced it." Young Vladimir went to City and Country, a Greenwich village progressive school that still exists. A second son, Paul, was born in 1945 in New York City. (He also lives in Moscow and has been working as a research associate in Vietnamese medieval history.)

In his Moscow studio, speaking into his own tape recorder, with tape he later gave me, Pozner told me that in 1947 he entered Stuyvesant High School, that special Manhattan public school for bright boys interested in science. He said he played basketball and track, even citing his best time (49.2 for the 440), and in 1950 entered Columbia College, where he majored in American literature. By then, however, the Pozner family had split up. As the son tells it, the senior Pozner had always planned to return to Russia and so obtained Soviet citizenship soon after his return to America in 1941. This he was granted on the grounds that his own father, grandfather Pozner, had become a Lithuanian citizen

after leaving Berlin and that, once the Soviet Union annexed Lithuania, all Lithuanians and their children were automatically entitled to Soviet citizenship. This grandfather was shot by the Nazis in 1941.

"By 1947," the son continued, speaking into his own tape machine, "the Cold War began, and we were being harassed by the FBI. Our phones were tapped. Our old friends were scared to call us; it was becoming really scary. The man who ran Loews International, Major Arthur Loew, called up my father and said, 'Now, look, you have to realize that I cannot keep you in this capacity as a Soviet citizen. Things have changed. Either you will become an American citizen—and that I can do for you in three days—and I will double your salary, or I'm going to have to fire you.' My father said that he realized the predicament. 'Go ahead and fire me.'

"And he was fired. Well, we had to move out of the duplex pretty fast, because we didn't have the money to pay for it anymore. My parents and baby brother moved into a very small apartment, a ground floor job on West

One reason why Pozner has been such an effective broadcaster and also such an effective spokesman for Moscow is, of course, that he speaks to us as one American might to another, without the hostile posture or Soviet lingo or the lugubrious accent that all sound so suspect and sinister to American ears.

Eleventh Street." In 1948, his father went with his wife and younger son to East Berlin, where he worked for the Soviet film organization. As Pozner now tells it, already politically hypersensitive, he decided that he did not want to live in post-Nazi Germany and so remained in the United States, boarding with a family named "Perez" on Park Avenue.

"I had problems in Stuyvesant. My father had educated me in a pro-Soviet way, which was fine throughout the War. By 1946, I began to run into animosity and emotional problems. There were

monumental fights. Kids ganged up on me at school. It was almost like being a black in the south. I was pretty much of a loner. I was kind of cut off. As soon as people heard about me, they didn't frequent me. I wasn't close to anyone at all. Most of my old friends had completely stopped seeing me. They were afraid; they said so.

"It was a feeling of apprehension, of being surveyed, of having your mail opened. You realized that there were nice people, good people whom you would like to frequent, who would like to be with you, but who simply were afraid. At that time there was a real fear of having anything to do with anyone like myself. Most of all I liked to sit in on jam sessions and play and sing. They weren't hootenannies, because they were just in people's apartments or in lofts. That's where I first met Woody Guthrie." This love of American vernacular music persists in Pozner's collection of jazz and folk records—the best collection in Moscow, he claims—as well as his translation of Woody Guthrie's autobiography, *Bound for Glory* into Russian.

The three Pozners moved from East Berlin to Moscow in December, 1952, a few months before Stalin died. "They came back at a good time, relatively speaking," the son judged between puffs on his Camel. "If Stalin had died later, or they had come earlier, I have reason to believe that my father would have been sent to Siberia, like so many others before him. But, thankfully, things worked out differently. I joined them at the end of 1953, having dropped out of Columbia and obtained my own Soviet passport. I was going on twenty. That was my first time in the Soviet Union, and I did not speak a word of Russian, because I had never spoken it at home. There was no need to."

He had to learn to be a Moscovite from scratch. "When I first came here, it was to me a totally alien country. All I knew were the ideas and the ideals of which my father had spoken a lot. But I really didn't know anything. I didn't know the language, little things: People walk differently. It's a different culture, and that is very hard to take when you are twenty. It took me some time; it took me some time. I went about to learn about this country in a conscientious way, as I learned about the United States. I began to travel. I went all over. I went by foot from Irkutsk near Lake

Baikal—that's in Western Siberia—to Bratsk. That's about 400 miles through the forest. It took me three months in the summer. I saw the lumber camps and the lumberjacks. I had tried to meet the people that I had learned about in America, and I found that there were many similarities—in the songs, in the way of acting, in the openness. Gradually, I came to have a feeling for this country. I think today I can say that it is as much a part of me as my American background is. And that has determined my role here, as I understand it."

In 1954, he took a competitive examination that enabled him to study biology at Moscow University and graduated in 1958 as a physiologist. Instead of pursuing graduate work, he became the secretary to Samuel Marshak, a Soviet translator of English literature. In 1958, he also married his first wife Valentina Chemberdz, the daughter of the well-known Soviet composer Sara Levina and lately a professor of Latin and Greek; and in 1961, they had a daughter Katya, who has since studied music. By the time of his first marriage, as he tells it, he had decided to remain in Moscow; there would be no return to America or France. That same year he was offered a job at Novisti, a new press agency that was then organized by the writers union, and there he worked, entirely in Russian, until 1970. He joined the Communist Party in 1967 and has since contributed three percent of his income to its coffers. In 1969 he married Yekatarina Orlova, a large, handsome redhead who has been an economics correspondent for the magazine *Soviet Union*; she speaks little English.

Pozner started freelance broadcasting, mostly in English, in 1966 and in 1970 was invited to work fulltime as a commentator for Gosteleradio, which is the nickname for the State Committee for Television and Radio. "I took it because being a commentator means just writing your own stuff and reading it and being totally independent in the sense of not responsible to or for anyone else and just doing your own work. And that is what I thought I really wanted to do. I was hoping to address a larger audience and always thought that radio and television gave you that opportunity." His principal job at the time was writing and speaking a five-minute English-language program, "Vladimir

Pozner Talks," that has been broadcast daily over Radio Moscow's North American Service. In the U.S. this could be heard only on short-wave sets, except in Florida where it is received as an AM signal from Cuba. For this work he told me he earned 370 roubles a month, plus a percentage for his knowledge of a foreign language that raised his base salary to 420 per month.

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Since his bosses have instituted an incentive scheme (a device more familiar to capitalism), Pozner has been paid "extra for everything I write," including his appearances on American television.

to capitalism), Pozner has been paid "extra for everything I write," including his appearances on American television. (American television pays Gosteleradio for the studio, the technicians and the satellite. Gosteleradio gives Pozner between 30 and a hundred roubles per appearance, depending upon how much time he spends on the air.) All these extras bring his average monthly income to a thousand roubles (or \$1,300 by the official rate of exchange). "In this country, this is a lot of money," he boasted—roughly the wage, I later discovered, of a high government bureaucrat or a Siberian oil worker. What do you do with it, I asked? "Spend it. Last year my wife and I spent a month in Paris. We both like antique furniture. Books."

On many American programs, Pozner has frequently engaged in spontaneous debates with American spokesmen, and these are always disconcerting, because he looks and sounds as American as the Americans. Therefore, either the producers or the American opponents customarily insist that Pozner be given some visual sign of his allegiances. For BBC television, he had a Soviet flag behind him; for the Canadian-produced pilot for PBS, he had a small Soviet flag on a stand in front of him. Reviewing Pozner's BBC debate with Robert Kaiser, a Washington Post correspondent, London's *Sunday Telegraph* commented, "The problem was

that Mr Pozner was at least as nice and clear as Mr Kaiser and, forgive me, but I think he actually spoke English better. Or rather American. Because if it wasn't for the hammer and sickle draped above his head, Vladimir Pozner could easily have been mistaken for one of Mr. Reagan's bright young men."

One reason why Pozner has been such an effective broadcaster and also such an effective spokesman for Moscow is, of course, that he speaks to us as one American might to another, without the hostile posture or Soviet lingo or the lu-

This image of young Pozner as a story-teller prompted me to check out other details of his autobiography. Elementary-school classmates whom I interviewed likewise remembered that "he sought escape into fantasy," "he was full of fairy tales," "he could turn the slightest thing into a fantastic story."

gubrious accent that all sound so suspect and sinister to American ears. As Ted Koppel told me, "Instead of speaking in bureaucratese, or even worse in Marxist bureaucratese, that we find so stilted and thus automatically reject, he speaks in language we are accustomed to hearing." (Another ABC staffer told me a while back, "Putting him on is like having Brezhnev speak American.") A second reason is that his performance is unslick, as he stumbles through "ums" and "uhs" and frequently smacks his lips, as well as betraying a slight lisp that has plagued him since childhood. Because he answers nearly all questions immediately, rarely refusing or misunderstanding or fumbling for the most acceptable phrasing, his responses appear more spontaneous than calculated. A third, more subtle reason is his eyes, which engage the camera (and sparkle) in ways unknown to nearly all other Soviets appearing here. By contrast, other Russians on American television fail to look into the camera, have shifty eyes, stumble through English, pause suspiciously, seem secretive and insin-

cere, fall into incoherence and, in general, have far less credibility. He is not just Radio Moscow's best "American"; he may well be its only sympathetic voice. In truth, the Soviets could not have invented a better publicist if they tried. Why his bosses took so long to "discover" him is an interesting question.

The Pozner I met in Moscow looked and talked and felt like an American—better yet, like a New Yorker; he made me feel at home. He had his favorite folk singers—Judy Collins, Bob Dylan and, especially, Dave Van Ronk; his favorite jazzmen—Ellington, Parker, and Armstrong; his favorite American movies—*One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* ("not the novel"); his favorite contemporary novelists—Kurt Vonnegut and Saul Bellow, "if you still regard Bellow as contemporary." Why Vonnegut? "Much of what Vonnegut says is simply what I think and what I feel. Generally speaking, in my literary tastes I'm inclined to like people who have something to say. I don't want to sound corny about this, but to me the man is vomiting blood when he speaks. He's in pain about the human condition. His books are so popular here they are snapped up the minute they appear. They are brought out and, wham, they're gone." There was even a book of mine on his shelves; and from one colleague to another, I happily inscribed it.

Nonetheless, once talk turns to politics, no one can mistake Pozner for an American. His positions have been clearly and profoundly Soviet. As the folks at ABC told me, "None of us have any illusions that Pozner will give us anything other than official reaction." On national television, the night John Lennon died, he defended in advance the possible invasion of Poland: "As a matter of fact the Soviet Union has made it quite clear that it has no intention whatsoever of intervening, but . . . that should Poland need the help of the Socialist community and should it ask for that help, that aid would be coming."

"You called me an official of the Soviet government, and of course that's very honorable to me. But I'm not that. And I mean my words should not be taken as any kind of statement from the Kremlin." Another time he insisted, "Don't confuse myself with the Soviet officials you're speaking of. I'm a journalist working for the State Committee on Radio and Television. But that

doesn't make me an official. I'm hired by that organization."

"I speak my mind of whatever subject," he told me over tea. "It may coincide or not coincide with official policy. Take capital punishment: I'm against it; I don't think it serves any purpose, even though it exists in this country as a law. In domestic policy, we tend to subsidize too much. Meat is subsidized. It costs about three roubles to produce a kilogram of meat; it is sold for two-sixty. It is ridiculous that I should pay 16 kopecks for gas in my house, no matter how much I earn. I think rents should be higher than they are today. When I pay fifteen roubles per month for this apartment, that's stealing. I'm stealing from everybody.

"I'm totally independent. I write my own material; I read my own materials, and there's nobody to control it. But I realize full well that I'm working within a framework, and what I do and say is something that is accepted. There is much more difference of opinion here than Americans tend to believe, and much more freedom of expression. In fact, the limits of freedom of expression are very clear cut. You do not have the possibility in this country of attacking the system *per se*—attacking socialism of the Soviet Union. That's not the same as saying that something is not working and we should try to improve it, or that so-and-so is not doing a good job. There are laws banning the former; it's called anti-Soviet activity. There are laws against it, whether you like them or dislike them; they have their reasons, which are mainly historical. If you want to do that, go ahead; but you are breaking the law and you can take the consequences, whatever they may be. Aside from that, there is a lot of freedom of expression here."

The disagreements with official policy that Pozner mentioned at that time all concerned domestic matters. In a different context, he mentioned another, more profound deviation: "I think that anybody, no matter where you live, no matter who you are: If you want to leave your country, you can leave it. That's a human right, basic. But I know what it is to emigrate and therefore I always have compassion for *émigrés*. It's okay for the kids, if they are small; but for adults, it is a very painful procedure. It's tearing up your roots and that, in my experience, is very, very difficult." In a country that

few natives ever leave in their entire lives, where exit visas just for travel—even for brief trips to satellite states—are hard to obtain, this remains a radical position.

By no accounts has Pozner been a typical Soviet; he has possessions and privileges that are not commonly available. Our conversations were recorded on his portable German tape machine worth several hundred dollars. He seemed to get all the American books and magazines he wanted, even those that Soviet inspectors customarily confiscate as inimical to the Soviet system. In the early 1980s he obtained permission to travel abroad, not only for business but for pleasure, even with his wife (which is itself remarkable, as Soviet officials are usually reluctant to let couples out of the country together). The Pozners had telephones in every room. His apartment had a burglar alarm that was wired to the local police station (forcing the Pozners to close all their windows before leaving, and to telephone the police station immediately after coming home). He could freely enter the Intourist Hotels that were

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closed to nonoccupants, meeting foreign journalists, so he told me, without obtaining permission. In a fundamental sense, he functioned as though he was a wholly unrestrained "Western" reporter, in a culture that supposedly does not have wholly unrestrained journalists. As he drove me back to my hotel, my thought was that Vladimir Pozner had made himself into a character in a work of fiction.

His taste for fiction came out in other ways. During our conversation he was persistently reluctant to tell me the

names of people he knew in New York. His claim was that he was too alienated to have friends in college or high school or that the "family friends" who boarded him on Park Avenue were dead. As we spoke about his possibly returning to America, perhaps for a lecture tour, I asked him what he might like to do in New York City. He spoke of wanting to visit his old house, to walk the streets of downtown Manhattan, to look up elementary school friends such as "Bobby Hollander and the McGee brothers." I stopped him short. The first name was familiar to me: Robert Hollander, a Princeton professor of comparative literature, born a year before Pozner. Was this he? Pozner could not confirm my hunch (and refrained from mentioning any more names).

Once back in the U.S., I wrote Hollander, who acknowledged the childhood friendship and provided this memoir: "What I remember most vividly about Vladimir were his capacities for, one, having extraordinarily attractive fantasies and, two, for getting the rest of us to believe them. For the better part of a year he had me convinced that he had in his basement a trunk full of the most marvelous tin soldiers, tanks, ships, etc. He promised me (we were twelve at the time) that, whenever he could arrange to invite me on a Friday afternoon, he would give me a warship—a cruiser or battleship, I don't remember—with moving turrets.

"The crucial invitation never came, despite my incessant inquiries, until the whole beguiling scheme was allowed to dwindle and disappear into the pile of lost implausible hopes that childhood wisely accommodates. On two or three occasions that same year Vladimir came to school with money, five and ten-dollar bills, which he found, he said, in the gutter. I recall that one afternoon a contingent of other C & C classmates accompanied him to forage for currency in unlikely streets. They found none." No one could be more surprised than Hollander to find his childhood buddy, "thirty-three years later—what Herodotus calls a generation," now in Moscow "talking details with Ted Koppel."

This image of young Pozner as a story-teller prompted me to check out other details of his autobiography. Once back in New York, I could confirm that he went to City and Country, that he

lived at 24 East Tenth Street, that between 1934 and 1939 he attended Dalton Nursery School, Riverside School and a public school on 14th Street near First Avenue. Other elementary-school class-

Pozner told me that in 1960 he published a book of translations of "John Donne and the poets of that period." The emigré poet, Joseph Brodsky, himself a translator of English literature into Russian, insists that this book does not exist; the first Soviet volume of Donne translations appeared over a dozen years later, translated by someone else.

mates whom I interviewed likewise remembered that "he sought escape into fantasy," "he was full of fairy tales," "he could turn the slightest thing into a fantastic story." I also discovered that Columbia College had no record of him, that his transcript at Stuyvesant High School revealed that he dropped out suddenly in November, 1948, and then that this transcript was not forwarded anywhere (which indicates that he did not continue in another American high school). His schoolmates here at the time remember that in 1948 he went with his family to East Berlin.

Pozner told me that in 1960, while working as a secretary to the noted writer Samuel Marshak, he published a book of translations of "John Donne and the poets of that period." The emigré poet, Joseph Brodsky, himself a translator of English literature into Russian, insists that this book does not exist; the first Soviet volume of Donne translations appeared over a dozen years later, translated by someone else. Asked to account for this discrepancy, Pozner told me, "If you asked to see it here, I would have shown it to you." Brodsky: "I'd like to see it." Pozner told me that he got a free subscription to the Book of the Month Club from Arthur Krim, a prominent New York film executive. The latter remembers meeting Pozner's father once in Moscow around 1957, but has no recollection of sending the son any books.

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The person who introduced Krim to Pozner, senior, was Ilya Lopert, then an American film producer-distributor who had known the senior Pozner since they worked together in 1932 in Paris and had employed him in New York in the 1940s. It was Lopert and his family who gave the Pozners American books and clothes, among other supplies unavailable in Russia.

The more I questioned, the more discrepancies I found. The father was not in charge of MGM distribution to Europe and Latin America; other people were. In the *International Motion Picture Almanac* for 1947-48, Wladimir A. Pozner lists himself as "General Manager" of Loews International. In fact, he had worked since 1941 as a sound engineer in a dubbing operation that was initially owned by Lopert and later subsumed into Loews International. The work consisted mostly of dubbing American films into Spanish for Latin American distribution. George Muchnic, then a vice-president of LI, remembers that Pozner, senior, was "well-spoken, wrote good memos, knew his job. I know he got increases in compensation when I was there."

Along with others who worked in that office at that time, Muchnic questioned Pozner's story of his father's dismissal by Arthur M. Loew, long deceased. "I worked with Arthur every day. I wasn't there, but I can't imagine that he would double anyone's salary." Seymour Mayer, then in charge of international sales, told me, "It was not like Arthur Lowe to say that—change your citizenship and I'll double your salary. \$50,000—that's ludicrous; no one got that kind of money in that type of job in those days."

What happened in fact was that Pozner, senior, decided on his own to emigrate, only suddenly informing his colleagues and family. "He kept it a dead secret," a close family friend remembers. "I don't think anyone knew about it, not even Jerry. We were afraid at the time that Jerry wouldn't leave America. Vovo had dreams of becoming a head of Mosfilm." And then there were circumstantial reasons to doubt the son's story of the elder Pozner obtaining Russian citizenship as early as 1941. Pozner was not a Communist when he came to America. Indeed, back in Paris he had captained a White Russian basketball team. While here, he fell under the influence of his sister who had gone to New York before

him and who had cared for his future wife and their son during their first stay in New York. Known as Mrs. Helen Kagan, she had worked as a buyer at Macy's and then at the U.N. and lived with a man, a Russian, who was thought to be a communist. Secondly, there was a delay in the Pozner family's departure—a delay having something to do with receiving appropriate papers, which is to say a new passport or a new citizenship.

In my judgment, Pozner is less a liar or an imposter—two possible charges that come to mind—than a fibber, a guy who since childhood has told petty falsehoods because he likes to tell stories, not only because that is his way of charming people but because like all good fictions his stories made *his* life richer and more literary than it would otherwise be. Notice that he fibs not about others but about himself (and his ancestors). As a good fibber, Pozner can persuade others of the "truth" of his fictions; perhaps after many years, he eventually persuades himself, or even transforms himself into a persuasive example. An emigré here, who remembers Pozner in Moscow as "someone who lied when he did not need to lie," nonetheless believed that Pozner had, in fact, attended college in America, in part because he developed a linguistic competence equal to that of American university graduates. Now that this profile is finally appearing in print, I wonder how many other "attractive fantasies" are left in this piece. (It is a long way, after all, from Irkutsk to Bratsk.)

Knowing what I know now about Pozner, my hunch is that, especially when he talks to us, he believes himself to be an American, all truth to the contrary notwithstanding; and his capacity to persuade not just us but himself of this illusion accounts for why he is such a uniquely successful Soviet communicator. Of course, there is also a difference in political meaning between a college student, a could-have-been American, spurning America for Communism and a younger high school student being taken there by his parents; but my own opinion is that such a political nuance is perhaps less necessary than his romantic, essentially literary desire to believe that the crucial decision of his life—the one that determined his future—was made by him, rather than, as it was, by someone else, for him. □

Reviews

The Diary of H.L. Mencken,
Charles A. Fecher, ed. Alfred A. Knopf, 1989, 476 pp., \$30.00

Mencken: The Man vs the State of Opinion

R. W. Bradford

For 40 years, H.L. Mencken exerted an enormous influence on the arts and politics of the United States. As a critic of literature, a commentator on public affairs, a scholar, and an editor, Mencken was, in the words of Walter Lippmann, "the most powerful personal influence on this whole generation of educated people."¹ During the 1920s, his influence as a critic reached a level unequalled in American literary history. Because of his trenchant criticism of government and his unwavering support for maximum individual freedom, he also earned a special place in the libertarian imagination.

Throughout his career, he was a controversial figure. He still is.

Mencken's diary, parts of which have just been published, has been greeted with a chorus of accusations of bigotry. Curiously, the controversy has been engendered mostly by the introduction written by Charles A. Fecher, its editor, who opines that the diary proves Mencken anti-Semitic, anti-black, and maniacally hateful toward Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

Mencken has been excoriated by journalists, denounced by preachers, and trashed by television smarties. The controversy has no doubt stimulated sales of the *Diary*, presumably enriching the Pratt Library in Baltimore, which owns its copyright, and the firm of Alfred A. Knopf, its publisher.

Comments on the *Diary* typically re-

fuse to analyze its contents, instead parroting the sensational charge of bigotry. In a discussion of the book on *CBS Nightwatch*, not a single participant claimed to have read the entire book; when asked to cite evidence for his case, the individual asserting that the book proved Mencken an anti-Semite didn't quote from the *Diary* at all, instead citing as evidence a passage from a long discredited biography of Mencken.

This is a shame. Mencken and his diary deserve to be considered on their merits.

The Man

Henry L. Mencken was born in Baltimore on September 12, 1880. His father owned a cigar-making business and educated his son in a German-language technical school for eventual management of his business. Young Henry had little interest in cigar-making, and when his father died unexpectedly when Mencken was 18 years old, Mencken took the opportunity to quit the world of business and pursue his great ambition to be a writer. He pestered a local newspaper and was finally given an unpaid job. His first article appeared in the *Baltimore Morning Herald* on Feb 23, 1899.

Within a year, he was selling articles to New York papers. Six months later he became a columnist; a few months after his 21st birthday, he was named editor of the *Sunday Herald*. At age 23 he was named city editor of the *Evening Herald*, and at 24 its managing editor. Not satis-

fied with daily journalism, he experimented with a wide variety of writing, including poetry and fiction. (His first book, published in 1903, was a collection of poems.) His writing was iconoclastic, bombastic, witty, acerbic, ebullient, scholarly, irrepressible, intelligent, and full of joy.

It was in literary criticism that Mencken first gained national prominence. In 1905, he published a critical study of George Bernard Shaw, not then well-known to Americans; in 1907 he wrote the introduction and notes for—and oversaw the translation of—two of Ibsen's plays. A year later, he became the book editor of *The Smart Set*, a minor magazine published in New York. In its pages, he reviewed thousands of books and achieved a formidable reputation as a literary critic.

At this time, he also began a lifelong acquaintance with George Jean Nathan, the drama critic. In 1915, he and Nathan became co-editors of *The Smart Set*, and in 1919, he began to collect his critical essays from *The Smart Set* and elsewhere and published the first of six annual editions of *Prejudices*. By the time he and Nathan left *The Smart Set* in 1924, it was no longer a minor magazine. When they left over differences with its owner, and founded *The American Mercury*, their new publication quickly became the most influential magazine in America.

Meanwhile, Mencken acted as editor of a major daily newspaper and wrote a widely read newspaper column. He also found time to write *The Philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche* (1908), a book-length debate with a socialist (*Men vs the Man*, 1910), a travel book (*Europe After 8:15*, with Nathan and W. H. Wright, 1913), a collection of satires (*A Book of Burlesques*, 1915), a book of aphorisms (*A Little Book in C Major*, 1916), a collection of literary criticism (*A Book of Prefaces*), an important book on linguistics (*The American Language*, 1918), and a translation of Nietzsche's *The Antichrist*. He also found time to cover the Great War and a revolution in Cuba as a news correspondent.

Gradually during the 1920s, the focus of Mencken's attention began to turn from literature to public affairs. He ridiculed all politicians without favor, railed against Prohibition, campaigned for free speech and press, and forcefully advocated his own liberal ideals of individual freedom and a state with very limited powers:

Good government is that which delivers the citizen from the risk of being done out of his life and property too arbitrarily and violently—one that relieves him sufficiently from the barbaric business of guarding them to enable him to engage in gentler, more dignified and more agreeable undertakings, to his own content and profit, and the advantage, it may be, of the commonwealth.²

The ideal government of all reflective men from Aristotle to Herbert Spencer, is one which lets the individual alone—one which barely escapes being no government at all.³

But his interests were wide and deep. He fell out with Nathan over the issue of what the *Mercury* should concern itself with. In the words of their mutual friend, Theodore Dreiser, Nathan favored "the frothy intellectual

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and social interests of the stage, the Four Hundred, the Bohemian and mentally dilettante worlds, whereas he [Mencken] personally was for serious contemplation of science, medicine, education, literature and what not."⁴ Early in 1925, their editorial partnership ended. In August of that year, a *Mercury* advertisement reflected Mencken's victory and the breadth of his focus:

The American Mercury Authors

An architect, a perfumer, a United States Senator, a chemist and pharmacologist, a negro poet, a dentist, a naval officer, a tramp, a lawyer, a lumber-jack, a radio-engineer, a consular attaché, a Porto Rican, a photographer, a composer, a sec-

retary to a Congressman, a meteorologist, a poet and critic who knows jewelry, a printer, a Chilean journalist, a ship's engineer, a librettist, newspaper men and women, physicians, surgeons, professors and instructors from all over the country, a musician and a Chatauqua lecturer!

These are a few of the writers who have contributed to The American Mercury. Every number a symposium on American life.⁵

Mencken's popularity soared during the 1920s. At college campuses across the nation, a copy of the Paris-green *Mercury* became a badge of intellectual vigor. His battles with Methodists and Baptists (the chief architects of Prohibition) and with Fundamentalists (opponents of evolution and modernity) put him in the headlines. In 1925, an attack on censorship drew the attention of the Watch and Ward Society of Boston; a few months later it conspired to ban an issue of the *Mercury* from sale in Massachusetts on the preposterous ground that an article about a small-town prostitute (excerpted from *Up From Methodism*, by Herbert Asbury) was obscene. Mencken himself went to Boston and challenged the censors by openly offering the *Mercury* for sale on Boston Common, for which act he was arrested, tried and found innocent, thereby striking a victory for freedom of the press.

Mencken always addressed himself to America's "civilized minority," and railed endlessly against the attitudes of the "booboisie"—its childish religion, its faith in its politicians, its boosterism. With regard to American literature, for example, he opined:

What ails the beautiful letters of the Republic, I repeat, is what ails the general culture of the Republic—the lack of a body of sophisticated and civilized public opinion, independent of plutocratic control and superior to the infantile philosophies of the mob—a body of opinion showing the eager curiosity, the educated skepticism and the hospitality to ideas of a true aristocracy. This lack is felt by the American author, imagining him to have anything new to say, every day of his life.⁶

Not surprisingly, the booboisie struck back. Mencken was denounced from pulpit and editorial page from coast to coast. "He was denounced as a mangy ape, a dog, a howling hyena, a bilious buffoon, a cad, a British toady, a super-Boche of German *Kultur*, a cankerworm, a radical Red, and a reactionary," William

Manchester noted.⁷ Ironically, in light of the current campaign against Mencken, he was also denounced as a Jew. G. K. Chesterton, for example, called him "A clever and bitter Jew in whom a real love of letters is everlastingly exasperated by the American love of cheap pathos and platitude . . . [his nihilistic philosophy appropriate] to a man with a sensitive race and a dead religion."⁸ Mencken responded by collecting the attacks and publishing an anthology of them, *Menckiana: A Schimpflexicon* (1927).

In the 1930s, as the Western world fell into the morass of the Great Depression and fascist and socialist ideas

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took hold. Mencken's popularity gradually declined. For most of the decade, he argued brilliantly against these collectivist notions. But as war broke out in Europe, it became clear to him that his own opposition to U.S. participation isolated him from many of his friends and much of the public, and he stopped writing for publication about public affairs.

He did not stop writing, however. He wrote a series of charming reminiscences about his childhood and youthful experiences as a newspaperman for *The New Yorker*, eventually gathering them into three collections, *Happy Days*, *Newspaper Days* and *Heathen Days*. More than once they were compared to *Huckleberry Finn* (a comparison Mencken detested: his admiration for Twain was too great), and they were critical and commercial successes. He published his *New Dictionary of Quotations* in 1942 and a massive supplement to *The American Language* in 1945.

After the war, Mencken's ideas were again fit for popular consumption, and it looked for a while as if he might again ride the cycle of popularity he had ridden after the first Great War. He was featured in *Life* magazine, edited an anthology of his early writing, wrote yet another huge supplement to *The*

American Language. He sold the film rights to his *Christmas Story* (1946), a small book that grew out of a *New Yorker* article, for a case of ale to be delivered to him every week for the remainder of his life. He even returned to political reporting, attending the political conventions that nominated Truman, Dewey, and Wallace.

But age caught up with him: on November 23, 1948, he was stricken with a massive cerebral thrombosis. It was the worst thing that could happen to him; it affected his brain in such a way that he could neither read nor write, sentencing him to the torture of seven empty years of waiting to die.

The Private and the Public Man

In a sense, knowing Mencken is the easiest thing in the world: one need only read his astonishingly varied writing, amounting by his account to some 10,000,000 words. But he was, by all accounts, an extremely private person, and while he reveals his beliefs in his writing with great lucidity, it is difficult to understand his personality from his writing alone. He was very concerned about the privacy of his friends and colleagues, and was circumspect in what he said of them. As a consequence, his biographies tend to focus on his literary and public career.

Mencken's writing is so lively and amusing and his public career so gaudy that it is hard to imagine a biography that would not be a joy to read. From Isaac Goldberg's *The Man Mencken* (1925) to Carl Bode's *Mencken* (1969), they are immensely pleasurable. In my judgment, William Manchester's *Disturber of the Peace* (1950) is the best of the lot, thanks to Manchester's literary talent and appreciation of both Mencken's writing and his personality (Manchester had the advantage of knowing Mencken personally and well). But Manchester worked under the genuine handicap of Mencken's reticence about his friends and personal relationships. As a result, Manchester's portrait has substantial gaps: he wrote little about Mencken's relationships with women, except for Sara Haardt, Mencken's wife from 1930 until her death in 1935, and even the account of that relationship is sketchy. Given Mencken's famous, if delphic, hostility toward women, this is an important gap. Also lacking is detail of Mencken's intimate relationship with the *Baltimore Sun*, for which he worked in one capacity or another from 1906 until his stroke in 1948.

Bode had access to a considerable number of Mencken's confidential papers and he interviewed many of Mencken's friends and colleagues. Consequently, his biography is far more rigorous. It is first-rate scholarship, though it lacks the warmth and literary merit of Manchester's. Fecher's *Mencken: A Study of His Thought* (1978) is an interesting attempt to examine Mencken's ideas, though I think it fails on many counts. Fecher, long an employee of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Baltimore and apparently unable to grasp as simple a fact as Mencken's absolute and resolute agnosticism and contempt for religious belief, labors mightily to save his soul: "It is not easy to tell just how Mencken felt about Jesus." He also comes perilously close to making Mencken into a dull fellow.*

Despite Mencken's gigantic literary output, the large number of contempo-

He ridiculed all politicians without favor, railed against prohibition, campaigned for free speech and press, and forcefully advocated his own liberal ideals of individual freedom and a state with very limited powers.

rary portraits of him, and the availability of several first-rate biographies, there are massive gaps in our understanding of Mencken the man.

That is one reason why the publication of his *Diary* is such an important event. As I read the *Diary* I began to get a feel for the first time of Mencken the human being, rather than Mencken the writer. Limited by the semi-selfconsciousness inherent to any journal written for eventual publication, *The Diary* brought his personality into sharper focus.

And it did something else: as I read the *Diary*, I felt an urge to re-read biog-

phies I haven't read for two decades, to re-read his letters, to dig through my collection of *American Mercuries*. At first it was my curiosity that was aroused, but gradually I realized that something else was also: my lust for the pure pleasure of reading his prose. The *Diary* sparkles and outrages, reminding us of what a superb writer Mencken was. This is all the more remarkable when one considers that it is a first draft, corrected only for typographical errors.

The Diary

As published, *The Diary* includes only about a third of the 2100 typewritten pages that Mencken wrote. Most of the roughly 1400 pages that editor Fecher cut consisted of repetitions, hypochondriacal complaints,** and the details of Mencken's role as a director of the Knopf book publishing firm, and of the A. S. Abell Co, publisher of the *Baltimore Sun*. Fecher seems to have done an admirable job of editing.

The defining characteristic of a diary is its privacy: what a person writes in his diary records private details of his life, private opinions about people he knows, and private thoughts in general. Of course, a diarist may write a record for future reference: by referring to his diary, he can discover or verify just when a certain event occurred, whom he met where to discuss what business, and so forth.

A diary written for eventual publication has a different character: it is always under suspicion of playing to its audience. This is true even when it is written for publication after death: the diarist may be tempted to use it to influence the opinion of future historians, to get in the last word on disputes and controversies.

It is plain that Mencken planned that his *Diary* eventually would be published, if only to the scholarly community. So we must ask ourselves: to what extent does his *Diary* reflect his private thoughts? to what extent a record intended for a future readers?

There are several occasions in which he obviously uses his *Diary* as some-

* The most peculiar of the biographies of Mencken is Charles Angoff's *Mencken: A Portrait from Memory*. Angoff, Mencken's assistant/editor at the *Mercury*, portrays Mencken as an unbelievably foul-mouthed, crude, inconsiderate, cruel, and vile human being—a portrait at variance with the memory of virtually everyone who knew Mencken. It was this book cited as evidence of Mencken's anti-Semitism on CBS *Nightwatch*.

** Mencken reputation as a hypochondriac is well deserved. At one point in his diary he threatens to write a detailed history of his personal health: "So far as I know, no one has ever set down such a record of himself, though all the books by literati are full of complaints of illness. To this end I have got memoranda from the various hospitals where I have been a patient . . ." (Sept. 12, 1945)

thing other than a record of private thoughts and activities. For example, when he twice writes of a woman who is publicly claiming some sort of sexual relationship with him, he is clearly trying to establish an alibi; in fact, he says as much. In his accounts of his struggles to convince Paul Patterson of the *Sun* that important changes in editorial policy are needed, he may be trying to see to it that his views will be known in the future, trying to get the last word. Sometimes Mencken may have written for the sake of his reputation with future historians. But this need not limit his candor: although Richard Nixon knew he was being taped for future historians, in the Watergate tapes, he nevertheless forever embarrassed himself with the petulance, dishonesty, and pettiness that characterized his conversations.

But Mencken's *Diary* is extremely forthright. It is singularly un-self-righteous. It pays little heed to the opin-

Mencken's popularity soared during the 1920s. At college campuses across the nation, a copy of the Paris-green Mercury became a badge of intellectual vigor.

ions of others. Mencken insisted that his diary be sealed until 25 years after his death, and even then be open only to scholars; he intended it to be read only when the people and events involved were dimly remembered, beyond the praise or blame of contemporaries. That the *Diary* was published at all required (a) getting a legal opinion authorizing publication from the Maryland Attorney General; and (b) convincing the Board of Directors of the Pratt Library, to whom he bequeathed it, that it was a good idea to repudiate Mencken's explicitly stated instructions forbidding its publication.

The *Diary* is a place where Mencken recorded the details of his life, his literary plans, his frank opinions of his friends and colleagues, and his private opinions on what was happening in the world. The ingenuousness and spontaneity of his opinions does more than add color to his record. It provides a valuable resource to those interested in his thinking, his writing, his scholarship, his ca-

reer, and his times. It makes *The Diary of H. L. Mencken* the most intimate kind of historical document.

The *Diary* reveals him to be a man who worked hard at his writing and who strictly adhered to his code of ethics: he believed a man should practice industry and thrift, pay his debts, take care of his family, be good to his friends, tell the truth, be moderate in his personal habits, and practice good manners toward everyone. He was, in some ways, a typical bourgeois Victorian, but he combined this Victorian ethos with a skepticism toward philosophical and theological belief that is characteristically modern—though, I suspect, he would view his skepticism as a simple matter of intellectual honesty and vigor.

In at least one sense, Mencken was a Victorian regarding his relationships with women: he believed a gentleman never speaks of sex, even in his diary:

Such things, it seems to me, are nobody's business—and I must always remember that what I write may be read by others after I am gone. As a matter of fact, they are not even the author's business. The women a man sleeps with make charming episodes in his life, but it is seldom that they influence the main course of it. Marriage, of course is quite another story . . . (Feb. 5, 1942)

Despite the skepticism he had displayed in print about love and marriage ("love is the delusion that one woman differs from another"), he reveals himself to have been deeply and romantically in love with his wife, Sara Haardt. He doesn't mention her death at all until five years later, when he makes very plain his grief over her death and the depth of his romantic feelings:

Sara is dead five years today—a longer time than the time of our marriage, which lasted but four years and nine months. It is amazing what a deep mark she left upon my life—and yet, after all, it is not amazing at all, for a happy marriage throws out numerous and powerful tentacles. They may loosen with years and habit, but when a marriage ends at the height of its success they endure. It is a literal fact that I still think of Sara every day of my life, and almost every hour of the day. Whenever I see anything that she would have liked I find myself saying that I'll buy it and take it to her, and I am always thinking of things to tell her. There was a tremen-

dous variety in her, and yet she was always steadfast. I can recall no single moment during our years together when I ever had the slightest doubt of our marriage, or wished that it had never been. I believe that she was equally content. We had our troubles, especially during her illnesses, but they never set up any difference between us: they always drew us closer and closer together. (May 31, 1940)

For some 2,000 words, he continues to describe his relationship with his wife and his love for her:

She had a sharp intelligence, and yet she was always thoroughly feminine and Southern, and there was not the slightest trace of the bluestocking in her. Marriage is largely talk, and I still recall clearly the long palavers that we used to have . . . We had plenty to talk of. I talked out my projects with her, and she talked out hers with me. I don't think we ever bored each other. I know that, for my part, the last days of that gabbling were as stimulating as the first. I never heard her say a downright foolish thing. She had violent prejudices, but so did I have them, and we seldom disagreed. It seemed to me that she always maintained hers with great plausibility. I have never known a more rational woman, nor another half so charming. She was far too reserved to be described as a popular favorite, but she always made a good impression on people of sense. . . . (May 31, 1940)

Over the remaining eight years of his *Diary*, he occasionally writes again of Sara. His voice never changes: his love and respect for her and his profound sorrow at her death never vary.

His Victorianism stops far short of prudery. Despite his reticence about writing of sexual matters, he does let slip a few of the details of his losing his virginity at age 14, reveals a bit of his attitude toward homosexuality, tell a slightly smutty joke, describes a stag party at the *Sun* at which the entertainment was provided by a transvestite sex show, and tells an amusing tale about one of his more Victorian friends:

One night at the beer table, as I recall, there was some mention of sexual intercourse in human beings, and Max [Brödel] ventured that it was a trivial business, and not half so thrilling as was commonly assumed. "After all," he said, "it seldom lasts more than a minute, and never more than two." This astonished [Raymond] Pearl, as it

astonished me, and we both had at him. The more we cross-examined him the plainer it became that he actually believed what he had said. When Pearl argued that any man who entertained a lady for so little as two minutes was guilty of a gross offense, not only against her person but also against the peace and dignity of the human race, it was Max's turn to be astonished. He simply never heard that copulation could be prolonged at will—at all events, far beyond the limits he had set . . . On the heels of this grotesque discussion Pearl announced the founding of an organization to be called the Society for More and Better Fucking in the Home . . .

We learn that Mencken took joy in work, in food, in drink, and most of all in the companionship of friends. His close friendship with his publisher Knopf involved sharing all these pleasures: they rarely discussed business except over a fine meal with a good wine, and they enjoyed annual pilgrimages to Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, for its Bach Festival and the excellent local beer. The Saturday Night Club combined all of these pleasures but work: it consisted of a group of friends who met each Saturday night to eat dinner, perform music (Mencken played second piano), drink beer, and talk. Mencken attended it regularly for more than 40 years, even inviting its members to his own home for meetings

In 1925 Mencken was arrested, tried for, and found innocent of selling a banned copy of the Mercury on Boston Common, thereby striking a victory for freedom of the press.

during Prohibition when public consumption of beer was risky.

It wasn't all fun. Mencken speaks with contempt, tinged with disappointment, of friends who borrow money and don't pay their debts, or who are otherwise irresponsible:

Phil Goodman tells me that Ernest Boyd is miffed because I have seen little of him during the past year. My reason for avoiding him is that he has been devoting far more of his energies to drink than to work. In consequence, he is constantly in money difficulties. Some time ago he tried to borrow

\$1,000 from Harry C. Black, though he already owed Black \$1,000 and had owed it for years. I detest men who borrow, and especially men who borrow as a result of their own indolence. (July 30, 1931)

For a man who identified himself as "ombibulous," who campaigned against Prohibition both in public campaigns and in extensive disobedience of the law, who cherished good beer, wine, and whiskey, his lack of a sympathy for those who inbibe to the point at which drink interferes with their work is perhaps a bit surprising: he had reason to deplore this weakness in Sinclair Lewis, Scott Fitzgerald, and even his old friend Paul Patterson, president of the *Sun*.

But the *Diary* is primarily a joyous affirmative work. Along the way we meet a great many interesting people, and catch glimpses of many more, including Rose Wilder Lane, Albert Jay Nock, and Dashiell Hammett. There is a treasure trove of anecdotal information about important literary figures like Sinclair Lewis, Edgar Lee Masters, Theodore Dreiser, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Joseph Hergesheimer, Harold Ross, Ezra Pound, and others.

We also meet the peculiarly American eccentrics whom Mencken found so amusing, like Dr F. E. Townsend, originator of the Townsend Plan, according to which the government would give every person in the United States of 60 or more years of age the sum of \$200 per month, on the condition that the money be spent before the month ended. All this spending, Townsend argued, would stimulate the economy and cure the Depression. His theory never was enacted, though it did stimulate Roosevelt to enact Social Security. But it did gain considerable support among people 60 years or older. In 1943, Townsend visited Mencken to ask advice on the publication of his autobiography. Their conversation touched on many subjects. Mencken relates one curious episode:

The doctor told me a long tale about his cousin, a man of his own age [76], who lately came down with cancer of the prostate. He said that at his advice the cousin submitted to castration and that the effects were magnificent. The cancer vanished and the patient put on 40 pounds of flesh . . . his cousin is now strong enough to operate a three-acre chicken farm and is otherwise in prime condition. He said that he was

thinking seriously of getting castrated himself. His prostate is normal, but he believes that he is underweight and that adding 30 or 40 pounds would improve his general health. He said somewhat primly: "My reproductive stage is now over, and I see no reason why I shouldn't sacrifice a couple of useless glands." (June 2, 1943)

This story, which Mencken reports without comment, offers considerable support for Mencken's belief that a person who is a crackpot in one field will likely be a crackpot in others. At the end of another vignette of a quack, Dr. J. B.

The ingenuousness and spontaneity of his opinions does more than add color. It provides a valuable resource to those interested in his thinking, his writing, his scholarship, his career, and his times.

Rhine, promoter of the notion of extra-sensory perception, he provides this charming insight into marriage:

His wife seemed to be much more intelligent than he. She is a native of Ohio, apparently of German origin, as Rhine seems to be himself. I noticed that while he was expounding his ideas she sat regarding him in silence, with a quizzical smile. My guess is that she knows the answers, but is too discreet to utter them. I have often noticed the same look among the wives of quacks and enthusiasts. Women in general seem appreciably more intelligent than men. A great many of them suffer in silence from the imbecilities of their husbands. I daresay that poor Sara occasionally shouldered her share of this burden. (May 1, 1939)

Elsewhere Mencken tells the story of waiting in line in a *pissoir* with the Duke of Windsor, getting annoyed by the wait, hunting up a pay toilet with Felix Frankfurter, and leaving its door ajar so no other guest would have to cough up five cents. But mostly, the experiences he relates are of his own work and of the two business enterprises in which he was interested, the Baltimore *Sun* and Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. Mencken served on the Board of Directors of each firm. Those who ran each firm were friends.

He took his responsibilities seriously and recorded his experiences and his thinking about them in considerable detail. Fecher tells us that he cut much of these accounts, on the theory that readers would not be greatly interested. I found these entries to be fascinating and would have liked more of them, although I suspect my appetite for them may be great-

Mencken reveals himself as remarkably individualistic at a personal level. He judges everyone he meets on the basis of his character. He is quite willing to denounce the high and mighty who fail to meet his moral or intellectual standards, while observing moral and intellectual virtue among common people.

er than most readers'.

At a personal level, Mencken reveals himself as remarkably individualistic; he judges everyone he meets on the basis of his character. He is quite willing to denounce the high and mighty who fail to meet his moral or intellectual standards, while observing moral and intellectual virtue among people of modest social or intellectual standing. In 1939, for example, he happened to learn the address of the house where he was born:

This morning I went down to Lexington street to have a look. I found a pleasant little three-story house, directly opposite a slum area that is being cleared under the Federal housing scheme. The door of the place was open, and inside I found a colored man on a stepladder and a white man on another. The colored man told me that he was the new owner of the place. He had been living in his own house in the slum area, but the government had now condemned it. He told me that the price he got for it was considerably less than his investment. He had used the money to buy [the house where I was born] and was now engaged in rehabilitating it. He was scraping the accumulated wallpaper off the walls, and the white man, a plasterer, was patching holes that this work revealed. The colored man seemed to be a very intelligent and

decent fellow. He told me that he hoped some day to put in a central heating plant, and I was tempted to offer him the price. I'll probably go back to see him at some time in the near future. (April 15, 1939)

In 1939, he notes an interesting conversation with the chauffeur of a friend in North Carolina:

Last night the Hanes' colored chauffeur drove me from Durham to Greensboro in order that I might pick up my train. The distance is about 55 miles, and I seized the chance to set the chauffeur to talking. He turned out to be an uneducated but extremely sharp-witted colored man, and he told me a great deal of interesting stuff... (May 1)

Mencken goes on for another 250 words summarizing the chauffeur's opinions about the local economy and related manners. Five years later, he writes of his disappointment at missing a conversation with the driver, whom he identifies this time by name, "In the past I have always enjoyed such trips with him... but this time, because of the gas shortage, he had to take another passenger—a Winston lady whose name I forget—and in her presence he was shy and retiring. Moreover, she did a great deal of talking herself..." (July 17, 1944)

This respect for merit is hardly surprising: as an editor, Mencken always gave careful consideration to articles submitted by people of humble station; more than one of his biographers noted that he seemed to relish submissions from prisoners, and he published many. One of the more frequent contributors to the *Mercury* while he edited it was Jim Tully, a hobo. When he writes of such people, there is never the tone of condescension; he treats them with the same respect that he accords to anyone else whose thinking or writing he values.

This curious egalitarianism is very appealing. Of course, Mencken was an avowed advocate of the "superior man" and the "aristocracy," and he would be shocked to hear himself described as an egalitarian. But the fact remains that his extreme methodological individualism meant that the "superior men" whom he included in his "aristocracy" were very often people of rude means and education, and the people he denounced as buffoons and fools and consigned to the rabble were very often people of elevated status and schooling. As an editor and a critic, Mencken judged every piece

of writing on its merits; as a human being, he did the same with people.

This is not to say, of course, that he was reluctant to make sweeping generalizations about whole classes of people, by race or class or religion or geographical location. He often over-generalized for literary effect. But he always realized that these generalizations were *post hoc*, never the major premise of a syllogism of the following sort:

All xxxx are fools.

So-and-so is an xxxx.

Therefore, so-and-so is a fool.

The Menckonian logic took something like the following form:

Most of the xxxx's I have encountered are fools.

So-and-so is an xxxx.

So-and-so should be judged on his merits.

Even this overstates the way he thought, for it would never occur to him to judge any man by class or station. Of course, this did not prevent him from fuming in this way:

People have often observed that a certain sort of left-liberal "loves humanity but hates individual human beings." The converse of this proposition seems to apply to Mencken: he hated humanity but loved individual human beings.

So-and-so is a fool.

So-and-so is an xxxx.

Nearly all the xxxx's I have encountered are fools.

So this doesn't surprise me.

The foregoing discussion, I suppose, suggests my answer to the question: was Mencken a bigot?

A Portrait of an Anti-Semite?

The attack on Mencken's character begins on the dust jacket of *The Diary*, which describes Mencken as a "bigot." A bill of particulars against Mencken is spelled out in Fecher's "Introduction." After discussing a number of insignificant instances of Mencken's cantankerousness, Fecher writes:

Much more important, and infinitely less comprehensible, are his attitudes toward the war that was raging during much of this time, toward

Franklin D. Roosevelt, toward black people, and most especially toward Jews.

His feelings about World War II are incredible . . . His hatred of Roosevelt was, indeed, maniacal—there is no other word to use . . . His attitude toward black people was a curious mingling of total egalitarianism on the one hand and patronizing superiority on the other . . . the most inexplicable and least pleasant aspect of his personality as it is revealed to us in the diary [is] his feelings about Jews. In [my earlier book] I sought to defend him from the charge of anti-Semitism . . . But at that time I, like everyone else, had not seen the diary. Today I would be much less ready to take such a stand. Let it be said at once, clearly and unequivocally: Mencken was an anti-Semite.

Fecher's charges, particularly the sensational charges of racial bigotry, have been widely taken up. In *The New York Times Book Review*, Robert Ward writes about "Mencken's strange blindness regarding World War II . . . near pathological hatred of Franklin Delano Roosevelt . . . More offensive and shocking is Mencken's anti-Semitism and his deeply condescending views of blacks." In the *Detroit Free Press*, Les Payne asks: "Was H.L. Mencken a racist? The answer is quite clear, and the answer is yes." In *The Wall St Journal*, Michael Kott writes "So great was his loathing for F.D.R., he got fuzzy-eyed thinking about the Reich." Richard Cohen writes in *The Washington Post Magazine* that the diaries "revealed him to be an anti-semitic and a racist."* In Mencken's beloved *Baltimore Evening Sun*, Neil A. Grauer writes that "The reputation of H.L. Mencken, one of the nation's literary and journalistic icons, may be tarnished permanently by publication of his previously secret diary." An editorial in

* Cohen also makes the ludicrous charge that Mencken has escaped condemnation in his home town of Baltimore because the citizens of that city are "reluctant to condemn Mencken and reduce its tourist attractions by a third (only Fort McHenry and Edgar Allan Poe's grave would remain)." I do not know the motives of those unnamed defenders of Mencken from Baltimore, but I cannot imagine Cohen has it right. I remember the day in 1985 when I visited Mencken's home, now open as a museum: I noted from the guest book that I was the first visitor in three days, and the guide was reluctant to let me leave, not because he valued my personal charm, but because he was lonely.

the *Detroit Free Press* proclaims that "The diary . . . is peppered with scores of anti-Semitic slurs and evidence of a deeply ingrained conviction that people of different skin color were inferior to whites." Doris Grumbach in the *Washington Post* wins the prize for the most immoderate position: "Those who defend a writer such as H.L. Mencken must be said to possess an antisemitic sensibility themselves."

The Jewish Question

Forewarned by Fecher's *Introduction* to the *Diary*, and by comments in the press, I attempted to note as I read the book every use of the word "Jew" in any of its forms. I found 31 cases. Twenty-

Ironically, in light of the campaign against Mencken, he was denounced as a Jew: G.K. Chesterton, for example, called him "A clever and bitter Jew in whom a real love of letters is everlastingly exasperated by the American love of cheap pathos and platitude . . . his nihilistic philosophy is appropriate for a man with a sensitive race and a dead religion."

five of these were simple mentions that a certain acquaintance was a Jew, e.g., "a Harvard Jew"). The frequency of such usages is hardly surprising; Mencken was a professional intellectual, editor, author, and publisher; he was part of a highly literary world in which Jews were (and remain) very prominent. (Mencken elsewhere mentions the ethnic background of other non-Jews—e.g., "Harcourt is a clever Dutchman," "She is a native of Ohio, apparently of German origin, as Rhine seems to be himself," "We had two Jews among the members, a Czech, and Americans of widely varying views" [Mar. 10, 1931, May 1, 1939, Feb. 5, 1942]—no one has yet to my knowledge cited these as evidence of his anti-Dutch, anti-Czech, or anti-German bigotry.)

In two other cases Mencken observed anti-Semitism in other people. Four other passages in the *Diary* mention Jews. It is these four that are most frequently cited

to support the thesis that Mencken was anti-Semitic. Let us consider them individually.

1. His entry for February 10, 1942, relates a conversation with Samuel Eliot Morison, professor of history at Harvard University:

It is plain to see that Morison's opinion of [Harvard's] history department is low, though he is naturally cautious about saying so. I asked him what sort of students he was encountering. He said that they were mainly Jews, and that few of them showed any capacity.

2. His entry for December 2, 1943, relates a conversation with the secretary of a private club of which Mencken was a member and where he frequently dined with guests, who told him that "some time ago" a man had been admitted to membership who turned out to be a Jew who had acted to conceal his heritage. Once admitted, this person had revealed that he was Jewish, only to have his sponsoring friends ask him to resign:

Mason told me that there was no objection in the board of governors to bringing an occasional Jew to a meal in the club, but that this applied only to out of town Jews, not to local ones. There was a time when the club always had one Jewish member, but the last was Jacob Ulman. Ulman was married to a Christian woman, a great-granddaughter of Thomas Jefferson, and had little to do with the other Jews of Baltimore. When he died the board of governors decided that he should be the last of the Chosen on the club roll. There was no other Jew in Baltimore who seemed suitable.

3. His entry for July 17, 1944, describes the Whitestone Inn, a resort in North Carolina at which an acquaintance of a friend is staying:

The only Jew on the guest list is Milton J. Rosenau, the sanitarian. He got in on the score of his acquaintance with Fred Hanes—and immediately proposed the bring in other Jews. But Bovard [the owner], by various devices, has managed to keep them out.

What can we say of these episodes?

These are anecdotes told to Mencken and recorded without comment in his *Diary*, without the slightest hint that he approves of the attitudes they suggest. Curiously, the individual expressing the anti-Semitic sentiments in first case, Samuel Eliot Morison, is identified by

Fecher in a footnote as a "distinguished American historian." But Mencken, who reported Morison's remarks without comment is condemned as an anti-Semite on the basis of this evidence.

Mencken did not denounce Morison, the Maryland Club or the Whitestone Inn as anti-Semitic. Nor did he ostracize Morison, resign from the Club, or organize a boycott of the Whitestone Inn. Mencken mentions the Inn only in passing, without indicating whether he patronized it. Does his failure to take these actions constitute proof that he was a bigot? Can a person record in his diary an anecdote told to him without thereby agreeing with the attitude implicit in the teller of the anecdote?

4. His entry for April 27, 1944, describes a disagreement with Alfred Knopf. Mencken was a good friend of Knopf; he was also one of the best-selling authors whom Knopf's firm published. Knopf had financed and published *The American Mercury*, and Mencken's friendship and unpaid editorial work had been rewarded with a seat on the board of directors of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. The disagreement was over a book Knopf had published:

I believed the little book of prayers for soldiers, just brought out by the house, disgraced its list and damaged its trade-mark. There are actually prayers by Generals Eisenhower and Patton—the latter the hero who lately got into the newspaper by cuffing a wounded soldier. I said that such trash undid the work of years, and left the house imprint ridiculous . . .

The idea for the book of prayers, [Blanche Knopf] said, came from Bernard Smith, the sales manager. What his name was before he changed it I do not know. He, too, is a Jew, and moreover, a jackass.

The episode is more troublesome than the first three. Mencken is plainly upset at the decision to publish the book of war-prayers—upset to the point which he notes the book's sponsor is a Jew and a "jackass." It is plain that Mencken is upset with the fact that Smith is a jackass rather than with the fact that he is a Jew. But does this remark demonstrate anti-Semitic bigotry?

There is, of course another possible explanation: that Mencken disliked the denial of Smith's heritage that his name-change seems to imply. In his introduction, Fecher tells us how Mencken chided his close friend and collaborator

George Jean Nathan for Nathan's attempts "to deny, or at all events to conceal, his Jewishness." Lawrence Spivak, who knew both Mencken and Nathan, goes further. In a recent interview, he said, "If anybody was anti-Semitic, it was Nathan."⁹

The entry most frequently cited as evidence of his anti-Semitism was not included in the published *Diary*, though Fecher quotes it in his introduction. Mencken referred to two Jewish businessmen whom he apparently considered to be unethical as "dreadful kikes." Now this is certainly uncouth by today's standards, and probably by the standards of Mencken's day. But does this entry, even in combination with the entries cited above, among the thousands of pages of a diary covering 18 years, demonstrate

Some of those who charge Mencken with anti-Semitism cite his use of the term "Jew" to describe Jews. This usage doesn't seem like evidence of anti-Semitism to Lawrence Spivak, the object of one such characterization ("Spivak is a young Harvard Jew"). Spivak believes that the accusation is "all nonsense . . . He called me a Harvard Jew. Well, I was at Harvard and I am a Jew."

anti-Semitic bigotry?

Certainly, the word "kike" is ugly and shocking.* But I am not convinced that Mencken's using it a single time, apparently in anger, proves him anti-Semitic. I recall that when I taught fourth grade in an inner-city school twenty years ago I was shocked to hear one tiny black child call another "nigger!" in an-

ger. I am no more convinced that Mencken was an anti-Semitic bigot than I was that any of the black children who occasionally used that ugly word in anger were anti-black bigots, or examples of self-hating blacks.

Some of those who charge Mencken with anti-Semitism cite his use of the term "Jew." This usage doesn't seem like evidence of anti-Semitism to me, nor does it seem so to Lawrence Spivak, the object of one such characterization: "Spivak is a young Harvard Jew." Reached by telephone at his Washington home, Spivak said that the charge that Mencken was anti-Semitic is "all nonsense . . . He called me a Harvard Jew. Well, I was at Harvard and I am a Jew . . . His only prejudice is that he was strongly pro-German . . . I can remember that Mencken once said that he couldn't understand how any intelligent, civilized person could be anti-Semitic." Still feisty and alert, the 89-year-old Spivak volunteered to defend Mencken against the charge of anti-Semitism by the National Press Club, which is considering removing his name from their library. (The Press Club has not taken Spivak up on his offer.)¹⁰

Part of the problem with Mencken's using the term "Jew" to describe a person lies in the fact that the world has changed. Two generations ago, the ethnic and geographical identity of a person was a very important component of his character. To describe a person as a "New York Jew" or a "Milwaukee German" or a "Georgia Cracker" was to say something of defining significance about that person. Nowadays, of course, a person's parentage and home town mean very little: the values and beliefs of a person reared by Jewish parents in New York, German parents in Milwaukee, or poor white parents in Georgia tend to be more similar than they were in the past. We should remember that mass culture is largely a mid-20th-century phenomenon, although in America at least it had its roots in the 19th century.

Homogenization of culture advanced earlier and more quickly in the U.S. than in other countries, for obvious reasons. America has a tradition of egalitarianism: we believe that all men are created equal, and find the notion of a hereditary aristocracy archaic and silly. America has a common language and few barriers to internal immigration, enabling people to move from one place to another more often than in other countries. But most of

* Mencken had previously used this ugly word in print: in an essay about conservative literary critic Stuart Pratt Sherman in *Smart Set* in 1923, he wrote: "For what distinguishes the American Goths, Wops and Kikes above all other barbarians, as Dr. Sherman himself accurately argues, is their defective respect for the purely spiritual inheritance of their Anglo-Saxon compatriots." So far as I know, this colorful passage did not subject Mencken to charges of anti-Semitism, or, for that matter, of anti-Italianism, or anti-Gothism.

all, the large size and relative political freedom of the U.S. provided the conditions necessary for the development and growth of the mass media.

In Mencken's era, the mass media were only beginning. Only a few periodicals had national circulation. It was not until the rise of cinema, radio, and television that media became genuinely national, when people in Iowa, New York, and California shared news and entertainment conveying the same information and values.*

The homogenization of mass culture has changed our habits and mores. Today when we meet someone, our first question is likely, "What do you do for a living?" The answer to this question conveys a great deal of information about a person's character and hints at his values. In Mencken's day, the first question was likely, "Where are you from?" Today, ethnic and regional background has far less influence on a person's values or character than it had in the past. This uninterest in ethnicity has been reinforced by the rejection of racial discrimination by the overwhelming majority of Americans and the consequent feeling that there is no honorable motive for inquiring about a person's ethnicity.

I neither know nor care about the ethnicity of most of my friends and colleagues, and am vaguely offended by ethnic characterizations. Partly, I suppose, this is the result of the outrage that I felt when my mother told me that my grandfather was barred from certain hotels because they were "restricted" (i.e. barred Jews and apparently, Dutchmen who look like Jews). But mostly, I suspect ethnicity means very little to me because I grew up in the age of mass culture.

But during Mencken's formative years and most of his mature years, this was not the case: ethnicity was very important. This, I believe, is what

Lawrence Spivak was getting at when in explaining Mencken's ethnic references, he said, "In the teens and 20s, people had quick identifications for people. Those things didn't mean very much."¹¹ And that, I think is what Russell Baker was getting at in his defense of Mencken in the *Washington Post*, when he said, "To have been utterly free of such stuff [using racial terms] in Mencken's time and place would have been astonishing. . . The neighborhood language bristled

If any single ethnic group stands out as an object of Mencken's ire, it is "pure Anglo-Saxon," whom he denounced repeatedly and with vigor. "Filthy and destructive anthropoids, physically as well as morally, they are a poor lot."

with words now considered so barbaric that using one would disqualify the user for public office or television millions."

Whether or not one feels comfortable using ethnic terms like this or not (and I for one do not) we should understand how and why they were used. Simply to denounce this usage as bigotry is not simply uncharitable. It is narrow-minded and—yes, I'll use the word—bigoted.

Of course, Mencken knew what *real* anti-Semitism was. Characteristically, his view transcended knee-jerk denunciation:

Anti-Semitism is latent all over Western Europe, as it is in the United States, and whenever there are public turmoils and threats of public perils it tends to flare up. . . . The disadvantage of the Jew is that, to simple men, he always seems a kind of foreigner. He practices a religion that is not common, he has customs that seem strange to the general, and only too often he indulges imprudently in talk about going back to his own country some day, and reviving the power and glory of his forefathers. He is commonly a fierce patriot in whatever land he lives . . . but his patriotism is always ameliorated, despite its excess, by a touch of international-mindedness born of his history, and in consequence he is commonly held suspect by patriots who can't see beyond their own frontiers. Thus he is an easy

mark for demagogues when the common people are uneasy, and it is useful to find a goat. He has served as such a goat a hundred times in the past . . . In Germany, as in Poland, Austria and France, he has been made use of by demagogues for many years, precisely as the colored brother has been made use of in our own South.¹²

By today's sensibilities, it is possible to extract passages from Mencken that seem anti-Semitic—though one can find far more that are anti-anti-Semitic. But words alone do not determine a man's character. There is a far better way to evaluate a man's beliefs: the record of his actions. Let us look at Mencken's behavior and see whether anti-Semitic bigotry appeared there.

All the evidence points in the opposite direction. Mencken counted many Jews among his closest personal friends, including Blanche and Alfred Knopf, Phil Goodman (a drinking buddy who was briefly his publisher), George Jean Nathan (who co-edited *The Smart Set* and co-wrote two books with him, and who co-founded and for a while co-edited *The American Mercury* with him), Louis Cheslock (a member of the Saturday Night Club), and numerous others.**

In addition, when given the opportunity, Mencken went out of his way to come to the aid of Jews who were victims of genuine anti-Semitism. When Hitler's Germany threatened to deport German Jews, other nations responded by refusing them entry. At the Evian conference in 1938, the U.S. balked at allowing German Jews to emigrate to the U.S. Mencken attacked this decision with his usual vigor in his newspaper column:

It would be much more honest and much more humane to tackle the problem at once, and settle it without further ado. Either we are willing to give refuge to the German Jews, or we are not willing. If the former, then here is one vote for bringing them in by the first available ship and staking them sufficiently to set them on their feet. That is the only way we can really help them . . . [The initiative] should be taken by the political mountebanks who fill the air with hollow denunciations of Hitler, and yet never lift a hand to help an actual Jew.¹³

He admitted the action might "stir

* The cultural homogenizing effect of the mass media was intensified by the rise of cartelization that occurred in the early 20th Century. By the 1920s, the film industry was largely cartelized and the radio industry soon followed. There is some indication that this tendency has reversed itself: the diversity of film, electronic, and print publishing has increased in recent years. The extent of the heterogenizing effect this development will have remains to be seen. At the same time, we have seen the mass media internationalize, which is tending to homogenize culture over an even wider area.

** Fecher, it is worth noting, reports Mencken's friendships with Jews in his introduction, and grants that Mencken's anti-Semitic bigotry was difficult to explain in light of them.

up the Ku Kluxers, and there may be outbreaks of anti-Semitism" and suggested a solution: "If the Jews are brought in at once it will be seen quickly that they can be absorbed without any strain, and so the old pals of Hugo Black will be stumped. Such idealists never flourish in the face of overt facts. Their whole metaphysic revolves around bugaboos."¹⁴ * (Although Hugo Black is remembered as a left-liberal member of the Supreme Court, shortly after his appointment, it was learned that he had been a member of the Ku Klux Klan.)

What determines whether a man is anti-Semitic? A few uncouth words uttered in anger? Or a lifetime of relationships and action?

Black and White

Fecher cites two passages in the *Diary* that supposedly demonstrate Mencken's anti-black prejudice. The first is Mencken's entry of September 23, 1943:

While I was at work this morning there was a clatter down in the hall, and when I got there a deliveryman was picking up Emma Ball, the colored maid, who had slipped on the waxed hardwood floor and struck her head on the staircase. I gave him a hand, and in a little while she had recovered, thought the blow dazed her. I have warned her over and over again against giving the floors too high a polish. More than once I have fallen on them myself, and one night I came down on the back of my head. But it is impossible to talk anything resembling discretion or judgment into a colored woman. They are all essentially child-like, and even hard experience does not teach them anything. Emma, it appeared, was bruised only slightly . . .

The second passage is the entry of June 2, 1948, concerning the promotion of Emma Ball to housekeeper, upon the murder of Mencken's black housekeeper, Hester Denby, by her deranged daughter:

Emma Ball, the maid, is settling down to her new job as housekeeper, and doing very well. Her cooking is already really excellent, and she seems to be determined to improve it. I see

her giving hard study to a book in the kitchen.

Unfortunately, Emma belongs to the Afro-American race, and shows many of its psychological stigmata. When I handed her Hester's house key, she made various improbable excuses for not carrying it. Last night she confessed to August [Mencken's brother] and me that she hated to touch it.

To Fecher, these two entries, among the many in which Mencken expresses his esteem and affection for Ms Ball, prove Mencken's "deeply ingrained conviction that black people were by their very nature inferior to white."^{**}

To me, these episodes seem more like an expression of the frustration he felt at his inability to convince Ms Ball to follow her employers' instructions about polishing the floor or to ignore her superstitions, and, quite likely, an expression of the degree to which Mencken was upset, in the first case, by the injury to Ms Ball, and in the second case, by the murder of Ms Denby. In his Introduction, Fecher acknowledges that Mencken was "greatly affected" by her murder, and wrote sev-

Much of Mencken's professed hostility to humanity is a pose. He consciously seeks to maximize the outrageousness of his writing. His pose of insensitivity is part of his charm.

eral entries about the horrible event, "only a few of which I have included here." One wonders just how much Mencken wrote about Ms Denby's murder: the "few" entries that Fecher included in the published volume span eight days and run some 1300 words.

Robert Ward, writing in the *New York Times*, cites the following passage as evidence of Mencken's racism:

Unhappily, the low-class blacks who formed part of the war-time immigration show no sign of returning home.

^{**} In his 1978 book Fecher wrote: "When he described himself as being entirely without prejudice, he was speaking the simple truth." In an interview with Fecher on Jan 20, 1990, Fecher said that his change of opinion was based "solely" on the two passages about Ms Ball and that he could recall no passages in the unpublished portions of the diary that reflected anti-black sentiment.¹⁵

They find life in Baltimore much pleasanter than it was in their native wilds, and when hard times come again they will all go on the dole. The city jail is already full of them, and four or five are in the death house. (Dec. 15, 1945)

Without a doubt this is the most vicious description of blacks in the *Diary*; considered out of context, it is quite damaging. But when reading Mencken, one should always remember his habit of consciously trying to maximize the outrageousness of his views. One should also consider that his bitterest denunciations of a group are almost always presented in the context of denunciation of other groups. The passage in question appears the context of a denunciation of rural white southerners:

It is never difficult to recognize them. No such shabby, ill-fed men and filthy, slatternly women and children had ever been seen in Baltimore before. They were numerous in the shopping areas, and it was not uncommon for the natives, encountering a grotesque specimen, to stop and stare. The women, as a rule, were heavier than the men. They were all shapeless, and their dirty hair was pushed back in a kind of waterfall, cut off straight at the level of the shoulder. . . . The children all looked starved. These poor creatures brought their native eating habits with them, and in Baltimore, as in the Appalachian uplands and the Carolina mill-towns, subsisted mainly on fat-back and corn-meal. They kept the Baltimore hospitals busy, especially the obstetrical wards. Indeed, I don't recall ever seeing one of the younger women without a child or two dragging at her heels or in her arms. They also gave the police plenty of business. Many of the women locked up their children for days at a time, and went on drunks, and the men did a good deal of fighting. I only hope that Baltimore remembers them, for they provided dramatic ocular evidences as to the true nature of the "only true Anglo-Saxons," so much whooped up in the South. It was plain that all the European immigrants in Baltimore, including even those from the Mediterranean and Balkan lands, were much superior to them. This was also true of the Negroes. Unhappily . . .

It is here that Mencken describes blacks in the unflattering terms quoted above.

What is his point? That the "pure Anglo-Saxon" southerners are inferior to blacks, detestable as those blacks may be.

* Although Fecher had not heard of this column by Mencken when I told him of it on Jan 20, 1990, he expressed a genuine interest in it. While he stood by his conclusion that Mencken was anti-Semitic, he disclaimed any responsibility for the book's dustjacket claim that Mencken was a bigot.

Indeed, if any single ethnic group stands out as an object of Mencken's ire, it is "pure Anglo-Saxons," whom he denounces repeatedly and with incredible vigor. For example, on July 19, 1944 he writes, "Physically as well as morally they are a poor lot. The women are dumpy, puffy and pale, and the men are tall, thin and cadaverous. The war industries have brought thousands of these anthropoids to Baltimore . . ." Mencken goes on to denounce them as "filthy" and "destructive" people:

One of their [the whites] curious characteristics is their apparent hostility to all growing things. The backyard of any house they occupy is soon reduced to a desert of sand and trash: they stamp out the weeds. Not one of them has even been known to cultivate a flower. The Negroes are much more civilized. All save the poorest and most wretched of them have very pretty gardens . . . In the alley behind Hollins street [where Mencken lived] there is a colored couple that has three window-boxes full of petunias . . . The same little house is kept well painted . . . and the occupants plainly take some pride in [its] appearance. No linthead or mountaineer [Mencken's favorite pejoratives for white southerners] ever shows any feeling for beauty. They all live like animals, and are next door to animals in their habits and ideas.

The examples of this literary device in Mencken's writing are many. In a 1928 letter to his future wife about his experiences at Republican National Convention in Kansas City, Mencken wrote, "Yesterday I had a palaver with two high-toned coons of Alabama. They seemed like Goethes, compared to the white politicians." Mencken's use of the word "coon" is vile to our sensibilities, yet plainly he used it with intention of maligning the white politicians, not the blacks. He had met with A. F. Hosley, secretary of the Tuskegee Institute, and Claude A. Barnett, director of the Associated Negro Press. In his dispatch for the Baltimore *Evening Sun*, he wrote, "They showed good humor, good manners, and sound sense. It was a pleasure to meet them after suffering for hours among the white morons. They remain the most intelligent men I have encountered among persons officially attached to the convention, one United States senator and five bootleggers excepted."¹⁶

This purposely outrageous device of

ten left him susceptible to charges of bigotry fabricated by yanking a quote from context. In his introduction to his translation of Nietzsche's *The Antichrist* (1918), he wrote the following sentence: "The case against the Jews is long and damning; it would justify ten thousand times as many pogroms as now go on in the world." On the face of it, it is just plain nasty. But it is another case of Mencken making an outrageously exaggerated statement in order to make another exaggerated statement even more outrageous. This statement appears in a discussion of the evil of Christianity, three sentences later, Mencken writes of the "general superiority" of Jews over Christians, and he concludes his paragraph by arguing that "the increasing Jewishness of the

By dropping the context of Mencken's comments, by ignoring his life, by forgetting the literary techniques he employed, the character assassins have managed to put together a superficially plausible case that he was a bigot. But that only makes their action all the more contemptible.

plutocracy . . . will lift it to such a dignity that it will at least deserve a certain respect." I am not aware that Mencken was charged with anti-Semitism at this time: if he were, I am sure that it would have amused him and the publisher of his book, Alfred A. Knopf.

Again, let us consider Mencken's actions, rather than his words.

As editor of the nation's most influential journal, Mencken regularly published black authors and used his influence to get others to publish their books. Indeed, he is generally recognized as a moving force in the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s. As a book reviewer, he often commented very favorably on books written by blacks. Here, for example, is his very brief review of *The Negro in South Carolina during the Reconstruction*, by Alrutheus Ambush Taylor: "A valuable piece of research by a colored scholar. It offers hope that the history of the south is at last to be written accurately and intelligently. No com-

parable book by a white Confederate historian is half so well done." (The *American Mercury*, March 1925, p. 383)

George Schuyler, the prominent black writer and editor, recalled Mencken in his memoirs:

But the closest of all [my best friends] was that distinguished Southerner, Henry L. Mencken of Baltimore, Maryland . . . I corresponded with him from the time my first article in the *Mercury* in December 1927, until long after he was stricken with paralysis and could only correspond through his secretary.

We first met at the office of *The American Mercury* . . . When I came in, Mencken, a roly-poly exuberant man of medium height, jumped up grinning and said, "Well, we meet at last!" By that time I had contributed about four articles to the magazine. . . . All the other times I saw him were in his home on Hollins Street . . . Mencken boasted of his justly famous cellar, which he did not have to press me hard to sample . . .

Mencken was affable and hospitable, the perfect host. On the matter of the Negro, he had none of the mawkishness the white professional liberals display. He had no illusions about either colored or whites. He had been surrounded all his life by Negro neighbors, and knew them as individuals in a way that so many sentimentalists do not. I learned much from him about Negroes in Baltimore and the rest of Maryland. . . .

Mencken did an enormous amount of reading and he even subscribed to, and read, the *Pittsburg Courier* [the nation's largest circulation black newspaper; Schuyler was its editor]. One night he told me that Julia Bumbry Jones, the woman's editor of the *Courier*, wrote the best column of the kind in American journalism. At a time when very few Negroes were being accepted in the more outstanding magazines, Mencken encouraged them and published more of their output than any others. He often used excerpts from my *Courier* column.¹⁷

The last thing Mencken ever wrote—his newspaper column of Nov 9, 1948—was an eloquent plea for racial integration, in this case of the public parks. This excerpt captures its flavor:

The public parks are supported by the taxpayer, including the colored taxpayer, for the health and pleasure of the whole people. Why should cops be sent into them to separate

those people against their will into separate herds? Why should the law set up distinctions and discriminations which the persons directly affected themselves reject? If the park tennis courts were free to all comers no white person would be compelled to take on a colored opponent if he didn't care to . . . Any white player could say yes or not to a colored challenger, and any colored player could say yes or no to a white. But when both say yes, why on earth should anyone else object?

It is high time that all such relics of Ku Kluxry be wiped out in Maryland.¹⁸

People have often observed that a certain sort of left liberal "loves humanity but hates individual human beings." The converse of this proposition seems to apply to Mencken: he hated humanity but loved individual human beings. Of course this is not strictly the case: much of Mencken's professed hostility to humanity (usually expressed as a hostility toward subgroups of humanity) is a pose. He consciously seeks to maximize the outrageousness of his writing. His pose of insensitivity is part of his charm.

Now I am aware that Mencken would likely have denied that his insensitivity was a pose: but virtually all the evidence of his life indicates that he was an uncommonly sensitive human being, considerate of the feelings of others, helpful, friendly and polite. Although I suspect he would hate to hear this, he was a nice man.

Roosevelt and the War

Fecher's other two charges against Mencken, that "his hatred of Roosevelt was, indeed, maniacal—there is no other word for it" and that "his feelings about World War II are incredible in a man of his intelligence, knowledge, and perception"—have received far less attention than the charges of anti-Semitic and anti-black bigotry. Whether this is because these charges are less liable to inflame popular passions or because they lack even the superficial cogency of the other charges I do not know.

Fecher's argument about Mencken's feelings regarding World War II runs as follows:

His feelings about World War II are incredible in a man of his intelligence, knowledge and perception. There is no mention in the diary of the German invasion of Poland which began it, or of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor

which brought the United States into it, or of the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima which brought it to an end. There is hardly any mention of Adolf Hitler. He seems to have had no conception at all of what a German-Japanese victory would have meant to the civilized world, or to the liberties that he himself so cherished. He grumbles about the inconveniences the war has caused him, but finds satisfaction in the fact that it has impinged relatively little on the routine of his own life. (xvi)

That's Fecher's *entire* case. Mencken's "feelings" are "incredible" because he didn't write about the war in his diary as much as Fecher thinks he should have. There is no indication that Mencken was even vaguely sympathetic to Hitler. Of course, there couldn't be; Mencken held Hitler in contempt. As far back as 1933 he denounced Hitler as a "preposterous mountebank," and his followers as

As an avowed advocate of the "superior man" and the "aristocracy," he would be shocked to hear himself described as an egalitarian. But the fact remains that his individualism meant that the "superior men" whom he included in his "aristocracy" were very often people of rude means and education, and the people he consigned to the rabble were very often people of elevated status and schooling.

"hoodlums." ¹⁹ There is no indication that Mencken opposed the U.S. war efforts. Of course, there couldn't be: Carl Bode, Mencken's most authoritative biographer, tells us that after Pearl Harbor, Mencken "thought that the United States had to defeat the Japanese and the Germans, too." ²⁰ The suggestion that Mencken "seems to have had no conception" of what an Axis victory would mean ignores the fact that Mencken harbored no doubt that the Allies would prevail, and had no more reason to worry about what an Axis victory would be like than he had to worry about what the

election of a Klansman to the presidency would be like.

Of course, Mencken was not thrilled by the war. He had anticipated the war four years prior to Pearl Harbor, when he wrote: "A foreign war would make the New Deal sorcerers safe in the saddle until its end, which might be years off." ²¹ And he realized that war is a horrible thing, both for the men who fight it and for the quality of life and liberty of those at home: "War, in this country, wipes out all the rules of fair play, even those prevailing among wild animals. Even the dissenters from the prevailing balderdash seek to escape the penalties of dissent by whooping up the official doctrine." (April 1, 1945)

Fecher does not criticize these views, or any of Mencken's other well-developed views on wars in general or World War II in particular. He has no complaint about what Mencken said, thought or wrote about the war. Instead, he complains about the fact that Mencken did not write very much about the daily war news in his diary, or join in the popular hysteria about the possibility of an Axis victory. Fecher's criticism is just plain silly.

His claim that Mencken had a "hatred of Roosevelt [that] was, indeed, maniacal—there is no other word for it" is ridiculous on its face. Mencken went from 1941 to 1945 without writing a word for publication about Roosevelt. Despite the ascendancy of politics in the national consciousness during the 1930s and 1940s, Mencken mentions Roosevelt only occasionally in his diary covering those years. This is mania?

I'm not saying that Mencken didn't get his licks in against Roosevelt. He certainly did:

Roosevelt is a fraud from snout to tail. Every one in Washington is well aware that he is itching to get the United States into war. (Sept. 29, 1939)

Roosevelt will probably go down into American history as a great hero. It is one of our Heavenly Father's characteristic jokes upon the American people, and in his usual bad taste. (Jan. 12, 1944)

He could have been beaten only by a demagogue even worse than he was himself, and his opponents showed no sign of being able to flush such a marvel. The best they could produce was such timorous compromisers as Willkie and Dewey, who were as im-

potent before Roosevelt as sheep before Behemoth. When the call was for a headlong attack, they backed and filled. It thus became impossible, at the close of their campaigns, to distinguish them from mild New Dealers—in other words, inferior Roosevelts. He was always a mile ahead of them, finding new victims to loot and new followers to reward, flouting common sense and boldly denying its existence, demonstrating by his anti-logic that two and two made five, promising larger and larger slices of the moon. His career will greatly engage historians, if any good ones ever appear in America, but it will be of even more interest to psychologists. He was the first American to penetrate to the real depths of vulgar stupidity. He never made the mistake of overestimating the intelligence of the American mob. He was its unparalleled professor. (Apr. 15, 1945)

Whether one agrees with Mencken's view of Roosevelt or not, one ought to be able to understand it. Mencken lived in difficult times. The liberalization of the 1920s gave way to the Depression of the 1930s and another world war in the 1940s. Mencken's social and political ideas were under attack everywhere. The size and power of government were growing exponentially, taxes were skyrocketing, free speech was receding, and socialist notions seemed to be winning everywhere except where Fascist notions prevailed. The liberal social order that had spawned Mencken, that he loved, appreciated, and cherished, was losing out to barbarity.

In this context, his absolute loathing of Franklin Roosevelt is understandable. Roosevelt was the primary instrument of illiberalism in the United States: his New Deal entailed not only the massive growth of government and decline of individual liberty, it also included an ideological change from the valuation of liberty to the valuation of government enforced equality.

A part of Mencken's ill-humor toward Roosevelt is the inherent ill-humor of the aging. As the senses dull and the capacities for work and pleasure diminish, the girls of one's youth become prettier, the booze boozier, the grass greener, the music more captivating, and the old, departed world a better place in which to live. This is a process we all experience. We should understand it, even if we don't sympa-

thize with it.

Such understanding is beyond Fecher. In defense of his bizarre thesis, Fecher notes that Mencken was affable toward Dr. Francis Townsend, Gerald L. K. Smith and Bishop Cannon, who advocated ideologies as repugnant to Mencken as Roosevelt's. Apparently, Fecher could not see any difference between a man who advocates pernicious ideas and implements them to the detriment of the entire world (Roosevelt) and a colorful quack who earns his living by selling pernicious ideas to rubes but who lacks any means of implementing them (Smith, Townsend) or men clearly past the capacity for mischief (Cannon).

My own guess is that Fecher, like so many who came of age during the Depression, views Roosevelt as some sort of saint and simply cannot grasp the idea that a rational person could hold him in low esteem. If I were inclined toward behaviorist explanations, I would suggest that Fecher could no more escape the bounds of the world of his youth and his upbringing and have an unreligious view of Roosevelt than could Mencken escape the bounds of the world of his youth and his upbringing and deify Roosevelt.

The State of the Industry

The evidence from the *Diary* that Mencken was bigoted, anti-Semitic, anti-black, maniacally anti-Roosevelt, or harbored "incredible" feelings about World War II is practically non-existent, and the evidence to the contrary from the *Diary*, his private life and his public career is overwhelming. By dropping the context of Mencken's comments, by forgetting the literary techniques that he employed during his entire career, and by ignoring his life, the character assassins have managed to put together a superficially plausible case. But that only makes their actions all the more contemptible.

The role of the publisher is interesting: what other book—save

perhaps one written by a mass murderer like Hitler—carries a dust jacket characterizing its author as a "bigot"? I suspect that the publisher has purposely promoted the book as bigotry to hype its sales. When I mentioned this hypothesis to a Jewish friend familiar with the publishing business, he responded that although he had not read the book, he had read enough about it in the trade papers to know that this was a case of a publisher's "flack whose publicity created a monster that got out of control." Les Payne made a similar charge in *Free Press*: "Bent more on profits than on facts, the agents and assignees of the diary's publisher are doubtless working behind the scenes of this fake furor, with eyes cocked on the best-seller list."²²

Trashing Mencken might goose the sales of the *Diary*, but one wonders whether this is in the long term interests of Knopf (its publisher) or the Pratt Library (its copyright holder). Knopf is the publisher of virtually all Mencken's books, and the Pratt Library holds the copyright on most of his literary estate, and it is difficult to believe that convincing the world that Mencken was a bigot will help stimulate the sales of his other books. Fecher, incidentally, has no financial interest in the book: he edited it on a contract basis for Pratt.

I have no special insight into the motivations of the publisher, but it is certainly ironic that the *Diary* was published by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. Knopf was a close friend of Mencken's and publisher of all Mencken's books since 1918. At the tender age of 89, Knopf wrote a brief memoir for publication in Mencken's *festschrift*. Knopf was very reserved and so was his memoir, but it does touch on the personal rela-



"Have you stopped beating your wife?"

tionship between Knopf and Mencken:

By this time [1936] our relationship with Henry had become far more than that of publisher and author. I was devoted to him, and so was my wife, Blanche. He had more influence over me and my beliefs than anyone except possibly my father . . . I know Henry soon conceived an affection for all three of us, and his later joining the Board of Directors was a mere formality.²³

One cannot help but speculate that one reason the publication of the *Diary* was delayed so long was that Alfred A. Knopf would never have stood for the charges of anti-Semitism in Fecher's introduction and of bigotry on the book's dust jacket. After all, Knopf knew Mencken well, and knew that Mencken was neither an anti-Semite nor a bigot.

Whatever its motive, the attempted character assassination of Mencken will prove futile. After the controversy is off the pages of the newspapers, after Charles Fecher is no longer a welcome guest on the *The CBS Morning News*, after the charges against Mencken are forgotten, along with the men of little honor or intellect who attacked him, the world will be a better place for the publication of his *Diary*.

Mencken has given us a rare gift, a detailed record of an important life and the frank opinions of a man whose opinions mattered. □

I am grateful to Stephen Cox, Richard Kostelanetz and Sheldon Richman for helpful suggestions at various stages in the writing of this essay, and to Sheldon Richman for permission to quote from his interview with Lawrence Spivak. Of course, the finished product is my responsibility alone.

Notes

- 1 *Saturday Review of Literature*, Dec 11, 1926.
- 2 *Prejudices: Fourth Series* (New York: Knopf, 1922), p. 221.
- 3 *Prejudices: Third Series* (New York: Knopf, 1921), p. 292.
- 4 Dreiser's letter is in the University of Pennsylvania Library. It is quoted by Carl Bode in *Mencken* (Carbondale, Ill: Southern Illinois University Press, 1969), p. 219.
- 5 *American Mercury*, August 1925, p. xxxiv.
- 6 Quoted by William Manchester in *Disturber of the Peace* (New York: Collier Books, 1962), p. 146.
- 8 Manchester, p. 147.
- 9 Lawrence Spivak, telephone interview with Sheldon Richman, January 16, 1990.
- 10 *Ibid.*
- 11 *Ibid.*
- 12 *The American Mercury*, Dec. 1933, pp. 508-9.

This was the last article Mencken wrote for the *Mercury* as its editor.

13 *Baltimore Evening Sun*, Jan 1, 1939.

14 *Ibid.*

15 Charles A. Fecher, telephone interview, Jan. 20, 1990.

16 Marion Elizabeth Rodgers, ed., *Mencken & Sara: A Life in Letters* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1987), pp. 386.

17 George Schuyler, *Black and Conservative* (New Rochelle, NY: Arlington House: 1966),

pp. 233-234.

18 *Baltimore Evening Sun*, Nov. 9, 1948; also in Alistair Cooke, ed., *The Vintage Mencken* (New York: Vintage Press, 1955), pp. 227-30.

19 *On Mencken*, John Dorsey, ed. (New York: Knopf, 1980), p. 267.

20 Bode, p. 357.

21 *The American Mercury*, Jan. 1938, p. 21.

22 Dec. 26, 1989.

23 Dorsey, ed., p. 287.

Grumbles from the Grave,

by Robert A. Heinlein. Ballantine Books, 1989, 281 pp., \$19.95.

In It for the Money

James S. Robbins

"How does one person get to be the hero of the New Right, women's lib, and the hippie culture all in the same breath?" This is only one of the questions addressed in the late science fiction writer Robert Heinlein's final book, *Grumbles from the Grave*. First conceived in the late 1960s but not to be published until after his death, *Grumbles* is a collection of letters by and to Heinlein which span his entire career.

The book opens with a short biography by Heinlein's wife, Virginia. Heinlein was born in 1907, and spent most of his youth in Kansas City. He graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1929 and served aboard the *Lexington* until a medical discharge in 1934. Back on land he held down various odd jobs, and, faced with mortgage payments, started writing short stories in 1939. He looked at the check for his first sale, "Lifeline," said, "How long has this racket been going on?" and with this insight began a stellar career.

The early letters are mainly between Heinlein and John W. Campbell Jr, publisher of *Astounding*, an important early science fiction magazine and Heinlein's first literary home. Within a few years, Heinlein became a dominant presence at *Astounding*. The Heinlein/Campbell ex-

changes don't reveal much about Heinlein's ideas, but they show a great deal about his concern for payment for his work, and about the state of the writing game in the early forties.

When war broke out in Europe, Heinlein attempted to put some emotional distance between himself and events by following the news on a month delay. But after Pearl Harbor was attacked, things became personal. Heinlein immediately rejoined the Navy. A letter dated December 9, 1941, discloses his reasons for doing so, and reveals something of his thinking on foreign policy: "Germany and Japan are not safe to have around; we are bigger and tougher than they are, I sincerely believe. Let's rule them. We do not want it that way—but if somebody has to be boss, I want it to be us." (27) He also supported the restriction of free speech during wartime. This was probably an emotional reaction by a patriotic American, and Heinlein may not have been so imperialistic later in life. But the book does not reveal whether Heinlein's attitude ever changed, and though Virginia added some connecting text between letters and chapters, the lack of more in-depth commentary is a major shortcoming.

Heinlein's letters pick up again after the war, where they give some insight into the science-fiction publishing indus-

try of the 1940s and 1950s, when Heinlein moved from short stories to novels for the juvenile market. Several letters show the problems of dealing with what can only be called an irrational editor at Scribner's, who made changes seemingly without reason and offered contradictory explanations. Heinlein went along with this, grudgingly, for several years, until he presented an ultimatum: "if I ever submit to her another story, it will be sight unseen till then and take it or leave it." (79)

As with any epistolary work, one must be sensitive to context, names, dates, and other signals if one is to make any sense of the events behind the letters. There is no plot, of course, and drama hits unexpectedly, as when Heinlein's simmering dissatisfaction with Scribner's turns to open war over the rejection of *Starship Troopers*. After twelve successful novels, Scribner's rejected *Troopers* with a perfunctory note and no explanation. The dispute led to Heinlein's departure from the publisher, and the book went on to garner Heinlein his second Hugo award for best novel (the first being for *Double Star* in 1956).

The letters also chronicle the transition in the publishing industry from the period of self-censorship in the thirties and forties to the introduction of sex and violence in the fifties and sixties, both of which now seem mandatory in most fiction. Heinlein's "juveniles" were ruthlessly purged of anything even remotely suggesting sex, and his editor, a self-described "good Freudian," went to absurd lengths to blot out sexual symbols. Heinlein's response was a lengthy commentary on Freud, beginning "Freud was not a scientist; he was simply a brilliant charlatan." (66) Heinlein also had to defend himself against a claim that his books, which portrayed free-spirited youths, caused juvenile delinquency. Heinlein thought this was nonsense, and believed that young people were far more perceptive and interested in serious issues than their parents. And anyone who is familiar with the science-fiction-reading section of the youth culture would know that they are unlikely candidates for criminality. Imagine if you will a young leather-clad crack-dealing gangster with an Uzi in one hand and a copy of *Starman Jones* in the other. Heinlein was allowed more latitude in his later "adult" fiction, and the publisher of *Glory Road* (1962) praised it for be-

ing "spiced with interesting sex." (170)

Stranger in a Strange Land (1961) elevated Heinlein from the status of famous writer to cult hero. It is the story of an Earthman raised by Martians who returns to his native planet and is mistaken for a messiah. In *Stranger*, Heinlein wanted to address the two "sacred cows" of Western culture: monogamy and monotheism. He referred to it as his "Sex and Jesus book." (233) *Grumbles* features an entire chapter on *Stranger*, a controversial book that was an instant hit among readers of science fiction and college students (two widely overlapping groups). Heinlein's letters are very frank in describing the messages of the book. "Concerning sex, my book says: sex is a hell of a lot of fun, not shameful in any aspect, and not a bit sacred." (229) Monogamy is described as a useful "social pattern," but not connected in any way to sin. And as sex is fun, religion is its antithesis. "My book says: a personal God is unprovable, most unlikely, and all contemporary theology is superstitious twaddle insulting to a mature mind." (229) Agnosticism is only more acceptable in that it "pleads ignorance, utter intellectual bankruptcy, and gives up." All other religions are "Just as silly, and the very notion of 'worship' is intellectually on all fours with a jungle savage's appeasing of Mumbo Jumbo." (229) Almost everybody connected with the book's production wanted him to tone it down. "I know the story is shocking," he wrote. "But I don't see how to take out the sex and the religion. If I do, there isn't any story left." (228)

Heinlein's reaction to fame and popularity, and most of the "grumbles," can be found in Chapter VIII, "Fan Mail and Other Time Wasters." He refers to fan mail as "unsolicited letters from strangers," and seems constantly annoyed by those whom he does not know who want something from him. He is critical of those who write about him, and mentions incredulously one Heinlein "expert" whom he had never met. As the years passed and his popularity grew, Heinlein became more exasperated. In 1964, he decided to cut off his fans and end personal appearances. He wrote that he was "lowering the boom on all of it—and if this makes me a rude son of a bitch, so be it." (144)

But even after this ultimatum, Heinlein made some attempts to accommodate his fans; far from being rude, he

was so polite that he had a difficult time carving out the necessary privacy that many celebrities would seize without a second thought. In several letters he debates the merits of using computerized form letters to cope with his voluminous fan mail (finally opting to do so), a technique others would adopt as a matter of course. But Heinlein expected politeness in return, and bemoaned the fact that few fans who wrote to him included a self-addressed stamped envelope. But he nev-

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er questioned the tastes of his admirers; while he minimized his contacts with "organized fandom," he did accept four fan-awarded Hugos.

Because *Grumbles* is not explicitly concerned with politics or philosophy, there are few passages more than a couple of sentences long in which Heinlein expresses his political opinions. The most direct and interesting political discussion is in a letter dated April 19, 1949, concerning the novel *Red Planet*. Heinlein writes to his editor, "I have one of my characters say that the right to bear arms is the basis of all human freedom. I strongly believed that, but you required me to blue-pencil it." (54) In the three-page exegesis which follows, Heinlein makes a succinct case for his proposition, and states that he is "opposed to all attempts to license or restrict the arming of individuals." Such laws, Heinlein writes, are "a violation of civil liberty, subversive of democratic political institutions, and self-defeating in their purpose." Heinlein ruefully admitted, though, that even if he could convince his editor to change her opinions, they would still be faced with selling the book to "librarians and teachers" whom he assumes to be opponents of firearms.

In 1958, in response to a SANE ad campaign, a "pacifist-internationalist-

cum-clandestine Communist drive," Heinlein started the Patrick Henry League, which opposed international atomic controls and world government. Wrote Heinlein, "I wish some of those starry-eyed internationalists would go take a look at the illiterate, unwashed uncivilized billions whose noses they want to count in a 'world state'!" (210)

He refers to fan mail as "unsolicited letters from strangers," and seems constantly annoyed by those whom he does not know who want something from him. In 1964, he decided to cut off his fans and end personal appearances. He wrote that he was "lowering the boom on all of it—and if this makes me a rude son of a bitch, so be it."

The League was not a serious effort, but when it garnered greater than expected support, Heinlein let it continue. His attitude towards the possibility and survivability of nuclear war is contained in a sentence in a letter dated (significantly) November 16, 1961: "Our bomb shelter is completed and stocked..." (96)

Heinlein was libertarian in his sympathies, but the book makes no mention of contacts with the LP or any other libertarian group. But Heinlein publicly

likened his political views to those of Ayn Rand, and one can find several Objectivist references in his work. The Hugo award-winning *The Moon is Marsh Mistress* (1966) describes a lunar colonial revolt against an oppressive, U.N. world government. (Heinlein was very critical of "One-Worlders.") "The Professor," one of the leaders of the revolution, explains his political beliefs:

"I'm a rational anarchist."

"I don't know that brand. . . . But what's this? A Randite?"

"I can get along with a Randite. A rational anarchist believes that concepts such as 'state' and 'society' and 'government' have no existence save as physically exemplified in the acts of self-responsible individuals. He believes that it is impossible to shift blame, share blame, distribute blame. . . as blame, guilt, responsibility are matters taking place inside human beings singly and nowhere else. But being rational, he knows that not all individuals hold his evaluations, so he tries to live perfectly in an imperfect world. . . aware that his efforts will be less than perfect yet undismayed by self-knowledge of self-failure."

Rand is mentioned only once in the book, in a letter dated January 28, 1949:

I have fallen ill of the desire to turn out a "literary" job. Specifically, I would like to do a job somewhat like Ayn Rand did in *The Fountainhead*, but with modern art, especially pictorial art, as my target. (94)

Unfortunately, Heinlein never went forward with this project. But he had an undeniable Howard Roarkish streak,

building two of his homes ("I finally fired our silly architect and took over the job myself." (125)) and doing extensive work landscaping.

Grumbles From the Grave is not a book for every libertarian. Those with no interest in science-fiction will probably find most of it dull. In fact, many SF fans may find it dull as well. Most of the commentary on

Heinlein's writings (with some notable exceptions) deals not with the ideas contained therein, but the problems associated with their publication. One also wonders if these letters truly represent Heinlein's most interesting private writings. There are none from World War II or his earlier days in the service, though a 1973 letter makes passing reference to a crisis with Japan "involving a war ultimatum that never got into the news" in which he had a "front row seat." (99) Heinlein writes in this letter that he will put a description of the event in *Grumbles*, but it does not appear.

The Heinleins travelled extensively, but there is very little concerning their trips, and the lack of impressions from anti-communist Heinlein's 1961 journey to Samarkand inside the Soviet Union is particularly discouraging. The reader is referred to two articles on the visit reprinted in *Expanded Universe* (1980), but if Heinlein wrote any letters during his excursion, they do not appear.

Heinlein had to defend himself against the claim that his books, which portrayed free-spirited youths, caused juvenile delinquency. Imagine if you will a young leather-clad crack-dealing gangster with an Uzi in one hand and a copy of Starman Jones in the other.

Grumbles From the Grave may be too strong a title. Perhaps *Complaints From the Crypt* would have been better. The book promises controversy, but is in fact fairly tame. Heinlein promised to "name names," but those he names are not well known. The letters also do not reveal anything about Heinlein's political views that wasn't known before, and may even understate them.

It is ironic that a man who craved privacy in life would want to publish a book of personal letters after his death, and doubly so that the book clearly states his irritation with fans, who will be the book's primary consumers. Yet a letter of September 16, 1973, reveals part of his motivation. He was assembling the book as a reward to his wife for putting up



"It's nothing personally against you, sir—I just want to be somebody."

with his "cantankerous ways." Heinlein thought it would bring her "some return" after his death. So in a sense *Grumbles From the Grave* is a memorial to one of Heinlein's primary motivations, and one most libertarians can respect: cash. And this is something about which he was always very straightforward: "when anyone asks me why I write, if it is a quick answer, standing up, I simply say, 'For money.' Any other short an-

swer is dishonest . . ."

If the reader wants to read about Heinlein and his ideas, skip over *Grumbles* and go directly to his novels. Left-libertarians should try *Time Enough for Love*, and right-libertarians will enjoy *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress* or *Starship Troopers*. And if the reader respects the author and his motives, he will feel secure knowing that he is helping to keep Heinlein's estate in the black. □

difficult to follow at first, mainly because of the Machiguenga lexicon, which the reader must figure out, a lexicon that involves such terms as "Tasurinchi," (God/Messiah) "Kientibakuri," (the Devil) and "seripigari" (sorcerer/witch doctor). Nevertheless, *The Storyteller* is worth the time that elapses as we are captured by its mysterious, exotic, and thought-provoking laissez-faire undertones.

—Richard Dueñez

Booknotes

Tales with Morals — Mario Vargas Llosa, libertarianism's favorite Latin American, takes us on a journey in his latest novel, *The Storyteller* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1989, 246 pp., \$17.95)—commencing in Lima, then moving on to the Amazon jungle of Peru where the Machiguenga Indians are woven a theology and ethos by "El Hablador" (The Storyteller).

"The Storyteller" is Saul Zuratas, a red-headed, half-Jewish, brilliant Peruvian underground ethnologist. But his really outstanding feature is not his scholastic accomplishments or bright red hair, but his birthmark, an enlarged port wine stain covering the right side of his face. His nickname is thus "Mascarita" (Mask Face).

Saul's closest friend during the academic years he spent in Lima before his secretive, self-imposed exile to Machiguenga country is an unnamed fellow ethnology student who serves as the novel's supporting character and narrator. The narrator is intrigued by Saul's consciousness—a consciousness that struggles with not only his own "misfittedness," but the misfittedness of Amazonia's indigenous people and exploitation by every outsider from missionaries and "viracochas" (rural developers) to anthropologists.

As Saul engrosses himself in the souls of the Machiguengas, he must confront a seemingly shocking Machiguenga law of the jungle toward their own misfits—their birth-defected newborns, whom they throw into the river to drown.

Although the Machiguengas shroud the reason for their infanticide with mythology, Saul unravels it through his role as an adopted Machiguenga "hablador," a mysterious form of oracle unique to the Machiguenga communities.

Saul evaluates both his own morality and that of the Machiguengas by "storytelling" a Machiguengan version of a genesis and a messianic ontology. Saul tries to distinguish the justification, if any, for the infanticide practiced by the animal kingdom from that of remote, primitive, indigenous society, neither of which has the means of properly caring for severely deformed and handicapped infants. It is a question of utilitarianism versus natural rights.

The introduction to the book describes Saul as "one of the most moving and extraordinary people Vargas Llosa has ever created." I would add that *The Storyteller* is probably one of the most cleverly-written works of the (I hope) next president of Peru, who has arranged the narrative to alternate between chapters using Saul's nameless friend (the narrator) as Saul's storyteller, and chapters using Saul as the Machiguengas' storyteller.

Although I have not yet been able to find a copy of the original Spanish version (*El Hablador*), Helen Lake appears to have done a competent job of translating the work into English, perhaps even over-Anglicizing it a little when, for example, Saul repeatedly refers to his anonymous confidant as "pal" instead of "amigo."

Saul's storytelling is also somewhat

Liberalism as the Mirror of Modernity

— In a scant 106 pages, John Gray provides, in *Liberalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986, \$25.00hc, \$9.95sc), one of the best introductions to the classical liberal movement. It is written chiefly from a philosophical perspective; even its first section, devoted to the history of the movement, concentrates on the work of philosophical theorists. But it never gets boring or arcane (which is, I am told, the besetting sin of philosophy). Though it covers a lot of territory, I will restrict my comments to two areas that are of special interest to me.

1. Gray's discussion of Christianity's influence on the development of liberal thought is right on target, and deserves careful consideration by those libertarians who like to make claims either for or against the Christian influence on their tradition. Few other areas of intellectual history are as prone to distortion at the hands of people who care more for rhetoric than for history and truth.

2. Gray makes an argument about the "minimum state" that every serious libertarian theorist should address: he purports to demonstrate that minarchism is "indefensible and, indeed, only partly coherent" (77). He makes a very good case, but, alas, his argument is crippled by a lack of real consideration of "free-market" anarchism; aside from his discussion of Nozick, anarchist ideas are *not mentioned* in his account, and never once does he suggest that anarchism became, in essence, a culmination of classical liberal ideology. In my judgment, this omission amounts to a distortion.

Still, the book is important. Gray believes that liberalism is the most modern of political ideologies. No other ideology so directly confronts—and so eagerly accommodates—the dominant aspects of modern life: the rise of the "loose individual," the decline of religion, and the dangerous spectre of catastrophic war. His paean to the great liberal writers of

the past is admirable and correct: "in the works of the great classical liberal thinkers . . . we have the most profound reflective response to the dangers and opportunities of the modern age" (93).

—Timothy W. Virkkala

Tongues of Men and Computers

— Once in a blue moon a book comes along that gives me a long term ecstatic brain-wallow. Hofstadter's *Gödel, Escher, Bach* was one, Rothbard's *For a New Liberty* was another, and now there is James Cooke Brown's *Loglan 1: A Logical Language* (Gainesville, Fla.: The Loglan Institute, 1989, 559 pp., \$21.50).

Do we all remember the throwaway line in *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress* about Manuel using the programming language Loglan? Heinlein didn't make it up. Loglan is a real language, the first principles of which were conceived in 1955 by social psychologist and board-game inventor James Cooke Brown. His primary goal was to test the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis that the range of human thought is limited by the structure of language. This is big stuff in linguistics. In simplistic layman's terms, if your language lacks a future tense, it's hard to think in terms of the future. And if the tense/mood/aspect structure of English verbs were more flexible, we'd find it a lot easier to think in Einsteinian non-simultaneous terms.

So Brown set out to devise a language without limits.

Don't, by the way, confuse this with Esperanto. I learned Esperanto as a boy, and I'm now in the process of learning Loglan, so I know whereof I speak. Zamenhof, the creator of Esperanto, had a totally different goal in mind. His purpose was to devise a language that

would be easy to learn for just about everybody, so that it could serve as everybody's second language, and therefore a worldwide *lingua franca*. In order to do that, he regularized the spelling and grammar, and set up a flexible word-derivation system whereby one could acquire a large vocabulary in a short time. In all of this he was pretty successful, but that was as far as he went.

All artificial languages that have been invented since Esperanto's debut in 1887 (and there are hundreds of them) have gone the same route of regularization, and that's what they all mean when they speak of themselves as "logical."

Loglan is logical in that sense, but also in a much deeper sense. An example is how Loglan handles the awkward-seeming symbolic logic that we learn in school. It seems awkward because English handles such things clumsily and we're used to it. There are four basic connectives between ideas in any logic system:

1. Conjunction: I am wise and human. The "and" signifies that I must be both wise and human for the statement to be true. Call statement "I am wise" "W" and statement "I am human" "H." Then for the double statement to be true, W and H must both be true. In Loglan: *Mi sadji e humni*.

2. Alternation: I am wise or human, or both (sometimes stated "I am wise and/or human"). For the double statement to be true, either W or H must be true, or maybe both of them. In Loglan: *Mi sadji a humni*.

3. Equivalence: I am wise if and only if human. For the double statement to be true, both W and H must be true, or both must be false. The double statement is not true if only one of them is true. In Loglan: *Mi sadji o humni*.

4. Independence: I am wise whether I am human or not. For the double statement to be true, only W must be true. The truth of H does not matter. In Loglan: *Mi sadji u humni*.

If you think about it, these are indeed the basic four ways of connecting statements in anybody's logic. But note how clumsy the

English constructions are. You can't express simple logical concepts in a simple way in English. Of course, English has the disadvantage of having developed before logic did. With Loglan it's the reverse. So, the simplest possible logical connections are expressed in Loglan with the simplest possible words: e, a, o, u.

On the other hand, you have what seems like a simple connective concept in English: I am human if I am wise. Just an "if." Should be easily reducible to a logical set of truth-conditions, but it's not. What it breaks down to is this—this statement as a whole is true if both W and H are true, or if W is false and H is true, or if both W and H are false. In short, it's equivalent to saying: I am not wise and/or I am human. Damned difficult to see in English, but easy in Loglan, because that's how they say it: *Mi sadji noa humni* (the "noa" is a combination of "no," which negates the first element, and the "a," meaning and/or.)

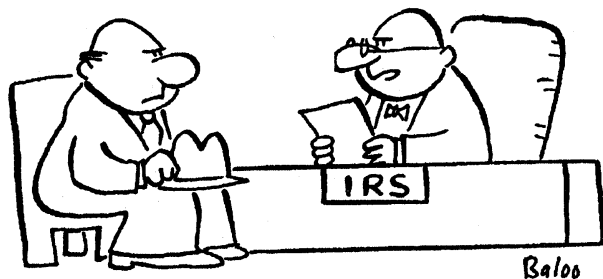
The whole language is like that. Learning grammar for most languages is like learning theology. This is the way it's done and never mind why—there are things men were not meant to know. But not so in Loglan. In spots, learning the grammar is challenging, but only because you're also learning about logic and thinking. And the lagniappe to all this is that the incorporation of symbolic-logic principles and the attendant non-ambiguity makes Loglan a prime candidate to be both a human and a cybernetic language.

The word-derivation system is also intriguing. Words from the eight biggest languages—from English down to Japanese—are combined and whichever word is found to be the most recognizable to the largest number of people is the word picked for inclusion in Loglan. A good example is the word *djano* (pronounced ja-no) which is derived from a combination of the Hindi jan, the Chinese j-dao, and the English know. All of these mean "know," and so does the Loglan.

Loglan has attracted the attention of philosophers (Quine at Harvard, in particular), logicians, computer scientists, anthropologists, science-fiction writers, and (of course) linguists.

And since we in the libertarian movement aspire to think logically, and would like it a lot if other people would give it a try, I commend Loglan and all its implications to your attention. At most, a solution to human irrationality, and at the very least, a terrific mind-game.

—Rex F. May



"If you say, 'What is this, Russia?' one more time, Mr Mulholland, I'm sending you to Alaska!"

From Central Europe, with Perspicacity

— The great danger of intellectual life is parochialism; fish must travel in schools, but thinkers should explore foreign waters. Modern libertarians, it often seems, have too narrow a range of philosophical reading. Even when they dare brave the main stream of modern philosophy, they generally dip in only to prepare a condemnatory tract. Pragmatism, positivism, linguistic analysis, existentialism—these are mostly foreign elements in the community of libertarian scholars, and anathema to most libertarian intellectuals and ideologues. And *phenomenology* is simply beyond the pale.

But it isn't, really. Phenomenologists have an ambitious program: phenomenology is the attempt to turn common experience into the ground of all philosophy and science *without adding any presuppositions* to this experience, just by categorizing the recurring forms and content of consciousness. Though it is all the rage on the European continent, it has several interesting ties to the modern libertarian movement (which is most prominent in the English-speaking world). For instance, the Austrian School of Economics grew out of the same philosophical environment as did the precursors of the phenomenological movement (such as Brentano, Dilthey, Meinong, and Ehrenfels), and has many parallel interests and methods. Alfred Schütz, the man who met Ludwig von Mises at the American shore, was one of the most astute developers of Edmund Husserl's method. And today, several young neo-Austrians are exploring something called "hermeneutics," which is an offshoot of the philosophy.

Libertarians should approach the twenty-seventh volume of the *Analecta Husserliana*, titled *Man Within His Life-World* (Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1989, 835 pp., \$187), with these thoughts in mind. Expertly edited by Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, and devoted to "Contributions to Phenomenology by Scholars from East-Central Europe," this hefty volume contains numerous essays exploring the phenomenological approach to social theory, aesthetics, semiotics and ethics. Coming from behind the iron curtain, these essays provide perspectives of the phenomenological movement rather different from what are usually shown in the West.

Though *Man Within His Life-World*

provides a number of instructive looks at the hermeneutic wing of the movement, it is the discussions of ethics that are most interesting. Disagreements among libertarians over the subjective and objective conceptions of value are causing much confusion in the realm of ethics. Though none of the authors approach the subject as I do (that is, correctly!), their discussions are astute, and suggest that a middle ground can be reached. Indeed, Dumitru Ghise insists that "*value is objective and subjective at the same time*. Without a relation between an *axiological object* (material or ideal) which, through its qualities—existing objectively, independent of and outside the consciousness of the one who perceives them—answers human requirements, aspirations, and wishes and a *subject* . . . one cannot conceive of either the genesis or the establishment of some value. . . . There is no break between existence and value, and no overlapping either, but an intersection of a dialectical type, a conjunction . . ." ("Man's Existence in the Realm of Values," p. 263).

Though one of the lessons to be learned from the contributions of Ghise and others may be that the gulf between

objectivists and subjectivists can be bridged, it is also worth noting that his essay—and almost all the essays in this volume—repudiate epistemological subjectivism, which some Austrian economists have charged is the inherent danger of the "hermeneutics" of the younger Austrian scholars.

The most astounding thing about this book, however, is its style. Every essay I have read (no, I haven't read all thirty-nine, yet!) is eminently accessible. This is saying a lot, for phenomenology has a well-deserved reputation for opacity. In part this is due to the aims of the philosophy, which are ambitious. Another reason for opacity is simply the perverse currents of academic tradition, currents that also buffet English and American philosophy. The editor and translators of this volume deserve unreserved praise.

For serious students of philosophy, the *Analecta Husserliana* are well-worth perusing. Indeed, if the reader can stand the occasional obligatory quotation from Karl Marx (the essays are from Central and East Europe, after all), this particular volume might even prove *pleasurable*.

—TWV

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Personal

Gay libertarian man, 29, is interested in contacting other gay libertarian men. Nonsmokers only. Occupant, 4 Bayside Village Place #307, San Francisco, CA 94107.

Stephen Cox, "Isolating the Error of Isolationism," *continued from page 19*

accounts for the Soviet Union's failure, in the postwar world, to extend its sway beyond Czechoslovakia? A nagging memory of the deals that Stalin made with Roosevelt? A subconscious awareness of its own mortal illness and eventual death? Or an acute realization of the dangers of a general war with NATO forces occupying positions in the heart of Europe?

Only wishful thinking about life in some other world will justify the view that "just-let-them-destroy-themselves" is the right prescription for all foreign ills. Such wishful thinking was not in practice among certain hard-headed founders of the libertarian tradition. As Robert S. Leiken recently observed in an essay in the *LA Times*, John Stuart Mill maintained that "The doctrine of non-intervention, to be a legitimate principle of morality, must be accepted by all governments. The despots must consent to be bound by it as well as the free States. Unless they do, the profession of it by free countries comes but to this misera-

ble issue, that the wrong side may help the wrong, but the right must not help the right."

Isabel Paterson, who in *The God of the Machine* (1943) brilliantly adumbrated the tyranny-cannot-forever-support-itself argument so often rehearsed by later libertarians, claimed with perfect truth that "If freedom were extinguished everywhere in the world, the whole high energy production system must break down and cease to function. No despotism can maintain independently and indefinitely a machine economy or a mechanized army. But"—and this is an important But—"until the batteries are completely exhausted, a despotism can do enormous damage."

The purpose of a prudent intervention is to keep damage from spreading to new countries and to shorten its duration in countries already afflicted. This Finland could not do; this the United States and its allies have helped to do, though at enormous and often unnecessary cost. It is the job of libertarians to try to reduce

the material and spiritual cost involved in such efforts—to oppose needless military expenditure, to denounce real waste of life, to educate people to the abominable nature of a militarized society. But it is not the job of libertarians to suggest that *domestic* tyranny is the only danger.

To detect the lack of verisimilitude in the depictions of twentieth-century events produced by creedal isolationism, one need not be employed by Lockheed, the Council on Foreign Relations, or the U.S. embassy in Managua; and one need not be a believer of the lie that American taxpayers and conscripts should be willing to "pay any price, bear any burden" to project their country's power abroad. One need only be prepared to look at history in a way that is not wholly bound by creedal thinking, however high-minded. Unfortunately, a libertarian movement that is bound by creedal isolationism will have little chance of serving liberty, because its creed will be preached to a nearly empty church. □

George H. Smith, "Scholarship as Leechcraft," *continued from page 38*

So how is it that the welfare-intellectual has so much spare time on his hands? He receives a full-time salary, so doesn't that suggest that he has a full-time job? No, the "job" is more like welfare, so this fortunate intellectual has plenty of time to kill—leisure made possible by the businessman's taxes. If the welfare-intellectual really wishes to promote the values of the businessman, why doesn't he do so with the businessman's tax money? Why should the businessman pay again?

To those businessmen who are fond of folksy, down-to-earth wisdom, I ask: Have you ever heard the saying, "Don't let the same dog bite you twice?"

Meanwhile, as the businessman recovers from the second bite, the market intellectual is scraping together next month's rent.

There is a tragic personal side to all this. The libertarian intellectuals who began in the Sixties (when there was little money available to anyone) were fired by enthusiasm and dedication alone. They didn't get credentials, either because they were uninterested in entering those bastions of welfare known as uni-

versities, or because they couldn't stomach the stifling, repressive atmosphere of graduate schools. Nevertheless, they wrote article after article, hammering out the theoretical details that most libertarians now take for granted.

As libertarians became respectable—thanks in large measure to the efforts of market-intellectuals—money became available from private institutions. Market-intellectuals took heart. Now, finally, they could make a decent living from their labor. But this didn't happen. Instead, the money went to welfare-intellectuals moonlighting in their spare time, or to those future welfare recipients known as graduate students. Indeed, a graduate student could receive more money in one year than a market-intellectual had gotten in ten. The market-intellectuals—those who had labored long and hard for something they believed in—were left to twist in the wind. And twist most of them did, as they struggled to make ends meet, and as they watched a new breed of welfare-intellectual rake in libertarian money.

To add insult to injury, libertarian money began pouring into the hands of

welfare-intellectuals who were not even libertarians, or anything close. I once attended a conference on education sponsored by a free-market foundation. There were only a few libertarians in the bunch; the rest were establishment educators and administrators. On those rare occasions when a libertarian got a word in edgewise, the establishment clique listened condescendingly and then returned to talking among themselves about the pressing need for higher taxes.

The money invested in that useless conference could have supported a market-intellectual for many months. Instead, a dozen anti-libertarians returned home after two days of chatting, fat libertarian checks in hand. They must have laughed all the way to the bank.

No libertarian foundation to help market-intellectuals has been established or seriously considered. Every year thousands of libertarian dollars disappear down the establishment rathole while brilliant and dedicated market-intellectuals go begging. Is this any way to run a movement? □

Notes on Contributors

"Baloo" is the *nom de plume* of Rex F. May, whose cartoons appear in *The Wall Street Journal* and other periodicals.

R. W. Bradford is editor of *Liberty*.

Stephen Cox, a senior editor of *Liberty*, is Associate Professor of Literature, University of California, San Diego.

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Karl Hess, a senior editor of *Liberty*, is also the editor of *Libertarian Party News*. His most recent book is *Capitalism for Kids*.

John Hospers is editor of *The Monist* and author of numerous articles and several works of modern philosophy, including *An Introduction to Philosophical Analysis*, which has just recently been published in its third edition.

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Terra Incognita

Tokyo

Advance in the science of public relations, as reported on "Today's Japan," on *NHK-TV*:

The Japanese Public Employment Security Commission has renamed itself, "Hello, Work!"

U.S. A.

Note to princesses in search of princes, as reported in the authoritative *National Enquirer*:

Because the skin of certain toads contains a chemical substance believed to cause a "high" when eaten, it is now a felony in the United States to lick toads. A drug enforcement agent who asked not to be named said that he didn't know of anyone arrested yet for toad licking, but he added, "It is in the same category of illegal drugs as heroin and LSD. It's a felony to possess it and a felony to use the drug."

Benin

Linguistic progress in West Africa, as reported by *The Wall Street Journal*:

Benin is in step with events in Eastern Europe. On Dec. 8, the government of Benin issued an official proclamation: "From now on Marxism-Leninism is no longer the official ideology . . . Consequently, the use of the term 'comrade' is no longer mandatory."

Washington, D.C.

The value of psychiatric research for the safety of public servants, as demonstrated in a dispatch in the *Detroit News*:

Park Deitz, a California psychiatrist, has concluded a study of 200 "inappropriate" letters to members of Congress. The study concluded that more than 80% of writers of "inappropriate" letters were male, more than 95% identify themselves, and that "about 90%" are mentally ill. The study cost taxpayers \$400,000, or about \$2,000 per "inappropriate" letter.

Islamabad, Pakistan

The protection of traditional family values in Pakistan, as reported by the *Associated Press*:

"Rape victims in Pakistan seldom bring charges against their attackers, out of fear of being accused of willingly having illicit sex, which is punishable by stoning to death.

"To disprove the charge, a woman needs to find four men to testify that she was sexually assaulted, or get the rapist to confess. A woman's testimony, even the victim's, doesn't count."

River Rouge, Mich.

Evidence for the adage, "Black jacks don't crack skulls, people crack skulls," as reported in a dispatch in the *Detroit News*:

Officers Arthur Welch and Dwight Black were suspended after the former cracked the skull of the latter with a blackjack when they disagreed about who should staff the command desk while their supervisor was at lunch.

Olympia, Wash.

Innovative idea in the control of AIDS, the nation's #1 public health concern, from a proposed law under consideration by the Washington State Legislature, as reported by the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*:

An AIDS-control measure before the legislature would outlaw sexual intercourse and "heavy petting" by individuals less than 18 years of age.

Crystal Falls, Mich.

The beneficial effects of citizen involvement in the War on Drugs, from a dispatch from the *Detroit Free Press*:

Volunteer drug undercover agent Wendy Stanek described her first big bust: "It was a piece of cake, in and out and just like buying groceries. One of the guys I busted was my lifelong friend. He came to me and I said, 'Oh my God, I don't want to hear that.'" But she turned him in anyway.

Mrs Stanek was inspired to become an undercover agent by the "drug-related" death of her son in an automobile accident, in which a marijuana pipe was found in the toe of the shoe of one of the passengers.

U. S. A.

Interesting observation on the track record of Soviet communism, from Nobel-laureate Paul Samuelson, in his widely-used undergraduate economics textbook, *Economics*:

"What counts is results, and there can be no doubt that the Soviet planning system has been a powerful engine for economic growth."

London

"Out with the old and in with the new," as reported by the *London Sunday Times*:

Britishers who wanted to dance on New Year's Eve were prohibited by the Sunday Observance Law of 1780, which prohibits dancing in commercial establishments on the Sabbath, unless the establishment is a museum, botanical garden, aquarium or zoo. John Roberts, secretary of the Lord's Day Observance Society, which policed the celebrations, commented: "Sunday, whether it is New Year's Eve or not, should be set aside for worship and rest."

Pontiac, Mich.

Evidence that justice is not blind in the Wolverine State, as reported in the *Detroit News*:

Brent Nelson, who wore four gold chains, a gold charm and six gold rings at his court appearance, was sentenced to two years probation and six month's of electronic tethering to his home for the crime of lying about his identity to a merchant. Judge David Breck explained the the unusually stiff sentence: "It offended me, wearing all that jewelry."

Anderson, S.C.

Privatization of law enforcement in America's South, as reported in the *Chicago Tribune*:

"Need Cash? Turn in a dope dealer." That's the message on billboards going up in Anderson. "I want people to realize that they can make some really good money, depending on how much they cooperate," added Sheriff Gene Taylor. He promised to pay bonuses to informants who agree to testify in court.

The United Nations

Why drug legalization won't work, according to Francisco Ramos-Galino, director of the UN Division of Narcotic Drugs, as reported by *Vienna Radio Service*:

"The State, the United Nations, and Society—everyone—would simply shift the responsibility to *individuals*."

(Readers are encouraged to forward newspaper clippings or other documents for publication in *Terra Incognita*.)

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