

Liberty

"More Liberty begets desire of more." — John Dryden

The Two Libertarianisms *by Ethan O. Waters*

The ACLU: Suspicious Principles, Salutary Effects *by William P. Moulton*

Nicaragua: A Front Line Report *by Gary Alexander*

Ayn Rand: Still Controversial After All These Years *review essays by*

David M. Brown and David Ramsay Steele

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Dentinger Doodle Dandy

Congratulations for publishing John Dentinger's essay decrying the conservative leanings of many libertarians ("Strange Bedfellows," *Liberty*, March 1988). It not only makes a point that needs to be listened to, but does so with wit and style. While I am supporting Ron Paul's candidacy, I find it distressing that his performance so far will do little to draw women, gays, peace advocates, or civil libertarians from outside the party. Economic issues must be our movement's drumbeat, but let's not forget the melody. Amidst the background noises of theocracy and nuclear Armageddon, and the shrill piping of anti-drug and anti-sex crusaders, Peace and Civil Liberties is an election-year tune America could be dancing to.

Scott Semans
Seattle, Wash.

Academic Irresponsibility

I would like to express concern with a few of Murray Rothbard's remarks in the seminar on the "Crash of '87" (*Liberty*, March 1988). There is a real insensitivity displayed on his part when he uses terms such as "a beautiful thing to see" when predicting an economic collapse and "a lovely thing" when foreseeing "a smashing defeat" for the Republicans this November. This might not be worth mentioning were it not for the fact that it is a part of a long pattern of such statements. I recall Rothbard's glee when the South Vietnamese government collapsed in 1975, at which time he used similar terms of celebration.

What bothers me is that these remarks are academic in the worst sense of the term. They are divorced from the actual meaning of the events being described, and yanked so totally out of context as to become irresponsible. After all, the collapse of South Vietnam was caused by an invasion by communist North Vietnam, not by a libertarian revolt against the state. Similarly, a GOP defeat this year would, in the real world, simply mean Michael Dukakis or some other left-liberal as President with a compliant Democratic congress. Is this really something libertarians should worry for?

The left is much better and more ex-

perienced at such evasions and context-dropping. They are good at saying such things as "the elimination of a socially regressive pattern of ownership and production," instead of "mass murder." Let's leave such linguistic crimes to them.

Michael Townshend
Chicago, Ill.

Un-Reasonable Purism

The only nagging bitch I have about an otherwise enjoyable issue (*Liberty*, March 1988) is that *Reason* magazine is again pointed out as the hopelessly heretical ex-libertarian scum they supposedly are. And this bothers me.

Reason's contribution to a *laissez-faire* environment over the years has been invaluable. And now, when the "purists" don't represent a big enough market to keep the magazine afloat, they scream about back-stabbing because the magazine is attempting to broaden its subscription base by appealing to libertarians and conservatives. Sorry, but I can't dredge up much sympathy.

In fact, I feel that *Reason* may have a much broader social impact by adopting the strategy they have. Publications still exist that are not tainted with the cancer of compromise, but to me, getting a hard core Op-Ed piece in *The Wall Street Journal*, with a readership of 3 million, or *Reason*, which might some day reach 500,000 fans, is a numerical superiority that could result in real progress. When the alternative seems to be pounding on doors for ballot access, I'll take the publishing industry, warts and all...

D. R. Blackmon
Etiwanda, Cal.

Leaving the Choir

I'm leaving the libertarian movement. That may shock some people. You may as well know Mike Holmes' review of my *Free Market Yellow Pages* ("Libertarianism," *Liberty*, Dec. 1987) was the proverbial straw.

During my 3 years in California, I published two issues of the *Free Market Yellow Pages*, produced 6 conferences, 5 half hour tv shows, organized supper clubs and other social events, and participated in numerous other libertarian activities. I'm finally convinced I've "only

been preaching to the choir" (with the implied criticism that I shouldn't have been doing so).

I moved to California because of its large libertarian population. I was seeking the appreciation from "family" my own family denied me *because of my libertarian activism* in Florida. One of my biggest disappointments in life was the realization that libertarians enjoy tearing down others just like the average statist. But what is it about libertarians that take such glee in *provoking* disharmony instead of harmony? I wouldn't have minded Holmes' review so much if it had been balanced with at least a few suggestions for improvement. I'm tired of being criticized by armchair libertarians (who I ignore) and dumped on by those who should know better (which I take personally).

... Am I really leaving the libertarian movement? And miss all this fun?

Dagny Sharon
Orange County, Calif.

Positive Rights

In "Samaritanism: Good and Bad," (*Liberty*, Dec. 1987) Walter Block wrote, "In the libertarian view, there are no positive responsibilities incumbent upon the moral agent apart from those he takes upon himself, through contractual agreement." This is not accurate. Yes, the distinction he noted between good and bad Samaritanism is not only valid, it is critical to the understanding of libertarianism. But there are positive responsibilities that are not necessarily contractual in origin; for example, compensation, restitution, and stepping on the brakes to avoid hitting another car.

The parent-child relationship does not arise out of contract, yet providing for one's own dependent children is also a positive responsibility. Given the way he has argued elsewhere, Block would respond: Feeding one's own starving children is, like giving charity, optional; parents who choose not to are, at worse, bad Samaritans.

This is simply not so, for we are responsible to others for the consequences of our voluntary actions which we have imposed, or threaten to impose, upon them without their consent. We can have positive obligations to protect from harm anyone we endanger without his or her consent—even though no aggression may have yet taken place.

No aggression is committed by caus-

→ continued on page 6

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More Letters

ing children to be. Nevertheless, parents owe their children care and protection because dependent children are in their parents' power because of the parents' voluntary actions. If they get harmed because their parents have intentionally or negligently abandoned them, the parents have caused the harm; i.e., have initiated force. Because we have the obligation never to initiate force, we can have positive obligations to others for this reason alone.

Doris Gordon
Wheaton, Md.

Kudos

The question brought up by Waters was the reason I first subscribed, so keep this debate going! Now I am renewing because of Dentinger's essay ("Strange Bedfellow's," *Liberty*, March 1988)—it was great! He could have said much more, maybe he will . . . In order for me to get my usual dose of anti-state civil rights stories I have had to find them in *Penthouse* and *Playboy*. I certainly do not get much in *Reason*! (What's the difference between *National Review* and *Reason*? Answer: One step to the Right!)

Treg D. Loyden
Tempe, Ariz.

Can You Spell Ultrapedantic?

I write to advise you of the correct spelling of *luftmensch*, which is not a German word at all, but a Yiddish one.

The word *luftmensch* is a very common Yiddish word that refers to someone with no visible income, one who seems literally to draw his sustenance from the air. Unlike other Yiddish words (such as *Tinnef* and *Ganeff*), it is not in current German usage, nor does it appear in the Grimms' *Wörterbuch*, the OED of German, and I doubt that any German who is not familiar with Yiddish has even heard it. Thinking *luftmensch* is a German word is, of course, an honest mistake, since Yiddish started out as a variety of German. Since the Middle Ages, however, Yiddish has gone its own way, has had its own literary tradition, and is customarily written in the Hebrew alphabet. This brings up the point of spelling, or transliteration. There is a standard system, but for nonscholarly purposes the system used by Leo Rosten in *The Joys of Yiddish* and *Hooray for Yiddish!* is just fine.

If the "l-word" were German, it would have to be spelled *Luftmensch*, with capital "L" and NO diaresis; it is, after all, *Lufthansa* and not *Lüfthansa*. In any case, the spelling "*luftmensch*" is wrong and should not be used.

Watch your spelling of foreign words. Liberals can be ultrapedantic. Let's not give them any reason to snort at us, especially when we have lots of reasons to snort at them.

Norman R. Spencer
Champaign, Ill.

Quit Rents, By George!

For a long time I have clashed with many of my libertarian friends over my view that one cannot own land and natural resources in the same way that one owns other kinds of property. I have tended to see the basic logic of Thomas Paine's position that a tax or "social rent" on land might possibly be legitimate.

Ethan O. Waters in "Libertarians, Moralism and Absurdity" (*Liberty*, March 1988) has given me the best ammunition for my beleaguered position that I have yet discovered. Mr Waters takes for granted in his essay the commonly received notion of land rights—i.e., that a mystical concept called "titles" (which is transferable at will) confers rights over land. From this premise he has developed a logically compelling scenario in which libertarians could be cornered into choosing between defending the oppressive practices of a vicious dictatorship or renouncing non-aggression.

The only escape I see from this dilemma is to abandon the wrong-headed notion of property rights upon which Waters' argument rests.

If everybody in a country voluntarily signed over to government their property rights to the air over their land, would that give the government the right to prohibit breathing by undesirables? The blue sky above (and the earth below) are not owned in the same way as is a hammer you bought at Sears. But that does not mean that the concept of property is in itself inapplicable to air or land: industrial polluters do not have a right to make adjacent neighborhoods uninhabitable by fouling the atmosphere—and feudal lords (or small landowners) do not have a right to look around and lay claim to chunks of the planet in perpetuity just by taking out "title." Those who disagree may want to back up their position by giving up their houses to the

nearest Indian and going back to the Old World.

Exactly what property rights are legitimate with respect to our biosphere, and exactly how they function, is too complex a subject for a simple letter. But such rights definitely consist in more than a claim—or quitclaim—registered with some governmental authority by somebody's great grandpa. The non-aggression axiom is saved! but, alas! at the cost of the rights of land speculators to exercise eminent domain over God.

Michael Lee
Salt Lake City, Utah

Constitution of Some Authority

I was glad to read Sheldon Richman's critique of the Bork nomination to the Supreme Court ("The Majority vs The Majoritarian," *Liberty*, March 1988), for the turmoil in the media was so slanted as to be useless for evaluation. Richman illuminated with chilling clarity Bork's essential rejection of the 9th Amendment. I can only hope that Richman is correct in thinking that this event has stimulated/will stimulate greater public consciousness of the Constitution and its meaning.

As an interesting reflection on this meaning, Richman brings up the perennial anarchist question, "On whom is the Constitution binding?" I don't know why they continue to frame the question, in view of the fact that an answer is established within the Constitution itself, contrary to the "authority" of Lysander Spooner. (See Art. II, Sect. 1, para. 7 and the entirety of Article VI.)

Simply put, the Constitution is binding on *all* holders of legislative, executive, or judicial office in federal or state capacity, on the strength of mandatory affirmation by each individual officeholder. Or, in other words, the Constitution is the supreme law of the land binding on the *actions of government*.

Thus, we come to the crucial problem of our time: the public has grown so ignorant of the nature of the Constitution that it has come to accept as normal a rogue government whose officers operate in an extra-Constitutional manner . . . at all levels. We seem to have lost (or are in dire danger of losing) the concept of a government of laws, not of men. I think we can all agree that a restoration of the Constitution would be infinitely preferable to the festering fascism surrounding us.

Michael J. Dunn
Auburn, Wash.

Essay

The Two Libertarianisms

by Ethan O. Waters

There are two varieties of libertarian theory current today. The difference between the two libertarianisms lies in their reason for advocating liberty. The libertarian moralist advocates liberty because he believes liberty is the condition that results from men acting under the moral law of nonaggression. The libertarian consequentialist advocates liberty because he believes liberty is the optimal arrangement for human society, a way of life under which human beings thrive.¹

In this essay I will explore further the relationships between these two libertarianisms. It is my belief that although these two approaches to liberty have different philosophical roots, they are actually quite compatible; indeed, they co-exist in the psyches of most libertarians.

Libertarian Moralism and Consequentialism

Libertarian moralism is typified by Ayn Rand: "There is only *one* fundamental right (all the others are its consequences or corollaries): a man's right to his own life. Life is a process of self-sustaining and self-generated action; the right to life means the right to engage in self-sustaining and self-generated action—which means: the freedom to take all the actions required by the nature of a rational being for the support, the furtherance, the fulfillment and the enjoyment of his own life."²

To the moralist, recognition of others' property is inherent to recognition of their right to life: "The right to life is the source of all rights—and the right to property its only implementation. Without property rights, no other rights are possible. Since man has to sustain his life by his own effort, the man who has no right to the product of his effort has no means to sustain his life," Rand wrote.³

The leading advocate of this moralistic theory of liberty today is Murray Rothbard, whose defense of natural rights in *For a New Liberty* seems almost to be cribbed from Rand: "the nature of man is such that each individual person must, in order to act, choose his own ends and employ his own means in order to attain them . . . Since men can think, feel, evaluate, and act only as individuals, it becomes vitally necessary for each man's survival and prosperity that he be free to learn, choose, develop his faculties, and act upon his knowledge of value. This is the necessary path of human nature; to interfere with and cripple this process by using violence goes profoundly against what is necessary by man's nature for his life and prosperity. Violent interference with a man's learning and choices is therefore profoundly 'antihuman'; it violates the natural law of man's needs."⁴

Ludwig von Mises, on the other hand, typifies the consequentialist libertarianism. For him, liberty is valued because it enables men to optimize their wealth and happiness. He described his political philosophy thus: "Liberalism is a doctrine directed entirely towards the conduct of men in this world. In the last analysis, it has nothing else in view than the advancement of their outward, material welfare."⁵

Property is just as important to Mises as it is to Rand. "The program of liberalism . . . if condensed to a single word, would have to read: *property*."⁶

But Mises values property for its consequences: "In seeking to demonstrate the social function and necessity of private ownership of the means of production and of the concomitant inequality in the distribution of income and wealth, we are at the same time providing proof of the moral justification of private property."⁷

For the consequentialist, property is good because it maximizes human well being. For the moralist, property is good because it is in harmony with fundamental moral principles.

Nonsense on Stilts?

As developed by Rand, Rothbard and others, moralistic libertarianism claims to provide its adherents with a logically compelling, objective moral theory. This morality has implications for all men in their social behavior.

Libertarian moralism can be understood as the belief that it is always wrong to initiate the use of physical force against another human being. When Rand first states this moral imperative she writes it in ALL CAPITAL letters, and for good reason. Rothbard concurs, "The central axiom of the libertarian creed is nonaggression against anyone's person or property."⁸ It is this "nonaggression axiom" that implies the positions that distinguish libertarian moralism from other political beliefs. The universal opposition to taxes, to conscription, and ultimately to the institution of the state is the immediate consequence of this proposition.

The ultimate meaning of the non-

aggression axiom is: All men have an obligation to refrain from using force or fraud against the life or property of another. This obligation cannot have its origin in contract, for the validity of contract depends on the validity of the nonaggression axiom itself. From what else can an obligation be derived?

For the libertarian moralist, the nonaggression axiom is a consequence of the position that men possess inalienable rights. It was Rand who first formulated the nonaggression axiom, and she formulated it as a corollary to the right to life: "A right cannot be violated except by physical force. One man cannot deprive another of his life, nor enslave him, nor forbid him to pursue his happiness, except by using force against him . . . Therefore we can draw a clear-cut division between the rights of one man and those of another. It is an objective decision—not subject to differences of opinion, nor to majority decision, nor to the arbitrary decree of society. NO MAN HAS THE RIGHT TO INITIATE THE USE OF PHYSICAL FORCE AGAINST ANOTHER MAN."⁹

The first problem with this theory is the derivation of the nonaggression axiom from the notion of inalienable rights. Even if one grants that nature or objective morality confers certain inalienable rights on all men, one can argue that the nonaggression axiom does not follow. For example, nature or objective morality could sanction two individuals to try to possess the same piece of property, in which case one or the other would either have to initiate the use of force or simply abandon the property whose pursuit has been sanctioned.

In response to this sort of thinking, the libertarian moralist has generally proposed that objective morality can never sanction such a conflict because, as Rand argues, "there are no conflicts of interest among rational men."¹⁰ This universal has not satisfied the critics, who have spent considerable energy contriving hypothetical situations, some realistic, others fanciful, in which the interests of rational men conflict. These critics generally argue along the following lines: "Suppose you are on a ship which sinks. You and another rational man come upon a lifeboat, which only has room for one person.

Both of you are on the verge of exhaustion. Is this not a genuine conflict of interest between rational men?"

Rand's response to the better contrived of these situations is that they are emergencies, and that normal rules do not apply, and men should act appropriately for the emergency: "An emergency is an unchosen, unexpected event, limited in time, that creates conditions under which human survival is impossible . . . In an emergency situation, men's primary goal is to combat the disaster, escape the danger and restore normal conditions . . . By 'normal' conditions, I mean *metaphysically* normal, normal in the nature of things, and appropriate to human existence . . . The fact is that we do not live in lifeboats—and that a lifeboat is not the place on which to base one's metaphysics."¹¹

The problem with this definition is that it destroys the universality of the nonaggression axiom: if one dispenses with observing the nonaggression axiom in any situation in which conditions "appropriate to human existence" do not prevail, as a practical matter one may dispense with it whenever one doesn't like his circumstances. One should always obey the nonaggression axiom, it is argued, except in emergencies. What is to keep an individual

To the question, "When is it legitimate to initiate the use of force against others?" the libertarian moralist answers, "Never! Unless, of course, you really need to initiate force."

from declaring a personal state of emergency whenever it seems expeditious to initiate the use of force?

But more importantly, in granting the validity of certain emergencies (however limited and tightly defined) the libertarian moralists have given up on the universality of the nonaggression axiom. To the question, "When is it legitimate to initiate the use of force against others?" the libertarian moralist answers, "Never! Unless, of course, you really need to initiate force . . ."

In challenging the sensibleness and universality of the nonaggression axiom, the critics are not getting to the heart of the matter. For practically every libertarian moralist, the nonaggression

axiom is the logical consequence of the inalienable rights of the individual. Whether or not the nonaggression axiom can be formulated in a reasonable and universal way is clearly secondary to the issue of whether inalienable rights exist; if the concept of inalienable rights is not rational, the formulation and defense of the nonaggression axiom is an irrelevant intellectual exercise.

Just what are these "natural rights" or "moral rights" upon which the nonaggression axiom is based? Perhaps natural rights can be understood in the same way as legal rights: just as one's legal rights are those rights conferred by law, so natural rights are rights conferred by nature or by objective morality.

At first inspection, there is much to be said for this understanding of rights. The notion of legal rights is widely understood and makes perfect sense. We all speak fluently of legal rights in a variety of contexts: rights to manufacture a certain item, rights to use exclusively a certain piece of property, rights to produce a certain play, etc. Legal rights are the products of declarations by the state that it will defend an individual's taking certain actions against other individuals who might interfere. When one says, "I have a legal right to do this," one means "the state will defend me against anyone's preventing my doing this."

Can we understand natural or moral rights in this same fashion? Perhaps we can understand natural rights to be rights conferred by nature, rather than the state; and "moral rights" to be rights conferred by morality. Just as it is meaningful to say that a trespasser is violating one's legal rights (i.e. is invading the property that the state guarantees one's exclusive control of), so we can argue that the trespasser violates moral law or natural law.

Alas, neither natural rights nor moral rights can be understood by this analogy. When we talk about legal rights we necessarily talk about the ability of the state to enforce them. When we talk about natural or moral right, do we imagine that nature or morality mobilizes some kind of police power to enforce these rights? Of course not. Legal rights are nugatory

unless people enforce them.

In *Textbook of Americanism*, Rand defines a right as "a sanction of independent action." But this definition has a problem. The word sanction is a bit obscure: in some cases sanction is a synonym for "support, encouragement, approval"; in others, sanction is a synonym for "provision of law that secures obedience."¹²

If Rand means sanction in the sense of "support, encouragement, approval," her notion of rights will obviously not result in anything akin to the nonaggression axiom. At most it might imply lack of support, discouragement or disapproval of initiated force—not the prohibition of initiated force.

On the other hand, if Rand means sanction in the sense of "provision securing obedience," her definition has the same problem as have rights understood by legal analogy have: obedience must be secured by an agent. For a sanction to have meaning in this sense, it must be enforced, and this enforcement requires an agent (e.g. the state). Neither nature nor morality is an enforcer.¹³

If natural or moral rights are not to be understood by analogy with legal rights, or as sanctions, then how are they to be understood? What is the "stuff" of rights? What are rights made of?

Some 17 years after publication of her definition of rights as "sanctions" Rand offered another definition. Perhaps she recognized some of the problems of considering rights to be a particular type of sanction. In her essay "Man's Rights" she defines a right as "a moral principle defining and sanctioning a man's freedom of action in a social context." But this definition is hardly any improvement: even when defining rights as a particular type of "principle," Rand cannot avoid the concept of sanction (and all its concomitant problems).¹⁴

In view of the murkiness of the concept of inalienable rights, it is not surprising that supporting arguments often depend on outright obfuscation rather than logic. Rand's argument in *Atlas Shrugged* is typical:

"Rights are conditions of existence required by man's nature for his proper survival. If man is to live on earth, it is *right* for him to

use his mind, it is *right* to act on his own free judgment, it is *right* to work for his values and to keep the product of his work. If life on this earth is his purpose, he has a *right* to live as a rational being: nature forbids him the irrational. Any group, any gang, any nation that attempt to negate man's rights is *wrong*, which means: is evil, which means: is anti-life."¹⁵

This may be powerful as rhetoric, but it

Perhaps libertarians are aware of the theoretical weakness of their position and are anxious to hide it from the light of day.

is no argument at all. By repeating the term *right* five times in italics and once otherwise, Rand may create a parallel in some reader's minds. But certainly *right* as a synonym for "morally proper" and *right* as a synonym for "sanction" are two different terms, and she has failed to demonstrate how any objective moral sanction against initiation of force follows from the moral propriety of taking certain actions.

The concept of rights makes perfect sense in a legal context. But legal rights are always alienable: they are enjoyed as a product of the state, and cease to exist when the state defining them ceases to exist. In the end, inalienable rights theory fails because it appears entirely chimerical.

Somehow, the various arguments for absolute natural rights seem to most people to be a bit like the actions of a three-card-monte artist: it is impressive to watch, and you seem to be following it, but you know the artist is a skilled manipulator and in the end you aren't really surprised that you have been fooled.

It is this chimerical nature of natural rights theory that causes it to lead to the absurd consequences that I mentioned at the beginning of this essay. If natural rights theory makes no sense at its foundation, should we be surprised that it leads to silly consequences? If the concept of inalienable rights is nonsense, then the consequences are indeed, to use Bentham's delightful phrase, nonsense on stilts.

In my previous essays in *Liberty* ¹⁶ I

demonstrated that the libertarian moralist must logically defend political institutions and laws that he knows are destructive to human prosperity, liberty and life provided that such institutions and laws have their origin in contract, and that libertarian moralism ultimately implies either that (a) a good person cannot use any government services whatsoever, including such benign services as the post office or government roads; or that (b) a good

person can use virtually any government service whatever, including the use of the police to take the property of his neighbors for his own benefit.

These are, of course, patently absurd propositions. The fact that these patently absurd propositions are the logical conse-

quences of libertarian moralist theory is not an argument against that theory. If the theory is objectively true, then the fault lies in our notion of absurdity. Any valid attack on it must challenge its logical antecedents: either the propositions that underlie it or the specific argument by which it is defended.

I have discussed some of the problems that exist in the development of that theory, but I have not systematically attacked it. Such an attack is beyond the scope of this paper, for it would be required to address each variation of the derivation of the moralistic libertarian position. I have, however, indicated the problems exhibited by most formulations of the moralistic libertarian position.

The Road to Slavery?

Consequentialist libertarianism provides its adherents with a cohesive, rational approach to political theory. As developed by its leading theorists (e.g. Mises, Hayek, Donisthorpe) it provides the intellectual tools to understand human action. Because the consequentialist libertarian has developed a systematic way to study human interaction, he can make public policy recommendations, even in the context of the real world.

The curious thing about libertarian consequentialism is that even libertarian moralists grant the truth of its arguments. Indeed, one of the leading libertarian moralists, Murray Rothbard, by training an economist, is happy to defend the truth of the core belief of

consequentialist libertarianism—that a free society is far more productive and conducive to human happiness than an unfree society.

The moralist critics take two lines of attack against consequentialism. On a theoretical level, they argue that consequentialism is wrong because it denies the propriety of an objective moral theory, inalienable rights and the universal prohibition against aggression. The other moralist criticism of the consequentialist position has nothing to do with its truth or falsity. It is that consequentialism fails to inspire moral fervor. This criticism grows out of its ability and willingness to make policy recommendations within the context of a

non-libertarian society; somehow this requires that the consequentialist abandon the moral high ground. "The utilitarian . . . will rarely adopt a principle as an absolute and consistent yardstick to apply to the varied concrete situations of the real world," writes Murray Rothbard. "To say that a utilitarian cannot be 'trusted' to maintain libertarian principle in every specific application may sound harsh, but it puts the case fairly."¹⁷

Even if one concedes that consequentialism's theory is rational, logical, and scientifically sound, it does a poor job of advancing liberty. "Who in hell would join a radical minority movement, and commit him- or herself for life to social obloquy and a marginal existence, for the sake of 20% more bathtubs or 15% more candy bars? Who will man the barricades, either physically or spiritually, for more peanuts or Pepsi?" asks Murray Rothbard. "Look at all the radical or revolutionary movements of the 20th century, whether they be Communist or fascist or Khomeiniite. Did they struggle and move mountains for a few more goods and services, for what we used to call 'bathtub economics'? Hell no, they moved mountains and made history out of a deep moral passion and would not be denied. What moves men and women and changes history is ideology, moral values, deep beliefs and principles."¹⁸ This criticism is clearly *ad hominem*: it portrays the consequentialist as coldly making calculations in exclusively material terms, assuming that consequentialists do not ever consider valuing anything outside

the money nexus.

Is Synthesis Possible?

Given the theoretical divergences between libertarian moralists and consequentialists, it is surprising that the two groups get along so well. Most radical political or religious groups fragment over matters of far less importance to their central beliefs. Given the fervor of many advocates of both moralism and consequentialism, one might expect the libertarian move-

It is not surprising that arguments for rights often depend on outright obfuscation rather than logic.

ment to be split into irreconcilably bitter, hostile factions over the matter.

In actual fact, aside from an occasional argument in an academic journal or other obscure place, the issue is hardly noticeable. What accounts for this peculiar phenomenon?

One might be tempted to think that the absence of acrimony over the issue is the product of people's rationality and good manners. But libertarians have long shown a willingness to argue over points far less significant. Battles over the presidential nominations of the Libertarian Party, for example, often move members to tears; the nomination of David Bergland in 1984, touched off a mass exodus of many longtime party activists, including most of those who had managed the 1980 presidential campaign.

A more cynical hypothesis is that libertarians are aware of the theoretical weakness of their position and are anxious to hide it from the light of day. There may be some truth to this, I suppose, though most libertarians' willingness to consider and accept so radical and unpopular a view as libertarianism indicates that they are open to peculiar ideas and willing to stand on their own judgment.

There is, I believe, a better explanation for the remarkable lack of controversy on the issue. I am convinced that most libertarians have little interest in the controversy because they find elements of both beliefs within themselves.

This hypothesis first occurred to me almost a decade ago after a conversation with a friend, a fairly prominent li-

bertarian. On a lark, I asked him if he would consent to my interviewing him about his beliefs as though I was a non-libertarian journalist. He consented and the game was on.

"Why do you advocate freedom?" I asked.

"Because men have moral rights to life, liberty and property," he replied. He was confident, almost brash.

As I questioned him further, leading him along the same critical lines of thought about rights theory that I summarized above, his demeanor gradually changed. His air of certainty receded; he grew defensive. After an hour or so, he admitted with a little exasperation that he was quite aware of

the problems in rights theory. In fact, he went on, he did not believe that rights theory was defensible. "It's just that I think everyone should be free. The world would be a far better place if all men were free."

He had admitted that rights theory is wrong, and that consequentialism is right. What an extraordinary turn of events, I thought. My friend advocated moralism only because he thought it more rigorous, more respectable, more defensible. His advocacy of libertarianism was moralistic; his defense of libertarianism was consequentialist. Perhaps other advocates of rights are actually closet consequentialists.

A few days later, I was involved in a similar discussion with another natural rights advocate. But he could see where my line of thinking was leading. He cut me short and took the lead. Before long he was asking me questions like the following: Would you violate another man's rights if doing so had little risk and would likely mean substantial wealth for you?

I shall not bore you with details . . . Suffice it to say that within a few minutes I admitted I would not steal under such circumstances, and that in an important sense, I was a libertarian because libertarianism seemed morally right, though I could not rigorously defend that morality.

It occurred to me that I wasn't much different from my moralist friend. Just as he had a moralist ideological offense but a consequentialist defense, I had a consequentialist offense, but could not dispense with my

own moral sensibilities. Both of us had psychologically synthesized our beliefs.

We agreed that the consequentialist position made good sense and neither of us could dispense with our own moral views. He considered the moralist element of his thinking to be more acceptable to others, so his offense was moralist, but deep in his secret heart, he realized that the moralist argument was lacking.

I remain convinced that the moralism of inalienable rights and the nonaggression axiom is just plain wrong: its derivation is fallacious and

its logical consequences sometimes silly. But I have not dispensed with morality altogether.

So I suggest before we conclude that the two libertarianisms are mutually exclusive that we reflect on their psychological compatibility and consider the possibility of philosophical synthesis. Perhaps we should consider the two libertarianisms to be two aspects of the same belief, or different emphases of the same basic belief. If libertarianism is a proper theory there is no reason to doubt that it is both morally right and eminently practical. □

Endnotes

1 There is also another school of libertarian thought. Certain libertarians, S.E. Parker, for example, defend liberty on strictly personal, egoist grounds. For them liberty is good because they want it. This rather idiosyncratic school of thought is relatively uninfluential within the libertarian movement at present.

2 Ayn Rand, *The Virtue of Selfishness* (New York: New American Library, 1964), p. 93. It is impossible to understand the modern libertarian movement without coming to grips with Ayn Rand. Indeed, the development of libertarianism in many ways can be understood as the development of the implications of the nonaggression axiom and reactions of other thinkers to it.

Although Rand eschewed the radical libertarian theory that the nonaggression axiom implied, those who admired her thinking did not. If no man or group of men has the right to initiate force, how can a group of men form a government, that is, form an institution that claims a monopoly on the use of force within a given area? This sort of thinking was apparent to Rand's followers, and led to the birth of the modern libertarian movement.

3 Ibid., p. 94.

4 Murray N. Rothbard, *For a New Liberty* (New York: Macmillan, 1973), p. 26. Rothbard acknowledges his agreement with Rand and his debt to her. In *The Passion of Ayn Rand* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1986) Barbara Branden writes: "... Rothbard has stated that he 'is in agreement basically with all her philosophy,' and that it was she who convinced him of the theory of natural rights which his books uphold." (p. 413)

5 Ludwig von Mises, *Liberalism* (Princeton, N.J.: D. Van Nostrand & Co., 1962), p. 4.

It should be noted that Mises used the term "liberalism" as it was understood everywhere in the 19th Century and is generally understood in Europe today: as a belief in a maximum individual freedom and

a minimal state. The term "libertarianism" in its present meaning did not come into common use until the 1960s. Cf "The Decline of Classical Liberalism: 1860-1940" by Stephen Davies, *Humane Studies Review*, 5 (Winter 1987), 1-2, 15-19.

6 *Liberalism*, p. 26.

7 Ibid., p. 33.

8 Murray N. Rothbard, *For a New Liberty* (New York: Macmillan, 1973), p. 23.

9 Ayn Rand, "The Textbook of Americanism," (New York: Nathaniel Branden Institute (n.d.), p. 6. Reprinted from *The Vigil*, 1946, a publication of The Motion Picture Alliance for the Preservation of American Ideals, of Beverly Hills, Calif.

10 Rand, *The Virtue of Selfishness*, p. 56.

11 Ibid., p. 47.

12 So, at least, says *Webster's New World Dictionary*.

13 In actual fact, the enforcement need not take the form of punishment by aggressive violence. In primitive hunter gatherer cultures, the enforcement frequently takes some form of ostracism. The threat of ostracism is usually effective only in a small society where survival and well being are dependent on remaining in good standing of that society. The use of ostracism as punishment in a highly civilized society is rarely effective except within families and cults, where conditions parallel primitive society in many ways.

14 Rand, *The Virtue of Selfishness*, p. 93.

15 Ayn Rand, *Atlas Shrugged* (New York: Random House, 1957), p. 1061.

16 Ethan O. Waters, "Reflections on the Apostasy of Robert Nozick," *Liberty* (Oct. 1987), pp. 14; and "Libertarianism, Moralism and Absurdity," *Liberty* (March 1988), pp. 14-15.

17 Rothbard, *For a New Liberty*, p. 24.

18 Murray N. Rothbard, "On the Duty of Natural Outlaws to Shut Up," *New Libertarian*, No. 13 (April 1985), pp. 10-11.

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AHA! WE PUT TOMATOES IN OUR DEFINITION BUT THE CHEF LEFT THEM OUT OF HIS PIZZA?

RIGHT, BUT DON'T CALL IT "PIZZA", CALL IT PRODUCT, NO TOMATOES, NO PIZZA.

BUT WEREN'T CUSTOMERS SWARMING TO HIS RESTAURANT FOR YEARS TO GET HIS PIZZA, I MEAN PRODUCT?

YES, BUT WHEN HE STARTED PACKAGING IT AND SELLING IT TO SUPERMARKETS HE LABELED IT "FROZEN PIZZA".

THEN IT WAS U.S.D.A. TO THE RESCUE?

RIGHT!

DAYS LIKE THIS RE-KINDLE MY SENSE OF PURPOSE.

GOOD NEWS FOR THE AIDS PREVENTION PROGRAM! I'VE COME UP WITH AN IDEA FOR A NEW PRODUCT TO MAKE SAFE SEX MORE ATTRACTIVE.

SAFE SEX? R.R. WANTS US TO STRESS ABSTINENCE. SO, WHAT'S THE NEW PRODUCT?

FLAVORED CONDOMS.

BUREAU OF NON-CANDIDATE SEX

WHAT FLAVOR?

BANANA.

"PUT IT ON BEFORE YOU GET IT ON"

TELL THEM. DON'T SHOW THEM

WHAT DID R.R. THINK OF OUR BROCHURE ON AIDS PROTECTION?

HE SAID IT'S TOO GRAPHIC.

DID YOU TELL R.R. A BROCHURE NEEDS TO BE GRAPHIC?

YES. I TOLD HIM ONE PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS.

WHAT DID HE SAY?

HE SAID, "GREAT. FOR EVERY 1,000 WORDS WE PUT IN WE CAN ELIMINATE A PICTURE."

BACK TO THE DRAW... UH... I MEAN TO THE WORD PROCESSOR.

"BOSS" "BUBBLES" "BONG"

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BURONic EPISODES

A speculation on the source of headlines by Bob Ortin

REAGAN THE NEO-VICTORIAN

R.R. SAYS HE WANTS AN AIDS BROCHURE THAT STRESSES ABSTINENCE AND ISN'T TOO GRAPHIC, BUT WILL BE EFFECTIVE.

SOUNDS LIKE R.R. WANTS AN OMELET WITHOUT BREAKING ANY EGGS.

ACTUALLY, HE'D PREFER NOT TO HAVE AN OMELET AT ALL.

WHAT'S R.R. AFRAID OF?

THE 20TH CENTURY.

HE'D BETTER RELISH THAT FEAR WHILE HE CAN. THE 21ST CENTURY IS ALMOST HERE.

DON'T THINK HE DOESN'T FEEL THE PRESSURE.

Liberty in Nicaragua: An Impossible Dream?

by Gary Alexander

As I edit this Central American travel journal for the umpteenth time, I see from this morning's paper that violence has flared up again in Nicaragua, while riots in Haiti have disrupted the first elections held there in 30 years. Meanwhile, violence from the "right wing death squads" in El Salvador seems to be on the rise again, and terrible stories are coming out of Panama, Chile, Argentina, Cuba and several other Latin American nations. Meanwhile, in my own back yard, the Cuban Marielitos, who are held captive in federal prisons in Atlanta and Oakwood, Louisiana, are rioting to defend their most viable option—to stay in a squalid prison rather than to be shipped back to Castro's Cuba.

In other words, the situation in Latin America is normal: all fouled up. As I fold up this morning's paper and turn my attention back to this Nicaraguan journal, I have to ask myself, "Am I crazy trying to support the cause of freedom in Nicaragua? Will Latin America ever grow out of this violent pre-revolutionary stage and enjoy even the simplest rudiments of liberty—or is freedom another impossible dream in the Third World?"

While nobody knows the answer to the first question, I now know from direct experience that liberty is no longer an impossible dream for everyone in Latin America. Hundreds of thousands of them are voting with their feet for freedom. Asia had its "boat people," but Latin America has millions of "feet people" who don't face the watery barrier holding back most Asians, or even Cubans and Haitians, for that matter. As a result, we're seeing a mass exodus of Latins into North America, and the stream will escalate unless we help provide those Latin American nations with a fighting chance for liberty.

While libertarians in North America dot the "i" or cross the "t" on their own personal crusades for liberty, the majority of the rest of the world hasn't even mastered the capital letter "L" of Liberty yet—Life itself. For the bulk of Latin America, and most of the rest of the Third World, our noble crusade toward minarchy or anarchy must seem light years away from their elemental struggle simply to stay alive in order to make those choices. Their goal is to avoid bullets, torture or starvation.

Like many libertarians, I have been a closet crusader over the years. I fought the draft in the 1960s and taxes in the 1970s and 1980s. I hope to live to fight another day, but the focus of freedom has definitely shifted for me since I took a trip to the Soviet Union in 1986, and then to Nicaragua and Honduras last fall. During the last week of the 90-day "Arias Peace Plan," I visited those war weary nations, along with fellow libertarian activist Jim Blanchard and several others. The highlight of our trip was witnessing the last refugee border crossing at Las Manos, Honduras, on October 31, 1987. (As far as we could tell, we were the only Americans who filmed that historic final border crossing.) The Honduras portion of our trip was by far the most moving, and that's what I'll concentrate on in this article. First, we paid a visit to a clandestine Contra hospital camp, then to the border, and finally we saw where many runaway Nicaraguans end up—

at a squalid United Nations-run refugee camp. Meet the "Feet People" of Nicaragua . . .

Freedom Feet

On Friday, October 30, 1987, we visited a hidden hospital camp treating wounded Contras, situated midway between Tegucigalpa and Danli, in southeast Honduras. These young soldiers were recovering from the loss of their various extremities in battle. The "Freedom Feet" camp is sponsored by Dr. Alton Ochsner's Caribbean Commission (see Appendix 1). For just a few hundred dollars of tax-deductible donations, the Freedom Feet can send volunteer American doctors to Honduras to fit prosthetic devices to young legs and arms blown away by Sandinista land mines, bullet wounds and Soviet-made Hind-24 attack helicopters. Amazingly, we found these boys (mostly teenagers) were walking, even running, within a few minutes of strapping on their new legs. There was tremendous *esprit de corps* among the 100 young men there, plus a handful of women fighters, like Delores . . .

Delores, 20, has been fighting with the Contras since she was 14, usually working as a courier.* About 18 months ago, she was trying to save a platoon commander who had been hit badly in a skirmish. However, the two of them

* *Noms de guerre* are frequently used, to protect the identity of those who may return to Nicaragua).

were surrounded and cut down by heavy automatic fire. They were "executed" point blank by Sandinistas firing a machine gun blast into their bodies. Left for dead, Delores had 11 bullet wounds in her body—in both her legs, both arms and shoulders and over the periphery of her torso, but no mortal wounds. The commander died, but Delores was rescued the next day by her comrades. It took her 12 days to get out to a makeshift hospital. Now she is recovering, but still limps badly. To help give her the best care possible, some private U.S. citizens are paying for her trip to New Orleans to receive volunteer medical care in Baton Rouge. (This is but one example of how private sector aid can help. More on that later.)

Another Contra is called "Dr. Don," about 30, a tall, strong medical doctor, fluent in both Spanish and English. He did our translating at the Freedom Feet base camp. He is one of only 19 medical doctors serving with the Contras in Nicaragua. He grew up in Bluefields, on the Atlantic coast, was educated in Mexico and has been fighting deep inside Nicaragua with the Contras for over four years. At the time we met him, he had been fighting and healing broken bodies for so long that he needed a 20-day tour of "rest and recreation" but despite being on a tour of R & R, he was working eight hour days helping the volunteer doctors fit patients for prostheses, and translating between patient and doctor.

Dr. Don was discouraged about the United States' on again, off again support of the Contras. Don told us he desperately needs basic medical supplies from the outside world: especially antibiotics, surgical equipment and pain killers. We asked, "What do you think's going to happen if aid fails to come?" At first he couldn't answer. A few minutes later he said, "Big question. If the money keeps coming in at a pittance, we'll never win the war. The Sandinistas are getting \$600 million a year from the Soviets, but we get \$27 million one year, nothing the next, then \$3.2 million. With you people, it's yes, then no, then yes, then no. We need friends we can trust."

Then we met "Coyote," 14, who had stepped on a land mine a few months back and was being fitted with an artificial leg at the Freedom Feet facility when we met him. By now, he was chomping at the bit to get back inside Nicaragua. He had been fighting for three and half years, since turning age 11. Asked why he was going back, he said his family was there—oppressed and fighting for freedom. He said he was fighting for freedom of speech, freedom to move about without Sandinista control, and freedom of religion. (How many 14-year-olds do you know who can talk that intelligently about freedom, much less fight for it?) Dr. Don said some of these young ones are the most dedicated to the Contra cause, and it showed: Little Coyote had the hard glint of a seasoned fighter in his eyes.

We interviewed several more freedom fighters. We saw one boy with both arms blown off, by a rocket launcher, and another with both legs blown off by a land mine, but these

Coyote, who had stepped on a land mine and was being fitted with an artificial leg, was chomping at the bit to get back into Nicaragua. He had been fighting since he turned 11. His family was there—oppressed and fighting for freedom.

boys were uniformly desirous of getting back into Nicaragua. In fact, the doctors couldn't keep some of them down. There's no barbed wire keeping them in. A lot of them walk off into the sunrise, never to be seen again. After all, it gets pretty boring there. While we talked, some of the boys were playing baseball on their artificial legs.

Also present at the Freedom Feet camp were a couple of private American citizens who were considering donating helicopters and other light aircraft to the Contra cause. It struck me as bizarre that the Soviets donated over 50 Hind-24 attack helicopters and 40 Mi-8/17 transport helicopters to the Sandinistas, but the freedom fighters had to ask private American citizens for a single humanitarian helicopter! The "Lady Ellen" helicopter, donated by Ellen Garwood, has evacuated hundreds of wounded freedom fighters, who would normally need to walk two

weeks to find an aid camp. (This is yet another example of successful, though minuscule, private aid at work.)

The Last Great Escape

October 31 marked the sixth and final Saturday exchange of refugees and their families in a narrow, two-kilometer "neutral zone" on each side of the Honduras/Nicaragua border at Las Manos. The previous week, 500 refugees had escaped the confines of the border, and another 1,200 crossed near the Costa Rican border before the border guards fired into the air, and bashed a few heads, in order to try to slow the tide of Nicaraguans pouring out of the socialist worker's paradise there.

As we drove the last 20 miles south of Danli toward the border, there were two military checkpoints—they checked our passports at the first one, and waved us through the second. Then we saw a mile of parked cars leading up to the border. Our guide, a missionary who works primarily among the Miskito Indians for Friends of the Americas, had missionary license plates which got us all the way up to the front, where one coil of barbed wire was all that held back maybe 10,000 Nicaraguans, looking north toward freedom.

As we parked and walked the final yards leading up to the border, we noticed a truck at the side of the road, serving as a radio broadcast base. At first, loudspeakers blared forth some spirited Latin music, but this din was soon replaced by some impassioned speeches about "Libertad." Our translator said this was a remote transmission base for Radio Liberacion, the pro-freedom Contra radio station that reached into all of Nicaragua, except Managua, where it is jammed. Their rhetoric was hard-core libertarian, talking about the "criminales Sandinistas" and inviting people to defect. Jim Blanchard then gave the radio speaker a shirt, which he had prepared for this trip, with the inscription, "Contras Para Libertad." To our delight, the speaker ripped off his other shirt and put on Jim's "Libertad" shirt.

Soon we noticed that there was a non-stop stream of paper scraps being

passed through the crowd to the radio truck to be read over the air. In fact, the Honduran soldiers transmitted most of the messages to the radio truck. A mother climbed up on the radio truck and pleaded in impassioned tones to bring down the Sandinistas, whom she said had killed her one son and then imprisoned the other. The front row of refugees was almost entirely made up of mothers, just like her, no doubt looking for their children, in hopes they would be free to come to see them. Knowing that this rugged outpost was in the midst of a mountain range, far away from any city, we realized that these mothers had to travel two or three days to get up to the front of the line. We found out later that most of these people travelled two days in overcrowded buses to be there that day, and each Saturday.

On this Saturday, 278 Nicaraguans were to escape across the border, at right about the point where we were standing, but that took place about an hour or two after we left. Behind these 278, were thousands more wishing they had the courage to do the same thing. Of course, we've yet to see a mass exodus into a communist or totalitarian regime. On this day, all eyes looked north, toward freedom. Because of the volatility of "Los Encuentros Familiares," the border was only open for four hours, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. We were there only from 11:00 am to noon. Being so close to the border, we weren't very well protected in case there was a surge over the barbed wire, so we got all the pictures and interviews we needed, then made our own bolt toward safety.

As we turned the van around, preparing to go back to Danli, a number of young men begged for a ride back with us. We invited one of them in, who was thankful for the ride even though he had to sit on the floor of the van. The young man, Mario, is a Nicaraguan whose father had been a general in the Somoza Guard; the Sandinistas had murdered him. Mario himself had been in jail 20 times in the last eight years and had resisted conscription into the Army several times, despite death threats and one attempted execution which misfired. (He had a deep wound in his skull, which he

showed us.) The day before he met us, he had witnessed two youths trying to avoid forced conscription in the Sandinista army by running away from their recruiters. The two boys were promptly shot in the back and killed.

Another man we met at the border was Omar Rubio, an Assembly of God pastor. Rubio and several others joined us for lunch in Danli, where we learned his story, documented by Stan Patrick in "Central America: The Cancer Within." Rubio had been arrested in his Assembly of God church in Ocotal in 1983, on charges of fomenting anti-

The United Nations ought to be ashamed of allowing such filthy, disease-breeding conditions. When confronted on this point, the representatives merely said, "It's better than what they come from."

Sandinista propaganda in his church (which he's proud to say is true). He was then tortured brutally—beatings with wooden clubs, breaking three of his ribs, electrical shocks and prods to his genitals and buttocks. Then he was force-fed salt water, which makes the body more sensitive to electrical prods, stripped, laid in water, and then electrical charges were pumped into the water. The Sandinistas then jumped on his face and testicles and shoved a loaded M-16 into his mouth and fired six times. It misfired each time. Then they put the same bullets into another rifle, fired them into the air and the bullets discharged. After that trauma, they put him in prison on bread and water.

After 15 days in prison, the Sandinista guards tied Rubio's hands behind his back, drew his arms over his head on a pulley system, which yanked his arms out of their shoulder sockets. While in that painful position, they bayoneted him in the stomach. Rubio was ready to die by that time, calling out to his God and leaning into the bayonet, accepting death, but suddenly there was no more torture. Rubio was taken to a hospital, from which he eventually escaped over the border. When we caught up with him, he was working with missionaries in Danli, the same people who later that day helped us gain access to the

United Nations refugee center at Jacaleapa . . .

The Refugee Camp . . . and Cemetery

There are presently 16 refugee camps and reception centers in Honduras. The official number of Nicaraguan refugees is about 40,000, including 16,000 Miskitos and 24,000 others. The number is swelling daily and could reach 50,000 officially (and 100,000 in the shadows) by the end of 1987. Conditions at the refugee camps are deplorable. In the United Nations-run camp at Jacaleapa, over 6,600 refugees were cramped into a few acres. The living quarters were made of rough lumber, covering a single 16-foot square room, often housing up to 15 people. The floors were dirt. There was no electricity, no safe water and only 15 or 20 op-

erational latrines. Once these latrines were filled, they were simply boarded over.

During October, approximately one infant per day was dying of diarrhea, as a result of the diseased water, which in turn was a direct result of placing the source for their well water directly downstream from the crude latrines. We visited a cemetery, just across the street from the refugee camp, and we saw a number of small, shallow, relatively new graves, which could be those of the children who were dying across the street. Whether or not this is true, the United Nations ought to be ashamed of allowing such filthy, disease-breeding conditions. When confronted on this point, the representatives merely said, "It's better than what they come from."

In the refugee camp, we saw dozens of children (maybe 50 to 75 of them) swarm around Jim Blanchard and his wheelchair as he made his way around the camp. They didn't want to let go of him, as if this man and his chair were some sort of a lifeline of hope for them. We saw malnourished and infected children near death, but we also saw a lot of those same children smiling and playing. Children are children, even in such a living hell. Hope springs eternal, especially in children.

The Best Hope— Private Business

While in Nicaragua, we spent a morning in the offices of COSEP, which stands for the Consejo Superior de la Empresa Privada, a kind of Chamber of Commerce of Nicaraguan businessmen. Several COSEP leaders have been brutally murdered or imprisoned over the years. In fact, nearly the entire leadership of COSEP was imprisoned for four months in late 1981 and early 1982 for writing a letter to the Ortega brothers protesting their thinly veiled death threats against COSEP leaders. As a result of this, we noted something of a siege mentality among those businessmen who were still brave enough to show allegiance to freedom against such terrible odds.

William Quan, the Vice President of COSEP, was arrested on August 19, 1986, for a traffic violation and hasn't seen freedom since. He spent time in the dreaded "tiger cages" of Tipitapa and has endured unspeakable torture for the crime of making a profit. After being imprisoned, Quan's fleet of trucks was commandeered by the Sandinistas, his bank accounts were seized, and his precious stockpile of gas and diesel was stolen. After all this was accomplished, there needed to be legal justification for it, so Quan was sentenced to 30 years in prison for treason and espionage. Later, all charges of treason and espionage were dropped, but his sentence was only reduced to 22 years. He is 55, so this may be a life sentence.

COSEP's leader is Enrique Bolanos, who also has several brothers in the movement. One of them, Alejandro, has moved to St. Charles, Missouri to open up a Nicaraguan Information Center. He has just finished a biography of William Walker, the first North American invader of this fair land. Another Bolanos brother, Nicholas, spent several hours with us during this trip telling us his story in more detail. Nick owns one of the largest farms in Nicaragua, about 35 miles southeast of Managua, in the cooler coastal mountains. In 1985, the Sandinistas sent in several trucks, with armed soldiers to seize over \$3 million worth of land and equipment. In that first

wave of seizures, the government took eight airplanes, 20 tractors, over 50 trailers and most of his farm implements.

Then, Nick was forced to sell his coffee crop for about one-sixth the world market price, so he took a loss on each sale. Then, in 1987, his cotton gin was confiscated, so he planted 1,000 acres of sorghum instead of cotton. "So far, I haven't been wiped out," he says, "but on a number of occasions they have come to me and wanted me to sell the farm for Cordobas (the hyper-inflated Nicaraguan currency). I said my farm is not for sale. The second time, they even offered me U.S. dollars, but I told them I'm still not selling. I told them, 'I want to live here. I want to work here. If you want to take my farm, go ahead and take it, but I'm not selling it.'"

Amidst all this depressing news, I got the strong feeling of permanence from both the fighting boys and the businessmen. No matter what the fickle U.S. government may do, or not do, the various freedom fighter groups are here to stay. They're in the battle for the duration, and they have an ally far stronger than the Soviet military

Love of freedom is more powerful than any government—freedom is too important to leave to those in the State Department and Congress.

might or the U.S. government. They have a love for freedom, and they have the vast support of the populace of their native Nicaragua. Whether you want to talk about the controversial "U.S.-backed contras" (as the press invariably calls them, whether or not the U.S. supports them) or the more peaceful free market businessmen of Managua, the forces for freedom are always more powerful than the physical force of the tyrant.

Liberty in Latin America? Yes, there's hope. Liberty already exists—as well as could be expected in this statist world—in neighboring Costa Rica, a land which serves as a role model for what Nicaragua could be, without despots like Somoza and the Sandinistas. I've been to Costa Rica twice this year, and stopping through there on the way home from Nicara-

gua and Honduras this time I found the contrast was quite astonishing. Costa Rica, true to its name, is a Rich Coast—but uniquely rich in the midst of dire poverty in the region. As a result of such freedoms, over 20,000 Americans have retired there. One can only hope that the Costa Rican example catches on.

In the meantime, before the flower of freedom truly blooms down south, there are plenty of things we can do to help promote freedom in Central America and around the world. After all, our nation was founded on something like private aid—volunteer soldiers plus foreign financial aid. If it weren't for private citizens of Europe, like the Marquis de Lafayette of France, Baron von Steuben of Prussia or Thaddeus Kosciusko of Poland, the American Revolution might have ended up in a crushing defeat by the British.

What Private Citizens Can Do

It is illegal to conduct foreign policy without a state license—it's illegal to ship guns or other lethal aid. (I'm glad those laws weren't in effect in Europe when Lafayette, von Steuben and Kosciusko came over.) Until some brave civil libertarians test the power of those laws, I imagine it's more practical to talk about humanitarian and financial aid. I feel that the li-

bertarian solution to Central America's war is to support those groups from the private sector which, upon close examination, deserve support. Today, as in the 1770s, it is mainly private American citizens, not the central government, that are providing the most consistent aid to freedom fighters worldwide. Congress can't decide whether or not to support the Contras from one week to the next.

In the private sector, I know of at least a dozen organizations giving private humanitarian aid to the refugees fighting or escaping Afghanistan, Nicaragua, Mozambique, Angola, Cambodia and other areas of brutal Communist occupation. (By the way, I'm not against just the Communists. I'm against any occupying imperialistic police state. It's only that the Soviet Union is the greatest such empire still in existence, and they represent the

source of the bulk of oppression in the world today.)

I hope libertarians become more vocally pro-freedom for the entire world, not just for America. While few libertarians would advocate sending the Marines into Nicaragua, or even sending tax dollars for military aid, there are several peaceful and private options that are immediately available:

- (1) Libertarians could insist that Daniel Ortega remove the entire Soviet military presence from Nicaragua, as Sadat did in Egypt in 1972. This could be added to the Libertarian Party platform. Instead of condemning only U.S. involvement abroad, we should condemn the far more oppressive

and pervasive Soviet involvement around the world.

- (2) Libertarians can send private humanitarian aid to the businessmen of COSEP and the agencies that do the best work in the U.S. (see Appendix 1)—and advise others to support them.
- (3) Those with Spanish language skills can send translated versions of the classic works of liberty into Nicaragua, including works by Hazlitt, Bastiat and von Mises. (A list of existing Spanish translations of libertarian books is available from the Libertarian International, 9308 Farmington, Richmond, Virginia.)

There are other ways to support freedom in the private sector, such as those mentioned earlier in this article. Your help will be deeply appreciated. The Nicaraguan people don't want the Marxists there. They have a good chance to root the rascals out, if we have the courage to help.

Love of freedom is more powerful than any government—our own or the Sandinistas—but freedom is too important to leave to those in the State Department and Congress who have too often shown their disdain for human lives and freedom around the world. If the freedom fighters are the equivalent of our founding fathers—and some of them are—then some free Americans are the equivalent of Lafayette, Steuben and Kosciusko. Maybe you're one of them. □

Appendices

Appendix I

Recommended Humanitarian Organizations and Personal Contacts

Caribbean Commission
c/o Dr. Alton Ochsner
1407 State St.
New Orleans, LA 70118

United States Council for World Freedom
c/o Maj. Gen. (ret.) John K. Singlaub
2621 E. Camelback Road, Suite #145
Phoenix, AZ 85016

COSEP
Partado 5430
Managua, Nicaragua, CA

Nicaraguan Information Center
c/o Dr. Alejandro Bolanos
P.O. Box 607, St. Charles, MO 63302

Friends of the Americas
c/o Woody and Diane Jenkins
912 North Foster Drive
Baton Rouge, LA 70806

Appendix II

A Gallup International Poll, August 7, 1987:

1. Do you think the Sandinistas represent a majority or a minority in Nicaragua?

	<u>Minority</u>	<u>Majority — or no answer</u>
Costa Rica	79%	21%
Honduras	75%	25%
El Salvador	64%	36%
Guatemala	64%	36%

2. Do you think a majority of Nicaraguans support the Contras or the Sandinistas?

	<u>Contras</u>	<u>Sandinistas</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
Honduras	75%	15%	10%
Costa Rica	72%	12%	16%
Guatemala	60%	23%	17%
El Salvador	46%	20%	34%

3. Who treats civilians better in the war zones, Contras or Sandinistas?

	<u>Contras</u>	<u>Sandinistas</u>	<u>No Answer</u>
Honduras	74%	6%	20%
Costa Rica	72%	6%	22%
Guatemala	60%	18%	22%
El Salvador	45%	10%	45%

4. Do you approve or disapprove of U.S. military aid to the Contras?

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>No Answer</u>
Honduras	81%	9%	10%
Costa Rica	70%	21%	9%
El Salvador	69%	23%	8%
Guatemala	68%	28%	4%

Appendix III

An Unofficial Survey:

The Man on the Street in Managua

Public opinion polls are illegal in Nicaragua, but my associate Larry Reed conducted one anyway. Larry talked with dozens of people in gas lines, where 60 to 80 cars routinely line up for gas, many cars being pushed by their drivers. These gas lines are a hotbed of resentment, with drivers talking revolution without even being asked. "Only another revolution will cure this," spitted one. "Tell Americans we love Reagan, we love America."

Continuing Larry's public opinion poll, he met several "Mothers of Political Prisoners" and interviewed them on video. He also went into the mountains around Jinotega, etc., and talked with people who hear the battles at night, quietly rooting for the Contras. He also attended an opposition demonstration in a Managua meeting hall, where free speech got this free: Somebody yelled, "Tell the Sandinistas to go to fucking hell."

Larry visited a grocery store, where everyone had ration cards—limiting them, for instance, to two rolls of toilet paper per month, one pound of butter and one pound of rice per month. Soldiers with guns were stationed at the door, checking each ration card and food basket. The ladies who were shopping were angry about this, blaming the Sandinistas for the shortages, because right across the street, in full view, was the luxury store for the party officials, with no lines and plenty of food, but barred to the public.

Perhaps the most tragic interviews Larry conducted were at the city dump, near the eastern market, where trucks dump garbage each morning, and hundreds of people converge on it like flies, looking for scraps of food. Even by mid-afternoon, when the garbage was mostly picked over, there were several mothers with their children who would put half-eaten fruit in their plastic bag for dinner that night. One mother looked up at Larry and said, "This is what we have come to . . ."

Would you do business with the Nazis?

Et tu, ABA?

by Erika and Henry Mark Holzer

If, 50 years ago, an association of Nazi lawyers had proposed to enter into a "Declaration of Cooperation" with the American Bar Association—mutually pledging to advance the rule of law and work for human rights—the revulsion of most lawyers would have been palpable.

To the "practical" arguments—that open doors are preferable to closed ones, that Nazis can be talked out of their "excesses," that to this end a continuing "dialogue" should exist even as victims of the Nazi regime suffer and perish in Buchenwald and Auschwitz—American lawyers would have protested—loudly—that to sit down with thinly disguised agents of the Third Reich was to sanction that regime. That to shake the hands of its "legal" representatives was to bloody their own. That for lawyers to cooperate with men who had helped destroy the rule of law in their own country was obscene.

Yet the American Bar Association, in a flagrant assault on its own Canons of Professional Responsibility and their professed commitment to individual rights and the rule of law, has entered into such a declaration of cooperation.

Not with the Nazis. With another totalitarian regime whose *substantiated* record of human rights violations—from mass murder to an institutionalized system of slave labor to systematized persecution of dissenters—surpasses in numbers and duration, if not in horror and bloodshed, even the Nazis.

In May 1986, the ABA agreed to sit down with thinly disguised agents of the Soviet secret police. It entered into a "Declaration of Cooperation" with a group that, in brazen parody of the ABA, chose the label "Association of Soviet Lawyers." It pledged to advance the rule

of law with puppet lawyers who, in their own country, take part in rigged trials, uphold censorship, and regard public protests, teaching Hebrew, and attempting to exercise one's right to emigrate, as "crimes" against the state.

Just recently, at its national convention in San Francisco, the ABA defeated a proposal to end its cooperation with the Soviets. The watered-down proposal, aimed at abrogating only "formal" ABA/Soviet dialogue, was voted down, 156 to 32 (out of a total non-attending ABA membership of roughly 340,000).

What did a small but entrenched minority of the ABA achieve by its dubious victory in San Francisco?

It will continue to discuss human rights with KGB functionaries even after hearing firsthand evidence of torture and death in the gulag from dissident psychiatrist Anatoly Koryagin, whose credentials include six years in the camps—four of them spent in solitary isolation and on hunger strikes—and who traveled from Switzerland to deliver an eloquent message and an impassioned appeal, which the ABA chose to ignore.

It will continue its "open dialogue" with a Soviet group that, as Nicholas Daniloff (the American journalist arrested in Moscow last year) pointed out to ABA members, is *not* the ABA's equivalent but was created by the Communist Party's Department of Agitation and Propaganda to promote Soviet foreign policy.

It will go on fraternizing with the legal arm of a regime that slaughtered 50 million of its own people, subjugated Eastern Europe and much of the Far East, and today ravages and depopulates Afganistan while pursuing a *government policy* of blowing off the limbs of children with "toys" that explode.

Most ominous of all, the ABA's irre-

sponsible dabbling in a kind of "legal detente" will cloak a group of pseudo lawyers in a mantle of legitimacy, even as the legal system they represent can boast that it has *never*, in its 70 year history, permitted the rule of law within its own Soviet-dominated borders.

Why should all Americans object? Because the ABA, in the eyes of the world, is this country's most prestigious legal organization—the self-appointed guardian of our liberties.

But the problem obviously doesn't begin and end with the American Bar Association or even with lawyers making unholy alliances with the Soviet Union. Unfortunately, too many American businessmen are—and it seems always have been—only too eager to do business with totalitarian regimes, often donating good-old-Yankee-ingenuity and technological expertise at the precise time when regimes like the Soviet Union are in dire economic straits and need bolstering by the West.

It's happening right now. Experts at analyzing the domestic Soviet scene, such as Russian dissident Vladimir Bukovsky, have been telling us that Gorbachev's vaunted *glasnost* strategy is calculated to buy time while he digs his regime out of critical economic difficulties—with desperately needed Western help, of course—after which this new spirit of detente will revert to the old spirit of confrontation and hostility. And while unprincipled lawyers and businessmen need no encouragement from on high, it must be said that President Reagan's lovefest with Gorbachev and his current revisionism (from "Evil Empire" to "Afganistan? He didn't know the gun was loaded!" in a few short years) have unquestionably encouraged these people to make their deals with all deliberate speed.

The question today's entrepreneurs must ask themselves is: If they wouldn't have sold Eichmann the trucks with which to convey millions of Jews to gas chambers, why would they sell the Soviet Union the equipment for an "Alaskan" pipeline built by slave labor? And if today's lawyers wouldn't have sat with the Nazis on tribunals which sentenced innocent men to concentration camps, why would they sanction the KGB's rigged trials which send innocent men to the Gulag?

The question every American must ask is: Can one give aid and comfort, of whatever kind, to totalitarian regimes without losing one's soul? □

Memoir

I Go to Jail

by Franklin Sanders

It is about 8:30 p.m. on Tuesday, September 1, 1987. I am at home ready to do a bit of work, the children are almost in bed. I hear a car out front. The doorbell rings, I open the door, and two Bartlett city policemen are standing there with a warrant for my arrest. Since I have been in my office in Bartlett all day, it seems curious to me that they would wait until almost 9:00 p.m. to arrest me.

I go out onto the front porch. My wife Susan and three of my children watch through the glass door. One of the policemen says, "Send your children back in—you don't want them to see this."

"Oh, no," I reply, "I do want them to see. I want them to see and remember." I am in shorts, so I ask permission to change into other clothes, which the policeman, now inside, courteously grants. In the bedroom I change and exchange brief words with Susan, then ask for a moment alone with my family. I try to calm down my 4-year-old who is tuning up to cry. My oldest daughter comes into the room. "Have a good time, Daddy." I look at her and smile.

We go back into the other room and I ask if the policemen object to my taking my Bible with me. No problem. We leave and get into their car, headed for the Bartlett city jail.

At the jail I am led back to a room with a desk and a cage built into a corner of the room, complete with a sleeping resident. The policemen are friendly. They want to know why I am there. They get ready to fingerprint me, and I refuse on the basis that fingerprinting is an act of testimony, and a violation of my Fifth Amendment rights. Oh, they tell me, the law says you have to stay here until you give us your fingerprints and sign this card. Since I am alone and they are armed, I cannot keep them from taking my hands and fingerprinting me. I still re-

fuse to sign. Does this mean they will keep me here forever, I ask? They laugh. Will you raise my children, I ask? They guffaw.

Finally they realize I am not going to post bond, since posting bond would at this point sanction my arrest. Through a steel door I am led back to the cells. They take away my glasses and shoes, and frisk me. It's cold as a meat locker. The poor fellow in the cell with me is trying to sleep and shivering under two blankets. He has been arrested for DWI and is very confused, apparently under some sort of medication.

The surroundings are grim: a 10'x10' steel cage with bars across the front and a glaring light bulb in the back behind wire and a pane of glass. There are two steel shelves fixed to the wall that serve as bunks. There is also a stainless steel toilet-basin. I eventually get the jailer, a boy of about 22, to bring me a blanket. Although interrupted frequently by my roommate, who is trying to figure a way out, I settle down to read my Bible.

My name is called: there's a visitor. By now I have lost all sense of time and am half frozen. There are no windows anywhere. The jailer ushers me back outside to the cage, I wait a moment, and my pastor comes in. We talk for a few moments, and I discuss with him how to file a petition for a writ of habeas corpus the next morning. Only much later do I find out that it must have been around midnight or 1:00 a.m. when he came.

How has all this come about? I have lived a long time in peaceful coexistence with the City of Bartlett: I didn't bother them and they didn't bother me. On July 10th I had gotten a letter from one Stephen C. Smith, Director of Finance for the city of Bartlett, informing me that I must get a business license, cost \$18.50, and pay gross receipts tax. This pre-emptory letter demanded I secure the license by July 27th and threatened legal action.

On July 13th I responded with a two page letter in which I demanded to know all the facts and the law that had led Smith to the legal conclusion that I was a "person doing business" and required to have a license.

Mr. Smith's response was another threatening letter demanding that I get a license. He refused to answer the demands for facts and law I made in my letter to him. I answered with another letter informing him that I had no desire to enter into any contract with the city for any privilege, license, or franchise, and that I was only "pursuing the activities which my righteous God has appointed me to pursue." Later I followed this up with another letter pointing out that after careful perusal of the statutes (which I had to dig out myself), I concluded that I was not engaged in any of the activities enumerated therein.

His response on August 3rd was to serve me with a summons to municipal court for August 31st. I decided that I should pay a visit on Mr. Smith so he could see in person that I was not a

wild-eyed madman. I also worked up a jurisdictional challenge explaining my position.

On Wednesday, August 26th my pastor and I went to see Stephen Smith and presented him with a copy of my pleading. I explained to him that I was there in the same spirit of humility that moved my Lord Jesus Christ, and that I did not consider him or the city my enemies, but wanted to be a friend and neighbor to him. He persisted that I must have a license. In the course of the conversation I told him of my concern about the libels spread about me, and he admitted that he had heard these things third hand, and that I had been before a grand jury for writing a threatening letter to an IRS agent. I asked him: If there were any truth to that, would not the grand jury have indicted me? My pastor and I left cordially.

When Monday, August 31st rolled around, court was held without me. Although that day the warrant for my arrest for "failure to appear" was issued, I heard nothing else from the city until the police came to arrest me the night of September 1st.

So there I was in jail, trying to explain to my pastor about a petition for a writ of habeas corpus to get me out. He asked if Susan and the children could come visit. I gritted my teeth. My composure evaporated and tears burned my eyes as I looked at him: "Yes, I want them to see me. I want them to see and remember." He read from his small Bible, we prayed, and then he left. I went back to the meat locker.

It was hard to sleep in the biting cold. Underneath me was a plastic covered mattress; sleeping on it was like sleeping on a baggie. The blanket must have been made from pressed dust bunnies and old string. The lights never went out. My roommate was a world-class snorer, and occasionally my steel-shelf bed thumped and bumped as the inmate on the other side of the steel wall turned on his steel shelf. Whenever I tried to sleep I woke up drenched with sweat from my own body heat coming back from the plastic mattress. If I threw off the blanket I froze in my own sweat. Now and then there was an

enormous explosion as one of the other inmates flushed a toilet.

In the morning I awoke to the cheerful voice of the daytime jailer offering a cup of coffee. Gratefully I accepted a styrofoam cup of the hot brew. Here was some warmth at least. A short time later the jailer announced one of the two meals of the day (10 a.m. and 4 p.m.), and brought out pancakes with sausage. Apparently they were using *imitation*, imitation maple syrup, and the smell brought a wrenching wave to my innards. I tried to plunge the plastic spoon into the pancakes, but it only bent double. Must be my imagination. Again I tried. Finally I sawed through the pancake and ate a bite. Then another. Then gave up. Maybe fasting was a better idea.

It must have been almost noon when my pastor showed up for another visit. He grimly explained that since 8 that morning he had been trying to get a judge downtown to sign my petition for habeas corpus, but one flatly refused and the only other one was leaving town that day and wouldn't be holding court again until the following Tuesday. I felt sorrier for his evident suffering than I did for myself.

On September 3rd, Thursday, I am awakened by the loud voice of the city attorney, talking to the inmates next door. Apparently court was to be held at 6:30 a.m. Finally he gets to me. He has a copy of the pleading I filed last

One tall black looks over at me, takes in my Bible, and says with a laugh, "Hey, main man, wat they got you in here fo', street preachin'?" I must look a bit strange in my blue oxford cloth button-down shirt and khaki trousers, my great white plastic bag tucked safely at my feet.

Wednesday. "Do you have a lawyer? You're way off base with all this." The psy war has started, I thought. There is to be a bond hearing, he informs me. Later the jailer comes in and takes me through the outer room into the courtroom. This is a large, brightly-lit room. I am dazed, only half awake. I am trying to hold on for that habeas corpus hearing, but I want out, out, OUT! I see Susan, an angel dressed in white. I ask to talk to her to learn what my counselor has advised. She has notes which say I am to stand on the higher jurisdiction

of the court where the habeas corpus petition has been filed. I am *very* confused. The prosecutor is ranting about how I refused to appear and he wants a bond set "that will get my attention" and the judge is demanding that I agree to appear in court. The prosecutor demands a high bond, I am trying to talk sensibly but failing completely, trying to hold on to the need for waiting for that hearing. Finally the judge sets bond at \$750 (the fine for my supposed offense is \$5 to \$50—I have really hit some nerves somewhere), I am trying to tell him that it's not that I refuse to appear, but that I can't without granting him jurisdiction and must wait for the habeas corpus hearing. Hustled off to my cell, I flash one last glance at Susan.

Back in the cell, I try to read but can't concentrate. I am falling, falling, falling, and there is no one to catch me. I will be here forever. Three sheet steel walls and bars and no sunlight, no sunlight! What if there's a fire in here? God has forgotten me. He won't hear my prayers. Perhaps he can't hear. Perhaps I am wrong and he won't help. Am I right? That prosecutor said I was hopelessly off base. I could be outside and free instead of here, here for a principle that few people know, let alone support.

Then words came to me from a letter a friend had written just a few days before. We were praying about your situation, she wrote, and afterwards

these words were pressed on me: "Having done all, to stand." With all my might, I clung to those words. "Stand." I had done all I could do.

The jailer brings supper: a beanie-weenie TV dinner. I decline and request the package Susan had

left: gum and fruit rollups. I am not hungry—a fast from God—take away my hunger, Lord!—but oh! how clean that chewing gum tastes! Finally that afternoon I get a shower, and after my repeated entreaties the jailer eases off on the air conditioning and it becomes bearably warm. My pastor comes and brings new books. Susan can't come because her car broke down. I read and read and read. Sleep comes.

Awake again. Somewhere I can hear a crow cawing. Thank you, Lord! What a winsome, beautiful sound, full

of sunlight and pine trees! The jailer comes in with hot coffee and lets me call Susan.

"Sanders. Get your things. You're going downtown to the Shelby County Jail." My heart stops. It's about 11:30 a.m. now. I am handcuffed but hold onto my Bible. My things are loaded into a big white plastic bag and we go outside to a car. In the back, I sit blinking in the sunshine.

At the Shelby County "Justice" complex (the "glamour slammer") we drive to a below-ground garage door. At long last it opens and we enter something like a garage, but with a bullet-proof teller's window at one side. I am thumbprinted and pointed to a door that says

"male." It opens onto a 12'x12' room with bars on one side. There is a control center across the hall, behind more bulletproof glass. For a long time I stand reading my Bible. Finally the bars open from the hall and a small, thin black man enters. He nods wordlessly and sits down on the floor amidst the cigarette butts. I reach for my gum, pitch him half a piece, take a half for myself. The outside door opens. Another black in handcuffs and leg-irons steps in, the door stays open. He is surly and untalkative. I read. The bars open again: one white and 3 more blacks enter. The bars close. This last crowd is all about the size of my own 6' 3", but rather stouter. One tall black looks over at me, takes in my Bible, and says with a laugh, "Hey, main man, wat they got you in here fo', street preachin'?" I must look a bit strange in my blue oxford cloth button-down shirt and khaki trousers, my great white plastic bag tucked safely at my feet and my big zippered black Bible in my hands. "No, I'm in here because I don't worship the same gods as the City of Bartlett." This quells all conversation in embarrassed confusion, and the crowd falls to begging cigarettes off each other. The outside door opens, and in slouches what looks like a walking corpse with a cane, upwards of 70. Beneath his open shirt I can see 4 plastic cups stuck to his chest, the kind they use for EKGs. He is a mite tipsy. He surveys me from head to foot, and then to the world in general announces with conviction "Man, when they

gotcha, they gotcha." I am afraid he will die on the spot. A jailer walks by the bars, sees me reading, and says without malice, "Now that man's got the right idea—yeah, read that Bible."

The bars open again, I have lost count of the men. Twelve, no 13. The black jailer comes back and begins handing out long clear plastic sacks. A foolish need comes over me to get one of those sacks, like being in the Army

The woman from ID appears and says, "This one is sort of a reject." Without comment the guard leads me across the hall to one of the holding cells, opens the steel door, and ushers me in.

I have arrived: in solitary.

when you're afraid they'll forget to call your name. I catch myself: I'm going to be here a while.

Finally we are called out by twos, put our valuables in the plastic bags (my wedding ring and chewing gum), and are frisked. The guard takes away my Bible. At my protest, he tells me I'll get it back when I get to my cell. Then they put us in another cell, this one 7'x12' with stainless steel benches on either side, and behind a blind wall in the back, a john. The room fills up. There are ten blacks, two whites besides me, and everybody but me is smoking. With no air conditioning in the tiny room, it's about 90 degrees. Relaxing I listen as they swap tales of why they are here.

Down the bench a short, gray-bearded black is loudly protesting his arrest. Dressed in very dirty work clothes and steel toed boots, he looks like the kind of man you want to hire, a man accustomed to hard work. The police arrested him at the scrap metal yard where he works as a welder. He had just bought two giant hamburgers for lunch and a quart of Coke, and the cops wouldn't let him eat it when they arrested him. They ate it, he complains, reasonably it seems to me. They have arrested him for a "strong arm robbery" that occurred while he was in prison serving a sentence for murder. His third, as it happens.

Across the way a jail house lawyer is expounding the law. Attentively I listen; he shows a great deal of experience. The corpse is still yelling for the

jailers, who must be deaf. I change seats again, possible only when someone else vacates one. Next to me is a small black in a baseball cap who looks like a construction worker. He is very depressed. Never before in all his life has he been in jail.

The stories go on and on: non-payment of child support, armed robbery, burglary, failure to appear (that struck a chord!), assault and battery,

public drunkenness, drugs, suspicion of suspicion. The welder had been arrested 23 times.

What idiocy! This is hopeless. The liberal "justice" system will never rehabilitate these people. What has been created here is a whole class like a giant milch cow, to be milked for the

benefit of the courts and lawyers and bailbondsmen and social workers. Whatever the right system is, it *can't* be this! I know there will always be criminals, even a criminal class, but this is insane. What earthly good can all this do?

But have you ever been five days without the sunlight? Five days without even being able to *see* the light of the day? It makes you crazy, insane, ready to do anything. Have you ever spent day after day in a sheet steel room, 6'x9', unable to move out of it? It makes you crazy. What cruelty is there more inhuman and obscene than to lock a man up in a cage?

At last I get to make a phone call. As fast as I can I ring Susan, tell her what has happened, tell her to try to get me out of here and back to Bartlett. This is Friday afternoon before Labor Day, and if something isn't done quickly I am going to stay here until next Tuesday. I call my pastor and urge the same to him. They're doing all they can. With the phone calls I get a plastic bracelet, like a hospital bracelet, with my name and color and booking number on it. Now I am the last four digits of that eight digit booking number, 7057. I go back to my surrealistic cell.

By twos we are called out of the cell for "processing." Across the hall our pictures are taken and forms are filled out. Pointed down a long hall, I head that way. Once around the corner I see the men from my cell sitting on the

floor, waiting for the bars at the end of the hall to open. Through the bars is another glass-enclosed control room. There are more barred doorways to the right and left. I cannot see around the corners, but there is a terrific noise coming from there, like water running and the sound of many voices. I sit down next to the plumber, and we try to make conversation.

A meal cart is rolled through the bars and past us, laden with trays. There is also a great bucket of sandwiches. I am not interested.

A jailer calls my name, hands me a slip of paper and tells me to go back to ID. In ID a black woman asks me if I've ever been arrested before and wants to take my fingerprints. Reasonably, calmly, and graciously I reply, "Before you do that, I want you to know that I claim all my rights at all times and waive none of my rights at any time. This is an act of testimony and I do not choose to waive my Fifth Amendment rights." The clock reads 5:00 p.m. She tells me to call the guard. A young jailer with skin tightly pulled over his face like a pit bull comes up the hall. The woman from ID appears and says, "This one is sort of a reject." Without comment the guard leads me across the hall to one of the holding cells, opens the steel door, and ushers me in.

I have arrived: in solitary.

The cell is not wide enough for me to stretch my arms completely out. I estimate 5-1/2 feet wide. Later I count the cement blocks: 3-3/4 blocks wide, 9-1/2 blocks long, 13 blocks high. On one side is a stainless steel bench, at the end a stainless toilet/basin. The door has a tiny window and a speaking grate. I can see almost nothing of the hall. Outside I can occasionally hear rattling keys and slamming doors. Why do you think they call it the slammer?

I am alone, and strangely it is more oppressive than that crowded cell next door. I hear my name called outside. I yell that I'm in here! I try to get the guards' attention. My name is called again. No one will listen!

Time passes. My name is called again. I try frantically to get attention, but the guards are all deaf. Why won't they look? Finally I fall asleep. I wake up hearing my name again, and the

whole bitter charade plays itself out a third time. There is loud shouting next door and pounding on the wall and other door. Even through the steel door and concrete blocks I can hear the cursing.

When the shift changed at 10:00 p.m., they finally opened my door and put me into the cell next door, the one I had been in before. But now there was a difference to my wondering eyes. Where before it was crowded with 13 men, now there were—23, no, there was another, sleeping up under the bench, make that 24. There were men all over the floor, sleeping in the cigarette butts, men standing, men wound under the benches, men everywhere, and no breath of ventilation. Everyone awake was smoking. My "class" was all gone: I had a new set of roommates.

Had I been raised in a vacuum? All my life I've been living alongside blacks, and I never knew anything of what was going on, how they live, how they think, what all this means to them. I had traveled all over the world, yet I had more in common with a Frenchman or a German than with these blacks from my own city. Nor were they unkind to me, or even indifferent. I was just there, listening and getting my education. As long as I was in jail, no one ever offered me the first sign of violence, not even the first word of disrespect. At least, not on my side of the bars.

Through the bars I see a middle-aged white man in a baseball cap, can hear his conversation. "Oh, Mama, please come and get me out. You can't leave me in here," he pleads. He begins to cry. I turn away.

Toward midnight I was called out and led to ID again. Another shot at fingerprints. I yield and sign the card "under duress." At a desk a bored black woman behind a typewriter fills out a form with impertinent and irrational questions. Why do they care if my mother is alive and where she lives?

The guard motions me across the hall to the same cell where I had been in isolation. But now there is a difference. Now there are five men, counting myself. At the far end of the bench

sleeps an old man. Someone scoots over for me. A young white boy in tennis shoes and swimming trunks and no shirt says, "You'd better watch it. Pop said to leave him alone." The others laugh in a way that informs me that Pop, shrunk up on the end of the bench asleep, had better be left asleep.

They are all smoking (except Pop, who is comatose). I am choking. The swimmer is in for squealing his tires in a parking lot. He is philosophical, unconcerned. One man lies down amidst the butts, his arms on his face, practical and ready for sleep. My rear is aching from sitting on stainless steel for 13 hours.

Finally the keys rattle at the door. We are led out, down the hall. Through a doorway we turn to the right and I try to comprehend. There is a very large tiled room, 30'x30' or larger, with the ubiquitous stainless steel benches. At the far right is a window through which I see what looks like a laundry. To the left through the other wall is a large bay with 6 showers. To the far left—I can't believe this—there are two large holding cells. Peering in I can see only massed humanity. We are put into the cell on the far left. We can barely squeeze in. I try to count the men but give up. There are too many bodies on the floor and jammed under the benches. The room is divided by a wall that partitions off about a third. I stand since there is room for nothing else.

The cell might accommodate 20 people. At 45 I stop counting, unable to disentangle them all. The benches are occupied by stretched out sleepers, but no stander protests. I talk to another prisoner, then I listen to the conversations around me. I learn quickly. The stay in this holding

tank is three days, before you get a cell. Public drunks are supposed to be held for 5 hours, then released. Some have been here 20 hours. Someone says he heard that one guy stayed here two months. They just lost track of him. This is cheerful news.

Time passes quickly. The company is lively. I finally get a seat. This is a painful pleasure. Unsuccessfully I assay sleeping with my head on my knees. From time to time more men are crowded in with us. Labor Day weekend will be fun—it will *really* get

crowded soon, I am told. I can't wait.

Around 4:30 both cells are opened up and we are all led out into the big room. We line up around the walls and after the cells are swept out and mopped we file past the food. I am handed a peanut butter sandwich and a styrofoam cup of black fluid. Having served in the Army, I know that you take whatever they hand you. My sandwich goes to one man, my coffee to another.

Sometime during the day a cart with one telephone is wheeled up to the bars. The other cell gets first crack. My chances of reaching the phone look very dim. Crowding close to the bars I get my name on the list. There is a trustee taking names.

He is advising those without bond which bondsman to call. This goes on forever. Through the bars I see a middle-aged white man in a baseball cap, can hear his conversation. "Oh, Mama, please come and get me out. You can't leave me in here," he pleads. He begins to cry. I turn away.

Later I notice an older, well-dressed white man clinging to the bars. What's he doing in here? He is begging the guard to let him see the medic. The guard is deaf, acts as if no one were speaking. The man continues to plead, the guard ignores. After 20 minutes or so, he collapses backward into the cell. Not near enough to reach him, I can still see from his ashy color that he is having a heart attack. "See if he has any nitroglycerin in his pocket!" someone shouts. Eager hands reach into his pockets, find the pills, while someone shouts out instructions: "Put it under his tongue." The guard finally pays attention, the medic comes, and six men carry out the victim.

There is a short, fat and very loud black in the back of the cell conversing urgently with his seatmate. I listen attentively; the man is talking sensibly. He understands that as long as drugs are illegal, their use will flourish. He advocates legalizing everything and putting it all into a red-light district so the rest of them can get some peace. He has bright, glittering eyes and an air of leadership. He engages another young black. They begin discussing business: the cocaine business. Cocaine, the fat man says, is his thing. Some people like beer, some whiskey,

some marijuana. Me, my recreation is cocaine. Not a lot, not all the time, but that's just my thing when I want to get high.

Cocaine is a fine business, I learn. You can make \$30,000 a week trafficking. I am not disgusted, not irate, just listening. They talk about the folks who really handle big lots, who they are . . . \$30,000 a week! How in the world can anybody think they can keep a man

Had I been raised in a vacuum? All my life I've been living alongside blacks, and I never knew anything of what was going on, how they live, how they think, what all this means to them.

who makes at most 8 bucks an hour at manual labor from selling dope for \$30,000 a week? Who's crazy here? He'd be a fool if he didn't.

The fat man complains that when he was arrested there was a half-track of cocaine on his dresser. The cop walked over to it, picked up the spoon, and snuffed it all up. He looks at me with a smile. "This is all new to you, isn't it? Now you got to understand that this is just the way it is, we're just talking about what we know."

I nod, not judging, just listening.

"You ever try cocaine? Naw, I bet you're scared of it."

No, I assure him, just never felt the need for it. He doesn't challenge me, there's no malice. I am fascinated. He informs me that I am "cold as ice," which I take for a compliment. The Fat Man has a business on the outside, a legitimate business, and it's just beginning to pay off. He has all the pride in his accomplishment you'd expect. I try to put this side of him together with his reasons for being in jail, and decide that it's all hopelessly insane, that it can't be understood, not just him but the whole system. This is his third day in here, waiting for a cell, eating peanut butter sandwiches and drinking Kool-Aid.

What day is it? Must be Saturday. There is a commotion in the cell next door. The medic returns. The sad man in the baseball cap is carried out. Heart attack number two.

We are led out for lunch, then supper. I take my food and give it away. By now I am getting dry. I pinch my skin

to see if I am dehydrating. The pinch of skin slowly recedes. That's not good. I nudge my way back to the bars, get the deaf guard's attention, and tell him I have to see the medic. This is purely *pro forma* on my part as I do not expect any reaction. The guard says he will tell the medic. Later, much later, I ask him again. He's called the medic, he says, but the medic hasn't called back. The phones come back, this time

two of them. While I am waiting, they call my name: a visitor.

Along one side of the visiting room are booths with inch thick windows. At Number 10, where I see my pastor through the glass, I sit down and pick up the telephone receiver. The discomfort disap-

pears I am so glad to see him. Susan is coming to see me, he says. I tell him what is going on, ask him not to tell her. I'm getting an education. Surprised by my own joy and cheerfulness, I want to say a thousand things. Time is passing quickly.

With a bemused look he tells me, "No one is in charge here." We laugh at the obvious truth of that, at a system that is no system but some maniac, malevolent, driverless Greyhound bus somehow lurching down the road. He had stayed there 5 hours Friday night trying to see me. That was why they were calling my name. The disembodied voice says something about leaving. Does that mean me? I leave the room and am called back. More time, but can't be enough time. Finally I must leave, but it isn't bad.

At one point there is excitement amongst the guards. There's another riot upstairs. Upstairs. Where every kind of criminal is held. Some of them with "life on life" sentences, I'm told. Where they're sleeping on the floors. Where the guards won't intervene in a fight. Where there are riots, on the 3rd floor. Like playful boys the guards run out, ready for a scrap.

At the 10 p.m. shift change we're called out into the big room. A guard with a clipboard calls out names. Two Sanders—is the booking number right? 7057. That's me. I am led to the other side, where the cell blocks are. I am frisked and led to the A-block. Down the hall past hands begging through the bars for cigarettes. A-10.

This one's mine. The guard asks if anyone wants a shower. I do—very much, but I have no towel. It's all right, I can dry off on my shirt. Okay with the guard, if I can find some soap. The shower is between two cells about half-way up the block. While another inmate undresses and showers, I stand there in my underwear, holding my blue oxford cloth button down shirt. Finally he exits, I enter, happy to find a bar of soap. There is one (1) button in the shower. You push it and for a minute or so there is hot water. I turn it on and bask in the heat and steam. Helpless before my thirst, I open my mouth and swallow a large mouthful of hot water. It's enough. I keep on soaping and showering. Push the button again. The waiting inmates are as patient as I am. I climb out and dry off with my shirt, return to my cell.

My cell is 6'x9'. Stainless toilet/basin, the basin is stopped up with murky water. Steel shelf for a bed. No mattress, no blanket, no sheets, no hope of any. My rear is now very sore, and the sides of my hips. The steel doesn't give very much. I hang up my shirt on a hook. Over my head is a faithful light, never to be turned out. Thank God for this tee shirt. Thank God it's not cold in here.

"Ten!" I go to the bars at the steel door. Across the way in 16 is a young black man. "Do you work with animals? With that beard you look like some kind of farmer that works with animals. You know about animals? You been to the zoo lately?" This is all friendly curiosity. "You ever read *National Geographic*?" We talk.

Finally I turn in. Over my head is a radio. It gets three stations, whose

common point is a loud, throbbing beat. Evidently I am the only person in the cell block who has discovered that this radio can be turned off. Enough. I try to sleep.

The Lord's Day morning. Food comes. Through the bars they slide in a tray. I had already decided that if God gave me something decent, I would break my fast. There are several things on the tray I don't recognize. However, four items I have seen before: three stewed prunes and a styro-foam cup of milk. With grateful heart I eat the prunes. I meditate on whether or not I can eat the pits, too, then reluctantly decide against it and drop them on the tray, drink the milk.

Monday evening I get a visit from my counselor. He has papers for my habeas corpus hearing the next morning. These I take back to my cell and read over and over and over, trying to memorize them since I will have to speak for myself.

"Ten!" My cell door opens, I am instructed to get my things. This doesn't take long. Out in the hall when I find a clock I see that it is 2:45 a.m. They are moving me to a cell upstairs. Why at 2:45 a.m.? Why not at 4:30? 6:30? Doesn't matter—nobody's in charge. Before I go upstairs, they give me a mattress.

I've made it this far, God willing I'll last a few more hours. Upstairs I am put into a cell block much like the one downstairs, except the hall is about twice as wide. There is a long stainless steel picnic table, and at the back of the room, two stainless steel pews for the worshipers of the one-eyed idol which hangs from the ceiling. The cell

doors are open, but the bars to the hall are locked. There are two or three men playing cards, and about seven sleeping on the floor. I spread out a mattress on one of the pews and try to read my legal papers. I drift off to sleep, wake up again when the cell block is called out to "breakfast." When they file out, I stay behind.

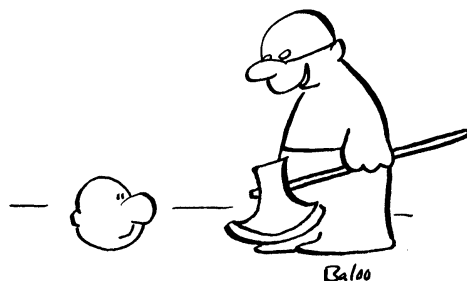
When they come back, they bring more surrealistic adventures. A young black sits down to my right and begins to chant the Edda of his life, at least that's what it seems to be. There is a heavy rhythm to his chant, but the words don't make much sense. I try to read. An old duffer comes and sits down on the other side. He tries to engage me in conversation, wants to know what I am studying. I try to explain, and he launches into a diatribe about how none of it will do any good and I will probably remain in jail forever. By now I have enough of both him and the chanter. Before I can tell him to BUZZ OFF, in front of me a stout black sweeping the floor falls down in an epileptic fit. Several others try to help him, finally his twitching stops and he shakily stands up. They lead him back to his cell. Will 10 o'clock never come?

Shortly before 10 I am called out and taken back downstairs. Two very large white guards handcuff me behind my back and lead me out, into the sunshine (!) and across the street to the courthouse. As we climb the stairs inside and round the corner—Bless God!—there is the crowd from my church with heads bowed, praying in the hall. In the courtroom there is standing room only, and I am seated in the jury box, where they take off the handcuffs. The judge enters. The Bartlett City prosecutor is there and begins. When he finishes his opening statement, in my jailhouse pajamas and with cottonmouth, I begin to read and explain from my papers.

The judge refuses my petition for a writ of habeas corpus. I am remanded back to the custody of the Bartlett Jailor. Again, I am handcuffed behind my back and returned to my cell block. Shortly I am called forth and taken back to the Bartlett jail, seventeen pounds lighter.

In Bartlett I am allowed to make a phone call and talk to my counselor. I have exhausted my every legal remedy for release. It is the eighth of

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"There now—that wasn't so bad, was it?"

I Go To Russia

by Benjamin Best

My tour group had an afternoon free in Berlin before we were scheduled to leave for the Soviet Union, so I decided to visit East Berlin.

Not long before, a young West German named Mathias Rust had landed his Cessna airplane in Red Square. He had become something of a folk hero in West Germany. I bought a T-shirt in West Berlin that read: "International Airport, Rotor Platz" (Red Square). Somewhat carelessly I wore it as an undershirt that afternoon.

Getting into East Berlin means first standing in line for East German currency. A tourist cannot enter East Germany without getting at least 25 East German marks which must be spent completely (i.e., cannot be brought back to West Germany or changed back into Western currency). The tourist must pay one West German mark for each East German mark bought. Although there is no exchange market for Warsaw Pact countries, I was told that the market rate would be closer to 6 Eastmarks per Westmark. I had also heard that there is little or nothing in East Germany that a Western tourist would want to buy.

After getting my money, my person and my passport were inspected by an East German border guard. He called me into a room and had me empty my pockets onto a table. I suspected something was wrong when he told me to take off my shirt. He told me that my T-shirt was not permitted in East Germany. The guard had apparently recognized my seditious souvenir T-shirt from the lettering visible at the open collar. We left the room and I was told to wait at a nearby seat.

The guards had my passport and I was on the East German side of the wall. Between me and West Berlin was a double set of concrete walls capped with barbed wire and some of the 1,800 shooting towers surrounding Berlin. I

didn't really see a point in getting melodramatic about the matter. And I didn't think the guards would do anything to me. But the longer I sat, the more uncomfortable I became.

The first guard was joined by another who quizzed me on where I had gotten the T-shirt, what my intentions were in buying it, why I had come to East Berlin, what I do for a living, etc. Then I was told to sit and wait again. More guards came, one of whom looked like a well-decorated officer. They talked, examined my passport and conferred privately. I figured I hadn't done anything that couldn't be corrected by an apology and giving up my T-shirt. But on the other hand, I am not used to intense censorship or being surrounded by shooting towers. These people look at life very differently from the way I do and they are deadly serious about it. Left alone with my thoughts, I had a few moments of real panic.

I was joined for a short time by a young woman from my tour group. She had bought a book about the Berlin Wall in one of the shops on the West side. She was dwelling on the irony that she, an ardent socialist, was being held. The guards eventually decided to keep her book and allow her into East Berlin.

I also saw another tourist in an altercation with a guard over the fact that he was leaving East Berlin but still had his Eastmarks. He said there was nothing there he wanted to buy, but the guard insisted that he go back and

spend the money.

After an hour and a half of delay and hassle, a guard told me I could go to East Berlin, but would have to leave the T-shirt behind. When I told him I would just as soon return to West Berlin, he immediately agreed. I was even allowed to change my Eastmarks back to Westmarks, which is normally prohibited.

The core of the problem was the intensely paranoid bureaucratism of the East German guards. I experienced little real malice; I suspect they nurtured an ethnic pride that a German, Mathias Rust, had tweaked the nose of the Russian bear.

But the experience made me very circumspect and overcautious in traveling to the USSR. Because of my experience with the East Germans, I took the advice that "the lighter you travel in the USSR, the less hassle." I packed a tote-bag with shirt, pants, several pairs of underclothing, toilet paper, towel and my electric shaver.

Leningrad

We flew to Leningrad on a Soviet plane, where I had my first taste of the Russian diet and its effects: our meal was heavy with greasy meat and starch, and most of the Russian passengers were considerably overweight.

The city looks as if it hadn't changed since Ayn Rand was born there. I saw no skyscrapers at all and very few modern-looking buildings. There were no colorful signs, neon lights or eye-catching architecture . . .

just drab old buildings.

Our Soviet tour guide was a stocky 19-year-old female. I expected her to be a hardline Marxist, but she wasn't even a member of the Communist Party. (She said that it was too much work to belong and that there were no advantages to being a member—because of careful Soviet efforts preventing petty opportunism.) Our tour guide told me that rather than having people discussing ideology, the government prefers for them to be doing things more economically beneficial for the country. The complete absence of revolutionary zeal in the Soviet Union—here and elsewhere—came as a complete surprise to me.

We were free to come and go as we pleased in Leningrad, as we later were in Moscow. And at no time in my wanderings did I notice being tailed by the KGB or anyone else.

Wandering Leningrad the first night, we were soon approached by young men wanting to trade. The traders wanted jeans, T-shirts, watches, calculators and Western currency. I had already declared my watch and my shaver, so I didn't trade them. I hadn't brought any jeans and I had left my Cessna-Red-Square T-shirt in Berlin. Some traders only had lacquered boxes for trade, but many offered fur hats, military garb, flags and Rubles.

As an ardent pro-capitalist, I'm almost embarrassed to admit that I was less involved with the traders than most of the other (non-ideological) people on my tour. For one thing, I don't like bartering. For another, almost all the traders constantly smoked cigarettes and I prefer not to deal with smokers. I only traded currency. I didn't even attempt to bargain, partly out of concern over being hassled by customs. Our tour guide told me that the currency traders were the only ones who could be sent to jail.

The others on my tour, however, traded their jeans, T-shirts, and watches. Much of their motivation was the romance of dealing in the black market. One of the traders told a fellow in our group that it was illegal to take a Soviet Flag outside the USSR. Of course, this made the fellow eager to obtain a Soviet Flag and try to "smuggle" it out.

I have heard repeatedly that the traders want our currency for the Western currency shops. I saw only one such shop and was not impressed with its selection or prices—even compared to the Soviet department stores. In fact, the largest department store in Leningrad had Lee-brand jeans and digital watches for sale. The traders evidently figured they could get a better deal from the tourists.

Although I began to think of the traders as pesky high-pressure salesmen, they were among the few people

As an ardent pro-capitalist, I'm almost embarrassed to admit that I was less involved with the traders than most of the other (non-ideological) people on my tour.

to be found who could speak English. (There are far fewer people who know any English in the USSR than in any other European country that I visited.) Some people used trading as a way to get to know Russians and a few even visited them at their homes. One trader, who said that his father was a physician, told me that through his dad he had gone to a special school to learn English and gotten a medical deferment from the draft.

Our city tour of Leningrad included the Peter and Paul Fortress as well as the Hermitage, an exercise in czarist opulence intended to outdo the Palace of Versailles. The Hermitage is now an art museum, housing one of the world's greatest art collections. Soviet citizens lined up for hours to get in, but we tourists were admitted without waiting.

Later I visited St. Isaac's Cathedral with a few others from my tour. There was a long line waiting to get in, but one of the women in our group had the audacity to go to the front of the line and get tickets. No one complained. St. Isaac's is the third largest Cathedral in the world, and possibly the most awesomely beautiful. Its exterior was undergoing reconstruction, so apparently the Soviets were concerned about preserving the artistic masterpiece. I never learned whether or not St. Isaac's is currently used for worship, but I was told that another large Leningrad church had been converted into the Museum of Religion

and Atheism.

We later visited the Museum of the History of Leningrad. It was difficult to find because it was in the middle of a block of similar buildings and was in no way distinctive. Although there were many staffers and a guard inside, none of them spoke English. After about 45 minutes we saw a group of Outer Mongolians accompanied by a tour guide—but otherwise we had the museum to ourselves. Unfortunately, all the legends were in Russian only.

I walked through the sculpture filled park adjoining the Summer Palace and as I left I was approached by a fiftyish Russian fellow whose English was quite good. He said he was entirely self taught. He said he worked for the streets and sewers department. His ambition in life was to be a street musician ("amateur vagrant," he called himself), but had been arrested and given a fifty-Ruble fine when he had tried playing in the park. He thought the new liberalism was mostly a sham, except for a more open dialogue on booze and drugs.

I was surprised to learn that he had never heard of the World's Fair or the Eiffel Tower. I later learned that our tour guide had never heard of them either. I suspect that this is indicative of a Soviet government attempt to keep the people ignorant of temptations to go abroad.

We were scheduled to meet with some Soviet students to "exchange views." I was expecting a group of glib Young Communists who were practiced in the dialectics of attacking the American Point of View. Instead, we met with a group of young workers only one of whom had any grasp of English. Another fellow and myself were paired with a couple of giggling women in their early twenties. As we tried to communicate by sign-language, the laughter proved to be very contagious. We gave them some coins from different European countries and they gave us pins. Oddly, one pin depicted the Museum of the History of Leningrad. The other pin depicted Lenin, although it had about as much ideological significance as if I had given a pin depicting George Washington. (Images of Lenin are common in the USSR,

whereas images of Marx are very hard to find.)

We did some disco dancing to Russian rock music and to a tape of American rock music belonging to a member of our tour. When it was time to go, I was quite touched by the amount of regret our companions displayed at parting. They insisted upon an exchange of addresses.

Everywhere else I went in Europe (even Hungary) the discos played American rock almost exclusively. Everywhere else in Europe I saw American movies and American TV programs with European-language subtitles. English is becoming an international language because so much of the world is fascinated by American cultural goodies.

This was not the case in Russia. I watched a TV show of a Russian rock concert, complete with all the usual props: strobe-lights, smoke, mosaics of mirror, etc. Apparently the Soviet government tries to reduce Western influence by copying much of it. I was reminded of Mises' claim that socialists can only set prices and do economic calculation by "peeking at the market."

Moscow

We rode a train from Leningrad to Moscow. I was surprised at how old and poor the farmhouses seemed. Except for their metal roofs, they looked like they were shabby remnants of the 19th Century.

Moscow looks a lot like Leningrad, except there are skyscrapers and new apartment buildings. The apartments all look alike—one architect was evidently all that was needed. I had the impression that much of the wealth from the rest of the country has gone into the development of Moscow. The Metro subway is the nicest I have seen anywhere in Europe or North America. Each station has a unique character, often quite artistic. One has mosaics, another large incongruous-looking chandeliers. I bought a book of glossy color pictures of Metro stations and their surroundings. (This was sold in my hotel's shop—which quoted the price in Rubles, but refused to accept anything but Western currency.) Since a subway ride is only 5 Kopeks (about three cents at the market rate), I was tempted to spend all my time just riding from station to station, and walking around outside each one.

Red Square, of course, is the center of Moscow—and it is ironic how much the czarist influence still dominates it. On one side is the Kremlin, the fortress whose ancient brick walls now surround the Soviet seat of government. On the opposite side of the square is the GUM department store (built in the 1890s), reputedly the largest in the world. Despite its huge size, its selection is inferior to that of an average K-Mart. To the side is St. Basil's Cathedral, built by Ivan the Terrible. It is as symbolic of Moscow as the Eiffel Tower is of Paris.

Lenin's mausoleum sits up against the Kremlin wall. I waited two hours to see Lenin's body, but came away convinced that what I saw was a wax effigy (or, at least, a body covered with very thick wax); the features were too smooth and flawless.

Our tour guide showed us the spot where Mathias Rust had landed his Cessna. Rust had flown in on a Sunday and caught too many high-level officers having a day off and too many underlings unwilling to take the responsibility to do anything. The Russian guide thought the whole episode was hilarious—quite a contrast to the East

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German border guards. (Having spent a day in Moscow on a Sunday, I was rather struck by how this atheistic country observes the Lord's Day more consistently than do most Christian countries—by *not working*.)

We went to the National Economic Achievements Exhibition, which is probably the closest thing to Disneyland in the Soviet Union. The fountains and architecture were breathtaking—but the contents of most of the buildings were unimpressive. The best by far was the space exhibition.

I expected the kiosks to offer mostly fast-foods, and was surprised to see they sold rather banal consumer items. One sold nothing but socks. I had bought more Rubles than I could possibly spend (and possessed more than I had bought legally) so I disposed of them by buying a Russian umbrella, which was an incredible struggle to open and close. Our tour-guide had a good laugh and said Russians never buy Russian umbrellas—only Japanese umbrellas.

Once, near Red Square, while crossing a wide street on which there were no people and few cars, a car started driving towards me as if it were trying to hit me. I began running, but it sped up and continued to head directly toward me. I just managed to leap to the curb when a policeman rushed out of the car and motioned for me to get in the back seat. I couldn't understand what the cops were saying to me so I started talking English. One cop said "English?" I nodded my head and said "Yes." He said "3 Rubles" and handed me a ticket for jaywalking. I paid him, took the ticket and got out.

One evening I found myself quite lost in Moscow. I could have retraced my steps, but that would have taken a long time. I tried to find a taxi, but they all rushed by me. After a while a beat-up car with a cracked windshield stopped and an old Russian pushed open the door. I was a bit desperate, so I got in and showed him my card with the name of my hotel on it. After he started driving he took out a cassette and plugged it into his cheap old cassette player. It played some corny English-language music. When he arrived at the hotel I handed him a 5 Ruble note. He nodded his head with satisfaction and I got out.

On my last night in Moscow I attended the Circus with my tour-group. As tourists, we were given front-row seats. There was an act in which one of the clowns pretended to be a drunk walking a straight line for a mock-policeman. I was a bit surprised to see this kind of humor at the expense of a symbol of authority. The performances by the trained horses, monkeys, ele-

The complete absence of revolutionary zeal in the Soviet Union—here and elsewhere—came as a complete surprise to me.

phants and tigers reminded me of the intense effort put into discipline that I came to associate with Russian character. And every time the audience clapped, they quickly assumed a cadence whereby all hands came together at once—signifying to me a spontaneous desire for conformity, group participation and discipline.

We were scheduled to return by air to Copenhagen, but were taken to Berlin instead. The Soviets have no qualms about altering their agreements when it is convenient for them to do so. When you tour the Soviet Union, you take what they give you or you take nothing.

In leaving the Soviet Union our baggage was not subjected to the same kind of scrupulous inspection it had been on entry, which came as a relief. I am sure, to those members of the group who had acquired Soviet contraband.

Touring Soviet Russia

The Soviets monitor currency in particular. They try to see that much Western currency is brought into the USSR and not much taken out. We were required to exchange money at a \$1.70 per Ruble, far above the black market rate of fifty cents per Ruble on the streets of Leningrad and Moscow. The Soviets do not allow Rubles to be taken out of their country and will buy back their Rubles at roughly \$1.70 plus a little gouging (giving only bills in return, and rounding off in their favor).

Most of the people in my tour-group found Soviet food to be marginally tolerable. All meals were included in the tour and alternatives (restau-

rants, groceries or fast-food outlets) were not readily available. The meals were prosaic at best: I recall breakfasts consisting of plates of frankfurters and glasses of buttermilk.

I saw a few kiosks selling ice cream, one flavor only, either vanilla or a caramel-like flavor. This ice cream has a wonderful taste and is unlike ice cream I have had anywhere else. In Moscow I

found only one example of a fast-food outlet; it was selling sausages wrapped in deep-fried bread.

There were pop machines on the streets of both Leningrad and Moscow. They were quite different from those in the

West. First the user had to rinse off the glass tumbler that was provided with the machine; then place the glass in a little window and push a button to dispense the pop. The glasses were to stay with the machines, and it is a comment on Russian character that they were not stolen. The drinks were cheap: 1 Kopek for soda water and 3 Kopeks for a 7-Up like drink. One machine by Red Square gave apple juice for 20 Kopeks.

There are also some kiosks (particularly near tourist attractions) selling Pepsi. There are no "cola wars" here: Pepsi has a monopoly courtesy of the Soviet government.

Soviet shopping and Soviet life have a lot to do with spending a great deal of time standing in very long lines. Considering that the pop machines entrust their glasses to the anonymous citizen, it is remarkable that I saw no other self-service in the USSR.

Imagine going to a store to buy some shampoo, thread and stationery. Then picture having to stand in three lines, one for each item, for 10-15 minutes each. Before standing in line you must pay a cashier who gives you a receipt to exchange for the item, so once in line you are somewhat trapped. Lines for meat, vegetables and fruit seemed to be longer (30-40 minutes) and some items required waiting well over an hour. I was amazed to see people in stores using an abacus—the hand-held calculator revolution has not yet hit the USSR.

One last point: Don't expect to find toilet paper in the Soviet Union. Instead most public restrooms have torn-up copies of *Pravda* sitting by the toilets. □

The ACLU: Suspicious Principles, Salutary Effects

Consider the fact that you can perform the following activities without interference or punishment by government, simply "as a matter of course":

Use the first-class mails to send your spouse a letter of an "indiscreetly passionate" nature without facing federal prosecution.

Import into the U.S. photographic reproductions of the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.

Wear a black armband in opposition to some aspect of public policy while attending public school classes.

Circulate printed matter designed to "Interfere with the success of any federal loan."

Sell copies of James Joyce's *Ulysses*.

Publicly express a desire that the United States Supreme Court will rule that conscription is unconstitutional.

Receive "foreign propaganda" through the mail without registering as either a foreign agent or a "person willing to receive" such propaganda.

"Burn, deface, mutilate or otherwise desecrate a cross" in New Jersey.

Doing any of these things was once sufficient cause to subject a person to fine or imprisonment in the United States. Each of these activities (along with all the examples listed in the box beginning on page 30) was at one time or another against the law.

The laws against these activities were struck down by the courts, winning these freedoms for Americans and enhancing the scope of the freedom all Americans enjoy.

In every case, the law was done away with because of action by the American Civil Liberties Union.

A complete citing of such cases is impossible. The cases cited are not of equal importance. They took place at different times. Not all were national in scope: some concerned state or local laws or merely the eccentric judicial interpretation of one person. Some—though by no means all—would probably have been eventually overturned without the aid of the ACLU (although "eventually" can be a very long time). But the fact remains that it is because of the actions of the ACLU that the freedoms listed—and many others—are enjoyed by Americans.

Salutary Effects

It is inevitable that an organization such as the American Civil Liberties Union will be controversial. Indeed, in a very real sense it invites controversy, and it would be failing in its mission if it did not do so. What may not be quite so obvious is the fact that the ACLU is just as inevitably going to be widely misperceived and misunderstood. Probably no other group of comparable size and influence has suffered from such a consistent failure to effectively communicate its motives and

*A Libertarian
Looks at the
ACLU and
Likes (Most of)
What He Sees*
by William P. Moulton

values to the American public. (There is also the problem that a large segment of the populace *does* understand the ACLU's views, but angrily rejects them.)

It is not necessary to give a great number of examples of the ways in which the ACLU inadvertantly generates enemies, for the general pattern is quite consistent. If the Union supports the right of some offbeat religion—say, the Hare Krishnas—to proselytize, or if it upholds the separation of church and state by fighting against government-mandated prayers in schools, it finds itself roundly accused of promoting “secular humanism” and of desiring to destroy Christianity. If some of its members defend the right of a high school librarian to keep *Huckleberry Finn* on the shelf in spite of the book's frequent use of the “N-word,” they are accused by many on the left of giving aid and comfort to racism. To cite an even more sensitive case, the ACLU's spirited and courageous defense of the right of the National Socialist Party of America, a Nazi group, to engage in a march through the heavily Jewish enclave of Skokie, Illinois, brought charges from both sides of the political spectrum that the Union was brutally insensitive to the feelings of the Jewish people, that it preferred Nazi thugs to “decent citizens,” and the like. Indeed, the Skokie case, which led to the striking down of a number of ordinances that were merely legalized harassment, cost the ACLU dearly. The Union estimates that between 15 and 20 percent of its approximately quarter-million members resigned in protest, including about 30 percent of its 8,000 Illinois members.

As might be expected, some of the most egregious misdescriptions of the American Civil Liberties Union are those that emanate from the wacko right. To most of the far right, the ACLU is simply beyond the pale—an utterly evil organization. A typical article which appeared in the Bircher organ *American Opinion* in 1985 stated, “For sixty-five years the American Civil Liberties Union has employed radical attorneys to increase the power of the state, especially the courts, over the lives and property of the American people.” To *Conservative Digest* the Union is the “best friend of communists and subversives everywhere.” In the anti-Semitic fever swamps it is sometimes referred to as the “Jew-merican Civil Liberties Union” or similar illiteracies. The present Attorney General of the United States, who

ought to know better, has publicly called the ACLU the “criminals’ lobby.”

What is the ACLU *really* doing in all the cases I have cited, and in the thousands of others that have engaged its energies? Well, for the most part it is simply being consistent in giving support to what it conceives to be civil liberties, and most especially to those which involve freedom of expression. (Sometimes, to be sure, it has slipped a bit from its high standards—we’ll go into that later.) There is no doubt that most hostility to the group’s activities is engendered by its adherence to principles rather than by an occasional anomaly or inconsistency.

The problem the ACLU keeps running up against is simply this: most people neither accept nor fully understand the classical liberal concept of tolerance. The idea that the freedom to pursue non-coercive goals is both an individual and a social good, that society is actually better off when nutty racists, communists, Nazis and silly but unobtrusive religious cultists are allowed freedom of expression and of peaceful action prob-

ably seems utterly persuasive to the readers of *Liberty*, but unfortunately it goes over like a lead balloon when presented to most people. If this were not the case the ACLU would have little to do.

One of the most intractable problems connected with the lack of enthusiasm for civil liberties in this country is the fact that the principles involved are never conceptualized by most people. They remain at the level of unintegrated attitudes and feelings. The mythical “average person’s” views on civil liberties is, I think, something like this: “Sure I believe in freedom. This is a free country. But there have to be limits on people who abuse these freedoms. Obviously we can’t give the same rights decent people possess to troublemakers and subversives and those who tear down everything that made this country great. And you can’t have people running off at the mouth and insulting other people’s religious and political beliefs and stirring things up.” Some left-liberals (not all) would add that we shouldn’t allow expression which will tend to perpet-

In America, courtesy of the ACLU, you can:

- Teach in a school in the District of Columbia even though heard to utter “disrespect of the Holy Bible” in public.
- Organize a chapter of Young Americans for Freedom on the University of Minnesota campus.
- Live in Johnstown, Pennsylvania if you are a Negro or Mexican, even if you have not previously dwelled there for at least seven years.
- If a juror, be reasonably certain that the jury room is not “bugged” under pretense of making a “scientific study” of jury deliberations.
- Hold a poetry-reading in New York City without a license.
- Perform electrical work in Philadelphia even if you live outside the city.
- Refuse to salute the flag in public in Indiana without being prosecuted for “riotous conspiracy.”
- Advocate the practice of polygamy in material sent through the U.S. mails.
- Sell, in Georgia, merchandise manufactured in a Communist nation without buying an expensive license to do so.
- Advocate the social equality of the races in Mississippi.
- Organize, in the state of Alabama, a branch of an organization headquartered outside of the state without registering with the Attorney General. (An NAACP chapter was fined \$100,000 for violating this one.)
- Print anonymous political pamphlets in California.
- If a foreign national, enter the U.S. as a visitor even if you have been accused of adultery in a divorce judgment in your home country.
- Suggest to conscripts about to be inducted that they ask about their constitutional rights.
- Possess and use a press card in Detroit without taking a loyalty oath.
- Teach a foreign language in Iowa (this was an extreme example of World War I xenophobic hysteria).
- Show a newsreel depicting “industrial unrest” in Chicago and Detroit.
- Marry, if you are white, a person of 1/64 or more Negro blood in Georgia. (About half the states had such laws, but Georgia was the most vigilant in seeking out tiny traces of “colored” ancestry.)
- Vote in New Mexico if you are an Indian.
- Publicly support the doctrine of pacifism in Colorado without being legally liable for commitment to a mental institution for “observation.”
- Establish or teach at a private religious-oriented school in Oregon.
- Pass out pamphlets dealing with public issues without being arrested for “littering.” (In some localities this battle has not been entirely won.)

uate racism, sexism, poverty and exploitation. Many on the right would add that we have to decide where discussion of ideas ends and sedition and treason begin. (I have heard these exact phrases used during conversations with each of the described types.)

The depressing thing about all this is that these long series of "buts," exceptions and exclusions slowly and remorselessly add up to a brutally authoritarian society. (Just as, in the economic sphere, an endless series of "I believe in the free market, but . . ." judgments add up to a totally controlled economy.) Try to imagine for a moment that all of the abridgments on free expression I have catalogued in this article—and thousands of others not mentioned in my sampling—had gone unchallenged by "outside agitators" of the type who form the bulk of ACLU membership. Not only would we be struck with all these monstrosities, but legislative bodies at all levels would be emboldened to proceed further. After all, the knowledge that laws are being struck down by the courts does act as a brake, even if an im-

perfect one. (A minor example: the small northern Michigan town in which I reside recently repealed its anti-condom ordinance after the city attorney reported that an identical one in Cincinnati had been declared unconstitutional.)

If neither the ACLU nor any similar force had challenged the aforementioned manifestations of statism, the list of tyrannies great and small would proceed to grow unchecked. Every new assault on liberty would be presented as a minor adjustment or rearrangement of behavior that in no way alters the basic nature of our free country. Perhaps on occasion such claims would even be made sincerely. The end result of such a process—after a long series of interest groups had ensured that each one's pet complaints had been attended to—would be no freedom at all.

Because the cultural factors which stand in opposition to the classical liberal ideal are so strong, the need for a group such as the Union is undeniable. I do not believe it is hyperbole to state that in a very real sense most of the freedoms which Americans still enjoy are

sustained by the broad and willing shoulders of the ACLU.

Glaring Imperfections

It is because of its great importance that it is disturbing when the ACLU occasionally falters. Of course, no institution is perfect, and none is unchanging. Like any outfit which has been around for seven decades, the ACLU has progressed through various periods. There is no doubt that during some stages—especially the 1930s—many members were only concerned with defending the rights of those on the left side of the political spectrum. There is also no denying that at times the ACLU has interested itself in affairs that have no relation to civil liberties or Constitutional protections in any reasonable sense—for example, opposition to nuclear power or support for higher welfare payments. There have also been cases in which the ACLU was simply on the wrong side.

The most notable example in recent times has been the Polovchak case, in which a Soviet citizen was able to emi-

- Publish a book in Massachusetts stating that "Jesus Christ was immoral."
- Publicly state, in speech or writing, opposition to military conscription. (This was a federal law, courtesy of Woodrow Wilson and cohorts.)
- Utter "scurrilous or abusive language" about the federal governmental or its officers. (Another Wilson contribution.)
- Advise people to refrain from purchasing Liberty bonds. (One man was sentenced to ten years for violating this gem.)
- Allege that the federal government favors "profiteers" over "the people." (Another case, same sentence—ten years.)
- Be eligible to join the Baltimore police force even though, in your spare time, you occasionally spend time at a nudist colony.
- "Discuss, expound, advocate or oppose" the principles of any "religious denomination or sect" in any "speech, lecture or discourse" within the confines of Los Angeles. (This kind of ordinance was usually, though not always, aimed at the Jehovah's Witnesses.)
- Teach in a public school in New York state even if you are a member of any of a long (and outdated and inaccurate) list of "subversive" organizations.
- Give a speech or write an article that tends to bring the president of the United States into "contempt or disrepute." (Another Wilson law, which could have been used against almost any candidate for high office who was not a Wilson loyalist.)
- Utter "opprobrious words" in public in Georgia.
- Accept advertising from persons and groups trying to raise money for the defense of "subversives" without losing your periodical's second-class mailing permit.
- Allow, if you own a building in California, "subversive" groups to rent a meeting hall without forfeiting any tax exemptions or refunds which might ordinarily be your due.
- Apply(!) for a passport if one is a "Communist or sympathizer."
- Defend, if you are a lawyer, IWW members in the state of Washington without being disbarred.
- Attempt to unionize workers in New York City without registering with the Police Commissioner's office.
- Have a street number assigned to your new house in Bensalem Township, Pennsylvania, even if you refuse to state your religious preference.
- Distribute Jehovah's Witnesses literature in Massachusetts, California and New Jersey. (Although in some communities door-to-door solicitations is still in a state of legal limbo.)
- Enter into a business partnership with a white person in Arizona if you are of Japanese ancestry.
- Deny the existence of God in public parks in San Francisco.
- "Embarrass" the government in time of war. (Wilson, of course)
- Laugh at, ridicule, jeer at, or show disrespect for men in military uniform, the uniform itself, or persons engaged in military maneuvers. (There was at least one arrest and criminal prosecution for laughing at the clumsy antics of newly inducted recruits who were drilling in a public park.)
- Utter a speech in Chicago that "stirs the public to anger; invites dispute; brings about a condition of unrest, or creates a disturbance." (One wonders what subject, other than a lecture on the multiplication table, could not be banned under such a law.)
- Publishing an article, derived entirely from publicly released government documents, dealing with the construction of a hydrogen bomb. (In this instance the government withdrew its challenge before final judicial resolution.)
- Place a peace symbol on an American flag. (This case was won on very narrow grounds, the Supreme Court ruling that the combination of the stars and stripes and the peace symbol was not a "United States flag" within the meaning of the various state and federal laws.)
- Refuse (or forget) to doff your hat when Charles Lindbergh passes by in a parade in New York City. (Okay, I didn't say all the issues were up to date and relevant. The fact remains that a man was arrested for this and was saved from prosecution by the intervention of the ACLU.)
- Vote in Mississippi without proving one's "good moral character" to the satisfaction of the registrar.
- Ask for a change of venue in a criminal case in Virginia without being given a summary contempt-of-court conviction. (This was used against civil-rights lawyers in the 1950s and 1960s.)
- Be an officer in the NYPD even if you belong to the John Birch Society.

yet more, page 32

grate to the United States with his entire family, and then, after a couple of years here, decided to return to the socialist motherland. His twelve-year-old son Walter had become thoroughly Americanized and refused to return. His parents sought to have him forcibly repatriated, thus beginning a six-year struggle. With the help of sympathizers in the Reagan administration, young Polovchak was able to stall the issue until he turned eighteen and could become a naturalized citizen on his own. Although this case had a happy ending, it was not because of the ACLU. For no good reason the ACLU took the elder Polovchak's side, and labored for six years to send the young boy to a life under totalitarian rule. It seems certain that political inclinations played a role in this decision, for it was obvious at the time that many ACLU leaders did not sympathize with the anti-Soviet motivations and rhetoric that characterized young Polavchak's supporters. It is probably safe to assume that the organization would not have striven so mightily to help deport a child to Chile or South Africa.

The most disruptive issue within the

ACLU at the present time is, without qualification, the case of Professor Randall Kennedy of the Harvard Law School. Kennedy explicitly adheres to the view, always popular among some leftists, that "reactionaries" have no rights, or at least far fewer than do decent, progressive people. This view, of course, goes back to Lenin and even to Robespierre. Its most strident exponent in more recent times was the late philosopher Herbert Marcuse, who referred to actual tolerance as "repressive tolerance" (because it allowed people to come to incorrect, i.e., non-Marxist and non-Marcusian, conclusions) and called for a new "liberating tolerance." What, exactly, is this creature? In Marcuse's own words "Liberating tolerance, then would mean intolerance against movements from the Right, and toleration of movements from the Left . . . [I]t would extend to the stage of action as well as of discussion and propaganda, of deed as well as of word." More precisely, he demanded "the withdrawal of toleration of speech and assembly from groups and movements which promote aggressive policies . . . or which oppose the exten-

sion of public services, social security, medical care, etc." In point of fact, what Marcuse did was simply to say to the assorted little groups of Stalinoids that litter the political landscape: "Your vindictive desire to punish and annihilate those who oppose you is perfectly legitimate. There is no need to be ashamed of these desires. Let me, however, cloak them in philosophical and academic garb for you, and blunt their cutting edges a little." In doing so, Marcuse helped to impart an atmosphere of repression, hysteria and paranoia to the New Left, qualities which grew ever more shrill as the movement disintegrated into oblivion in the early seventies.

It is not clear from his public statements whether or not Randall Kennedy is consciously in debt to Marcuse's legacy. But there is no doubt that his outlook is similar. Kennedy has been a leader in the attempts, often successful, to block persons with unacceptable views from speaking at Harvard. The special objects of his attention are representatives of South Africa and of the Nicaraguan Contras. In a speech given in late April 1987, catchily titled "In Defense of Dis-

American Freedoms, Courtesy of the ACLU (continued)

- Run for District Attorney in Los Angeles County without swearing that one had never represented a "criminal."
- Distribute a movie in Ohio without demonstrating to the satisfaction of a board of censors that it is "of a moral, educational or amusingly harmless nature."
- Teach in a public school in California without shaving off one's beard.
- Place a political sign or sticker on one's residential property in California.
- Speak in public at the University of West Virginia without prior approval of the local American Legion. (Yes, at one time you really had to get their formal prior OK.)
- If a teacher at a public school in Iowa, keep your job even if your own children attend a private school.
- Affix political-message stickers to the outside of first-class mail.
- Teach at the University of Pittsburgh while belonging to the ACLU.
- Receive "subversive" literature in the mail without having to specifically request that the Postal Service deliver it.
- Mail pamphlets to young men explaining to them the ways in which they can apply for the status of conscientious objector.
- Become a naturalized United States citizen even though you are a religious pacifist.
- Run a children's summer camp in New York state without flying the American flag.
- "Predict" an American defeat in a war. (Wilson again.)
- If an employer, criticize a union in front of your employees, providing it is not done "in association with coercion."
- Work in a night-club in Maryland without being fingerprinted.
- Travel abroad without having to provide the Passport Division with prior evidence of one's "loyalty."
- Work as a barber in California even if you have pleaded the Fifth Amendment before a Congressional investigating committee.
- Give evidence in a court in Alabama even if one is an atheist.
- Fictionally(!) portray interracial marriage in novels and movies in Atlanta.
- Mail a first-class letter knowing that, at least in law, it will not be opened at random by a postal inspector to see whether it "might" contain obscenity.
- Teach evolution in Arkansas and Mississippi. (The more famous Tennessee law was never overturned judicially but was repealed by the legislature in 1967.)
- Mail a magazine via second-class postage even if it is "not of a public character contributing to the arts, literature and the sciences." (In arguing in favor of this vague concept, Postmaster General James Farley stated in 1943 that magazines and newspapers must not simply avoid pornography and obscenity, but are "under a positive duty to contribute to the public good and the public welfare.")
- Import medical films showing actual childbirth.
- Fly a flag upside down in New York state.
- Publicly show the classic but very racist 1915 movie "Birth of a Nation" in Boston.
- Organize and maintain a Jehovah's Witnesses congregation in Kansas.
- Engage in "seditious" speech against individual states (but not against the federal government).
- Become a barber in Indiana if you are an ex-convict.
- Hold an anti-war meeting at a private home in Minnesota and serve beer for a small donation to the cause without being arrested for "running a disorderly house." (Vietnam era this time.)
- Buy, sell, advertise, and even wear condoms in the state of Connecticut.
- Sew a flag to the roof of your car in the state of Washington.
- Accept employment in the International Red Cross or other trans-national public agencies without prior clearance by the Attorney General.
- If a California lawyer, be "disrespectful" to a Congressional committee without being disbarred.
- March in public in Skokie, Illinois, without posting an enormous bond and agreeing to a lengthy list of "No-Nos" in advance.

rupting Speech by South African Government Officials," Professor Kennedy stated that "toleration has its limits," and that suppression is justified if the audience feels "it is a strain on humanity if certain persons speak without disruption." In response to questions from the audience, Kennedy elaborated upon his list of those who should not be allowed civil liberties: racists, Contras, Caspar Weinberger, Republican cabinet ministers generally, and certain others judged to be beyond the bounds of civil society.

When asked whether the killing of a lecturer from one of his *verboten* categories might be justified, Kennedy replied "It's a close call, something I'd have to think deeply about." Apparently murder is not, in his value system, necessarily to be ruled out as a response to speakers who depart from progressive orthodoxy.

What we are describing here is simply a left-wing mirror image of the most brutally vile elements on the primitive right, a sort of Robert Shelton or Jesse Stoner with table manners. The difference seems to be that the yahoos who shout that "colored agitators and communists" have no rights aren't given faculty posts at Harvard.

Given the state of the modern left, none of this would be particularly surprising were it not for the fact that Randall Kennedy is not merely a member, but is also on the board of directors, of the Massachusetts Civil Liberties Union, and was, in fact, re-elected to that post by the membership as recently as last October.

All of this has raised a few eyebrows, both within and outside of the ACLU. But—and this is the depressing thing—there has been no real outrage from the ACLU membership. The truth is simply that there is sufficient sympathy among the members for Kennedy's repressive left-wing views to blunt any substantial outcry.

As California civil liberties activist Randy Grindle pointed out in an interview with this writer, "One problem with the ACLU is that it neither receives nor particularly wants input from the right. Its values, priorities, and outlook, as well as the members themselves, enter mostly from the left. In some ACLU affiliates, and most especially the venerable Northern California chapter, the

leadership governs along left-sectarian and even Stalinist lines. They know the type of members they want, and they recruit that type. *Mother Jones* magazine, incidentally, has its headquarters directly below the regional ACLU office in San Francisco, and a lot of cross-fertilization of ideas goes on. There is definitely a true, consistent, radical civil liberties viewpoint within the national leadership

When asked whether the killing of a lecturer might be justified, Kennedy replied "It's a close call, something I'd have to think deeply about." Apparently murder is not, in his value system, necessarily to be ruled out as a response to speakers who depart from progressive orthodoxy.

of the ACLU, typified by Ira Glasser and Norman Dorsen. Unfortunately, they have to placate and keep the loyalty, both institutional and financial, of a lot of members who regard the ACLU as just another left-liberal activist group."

At this point, it would appear that the Kennedy Affair has served more to provide ammunition to right-wing opponents of the ACLU than to lead to a serious examination of the Union's values and purpose.

Suspicious Principles

Is there a root problem—a seminal error—in the outlook of the American Civil Liberties Union that tends to give rise to these sorts of problems? There doesn't necessarily have to be, of course. After all, an organization with tens of thousands of members is going to have some who blunder in their understanding of things, and in a certain number of cases their errors are bound to carry over into the working operations of a group that tends to govern itself by consensus.

In truth, there does appear to be a problem with the general outlook of the ACLU. The simplest way to describe it is thus: the ACLU does not operate in accordance with any coherent theory of rights. That is, it does not define "rights." Many of its members think about rights, of course, but their conclusions on the subject tend to be weak and superficial, and not well integrated with a broader system of values.

I am sure that the reaction of many readers will be, in effect, so what? All modern left-liberal groups share this

flaw. It's part of the whole package of nonsense about human *versus* property rights, that you can't apply economic laws to human beings, that we need to produce for use, not for profit, and so on and on and on. To insist on a formal philosophical framework for every value or position is to fall into the Randian trap of delusionally elevating every issue into a titanic clash of philosophies.

This reaction is not without some merit. Certainly it is true, as mentioned above, that the ACLU draws most of its members from what today passes as the liberal side of politics. It is also a fact that the most one can generally expect from such persons is a very partial, we might even say *schizoid*, defense of liberties. All of us are familiar with the type of person who believes that censorship of high-school newspapers is an intolerable tyranny, but who supports brutal one-man rule by tinhorn Third World despots on the grounds that the latter represents a progressive and anticolonialist force. Like it or not, such specimens abound, as do their counterparts on the right. We have to live with the situation.

So why should we attach so much importance to the confusions and inconsistencies of the ACLU membership? Let's call it a combination of lover's quarrel and genuine concern. They're so good in so many ways, and it would be nice if they would get their act together. Furthermore, the errors we're dealing with could result in another Polovchak fiasco in the future, and the next one might have a more sinister *denouement*.

The Heart of the Matter

The question poses itself—if the ACLU does not have a conscious philosophy of rights, what does it have? Perhaps the clearest way to characterize the Union's ambiance is to contrast it with the radical Whig, classical liberal conception, one which is today represented primarily by our small libertarian movement. I will especially refer to the matter of freedom of expression, since that is the Union's special field of interest.

The strong classical liberal (or, if you prefer, libertarian) position can be summarized as follows: "There are certain areas of life in which people must be allowed freedom if they are going to live a human existence. The necessity of this freedom is not dependent on the specif-

ic goals and values of those who claim and use it. It makes no difference whether the practice of liberty in any particular case contributes to the democratic ethos, or widens people's horizons, or prepares them for citizenship in a complex world, or, in fact, whether it advances any identifiable purpose. We claim certain rights as a natural condition of our lives, and damned be the authority which tries to take them away."

Now there are probably some members of the American Civil Liberties Union who hold to this view, at least in the case of certain freedoms. But, for better or worse, the general viewpoint of the ACLU is neither as clear nor as feisty as this. What we are offered instead is a kind of well-meaning goo. There is no single manifesto from which to quote, for the ACLU, as mentioned above, proceeds more from consensus than from formal statements of purpose. The following phrases are all, however, lifted from statements in ACLU publications and from books and letters of ACLU supporters. Let us take a look at some of them (all refer to the subject of freedom of expression): "essential for citizen participation in the governmental process;" "healthy balance between stability and change"; "citizenship in a modern democracy"; "broadest possible dissemination of ideas"; "the balance of free-

dom and social obligation that is the mark of a democratic state"; "the function of privacy in a democratic society"; "the free flow of information necessary to an enlightened citizenry."

These phrases don't sound quite right, do they? It's not that they're wrong really—who, after all, wants an unenlightened citizenry?—but they are weak reeds on which to support a concept of civil liberties. They give far too much away, and concede too many points to the enemies of freedom. It is simply too easy, given the premises of the ACLU, for an advocate of censorship to say, as many have, "Come, now, do you really think that democratic values are enhanced by allowing Nazis to march and give public speeches? Is preparation for citizenship really furthered by protecting the right of racist hate sheets to advocate sending blacks to Africa?" There are legitimate answers to these objections, of course, but they are not readily forthcoming from the amorphous social-utility analysis which underlies so much ACLU thinking. The fact that ACLU members resist the arguments of would-be censors even in the case of highly sensitive examples of free expression is more of a tribute to the members' courage and passion than to the logic of their formal principles.

Perhaps I am being slightly too harsh

to the ACLU. After all, most of its members are denizens of the upper middle class left-liberal milieu, and they bring with them certain rather overblown assumptions concerning the democratic *mythos*. But, as conservative intellectuals are always reminding us, ideas have consequences. Libertarians as well as run-of-the-mill ACLU members should keep in mind the fact that there is an alternative, and very sinister, tradition on the left which takes a very different view of civil liberties. This is the Marcusean ethos, described above, which has as its operational roots in the Leninist state and which makes only the shallowest pretense of recognizing the rights of dissent and free expression. In this frame of values, liberty of any sort is viewed as a mere bourgeois prejudice that has no place in the revolutionary order. In most of the world, this viewpoint is that of the political left. The American Civil Liberties Union, despite its faults, has helped to keep alive an alternative conception of human activity within the ranks of left intellectuals, and has been a significant factor in keeping the American left from becoming completely totalitarianized. For that, and the resulting freeing up of political debate, it deserves our thanks.

Besides, someday I might want to mutilate a cross in New Jersey. □

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September, and I can see no further point in staying in here another 20 days waiting for my court date. I have been unlawfully arrested and imprisoned for seven days.

There is nothing else to do but pay the ransom. At long last the jailer comes, gets me out of the cell. A clerk hands me a receipt for the \$750 bond, and I walk out. My pastor, an elder, and my counselor are waiting. "Welcome to the world of unreality!" my counselor laughs at me. Blinking in the bright sunshine, I look at the trees, the asphalt. It is all unreal. I hug them all and we leave.

On September 28, 1987 a trial was held in the Bartlett City Court, Judge Robert Rose presiding, on the charge of "no business license". My motion for a jury trial, and all my other motions, were denied. It was revealed in sworn testimony that a Tennessee Department of Revenue agent, working with the IRS agent investigating me, had sicced the

City of Bartlett on me. I was found guilty. On October 1, 1987 a trial was held in the Bartlett City Court, Judge Freeman Marr presiding, on the charge of "failure to appear." I was found guilty and fined a total of \$150. Both convictions have been appealed, and under Tennessee law I will get a new trial in the Circuit Court.

Was it worth it, worth seven days in jail to fight an \$18.50 business license and an unlawful arrest? Worth it to discomfort and upset my family and friends? Worth the loss of time, worth the anguish? Was it a godly act of standing for the rights My God has given me, or was it just a stupid, pointless, bull-headed, quixotic, Pickett's charge against unthinking municipal totalitarianism and government conspiracy?

God forgive us, we've been a nation of cowardly sheep, myself included. I'm tired of people telling me to give up, that there's no hope, that nothing

can be changed. I'm ashamed of living scared, of waiting for somebody else to be first, ashamed of yielding where I ought to stand like a man, for my rights and for my children's.

What do you do when you look around and realize that, sorry and frightened and incapable as you are, nobody else is going to move?

Going to jail did something to me: it left me very pensive and borderline depressed for quite some time. Perhaps "searching for direction" is a better description. For about a month the shock of garlic, pepper, beer, fresh fruit, meat, sunlight, and the laughter of my children, after the sensory deprivation of the slammer, just left me reeling in enjoyment every day—like a drunk turned loose in a brewery.

As far as I'm concerned, God willing, no mothers' son will ever see me darken the door of a jail again as long as I live. □

Appraisal

Alice in Wonderland

by David Ramsay Steele

Walk into any decent bookshop in any part of the English-speaking world, and you are liable to find a shelf or two entirely taken up with the works of Ayn Rand. Week in, week out; year in, year out. If you're a bookseller, this is a sight better than Erich von Däniken or Leo Buscaglia.

Some of Rand's books are novels, some are on esthetics, some on political philosophy, some on epistemology and metaphysics. These are books which, in the words of the old sixties ads for *Catch-22*, "will change your life." They make converts. Typically, the future Randist begins with that bulky mega-seller, *The Fountainhead*. Reading *The Fountainhead* is an overpowering emotional experience. It is a spellbinding story with a certain amount of preaching sprinkled in. The reader may find the ideas, and even more, the hints of ideas, alluring. The novice moves on to *Atlas Shrugged*, even bulkier (1,084 pages) but still phenomenally popular. The story is less spellbinding, indeed, less than spellbinding, and there is much, much more preaching sprinkled in, but by this time the reader has acquired a taste for Rand's distinctive form of rhetoric, and is ready to graduate to her nonfiction works, *For the New Intellectual*, *The Romantic Manifesto*, *The Virtue of Selfishness*, even *Introduction to Objectivist Epistemology*. Here the budding Randist finds, declaimed in strident, bad-tempered prose, a new gospel, a system of ideas, a creed applicable to all aspects of life. Among the articles of this creed are: that there is no God; that laissez-faire capitalism is the best possible economic system; that limited government is the only correct political order; that the United States of America is the best society in human history and virtually always in the right in its conflicts with other powers; that cigarette smoking is both harmless and morally virtuous; that

Hume and Kant are loathsome villains, whilst Aristotle, Aquinas, and Ayn Rand are the great heroes of philosophy; that Rachmaninoff is a hero of music while J. S. Bach and Richard Wagner are among the villains, with their "malevolent sense of life"; that Dostoevsky and Hugo are great novelists; that, in more recent times, Ian Fleming and Mickey Spillane are also outstanding writers—and, of course, Ayn Rand; that a photograph can never be a work of art; that liking horror stories always indicates a mystical outlook and therefore mental sickness. And, most famously, that altruism or self-sacrifice is the great vice and source of all vices, whilst egoism or selfishness is the great virtue and source of all virtues.

There are many readers of Rand who graduate in this way, just by reading the books, without authoritative guidance, and they will perhaps tell you that the above is a caricature, that there is no creed, that some of these items are just Rand's personal opinions, with which they (the readers) happen to disagree. But in the old days there was an organized Randian church. It was called the Nathaniel Branden Institute. It lasted from 1958 until 1968, when it terminated due to the messy and spiteful falling out of Rand and Nathaniel, the rock upon which she had hoped to found her church.

When the Nathaniel Branden Institute (NBI) was in operation, there could never be any doubt in the minds of its apostles, adherents, apostates, or

excommunicates that Randism or Objectivism was indeed a creed. If you didn't smoke, you had better have a damned good reason—a certificate signed by several Objectivist physicians might be safest. If you were married to a theist, you had better get a divorce. If you were depraved enough to enjoy Bach, better change your musical tastes pronto.

Like many cults, the Randist network of NBI (which existed only in North America) used group pressure, scorn, and contempt to humiliate and degrade those individuals who betrayed wretchedness by signs of deviance—in this case, by liking Tolstoy, feeling a duty to help one's relatives, growing a moustache, entertaining the thought that there might be a God, feeling tolerant towards homosexuality, or being concerned about the disappearance of living species due to industrial pollution.

Ayn Rand is, on many counts, a remarkable figure. The mere sales of her books constitute an outstanding achievement, but I cannot think of any historical parallels for someone who used a popular art form to successfully promote an all-encompassing doctrine, especially one that was so eccentric a mix of disparate elements, and one that was so out of fashion when she began to propound it. We have to imagine something like Ferdinand Lassalle writing Jack London's novels, but even this does not come near the strange prodigiousness of Rand's accomplishments. She has had a significant impact upon the world, but there

are unmistakable signs that the impact is only beginning. She has had a traceable influence upon the Reagan administration, which might have pleased her (she died in 1982) even though she fiercely opposed Reagan, because—and if you don't know already, shut your eyes and see if you can guess—he was anti-abortion, a clear demonstration that he was evil and sick, even though he might be posing as an anti-communist.

It is often claimed that Rand gave birth to the modern libertarian movement. This is an exaggeration, but it is true that the overwhelming majority of leading lights in the early libertarian movement of the 1960s had earlier gone through a Randist phase, and even today the peculiar quirks of Randist jargon ("facts of reality," "whim worshipper," "Robin Hood ethics," "blank out") pop up occasionally.

A Rivetting Tale

The tale told by Barbara Branden* is absolutely rivetting. It is considered high praise to say of a book that, having once begun it, you can't put it down, but for me the more significant accolade is that *having finished it* you can't put it down, and that is certainly true of this amazing and fascinating story. It recounts Rand's life, partly on the basis of personal recollection and partly on the basis of detailed research. The portrait of Rand is outrageously vivid, yet patchy. There was something abnormally potent and enthralling about Rand, and although those who never met her can hardly reconstruct exactly what it was, Branden's book is impressive testimony to its existence and approximate contours. Yet there are puzzling gaps and murky areas.

The organism which was later to denote itself as "Ayn Rand" was born in St Petersburg during the abortive Russian Revolution of 1905, and given the name Alice Rosenbaum. The daughter of a self-made chemist, she emerged as a distant, precocious child. By the age of 10 she was already making snap judgments about everything and everybody in the world, turning these judgments into unshakeable dogmas,

demanding as the price of non-belligerence that people accept these dogmas, and seething with violent indignation against anyone who denied, or for that matter, failed to personify, these dogmas. In one of the taped interviews which Rand gave Branden decades later, Rand says: "By fifteen, my sex theory was fully formed." (34) As the context makes clear, the 15-year-old's theory of sex incorporated views she had held passionately since at least the age of 10.

Alice and her family suffered hardships during the civil war following the Bolshevik *putsch*. Bolshevik repression served only to encourage in her young breast precisely those counter-revolutionary feelings the persecution was designed to extirpate. By chance, Alice avoided the liquidation which the heroine of her first novel, *We the Living*, could not escape, and in 1926 she contrived to visit relatives in Chicago. Like droves of others before and since, Alice had to lie to get into the US, pretending her visit was intended to be temporary. Despite this, immigration controls were not prominent among the state interventions later denounced by Rand.

On the boat over, Alice changed her name to Ayn (rhymes with MINE!). In one of Branden's many infuriating

change their names.

From Chicago, Rand moved to Hollywood in search of fame as a screen writer. Awkward, pathetic, and still far from fluent in English, she seems to have aroused feelings of warm altruism and Christian charity in many people, who went to great lengths to help her. In Russia she had admired De Mille's pictures, so she went to the De Mille studio, to be given the usual polite brush-off. In the street she spotted De Mille in the flesh, and stood gawping at him, provoking his curiosity. De Mille got her a job, and the De Milles took the little Russian waif under their protective wings. Working as an extra on "King of Kings," she instantly fell in love with, and later married, another extra, Frank O'Connor, who was to spend most of his life boozing and living off her books, the epitome of the "mooching bum" she was always cursing in her apopleptic writings. With De Mille's help again, she got a job summarizing and adapting screenplay proposals. During the thirties she became aware of the strong Bolshevik sympathies of Western intellectuals, and worked on her first novel and her play, *Penthouse Legend* (better known as *Night of January 16th*) which introduced the gimmick, since imitated several times, of having more than one

ending, with the choice made by the audience or, as in this case, by a jury selected from the audience. Both novel and play were modest successes, and Rand became known as that then-freakish creature, a writer and intellectual who was a strong anti-communist and in no way sympathetic to socialism.

cialism.

In the late thirties and early forties she worked on her second novel, *The Fountainhead*, and worked for the Willkie campaign against the reelection of Roosevelt. She met many of the leading figures of American conservatism, which in those pre-Buckley days still contained strong elements of classical liberalism. She was later to fall out with all these conservative acquaintances. With the sale of the movie rights to *The Fountainhead* for fifty thousand dollars, Rand moved from obscurity to fame and from poverty to comfort. In 1947 she appeared as a

It is considered high praise to say of a book that, having once begun it, you can't put it down, but for me the more significant accolade is that having finished it you can't put it down, and that is certainly true of this amazing and fascinating story.

omissions, she explains that "Ayn" was taken from the name of a Finnish writer whom Alice had not read, but says nothing more about this writer, or whether Rand subsequently read her—or him. It goes without saying that the Finnish Ayn was a ferociously evil, mentally sick, whim-worshipping mystic, like everyone else, but readers need to be told how this discovery was made, and any little details associated with it. Some years later, Ayn Rosenbaum selected the name "Rand" from her Remington-Rand typewriter. As Rand remarked, criminals and writers usually keep their initials when they

* In *The Passion of Ayn Rand*, by Barbara Branden, Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1986.

"friendly witness" before the House Un-American Activities Committee, investigating Communist infiltration of Hollywood. Branden makes some gestures towards defending Rand for this discreditable activity.

As *the Fountainhead* was beginning its delayed success, and while working on *Atlas Shrugged*, Rand heard from two young admirers, who were to change their names to Nathaniel and Barbara Branden.

(It has been contended that the name "Branden" is derived from "ben-Rand," but Branden doesn't confirm this.) They both became worshippers of Rand, and introduced her to other acolytes. In 1958, NBI was formed to indoctrinate enquirers and followers into the

complete system of Ayn Rand: her opinions on art, politics, and metaphysics were presented to the "students of Objectivism" as sacred truths. But even before the formation of NBI, Nathaniel had first married Barbara on Rand's recommendation, then commenced a once-a-week sexual arrangement with Rand, 20 years his senior, with the full knowledge and consent of his and Rand's spouses. This "rational" affair continued for a decade, as NBI expanded, Rand's fame grew, and Rand and Nathaniel lectured together to the unsuspecting flock. The great break between Rand and Nathaniel came after an interregnum in the affair, following which Nathaniel refused to recommence it because of his involvement with another woman, an involvement which he had kept from Rand's knowledge. Rand's discovery of how she had been deceived led to the expulsion and anathematizing of Nathaniel, the break-up of NBI, and the demand that all true followers of Objectivism should join Rand in pouring scorn, hatred, and lies upon the Brandens. Apparently, Rand's theory was that since Nathaniel had behaved so immorally, he had forfeited any right to decent treatment, so any kind of stories could be fabricated about him—including the charge that he had misappropriated the funds of NBI. The question was even raised at an Objectivist discussion of whether it would be moral to have Nathaniel assassinated. (Bear in mind that these "rational" people were kept in the dark

about what Nathaniel was supposed to have done, and were expected to follow Rand blindly in attacking Nathaniel.) Much, one supposes, to Rand's vast annoyance, her denunciations of Nathaniel and intrigues against him did not halt his extraordinary success as a pop psychologist. His fame as both writer and therapist has grown remarkably. His *Psychology of Self-Esteem* (21 impressions since 1969) deals at length

Rand always denounced the libertarian movement, its philosophy, its methods, its goals, and its personalities.

Libertarians, on the other hand, have always been frank and over-generous about what they owed to Rand.

with problems of insufficient self-esteem, but says nothing about the problem of excessive self-esteem.

The soap opera continues. Some of it you can catch up on by reading *The Passion of Ayn Rand*. The orthodox Randists, led by Leonard Peikoff, have put it about that anyone who utters a word in praise of the book is to be shunned, boycotted, and cut off root and branch. Outside the ranks of the Elect, voices have been raised that Branden's omissions and misleading emphases call for correction, and we can expect numerous memoirs and polemical commentaries. I very much doubt that any of them will be half as well-written or gripping as this one.

A Selective Picture

I am not one of those blessed by past personal contact with any of the original Randist apostles. I cannot pronounce on the numerous allegations and counter-allegations which Branden's book has stirred up. But it is clear from a modest amount of background knowledge, plus a careful examination of *The Passion of Ayn Rand*, that it is a piece of special pleading. The author is, I am sure, telling the truth and nothing but the truth, as she remembers it, but she is not telling the whole truth. She places facts in that light which best suits her purposes. On my first reading, I concluded that Rand had treated Branden very badly, and Branden had responded with continued adoration, despite some criticisms. On my second reading, I con-

cluded that the author was all the time working very hard to give me exactly that impression—which by no means implies that it is untrue, but does put it in a very different perspective. The attitude Branden has towards Rand is one that individuals generally hold only towards their parents: a burning anger, a rage for self-justification, contained by a rigid insistence that the parent is good and worthy. In Branden's case, this seems to be bound up with her urgent need to deny the patent fact that Rand had a blighting effect upon her (Branden's) life, as Rand did on the lives of most of those she knew.

This book contains many statements describing Rand as an extraordinary intellect—"the brilliance and intricacy of her mind" (173), "her astonishing intellectual powers . . . vast intelligence" (303)—yet it contains no evidence for these statements. It is asserted that Rand's conversation was tremendously high-powered and persuasive, but no attempt is made, by this veteran of hundreds of these conversations, to reproduce any of the searing insights or masterly analyses. I conclude, on the evidence of Rand's writings, that this is because there were none: undoubtedly Rand possessed an uncommon personal magnetism, especially for docile souls who craved for someone to tell them what was what, but she was no great thinker in any field. (There are two or three isolated witticisms. Asked who, in her proposed kind of society, would "look after the janitors," Rand replied ". . . the janitors.")

Branden does mention Rand's "series of angry ruptures with people who had been her friends" (153) but somewhat plays this down. Rand fell out nastily with almost everyone, a propensity which some Randists have inherited. There is no mention here, for instance, of Rand's breaks with Rose Wilder Lane or Edith Efron.

Branden's angry worship of Rand is revealed in her constant desire to catch Rand out in mistakes, and yet defend Rand strenuously against the unpleasant inferences which might be drawn from these mistakes, though such inferences are often all too obviously warranted. Branden's apology for Rand's behavior over the alterations to

We the Living (114-15) is noteworthy. The first edition of *We the Living* reflects Rand's political ideas shortly after her arrival in the U.S., including her Nietzschean contempt for the fate of the common herd. Some time later, Rand brought her views more into conformity with Anglo-Saxon liberalism. She removed from later editions the passages praising ruthless elitism, but stated in her foreword: "I have not added or eliminated to or from [sic] the content of the novel . . . all the changes are merely editorial line-changes." Branden tries to defend this by a soft-focus exegesis of the shrill anti-common man message of the first edition. This not only glosses over Rand's lack of candor about the change; it leaves unexamined the broader question, Rand's reticence about her own change of views and therefore about the sources of that change of views. For any non-Randist with an interest in fiction there is also something quaint about the assumption, undoubtedly made by Rand and shared by Branden, that a speech by a "good" character must coincide with the author's own opinions.

Rand had a very poorly developed sense of humor, which she defended by being almost opposed on principle to humor. She had great scorn for the notion that one should be able to laugh at oneself. By taking up this position, she deprived herself of many long hours of rich amusement. Rand and all her circle were people who took themselves too seriously. Her laissez-faire liberal views aside, she is typical of a certain kind of left-wing intellectual who tries to subject her whole life, including her sexual relationships, to "rationality." Rand's affair with Nathaniel was supposed to be rational. According to Rand, the person one loves represents one's highest values. Since Rand was the noblest person Nathaniel knew, as well as being the most rational person in human history, it was right and proper for them to go to bed once a week. When it came out that Nathaniel no longer wanted an intimate physical involvement with his intellectual mentor, because she was too old and he had found someone else, Rand's sexual jealousy was rationalized in the verdict that Nathaniel was morally depraved. This sort of thing would be merely comical, if it were not that the personal misery was magnified by everyone's determination to be,

as they thought, rational.

Human sexual impulses are largely the outcome of past competition among genes. Human feelings and responses are those which have tended in the past to cause some genes to reproduce themselves more rapidly than others. Our endowment of sexual emotions did not come about in order to enhance the happiness of individuals or the well-being of society, but in order (as it were) to enhance the copyability of little bits of DNA. If you try to make something rational out of that, you make a fool of yourself. Behavior may be legitimately described as "rational" or "irrational" insofar as the means chosen are well or badly suited to achieve the ends sought. It makes no sense to speak of ultimate ends (like whether or not you wish to stay alive or to avoid suffering) as rational or irrational.

The Randist Legacy

Branden tries to defend Rand's humorlessness by relating it to her singularly logical mind (172), but this must be wrong because Rand did not possess a singularly logical mind. She was inclined to sloppy thinking. She took herself too seriously, partly because she was humored by the likes of the Brandens, who tolerated her cantankerousness on the mistaken grounds that she was a great thinker—though even great thinkers should not be humored when they take themselves too seriously. This did a disservice to Rand, as such humoring generally does, because it enabled her to live increasingly within her own world of fantasy, unchallenged by effective criticism. Perhaps she was too set by her twenties for any criticism to be effective. Be that as it may, gullible followers are never scarce.

Branden's desire to place Rand's tantrums in a favorable light often leads her to make dubious judgments. Branden remarks upon "how rare it had been in her life that a hand was held out to her in simple human kindness." (169) On the evidence of Branden's own book, this is far from the case. In her 1957 autobiographical note to *Atlas Shrugged* ("About the Author"), Rand asserts: "I had a difficult struggle, . . . No one helped me . . ." It appears from Branden's account that Rand was a constant beneficiary of charity and kindness until she started making money from *The Fountain-*

head. When she arrived in Chicago, she was looked after by the relatives who had made it possible for her to get out of Russia. She declared then that when she became rich, she would buy her aunt a Rolls-Royce. When she did become rich, she didn't even reply to these relative's letters. On arrival in Los Angeles, Rand stayed at the Studio Club, a philanthropically-subsidized home for young women seeking their fortunes in Hollywood. She was often behind with her rent, but was not evicted. After *We the Living* was published, Rand gratefully sent an autographed copy to the Studio Club director. The Studio Club subsequently had to close for lack of funds. At every turn, people went out of their ways to help Rand by recommending her writings and finding her jobs and contacts. She habitually repaid kindness with indifference or with venom.

The most unsuccessful part of Branden's book is the final chapter, a listing of numerous people of prominence in many fields who have been influenced by Rand. Many of these people are prominent and avowed libertarians. Surely Branden should have mentioned the fact that Rand despised and detested libertarianism? (She does mention Rand's hostility specifically to the Libertarian Party, attributing this to the fact that some LP members were anarchists.) Rand always denounced the libertarian movement, its philosophy, its methods, its goals, and its personalities. Among other things, she castigated it for "plagiarism" of her ideas, an instance of her colossal presumptuousness, since a political movement is free to be influenced by any published writer, libertarians have always been frank or overgenerous about what they owe to Rand, and Rand herself took the ideas from others.

Although Rand's influence is indeed enormous and still growing, Branden overstates it. This is part and parcel of the *ostinato* "rooting for Rand" theme in Branden's book. It only spoils the absorbing account of an intrinsically fascinating figure to keep insisting implausibly that she is a world-shaking genius.

The method of listing people prepared to say "Rand changed my life" is not convincing. The majority of confirmed meat-eaters in the U.S. had some early contact with McDonald's, but this doesn't mean we can confi-

dently attribute the prevalence of meat-eating to the influence of McDonald's. People with an appetite for certain kinds of ideas will gravitate to the purveyors of those ideas. Alan Greenspan does not appear to owe any of his economic ideas to Rand—economic theory was apparently the one area where she did not personally hand down the total truth. Murray Rothbard was a libertarian before he met Rand, and would have been a prodigious free market propagandist aside from his brief association with Rand. The fact that Billie Jean King was inspired by reading *Atlas Shrugged* is not of great consequence for anyone else. Some of the most effective proponents of libertarian ideas, like Ludwig von Mises and Milton Friedman, do not show evidence of the slightest Randist influence. (Mises met and admired Rand, but there is no taint of Randism in his writings.) As for the relationship between Randism and Reaganite conservatism, it should be obvious which is the flea and which is the dog.

The major effect of Rand upon libertarians has been to favor the doctrine of natural rights, though most libertarian writers who do accept natural rights (Rothbard, Nozick, David Friedman, for example) adhere to forms of the doctrine which aren't particularly close to Rand's, and to date this preoccupation with natural rights has not borne any fruit in the shape of a coherent explanation or defense of the doctrine (that is any advance upon Spencer). I doubt that Randism will ever have any appreciable direct impact on philosophy or politics, though it may perhaps have some small impact on literature, by helping to rehabilitate the supreme importance of a good story.

The Randist influence on the libertarian movement has slumped in the past 10 years, a thoroughly healthy development, but also an inevitable one, as young people first captivated by Rand find the dogmas beginning to chafe. Randism will never have any influence on *National Review*, *American Spectator* conservatism, enmired as it is in its own equally threadbare, but more popular and more intelligently-argued dogmas, associated with religion, traditionalism, and state-worship.

Randism's influence within the libertarian movement will continue to dwindle away: Rand is becoming to libertarianism something like Fourier is to socialism. The only home for born-again Randists will be in the narrow church of Peikoff and Schwartz, The Ayn Rand Institute and *The Intellectual Activist*. While pouring abuse on libertarianism (mainly because it per-

The true plot of Atlas Shrugged is: how some good looking individuals were saved by coming to agree in every particular with Rand, and how everyone else was eternally damned.

mits a wide range of philosophic and strategic views, encompassing approval of God, anarchy, sexual and chemical deviation, and the natural rights of dispossessed Palestinians) the Objectivist cult offers a warm embrace only to those who swallow the Randist creed in every detail. After all, how could a rational person co-operate politically with anyone who didn't like Rachmaninoff? Given the vast readership of Rand's writings, and the dazzling appeal of a creed which offers a solution to all intellectual, personal, and social problems by learning to mouth a few catch-phrases, I expect that the cult will achieve a very large membership during the next few years, comparable to Scientology or La Rouchism—with about the same intellectual level, the same deleterious effects on the minds and lives of the cult members, and the same, absolutely negligible, amount of influence on political thought.

Atlas Wined

Rand's best work by far is *The Fountainhead*, an extraordinarily gripping story based on the idea that a person who knows what he wants and strives for it without being afraid of other people's reactions is admirable, while a person who is continually taking his bearings from other people's evaluations is sadly warped. Rand's original title was *Second-Hand Lives*. The characters are stylized, diagrammatic representations of notions from Rand's ethical and psychological theories, but she has taken some pains to make them different from each other,

internally consistent, and believable. The book is especially attractive for readers who know nothing of Rand's ideas, for the characters' bizarre motivations then seem to be sometimes inexplicable, and this adds an intriguing air of mystery to an otherwise cut-and-dried narrative. Judging from Branden's account, it is an enormous pity that Rand was made to shorten the novel by eliminating one major character. Inclusion of Roark's first cohabitee, the film star Vesta Dunning, would have made Roark less conventionally well-behaved and his egoism more of a challenge. (Rand, who never fully mastered English, mistakenly used the term "egotism" in *The Fountainhead*. Instead

of correcting this in later editions, she attached a note explaining that she had been misled by a faulty dictionary—and to prove it, citing the dictionary in question!) In this work Rand displays an extremely astute dramatic sense—inclined to run to crude melodrama, but there is a welcome niche in fiction for crude melodrama. Somehow this talent of Rand's was largely lost when she came to perpetrate that crashing failure, *Atlas Shrugged*.

In *The Fountainhead*, the preaching is kept within bounds, and is generally not too jarringly inauthentic. The one bad lapse here is the long speech in which Ellsworth Toohey lays bare his own motivations—but Rand had put herself in an impossible position with her ethical theory. For Rand, a villain must be a completely self-sacrificing person. Toohey is an intelligent villain who wants power, but somehow it has to come across that in wanting power he is not being selfish—which would be virtuous! If Toohey had been dedicated to a mistaken ideal—based on the theory that everyone would be happier in a world of self-sacrifice—it would be convincing, but we would have no reason to hate him. If Toohey had known that universal self-sacrifice would lead to universal misery, but wanted it for the selfish motive of getting power for himself, this would have been detestable, but dangerous to Rand's egoistic message. Toohey has to want to do his bit towards a goal which (it is made clear) can arrive only after his death, to know that the goal will make everyone completely wretched, and to want it for

that reason. But this just makes him an unbelievable loony, bereft of any plausible link to real persons like Lewis Mumford and Harold Laski (who were among Rand's models for Toohey).

The film of *The Fountainhead* retains enough of the book that it must deeply puzzle any reflective person who sees it, unaware of the ethical and political baggage. Gary Cooper is a disaster as Roark. Branden claims that the film was shot nearly unchanged from Rand's script, but surely this must be wrong. As I recall, the film plays down or conceals altogether the crucial fact that the building dynamited by Roark is a government housing project. Surely Rand would never have willingly permitted that.

The Fountainhead illustrates Rand's disgust for people she called "second-handers." There is a strange oversight in the treatment of this subject by Rand and her followers. The second-hander is someone who thinks relationships are more important than ideas. The heroic or independent person is someone who thinks ideas are valuable in themselves and that relationships are merely instrumental. Neither Rand nor Branden ever seem to have noticed that the first is virtually a definition of a woman's personality, and the second, of a man's personality. Branden does note that Rand had problems with her own femininity, that when she was young she had a fierce crush on a beautiful female tennis player, that Rand wore short hair and a cape, chain-smoked, and for a while even carried a cane, that she was always strangely drawn to beautiful women. Naively or wisely, Branden, who psychologizes a lot on other matters, does not speculate about this. Perhaps sub-conscious perception of Rand's gender ambiguity helps to account for her otherwise inexplicable spell, as, according to W. W. Bartley III, was the case with Wittgenstein.

The Fountainhead continues to be a huge commercial success, but Branden cannot resist her usual extravagant overstatement. She refers to "the odyssey of *The Fountainhead*, unique in publishing history . . ." (180) Literally this is correct: the career of every book published is unique. But Branden makes clear that what she means is that Rand's novels are unmatched in

their contrast between a slow start and subsequent multi-million sales. There have actually been much more extreme contrasts, for example *The Great Gatsby*, *Steppenwolf*, and *Lord of the Rings*.

In *Atlas Shrugged* a future United States is sinking into interventionist chaos, with more and more govern-

The only home for the born-again Randist will be in the narrow church of Peikoff and Schwartz, the Ayn Rand Institute and The Intellectual Activist.

ment controls causing more and more disorganization. The rest of the world has long since collapsed into the barbarism of starving "people's states." One by one, all the most brilliant intellects in the U. S.—businessmen, artists, scientists, businessmen, philosophers, businessmen, businessmen, and businessmen—mysteriously disappear. The heroine, who manages a large railroad corporation, becomes aware that there is a conspiracy behind the disappearances. The plot is that of a mystery story, but there is no mystery: the solution is obvious before page 50, and is hammered into the reader's head on each of the next few hundred pages. The great achievers are going on strike, because they are fed up with the way everyone else is living off their achievements whilst maligning and persecuting them. The achievers have disappeared into obscurity, and every year they all take a holiday together in Galt's Gulch, a utopian haven in the mountains, based on gold coinage and the mutual respect born of rational greed.

The book has many virtues, including a fundamentally sound plot and a lucid, unpretentious narrative style. It was the first major work I read connected with twentieth-century free market ideas, and I was at first dazzled by its seeming audacity and its eerie, anachronistic, dreamlike quality. I was also inspired by its hints of a fully-worked-out theoretical system, a metaphysical, epistemological, and ethical structure which somehow supported the author's political conclusions. It was a great disappointment to find later that this system did not exist. The various speeches and allusions in *Atlas Shrugged*—so obviously far-fetched

and logically slipshod, but perhaps defensible as rhetoric within a novel—are themselves quoted at length in Rand's non-fiction essays on philosophy, art, and politics. The horrible, pitiful truth finally dawned: *this is all there is to Rand*. She really believes that this mouth-frothing sloganeering is philosophy, is reasoning, is the way to persuade rational people.

All the faults of *The Fountainhead* have become horribly magnified, and most of its saving features have been lost. *Atlas Shrugged* doesn't contain any convincing characters, only cardboard cut-outs which move jerkily this way and that, while the ventriloquist-author has them spouting her doctrines. The good characters all agree exactly with the author's views on sex, business, music, philosophy, politics, and architecture—the only exception is that sometimes one of the good characters hasn't quite grasped a significant point, and when the penny drops and he comes into full conformity with Rand's opinions, this is a highly dramatic development. The bad guys all agree with what the author says all her ideological opponents must believe (almost entirely different from what these opponents actually do believe, outside fiction). Both goodies and baddies continually expound their incredibly shallow *Weltanschauungen* in Rand's stilted jargon. Unlike Toohey in *The Fountainhead*, none of the villains is intelligent or effective. (Stadler doesn't count; he is *stated* to be a genius, but this never affects his described behavior.)

Just as in real life Rand surrounded herself with yes-persons, hanging on her words and reciting them anxiously back to her, so in *Atlas Shrugged* she creates a world of zombies mouthing her patented terminology and going into the zombie equivalent of convulsions of delight whenever they hit upon another of her conceptual gems. Galt's Gulch is indeed Rand's Utopia: a society where everyone makes speeches all the time expounding Rand's opinions, the listeners all blissfully nodding their heads in agreement. The true plot of *Atlas Shrugged* is: how some good-looking individuals were saved by coming to agree in every particular with Rand, and how everyone else was eternally damned. The book has often

been described as nightmarish; it has something of the unnerving quality of a delusional system made real which we find in some of Philip K. Dick's novels, notably *Eye in the Sky*. (But Dick could really write, and he was doing it on purpose.)

Of all modern tendencies in fiction, Rand's novels are closest in spirit to the socialist realist works favored by the Stalinist regime. Stalin said: "Artists are engineers of the soul." Rand said: "Art is the technology of the soul."

One of the climactic points of *Atlas Shrugged* is Galt's long speech, which explains Rand's theories, in Rand's language, over all radio and TV channels simultaneously, and helps to bring about the downfall of "the looters." Actually, airing this tedious drivel over all stations would speedily lead to a revolutionary overthrow of the government which permitted such lax regulation of the airwaves, followed by the guillotining of Galt. With cretins like Rand's villains running the U. S., I reckon I could take over within a week, given a handful of Marines and a few rock 'n' roll tapes, except that plenty of others would get in ahead of me. Galt's speech is 58 pages long, and I suppose 90 percent of readers skip most of it, as I did on my first reading.

Branden claims that it took Rand "two full years" to write. (266) It feels like two full years reading it.

In Branden's judgment, part of Galt's speech takes "a major step toward solving the problem that haunted philosophers since the time of Aristotle and Plato: the relationship of 'ought' to 'is'—the question of in what manner moral values can be derived from facts." No such problem has haunted philosophers since the times of Plato or Aristotle. In the eighteenth century, David Hume raised a different question: whether values could be derived from facts (alone) *at all*, but this attracted no attention at the time, and didn't haunt anyone until the twentieth century.

According to Galt's speech, in a passage singled out by Branden, "There is only one fundamental alternative in the universe: existence of non-existence—and it pertains to a single class of entities: to living organisms." This is false. Any class of matter

(atoms, crystals, stars, etc.), not just living organisms, may exist or not exist. Galt (Rand) also emphasizes that: "to think is an act of choice . . . *man is a being of volitional consciousness*." This also is false. Thinking is involuntary, like digestion or blood-clotting. If you don't believe this, try to stop thinking for a few seconds. Galt (Rand) also keeps insisting that "existence exists." This seems to be of momentous importance to Galt (Rand), but in the only sense I can make of it (that "existence" is something which exists in addition to all the things which exist) it is not evident, and I believe it is false. (If what is meant is that "Things which exist exist"—existents exist—then that is trite and has never been denied by anyone.) And so it goes on, 58 pages of it, one pompous vacuity after another.

There is the possibility that *Atlas Shrugged* may be produced as a TV miniseries. This would probably be its most favorable incarnation. The characterization is not up to the level of *Falcon Crest*, but the plot is a lot more interesting, and thankfully most of the pedantic dialogue would have to be cut. Galt's speech could be eliminated altogether, and something should be done about the fact that Rand's "future" is now impossible, since she did

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not foresee such developments as the eclipse of rail by air travel. Maybe Dagny Taggart should run an airline instead of a railroad.

Some of Branden's misjudgments are astounding. On *Atlas Shrugged* she refers to "the faint sado-masochistic overtones of its love scenes, the troubling violence of the sexual encounters." (299) Nearly all of Rand's romantic scenes in all her works are loudly and obviously sadistic. She was into domination. There is much grabbing of wrists, yanking of arms, ripping of cloth, and brusque insertion. Both *Penthouse Legend* and *The Fountainhead* contain rapes, performed by the heroes and presented as entirely admirable. (It is true that in both cases it

is made clear that the rapees "really want it.")

It is amusing also to have Branden discussing Rand's early penchant for "understatement." The only understatement of which Rand was capable was to stamp on the reader's toes instead of booting him in the groin. Rand was a primitive. Any kind of subtlety was beyond her.

Randolatry

The disciples of Ayn Rand were second-handers *par excellence*. They quavered at the thought of her disapproval. They humored her outbursts and reverently went along with the make-believe that she was a towering intellect. Mrs Branden, for example, could have walked away from it all. Potentially, she seems to have been a better writer than Rand, but she gave that up for the sake of her submission before the cult. All this was done in the name of reason and self-interest. It is a familiar spectacle to see individuals suffering the cruel and vindictive humiliation reserved for sinners within a religious cult, but it is appallingly ironic when this deliberate humiliation is done in the name of that person's self-interest. Rand and her circle—including the Brandens—helped to introduce a lot of entirely pointless misery into the lives of their followers, and I am afraid that Branden is insufficiently clear about expressing her regrets for the harm that she participated in doing, even though she was also one of the victims.

Randism was and is a religious cult. ("Religion" is "a system of faith and worship.") Branden has often described Objectivism as a cult, but in this book she withdraws this label. She now states that although Objectivism has some of the features of a cult, it cannot be a cult because of its commitment to reason and individualism. (352) Well, there is a lot of *talk* about reason and individualism, just as among Bolsheviks there is a lot of talk about science. But reason does not consist in shrieking the word "reason" all the time. It consists, as Socrates put it, in "following the argument wherever it leads," especially, of course, if it leads where you don't want to go. There is no evidence that the Randists understood the most elementary re-

quirements of rational discourse. Branden quotes Sidney Hook, from his review of Rand's *For the New Intellectual*: "Despite the great play with the word 'reason,' one is struck by the absence of any serious argument in this unique combination of tautology and extravagant absurdity." (321) That is exactly right. The Objectivists, no less than the devotees of a theistic sect, are engaged in abusing their minds by reiterating articles of faith. As for their individualism, it reminds me of the individualism of the mob in *The Life of Brian*. Trying to get the crowd to stop worshipping him, Brian shouts: "You are all individuals." The crowd drones back ecstatically: "We are individuals." Unlike Brian, Rand was addicted to the idolatry of her besotted admirers.

Rand wrote an article called "The Argument from Intimidation" (included in *The Virtue of Selfishness*) in which she describes the kind of *ad hominem* argument which says that only those who are in some way deficient can hold a particular point of view. In the heyday of socialism, this kind of argument was commonly employed against any voices dissenting from socialist dogma. However, there is one writer who resorts to this kind of argument more than any other, and that writer is Ayn Rand. The Argument from Intimidation is her stock-in-trade. (For example, the essay "Collectivist Ethics," in *The Virtue of Selfishness*, opens: "Certain questions, which one frequently hears, are not philosophical queries, but psychological confessions . . ." Again, on the first page of the introduction to that book, we are told that to raise doubts about the advisability of Rand's use of the word "selfishness" implies "moral coward-

dice.")

As Branden points out, although Rand in principle conceded the possibility of honest disagreement or honest error, in practice she tended always to conclude that disagreement with her opinions was a symptom of sickness and therefore of evil. Rand herself announced that she had "long ago" lost interest in debates with critics.

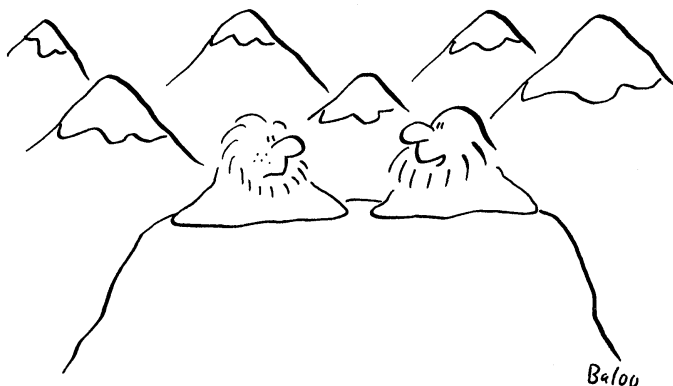
Egoistic Ethics

Rand asserts that ethics is entirely based on reason, and that the supreme moral virtue is selfishness, or rational self-interest. This is developed at times (See "The Objectivist Ethics" in *The Virtue of Selfishness*) by biological, or biological-sounding, arguments. What is good for an organism is what contributes to that organism's survival and well-being. This seems clear enough: it is moral to do what is to one's advantage and immoral to do what is against one's advantage. It follows that it is moral to cheat, murder, and steal, on those occasions where a rational analysis shows this to be to one's advantage. But no such conclusion is drawn by Rand. Respecting other people's lives and property, even when this hurts one's bank balance or survival prospects, is stated to be in one's rational self-interest. From a biological point of view—maximizing one's chances of survival, good health, or reproduction—this is obviously not always the case. Rand explains that the standard of ethics is not the individual's bodily or biological survival, but the survival of "man *qua* man," or man as a rational being. Thus, all Rand's biological-sounding arguments go by the board: it may even be "selfish," in her redefinition of the term, to court death for

the sake of a "cherished value." But there is no clear stipulation of how the nature of man as a rational being, or the values which it is permissible for a rational egoist to cherish, are to be determined. The outcome is that Rand appears to be urging egoism, but is actually urging unselfish sacrifice of one's own interests to what she tells us is the life proper to a rational being. All this terrible confusion and double-talk arises because Rand cannot stomach the manifest truth that it can be to a person's advantage to violate the rights of another person. If ethics is to tell us that people's rights may not be violated, it must tell us that we ought sometimes to do things against our own interests.

Rand's main weapon against the above point is to imply (Argument from Intimidation) that anyone who makes it must believe that "man is a sacrificial animal." Here she overlooks two points: 1) that it is generally held that many decisions are morally neutral: ethically, you may do one thing or the other; and 2) that moralists have focussed on cases where individuals ought to sacrifice their interests, not because sacrifice of one's interests *per se* is held to be necessarily good, but because it is assumed that there is comparatively little problem about getting individuals to do what is right when that happens to be also to their advantage.

In talking to various Randists, I have been offered two sorts of elaborations of Rand's argument. 1) It is claimed that to violate someone's rights when this appears to be to one's own benefit will always in fact be to one's own net disadvantage because of the psychological repercussions, to wit, the loss of one's self-respect. This, however, throws the justification of morality onto something which is either an "irrational whim," or some other principle of morality (what forms one's standards of self-respect) which in turn requires justification. It is not true that everyone's self-respect will suffer if they violate someone else's rights (or suffer enough to outweigh the gains). I have met people who would never be able to live with themselves if they passed up the chance to gyp some poor sucker, especially by violating his rights, the more violations the better. One might say that they ought not to be like this, but in that case one is appealing to a moral standard not deriva-



"Now, until you've actually achieved perfect wisdom, you'll have to learn to evade questions."

ble from that person's self-interest. (Rand holds that *all* morality is self-interest alone.) 2) It is claimed that violations of rights wouldn't work out well for everyone in the long run. One version of this is to claim that, for instance, if everyone were a thief, wealth would be greatly reduced, and there would be a lot less to steal—which is no doubt true. However, this is not an argument from self-interest. It is an argument from the welfare of society. A rationally-minded person will weigh the consequences of his actions—if he is a pure egoist, the consequences for just his welfare. Any one act of theft, or even any one person dedicating his life to theft, is not going to make the

difference between a society in which rights are generally respected and a society of interminable pillage. A rational egoist will scoff at appeals to the long-term consequences for society, especially if he is getting on in years. The rational egoist will be a free rider on other people's unselfish respect for rights. (It is even perfectly reasonable for an egoist to support laws against theft whilst himself practicing theft: there is nothing contradictory about this position.)

The Gospel of Spleen

In one respect, the tragedy of Rand is like the tragedy of the Beatles: because she could do one or two things very well, she became surrounded by a lot of admirers who were prepared to encourage her to believe she could do any number of things superbly. By sticking to fiction, she could have become a sort of minor right-wing Jack London. As it was, she didn't write much fiction, and most of it is not outstanding.

But the tragedy, in Rand's case, begins earlier. If Branden's reconstruction of Alice's early life is at all reliable, it seems that she had the makings of a good mind, but lacked any training in critical thought. She was more intelligent than almost everyone she met, and soon formed the theory that other people's inane and unsystematic defenses of conventional thinking were the only alternatives to her own half-baked notions. Since she was quick-witted, she was always able to improvise

new elaborations to these notions, without ever wondering whether some of them might be radically mistaken. By the time she was able to read arguments by people cleverer than she was, it was too late for her to learn the elements of rational enquiry: she was a messiah who announced the truth and cursed all who rejected it.

Recalling what she said to a Na-

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thaniel after their first meeting with Rand, Branden reports: "I feel as if, intellectually, I've always stood on a leaking life raft in the ocean, and as I jump to cover one leak with my foot, another spurts forth—and I leap to cover it—and then there's another . . . But now I have the sense that it might be possible to stand on solid ground . . . as if for the first time the earth is firm under my feet." (236) Rand fed the appetite for certainty. She spoke as if she had a fully worked-out system which accounted for everything. Such a system, if it could exist at all, would be a vast structure made up of minutely-reasoned segments. Rand's theories, such as they are, do not form a vast structure, and she had no talent for minute reasoning. The impression of all-encompassing explanation is given by bold, broad, sweeping, imprecise assertions. An unrelenting covering fire of vituperation and demeaning is maintained against anyone who might point to any of the difficulties with these assertions. Presumably some of the brighter disciples are able to keep the faith by telling themselves that these assertions can be interpreted as gestures indicating the general lines upon which a more rigorous argument might one day be built—but this is an unwarranted attitude, a kind of faith, because (apart from Randism's demonstrable errors at the broadest level) surprising refutations often spring from fine details. The doctrinal structure of Randism is bluff, buttressed by abuse of all critics.

In every sect there is an official and an unofficial doctrine. The official doctrine is formulated, written down, and recited. The unofficial doctrine is conveyed more indirectly. It is a set of attitudes and responses. It may even be denied if an outsider detects it and tries to formulate it. In the case of Randism, part of the unofficial doctrine is that rational people can discern the truth about things at a glance, by a swift act of "integration." (Enemies of Randism are described as "unfocussed"; correct thinking is characterized as "focussing." The impression conveyed by this questionable metaphor is that the more rational you are, the more you will focus, and if you are very rational, you

will be able to discern the truth just by looking because, you see, everything will be sharply in focus.) Another part of the unofficial doctrine is that it is fine and laudable to be a spiteful person, to nurse spiteful feelings and express spiteful sentiments against everything evil and sick—everything that is not Randist. Three-quarters of Rand's essays are exercises in unremitting spitefulness. (In a review of Barbara Branden's book, Peter Schwartz declares: "Ayn Rand does not need me to defend her against lice." Circular letter to readers of *The Intellectual Activist*, 20th August 1986. To appreciate that sort of remark, you need to understand, not merely that he pats himself on the head for having written it, but that he pats himself on the head because it is such a very *rational* thing to write. He abandons all intelligent discrimination to let loose his infantile rage, and is able to feel that this is a worthy and heroic, because supremely rational, way to behave.)

"The virtue of selfishness" sounds like a serious challenge to conventional thinking, or at least an echo of Stirner, but because "selfishness" is redefined, most of traditional bourgeois morality comes out unscathed. What Randism adds is the denigration of common decencies. Randism excoriates "whims," but since the reasoning performed by Randism is so slovenly, it amounts to a rationalization of whims, usually nasty ones. Randism is a Gospel of Spleen. □

Perspective

The Critics of Barbara Branden

by David M. Brown

The publication of Barbara Branden's *The Passion of Ayn Rand* in May of 1986 was an Event.

Ever since libertarians and Objectivists first learned that the project was underway, the biography had been awaited with growing anticipation. The book was bound to attract interest—and controversy. Intense controversy had dogged Ayn Rand and her work all her life, and both admirers and critics had arrived at certain strong opinions about her. Barbara Branden's 19-year association with Rand and subsequent extensive research into her past were bound to yield both fascinating new material and a challenging reassessment of an enigmatic figure. Since Branden's task was to reveal Rand as neither a goddess nor a sinner, but as a vulnerable human being whose virtues and flaws achieved epic proportions, three basic reactions to Branden's perspective were possible.

The first view, which I and many other Rand admirers take, is that Branden is pretty much right. While she properly lauds Ayn Rand for her virtues, flaws are not ignored, as they could not be in a biography that honestly attempts to evaluate and understand its subject; yet Branden's ultimate assessment is strongly positive. The second position is that Branden is too hard on Rand, that she is struggling to besmirch Rand's character and achievement at all costs (to find "feet of clay,") and that her "attacks" on Rand are "interlarded with protestations of adulation" merely as a diversion from her actual motive, presumably hatred of the good for being the good. The third view is that Rand was really a moral monster with little if any redeeming virtue, and that Branden's account is shamelessly tipped in Rand's favor at the expense of truth, justice, and the Rothbardian way.

Most libertarians with at least a passing interest in the roots of their be-

liefs are acquainted with Rand's name and achievement. Her primary concern was to articulate and defend a heroic vision of man. She was a novelist, and her Promethean heroes were men and woman of intransigent moral integrity and idealism who fought for their ambitious values in the face of tremendous opposition. Her two major works of fiction are *The Fountainhead*, published in 1943 when Rand was 38, and *Atlas Shrugged* (1957). *Atlas Shrugged*, because of its greater philosophical breadth and explicit defense of capitalism in terms of rational self-interest, has had the biggest impact on advocates of liberty.

Rand followed up the novels with numerous essays that spelled out even more fully her case for reason, self-interest and capitalism. She brilliantly dissected false intellectual alternatives like faith versus skepticism, or liberalism versus conservatism, and proposed a new, objective view of man's nature and the requirements of his survival. "My philosophy, in essence, is the concept of man as a heroic being, with his own happiness as the moral purpose of his life, with productive achievement as his noblest activity, and reason as his only absolute."

The problem, however, for many of Rand's followers has been that although she was in many respects an exemplar of her philosophy, her actions sometimes contradicted it. She advocated independence, a first-hand look at reality, but was often impatient with the slightest deviation from her views—even when the disagreement was an honest one. She stated that

there were fundamentally two kinds of errors human beings can make, "errors of knowledge" and "errors of morality," but too often she treated honest mistakes as willful sins, often to the bewilderment and psychological detriment of those whom she excoriated. Even a different response to art than her own could excite a seemingly inexplicable wrath. "Ayn Rand was a woman with a powerful need for control," Branden writes, "control of her own life, of her own destiny, and of the belief system of those she chose as her friends."

In writing *The Passion of Ayn Rand*, one of Branden's goals was to "separate the person from the philosophical system," as she told an interviewer. "Nobody decides, when reading about Aristotle, that they have to know about how he treated his wife to understand his theories. But with Ayn, the personality and philosophy were accepted as one package." Rand *did* practice her own philosophy, but she did not always practice it consistently. And one can't blame a philosophy for the inconsistencies of its practitioner, though some have tried to do just that.

Branden does a good job of showing that other factors besides Rand's explicitly held ideas were important contributors to the unhappiness she suffered. These include Rand's inattention to psychological subtleties, her own repression of suffering, and various personal disappointments, primarily her inability to find in life the "ideal man" she was able to project effectively in fiction. So, to conclude, as did Tim Ferguson of *The Wall Street Journal*

(July 17, 1986), that "Rand's abstraction of unremitting egoism, played out, failed its creator," is vastly to misconstrue the complexity of what actually happened.

Most reviews of *The Passion of Ayn Rand* had at least a few good things to say about the book. Reviewers were fascinated by the drama of Rand's life, which began in the sordid squalor of Soviet Russia. And they were often surprised by Branden's apparent objectivity and magnanimity, considering the book's most startling revelation: Ayn Rand's fourteen-year affair with Nathaniel Branden, Barbara's husband at the time, an affair undertaken with the knowledge of both Barbara Branden and Rand's husband Frank O'Connor. Despite the snickering that this news inspired in some quarters, reviewers were for the most part fair-minded about both the biography and its subject. This comes as a surprise only by contrast with the grossly unfair treatment critics frequently gave Rand during her lifetime.

One of the most interesting analyses of the biography was written by George Gilder, a neo-rightist who claims that capitalists succeed by means of faith and self-sacrifice. "She was in some ways a monster as well as a prodigy," Gilder wrote in the *Washington Post*. "Yet by relentlessly attacking the 'unspeakable evil' and creative impotence of socialism at the time of its greatest ascendancy and by celebrating the moral and practical imperative of capitalism at its nadir—she was one of the great benefactors of the modern world." Barbara Branden's biography is "written with much of the sweep, drama and narrative momentum of the great works of Ayn Rand herself—and with the psychological insight and sensitivity that forever eluded her . . . Rand's life story is one of the great sagas in the history of literature" (*Washington Post*, June 29, 1986).

But Gilder misunderstands Rand's concept of rational self-interest. He asserts, for example, that family life depends on altruism and that "she also misses the essential altruism, the orientation toward the needs of others, that is crucial to production for the marketplace." Rand, of course, always stressed that altruism as a moral code meant *self-sacrifice*, an actual and self-

destructive exchange of a greater value for a lesser value; *not* merely help to others *per se*, which may be directed by benevolence, good will or some other valid selfish motive (including the desire for profit).

Misunderstanding of Rand's philosophy is rampant among libertarians too. Many libertarians are hostile both to Rand's person and to many of her ideas. One such is Dr. Murray Rothbard, whose learned treatise on "The

The so-called "cult" of Objectivism could not survive for more than a few tortured years precisely because Objectivism upholds reason as an absolute.

Sociology of the Ayn Rand Cult" you may have seen; it was published by *Liberty* as a supplement to its first issue. Rothbard spent a few months in Ayn Rand's circle and never recovered; since then he has rarely missed an opportunity to make clear his distaste for "Randroids" and the "Rand Cult." To be sure, Rothbard has reportedly defended Rand against some of her more virulent critics, and acknowledged his intellectual debt to Rand to Barbara Branden for use in her biography. But you sure won't find Ayn Rand footnoted in any of his books.

I find some of Rothbard's writings very instructive. I just read his review of Higgs' *Crisis and Leviathan*, for example, which appeared in the second issue of *Liberty*. Excellent book review. I only wish the same objectivity and respect for greatness were evident in his discussion of *The Passion of Ayn Rand* (which appeared in *American Libertarian*, July 1986). Though Rothbard readily hails evidence of Rand's tyrannical control over others, his reading of the biography seems to have missed the evidence of her virtues. Without an understanding of those virtues, Rand's extraordinary influence remains inexplicable.

Branden writes that "In Ayn's presence, and in her work, one felt that command: a command to function at one's best, to be the most that one could be, to drive oneself constantly harder, never to disappoint one's own highest ideals." That's unconvincing to Rothbard, who ascribes Branden's

long relationship with Rand to "unquenchable masochism."

Nor does Rothbard respect Branden's touching account of her eventual reconciliation with Rand, which he dismisses as a "pathetic claim." His view of the biography's main flaw, in fact, is that it functions as a biography, insufficiently dwelling on the horrors of the 1960s Rand cult, the rigidified intellectual movement that arose out of the lecture courses on Objectivism taught primarily by Nathaniel Branden. Rothbard claims that "Barbara overlooks her own high role in the cult," but Branden admits her guilt without wallowing in it.

Curiously, Rothbard emerges as an epistemological and ethical cohort of Drs. Leonard Peikoff and Peter Schwartz, inheritors of the official Objectivist mantle. Schwartz denounced Branden's book in a rapid epistle to the readers of his *Intellectual Activist* (August 20, 1986). Peikoff has not even deigned to read the biography—"it's noncognitive," he says—but that hasn't prevented him from disclaiming publicly on how awful it is, and on how "immoral" its author. (Keep this distinction in mind, pupils of Objectivism: to present evidence and evaluate it, as Barbara Branden does, is "noncognitive"; but to close one's eyes to the evidence and yet pronounce judgment on it, à la Peikoff, represents cognition at its best.) Peikoff's statement (published in both *The Intellectual Activist* and in Harry Binswanger's *Objectivist Forum*) ran as follows:

"The forthcoming biography of Ayn Rand by Barbara Branden was undertaken against Miss Rand's wishes. Miss Rand severed relations with Mrs. Branden in 1968, regarding her as immoral and an enemy of Objectivism. Being aware of Mrs. Branden's long-time hostility to Ayn Rand, including her public attacks on Miss Rand after her death—attacks interlarded with protestations of adulation—I have refused for years to meet with Mrs. Branden or to cooperate on this project. I had no reason to believe that the book would be either a truthful presentation of Ayn Rand's life or an accurate statement of her ideas. Advance reports from several readers of the book in galley form have confirmed my expectations. Therefore, I certainly do not rec-

commend this book. As for myself, I have not read it and do not intend to do so."

Can you imagine what Dr. Peikoff's response would be to someone who would publicly condemn *Atlas Shrugged* without reading it? The principle is the same in both cases.

Given the patent preposterousness of Peikoff's declaration, one might wonder why I bother bringing it up at all, especially since Randians are not allowed to read libertarian publications like *Liberty*. Very simply, my appeal is to the margin. There are always a few marginal folks out there who might yet choose to proceed on an independent path despite the risk of an authority's disapproval . . . which is, after all, what the Objectivist philosophy counsels.

In April of 1987 Peikoff delivered a Ford Hall Forum talk on "My Thirty Years With Ayn Rand," obviously a response to the Branden biography; which he still had not read. By now, a great number of former official, semi-official and thoroughly unofficial Objectivists had been booted out of the movement for daring to admit that they liked the book, or at least that they didn't regard it as competing with *The Critique of Pure Reason* for the status of most evil tome ever written. (Rand always hated Kant.) And people were wondering how Peikoff would justify his novel application of the Objectivist epistemology and theory of justice, which in the past at least, had always counseled that cognition should precede evaluation. This speech would make or break Peikoff, whose credibility was at stake. He just might salvage his reputation with a stunning display of triple logical somersaults, or he could be obliterated by an onslaught of catcalls, literacy volunteers, and gentle suggestions that he check his premises. In sum, it was win or lose, conquer or be destroyed.

Or at least, that was the expectation. As it turned out, Peikoff (who is, incidentally, the most articulate and precise of the official Randians) didn't have much that was intelligible to say about the biography—he spent most of his lecture discussing Rand's mental methodology, merely alluding to the book toward the end of his talk—and certainly none of his questioners tried

very hard to challenge him on any of his contradictions.

But somebody did ask Peikoff what he thought about the book, and about Rand's alleged affair with Nathaniel Branden. In a rambling ten-minute reply, Peikoff admitted the existence of the affair, which he said was confirmed by Rand's private papers (Peikoff is the executor of Rand's estate). He also said the affair was justified, choosing not to discuss Barbara Branden's account of the havoc it wrought. (But let's be fair about this; Peikoff was hardly in

Prominent admirers of Ayn Rand who have refused to accept unthinkingly the dictates of the Peikoff-Binswanger-Schwartz axis are treated far more shabbily by the groupies of that axis than the typical Joe Altruist off the street.

a position to discuss Branden's account of anything, having not yet read her book.)

As for Barbara Branden herself, Peikoff said: "I happen to know the author of that book extremely well, being related to her and having known her for a long time, and also Nathaniel Branden, and many of these other people that I alluded to in my talk. I know entirely what they are capable of, and I would not put any credence in anything that they say. So I did not refrain from reading the book because of being afraid to face facts. On the contrary, by my best definition of fact I would have no means whatever, including the fact that something was in quotes, of determining whether it ever occurred."

Did you get that? What?

Okay, so Peikoff doesn't trust Barbara Branden, and therefore distrusts her book, and therefore refuses to read it. Fine. But why should that affect *our* view of the book, in the absence of any argument from Leonard Peikoff as to why *we* should distrust Barbara Branden, whom he has refused to speak to for almost two decades now, and whose side of the story he has never bothered to consider? Why should we as readers deny the evidence of our own senses and the conclusions of our own reason, based on Peikoff's say-so? Barbara Branden's honesty and sincerity, and her love and admiration of Ayn Rand, are evident throughout *The Passion of*

Ayn Rand. Why should we evade what we see? Are facts irrelevant?

The so-called "cult" of Objectivism could not survive for more than a few tortured years precisely because Objectivism upholds reason as an absolute. Only a few cultists remain, but they effectively manage to make royal pains-in-the-asses of themselves. Today, prominent admirers of Ayn Rand who have refused to accept unthinkingly the dictates of the Peikoff-Binswanger-Schwartz axis are treated far more shabbily by the groupies of that axis than the typical Joe Altruist off the street. Why? For the same reason "apostates" are shunned by the Jehovah's Witnesses: once a True Believer has deviated from "the truth" and started to think for himself, he becomes a danger to the cause, and must be

shunned and ostracized as a matter of course so that the racket may be preserved. As Rothbard points out, what's at stake is power; what is desired is blind obedience. Peikoff had been moving away from that sort of thing since Rand's death, but he could not silently abide an honest assessment of Rand's life by an apostate.

Many good people who had been involved in the official movement are waving goodbye now, to lead their own independent lives and to think their own independent thoughts, which is a good thing. But libertarians should not be complacent about their own position. *The Passion of Ayn Rand* is a challenge to them to reevaluate *their* perspective also. Too many libertarians treat their "nonaggression principle" as a self-evident axiom requiring no particular philosophical proof, while using the dogmatism of *some* advocates of Objectivism as an excuse for ignoring Objectivism itself.

If you want to read an insightful review of *The Passion of Ayn Rand*, try Robert James Bidinotto's review in *On Principle*, or Louis Torres essay "Boswell's Johnson—Branden's Rand," in *Aristos* (May 1987). If all else fails, you can read the book and judge for yourself.

Ayn Rand's life is a story of courage; her achievements as a novelist and philosopher are an index of the power of an intransigently independent mind. Her story has important lessons for all of us. □

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Reviews

The Bonfire of the Vanities, by Tom Wolfe
New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 659 pp., \$19.95

Bonfires and Meteorites

Stephen Cox

At the New Year's parties I attended, Tom Wolfe's novel was the hot topic of conversation. Everyone seemed to be reading it, but everyone seemed at a loss about what to call it. The word "tragicomedy" was the most frequently suggested solution to this problem. "Tragicomedy" is a good enough word, if you don't expect either the "tragedy" or the "comedy" to appear in a familiar form. Wolfe's comedy is more unsettling than funny; it is much more likely to make you wince than to make you laugh. And his tragedy is made out of ingredients somewhat different from those specified in the traditional formula.

That formula, which is ultimately derived from Aristotle's *Poetics*, makes excellent sense. Because bad things that happen to perfectly good people shock and dismay us, and bad things that happen to perfectly bad people make us feel happy, the formula stipulates that the bad things that happen in tragedy should be visited upon people who are sufficiently admirable to evoke our sympathy but sufficiently flawed to deserve their fate. The tragic hero must have dignity and worth; otherwise, we would not be interested in his misfortunes. But misfortunes must not come to him simply by accident; they must be caused by his own defects. We would learn nothing from *King Lear* if the tragedy resulted from factors unrelated to Lear's flaws and limitations. It would be unfortunate, but not tragic, if Lear were flattened by a meteorite or ambushed by a shipload of Vikings, rather than destroyed by the consequences of something amiss in-

side him.

Wolfe's protagonist is not the traditional tragic hero whose fall evokes profound feeling because it is the fall of dignity and worth. Wolfe's protagonist is Sherman McCoy, a bond salesman who lives in a stylish apartment in Manhattan, hobnobs with socialites, thinks of himself as a "Master of the Universe," keeps a dachshund named Marshall, and worries about his mysterious difficulty in making ends meet on yearly earnings of \$980,000. When Sherman meets a stranger, his most heartfelt reaction is "I want to impress her!"—even if he regards her as a perfect "nonentity." (p. 347) His lack of dignity is measured by his constant, microscopically petty status-seeking and *thing*-seeking.

One of the *things* he seeks is an extra-marital relationship with a woman named Maria, who is an equally petty thing-seeker. He sneaks away from his wife one evening to pick Maria up at the airport. On their way back to Manhattan, they get lost in a dangerous section of the Bronx. Sherman's Mercedes is stopped by what appears to be a man-made obstruction in the road. Two black youths approach; Sherman concludes he is about to be robbed. There is a struggle, and Sherman and Maria try to escape. As their car takes off wildly into the night, they hear a slight *thok* from the rear end, a *thok* that indicates they may have struck one of the two young men.

Sherman decides not to report the incident. One of the youths, however, is hospitalized with a brain injury; he later dies. It is never demonstrated that the McCoy Mercedes was responsible for

the injury. Nevertheless, the car is traced, and McCoy becomes the object of protests by scandal-mongering newspapers and demagogic "community leaders." He is arrested, physically and mentally brutalized, and stripped of his family, job, and possessions. One of Wolfe's grim little jokes is that Sherman wasn't even driving—Maria was. Sherman's life is full of flaws, but it's never clear that his punishment addresses those particular flaws. Perhaps he and the black youth have simply been hit by a meteorite. This is the sort of "comedy," or "tragedy," that makes people look absurdly small and weak, and their lives absurdly accidental.

It's hard to read this book without recalling the best of American tragicomedies, F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. Indeed, Wolfe seems to have designed his story to invite comparisons between his hero and Fitzgerald's, comparisons that would emphasize the former's lack of dignity. You remember that Gatsby, who is a social climber and a status-seeker, is destroyed by his mistress's bad driving. Daisy Buchanan's auto accident is obviously, even ostentatiously, a result of Fitzgerald's complex plot-manipulations; but Gatsby has been such a recklessly daring adventurer in pursuing his love for Daisy that the final *accident* is made to seem an inevitable result of his overreaching character. Whatever flaws Gatsby has, pettiness is not among them. He is a romantic hero, "a son of God," an aspiring inventor of his own self, a hero meant to "suck on the pap of life, gulp down the incomparable milk of wonder." There is a ridiculous side of Gatsby and his fate, but if Gatsby errs, it is in trying to become a god, not in trying to become a real swinger. Something is bound to happen to Gatsby because he tries to become so great; if something is bound to happen to McCoy, it can only be because he tries to become so little.

In both novels, much of the comedy results from a many-leveled satire of the America that surrounds the tragic hero. America, in each case, is a society of symbolic *bad drivers*, people who have

lost track of authentic goals and values and even of practical means to the accomplishment of their ends. The difference is that Gatsby stands taller than his surroundings, while Sherman is a statistical representative of them. In fact, the more or less tragic plot of *The Bonfire* is just a string on which Wolfe hangs a series of descriptions of the way people live at one or another social layer of a city rotten with moral and intellectual diseases: descriptions of the poor consumed with envy and the rich swelled and bloated with ignorant complacency; of liberalism putrefying in stupidity, and conservatism frothing into mindless vengefulness; of men and women who trade individual thought and character for an almost demonic possession by the habits of their social groups.

This sounds as if Wolfe had merely written one more depressing guidebook to the underside of modern life. I am sure that a major reason for *The Bonfire's* large sales is the sick thrill of recognition that some readers feel when the conditions of their own existence are realistically described. But what redeems this book, what distinguishes it from any number of other books that have surveyed the same territory, is the brilliant style and insight with which Wolfe writes.

Satirical brilliance is what we expect from Wolfe. For twenty years—from his wry account of alliances between self-righteous social revolutionaries and self-satisfied plutocrats in *Radical Chic* (1970), to his devastating analysis of New Age religious and political movements in *The Me Decade* (in *Mauve Gloves and Madmen*, 1976), to his shrewd diagnosis of the ills of modern art and architecture in *The Painted Word* (1975) and *From Bauhaus to Our House* (1981)—Wolfe has wielded a more powerful style than that of any other contemporary student of social and artistic trends. He is a critic who achieves flamboyant satirical effects by describing his objects with exhaustive accuracy.

At one point in *The Me Decade* Wolfe refers to household decorations "such as baffled all description." This is one of the few times in his career when his descriptive talents have not risen to the occasion. In *The Bonfire*, Sherman McCoy looks out his father's window and sees an imagistic projection of his own sadness and insignificance: "In a

window of the new glass-and-aluminum building across the street, a young white woman was staring at the street below and probing the intertrigian notch of her left ear with a Q-tip . . . a very plain young woman with tight curly hair, staring at the street and cleaning her ears . . . How very sad . . . The street was so narrow he felt as if he could reach out and rap on the plate glass where she stood . . . The new building had cast his father's little office into a perpetual gloom." (p. 429)

Wolfe's vise-like grip on concrete

I am sure that a major reason for The Bonfire's large sales is the sick thrill of recognition that some readers feel when the conditions of their own existence are realistically described.

detail gives him the capacity to represent the minutest movements of his characters' minds (what's left of their minds, anyway) as they select and process perceptions of the world around them. And it gives him the capacity to render that world in all its bizarre multiplications of reality. It is a world where newspapers that are published and written by snobs carry banner headlines like

**SCALP
GRANDMA,
THEN
ROB HER.**

It is a world where the snobs have dinner in rooms "painted with so many coats of burnt-apricot lacquer, fourteen in all, they had the glassy brilliance of a pond reflecting a campfire at night." It is a world where the middle-class Assistant DA who prosecutes the scalpers and the diners contemplates "the power of the government over the freedom of its subjects" and revels in the ecstasy of seeing

that little swallow of fright in a perfect neck worth millions—well, the poet has never sung of that ecstasy or even dreamed of it, and no prosecutor, no judge, no cop, no income-tax auditor will ever enlighten him, for we dare not even mention it to one another, do we?—and yet we feel it and we know it every time they look at us with

those eyes that beg for mercy or, if not mercy, Lord, dumb luck or capricious generosity. (Just one break!)

(pp. 162, 344, 591)

Wolfe's triumph is his ability to submerge the reader in the speech, the perceptions, the thoughts, the wayward images of his characters, until one knows them intimately: from their tendency to say that people wait "on line" rather than "in line" (New York dialect) to the Dantesque visions that assail them in their moments of peril: "In this sad moldering little room were seven other men, seven other organisms, hundreds of pounds of tissue and bone, breathing, pumping blood, burning calories, processing nutrients, filtering out contaminants and toxins, transmitting neural impulses, seven warm grisly unpleasant animals rooting about, for pay, in the entirely public cavity he used to think of as his soul." (p. 640)

Such visions rely, perhaps, on the Swift of *Gulliver's Travels* and on the darker passages of satire in Blake's *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, but they are also wholly of the here and now. Wolfe's minute accuracy of description and evocation gains him entrance, again and again, to the lives and motives of people from all strata and subdivisions of American society. But because what is discovered there is almost entirely mean and sordid, one may well ask what good purpose all this serves. Part of the answer may be supplied by the title of Wolfe's book.

During the last decade of the fifteenth century, the reformer Girolamo Savonarola preached in the church of Santa Maria del Fiore in Florence, inciting his audience against paganism and sordid materialism. As an expression of their zeal, his followers publicly burned their "vanities," their pretty but distracting possessions. Wolfe refers to the Florentine episode in his title and nowhere else. We are left with two possibilities for the title's application. One possibility is that Sherman McCoy's life is a bonfire of vanities. In the course of the book, he loses all the spiritually valueless possessions and status-relationships that are his gods; they are burnt up, destroyed by publicity, prosecutors, jailers, and legal fees. Without them, his soul becomes a "public cavity" (which probably it always

was, without his knowing it), and he begins a struggle to protect himself from invasion by the outside world. But no Savonarola enlightens him with an improved system of values, and he is no Savonarola himself. We pity rather than admire him, and we pity him as we would pity a mouse harried by a cat.

The second possibility, of course, is that the bonfire is the book itself. Wolfe the satirist is burning the vanities of contemporary life, exposing the corruptions of self and society that turn his characters into mere public cavities. He is his own Savonarola. But his system of values fails to emerge clearly. He shows that people can change, yet he shows them changing not because they learn some conceptually-identifiable values, but because accidents happen to them. This is probably sufficient for his satirical purposes. *Babbitt* is a good novel, even though Sinclair Lewis had little more to teach us than the folly of the characters he satirized. But there are indications that Wolfe wants to do more and does not quite know how to do it.

In the middle of his book, a poet dying of AIDS is asked to give a little speech in the course of a dinner party, and he astonishes his audience by talking about matters of life and death. He reproves the ceaseless, valueless whirl of life in which his listeners are involved, but he refers to his own inability to make something enduringly valuable out of it:

The United States deserve an epic poem. At various times in my career I considered writing an epic, but I didn't do that . . . Poets are also not supposed to write epics any longer, despite the fact that the only poets who have endured and will endure are poets who have written epics . . . I cannot be the epic poet you deserve. I am too old and far too tired, too weary of the fever called "Living," and I value your company too much, your company and the whirl, the whirl, the whirl.

After this speech, "the intruder the [hosts] dreaded most, silence, now commanded the room. The diners looked at one another in embarrassment. . . . there was always the possibility that the old man had said something profound and they had failed to get it." (pp. 354-56)

Wolfe is not tired. He is not weary. He has written vividly and at epic length. What is lacking in his novel is the epic writer's ability to lift his material far

enough above "the whirl" to exemplify positive values, values that give the epic strength and substance. Perhaps Wolfe doubts his audience's capacity to "get it" if he should happen to utter something profound in his own voice. I think

such doubts would be misplaced. We are not all Sherman McCoy's, are we?

Read this book, and hope that Wolfe completes his progress from satire through tragicomedy to the epic of America. □

Therapist, by Ellen Plasil

New York: St. Martin's/Marek, 1985, 224 pp., \$13.95 hb., \$3.95 pb.

The Dark Side of Objectivism

Nathaniel Branden

Therapist is Ellen Plasil's account of her four and a half years of treatment by a prominent New York "Objectivist" psychiatrist. Her book is of special interest to me because of my past association with Ayn Rand and the Objectivist subculture.

The author was raised by Objectivist parents. Almost from the day she was born they abused her physically and mentally in an appalling number of ways, including sexually, and at the same time lectured her on "reason," "independence," and all the other routine clichés used by Ayn Rand's professed admirers without any true appreciation of their meaning.

In 1972, at twenty-one, Plasil found herself in an unhappy marriage and suffering from depression, so she moved to New York City in search of psychiatric treatment. She put herself in the hands of Dr. Lonnie Leonard, who had been recommended by Dr. Allen Blumenthal, a leading objectivist psychiatrist.

In the course of her treatment, Leonard informed her that he was the "healthiest" man he had ever known and that an important indicator of a woman's own "health" was whether or not she responded to him "romantically." From there it was only a short step to insisting that Plasil satisfy him sexually. But she was merely to satisfy him and thereby be fulfilled. It would be proof of her femininity. Using the authority of his position, Leonard intimidated, threatened, and abused her. He called her "scum," and, for all practical purposes,

he raped her. In other words, he recreated the nightmare of her childhood, while telling her repeatedly that he was her only hope for salvation. (This is quite different from the more familiar story of a psychotherapist who becomes infatuated with his client and has an affair with her.) Plasil's dependency on Leonard made her submissive and compliant.

The author by this time had left her husband. Her social contacts in New York were limited almost entirely to fellow patients of Leonard, and they all apparently worshipped him. She moved in a world where a person's most insignificant actions and preferences were scrutinized to determine whether he or she was a "good objectivist." Tastes in art, novels, and films were evaluated from the standpoint of Ayn Rand's personal likes and dislikes. In Objectivist circles, Leonard enjoyed a God-like status. Plasil did not feel safe in discussing her growing anxiety and doubts. She would have been accused of treason.

Of course not all enthusiasts of Objectivism manifest this foolishness; the majority of them are independent, decent, clear-thinking human beings. But there is an irrational, cultish tendency in many intellectual movements, and Objectivism, alas, is no exception. Ayn Rand's personal obsession with loyalty did little to discourage this trend, even though she doubtless would have been horrified by Dr. Leonard's practices. Rand had often protested, "Protect me from my followers!"

Finally, after many months of struggling with the question of whether Leonard had a legitimate purpose for his bizarre behavior at the therapy sessions

This review originally appeared in the Summer, 1987 issue of *Free Inquiry* and is reprinted with permission.

(for example, greeting her stark naked, video-taping her in a similar state, spread-eagled on the floor, and so on), Plasil telephoned Dr. Blumenthal. When she attempted to discuss her misgivings with him, he said he could not talk to her while she was Leonard's client. Besides, he insisted, he already knew what she wanted to say. When she tried to verify what he claimed to know, he hung up. The nightmare grew worse. But Plasil's doubt and anger also grew when she discovered that Leonard's other female clients had had similar experiences. After four and a half years of therapy, with outrage piled upon outrage, she decided to fight back. She terminated her therapy, and, with several other of Leonard's victims, she initiated legal action against him. Not surprisingly, shortly afterward Leonard announced that he was giving up his practice. Plasil was then accused by his other clients of causing irreparable harm to a great man.

I had a similar experience when I broke with Ayn Rand. I had left the New York circle of Objectivists in the late 1960s, years before the events in this book took place. I did not know Dr. Leonard, but I did help to launch Dr. Blumenthal's career. Although I repudiat-

ed him many years ago (we repudiated each other, you might say), I confess I read this story with embarrassment and sadness for having played even a small part in it. But perhaps, from one perspective, my part was not really so small. Did I not, together with Ayn Rand, help to create the kind of subculture in which irrationality and inhumanity could exist (even if, to repeat, we would have been horrified at this particular manifestation)? Blumenthal may protest that Leonard is not his creature, but I am not quite comfortable in protesting that Blumenthal is not mine. The bad judgments of our past do come back to haunt us.

Plasil won her case, and Dr. Leonard settled out of court. He is now working as a beekeeper in Florida. She has remarried happily and is working on a law degree.

Therapist is written with great simplicity, clarity, and dignity, and I recommend it to anyone interested in the psychology of cultism and how individuals can be led to suspend their moral judgment and their common sense in the name of idealism and loyalty—and out of an overzealous desire to belong *somewhere*. Plasil has something important to say to all of us. □

hold opinions on subjects we do not fully understand hesitate to challenge the sweeping and intimidating appeal to scientific authority of the quantum mystics. Thus, they can abruptly shift a comfortable philosophical or political exchange into unfamiliar territory. We suspect that quantum mysticism is pseudo-science, but we cannot prove our suspicion.

Fortunately, with the publication of Nick Herbert's *Quantum Reality*, we need be intimidated no longer. Herbert is a professional scientist who has written a book that stands squarely at the intersection of physics and philosophy. In simple and straightforward prose, without mathematics, he introduces the non-scientist to quantum physics. But in the process, he carefully distinguishes between the hard experimental evidence and the overarching theoretical interpretation, that is, between quantum facts and quantum theory. This makes it finally possible for the non-scientist to ponder informatively the philosophical implications of quantum mechanics.

The quantum facts by themselves appear almost mundane at first glance. But when physicists attempted to explain these concrete data, beginning in the 1920s, they came up with divergent and paradoxical interpretations. Herbert vividly recounts the intellectual history of this ongoing debate. For a while, despite Einstein's assertion that God does not "play dice" with the universe, the Copenhagen interpretation of Niels Bohr, with its assumption of irreducible metaphysical randomness, became dominant among physicists. Within recent years, it has lost much of its following to Hugh Everett's "many worlds" interpretation, which dispenses with metaphysical indeterminism by asserting that all probable quantum outcomes are in fact realized in parallel universes.

Herbert ends up presenting not a single, nor just two, but no less than eight unique quantum realities. The Copenhagen interpretation generates two possible realities, the many-worlds interpretation offers another, and there are five more. Every one of the eight is entirely consistent with the quantum facts. "For all presently conceivable experiments," states Herbert, "each of these realities predicts exactly the same observable phenomena." (p. 28) They differ only in their philosophical presuppositions.

These eight alternatives contain both bad and good news for objective reality.

***Quantum Reality: Beyond the New Physics*, Nick Herbert
Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985, 268 pp., \$16.95 hb., \$9.95 pb.**

Quantum Mysticism and Quantum Reality

Jeffrey Rogers Hummel

Each significant scientific advance inevitably seems to impinge upon political philosophy. The classical physics of Sir Isaac Newton reinforced the universal natural laws of Enlightenment liberalism. Charles Darwin's theory of evolution spawned a litter of social analogs. Later the cocktail party circuit transformed Albert Einstein's relativity into moral relativism. And most recently the devotees of subjectivism, Eastern religions, and even the occult have invoked the esoteric insights of quantum mechanics.

This "quantum mysticism" is not

merely the intoxicating brew of such popular books as Fritjof Capra's *Tao of Physics*, Gary Zukav's *Dancing Wu Li Masters*, and Michael Talbot's *Beyond the Quantum*. It has also made inroads into libertarian circles. We encounter it through the outlandish works of discordian Robert Anton Wilson, on the posturing pages of *Critical Review* compliments of Gus DiZerega, and in the strident rhetoric of arch-decentralist Carol Moore.

Almost none of the quantum mystics, whether libertarian or otherwise, are scientists. But that ironically puts non-scientists who dispute their philosophical conclusions at a distinct disadvantage. Those of us who scrupulously with-

The bad news is that they do provide some theoretical basis for quantum mysticism. The quantum mystics often just extrapolate from the models of certain prominent physicists. The fact that most practicing physicists would rather concentrate upon quantum theory's experimental predictions has lent further credence to these extrapolations. Herbert emphasizes the widespread neglect of the theory's philosophical underpinnings:

"Quantum theory resembles an elaborate tower whose middle stories are complete and occupied. Most of the workmen are crowded together on top, making plans and pouring forms for the next stories. Meanwhile the building's foundation consists of the same temporary scaffolding that was rigged up to get the project started. Although he must pass through them to get to the rest of the city, the average physicist shuns these lower floors with a kind of superstitious dread." (p. 158)

Physicists must therefore share responsibility for quantum mysticism. It is not blatant pseudo-science. The good news, however, is that the very same philosophical laxity that has allowed quantum mysticism to flourish simultaneously undermines the mystic's claim to an exclusive scientific imprimatur. The quantum facts by themselves do not impose any single solution to this intriguing metaphysical puzzle.

I have my own favorite among the eight quantum realities. Herbert refers to it as neorealism. In my opinion, it is the only one of the eight truly congruent with objective reality. It treats electrons, photons, and other subatomic particles as ordinary objects, with definite attributes whose quantities are determined whether or not they are being observed. Although endorsed by such renegades as Einstein, Max Planck, Irwin Schrödinger, and Prince Louis de Broglie, the neorealist interpretation has never been popular in the physics community.

John Von Neumann supposedly proved neorealism mathematically incompatible with the quantum facts in 1932. In 1952 David Bohm constructed a neorealist model that successfully refuted Neumann's proof, but Bohm's model contained a feature that most physicists found preposterous. It required the existence of a hitherto unobserved "pilot wave" that could transmit information between subatomic particles instantaneously, even if the particles

were at opposite ends of the universe. Such a non-local reality contradicts the special theory of relativity, which denies that anything can ever exceed the speed of light. Then in 1964, John Bell suggested a test for this superluminal wave. Not until 1972 were physicists physically able to conduct the test, but the results confirmed what has become known as Bell's interconnectedness theorem.

Many physicists have interpreted Bell's theorem as applying only to the neorealist interpretation. But as Herbert points out, Bell's theorem is utterly independent of quantum theory. Even if all the myriad interpretations of quantum should fall, Bell's theorem would still hold. It shows that *any* model of reality must be non-local. It applies just as strongly to the dominant Copenhagen interpretation.

Reason Papers

A Journal of Interdisciplinary Normative Studies

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If all quantum realities require the superluminal transmission of information, then physicists no longer have scientific grounds for rejecting neorealism. In other words, Bell's theorem eliminates the only serious objection to the neorealist interpretation. Although Herbert does not draw out this inescapable conclusion, the quantum facts appear to contradict relativity, regardless of how they are interpreted. Einstein was right about quantum theory, but only because he was somehow wrong about relativity.

This poses few intellectual difficulties for non-scientists. Most people's common sense can deal more easily with faster than light travel than with, say, Everett's parallel universes. But physicists have become wedded to relativity's elegance. Quantum theory, in contrast, is messier, but nevertheless its repeated experimental verification is unsurpassed. "Quantum theory works like a charm," explains Herbert; "it correctly predicts all the quantum facts we can measure plus plenty we can't or do not care to. This theory has passed every test human ingenuity can devise, down to the last decimal point. However, like a magician who has inherited a wonderful magic wand that works every time without his knowing why, the physicist is at a loss to explain quantum theory's marvelous success." (p. 157)

For half a century physicists have stubbornly tried to evade the inherent tension between quantum theory and the theory of relativity. The futile quest to reconcile the two is what accounts for all the bizarre gyrations in the alternative quantum realities and their mystical spinoffs. But Bell's theorem now makes the contradiction between the quantum facts and relativity so clear that it should inspire a major theoretical reformulation. That at least is my own tentative judgment, as an interested outsider.

Herbert himself is more cautious. He plays no favorites among the eight quantum realities. Indeed, he is quite open to the possibility that all eight are wrong, that another as yet unknown interpretation best fits the quantum facts. Unlike the quantum mystics, whose dim comprehension of the physics does not in any way inhibit their philosophical pronouncements, Herbert lets the reader make up his own mind. But the defenders of objective reality should be able to find all the ammunition they need between the book's covers. □

Compassion Versus Guilt and Other Essays, by Thomas Sowell
New York: William Morrow & Co., 1987, 246 pp., \$14.95

High Standards, not Double Standards

William P. Moulton

I'm not certain whether Thomas Sowell is a conservative or a libertarian. Probably one would have to call him a conservative (he is, after all, senior fellow at the Hoover Institution) with very strong free-market and free-society commitments. But there is really no need to worry about categorizing him. The man is a brilliant writer, and definitely not only on the side of those who love liberty, but of those who love intellectual honesty, clarity of thought and expression, and simple decency.

Those who have read Sowell's earlier works, of which *Knowledge and Decisions*, *Marxism: Philosophy and Economics* and *A Conflict of Visions* are perhaps the most seminal, will understand the type of literary and intellectual values to which I refer. Sowell writes with a lucidity and directness that are so compelling that they produce an almost irresistible impression of pure objectivity.

And this impression is, by and large, deserved. He gets to the point of his topic as quickly and with as little floundering as any essayist I have read. He pegs his issues to the ground and dissects them. With people, however, he is generally tolerant in his treatment, even when they might not deserve it. Verbal muggings are not his style.

Sowell's new book consists of eighty-one short essays arranged into topics such as social policy, foreign policy, economics, law, education, and race. The title essay "Compassion versus Guilt," deals with a fairly traditional topic for conservative intellectuals—namely, the fact that in a free (or even just normal) social polity the fortune of some is not the cause of the misfortune of others, and that to attempt to help the latter by crippling the former will destroy the well-being of both groups. His approach is a little different from the usual, however, and centers more on the concept of standards than on rewards and merit. "Standards do not exist for no reason.

We are not just being fussy when we expect a medical student to have mastered much complex knowledge before he becomes a doctor. . . . Mathematics and physics are not mere hurdles placed capriciously in the path of aspiring engineers. . . . to ignore standards is not to share benefits, but to destroy benefits." Even when tackling old issues, Sowell is never routine. He makes you think.

Sowell proceeds to his other topics with wit and acumen. He dissects the "green bigots" of the environmental movement ("These lobbyists proposed a plan to save fish from acid rain. The cost worked out to about \$16,000 per fish.") He tackles the double standards regarding "good" and "bad" dictators, the reasons why tiny Hong Kong imports and exports more goods than huge India, the continual bureaucratic and academic redefinition of "the poor."

And, probably best of all, he gives us a "Political Glossary." I just have to include a few samples from this lexicon:

- equal opportunity: preferential treatment
- compassion: use of tax money to buy votes
- insensitivity: objections to the use of tax money to buy votes
- demonstration: a riot by people you agree with
- mob violence: a riot by people you disagree with
- special interest lobby: politically organized conservatives
- public interest group: politically organized liberals
- private greed: making money selling people what they want
- public service: gaining power to make people do what you want them to
- a proud people: chauvinists like you
- bigots: chauvinists you don't like
- bilingual: unable to speak English

He writes at length about the leftists and feminist and "anti-racist" goon

squads which infest so many American campuses. We are given an analysis not only of the ways in which such groups and their tactics disrupt academic life—that much is, after all, rather obvious—but of the way in which the left itself is subtly corrupted by its own intolerance, shrillness, and narrowness of intellectual vision. The result, all too often, is that “[t]he left does not have to think on campus, just chant and demonstrate and feel morally superior.”

The author looks deeply into the matter of personal responsibility and the consequences of its decline as an ideal. Sowell does not resort to the rather superficial conservative exhortation to a “return to values,” but rather surveys the real results that the erosion of such responsibility has had in the readings of criminal jurisprudence, civil litigation, penology, education, welfare, and the electoral process.

The essays on foreign policy reflect a fairly standard conservative outlook, and may be less than satisfying to many libertarians. Even here, however, he is thoughtful, sensible and at times biting—ly ironic. (For example, he explains that Greece cannot be held to any standards, since, after all, “what would you expect from a country headed by a former Berkeley professor?”)

Sowell is at his best in writing about South Africa. He belongs to that small group of writers who resist the temptation to strike a fashionably moral pose on this issue. However, he is also in no sense a *Human Events*-type uncritical supporter of the Pretoria regime. He is rather living evidence that one can be simultaneously opposed to apartheid, Nelson Mandela, P. W. Botha, the ANC, the leftist blatherings of Desmond Tutu, and the empty posings of the Amy Carters of the world, and can also offer constructive insights on this very complex issue.

His other topics? Well, I’m not going to tell about all of them; you should read the book. Are there any issues on which I personally disagree with Sowell? Sure there are. Robert Bork. Prayer in schools. Maybe one or two others. But these disputes do not detract from the book, or from its author. He is, once more, not a knee-jerk conservative. His case is presented logically, fairly, without cant. Many libertarians will think he is wrong concerning some issues. No sweat. Read him anyway.

One of the most prescient essays in this collection does not deal with politics

at all, but with something much more important—baseball. I especially enjoyed this piece because it helps to demolish a particularly insidious viewpoint (heresy, actually) which continues to pop up in various disguises—namely the notion that Ty Cobb (or, more rarely, some other player) was greater than Babe Ruth. It simply isn’t so, and Sowell demolishes the claims made on behalf of others. As he states and proves, “Ruth was in a class by himself.”

In spite of the great variety of issues covered by the author, there is a common theme which weaves its way through all of his polemics and his erudition and his charm. It is the observation that life is ultimately redeemed from its never-ending crises by the common sense and innate justice of ordinary people. This is neither mushy, sentimental populism nor Rousseauian patronizing. It is simply a recognition of the fact that “opinion makers” can be appallingly shallow, faddish, herd-like and venal, and that being an “intellectual” is no guarantee of integrity or clear-thinking or morality. “Deep thinkers” is the ironic term which Sowell uses to describe a certain type of nitwit—the self-styled intellectual or expert, trendy, su-

perficial, authoritarian, politicized, and convinced that all that society really needs is a transfer of power to people just like himself.

The point Sowell returns to so often is simply this: A person doesn’t have to be a “deep thinker” to make the decisions affecting one’s life. The fact that people make choices based on their total life experiences seems natural to almost everyone except their self-appointed betters. No doubt certain patterns of group behavior and values will contribute to such choices. Quite probably Japanese-Americans will always be “over-represented” among mathematicians and engineers and women will always be “under-represented” among steeplejacks and barrel-scrappers. So what? Why should the cultivation of individual interests and the free choice of a career be regarded as a “problem”? What Sowell is saying and demonstrating is that it isn’t, except to a small coterie of coercive egalitarians who are very definitely “over-represented” in terms of the influence they wield.

Sowell says all these things, and much more, and says them perfectly. Read this book. □

Hunting the Wild Remainder

Timothy Henderson

You can’t judge a book by its price, either in terms of its meaningfulness to any given reader, or insofar as its potential for appreciation in resale market value. This is especially true regarding remainders, i.e., those books which have “remained” with, or been returned to the publisher after initial sales have slackened, and are then sold, usually through a specialty dealer, at a discount.

For instance, a few years ago I picked up a fine condition first American trade edition of J. G. Ballard’s *Love and Napalm: Export U. S. A.* at Pic-N-Save for 59¢. Recently I’ve seen more than one asking-price quoted in the 35-40 dollar range. Now, I admit the book market is

not all that liquid, and the bid-and-ask price spread can be wide. Still, the difference between my investment cost and the book’s current value, even allowing for inflation and hard bargaining, is more than sufficient to guarantee a profit should I choose to sell. (I probably won’t, though. I get too much of a kick relishing the irony of Ballard’s book being such an extraordinary market performer, while he himself is the quintessence of anticapitalist curmudgeonry.)

Of course, most remainders will never increase in real-term price. But those few that do are likely to make major percentage gains for a couple of reasons. One, a remainder is generally priced at such a deep discount that even if it only recoups its original cover price, that could easily mean a 300-500% increase or more. Two, the very fact that a title

was remaindered suggests a low total print run for that edition, which translates into built-in scarcity.

A diversified portfolio of remainders, then, can be built with very little capital (five books might cost around 20 bucks), so if only one book in the group "takes off," the odds for a profit being made are good, with very little downside risk. Furthermore, through trial and error I've formulated four guidelines which will significantly enhance the chances for investment success. First, buy only a first edition, first printing, and make sure that both book and dust jacket are in fine or better condition. Second, as a rule avoid the work of a "name" author. It may seem that an author's reputation would enhance the book's desirability, but most likely the book garnered a fair amount of critical and consumer attention when first released and was consensually judged to be minor compared with the author's best work. Whether this evaluation is deserved or not, it probably will stick, effecting a ceiling on profit potential. What is more, print runs of established authors tend to be relatively large. Third, select judiciously from first or early works of new or young talent. Your assessment is as good as anybody's in discerning which of these books were overlooked by the buying public, not because of their quality, but because of poor promotion or the average reader's unwillingness to risk the unknown. Finally, weight your portfolio with books of libertarian content. This is an ideological play. If I were to trade the aforementioned Ballard book, I'd do so now, before the socio-cultural surge it presaged (ultra-sensationalism, bleached, for that respectable, quasi-intellectual "grown-up" look, with clinical detachment) has ebbed. Then I'd buy into the next major wave which, swollen by the current renaissance of deeply-reasoned values, will be libertarianism. When it washes over the globe, interest in "earlier" libertarian stuff will be broad and strong.

Three currently available volumes which are obvious Best Buys are J. Neil Schulman's *The Rainbow Cadenza*, Vernon Vinge's *The Peace War*, and Ellen Plasil's *Therapist* [see the review on p. 50]. As the first two authors increase

their progeny, win some more awards, and gain wider reader recognition, their books are virtually assured to increase in value. And the lesson of Plasil's testament presents a value beyond price.

Following are two more books that essentially meet the above criteria. While neither are sure things like the Smith and the Vinge, I feel they are worth your consideration.

Lightsource by Bari Wood

The epigraph is from Ayn Rand, and so is the plot concept: A brilliant inventor harnesses an energy source that could power the planet for negligible

Dimitri, a wily Soviet functionary in Russia's U. S. embassy, comes by chance into possession of some American cash. Fearing he'll be caught and accused of taking bribes, he tries to "lose" the money by investing in the stock market . . . and inadvertently begins building a financial empire.

cost. Stylistically, however, Wood eschews Rand's near-mythic grandiosity for a more conventional approach. Interestingly, this non-style sometimes works to Wood's advantage, lending an accessibility to her characters not always present in Rand's work. More often, though, the absence of a trenchant artistic, authorial voice allows the somewhat predictable narrative to sink into the blandness of a TV-movie chase thriller, R-rated dialog notwithstanding. Still, the battle lines between Wood's individualist heroine and the villains (a gang of immoral big businessmen in collusion with government agents) are clearly drawn, and their personalities supported by a fair amount of psychological underpinning. And when one worrisomely wishy-washy character, the do-gooder President of the United States, finally takes a strong stand for property rights, Wood's ideological subtext emerges out of the murk of ambiguity into the lightsources of liberty.

All Wood's other novels appear to be of the horror genre, so this '84 book is an anomaly. Too bad. We need all the pro-freedom fiction we can get, whether of lofty or modest aesthetic intentions. Since one of Wood's novels (her second, *Twins*, co-written with Jack Geasland) now commands an asking price of \$45.00, maybe the carry-over effect will

stimulate interest in her other work. Maybe her regular readers will become aware of the real-life monster that threatens to devour us all. Maybe Wood will write an even better, more clear-cut, hard-hitting novel.

Maybe.

The Commissar's Report by Martyn Burke

The through-line of the plot is a nifty idea: Dimitri, a wily Soviet bureaucrat, having landed a plum assignment as a functionary in Russia's U. S. embassy, comes by chance into possession of some American cash (his wife wins it in a supermarket contest), and fearing he'll be caught holding it and consequently accused of taking bribes (a capital offense), he tries to "lose" the money by investing in the stock market . . . and inadvertently begins building a financial empire.

Dimitri eventually does become, albeit secretly, one of the richest men in the U. S., but this ongoing development serves primarily as a backdrop against which he engages in an unending series of skirmishes with both the Russians and the Americans, somehow managing to stay one step ahead of the ever-encroaching state(s). In this sense, Dimitri is a sort of transcendent figure, motivated at times by both Soviet fear and American greed, yet never losing his individual identity to either. And though the book's bawdy and darkly comic tone sometimes seems a little too much an attempt at capturing the collegiate audience, this is counter-balanced by its ultimate reward which, being written in the first person, is the sense of Dimitri himself, his wit, intelligence and energy, his *elán vital*, which cumulatively gathers and enriches the reader's consciousness.

Author Martyn Burke is surprisingly unknown in libertarian circles. His oeuvre, which includes directing and co-writing a feature film (*The Last Chase*), a documentary on the KGB, and this, his 2nd novel, offers something for everyone, from the hard-money agorist to the hard-defense think-tanker. Though the free market may be volatile, over time its direction is rising. With the next major uptrend, Burke's stock may be a leader. □

"Invent a secret code, and send messages in it . . ."

English vs the Educators

Sheldon L. Richman

The reason we no longer see those bumper stickers that say, "If you can read this, thank a teacher," is that they performed the surely unintended public service of identifying whom we should blame for all those illiterate high-school graduates in the United States.

But we shouldn't rush to put "If you can't read this, *blame* a teacher" bumper stickers on our cars. The illiteracy isn't really the teachers' fault: The fault is with those who *teach* the teachers.

This admittedly mischievous thought came as I read an article in the Spring, 1987, issue of the *Virginia English Bulletin*, which is published by the Virginia Association of Teachers of English. This upstanding group was treated in that issue to the truly interesting thoughts, entitled "What Should Language Arts Teachers Teach About Language?", of one Colin Harrison. Professor Harrison is "a member of the faculty of the School of Education at Nottingham University in Nottingham, England, where he *prepares* Language Arts teachers." My emphasis, but that's how the article's biographical note puts it; why the word "teaches" is avoided I can only guess.

Professor Harrison begins with a complaint: it seems "there is an enormous weight . . . which presses down upon teachers of language arts . . . in favor of teaching grammar as the central focus of the language arts curriculum." This pressure comes from "received opinion, public pressure, and tradition." Professor Harrison is here to save the teachers from this pressure and to set the rest of us straight: "What I wish to argue is that, for most children in school, at least before they reach the eleventh grade, a study of grammar is irrelevant and potentially counterproductive. They can't understand it, even if they acquire some automated procedures which make it look as if they do. Worse than

that, it has two very damaging effects: it turns children off English, and it teaches them to feel negatively about their own culture and language."

Got that? We surely don't want to turn children off English. And of all the things that could make children feel negatively about their culture and language, the No. 1 culprit has to be grammar exercises in school. Besides, writes the professor, teaching grammar doesn't work and "fosters cultural elitism."

In place of *mere formalisms* like subjects, predicates, objects, punctuation, and the like, Professor Harrison proposes the "systematic study of language": "What I would argue [then why doesn't he, by the way?] is that, instead of teaching the social conventions of our language in a divisive way as part of what we incorrectly call teaching 'grammar,' we should have language study as a central focus for our teaching, but approach it in ways very different from those which are rooted in cultural elitism."

What is the systematic study of language? "Consider what would happen," writes Professor Harrison, "if the object of language study becomes the relationship between language and the world. . . ." Now there's something I'm sure no one has ever thought of. The systematic study of language takes "the student's own language experience [as] the starting point." That is to say, instead of correcting children's grammatical mistakes, "we might consider investigating the ways in which native language users spontaneously demonstrate a sophisticated knowledge of the language system. . . ."

Professor Harrison writes that by age five almost all children "have acquired a *perfect command* of the grammar of their language." (My emphasis.) This is either dead wrong or tautological, though it is true that children acquire a wealth of tacit knowledge before they start school. He is impressed that chil-

dren can discuss grammar "without ever using the technical terms and without being in the least inhibited by the fact that they do not know them." He implies, though, that if we let the kids know that there *are* such terms, they might make mistakes and become inhibited. But on these grounds we should not teach kids any terms (which means any language) because we wouldn't want them to develop inhibitions. I think Professor Harrison is wrong, though. Children like to know the names of things, and there is no reason to think they make an exception for grammar.

Aside from this, has it ever occurred to Professor Harrison and his colleagues that the parents of these children might like them to have more than a tacit command of the language? That maybe the parents regret that they themselves have only a tacit command and want something better for their kids?

But that's enough about inconvenient details such as parents who only pay the teacher's salaries.

How does one teach the systematic study of language? Professor Harrison has several activities, "which will get into some of the educationally valuable possibilities connected with this area," for teachers to try on their students. Here is a sample:

- "Invent a new body language, including your own signals for 'yes,' 'no,' greeting—and kissing."
- "Invent a secret code, and send messages in it."
- "Choose five nations and draw a picture of their national flag [sic]; try to find out whether the colors and design of the flag [sic] have a special meaning."
- "Try communicating only with sign language for fifteen minutes. . . ."
- "Imagine you lived at the bottom of the sea. What would the world sound like?"
- "Start a rumor. Did it work?"
- "As a birthday present, your aunt, who works at CIA headquarters, has bugged the staff room at school. Write a transcript of the conversation."
- "In Pumpkin County, communication is difficult, because the word 'pumpkin' is the only one anyone is permitted to use. . . . Working with a friend, prepare a three-minute play in which you either (a) get arrested by a pumpkin for riding your pumpkin on the pump-

kin, or (b) have an argument with your pumpkins about whether or not you should be allowed to pumpkin on Saturday night. Remember, the only word you can use in this script is 'pumpkin.' Good luck!"

The children will need more than luck if their teachers are taking the advice of Professor Harrison. But let's have a closer examination of his ideas.

Professor Harrison believes that children will learn to write by writing. Now wait before you nod your heads and think, "Well, what's wrong with that?" Of course one learns to write, in part, by writing. But why Professor Harrison thinks the schools must choose between writing and exercises in grammar puzzles me. His position is just as bad as, perhaps worse than, that of people (if there are any) who would choose the other way round. But let's get back to the professor.

You'll recall that he thinks that teaching grammar "turns children off English" and "teaches them to feel negatively about their own culture and language." To void such calamities, he favors what he calls the "systematic study of language, which includes such innovative teaching methods as starting rumors, inventing secret codes, and contemplating that in the eighteenth century some people spelled "old" "owd." The teacher is exhorted to "simultaneously celebrate [dialect] variations and give students the opportunity to make choices between alternative forms of expression."

Professor Harrison also favors less bold methods, such as having the children write. He was shocked when a colleague "observed to me" (you can't *tell* him anything) that his son, who goes to school in Virginia, is hardly ever allowed to write more than an occasional paragraph. "All of his other writing was in single sentences, phrases, or single words," Professor Harrison wrote. "Do you believe that this is possible? Could it happen in your school? If it could, then the implications are serious indeed, for if we learn to write by writing, rather than by doing grammar exercises, then this child and others like him are unlikely to learn to write, no matter how many grammar exercises they complete, and how many grammatical skills they reach

criterion on." Then Professor Harrison adds parenthetically and in a cutesy, militantly antigrammatical way, "By the way, I think I'll leave that dangling participle in!"

I must digress: I have read that long sentence beginning "If it could" about a hundred times, and I cannot find a dangling participle anywhere in it. This suggests two possibilities: either Professor Harrison doesn't know what a dangling participle is, or the editor of the *Bulletin* had the good sense to remove it, but was too careless also to remove the paren-

It would be culturally elitist and damaging to the child's self-esteem to point out, for instance, that a preposition and a participle are two different things.

thetical asininity. Come to think of it, possibility No. 1 is the likely explanation. Could it be that this preparer of Language Arts teachers might have been referring to the *preposition* (on) that ended the sentence? And if so, should it surprise anyone that Professor Harrison doesn't know a preposition from a participle?

But back to the main thrust, as the social scientists like to say. When Professor Harrison says children learn to write by writing, he doesn't mean what you and I mean. Remember, the key thing is not to turn children off English or to make them feel negatively about their own culture and language. If we are to avoid this, we must be careful about what we do once a child has written something. Professor Harrison is all for "a great deal of emphasis on drafting, discussion, collaboration, and seeking real audiences for students' writing." (Artificial audiences just aren't the same.) Notice that there is no notion of *correcting* the writing. It would be culturally elitist and damaging to the child's self-esteem to point out, for instance, that a preposition and a participle are two different things. (Presumably, it would *not* undermine anyone's self-esteem if the *teacher* doesn't know the difference.) In fact, Professor Harrison praises schools that "believe that, generally speaking, it is damaging and counterproductive to 'correct' the errors in a piece of creative writing . . . instead the teacher will respond to the piece as we

would if a friend had written a story and asked us to comment on it." (Does the friend want just a perfunctory pat on the back or, presumably a contradiction in terms for the education profession, constructive criticism?)

Professor Harrison allows that if the writing is to be "shared with a wider audience . . . the teacher might put the students in a conference with others who would make suggestions concerning accuracy and expression. The teacher would probably, but not necessarily, be the final person to offer comment on possible changes." Note that these conferences, in which nothing but *suggestions* about accuracy are allowed, are held only when a piece of writing is for a wider audience. Is this to say that accuracy and expression are unimportant when a child writes for himself alone?

This reminds me of the kid who doesn't wash behind his ears because no one is going to see back there anyway. Finally, Professor Harrison says that if a teacher sees a "general weakness on some aspect of technical accuracy, he or she might have a twenty-minute blitz on it during class time." Frankly, I don't understand this. Won't it confuse the children to play down *mere* technical accuracy all the way and then have a blitz (whatever that may be) about it all of a sudden?

You may be wondering what the general principle beneath all of this is. If so, you're being charitable by assuming that people such as Professor Harrison are even concerned about general principles. But there is something that serves more or less the same purpose. Writes Professor Harrison, "What is enjoyable about undertaking this type of language study is that . . . [i]t recognizes their [the children's] expertise and puts the teacher in the role of neutral chair of a discussion in which the students are the true experts, since they, and not the instructor, are the native users of that dialect and are able to speak with authority about its usage and connotations."

Now we see what we're up against: the "rap" model of education. No one knows more than anyone else (unless it's the children, who know more than the teacher). We sit and rap, clarifying our values, enhancing our self-esteem, sharing our input and generally facilitating the integration of our emotional, in-

tellectual, physical, and transpersonal aspects. The teacher becomes Hugh Downs. And by the way, whoever said education could be value-free?

You're probably thinking, "What a racket for the teachers!" Fear not: "What I would wish to emphasize is that there is nothing sentimental or sloppy about the procedures outlined above. The teachers work just as hard as they would if they were marking grammar exercises and correcting punctuation errors." Hmm. Somehow moderating student raps about however they happen to speak and write doesn't strike me as terribly hard work. But maybe Professor Harrison means that *thinking up* such tripe is as hard as marking papers. That I may believe. At any rate, his defensiveness is remarkable. But remember that we education outsiders were not supposed to read this. The professional pedagogues don't talk this way at PTA meetings.

By the way, if you think this is the only bit of defensiveness, you're not paying close enough attention. The whole article is a maneuver to deflect attention from the indisputable fact that many teachers and most teacher teachers are notoriously illiterate. There are few people in the general population as good at constructing bad sentences.

The professor can't resist pushing his point about hard work: "I would go so far as to say that correcting students' writing, unless it is for some purpose such as preparing it for another audience, is a monumental waste of the English teacher's professional talent."

Well, gee . . . if the teacher didn't have to waste time correcting grammatical mistakes, he could be doing creative things like generating innovative syste-

matic language study activities such as this one from Professor Harrison: "Make a survey of the colors of the cars of a group of people you know; what can you learn from this?" (Besides that the teacher is a boob.)

All that is bad enough, but the offense is compounded by Professor Harrison's completely unsupported and stupidously fatuous claim that the "systematic study of language" will "give them [children] more power to use language effectively and to see it as a tool over which they have control in their own lives . . ." His method, he says, will "produce adults who can use their understanding of language to do such things as to question explanations that are inadequate, to spot bias, to run a meeting confidently, to criticize advertisements thoughtfully, and to handle relationships skillfully."

Yes, and the pedagogues who hawked the look-say method as a replacement for phonics promised that our kids would read better too. Forgive my skepticism, but I have trouble believing that a study of language in which nothing is *taught*, in which there is no right and wrong, in which "correction" is a dirty word, in which accuracy is merely a "technical matter," in which "inventing body language" is a bold and innovative education method, in which grammar is declared taboo in order not to turn children off English, in which *language*, to be blunt, is barely studied at all—I have trouble believing that any such "study" will lead to anything but generations of sheep, suitable for shearing by educationists, politicians, and professional snake-oil salesmen of all other stripes.

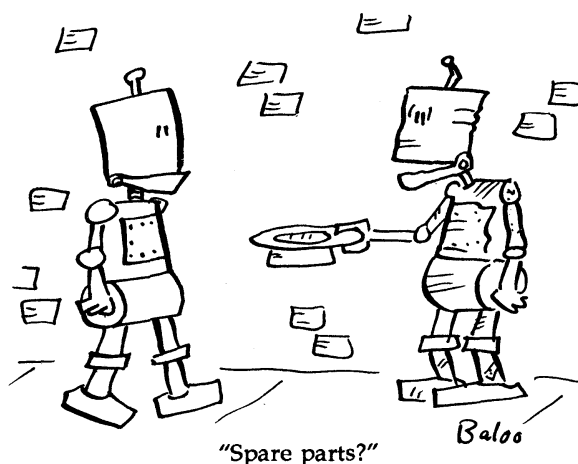
Children who are never taught that

there is a standard English will be in no position as adults to "question explanations that are inadequate." They will be unable to tell flatulent sophistry from careful, precise language because the distinction between these things was never taught when they were in school. Why shouldn't they assume that demagogues are merely speaking another dialect that deserves tolerance and respect?

People like Professor Harrison always say that teaching grammar and standard English is a conservative strategy for supporting the status quo. As he puts it, "Teaching formal grammar is in most respects uncontentious: grammarians may quibble about the adequacy of descriptive systems, but politicians and administrators will not feel that their territory is threatened." He goes on to say that "The question now becomes, not 'Why teach grammar?' but 'Why teach children to become more skilled language users?'" (My question is, How can we do the second without doing the first?) His answer is: "to empower students to change the world."

But contrary to Professor Harrison's view, it is he and his colleagues who have a stake in the status quo, namely, the educational monopolies; and his philosophy of teaching language is part of a conspiracy to cripple students' power to change it. For the last sixty years this monopoly has seen to it that children learn almost nothing in school. Every discipline has been corrupted (the transmutation of history into "social studies" is but one well-known example) in the name of holism and addressing children's "affective domain." The assault on grammar and standard English is merely part of the program. (For an enlightening discussion of how the education profession pulled this off, see Richard Mitchell's *The Graves of Academe*.)

Professor Harrison is correct when he writes, "the teaching of language is in a broad sense a political activity." If people are unable to see through cant and expose it to their fellow citizens, they will be helpless before and dependent on the ruling elites, political and educational, and their bureaucratic obtrusion. But if they can recognize insidious grandiloquence when they see and hear it, and if they can arouse a national audience through the thoughtful use of language, they will have some chance of disestablishing the elites. □



Videonotes

Stand Up and Cheer

(1934) directed by Hamilton McFadden
released on videotape by Fox Video.

It is the height of the Great Depression. Lawrence Cromwell, a great Broadway producer, is summoned to the President's office. The President speaks. "Our country is bravely passing through a serious crisis. But any people blessed with a sense of humor can achieve success and victory. We are endeavoring to pilot the ship past the most treacherous of all rocks: fear. The government now proposes to dissolve that destructive rock in a gale of laughter. To that end it has created a new cabinet office, the Secretary of Amusement, whose duty it shall be to amuse and entertain the people, to make them forget their troubles. Mr Cromwell, we are drafting you and your splendid talents into public service..."

Cromwell's task is a difficult one, but he tackles it with incredible energy, breaking the nation into amusement districts and ordering entertainers around the country. He barks: "Zone 36—one gross chorus girls. Zone 18—send two dozen blues singers, four dozen torch singers. Zone 21, two dozen mammy singers..."

But the battle is tough and the opposition is strong. As the leading bloated plutocrat tells his henchmen: "We've got to see to it that this Department of Amusement is a failure. We've made millions of dollars worth of contracts based on the continuance of the Depression. If Cromwell succeeds, if the mood and temperament of the people become optimistic, prosperity will arrive with a bang! And that will ruin us. We must attack Cromwell from every source. The printing press, political forums, the radio... the world is full of pussyfoots, bluenoses and killjoys. Laughter and gaiety are their archenemies. It shouldn't be hard to see the hand of the devil in Cromwell's program. We'll put up millions, in cash..."

The film succeeds in delivering all the absurdity that one would expect from a film whose theme is, "Let's sing and dance the Great Depression away!" The laughs (mostly unintention-

al) come fast and furious. And along the way the viewer can see Shirley Temple in her film debut, enjoy a hilarious parody of the U.S. Senate in action, and learn why black Americans are so disgusted by Stepin Fetchit. (Fetchit is so abysmally servile and stupid that it's difficult to watch him without vomiting. That's why fast forward buttons are on VCRs.) As Lawrence Cromwell, Warner Baxter essentially reprises his portrayal of Julian Marsh in *42nd Street*, infusing the role with the same surrealistic hyper-kineticism.

Just as the Depression seems at its worst and Cromwell is about to resign thinking he has failed, an aid rushes into his office. "I've got great news! The Depression is over! Factories are opening up, men are going back to work by the thousands! Our farm products are being sold the world over! Savings accounts are heaping up! The banks are pouring out new loans! There is no unemployment! Fear has been banished, confidence reborn! Poverty has been wiped out! Laughter resounds throughout the nation! People are happy again!" The film closes with a coast-to-coast musical number that might be best described as the musical embodiment of Mussolini's fascism. —RWB

The New Enlightenment

(1986) released on videotape by the
Reason Foundation

The recent rebirth of classical liberal thought is examined in this six-part British television series, offered on videotape by the Reason Foundation.

The series has much to offer: an overview of the rationale for human liberty, a libertarian interpretation of the past half century, even a look at the more radical implications of libertarian thought. The story is told in a fairly lively style, illustrated with appropriate film clips and brief interviews with libertarians and classical liberals.

In terms of both style and production values, the series is similar to the usual sort of British documentary you might see on PBS, which explains both

its strength and weakness. As entertainment, it is likely to be a bit dull except to those with an interest in political and economic thought. And the series is plainly oriented toward the British situation.

And in places it is a bit facile. "The father of this tradition," the narrator tells us, "is John Locke," as though liberalism were such a narrow tradition that it could be traced to a single individual thinker. Several of its comments on labor unions imply that unions are inherently criminal in nature.

Worst of all, in a lengthy segment on competition, the program argues that competition among entrepreneurs is analogous to competition among professional hockey teams. This flies in the face of a very important insight of classical liberal thought: entrepreneurial competition differs from game competition in that in the market many competing entrepreneurs can make a profit, thus making victory and defeat a matter of degree, while in game competition there is always one winner and one loser. The market economy is *not* a zero sum game.

These caveats aside, *The New Enlightenment* offers a worthwhile introduction to the liberal tradition. Though not as interesting or as amusing as Milton Friedman's polemical PBS series *Free To Choose*, it does provide local libertarian groups the opportunity to mimic the best part of that show—the lively debates that followed the presentation of each segment of the series. Watch *The New Enlightenment* in a group, and then hold your own discussion. —RWB

Brazil

(1985) directed by Terry Gilliam
released on videotape by
MCA Home Video

Brazil is a darkly comic vision of a *cacotopian* future. It's a bizarre cross between Orwell's *1984* and the farcical humor of "Monty Python." In my judgment, it is also one of the best films ever made with individual liberty as its central theme.

The hero of the story (Jonathan Pryce) is an uncommonly competent bureaucrat working in the Ministry of Information in a Superstate of the future. Unlike his boss (Ian Holm) and many of his co-workers, he understands how things work—or, more accurately, don't work. The plot is mostly concerned with the unravelling of a mistake that has caused an innocent man to be taken by the Department of Information Retrieval and, our hero soon finds, "deleted."

In the course of the film he meets the man (Robert De Niro) who was supposed to have been interrogated (that is, tortured), and also the girl of his dreams (Kim Greist), who might be a terrorist. The former illegally fixes his apartment heating and cooling system (which had gone extravagantly, comically haywire) and the latter unintentionally entices him to rebel against the system of which he is a part.

None of this captures the spirit of the film. I have no means by which to do that: the essential looniness of the film mixes so well with the serious subject matter that it has to be seen to be grasped. Ostensibly, *Brazil* is a satire, but the elements of romance, farce and tragedy are so strong that pigeon-holing the work is well-nigh impossible. It is also ostensibly science-fiction, but the interiors, costumes, and manners, etc., are overstated with both comic and symbolic effects, making the film more of an example of *fabulism* rather than the more straightforward science fiction of, say, 2001, or even *E. T.*

Because it satirizes bureaucracy, and because its vision of positive humanity (in the wondrously fantastic dream sequences and in the character of the hero) is so compelling, this film qualifies, in my humble opinion, not only as one of the greatest *libertarian* films of all times, but as one of the greatest films *ever*. —TWV

The Devils,

(1971) directed by Ken Russell
released on videotape by
Warner Home Video

As any film buff knows, a Ken Russell film equals a *very peculiar* film. As the old rhyme goes, when they are good, they are very, very good, but when they are bad they are horrid. *The Devils* is one of the good ones—truly horrifying, but not horrid.

The setting is the French city of Loudon during the 17th Century. The tale centers on a priest (Oliver Reed) who attempts to keep the walls of the city intact—thus insuring the city's freedom from the imperial encroachments of the evil Cardinal Richelieu and the bizarre Louis XIII. When we first meet the priest, we have no reason to empathize with him, and no suspicion that he will become the hero.

During the course of the tale the priest grows up; we come to like him, respect his ideas (which are heretical

from both Catholic and mainstream political points of view) and desire his success. Unfortunately for these developing desires (and for our comfort) he does *not* succeed: the story follows the historical record at least to the extent that the story has a tragic outcome. But the tragedy is not of the classic variety, and though we can play casuist and show how it was because of his "tragic flaws" (*sins*) witnessed in the film's opening scenes that set the stage for his downfall, we know very well that the (extremely brutal) punishment does not fit the crime. And this lack of fitness is the whole point: *The Devils* is first and foremost a biting piece of social criticism.

The attention to detail is as strange and surreal as that in *Brazil*, but its wit is intended to make you gasp, not smile. The vision is a vision of a hell on earth, a hell raised by human perversity, cruelty, and stifled passion breaking the binding of all constraint. It is a masterpiece, though most people find it hard to watch. Not for those with a

low (or even normal) tolerance for sex and violence, and not for light viewing, but recommended—nay, *prescribed*—for every person, regardless of tolerance level, who has even the *tiniest* respect for that practical chimera, theocracy.

The quality of the cinematography is very high, and the sets imaginative and just realistic enough. Yes, all the gore, disfigurement, and pain is believably depicted. The acting is superb. But even more importantly, the film's subject matter is reinforced to perfection by a musical score consisting of Renaissance music directed by the late David Munrow and an a-melodic, dissonant modern score composed by Peter Maxwell Davies. This contrast captures the essence of this very strange example of the horror genre. Ken Russell has yet to find another subject that matches his peculiar talents as well as this.

The film is based, by the way, on the Aldous Huxley historical novel *The Devils of Loudon*, and on a play also adapted from that novel. —TWV

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Periodicals

"I am the first to admit I am no stock market expert. But I know an overbought market when I see one. In my judgment, there is no doubt that a broad and steep decline will hit the market."—from *Analysis & Outlook*, Oct 8, 1987, mailed to subscribers by first class mail Oct 9, ten days before the stock market crash. For subscription, send \$49 for one year, or \$10 for 3 month trial to *Analysis & Outlook*, Dept L, PO Box 1167, Port Townsend, WA 98368. Pro rata refund upon request guaranteed.

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Personals

Gay libertarian man, 27, interested in writing to other gay libertarians. Mark Fulwiler, 231 Sanchez St., #4, San Francisco, CA 94114.

Brilliant libertarian egoist (19) seeks correspondence and possible long-term relationship with woman of similar philosophical outlook. Interests include computers, history, philosophy, music, and anarchism. Write: 450 Memorial Drive, H312, Cambridge MA 02139.

Notes on Contributors

Gary Alexander is a writer living in Metairie, Louisiana, and is managing editor of *Gold Newsletter*.

"Baloo" is the *nom de plume* of Rex F. May, whose cartoons appear in numerous magazines, including *The Wall Street Journal* and *National Review*. Mr May is the editor of *The Trout in the Milk*.

Benjamin Best is a computer programmer and free lance writer living in Toronto. In 1966, he was editor and publisher of the pioneer libertarian weekly *Idea Catalyst*.

R. W. Bradford is publisher of *Liberty*.

Nathaniel Branden was a close associate of Ayn Rand from 1950 to 1968. He is a practicing psychotherapist and author of several books on psychology.

David M. Brown is a freelance writer living in New Jersey. Until its recent demise, Mr Brown was Assistant Editor of *Oasis Magazine*.

Stephen Cox, an associate editor of *Liberty*, is Associate Professor of Literature, University of California, San Diego.

Timothy W. Henderson is a musician living in Los Angeles, California, with numerous studio, stage and screen credits. he is currently composing material for a libertarian-themed musical project.

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Henry Mark Holzer, member of the New York Bar, is professor of constitutional law at Brooklyn Law School and special counsel to the American Foundation for Resistance International.

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William P. Moulton, a contributing editor of *Liberty*, lives in northern Michigan.

Bob Ortin has a degree in applied mathematics and physics from the University of Wisconsin. He lives in southern Oregon where his political cartoons are regularly featured in a local newspaper.

Sheldon Richman is director of public affairs at the Institute for Humane Studies at George Mason University.

Franklin Sanders lives in Memphis, Tennessee, and publishes *The Moneychanger*, a privately circulated newsletter.

David Ramsay Steele is Editorial Director of the General Books Division of Open Court Publishing Co.

Timothy Virkkala is assistant editor of *Liberty*.

Ethan O. Waters is a writer who lives in Southern California.

In the Next Issue of Liberty:

"Rand Bashing: Enough is Enough" Ross Overbeek thinks it's time to put the life and work of Ayn Rand in perspective. He finds her work impressive and her contributions to libertarianism massive. In the course of his thought provoking essay, he argues that many of the excesses attributed to Rand are nearly inevitable in any successful ideological movement; illustrating his thesis with developments elsewhere in the libertarian movement.

"Nicaragua: The Case for Non-intervention" Bill Kelsey visited Nicaragua with a "pro-peace" group, and has learned a lot about how foreign visitors to war-torn countries are manipulated by their hosts. But he came away more convinced than ever that Americans should not involve themselves with the Contras, either publicly or privately.

"The Liberty Poll" Late last year, we conducted a poll of libertarians about life, God, government, sex, heroes . . . and how they would solve some serious moral problems. A fascinating profile of the Libertarians and their beliefs emerged.

"Taking Libertarianism Seriously" Murray Rothbard reviews *On Classical Liberalism and Libertarianism* by Norman Barry and other recent discussions of libertarianism by British philosophers, and wonders: Why do British thinkers take libertarian ideas so much more seriously than do American philosophers?

Terra Incognita

Harrison, Ark.

Investment advice from Kurt Saxon, pioneer "survivalist," as quoted in *The Wall St Journal*:

"In 1980, if you had taken your money and bought a case of sewing needles, they'd be worth double now. And when the collapse comes, you'll be able to get a pig for a needle."

Sacramento, Calif.

Evidence of the seriousness with which the U.S. Armed Forces ("We're not a company; we're your country") views national security risks, as reported in the *Orange County Register*:

Captain James Etheridge was sentenced to a year in prison and fined \$12,000 for an adulterous romance with an Air Force woman of lesser rank. Captain Etheridge, a career officer of some 21 years and a married man, was convicted of adultery, fraternization with an enlisted person, and conspiracy.

Honolulu, Hawaii

How the metropolis of the Island Paradise fights immorality, as reported in the *University of Michigan Res Gestae*:

A 26-year-old hotel night clerk assisted police in the battle against prostitution, by using \$70 provided by police to pay a prostitute for sex in his car, and then testifying in court against her. He testified in court that he was motivated by a sense of "civic pride."

Washington, D. C.

Demonstration of the harassment that patriots suffer at the hands of federal officials of dubious loyalty, as reported in *The Wall St Journal*:

Fawn Hall was ticketed for eating a banana on the subway in Washington, D.C.

Hollywood, Calif.

Good news for mail-order clients from the glamour capital of the world, as reported in *The Wall St Journal*:

Frederick's of Hollywood has "de-sleazed its catalog," according to a company spokesman.

Springfield, Ill.

An imaginative alternative to Social Security was shut down by Federal authorities, perhaps concerned about potential competition, as reported in the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*:

More than 31,000 men sent millions of dollars, plus clothing, sewing machines, jewelry and food to the Church of Love, which promised them retirement in a "valley paradise," attended by beautiful nude women, "Mother Maria and the Angels of Love" in which "all their wishes and dreams would be fulfilled."

Washington, D. C.

Why certain individuals do not have any constitutional right to be protected from warrantless searches, as explained by the U.S. Supreme Court, as reported in *The Wall Street Journal*:

People who engage in highly regulated business activities, like junkyard operators, have less expectation of privacy than others. Therefore there is no need for authorities to obtain a warrant before conducting searches of their premises.

Ottawa, Canada

How the Dominion of Canada protects its subjects from confusion and misinformation, as reported in *Communiqué*, a publication of Revenue Canada, Canada's tax enforcement agency:

"Goods with some or all of the following characteristics may be subject to prohibition: Goods alleging that an identifiable group is manipulating media, trade and finance, government or world politics to the detriment of society as a whole."

Washington, D. C.

How one generation of political leader prepares an appeal to the nation's great middle class, as reported in *The Wall St Journal*:

Democratic Presidential hopeful Sen. Albert Gore, Jr, grew up living in a suite in a luxury hotel in Washington, D.C., where his father was a member of the U.S. Senate, except during summers when Gore the Younger lived with a poverty stricken sharecropper family.

Ramona, Calif.

How a businessman can aid the First Lady in her War on Drugs, as evidenced by the advertising slogan of Dave's United States Coins (The Collectors' Friend), from an advertisement in *Coin World*:

"Get High On Coins, Not Drugs."

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

Evidence of artistic and technical progress in the most progressive socialist state, as reported in *The Wall St Journal*:

Mezhdunarodniya Kniga, the principal trading company for records in the Soviet Union, announced the release of the first compact disk in the Workers' Paradise: a series of speeches made by V. I. Lenin between 1919 and 1921. The compact disk was manufactured in the United Kingdom.

Bucharest, Rom.

Evidence of a softening attitude toward Communist dictators by constitutional monarchs, as reported in *Lumea*, a Foreign Ministry international affairs weekly:

In a statement congratulating Nicolae Ceausescu on his 70th birthday, Her Royal Highness Queen Elizabeth II said: "We in Great Britain are impressed with the determination with which you affirm your independence and the consistent way in which Romania has maintained a distinct position and plays an important role in world affairs. You personally, Mr President, are a statesman of world stature with widely recognized excellence, experience and influence."

London

Inability of the British Crown to take a joke, as reported in the *Los Angeles Times*:

The British Foreign Office denied that Queen Elizabeth II had congratulated Romanian dictator Ceausescu on his 70th birthday.

The Foreign Office summoned the Romanian Ambassador to a meeting to advise him: "The message was false and the government considers it an insult to Her Majesty."

(Readers of *Liberty* are invited to forward newspaper clippings or other documents for publication in *Terra Incognita*.)

What motivates our policy makers and causes their policies to fail?



Thomas Sowell, acclaimed as one of America's leading social thinkers, is at his best as he tackles the most controversial issues of the decade in this collection of his nationally syndicated columns and challenging essays, **Compassion Versus Guilt**. He examines the motivations of our nation's "deep thinkers" as they manipulate public opinion and influence policy decisions and explores the reasons why the "imposed solutions" are usually worse than the problems they are designed to solve.

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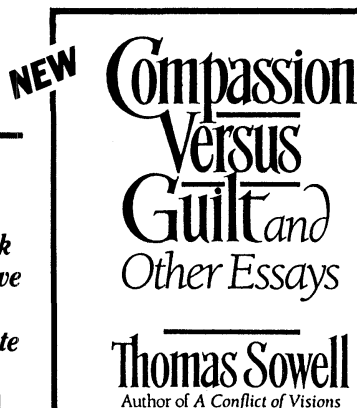
- Are the "humanitarian activities" of the United Nations promoting peace—or war?
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