

Liberty

The
Geography
of Freedom

May 1995

Vol. 8, No. 5

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Mexican Hayride

Clinton Wastes \$50 Billion in Six Weeks

by R.W. Bradford

The Bell Curve and the New Elite

by David Ramsay Steele

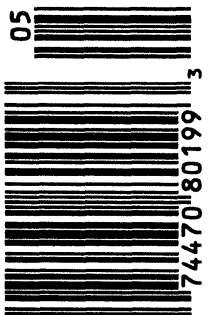
Blunder on the Right

by Paul Piccone

Who Lost Feminism?

by Jesse Walker

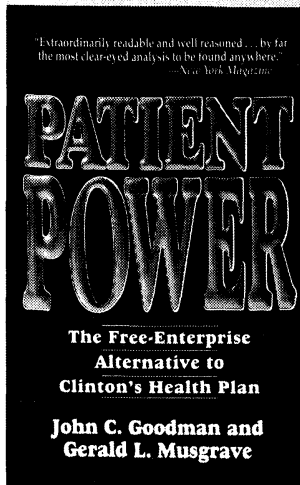
Also: *Caroline Baum* tours the Bond Market Babylon, *Richard Kostelanetz* sees John Cage at Madison Square Garden, *Jane Shaw* tracks the peripatetic P.J. O'Rourke . . . plus other Articles, Reviews, and Humor



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by Michael Tanner

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The federal government's record in managing the largest health care

system in the nation should caution us about the dangers of turning more health care over to government management.

Laboratory Failure: States Are No Model for Health Care Reform

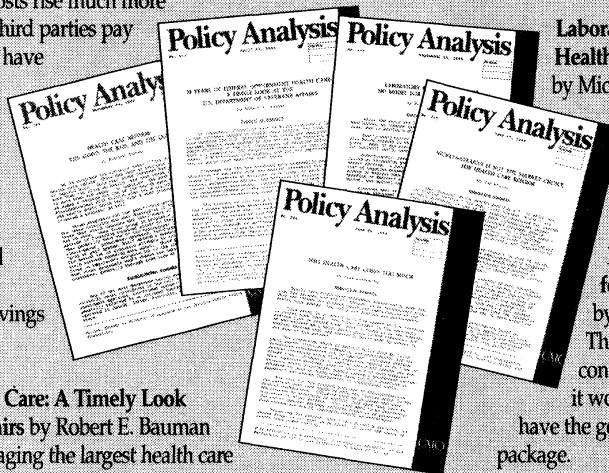
by Michael Tanner

The reforms implemented by Hawaii, Oregon, New York, and other states should not be a model for national health care reform.

Nickles-Stearns Is Not the Market Choice for Health Care Reform

by Tom Miller

The Nickles-Stearns bill supported by many conservatives is not a free-market reform: it would mandate insurance purchases and have the government define a standard benefits package.



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Letters

President Browne?

Congratulations to Mr. Pugsley on a tightly reasoned, well-written article ("Harry, Don't Run!" March 1995).

I was involved with the Libertarian Party at its inception, both in New Mexico and nationally (as first national secretary). Six months later, I left the party in disgust because I had discovered that the only way to achieve anything by political means would be to sell out my reasons for being involved in the first place.

In his perceptive and excellent article in *It Came from Arkansas* ("Who Benefits from the Clinton Program?"), Harry Browne shows that he has no illusions about the context in which a president works. Given all this, Mr. Browne, could you tell us what exactly you believe you could accomplish as president?

This last election, I registered for the first time in many years, but could not stomach going to the polls, especially with Ross Perot telling listeners that the people are the boss; I felt like a sheep being herded.

Mr. Browne, if I were able to make myself enter a polling booth in order to vote for you, what would I be voting for?

Diane Amsden
El Cajon, Calif.

Harry's War

I appreciate John Pugsley's concern about my campaign for the presidency. And I admire the thinking that has gone into his article.

John has chosen to further his beliefs through such political activities as pushing the FIJA movement and fighting government regulations. I have chosen to further my beliefs by trying to become president to cut the size of government.

John has decided to set aside immediate self-interest by undertaking such uncomfortable activities as engaging in civil disobedience or taking chances with his taxes. I have decided to set aside six years of my remaining life to try to serve a term as president.

John has explained why he believes the activities he favors are moral or praiseworthy, but he hasn't explained how they will lead to a reduction in the size of government. All these activities are valuable, but by themselves they

won't lead to a day when we will wake up magically in a free society. On the other hand, I know that the federal government (and most other governments) would be considerably smaller after I served a term as president. And since it is extremely unlikely that we will see a totally free society in my lifetime, I would like to make it as free as possible for the years remaining to me. That is in my self-interest; I'm not concerned about the generations of the coming centuries who might find a way to profit from the educational activities of today.

I have no quarrel with anyone who chooses not to support my campaign; after all, I didn't vote for 30 years. But I don't agree that I am aggressing against anyone by running for president or by being president. Every change that I make will be a change toward less government. I will disarm the politicians, not hand them new weapons.

And those who know me personally — including John Pugsley — will testify, I believe, that I am far more reliable than the politicians he cited, such as Ronald Reagan. I mean what I say, and my intentions will not be subverted.

If I'm elected, on the first day I will pardon all those convicted of tax evasion, nonviolent drug crimes, "insider trading," and gun control edicts. I will abolish all the regulations in the federal register that harass businesspeople. None of those acts require the cooperation of Congress. In addition, I will work to repeal the income tax, abolish federal departments and agencies, and reduce the size of government by at least two-thirds.

If John feels this is aggression, I will gladly add a provision exempting him from my actions, and he can continue paying income tax.

Harry Browne
Lafayette, Calif.

Civil and Disobedient

Hold it, Mr. Prechter ("Anti-Politics in Action," March 1995): Mr. Pugsley didn't say don't do anything at all. He said doing nothing is far from the only alternative to political action. He then lists 15 points of action to consider. I'd like to expand on point number three: "Stop doing business with your enemy."

The notorious bank robber Willie Sutton, when asked why he robbed banks, replied, "Because that's where the money is." If we were to ask our lawyers, legislators, judges, and policemen why they so mistreat us, they might well answer, "Because you still pay us handsomely, you still vote for us no matter how many onerous laws we make, you still walk into our courts voluntarily and say "Your Honor," and you still submit meekly when we apprehend you even if you know you have not defrauded, threatened, or harmed anyone."

Civil disobedience works. I recently spent eight months behind bars for obstruction of governmental administration and refusing to plea bargain or post bail. I also didn't walk into court. They pushed me in and when I was in I remained silent. Sure it involved pain but there was also a high degree of satisfaction watching them trying to run the show without my cooperation. They were exposed and stung. The community was asking, "Why him? Why not the criminals?"

Jacob Lapp
Cassadaga, N.Y.

Damned If You Do . . .

I found John Pugsley's argument against libertarians participating in the political process enlightening, but not convincing. It seems to me that not participating is political action by default.

While Pugsley is correct in recognizing that all human beings act out of self-interest, those who recognize natural law act out of self-interest *rightly understood*.

William Paul Hayden
Anchorage, Alaska

The Life of Politics

John Pugsley revives a debate that periodically engages libertarians. This is not the first time an apolitical libertarian has challenged Libertarian Party activists, accusing them of giving aid and comfort to the enemy by voting, running for office, or otherwise working to influence the direction of society with "political" activism. Interestingly, the issue has been somewhat dormant for a few years. Now that Harry Browne has decided to seek the LP presidential nomination, it is again spotlighted. Mr. Pugsley's letter is informative if one is new to the issues he discusses. But for those of us who have

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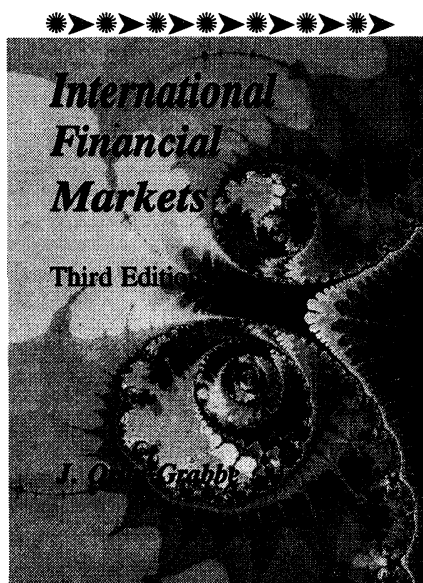
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About the Author:

J. Orlin Grabbe has an AB in Economics from the University of California at Berkeley and a PhD in Economics from Harvard University. While teaching at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, he founded FX Systems Inc., which built banking risk-management computer software systems for trading in foreign exchange, interest rate instruments, and commodities. After selling his interest in FX Systems (which later split into the

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Special Note to Erisians and Fnord Fans:

This is the only book on international finance which quotes both Robert Anton Wilson and the Reverend Ivan Stang!

two firms of FNX Limited and FSS), Dr. Grabbe became a short-story writer and banking consultant for derivative products in New York. He currently lives in the middle of the Nevada desert, near a cactus with a hidden computer jack, and with a .3030 close at hand.

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debated them during the last couple of decades, there is nothing new.

It is generally accepted that a society changes, undergoes an ideological revolution, only when the people in it change their thinking. They change their belief systems, primarily with regard to moral issues, as to what is right and what is wrong in how people ought to deal with one another. In today's America, this includes the question of the proper relationship between the individual and the state.

Someone once said, "Ideas have consequences." And many have repeated it since, because it is so obviously true. The change in society begins when someone, or some group, develops a different idea about how things should be and promulgates it. First, it is ridiculed and rejected outright. But as more thinking people begin to examine and criticize it, the idea is lent some legitimacy. Through a process of further examination, criticism, and expanding acceptance, the new idea becomes part of the thinking of more people, usually academics and other intellectuals. It is taken up by journalists and others (screenwriters, songwriters, talk-show hosts) who have influence on the general population. The common folk make it part of their discussion and, if the revolution succeeds, the majority embraces the new idea and demands the changes it implies. So it was with the American revolution of 1776 and so it must be today with our freedom movement.

Mr. Pugsley urges libertarians to do just about anything to advance this process except vote or otherwise directly involve themselves in political matters. My experience tells me that LP activism can be a powerful educator of academics, journalists, and plain folks. As a spokesperson for the LP for over 20 years, dealing with a wide variety of audiences, I have observed a major shift in attitudes on issues that illuminate basic

thinking about the rights of individuals and the proper role of the state. The shift is (mostly) in the libertarian direction.

I am firmly convinced that the LP has played a role in making libertarian views better known and more widely accepted. One reason for this is that people running for office and political party representatives are given access to the media, classrooms, and other venues where ideas are discussed. The existence of the LP as an "official" political party opens a great many doors for our participation in the mainstream political discussion. I have personally introduced thousands of journalists and others to libertarian approaches in my role as an LP candidate and spokesperson. In short, all political activism is educational. It makes no sense to deny ourselves this opportunity to introduce people to libertarianism and influence them in the right direction.

Why does it work like this? Basic communications principles tell us that people will listen to, and follow, people who are like themselves (share their values) and who address the issues that are important to them. In other words, if you want to be persuasive, you must go to where your audience is, join them, and move with them toward the destination you have chosen by convincing them it will serve their values to do so. So it is important to make some judgments about our audience in order to better devise strategies for effective persuasion.

It is unfortunate that almost all Americans still believe that some substantial amount of government is at least a necessary evil, if not a positive good. They believe that political parties, elections, and voting are legitimate avenues for change. They also have a healthy skepticism about all of it. Probably at least half believe that government bungles most of what it attempts. That is the opening for libertarian views; and the LP, including Harry Browne as its presidential candidate, is in a unique position to capitalize on it because we have consistently preached the inadequacies and evils of government.

The LP message to this audience has two parts. First, government doesn't work and is costing us billions in taxes and ruining our lives in many ways. Most Americans already agree with or are willing to evaluate this contention. Second, just about everything govern-

ment does can be done better by honest hardworking people without government, so we can cut it drastically, save ourselves a bundle in taxes doing it, and increase our freedom too. This second point is the libertarian answer to the question raised by the first point: so what are we going to do about (education, medical care, crime, etc.) if government doesn't work? The context in which people are most interested in discussing these matters is electoral politics. That's why the LP is a valuable tool in the freedom fighters' arsenal.

Here's one example from an increasingly likely scenario. Probably, there will be televised presidential debates in 1996. If the Browne campaign strategy is successful in developing early support, Harry Browne will be included. Can you imagine what effect a witty, articulate, and well-informed libertarian like Harry will have on the quality and direction of the debate? No matter who is elected, the questions he will raise about the statist programs of both the Democrats and Republicans will be embedded in the American consciousness. The next president and Congress will have to deal with a new electorate substantially more enlightened and empowered by libertarian ideas. I wouldn't miss that for anything. I hope Mr. Pugsley decides to watch too.

David P. Bergland
Costa Mesa, Calif.

Nirvana in Nevada

I don't blame people like Durk Pearson and Sandy Shaw for seeing nirvana in the Nevada desert ("Welcome to the Revolution," March 1995). It's great fun to read the text of the U.S. Constitution and win imaginary battles in court. I once attended a painfully illiterate People of the West luncheon and read their newsprint broadsides. God help them! They're honest and decent, but innocent of the critical intelligence to understand that federal case law voided the Tenth Amendment 60 years ago. Their Western uprising is nothing more than a ragtag coalition of gun nuts and New Age health nuts, politically inert beyond five free minutes on a local PBS station once every two years.

But *Liberty* is a different animal: it's your job to tell the truth. And the truth is, libertarians have failed. There is no magic horizon in the year 2000 or in 2010

Letters Policy

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

Reflections

State of the onion — In his State of the Union Address, President Clinton said, "The American people certainly voted for change in 1992 and 1994." What he didn't say is that in 1994, they voted, as best they could, to change what they voted for in 1992. —SR

Jack of all tripe — With Bill Clinton's hopes for reelection about as low as Fox network standards, you'd expect Republican hopefuls to be throwing their hats into the ring with glee. Not a chance: Jack Kemp, Bill Bennett, Dick Cheney, and Dan Quayle have all decided not to run. I have to admit I was a little disappointed about Quayle. I have a soft spot for the dopey former veep, who can at least take comfort in being smarter than Al Gore.

On the other hand, I was delighted at the departure of Kemp, the godfather of "progressive conservatism." This school preaches a laundry list of happy-sounding reforms: cutting the capital gains tax, enterprise (now "empowerment") zones, tenant ownership of public housing. This last sounds like a good idea until you see how Kemp put it into practice as HUD secretary. His HOPE (Home Ownership for People Everywhere) program consisted of spending huge amounts to renovate the buildings, selling them to the tenants at below-market prices, and doling out an ersatz brand of ownership that excluded the right to sell on the open market. This arrangement did not resemble a free-market system so much as it did the "land reform" the Reagan State Department foisted on El Salvador in order to snow congressional Democrats into appropriating more money for killing Salvadorans.

Kemp's kind of "free-market" thinking makes Clinton's policies seem attractive. —CS

A Gramm of prevention — The first Republican to enter the presidential race was Phil Gramm, the lifelong public employee famed for his firm free-market convictions. Gramm often ignores limited-government doctrine when it is politically advantageous to grab some pork for his home state (hence his support for the ill-fated Supercollider project, the Sematech consortium, and the mohair wool subsidy) or curry favor with another politician (hence his support for George Bush's 1990 tax increase). But when most Republicans vote for government intervention, they are only betraying their rhetoric; when Gramm votes for intervention, he is betraying his principles. In modern American politics, guilty-Catholic libertarianism may be the best we can hope for.

The real problem with the Texas senator isn't his tepid free-market economics. It's everything else about him. Even if you ignore his hawkish foreign policy views, Gramm is worth opposing for his proto-fascist stances on civil liberties. Gramm is the worst kind of drug warrior there is: the kind who doesn't care if the war on drugs destroys the lives of

even those who have nothing to do with illegal chemicals. Gramm is a strong supporter of "civil forfeiture," the police practice of seizing alleged drug traffickers' property even if the owners are found innocent — or never even charged. He advocates mandatory minimum sentencing for first-time non-violent drug offenders. He favors increased federalization of law enforcement.

Worst of all, he sponsored S 2245, the Drug and Crime Emergency Act of 1990, which would have declared a five-year state of emergency to win the drug war. S 2245 (and its counterpart in the House of Representatives, HR 4079, sponsored by Newt Gingrich) would have created enormous concentration camps for drug offenders. It also called for compulsory drug testing in schools and workplaces, forced prison labor, mandatory minimum sentencing, and suspension of Fourth and Eighth Amendment protections. All of this, incidentally, would have been an enormous unfunded federal mandate — something Gramm and Gingrich allegedly oppose.

Some libertarians will line up behind Gramm, just because he favors medical IRAs and a few spending cuts. I'd sooner not vote at all. —JW

Cutting back county hall — On a sad note, the *Los Angeles Times* reports that the Reason Foundation has endorsed a "short-term" tax increase as a "crucial part of a wide-ranging recovery plan" for Orange County, California. "You don't want to stand on principle to the point where you cut your own throat," said Bryan Snyder, senior vice president of the libertarian foundation. To date, the politicians in Orange County have ignored that advice, insisting that "tax increases are out of the question." —CS

Slovakia, mon amour — So you were wondering: what was the *real* message behind last November's Republican victory? Was it that famous populist wave? Term limits? The balanced-budget amendment? The Angry White Male? Newt's Third Wave charisma? Heidi Toffler's sex appeal?

Ha! You're all wrong, dead wrong. The real answer is *Slovakia*. When the voters kicked the Democrats out of Capitol Hill, it was because they were itching to make the world safe for a tiny former Nazi protectorate. Didn't you notice all those long lines of people in front of the Slovak Embassy in Washington? They're just a sample of the hundreds of thousands of Americans dying to die for Slovakia, so that proud nation could perhaps try to recapture its lost territories in the Czech Republic.

If you don't believe me, read Newt's Contract With America and its little-noticed "National Security Revitalization" bill, passed in February. It calls on the United States not only to maintain and strengthen that Cold War

relic called NATO — the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, not the National Association of Theater Owners, which is actually a more worthwhile cause to die for — but to expand it to include Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and our lovely little Slovakia.

Remember that famous “tripwire” on the West German border with Poland? If Soviet Bloc forces were to cross it on their way to Paris, U.S. troops were expected to retaliate, and you know the rest. Well, now that Congress has adopted the NSR bill, the tripwire is moving closer to Moscow. By the end of the century, the U.S. is expected to become the *de facto* protector not only of the British, the French, and the Germans, but also the Poles, the Hungarians, and our beloved Slovaks against the fearsome Russian military genius most recently demonstrated in Chechnya.

Gingrich did make some concessions to the more isolationist forces in his party. Initially, the NSR bill had proposed that the new NATO include all three Baltic states, Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine, the southern former Soviet republics, and even Albania. But now Albania and company have been left out. What has provoked this defeatist attitude among the Republicans? Is the Vietnam Syndrome — or, worse, Munich-style appeasement — threatening to take over the GOP? Why else would the Republicans abandon the good people of Albania and Romania and Armenia to their tragic fate?

My own modest proposal is to turn “NATO” into a discussion group on the Internet. That way, Newt and the other Tom Clancy buffs can play war games to their heart’s content. They can even lead U.S. troops on an invasion of — you guessed it — Slovakia. After all, providing all those guys with free laptops would be cheaper than fighting a new war in central Europe. —LTH

As we go marching down Tobacco Road

— Thomas L. Friedman, heir to the chair (not to mention the ponderous prose style) of the *New York Times*’ foreign affairs columnist Flora Lewis, recently scolded the War Party tandem of Gingrich and Dole for using “‘U.N.’ and ‘Boutros-Ghali’ as four-letter words” in their cynical appeal to “isolationists without high school degrees.” Of course, those unlettered isolationists (read: Middle American members of the Peace Party) are called upon to sacrifice their sons in the wars Mr. Friedman and his colleagues prevaricate us into, but at least we’ve caught a glimpse of the class hatred that motivates those American globonauts.

Friedman, by the way, castigates Senator Jesse Helms for his “isolationism” — Jesse Helms, who throughout the ‘80s sought to stick our snouts in the business (and our guns in the snouts) of every campesino, bushman, and nomad in the Third World. If Jesse Helms is an isolationist, Thomas L. Friedman is a columnist of rare style and lambent wit. —BK

The Yale man’s burden — In a March 20 editorial, *National Review*’s editors commented on a provision of the Contract With America that would prohibit placing U.S. troops under U.N. command. “NR does not usually

like restrictions on presidential authority in foreign affairs,” they haughtily intoned. “But neither can NR recall any Republican President who ordered U.S. troops into interventions as hare-brained as Mr. Clinton’s, all in the name of humanitarianism.” The question that immediately comes to mind is: *What about Somalia?* Has “NR” so quickly forgotten that the recent spate of “hare-brained humanitarian” interventions was begun by Republican George Bush? —CS

Blockheaded grants — Back in the Nixon era, conservatives loved to denounce “revenue-sharing,” the president’s scheme for allowing the federal government to redistribute money among the states. Revenue-sharing, they argued, subverted federalism by giving Beltway bureaucrats control over local governments’ pursestrings.

Two and a half decades later, congressional Republicans are pushing hard for “block grants” — i.e., having the federal government redistribute money among the states. According to today’s Right, block grants will *strengthen* federalism. Go figure.

As I write, the Newtoids are gearing up to challenge last year’s crime bill. The Republican changes that passed the House earlier this year still assault the Second, Fourth, and Fifth Amendments; they still federalize law enforcement; they still waste millions of dollars. But now those millions are to be wasted block-grant-style: instead of going to the particular pork projects Democratic legislators have carefully selected for their financial-political advantage, the cash will be directed toward whatever pork projects state governments, most of which are now Republican, select for *their* financial-political advantage.

Needless to say, the Democrats are apopleptic. The Republicans are standing firm, though — they were elected with a mandate, by God, and they’re not about to jettison their federalist principles. —JW

Whose ox is xeroxed — A reader sent me a newspaper column that provided a forthright defense of property rights, written by multibillionaire computer software magnate Bill Gates. “I think the views he expresses are fairly libertarian and well-articulated,” my correspondent wrote. “You might want to ask him to write something for *Liberty*.”

The property rights that Mr. Gates holds so dear are those that prohibit unauthorized copying of computer software. They are not the only public policy recommendations that Mr. Gates has offered the public. In Washington state, he has made large donations to a Democratic Party effort to try to defeat a measure that would limit the growth of government spending, a position that might seem a bit less libertarian than those he expressed about the property rights of software publishers.

Apparently Mr. Gates is an advocate of his property rights, but is not so sure about the property rights of others. I was reminded of an evening I spent with two friends a decade ago. Over drinks, the conversation turned to the question of copyrights. One friend believed that it was

Liberty’s Editors Reflect

DB	David Boaz
RWB	R.W. Bradford
SC	Stephen Cox
LTH	Leon T. Hadar
JH	John Hospers
BK	Bill Kauffman
WM	Wendy McElroy
SR	Sheldon Richman
CS	Clark Stooksbury
JW	Jesse Walker

perfectly appropriate to copy a computer program without the authorization of the publisher, but believed it absolutely immoral to copy books without permission. The other found nothing wrong with xeroxing a few pages from a book, but believed copying a computer program to be a foul deed.

One of my friends is a book publisher; the other a software writer. Would you like to guess which took which position?

On December 31, U.S. Trade Representative Mickey Kantor told the government of China that if it failed to provide the sort of legal protection for intellectual property rights that the United States believes appropriate, the U.S. would impose tariffs of 100% on a variety of Chinese goods exported to the United States. In effect, he told China that if it didn't punish Chinese people who make unauthorized copies of American computer software, CDs, audiocassettes, and videocassettes, the U.S. would slap a tax on Chinese shoes, hand tools, electronic toys, and other products.

In other words, for crimes committed by Chinese software and entertainment "pirates," Kantor proposed to punish two groups of people: Chinese manufacturers of inexpensive consumer goods and Americans who purchase inexpensive Chinese consumer goods. The proposition that innocent parties ought to be punished for the crimes of others is abhorrent to most people; in the past, it has been practiced mainly by tyrants — for example, the late Joseph Stalin, who routinely punished the relatives of those he accused (that is, convicted) of crimes.

But those whom Kantor proposed to punish were well-chosen. Manufacturers and exporters are powerful interest groups within China, well able to influence their government to change its policies according to Kantor's specifications. And the Americans who buy cheap Chinese flip-flops and tennis shoes, hammers and screwdrivers, 50¢ watches and 75¢ calculators are generally poor and neither sufficiently articulate nor well-organized enough to influence the administration, despite its professed love of the "common man."

But who is the intended beneficiary of the threat? Two groups stand to gain financially if the Chinese yield to Kantor's threat: the entertainment and software industries. The first is virtually the only U.S. industry to provide massive support to Kantor's boss Bill Clinton and the Democratic Party. The second is too entrepreneurial to provide uniform support to Clinton and company. But at least one figure in the software industry — Bill Gates — supports the Democrats. And his firm accounts for 75% of the software exports whose value would be tremendously enhanced by the imposition of U.S.-style copyright protection.

It wasn't just the victims of Kantor's threat who were well-chosen.

—RWB

You gotta license for that mouth? — The Oregon state legislature has been considering a bill that would require people to take a course before purchasing a handgun.

The Second Amendment guarantees the right to bear arms. Yet even those friendly to gun ownership seem undisturbed by what would amount to a "literacy" requirement for the exercise of this right. If rights require literacy — just as the right of blacks to vote once hinged on passing

an exam — then why not subject all items in the Bill of Rights to the same standard? Why not make people learn proper grammar and syntax before being allowed to exercise their right of freedom of speech?

—WM

What a friend we have in Willy — I may have missed something, but I haven't noticed any media curiosity about the origin of President Clinton's name for his legislative program, the New Covenant. One would think that so curious, so obviously archaic a name (New Deal, New Frontier, New Covenant?) would attract a lot of interest. It hasn't.

The Clinton New Covenant first surfaced during the 1992 campaign, but it soon disappeared. I assumed at the time that it had been dropped because a lot of people — not people in the media, certainly, who were as uninterested then as they are now — had complained about it. You see, "the New Covenant" is a crucial term in Christian theology. Its use in politics is bizarrely inappropriate.

According to the book of Hebrews and other New Testament sources, the New Covenant is God's covenant of salvation for believers: "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more" (Hebrews 8:12). The New Covenant is sealed by the blood of Jesus. The common ritual of many churches includes the recitation of Jesus' words at the Last Supper: "This cup is the new testament [or 'covenant': same Greek word] in my blood" (1 Corinthians 11:25).

The Christian idea of covenant or agreement continued Judaism's emphasis on God as an agreement-making deity. (The Old Covenant, according to Christian theology, was the covenant that God made with Israel, which was fulfilled and supplanted by the New Covenant that He made with all and sundry.) Americans' belief in the sanctity of religious covenants undoubtedly influenced their belief in the sanctity of secular contracts and contributed to their acceptance of the capitalist system, which is based on contractual relationships.

All this having been said, President Clinton's decision to put the New Covenant to use for political purposes seems curious indeed. In fact, it seems blasphemous, in view of the fact that the aforesaid Clinton constantly advertises his deep involvement with Christianity, indeed with evangelical Christianity, the most covenant-conscious branch of it. True, Clinton prefers attending churches whose ministers are more



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preoccupied with the social gospel than with evangelical theology, but hasn't this guy any better sense or knowledge than to use the language of God's blood sacrifice as a label for his political schemes?

Perhaps this is the point at which we just ought to forget everything that has been said about Clinton the reader of books, as well as everything that has been said about Clinton the prayer of prayers.

As to the media, it's been clear for a long time that the people who write for them either don't read books or insist on repressing any evidence that they do. These naifs may believe that the phrase "New Covenant" came to Clinton out of nowhere. But it amuses me to think that when they're tootling down the freeway and they see the New Covenant Tabernacle or the New Covenant Church of God in Christ, they imagine that Clinton's legislative program has already become an object of worship.

Not in these columns, of course.

But even as a secular contract, the Clinton New Covenant is peculiar. It's an agreement that's not agreed to — simply announced. The parties to the contract are unknown. Is it a contract between the voters and themselves, or between the voters and the Clinton administration, or the voters and Congress? As if any of these solutions made any sense, anyway. The terms of the contract can be changed at any time, in response to any political whim. And the benefit to some, at least, of the probable contracting or contracted parties (i.e., normal taxpayers) is impossible to discover.

This is another kind of blasphemy. —SC

The Sistine urinal — It looks like federal welfare for the intellectual class, in the form of NEA, NEH, and CPB grants, may finally come to an end. But the recipients and their media spokespeople will not give up without a shriek. Consider columnist Donald Kaul, a representative of the viewpoint humorously known as "liberalism," who addressed the issue in a recent syndicated screed.

Kaul raged that the "yahoos" in Congress have "declared war on the smart letters of the alphabet — NEA, NEH, PBS, CPB." In Kaul's view of the world, these institutions cater to an elite who refuse to dumb themselves down to the level of the "creationists, astrologers, homophobes, nativists, eugenicists, and talk show hosts who make up the spine of the right."

He also repeated the tireddest of clichés about art — that it must shock and disturb to be of value. "The core of [artists'] duty is to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable. The greatest art is

always subversive, never safe. Whatever the medium it should strike with the immediacy of a hot poker." Is the Sistine Chapel second-rate because Michelangelo failed to urinate on it?

In recent years, sophisticates have increasingly become enamored with art that is banal or offensive; the NEA has been eager to please them by subsidizing art that is loaded with hot-poker intensity, but tends to irritate the creationists and astrologers who inhabit Flyover Country.

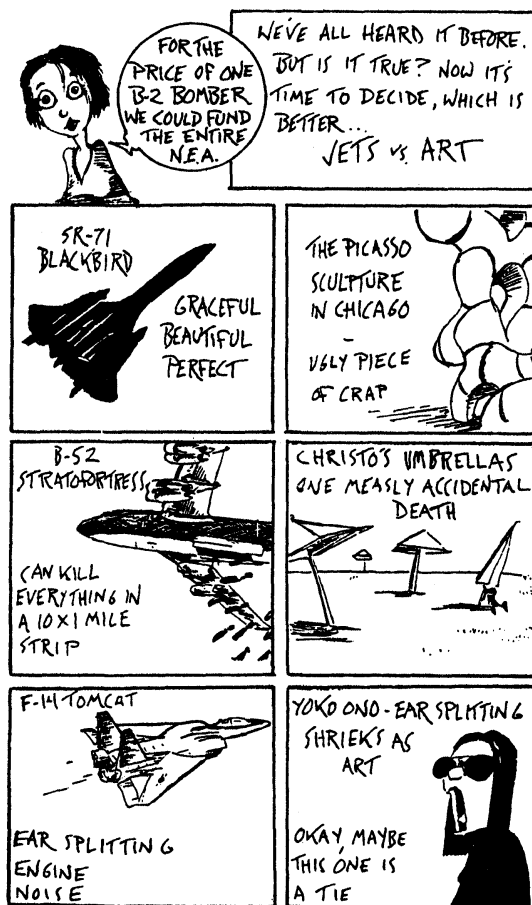
Still, Kaul does come to the correct conclusion. If art must be offensive to have value, he reasons, it would be better to end federal subsidies than to have them filtered through the "crude sensibilities of dreary folk like Jesse Helms, Strom Thurmond, and Larry Pressler, whose taste in fine arts runs to Super Bowl halftime shows." He apparently has faith that in a culture where Madonna passes for a singer and Donald Kaul passes for a journalist, André Serrano will still find a patron willing to pay him to piss. —CS

Hanging is too good for it — The Canadian artist Eli Langer's recent work — executed without models — was meant to heighten awareness of child abuse. When charges of child pornography were brought against Langer and the gallery exhibiting his paintings, Toronto's art community rallied in a rare burst of outrage. The court's solution: charges were dropped against Langer and the gallery. The paintings themselves were arrested and ordered to stand trial.

Refusing to testify in its own defense, the artwork has not yet been found "guilty." If a conviction results, lawyers will probably request community service rather than hard time. But if worse comes to worst, the jailed artwork is expected to demand the same rights and privileges as any other Canadian prisoner: visitors and rehabilitation. —WM

Pulp friction — A few months ago, *National Review* carried an article listing "the best films of all time," on the basis of their "inspirational" quality. Most of those listed were sanctimonious pap, offering either tearful religious inspiration or oversimplified heroic nationalism. The films that (in my opinion) did inspire non-phony emotions — such as Fellini's *La Strada* (1954) — were not mentioned. I started to write a response, but gave up the enterprise as hopeless.

But when I read Jesse Walker's praise for *Pulp Fiction* ("Pulp faction," March 1995), I began to believe that I'm no longer living in the same world as today's critics. My first thought was, "He can't be serious!" Sure, there were some cute lines of



dialogue that might have done credit to a play (most film scripts are pretty awful), especially by writers in a bitchy mood, as well as a few nice plot twists, such as returning to a setting not seen for an hour and now confronting us again to help connect our minds with what happened some time earlier — thus giving a disjointed series of events some measure of unity. It wasn't quite as repellent as *Interview with a Vampire*, from which one could retrieve one's sanity only by walking out during the first half-hour. But in *Pulp Fiction*, one had the expectation that something interesting was still going to come — and it never did.

As for *Quiz Show*, it is at least internally coherent and interestingly developed, though Walker's comments about its playing fast and loose with the facts are true enough. *Forrest Gump*, the best of the three movies Walker discusses, as far as I could see had *no message whatever*. There's not much you can conclude from it except that some numbskull managed to live through a period of history without a glimmer of what was really going on — a fate he shares with 99% of the American people. So what else is new?

There was, I think, only one film masterpiece in 1994, New Zealand's *Heavenly Creatures* — faultless in its development from the first moment to the last, astonishing in its psychological insight and its marvelous melding of fantasy and reality scenes. But this film has hardly been mentioned: perhaps its honesty and raw power were too much for audiences (including the Academy) to take.

There were other fine films in 1994. I thought I'd never see a better cinematic treatment of alcoholism than *Days of Wine and Roses* (1962), but the cumulative power of *When a Man Loves a Woman* changed my mind. (Perhaps it came too early in the year to be remembered.) Less intense but still absorbing and credible was *Blue Sky*, Tony Richardson's final legacy to films.

On some earlier films: Whatever happened to Ingmar Bergman's *Best Intentions* (1992, written but not directed by him), so deeply probing about parent-child relations that some viewers had to leave before the two and a half hours were over — was the honesty too painful? And why was Ingrid Bergman's best work, *Autumn Sonata* (1978), almost totally ignored? (It's almost impossible to find on video.) For that matter, New Zealand's other masterpiece of a couple of years ago, Jane Campion's *An Angel at My Table* (1990), a true account of a young woman's incarceration in a mental institution for seven years on the basis of a false diagnosis, hasn't been heard from either, though libertarians ought to have latched onto this one, as it dramatizes a favorite libertarian theme. There's lots of others, but let me mention one of the most subtly nuanced acting jobs in the world, as well as one of the most moving stories, Michael Redgrave's *The Browning Version* (1951; it's impossible to find, too).

What has happened to the films of Howard Hawks and George Stevens and Elia Kazan in the '50s, always with a coherent story line, interesting characters, and psychological credibility, the action always growing out of the characterizations? Has the present generation any acquaintance with these masters? Or don't these films "get the action started" fast enough? Doesn't it matter any more who the characters are before we find out what they do?

Hawthorne once wrote that the final test of fiction is whether it possesses "truth to the human heart." That is the

quality I value still, but the emphasis on it has mostly disappeared in today's reliance on special effects, cuteness, and gimmickry. I guess that's why I don't live in the same world. —JH

CyberDianetics — In his novel *Virtual Light*, William Gibson describes near-future "data havens" that serve the same privacy functions for information as Swiss banks do for money today. The precursor of such havens currently exists in the form of "anonymous remailers." These are nodes on a computer net that accept e-mail, replace its address with a random code, then forward the mail on to its final destination. Replies can be processed care of the anonymous remailer.

The most popular of these services, anon.penet.fi, has just been raided by the Finnish police, who confiscated the real name of one of its users. The user's crime: he raided a Church of Scientology computer and posted confidential and embarrassing information to a Usenet discussion group.

Johan Helsingius, who offers the remail service free to anyone on the Internet, described the police raid: "They treated my computer and hard drive as if it were a gun." Helsingius shouldn't be so surprised. A computer is the most revolutionary weapon you can aim at agents of the state. —WM

Disown a piece of the Rock — When the Mitsubishi Estate purchased Rockefeller Center, nativists warned that the Japanese were "buying up America." A few years have passed since the purchase; let's see how the Nipponese conspiracy has progressed.

Mitsubishi Estate paid about \$1.4 billion for Rockefeller Center. To do so, they borrowed about \$1.3 billion from Rockefeller Center Properties Inc. (RCP), a company created just to make that loan and hold the mortgage. RCP got the money to make the loan by issuing stock and bonds. RCP owes about \$800 million to its bondholders. It pays them out of its own interest income. But Mitsubishi is losing money on the deal hand over fist because rents at Rockefeller Center did not increase as expected; in fact, they went down. So Mitsubishi, the *International Herald Tribune* reports, may default on its loan and walk away from the building, leaving RCP with both the building and several hundred million dollars of profit, free and clear.

Had anti-Japanese hysteria prevailed, of course, this never would have happened. An American corporation, RCP, would be several hundred million dollars poorer, the U.S. balance of payments would be several hundred million dollars further in the red, and the pandering politicians would be bragging about how "we saved Rockefeller Center."

Investors, foreign and domestic, sometimes win and sometimes lose. In a free market, win or lose, every investment is also a mutually agreed-upon exchange. Both parties hope to benefit and often do. Our government usually respects our freedom to make exchanges and take risks. It does not often interfere with the sale of an asset by this company or that individual. On the other hand, it destroys countless opportunities for efficient exchange whenever it erects trade barriers, usually in the name of "protecting American industry" or "reducing the trade deficit."

What is it about those Japanese? They pay so much to buy our stuff, and they charge so little to sell theirs. They buy our

productive assets — that's investment. We buy their goods — that's consumption. In other words, to promote Japanese exports, they are subsidizing our consumption both by taking a low return on their investments (by selling their stuff cheap) and by paying high prices for American assets.

Sounds like those Japanese are giving themselves a bad deal. And yet Americans complain, or at least in the popular media they appear to.

The Japanese have a very high savings rate. Did you ever wonder what they do with the money they save? They end up buying productive assets like Rockefeller Center because they are willing to pay the highest price. Their money subsidizes our consumption — often of competitively priced Japanese goods. The result: Japanese investment in American assets, and a U.S. trade deficit with Japan. Of course, the so-called trade deficit with Japan only means that Americans buy more from Japan than they sell — but sell more to many other countries than they buy. It does not mean that Americans or their government owe money to the Japanese. I have a terrible trade deficit with my wine merchant, but an even better trade surplus with my clients. Doesn't bother me.

With a little bit of hindsight, we can see that the takeover of Rockefeller Center and similar assets was no skin off our collective nose. No one really cares about or notices the foreign ownership now, except for the American sellers, who probably thank their lucky stars that they were able to dump that property before the market slumped. Now we laugh about those fears — if we remember them at all.

If our government leaves it alone, no one will care about

the trade deficit either.

Unfortunately, no one seems to be laughing about the trade deficit yet. That's what worries me. By the time we forget about this new yellow scare, Congress may have imposed more restrictions on our freedom to buy what we want, damaged Americans' relationships with tremendously valuable trading partners, and set back free trade and the prosperity that goes with it for decades to come.

—Guest reflection by Michael Christian

Run for the border — As the United States careens toward socialized medicine, Canada is experimenting with privatizing its system. The American company Dynacare Health Group Inc. is being asked to take over lab testing for the Canadian Sunnybrook Medical Centre.

This precedent-setting step has Canadians howling about being "Americanized." But as Dynacare's chief operating officer, Harvey Shapiro, comments, "In Canada we still have a concept of a not-for-profit mentality, but that just doesn't work. In order to provide service there has to be a proper return. Someone has to have ownership of the system. Health care is not different from anything else."

When Prime Minister Jean Chretien openly speculates about massive cuts to Medicare, entrepreneurs sit up to listen. Who knows? As a resident of Ontario, I may soon be able to go to a private doctor (an encounter currently prohibited by law), pay my own way, and demand state-of-the-art procedures.

For decades, the United States has been a safety valve for Canadian health care. I presently receive extremely good '50s medicine: blood pressure is recorded, pap smears are checked, antibiotics are prescribed. When I need procedures from the '90s, I look to the States, which — God bless America! — still exchanges Canadian dollars. —WM

Atlas juiced — Simpson jury-watchers have discovered that one member of the panel arrives at court carrying a book of unknown title that is described by the *Los Angeles Times* as "something by Ayn Rand." This sighting probably sent Simpson's lawyers scurrying to find out more about Ayn Rand and her possible connections with their case. Office boys must have been dispatched immediately to collect Rand's entire canon, from *Night of January 16th* to *Philosophy: Who Needs It*. Alan Dershowitz probably started staying up all night to figure out the angles of Galt's speech.

If Simpson's lawyers sense the persuasive power that even one juror adept in Randian ideas could wield, they are sure to devise plans to enlist the sympathies of that juror. Imagine what these guys are likely to come up with. Let's see...

The defense might argue that Nicole Simpson, who never held a job after meeting O.J., was a second-hander whom her husband justifiably decided to shrug off. Or picture this: Johnnie Cochran tries to explain the larger dimensions of the case by means of a day-long lecture on ontology, epistemology, psychology, politics, and economics, culminating in a demand that the jury get the hell out of O.J.'s way. Or O.J. himself addresses the jury, explaining that his relationship with Nicole was not completed according to his specifications and that he was therefore within his rights to... uh... destroy it.



Well, maybe not. Somehow the Randian form of these arguments just doesn't cover their Simpsonian substance.

Probably Simpson's lawyers are smart enough to see this. They may already have discovered that the most useful thing for them to study is the speeches of Ellsworth Toohey. —SC

The Chechnya syndrome — It's fascinating to follow the debate taking place in Moscow over the bloody war in Chechnya. Listen to the Russian liberals (the real liberals, that is) who are staunchly opposed to sending Russian troops to that depressing Muslim area. The pathetic military intervention in Chechnya, they argue, is strengthening the power of the national security state apparatus and making it impossible to reform the economy and democratize politics.

Those liberals have got it right. If you want to weaken state control over the economy, you have to make sure to weaken its ability to wage war. But in Washington, the Republicans, who supposedly want to remove the government from our lives, are the most forceful advocates of increasing the defense budget and are already devising new military adventures. Bob Dole and Newt Gingrich want to use U.S. military power against the Serbs. Gingrich calls for a major confrontation with "Islamic fundamentalism," including the ousting of the mullahs in Teheran. And Phil Gramm doesn't like the accord with North Korea.

I guess nuking Pyongyang *would* make that government smaller and more cost-effective.

And that gives me an idea.

—LTH

Shine the light of truth — The main reason for the great resistance to cutting Social Security is that the elderly consider it a true "entitlement": knowing what they paid in Social Security taxes during their working lifetime, they feel entitled to collect Social Security benefits. What most retirees do not know, however, is that the average SS recipient receives far more in benefits than the accumulated value of the FICA taxes they paid.

It comes down to an issue of "fairness." We therefore suggest that, as a first step in the reform of Social Security, checks sent to recipients should contain a statement of the total accumulated value of that individual's receipts from the system. Most of the elderly will then see that they are receiving more in payouts than they put in. This would significantly blunt any feeling of entitlement. It could also be a major step in convincing recipients that it is not fair that their working children and grandchildren have to pay high SS taxes to subsidize a lifestyle for retirees that far exceeds the amount to which most recipients believe they are entitled.

The cost of providing this information should not be great, since the system already has the information available upon request. Americans cannot be expected to make reasoned and informed political decisions without knowing the costs and benefits associated with these decisions. Providing this information is the first step in putting Social Security on the cutting table with all other federal government programs.

—Durk Pearson and Sandy Shaw

Roger Lea MacBride, 1929–1995 — Roger Lea MacBride, the 1976 Libertarian presidential nominee, died March 4 at the age of 65. MacBride's activism as a classi-

cal liberal spanned virtually his entire life, from his childhood friendship with Rose Wilder Lane to his most recent role as chairman of the Republican Liberty Caucus. In some ways he was the last living link to the best of the Old Right — the rugged-individualist, anti-New Deal, anti-interventionist spirit of Rep. Howard Buffet, Albert Jay Nock, H.L. Mencken, Isabel Paterson, and Lane.

MacBride was born in New Rochelle, N.Y. Through his father he met Rose Wilder Lane, the daughter of Laura Ingalls Wilder, and came to regard himself as her "adopted grandson" as well as eventually her legal heir. (The *New York Times* obituary for MacBride on March 8 described Lane as an "adherent of the *laissez-faire* Objectivist philosophy of the novelist Ayn Rand," but it is probably more correct to say, as MacBride did in a recent article, that Lane and Isabel Paterson "made a conscious decision to recruit and promote the efforts of younger people to compete in the world of ideas. One of the first and most successful of their efforts was to discover and nurture the Russian emigré Ayn Rand.")

Lane introduced MacBride to anti-statist ideas, which he managed to hold on to despite attending Princeton University and Harvard Law School. He joined a Wall Street law firm but then moved to Vermont, where he opened a small practice, served in the state legislature, and was the Goldwaterite candidate for governor in 1964. His first book was *The Electoral College*, a defense of that system. Ironically, one of his arguments was that the electoral college strengthened the two-party system; but presciently, he did note that the electors are not legally bound to vote for the nominee of their party.

He moved to Charlottesville, Virginia, and was made Republican elector in 1972, probably because he was known to be an expert in the electoral college. The joke was on the Republicans, because MacBride became a "faithless elector" — faithless to Nixon and Agnew, anyway, but faithful to the constitutional principles Rose Lane had instilled in him. He cast his electoral vote for the brand-new Libertarian Party ticket of philosopher John Hospers and journalist Tonie Nathan, who thereby edged out Geraldine Ferraro by twelve years as the first woman to receive an electoral vote.

That vote — along with his background, intelligence, and accomplishments — quickly made him a star in a party short on people of maturity and recognized achievement. Ed Crane, then active in the Libertarian Party of California, recalls getting a letter from MacBride in 1973: "He was the first Libertarian I'd encountered who had engraved stationery, and I decided then and there that he should be our next presidential nominee."

The rest of the party agreed, though not without a spirited fight for the nomination, and MacBride put the LP on the map by getting on the ballot in 32 states and garnering 173,000 votes. MacBride was not only a thoughtful and articulate exponent of libertarianism: his personal campaign contribution of \$300,000 was indispensable to the growth of the party. The book he wrote for the campaign, *A New Dawn for America*, introduced thousands to libertarianism.

Like many early activists, MacBride eventually drifted away from the LP, disillusioned with the prospects for a third party. He spent some time turning Wilder's *Little House on the Prairie* books into a hit television series. Later he wrote his

own young-adult historical novels about Rose Lane's childhood on the Wilder family's Missouri farm, including *Little House on Rocky Ridge*, *Little Farm in the Ozarks*, and the forthcoming *In the Land of the Big Red Apple*. MacBride moved to Florida a few years ago, where he was active in the Republican Liberty Caucus, trying to promote libertarian ideas and candidates within the Republican Party. He was an early supporter of Connie Mack (R-Fla.).

Roger MacBride put libertarian ideas on the map in 1976, garnering a great deal of respect — if not a lot of coverage — from major national journalists. He played a key role in the growth of the modern libertarian movement. —DB

Mr. Something-or-Other — Murray Rothbard (1926–1995) liked to be known as “Mr. Libertarian,” and no one was more identified with the libertarian movement. It is therefore curious that not one of the over 600 words written by his friend and intellectual heir, Llewellyn H. Rockwell, Jr., in a memorial to Rothbard published in *The New American* and the *Washington Times*, was “libertarian.” What to make of this I do not know. Do the editors of *The New American* and the *Times* object to the L-word? Or is Rockwell rewriting history? —RWB

Rothbard the isolationist — Alas, I was not strictly speaking a colleague of Murray Rothbard's, or a neighbor, but no other intellectual had nearly the impact on my own political evolution, or materialized in my life at a more propitious moment.

It was 1965. I had just left a secret-clearance supervisory job in the defense industry to become president of SDS and begin a long period of intense campaigning against the Vietnam War. I was told that this made me a “New Leftist,” but I was not so sure. Why should opposing a wrong-minded military expedition make one a “leftist” at all, whether “new” or not?

Then someone — was it not Leonard Liggio? — noticed some latent libertarian conscience in my views and put Murray's work in my hands. To this day, three decades later, I remember the wooded hillside in New Hampshire where I first opened up Murray's work. As I wrote in 1967 after that experience, “The Old Right and the New Left are morally and politically coordinate.”

Job well done, Murray. Rest in peace. —Carl Oglesby

Rothbard the teacher — The first night of class, this little man with thick glasses perched on a Durantesque nose, sporting a bow tie and a pocketful of pens, shuffled into the room. He began talking the moment he stepped through the door, poking fun at the silly politicians who were deriding the “evil” oil companies for supposedly using the Gulf War to gouge consumers.

It was a typical Rothbard tale, illuminating how the free-market price system efficiently distributes goods, while government intervention mucks things up. He then launched into his *History of Economic Thought* story, which during the fall 1990 semester had a monetary theme. There was no time to take roll or go over a syllabus; we had centuries to cover.

Most libertarians discovered Murray Rothbard by reading *The Ethics of Liberty*, *For a New Liberty*, or one of his many other books or articles. My discovery started with the following entry in the University of Nevada Las Vegas 1990 fall course catalog: “History of Economic Thought, instructor — Rothbard.”

When I asked another graduate student about the History of Thought class, the student advised me not to take Murray, describing him as a “kook.” Luckily, I didn't take this incredibly poor advice.

Murray's classes had no sterile graphs or labyrinthine equations. Rather, it was like listening to your favorite uncle tell stories about the good old days, peppered with countless reading suggestions. Murray was a walking bibliography, reciting not only the title, but the author, the date published, and in some cases the publisher of the books he recommended. He was an awesome weapon to have on your side when researching and writing a thesis.

Two evenings a week I listened as Murray told of good guys and bad guys, the theories they espoused, their influences, and why these theories were put into practice. The villains of these economic dramas were always evil government bureaucrats and politicians, who lurked ominously in the shadows either silently stealing through inflation or openly robbing with taxation.

A Rothbard lecture was like being a passenger in a high-speed car chase. With facts and ideas streaming at us, Murray would suddenly change direction, heading down a path that seemingly took us away from our destination, but never did. He knew exactly where he was going. I hung on with the rest of the class, furiously trying to take down every word.

Because Murray's lectures were so good (and different from semester to semester), many of his students would audit his *History of Economic Thought* and U.S. Economic History classes over and over. In one of his last *History of Thought* classes, only 20% of the students were taking the class for credit.

Murray's office hour time was always in great demand. I spent many hours outside his office door waiting in line to talk to him. My waits were always rewarded. Murray did not talk down to me or any of his other students. In fact, he often asked as many questions as he answered, and was genuinely interested in what I thought. And we always had plenty of laughs. It was worth driving across town just to hear Murray's spin on current events, punctuated with his unmistakable cackle.

But Murray was anything but revered by most of the economics faculty at UNLV. The rest of the department resented the “east end of the hall,” where Murray, Hans-Hermann Hoppe, and a couple of free-market sympathizers had their offices on Beam Hall's fifth floor. Although most of the Economics Department's publishing came from the “east end,” the department chairman and graduate coordinator continually made snide remarks to students and colleagues about the Austrians, and did all they could to discourage students from studying under Rothbard and Hoppe.

The initial draft of Murray's performance evaluation for 1991 illustrates the appalling treatment he received from the department's then-chairman (whose claim to fame was that

continued on page 69

Analysis

Mexican Hayride

by R.W. Bradford

How Bill Clinton and Newt Gingrich raided Americans' wallets to save Wall Street investments and crooked Third World politicians' power base.

"I've been madly buying Mexican stocks, currencies, and U.S. debt all day . . ."

It was a hastily scrawled note faxed to me January 30 by a friend who earns his living as a speculator. On that day, the peso fell 10%, to new all-time lows, and Mexican stocks were collapsing. But my friend figured that the politicians and Wall Street types would prevail in the end, and bail out the Mexican government.

When the Mexican peso collapsed in mid-December, Bill Clinton promised Mexico a big pile of money. Not his money, of course. Our money. \$40,000,000,000 of it. "But it's not like we're spending the money," he said. "It's like we're co-signing a note."

The bailout was needed, he explained, because Mexico is our biggest trading partner; if it has to default on its loans, it won't be able to finance future imports from the U.S. Furthermore, he said, if the peso falls more, the Mexican economy will be hit even harder, which will drive more Mexicans across the Rio Grande.

The American people understood Clinton's message all too well. They realized that when you co-sign a note, you have to pay up if the borrower defaults. The last time they recalled our government "co-signing a note" was less than a decade ago, when it guaranteed savings-and-loan deposits — a decision that ultimately cost hundreds of billions of dollars.

Furthermore, people wondered who would gain from such a bailout. Certainly not the people of Mexico, who will still suffer under the heel of a profligate government that spends

most of its effort lining the pockets of wealthy Mexicans. The Mexican government always buys popular support with wild spending for a few months prior to each presidential election, only to have the United States — i.e., the American taxpayer — bail it out after the election. This is the third election in a row that was prefaced with a spending binge and followed by an American bailout.

So who really gained from the bailout? American investors who purchased Mexican bonds that otherwise would not be repaid, that's who. And why did American investors and institutions buy Mexican bonds rather than others? There's just one reason: Mexican bonds paid higher interest rates.

Of course, as with any investment, bigger payoffs are the product of bigger risks. In other words, the American investors who sent their money to Mañanaland *knew they were taking a bigger risk.*

During January, the Wall Street investors, banks, and institutions who had accepted that risk were busy lobbying Congress to cough up \$40 billion for Mexico. They told us they were motivated by a desire to do good, to protect American jobs, to

help poor Mexicans, to prevent an upswing in illegal immigration, etc. It was entirely an accident that the bailout would line their pockets.

The following day, Bill Clinton did what Congress wouldn't do: he bailed out Mexico using \$20 billion from the U.S. Exchange Stabilization Fund (which is directly under his control, but had previously been thought unavailable for such bailouts), and getting the International Monetary Fund and the Bank for International Settlements to cough up another \$30 billion.

And so the Mexican government can repeat its cycle of vote-buying and begging, Mexican peasants can continue to live under grinding poverty with a party thrown for them every six years, Wall Street investors can breathe freely, and you and I can look forward to a loss of only \$20 billion in taxpayer money, instead of the \$40 billion Clinton originally proposed. And my friend made a fortune by serving the function of the speculator: taking big risks when others are afraid or cautious.

Letting the Market Work

All through the "crisis," Clinton, the Wall Street bankers, the

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Republican leadership,* and other advocates of the bailout issued dire warnings about the horrible consequences that would follow if the U.S. treasury isn't raided for the benefit of the Mexican government and its bondholders.

According to Lawrence Summers, Clinton's undersecretary of the Treasury for international affairs, the bailout had nothing to do with helping wealthy American investors:

This is about promoting U.S. exports, about preventing illegal immigration into our country. Most importantly, this is about the kind of economic system that the U.S. has stood for since the Cold War ended: market-based capitalism. And if Mexico were allowed to encounter dire financial distress it would have reverberations around the world. You know you saw that yesterday when the Brazil stock market went down 8% on news about what was happening with respect to U.S. policy toward Mexico. You see that in political discussions in a variety of countries in Asia where the idea of open markets, the idea of economic liberalization is questioned because of concerns about what happened in Mexico.

This has nothing to do with bailing out investors. This has to do with protecting America's fundamental national interests.

In sum, according to Clinton's man, when the U.S. government bails out a bunch of wealthy investors and a profligate government, this amounts to a defense of "market-based capitalism." But Summers didn't stop there.

I'd sure have to disagree that the Latin American debt crisis of the 1980s was some kind of picnic. If you look at what happened, U.S. exports to Latin America fell by more than 50% during the period of the last debt crisis. Illegal immigration rose by more than a third. You know, in fact, in the three weeks since the peso collapsed, you see illegal immigration apprehensions on parts of our border rise threefold.

I think it's a view of yesterday's

* In an amazing press conference following the bailout, Newt Gingrich was beside himself with praise for Clinton's decision, asserting that it was "statesmanlike," "courageous," and worthy of Winston Churchill.

world to say that somehow financial distress in our neighbor has no real effect. We can make a difference. We have made a difference and it's very much in our national interest. That's why we're doing this.

We're sure of what would have happened if we had not been prepared to act, and it would not have been pretty. It would have made the kind of adjustment that Mexico's going to have to go through now much, much more serious. . . .

Will this work? Strong economic conditions in Mexico. Strong conditions on their borrowing, on their money, on their fiscal policy. A Mexican economy that's now based on the private sector in a way like it wasn't before. An up-front fee that Mexico is going to have to pay for any guarantees that we give them. Ultimate recourse to Mexico's oil export revenues. I think it will work. You know, that Chile thing, Chile went through a lot of hell, and it would have been a big problem for us in the early '80s if it had been on our border. But you know again, that's living in the past. In those days you had a small number of bank creditors and you could get them all together and you could push them to continue lending. You could work out a negotiated free-market solution. In today's world of thousands of creditors all dispersed, that's just not a possibility.

Before he began to babble incoherently, Summers mentioned that the loan will be secured by "Mexico's oil export revenues." Some security: the only way we can use that "ultimate recourse" for payment is the same way we can get them to repay now: by military invasion. Early in this century, the United States and other great powers did occasionally use their military to enforce repayment of loans. But that was before poor countries built modern armies. This alternative has been considered unacceptable for more than half a century.

Ironically, one of the first times the U.S. refused to use force to collect a debt occurred in 1938, when the government of Mexico expropriated American-owned oil companies, organizing the confiscated property into Pemex, the huge, grossly mismanaged, government-owned oil company

Taxonomy

A World Partly Free

by Bruce Ramsey

Freedom is not indivisible.

Freedom. We're all in favor of it. But freedom to do what?

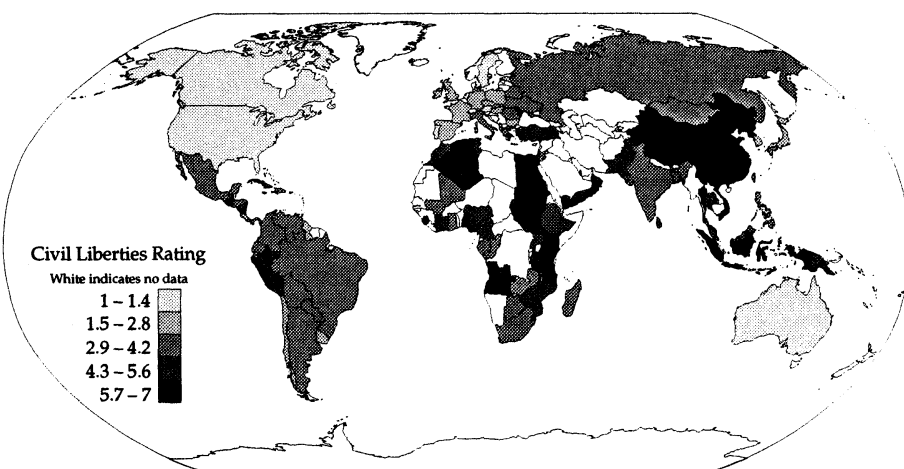
In 1993, I returned to the United States after living in Hong Kong for three and a half years. In Hong Kong I was free from about half the tax burden I'd had in the United States. I was free to import a housemaid from the Philippines, which I could not have done in the United States. I was free from most of the street crime of the United States. When I arrived in 1989, I was free to smoke at work, in restaurants, even in movie theaters. I could have my bank accounts in marks, yen, pounds, and several flavors of dollars.

But I was legally required to carry a government ID card. Even if I had been a citizen, I would not have been free to vote in an election to bring an opposition party to power. Citizens were not free to engage in homosexual sex, buy pornography, or own a rifle or handgun.

Advocates of freedom often talk as if freedom were indivisible, that being "partly free" is like being partly pregnant. If that's so, then most of the planet is partly pregnant. Strictly speaking, all of it is.

The group that pays the most attention to these issues is Freedom House. This New York organization has been issuing annual reports on world freedom for years. Its most recent report, published in its magazine, *Freedom Review*, in January 1995, evaluates freedom in 191 countries and 58 territories. Later this year, it will publish a book with several pages for each country.

Freedom House's definition of freedom is not as sweeping as libertarians'. It measures no freedom to smoke marijuana, for example, or to own handguns — neither of which is inter-



nationally recognized. It does cover two important kinds of freedom in actual contention in the world today.

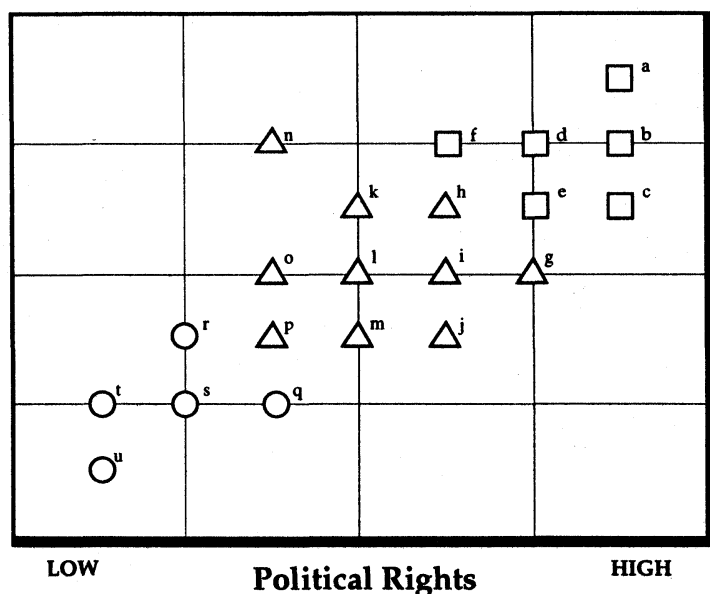
The first is political rights. The highest scores go to democracies, defined by Freedom House scholar Joseph Ryan as systems in which "people choose their authoritative leaders freely from among competing groups and individuals who were not chosen by the government." The second concept, civil liberties, Ryan defines as "the freedoms to develop views, institutions and personal autonomy apart from the state."

Nations' scores in these categories are determined by a checklist of questions (see sidebar, "A Look At What Counted," on page 19). All are rights to do things, or to be free from coercion or

domination by others. Included in civil liberties are the rights to own property and form businesses, trade unions, and professional groups, though no concern is paid to the level of taxes or commercial regulation. Not included are the socialist "rights" to food, housing, or medical care.

The resulting 1-7 rating system for political rights and civil liberties is a real-world standard (see maps above and on pages 20-21). Among the 191 nations, 26 top out at 1 in both categories, including the U.S., Canada, Australia, some of Western Europe, Barbados, Greek Cyprus, Kiribati, and Tuvalu. At the other end, 21 are ranked a rock-bottom 7 in both, including China, Vietnam, Saudi Arabia, and Cuba.

FIGURE 1



□ = Free

a. Australia
Austria
Barbados
Belize
Canada
Cyprus
Kiribati
Malta
Portugal
Sweden
Tunisia
U.S.
b. Bahamas
Britain
Costa Rica
Czech Republic
France
Germany
Hungary
Ireland
Italy
Spain
c. Greece
Israel
d. Bulgaria
Chile
Guyana
Japan
Poland
S. Korea
Uruguay
e. Argentina

△ = Partly Free

Bolivia
Botswana
Ecuador
Madagascar
Jamaica
Malawi
Mongolia
Panama
Slovakia
S. Africa
f. Estonia
g. Bangladesh
h. El Salvador
honduras
Taiwan
Venezuela
i. Albania
Colombia
Philippines
Russia
Ukraine
Zambia
j. Mozambique
Pakistan
Thailand
k. Dominican Republic
Fiji
Paraguay
Romania
l. Belarus
Congo
India
Jordan
Mexico
Moldova
m. Guatemala
Malaysia
Nicaragua
Sri Lanka
n. Hong Kong

○ = Unfree

o. Gabon
Ghana
Peru
p. Haiti
Morocco
Singapore
Turkey
Uganda
Zimbabwe
q. Yemen
r. Cameroon
Ethiopia
Guinea
Ivory Coast
Swaziland
Tunisia
s. Bahrain
Bosnia
Egypt
Kenya
Oman
Tanzania
t. Indonesia
Nigeria
Sierra Leone
u. Algeria
Angola
China
Cuba
N. Korea
Saudi Arabia
Sudan
Vietnam

If the sum of the two scores is 5 or less, the country is rated free; 6 to 10, partly free; 10 to 14, not free. By that reckoning, 20% of the world's citizens thus ranked were free in January 1995, 40% partly free, and 40% not free. The "not frees" were mostly in Asia and Africa.

The standards rank practice, not form. Most of Latin America, for example, is nominally democratic. But as Douglas Payne of Freedom House wrote in its 1994 report, "Rule is still

based more on power than law, the exceptions being Costa Rica and Chile, and to a lesser extent Uruguay. . . . Voters can choose a president and legislators at election time, but government remains a racket dominated by the powerful and the well-connected."

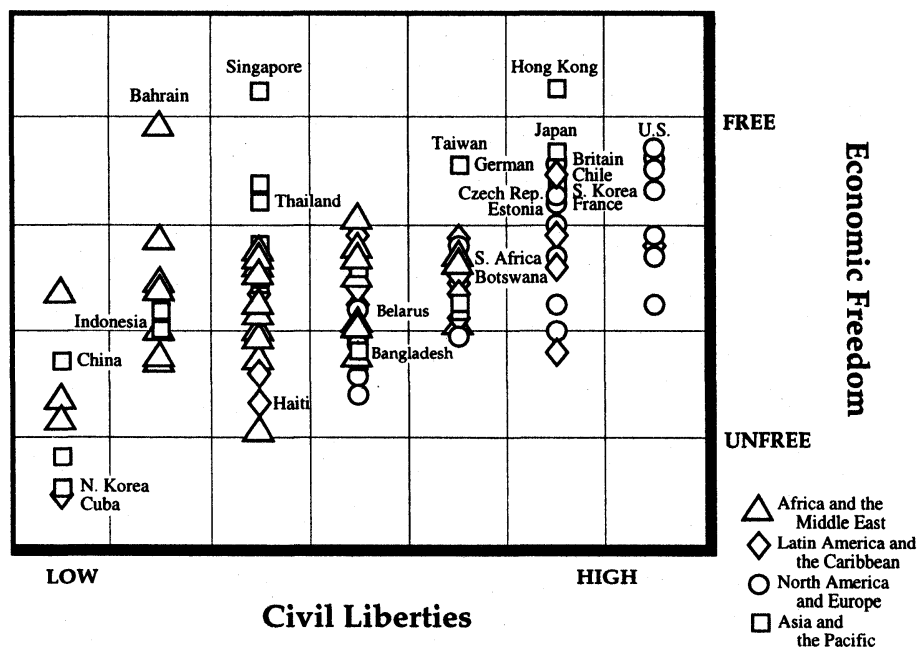
Freedom House also ranks freedom of the press in 186 countries. In 1994, it judged 68 of them to have free media, 64 partly free, and 54 not free (for methodology, see sidebar). The worldwide map of press freedom (see page

21) looks much like that of freedom in general: a swath of "not free" states across the middle of Asia and Africa; "free" ratings for the English-speaking world, Europe, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and most of Latin America; and "partly free" for the rest.

Add to these analyses a new entrant: the conservative Heritage Foundation's *Index of Economic Freedom*, by Brian Johnson and Thomas Sheehy. This study, published in late 1994, ranks countries on ten factors: tariff rates, income taxes, government consumption, inflation, barriers to foreign investment, bank regulation, wage and price controls, property rights, business regulation, and black markets (for methodology, see sidebar). Unfortunately, it examines only 101 countries. One of its purposes is to rank recipients of foreign aid, so it leaves out many important states, including Saudi Arabia, Syria, the Netherlands, and Switzerland.

One can quibble about these rankings, particularly for the countries one knows about. I'd rank Hong Kong above Singapore in economic freedom, though Heritage ranks them equally high (1.25). Hong Kong has had a bit more inflation, but much more important to economic freedom, I'd say, is that Singapore has substantially higher taxes to support lavish public works, a tough military force, and a forced-savings plan for housing, medicine,

FIGURE 2



and retirement.

None of these scores is a scientific measurement, though some incorporate objective facts. An average tariff rate is a fact, even if how to judge what level is a 1 and what a 5 is not. Others, such as the scores for property rights or press freedom, are pure judgments. But they are informed judgments, and they are all we have to go on. From my look at these studies, they appear to be pretty good judgments. And they lead to several conclusions.

The first is that political rights and civil liberties are intimately related. That striking fact is demonstrated in Figure 1.

"Political rights" is essentially another name for democracy. Adrian Karatnycky, Freedom House's executive director, notes that only one democracy was rated "not free": Bosnia. "Two thirds of democracies are free," he writes, "and all free societies are democracies."

Repeat that: *All free societies are democracies.* That should give pause to those who scoff at politics and refuse "on principle" to vote. No independent country has achieved civil liberty up to Freedom House's standard (let alone a higher one) without open political parties and free elections. (Hong Kong, a seeming exception, is not independent.)

The second conclusion is that political freedom and civil liberties are powerfully related to economic freedom. But there are more exceptions. Figure 2 (at left) shows a few countries with high economic freedom and low civil liberties. It's troubling to note that the three freest economies — Singapore, Hong Kong, and Bahrain — have low political freedom. But this is still far from the claim, which Singapore likes to make, that authoritarian capitalism is the Asian way. Writes Freedom House consultant Charles Graybow: "The continuing democratic evolutions in formerly authoritarian Taiwan, South Korea, and Thailand obliterate the myth that democracy is an alien, Western concept." In Figure 2, South Korea and Japan are in the same "free" territory as Germany, France, and Britain.

Overall, of 21 countries with high economic freedom (2.50 or better), 16 rank high (1 or 2) in civil liberties. And

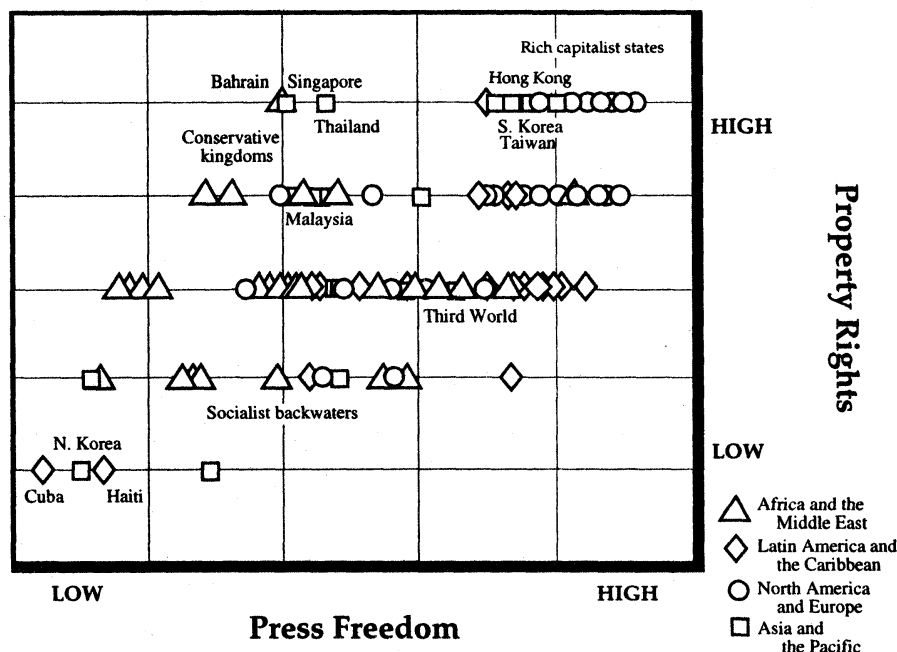
of the 27 countries that rank similarly high in civil liberties, 15 rank high in economic freedom.

A similar comparison can be made between Freedom House's measure of press freedom and Heritage's of property rights (Figure 3). Because property rights is scored in round numbers, the countries line up on the chart in distinct groups: capitalist democracies at upper

right, mostly conservative kingdoms to the left, the Third World in the middle, and socialist backwaters toward the lower left.

The countries line up in a band. The top edge of the band are those with the most economic freedom — and they happen to be in the fast lane of economic growth: Thailand, Malaysia, South Korea, Taiwan, Bahrain,

FIGURE 3



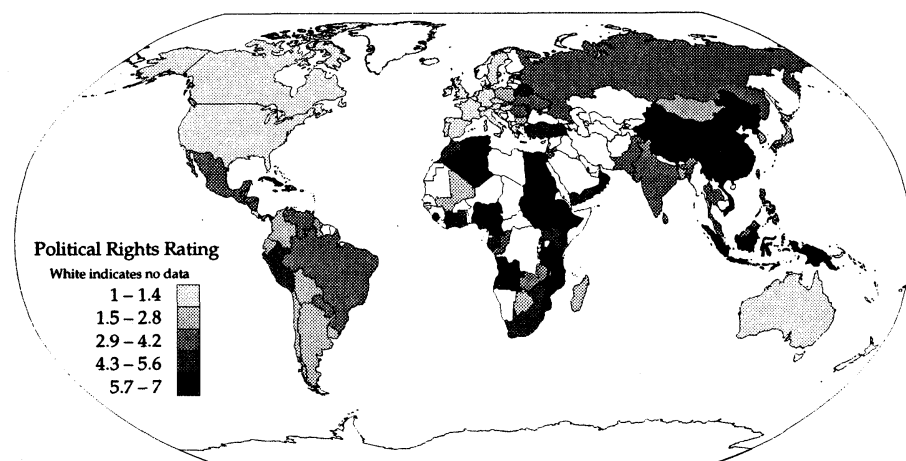
A Look At What Counted

Political Rights: Are legislators and the head of government popularly elected? Are elections free for challengers to participate in, fair to them, and conducted honestly? Do the elected representatives have real power, or do other groups (military, churches, landowners, the king) pull the strings? Can people organize new parties? Is there a significant political opposition that has a reasonable chance to be elected to power? Are minority groups excluded? For larger nations, is political power decentralized or concentrated in the center? Is the government an occupying power? If the government is a monarchy, is there consultation with the people and the right to petition the ruler?

Civil Liberties: Are there free and independent TV and radio stations, magazines and newspapers, book publishers, and other cultural voices? Do state-controlled outlets offer pluralistic points of view? Is there open public discussion? Free private discussion? Freedom to assemble and protest? Freedom to form political or quasi-political groups? Can citizens call upon the judiciary to give them equal protection of the law? Are they respected by security forces? Are they subject to political terror? Can workers organize unions and bargain collectively? Can citizens form professional and trade groups, businesses, and cooperatives? Is religion free of the state, and can people express their religion privately and publicly? Is there sexual equality? Property rights? Freedom of movement and residence? Choice of marriage and family size? Is there domination by landlords, employers, union leaders, or bureaucrats? Is there extreme government corruption?

Press Freedom: Do laws and administrative decisions of the government influence media content (score: 0-10)? How much political influence does government wield over media content (0-10)? How much economic

continued on next page



Singapore, Hong Kong. In the World Bank's listing of the fastest-growing countries in per capita GDP, 1980-1991, South Korea is #1 (8.7% annual rate), Thailand #4 (5.9%), Hong Kong #5 (5.6%), Singapore #7 (5.3%), Malaysia #17 (2.9% — though in the 1990s it has been at more than double that). Only Bahrain, an oil sheikhdom, didn't shine

in the 1980s. (The World Bank is forced to define Taiwan as part of China and ignore it, but that economy grew like a weed.)

These charts have several drawbacks. One is that they don't say how long a country has had a certain score. This is crucial for the ex-Communist states, which would have been

bunched in the lower left corner a decade ago but now are scattered all over like popcorn. In Figure 2, the Czech Republic and Estonia are right up with Germany. But western Germany has been following relatively sound economic policies for 47 years; the Czechs and Estonians, for about five. It is no wonder the Germans drive BMWs.

These charts measure systems and policy, but systems and policy are not the only things that count. Japanese score high on freedom of speech, but for cultural reasons, they are less likely to speak out than Americans. Chinese are similar. When I worked at a Southeast Asian newsmagazine, most of our letters to the editor came from Westerners and Filipinos, though we had at least as many ethnic Chinese readers. But we got few letters from them, and most of the critical ones were unsigned.

Culture also affects economic performance. Of the top ten fastest-

A Look At What Counted, *continued from previous page*

influence do government or private entrepreneurs wield over media content — through ownership, control of newsprint, official advertising, or other financial relationships? This includes economic incentives to distort coverage (0-10). Is there non-institutionalized or extrajudicial intimidation: killings of journalists, physical abuse, censorship, or physical interference with the media (0-20)? The ranking is the sum for both print and broadcast.

Sample rankings:

	State control	Political control	Economic control	Intimidation	Total
U.S. broadcast	1	1	3	1	
U.S. print	1	1	3	1	12
Canadian broadcast	1	2	1	1	
Canadian print	2	1	2	3	13
Mexican broadcast	3	8	8	4	
Mexican print	3	8	8	18	60
Chinese broadcast	10	10	8	18	
Chinese print	10	10	8	15	89

Economic Freedom: Average tariff rates of below 4% rated a 1; tariffs of 20% rated a 5. Personal income taxes with a flat rate of 10% or less rated a 1; an average rate of 25% rated a 5. Government consumption of less than 10% of GDP rated a 1; of 46% of GDP, a 5. Inflation rates of less than 6% a year in the 1980s rated a 1; of 30% or more, a 5. Capital controls rated a 1 if there weren't any; a 5 if foreign money was barred. A banking regime with few restrictions on foreign banks, on types of services, and with no government deposit insurance ranked 1; tightly controlled, 4; in chaos, 5. Price and wage controls ranked 1 if there weren't any; 5 if they were pervasive. Private property rights were ranked on a judgment-call basis (see

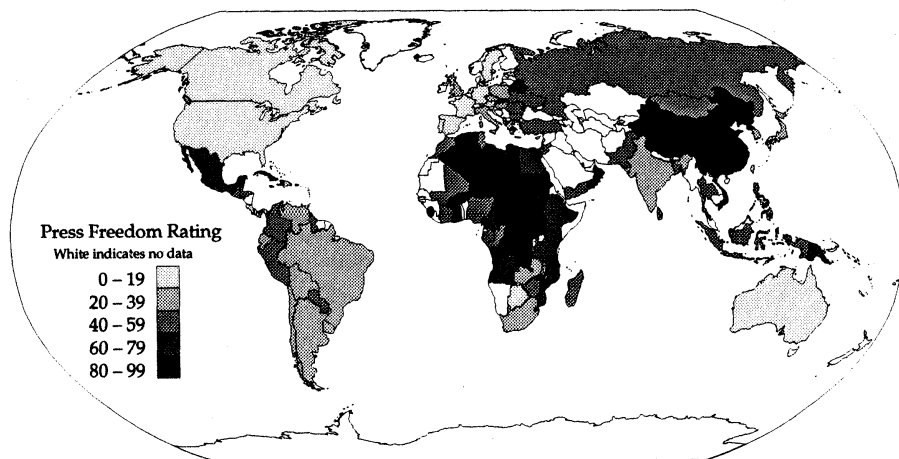
below), as was regulation. Black markets that were restricted to drugs, weapons, and prostitution, totaling no more than 10% of GDP, were rated 1; at more than 30% of GDP, 5. The total ranking is the average of all these factors. Highest were Hong Kong and Singapore.

Sample rankings:

	tariff	tax	govt. consumption	inflation	capital controls	bank controls	price controls	property	regulations	black markets	average
Hong Kong	1	1.5	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1.25
U.S.	2	4	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	1	1.90
Canada	2	4	2	1	3	2	2	1	2	1	2.00
Mexico	3	3.5	1	5	2	4	3	2	4	3	3.05
China	5	4	5	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	3.80
Haiti	5	3	3	2	5	5	4	5	5	5	4.20

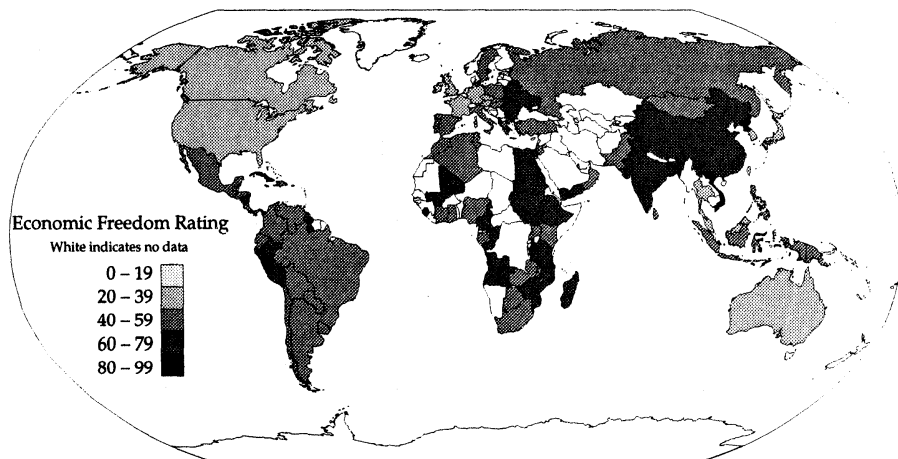
Property Rights: To earn a 1, private property must be guaranteed by law, and backed by an efficient court system and adequate enforcement. If it falls appreciably short in practice, through loopholes or spotty enforcement, then the country earns a 2. France, otherwise high, scores a 2 because its constitution reserves "natural public services" and "natural monopolies" to the state. If a government recognizes only some property rights, such as land, but not others, and expropriation is possible, the country earns a 3. If property is limited to personal items with little legal protection, communal property is the rule, and expropriation likely, the country earns a 4. If private property is outlawed, or the country is in such chaos that it has no protection at all, the country earns a 5. The sources used to come up with these rankings were the Economist Intelligence Unit, *ITL Reports*, Price Waterhouse, and the World Bank. By this standard, the U.S. and Canada each rank a 1, though they may not measure up to the standards of property rights advocates.

—Bruce Ramsey



growing world economies, 1980-1991, Chinese entrepreneurs play a crucial role in five: Thailand, Hong Kong, Singapore, Indonesia, and China itself. Indeed the oddest discrepancy in the Heritage data is the low position of China — and yet its roaring success in the past 15 years. In average per-capita GDP growth 1980-1991, China ranks #2 worldwide (7.8%). And yet in economic freedom it is down there with Belarus and Bangladesh.

One can make excuses: China is freer in some places (Shenzhen) than others (Shanghai), and the boom has been centered in the freer parts. Plus, it has 1.3 billion people, and it has special access to hoards of capital and entrepreneurial skill in Hong Kong and



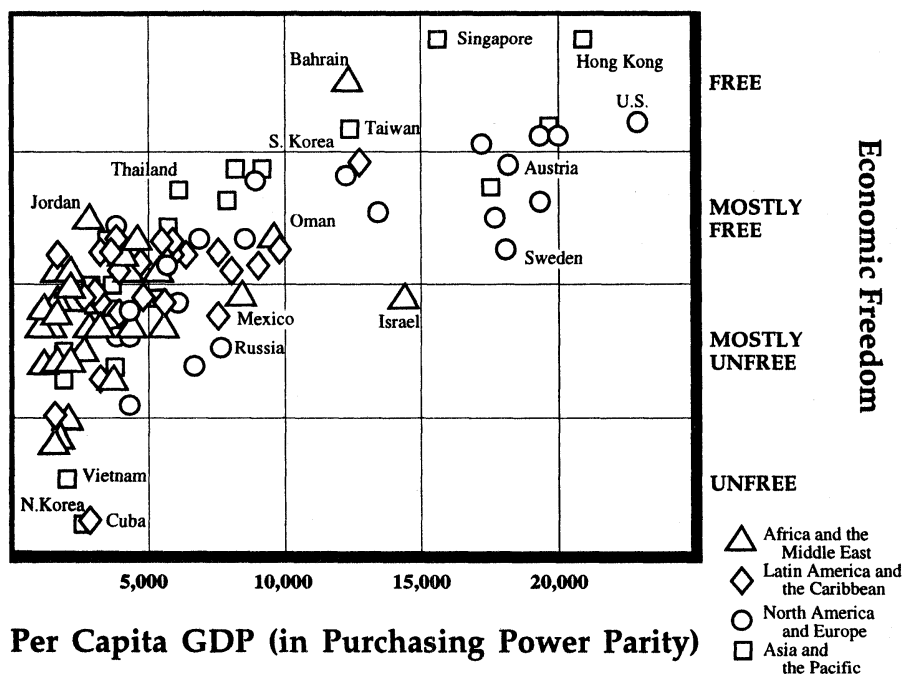
Taiwan. China has a low freedom score, but the trend is rapidly upward, making it a better bet than an unfree coun-

try with no upward trend. But the fact remains: China's economic freedom score does not predict its performance.

In most cases, the fit is better. Consider the former Communist states. Based on your own reading, think of which ones have progressed the most socially, which ones have been associated with clean elections and free-market economics. Then look at their economic records.

Or consider Latin America, where the highest-ranked country in combined economic and political freedom (Figure 2) is Chile. Or Africa, where the best combined score, after South Africa,

FIGURE 4



is Botswana. Chile and Botswana are the favorites of former hedge-fund manager and *Investment Biker* author Jim Rogers. In GDP per capita, 1980-1991, Botswana is sixth worldwide, with an average 5.6% growth — right between Singapore and Hong Kong. Chile is the current star of Latin America.

The broader message of these charts is that freedom is not all or nothing, black or white. It is tempting to argue that it is, especially in making a case for decriminalizing victimless activities: if we try to ban heroin, AK-47s, or hard-core porn, libertarians like to say, we will necessarily end up banning beer, bird guns, and *Cosmopolitan*. It's a neat rhetorical trick, but it's not true. Most of the world lives with partial freedom, and has for a long time. Partial freedom can mean nine-tenths or one-tenth. That doesn't mean you cannot, or should not, ask for ten-tenths. But each step has to be fought on its own merits. There is no slippery slope that, once stepped upon, leads inevitably to hell.

There may be a slope, all right, but all of humanity is on it, and our progress has been generally upward. No country is locked in hell. Not even Albania, China, and Vietnam. Ten years ago I argued with a leftist friend that military dictatorships seem to be able to shake off authoritarianism — I cited Portugal and Spain — but no country ever emerged from the Black

Hole of Communism. Well, events proved me wrong. Socialism is discredited. So is one-party rule.

The real message of these charts is, *remember world standards*. Yes, you may have utopian dreams — we all have them. But when you are judging your country against the ideal outlined in some book, don't forget to judge it against real countries, past and present.

Zealots who convince themselves that they are living in a quasi-police state in the United States or Canada are suffering from a massive distortion of perspective. Yes, you've lost some freedom in the past 50 years, especially from taxes and regulation. You've gained some, too, in personal conduct. By world standards, you are doing well. □

Bradford, "Mexican Hayride," continued from page 16

whose revenue now will "secure" the new loans.*

Summers also mentioned Chile, which suffered a similar financial crisis in the early 1980s, differing mainly in that the United States government did not intervene with a huge pile of your money. Did the disaster that Summers seemed to be predicting occur?

Well, yes and no. In the short term, Chileans suffered. With their currency practically worthless, they couldn't afford to import much from abroad, and the standard of living in Chile declined sharply. But just as the collapse of Chile's currency made imports very expensive, its collapse made its exports cheap. Because of the crisis, Chile freed up its economy, reducing regulations and taxes. Today, a decade later, Chile has the most prosperous economy in Latin America and is setting an example for the "undeveloped" world. It has also, perhaps not coincidentally, embraced the sort of democratic reforms that Mexico seems incapable of adopting.

And what happened to the investors in Chilean bonds? They took their lumps, and they learned something about investing in countries that don't follow a sound financial policy.

Profit and loss play vital roles in the marketplace. When individuals invest their money or labor in a way that fills other people's needs, they make a profit. When they invest money or effort in ways that do not fill others' needs, they lose. If you protect

people from risk of loss, you encourage them to invest in ways that do not serve other people, thereby undermining the whole economy.

Bankruptcy serves an important role in a market economy. It liquidates bad investments, sends signals to investors to put their money in sounder ventures, and redistributes assets from incompetent managers to competent ones.

Of course, governments are not private enterprises. Free-market businesses deal with their customers on the basis of voluntary, mutual benefit: if you don't want to buy a good or service, you don't have to. Governments, by contrast, can force their "customers" (their citizens) to buy goods or services regardless of whether they want the "benefits" or not, and even to make payments without any good or service offered in return. If you don't believe me, try not paying your taxes.

Allowing a government to go bankrupt is even more important than allowing a business to go bankrupt, for it is the only way to discourage the profligacy of a government like the one Mexico suffers under today, or Chile suffered under prior to its crisis. In the long run, the very best thing the United

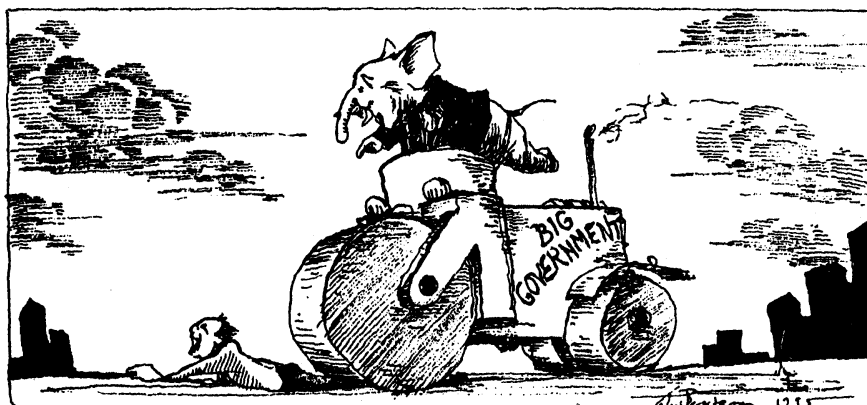
States could have done for Mexico would have been to let it suffer the discipline of the international marketplace.

What has happened since the \$50 billion bailout? The peso rallied briefly, but has again begun to fall. As I write these words, the peso is worth 13.4¢, down more than 15% from its level *before* the bailout. In other words, the precise disaster that Bill Clinton said would occur if we didn't bail out Mexico has occurred.

The U.S. dollar has collapsed with the peso, falling to its lowest level ever against the Japanese yen and the German mark. Today, it costs about 90 yen to buy one U.S. dollar. That same dollar bought you 235 yen in 1985. Today a German mark costs about 72¢. In 1985, you could buy that same mark for 29¢.

European speculators have concluded that the currency of a government willing to put billions on the line to help Mexico or Wall Street may not be a very good investment.

So far, Bill Clinton hasn't said a word about the calamitous post-bailout collapse of the peso. Apparently he has bigger things to worry about. □



DON'T WORRY CITIZEN, I'LL FIND THE REVERSE ANY MINUTE NOW

* Mexico considers this act of theft a great historical accomplishment. In 1988, Mexico celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the event by issuing a set of commemorative gold coins. Needless to say, unlike other commemorative Mexican coins, these were not heavily promoted in the United States.

Flowers for the Underclass

by David Ramsay Steele

The hidden message of *The Bell Curve*.

A number of fair-minded people have responded with indignation to the ferocious media *Blitzkrieg* against Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray's *The Bell Curve*. The two cautious and sensible pieces by Jane Shaw and Leland Yeager in the January 1995 issue of *Liberty* are good examples. Both articles regretfully mention the many unreasonable attacks on the book, and they are accompanied by Bill Bradford's documentation of a typical case of unfair journalistic treatment, one of hundreds.

While I agree with this general response, it is somewhat narrowly focused. As I see it, the more interesting facts are these:

(1) Compared with the way such a book would have been treated as recently as 20 years ago, there are numerous clear signs that *The Bell Curve* has received a remarkable amount of toleration and acceptance. We are merely anticipating by a few years if we say that Herrnstein and Murray have won the debate hands down, at least on those issues that are currently the most emotionally charged.

(2) Equalitarianism is at the end of its rope. At some point in the future, perhaps as early as 15 years from now, statements about human differences of the kind now subject to frenzied outbursts of vilification will be the most commonplace of truisms, accepted by all the mainstream media and all respectable university humanities departments.

These two facts help to put in perspective the following judgment:

(3) *The Bell Curve* not only offers virtually nothing to oppose the trend it most fears; the book actually serves

to powerfully reinforce that trend. Herrnstein and Murray sound the alarm at the growth of a new ruling class, the "cognitive elite." Yet whatever the intentions of its authors, *The Bell Curve* is a manifesto for this new ruling class and is ideally suited to become the elite's bible.

Opinions Do Change

Although favorable, or even temperate, commentary on the book is still very much in a minority, I think it is of sufficient volume and breadth to demonstrate that an ideological sea change has occurred in recent years.

A highly respected mainstream public figure and (at the time) plausible presidential hopeful, Bill Bennett, is asked on TV what he thinks of the book. He replies that it's a serious work, deserving consideration, and that Murray is a respectable analyst. Gwen Ifill makes sure she has heard right: "Is it a serious work?" "Yes, it is." The incident passes by without further comment. Can you imagine the reaction if any leading politician had said something equally favorable about Arthur Jensen, when denouncing Jensenism was all the rage 25 years ago?

The New Republic gave Murray a platform, though Murray's contribution was preceded by a baker's dozen of denunciations. These denunciations

counted for little. Readers could easily form their own conclusions about how cogent the critics' arguments were. *Newsweek* did something similar: it carried a couple of hostile articles, the usual exhibitions of emotional distress, with another piece calmly stating the facts about IQ research. Ben Wattenburg's *Think Tank* TV show devoted three programs to the book, one of them entirely consisting of an interview with Murray, the other two with a balanced panel of supporters and critics.

I could continue with numerous other examples, but I think the point is clear. *The Bell Curve* is not being effectively consigned to oblivion, nor is Murray being effectively demonized in the eyes of the general public the way Jensen was. Murray has predicted that, within six months, no politician will want to admit knowing him. I doubt it, but in any case, within a few years many politicians will boast of having broken bread with this illustrious sage.

Some opinions become so entrenched and so unanimously stated in public that it's easy to assume that they will never change. Practical politicians know that it is folly to make an assault on these established ideas, which seem to be immovable in the short run — though

a few politicians may be able to reap entrepreneurial profits if they detect a shift in the dominant ideas before other politicians have noticed it.

Yet the most established opinions can and do change. Sometimes they even change dramatically within a few years. An idea may rule for many decades, with all its critics dismissed as demented wackos, no matter how reasonable their criticisms, and yet within

It is a historical accident that equalitarianism caught the imagination of intellectuals. It is entirely possible that it will evaporate like morning mist.

a few years that idea may fall into serious question, and rapidly become an unfashionable minority view.

The unexpected suddenness with which a reigning idea may be dethroned arises because the reigning idea is never as strong as it looks. It is a paper tiger. This frailty arises for at least three reasons:

First, most intellectuals or active communicators (like most people in general, but even more so) will always agree with a clear consensus, as individual sheep follow the flock. Most people believe what their peers believe.

Second, those harboring doubts or disagreements with the ruling opinion hold their tongues, out of fear that their personal or professional standing might suffer if they were outspoken. Most people who don't believe what their peers believe pretend to believe it, or at least keep quiet about their disagreement.

Third, monopoly privilege enfeebles the mind. Those who argue for the fashionably correct line are easily able to beat down all opposition using weak arguments, because their powerful position intimidates critics. So they become flabby; they lose the ability to marshal arguments well. They are encouraged to tolerate even outrageously silly arguments (just look at three quarters of the hostile reviews of *The Bell Curve*), as long as fashion is on their side. When the dikes break, people are emboldened to point out the

feebleness of arguments that formerly went unchallenged.

Here are a few recent examples of major changes in ruling ideas: (1) the downfall of the Keynesian view of economic policy, which was scarcely challenged at all (as far as the general intelligent public was aware) as late as the mid-1960s; (2) the switch from a "color-blind" view of race relations, in which "integration" was considered all-important and was thought to be achievable by forcing people to ignore the skin color of individuals, to the standpoint that racial quotas and the encouragement of minority racial chauvinism are the best techniques to homogenize the population (considered a desirable goal before and after that switch); (3) the metamorphosis of environmentalism from something perceived as a luxury of the comfortably off ("conservation") into the currently fashionable dogma that "The Planet" is in danger and needs to be "saved" by all kinds of measures that hurt the majority of people; (4) the recent spectacular fall in the authority of Marxism; (5) the equally steep plunge in the authority of Freudianism.

I will add a further case, which I am not quite old enough to have witnessed, in the sense of being able to personally recollect people stating the "old" view: (6) the switch from the opinion that underpopulation is a serious danger, and obviously needs to be combatted by strong action to increase fertility (this view was utterly dominant as late as the early 1950s) to the opposite fear of overpopulation (which dominated from the 1960s to the 1980s, and which is now shifting back to the old fear of underpopulation, or "birth dearth" scare).

The Twilight of Equalitarianism

Admittedly, the fact that some dominant ideas have been overthrown does not show that *any* of them may be overthrown. Perhaps equalitarianism is different. Much ethical and policy discourse does assume that equalitarianism is here to stay. Yet, all too conspicuously, throughout history the importance of ineradicable differences in human abilities, and the desirability or inevitability of class hierarchy, have been taken for granted, as they are still

taken for granted by the 80% of the population who don't control newspaper columns, college lecture halls, or the like. Somewhat ironically, the equalitarian fashion is mainly confined to the privileged intellectuals.

I don't think that equalitarianism is an exception. It is a historical accident that equalitarianism caught the imagination of intellectuals for a while, and entirely possible that it will evaporate like morning mist. Equalitarianism could be defeated and replaced by a virtually unanimous commitment to a belief in human differences.

If this is correct, then I think that we are now witnessing that defeat: equalitarianism is in retreat on all fronts, and will be completely routed within the next 15 to 30 years. *The Bell Curve* is one straw in the wind; others include *Brain Sex*, *In Defense of Elitism*, and *Why Men Rule*. It's all over but the shouting.

One of the amusing signs to look for in the next few years is that people will start to deny that anyone *ever* held equalitarian opinions. With the change in paradigm, or dominant theory, a colorless, tasteless, odorless nerve gas is released into the atmosphere, so that

An idea may rule for many decades, with all its critics dismissed as demented wackos, and yet within a few years it may rapidly become an unfashionable minority view.

people come to see the formerly dominant theory as incurably grotesque and risible. (Or a hallucinogenic gas is removed from the atmosphere — either metaphor will do.)

Inequality: Get Used to It

Roughly speaking, *The Bell Curve* has two messages: (1) a restatement of the current views of the majority of psychometricians (psychologists concerned with mental testing); and (2) distinctive arguments peculiar to this book.

The vast majority of media comment has been focused on the first of these, while the second has received

very little attention. This widely denounced and detested tome is not detested and denounced for what is peculiar to it, but for what is the consensus, and indeed mostly utterly commonplace, among scholarly specialists.

Another irony is that Herrnstein and Murray's distinctive arguments, which hardly anyone is discussing, are somewhat hasty, while their exposition of orthodox psychometric findings, which has reduced intellectual bolsheviks to heartrending wails of distress, is outstanding both for its accuracy and for the impartial clarity with which it is presented.

Arthur Jensen was denounced by the media in the 1960s and 1970s, and stigmatized as an ideological leper in the eyes of the broad public. But among scholars in the field, Jensen remained a highly respected figure, and research has piled up corroborating the once-controversial positions associated with Jensen, so that they are now more or less the mainstream view among the knowledgeable.

Two separate and incompatible consensus have come to prevail. To take just one example, the generic media keep announcing that IQ tests are biased against blacks and in favor of whites. Unbeknownst to the broad public, however, serious attempts have been made, over the last 30 years, to test this proposition rigorously, and the conclusion is that IQ tests are slightly biased in favor of blacks and against whites. The same story of one consensus among the "informed public" and an entirely different consensus among the experts crops up again and again.

In summarizing the situation like this, I am not for a moment supposing that the expert consensus restated in *The Bell Curve* is bound to be true, or that it will survive intact in all details. We are doubtless in for some surprises, and even revolutionary developments, in psychometry and the genetics of human personality. Some of the findings Herrnstein and Murray report will come to be seen in a different light, while others will be exposed as due to faulty research, careless assumptions, or the overlooking of important factors.

Herrnstein and Murray are inclined to give the impression that their conclusions are better corroborated than they in fact are. At times they seem to

assume that "the data" can speak for themselves, and tell us the correct theory. They forget that all science is speculation. They even appear to suppose that if A is better correlated with C than B is, then A has been *demonstrated* to be "the explanation" for C.

The authors themselves point out that parts of their summary of the consensus are much worse corroborated than others: in particular, their discussion of the genetic component in the difference between average ethnic

group performances is based upon less reliable and more problematic evidence than the discussion of differences within the white population (which occupies far more space in the book). Herrnstein and Murray say that the question of genetic differences in cognitive ability among races is "still riddled with more questions than answers" (p. 272).

But it is hardly conceivable that the importance of heredity in helping to determine all aspects of any

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Markets, Welfare and the Failure of Bureaucracy



**William C. Mitchell
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Foreword by Gordon Tullock

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individual's personal character, including intellectual capability, will ever be called into question by competent scientists. It is hardly conceivable that innate differences, among individuals and among populations, will be shown to be nonexistent. This is about as plausible as the notion that astronomers will one day conclude that all planetary orbits are square.

A point which Herrnstein and Murray, but few of their opponents,

The imminent acceptance by all intellectual leaders of human inequality as an eternal and entirely gratifying fact of life will have momentous repercussions for our culture.

have grasped, is that for purposes of practical policy, it may make little difference whether IQ is substantially inherited or not. No one knows any practicable, reliable way to take a group of people with markedly low IQs and turn them, or their children, or their children's children, into a group of people with markedly high IQs. We do know that giving them money does not work, giving them schooling does not work, giving them skills does not work, and giving them self-esteem (which many of them already have far too much of) does not work. If intelligence is not substantially inherited, then it might as well be, for all that anyone can do about it.

The imminent acceptance by all intellectual leaders of human inequality as an eternal and entirely gratifying fact of life will have momentous repercussions for our culture. Statists will shift gears: instead of advocating government action with the avowed purpose of moving us in the direction of equality, they will advocate government action to bring about the right sort of inequality. Libertarians will also have to shift gears: instead of combatting the zeal to impose equality upon people, we will have to return to our customary historic task of combatting attempts to keep the lower orders in their place. We should get ready, for example, to oppose the coming tide of

demands for compulsory eugenic policies, in part by pointing out that voluntary eugenic methods will work better.

A New Ruling Class?

The Bell Curve convincingly argues that something unprecedented has happened during the last 30 years or so. There has always been a tendency for unusually clever people to rise to the top, but this tendency, before the 1950s, was very rough. There were many individuals who slipped through the net. Today, anyone with exceptional brains will, with overwhelming likelihood, be "discovered" and recruited away from their community of origin. He will probably pass through one of the best twelve universities. He will have a fair chance of earning a six-figure income — and few who do receive such incomes will be drawn from outside this high-IQ group.

Whereas you once could always find an unusually bright carpenter, cab driver, or small-town store proprietor, such creatures (as a good approximation) no longer exist among native-born Americans under the age of 40. The exceptionally clever people, the cognitive elite, are becoming segregated from the rest of society. They graduate from the same top schools and read or watch the same select media — quite different from those favored by the majority.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the bell curve, exceptionally unintelligent persons are also increasingly isolated — and increasingly subject to all sorts of "pathologies." They will soon be perceived, both by the elite and by the great cognitive middle class (the vast majority of the population), as at best a damned nuisance, and steps will be taken to hygienically remove them from decent society, to the functional equivalent of Indian reservations.

Most of these predictions have been made several times before — the word "meritocracy" became well established over 30 years ago — but Herrnstein and Murray's documentation is more up-to-date and more persuasive, their presentation more topical and more chilling.

A Gloomy Future

In contrast to the book's arguments about the social significance of IQ, its

statements about political trends and policies are disappointingly uncritical. The underlying vision seems to be a kind of Ross Perot view of America, with mere stagnation the story of the last 20 years and steep decline a serious danger for the immediate future. Or perhaps this is the orthodoxy the authors feel they dare not challenge, while seeking a hearing for their deviant views on other matters.

Herrnstein and Murray must have underestimated the rate at which the consensus on welfare-related issues would change. Portraying a gloomy future for the swelling underclass, they predict that the allocation of welfare costs will shift from the states to Washington. "Unable to bring itself to do away with the welfare edifice — for by that time it will be assumed that social chaos will follow any radical cutback — the government will continue to try to engineer behavior through new programs and regulations" (525). The ink was hardly dry on the first printing of *The Bell Curve* when the above prediction began to be refuted. Of course, the welfare state is still here. It may, sadly, still be here ten years from now, but it will be smaller. In case anyone hasn't noticed, the people are in revolt, all over the industrialized world, against the welfare state.

Herrnstein and Murray tend to view the lowest-income class as irremediably enmeshed in stagnant poverty. They do not forthrightly propose *permanently raising the prospects for the poorest* by abolishing welfare, abolishing the minimum wage, cutting taxes, and slashing regulations. They do advocate replacing the present welfare system with a guaranteed minimum income (547–48), and they do advocate cutting some regulations, on the refreshingly novel grounds that these are too complicated for people of low intelligence to follow.

The specter of the supreme cognitive elite is indeed disquieting, but surely less disquieting if the elite is not going to have interests or policies substantially distinct from the cognitive middle class, the people of mediocre IQ who constitute 90% of the population (*The Bell Curve's* classes II, III, and IV).

Ruling classes have generally sought to reserve privileged positions

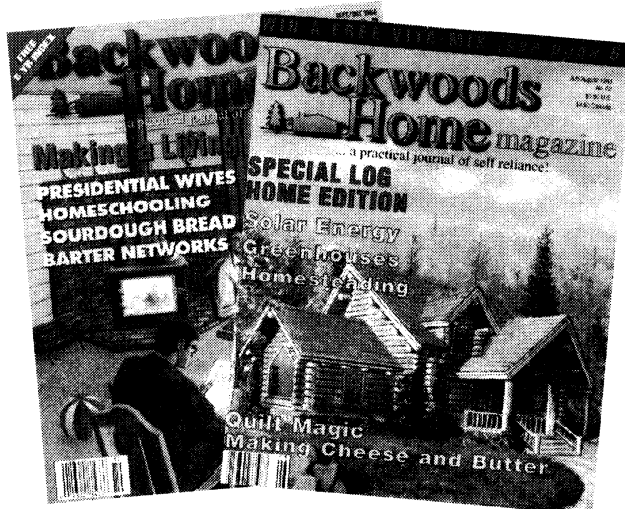
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for their children, but this is one thing the cognitive elite cannot do, without ceasing to be a cognitive elite. Because of the phenomenon known as regression to the mean (which implies that, for characteristics like height, intelligence, musical aptitude, or athletic prowess, the average offspring of parents above or below the average attainment for the whole population will score between the parents and the population average) the majority of elite members in any generation will have non-elite parents and non-elite children. As long as the top 5% ruling elite remains a cognitive elite, there has to be open entry for the brightest

fashionable and largely ephemeral worries.

Manifesto for an Aspiring Ruling Class

Documents of protest or dissent which come to be employed as scriptures by ruling classes are well known. The obvious example is the New Testament, some of whose component books were clearly written in expectation of an imminent, well-deserved end to the evil world of secular power, but which has since served as the other-worldly arsenal of many all-too-worldly rulers.

Another instance is the works of Marx, especially *The Communist Manifesto*, designed as a strategy for revolution by an exploited working class but handily pressed into service as apology for a Marxist-Leninist ruling class which, unlike nineteenth-century factory owners, actually did exploit the workers.

The Bell Curve is ideally suited to become an inspiration and apology for the cognitive elite. It is deliberately addressed to the elite — the authors say that readers will generally be elite members. If that's true, and given the book's unexpectedly huge sales, it must be read by virtually every member of the elite.

The book is therefore a perfect instrument for giving members of the elite a sense of class solidarity, converting this group from a *Klasse an sich* to a *Klasse für sich*. Millions of intelligent young people will read this book over the next several years, and will acquire a new sense of identity and of mission. Nothing could have worked so effectively to convert high-IQ, potentially high-income people into a cohesive, self-conscious collective, acutely aware of who their true class comrades are, swept clean of the last cobwebs of the guilty equalitarian prejudice that they ought not to rate themselves as better than the sluggish masses.

This will work all the more effectively by being a disturbing indictment. A book that appealed to smug self-importance could hardly have turned the trick so deftly. Readers will absorb the book eagerly because it raises the specter of horrifying social problems which sensitive souls ought to be compassionately exercised about.

Herrnstein and Murray attribute the growing power of the cognitive elite to particular trends, and whenever the authors have occasion to touch upon any of these trends, they either treat them as inexorable or they advocate policies which will accelerate the trends. For instance, they lament the loss to national income in the fact that IQ tests are not permitted to be used in industry (85), and they generally accept without hesitation any policy that would more effectively pluck all candidate members of the elite out of any non-elite setting. They are alarmed at the falling quality of education for the highly gifted, which has arisen because curricula have been dumbed down to encourage the less gifted (434). They never once stop to spend a few words on the possibility of leaving a sprinkling of high-IQ Jews in obscurity by making educational selection procedures less efficient.

Though seriously perturbed at the rise of the cognitive elite, the authors propose absolutely nothing to limit its influence. Instead they in effect propose that the elite use its power wisely, humanely, and morally. The implicit prescription is that the elite should take care not to become too isolated from the outlook and concerns of the vast cognitive middle, and should support measures that make things better for the underclass, the cognitive *Lumpenproletariat*. This is a policy they urge upon the elite on grounds of humanity, but it could equally be advocated as a technique of class survival.

The Bell Curve exhibits nostalgia and alarm at the rise of the cognitive elite. But suppose instead that Herrnstein and Murray had been over the moon about this development. Suppose they had argued: "This is the neo-Confucian or Jeffersonian ideal; at last the people of real ability are running the show. Oh, and by the way, these ideal rulers should prudently beware the dangers to themselves of becoming too isolated from their subjects." The tone of the book would then have been utterly different, and it would have repelled many of the readers it now attracts, but the policies it advocates would be just the same. □

The exceptionally clever people, the cognitive elite, are becoming segregated from the rest of society.

offspring of the remaining 95% of the population.

Herrnstein and Murray, as if aware that they can't seem to come up with any serious conflicts between the middle class and the elite, and that this weakens the urgency of their concern, suggest an alternative kind of disquiet: the elite will elude the shackles which constrain the rest of us: "Try to envision what will happen when 10 or 20 percent of the population has enough income to bypass the social institutions they don't like in ways that only the top 1 percent used to be able to do" (517). As instances, the authors cite faxes, modems, Fedex, private courts, alternatives to public schools, and private security guards.

And what about automobiles and telephones? These things started with 1% and moved to 20%, but this was merely a stage on the way to 80 or 90%, and there's no reason to doubt that the same applies to all the other devices mentioned. Everyone wants to escape from statism and obsolete technology, and high-income people often pioneer the way.

In contrast to their account of the sociology of IQ, much of Herrnstein and Murray's political assumptions and analysis will come to be seen as an uncritical reflection of currently

Instruction

Vocational Ethics

by Robert Lee Mahon

"Some things had not changed. A potter's wheel was still a potter's wheel and clay was still clay."
—Cyril M. Kornbluth, "The Marching Morons"

Like counseling, consulting, coordinating, and psychowhatsis of most kinds, teaching ethics to particular groups of professionals is one of the bromides of modern times. Ethical training has become a cottage industry, based on the premise that ethics is more complicated than we previously believed, but nonetheless can be taught as a kind of problem-solving technique. Vo-tech ethics, as it were.

According to this way of thinking, each discipline possesses special ethical problems, all of which somehow differ from the next's. Thus we are blessed with courses in medical ethics for aspiring surgeons, legal ethics for would-be lawyers, business ethics for potential MBAs, and now even ethics for computer hackers. According to *Newsweek*: "Several years after the introduction of computers into the nation's classrooms, teachers are realizing they have a two-fold lesson to teach: computer use and computer abuse." The article goes on to state that "few schools have initiated the second part of the program" because most "are still trying to catch up with the changing technology, which leaves little time for thinking about its moral implications." Or, in the words of Jeanne Dietsch, of Talmis, Inc., a Chicago computer-consulting firm: "Computer instructions don't teach lofty things like the difference between right and wrong."

Another recent *Newsweek* article indignantly reports that, for all the hue and cry over ethics in business, and in spite of the now-flourishing business

of supplying businessmen with those ethics, over half the participants at a recent conference of corporate executives decamped before their lecture on business ethics — after, appropriately enough, hearing Mr. T. Boone Pickens lecture on the how-to's of hostile mergers. (The business of America is no longer, apparently, business, but seminars about how to conduct business.)

Presumably they adjourned to the nearest bar to pad their expense accounts while dreaming dreams of Pickensesque raids and money-making ventures. But we may take some heart from this. Who knows what idea for what new product may be launched on a sea of martinis? Certainly none will result from the lecture on ethics, unless sheer boredom drives the occasional businessman to his own private brainstorming (read: "daydreaming") session.

Things used to be simpler. You studied theology to help you communicate with God, or at least maneuver your soul into a more advantageous position. You studied philosophy to help you understand those mysteries of the universe which the sciences couldn't plumb (which were plenty, back before genetic engineering and

microchips). And you studied literature and history to help you hassle with everything that could be neither solved nor understood.

Come to think of it, I *did* study ethics. In fact, I "had" two semesters of ethics as a senior at Rockhurst College. But this course was a *history* of ethics, a survey from the Greeks to Maritain. Naturally, I don't remember a word of it. Equally naturally, I don't need to. By the time I got to the history of ethics, I already had my own. From whom, where, whence? Parents? Friends? (Peers, as they are now labeled?) God? Sanctifying Grace? Natural Law? All of the above? None?

Who knows? We didn't worry about it back then. In that era, we assumed that we could tell right from wrong, and that we had a reasonably decent chance of doing close to right most of the time. Knowing ethics and being ethical are not necessarily, or even probably, synonymous.

Like war and the generals, ethics is too important to be left to the ethicists. Let the businessman take care of business, and let the buyer beware. He'll have to anyway, because anyone who thinks an ethics class on a

résumé makes a businessman more moral is one of those suckers P.T. Barnum liked to talk about.

Our society has adopted the weird belief that everything connected with the latter half of the twentieth century is so complex that it has to have its own educational specialty, complete with consultants and experts and sundry attending authorities — the nine muses raised to the ninth power. With that, we've adopted a crucial corollary: the notion that everything, no matter how personal, how mired in the ambiguity of the human condition, is still, somehow, teachable; that all problems are not just analyzable, but solvable, bottom-lineable.

Thus, presumably, kids who didn't learn ethics before they even knew what the word meant will somehow learn ethics for that part of their lives neatly compartmentalized with their computers — conveniently enough, from experts in "computer ethics."

Accept that logic, of course, and every field, every tool, should have its own course in ethics — and to teach

them, its own ethical experts, analysts, and consultants. Why not have courses in, say, ethics for construction workers? Plumbing Ethics 101? The ethical use of hammers and screwdrivers?

The business of America is no longer, apparently, business, but seminars about how to conduct business.

Ethics for auto mechanics? (Who, come to think of it, might be able to profit from . . .)

Is this a *reductio ad absurdum*? No — there's no *reductio* to it, only absurdity. What we're seeing is a typical modern response to social problems. The professions of power (business, medicine, the law, the technologies and sciences) do possess more potential to shaft the average citizen than janitoring or teaching. But they always have.

Our mistake lies in thinking that an

ethics class aimed at a specific profession or technology will affect the behavior of those professionals or technocrats. What hubris leads us to think that our time has complexities unfathomed by other eras, all because our technologies are more complex?

Do we need a teacher to point out that cheating with a computer is still cheating? Do we need a special course to see that stealing with a computer is still stealing? Or to tell when we're gouging our clients, or endangering our patients, and thus abusing our authority?

And do we really imagine that pointing out any of these abuses to the abuser will result in any *mea culpas*?

If all those previous generations turned out more or less ethical without any kind of formal education in ethics, that would suggest that this generation has no need for vocational ethics education. Or, for that matter, for counselors, consultants, shrinks, or other *idiots savant* whose presence doesn't seem to have altered the nature of the beast. □

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Africa Unseen

by Martin Morse Wooster

When it comes to Africa, we've all been left in the dark.

Most stories about Africa south of the Sahara are of two types: gloomy accounts of disasters in countries Americans know little or nothing about (Somalia, Rwanda, the Sudan) and reports on the dismantling of apartheid in South Africa. At first glance, these don't have very much in common. But they are similar because they tend to be terribly misleading, because they recast the continent's complexities in American terms.

When most black African nations gained their independence in the 1950s and 1960s, many liberal journalists saw these countries as places where innocents, freed of the foulness of Western civilization, could build a socialist paradise, living on indigenously produced fruits, nuts, and wholesome grains, wearing homespun clothes untouched by the drones of multinational corporations.

By 1980 or so, it was clear even to the most partisan observer that the socialist policies of most of black Africa had led those countries to economic ruin. As freelancer Christina Katsouris reports in the September 1994 *Africa Report*, between 1970 and 1980, most sub-Saharan economies bordered on collapse, thanks to rising government spending, higher taxes, monetary inflation, and artificially high exchange rates. Not only did Africa's share of world trade fall, but so did the sub-Saharan per capita income.

But we didn't hear very much about this continuing decline, because the editors of many American newspapers and magazines decided that

Africa wasn't very interesting. The reason for this disinterest probably had something to do with the expense of sending correspondents to distant lands, but it also sprang from many American editors' old and silly notion that their readers are only interested in foreign news from places where many Americans live or vacation.

Ken Silverstein, editor of *Counterpunch*, best makes this point in the September 1994 *Washington Monthly*. He argues that the civil war in Rwanda took people by surprise because most newspapers did not devote very much space to that troubled land — and when they did, they preferred to write about gorilla researcher Dian Fossey and ignore the rest of the country. A Nexis search in mid-June 1994 "which cross-referenced Rwanda with 'gorillas' vs. 'guerrillas' resulted in a rout by the apes, 1,123 to 138," with 91 of the "guerrilla" stories appearing only after the eruption of the Rwandan civil war in April 1994.

Silverstein's point is well-taken; Americans should know more about Rwanda. But his call for more *political* coverage of Africa is misguided.

There are already far too many stories about how one African strongman has been toppled and replaced by another, and even the most dedicated *New York Times* reader justifiably skips them.

Another Sort of Story

In South Africa, a different script was developed. All the internal differences among South Africans — between liberal Anglophones and conservative Afrikaners, between Xhosa, Zulu, and other tribes, between urban and rural blacks — were ignored. The conflict in South Africa was simply between oppressed blacks and oppressing whites. Liberal journalists told Americans that the South African situation was exactly like the civil rights struggle in the 1960s; conservatives warned what might happen if a Communist-allied South Africa seized that nation's supply of gold and platinum. (Some right-wing writers made even odder comparisons. My favorite was the one who claimed South Africa was like America because the Boers, just like America's pioneers, trekked across the desert in covered wagons to seek a new land.)

Press coverage of South Africa certainly didn't decline in the past 20 years, and probably increased, at least until Nelson Mandela became president. (Since then, coverage has dramatically fallen, at least in America.) But what is important about South Africa is what did *not* happen. There was no race war, no nationalizations, and no white flight. The country is still South Africa and not Azania. Nelson Mandela addressed the first session of

By 1980 or so, it was clear even to the most partisan observer that the socialist policies of most of black Africa had led those countries to economic ruin.

the multiracial South African parliament in Afrikaans.

It's certainly true that the average journalist in South Africa didn't have far to go to find hate-spewing fanatics. In the August 1994 *Esquire*, Daniel Voll spends a month with the racist Right and finds they have connections to goose-steppers around the globe. Vladimir Zhirinovskiy offered to give the Boers a homeland in Russia! David Duke called to give advice! (On how to lose elections and alienate people?)

But South Africa's hard white Right, like the hard black Left, was marginalized by the 1994 elections. White racists may grumble about black dominance and their black counterparts in the Pan Africanist Congress may spew fantasies about "One Settler, One Bullet," but when it came time to vote, the white Freedom Front received just 2.2% of the vote and the Pan Africanists received only 1.5%.

A very good analysis of the South African election is provided by Alexander Johnston in the October 1994 *International Affairs*. Johnston, a political scientist at the University of Natal, predicts that one result of the 1994 South African election is that small parties will have to change or die. The Pan Africanists, a party nearly as old as the African National Congress, began its legal life weaker than its longtime rival and failed to

catch up. The white Right failed to decide whether to take part in the election or boycott it, decided to participate weakly, and was crushed. Also doomed in Johnston's view is the Democratic Party (DP), the long-time voice of anti-apartheid English-speaking liberals. Whites deserted them and blacks ignored them; they received 100,000 fewer votes than they received in the whites-only 1989 elections. "The suspicion lingers," Johnston writes, "that the DP will have to die before the broadly based liberal democratic party capable of attracting substantial numbers of black voters can be born."

The three largest South African parties, says Johnston, should also not rest on their laurels. The African National Congress' 62.5% of the vote came from very poor urban blacks, union members, and rising businessmen; these groups have very little in common with one another aside from skin color. The National Party gained its 20.5% mostly from people who simply didn't like the ANC. And the Inkatha Freedom Party, the *only* major South African ethnic party, received its 10.5% by getting over half of the vote in KwaZulu/Natal and very little anywhere else.

If South African democracy is to be successful, Johnston argues, its political parties need to be based on ideas, not on skin color. South Africa has no significant socialist or libertarian party; the National Party pretends to be conservative but actually has no ideology at the moment. Should ideas become dominant in South African politics, it is quite possible that the ANC would splinter, particularly as income levels rise. But until a credible opposition arises, Johnston says, it's probable that "the most substantial opposition may come from within the ANC's ranks or from outside the party system altogether." Whatever happens to South Africa's political parties, they will not resemble the Democrats or the Republicans.

One sign of the deracialization of South Africa can be found in the October 1, 1994 *Economist*, which notes that the newly elected African National Congress parliamentarians have been far more eager to get perks than to foment revolution. Nelson

Mandela, as president, has a salary that is not only twice as high as his predecessor, F.W. de Klerk, but even higher than that of President Clinton. Parliamentarians earn 193,200 rand (\$55,000) a year, more than they made under white rule. And other politicians enjoy other perks: the Orange Free State premier, "Terror" Lekota, delights in travelling by jet and ignoring commercial flights.

Both Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the head of South Africa's trade unions have denounced these fat salaries as betrayals of the revolution. That may be true. But politicians who are now members of the ruling class are less likely to promote wealth-damaging measures that might threaten their incomes.

Africa Altogether

Now that South Africa is black-ruled, it should not be considered separately from other black African nations. Both the Left and the Right have debated ways to help Africa, and their divisions are remarkably similar. The Left, reports *E* magazine editor Will Nixon in the August 22, 1994 *In These Times*, is divided between people who want aid to go to local

A Nexis search that cross-referenced Rwanda with "gorillas" vs "guerrillas" resulted in a rout by the apes, 1,123 to 138.

entrepreneurs and other small-scale projects, and more radical abolitionists, most notably *Lords of Poverty* author Graham Hancock, who want Western aid to Africa ended altogether.

The Right, to judge from two articles in the November 14, 1994 *Insight*, is equally divided. American University economist George B.N. Ayittey argues that the West should only aid African countries that become democratic, and then only respond to African requests for funds. Hoover Institution fellow Peter Duignan counters that *all* aid is wasteful, that Western funds allowed one-party regimes in Tanzania, Zaire, and Kenya to survive for decades, and

continued on page 44

Argument

Convincing the Unconvincible

by Val Lambson

We may have to make a few payoffs on the road to freedom.

Whether the objective is to maximize wealth or freedom, *laissez faire* is the best prescription. Yet the U.S. continues to move toward greater government control. Why?

The reason liberty has not supplanted statism is that government intrusion confers benefits on some constituencies — constituencies who can then be counted on to oppose any reforms that might reverse their gains. In a transition to a free society, these people may have to be bought off, sometimes for reasons of political expediency, sometimes for reasons of fairness. Honest libertarian policy prescriptions must identify these costs and specify who will pay them.

Consider four such interventions: Social Security, rent control, the Postal Service, and grazing on public lands.

Social Security

It's easy to figure out one way to dismantle Social Security: simply cancel benefits. But this would run into the opposed constituency problem with a vengeance; even "means-testing," which would reduce benefits for wealthy recipients only, prompts tremendous opposition. So on grounds of political pragmatism alone, the case for compensating the opposed constituency — individuals who are or will soon be Social Security recipients — is strong.

There are also equity-based arguments for such compensation. One is that it would be wrong to cancel bene-

fits because retirees are only receiving what they paid into the system. Social Security was originally sold to the American people as a forced savings plan: workers would pay into an interest-earning fund and receive their contributions with accrued interest after they retired. To this day, suggestions that Social Security should be cut are met with cries of indignation from retirees who believe their contributions give them a moral right to their current level of benefits.

But the system never really worked this way. The first Social Security recipient, Ida May Fuller of Ludlow, Vermont, contributed a mere \$22 to the system and, having the audacity to live until she was 99, reaped benefits of \$20,000.¹ Of course, few receive such a healthy return on their Social Security "investment." Nonetheless, on average, current retirees receive all their Social Security taxes back with interest in about four years. Social Security has never been a savings plan. It has always been a "pay as you go" system in which workers, many of whom are poor, are forced to support retirees, most of whom are not.

It is true that as recently as the 1960s, the old were significantly

poorer than the general population, but this is no longer the case.² Granted, Social Security and Medicare constitute a significant fraction (perhaps 30–40%) of the income of the elderly, and it is clear that many depend on this government money. But this must be understood in context. A worker contemplating retirement takes into account future Social Security benefits and thus saves less than he would in the absence of the program. Social Security taxes also reduce his ability to save. If the system were suddenly cancelled, young workers would have time to adjust their private savings behavior — and, on average, would be much better off. But older workers, who have been forced to pay Social Security taxes of nearly 15% to finance their predecessors' benefits, would not have time to save for their own retirement. It would be unfair to cut their benefits.

One might thus argue that Social Security benefits should be phased out gradually. Young workers would be informed that they will receive no benefits while old workers would receive the level of benefits they have been led to expect. Workers between the two extremes would receive bene-

fits between the two extremes.

But such a plan is probably doomed to failure. As long as the Social Security apparatus is in place, workers are unlikely to find the state's commitment to reduce and eliminate benefits to be credible, and will not adjust their savings behavior. There will then be tremendous pressure to reverse the commitment, making the credibility gap a self-fulfilling prophecy. Efficient, permanent dismantling of the Social Security system requires it to be suspended in a single stroke.

So how can equity and efficiency be reconciled? One way would be to pay workers immediately instead of when they retire. Each person currently covered by Social Security should receive government "retirement bonds" maturing the year the individual turns 65.

These bonds should be tradeable, of course. That way, people who prefer to sell them at the market-determined price — to raise cash for a home, a small business, or riotous living — would be free to do so. Individuals holding mature bonds would receive cash they could then use for retirement — by purchasing a private annuity, for example. The Social Security bureaucracy would be unnecessary and could be terminated; the Treasury could handle the redemption of the bonds using revenues from taxes or sales of government property.

Some might argue that, since the bonds would be obligations backed by the federal government, this plan would dramatically expand the national debt. Actually, such a move would only *appear* to increase the debt. Social Security is a huge unfunded liability. The government claims that the system is running a surplus of over \$100 billion per year, but this ignores future outflows. As the baby boomers begin to retire, the ratio of retirees to workers will skyrocket; there will not be sufficient funds to maintain current benefit levels. Either benefits will be cut or Social Security taxes will be raised — or, more likely, both.

By making the unfunded Social Security liabilities explicit — and limiting them to the face value of the retirement bonds — this proposal would remove the uncertainty surrounding the government's future liability. The

charade would end before the system becomes even more difficult to deal with.

Rent Control

Like Social Security, rent control is a forced transfer: it usurps landlords' property rights and gives them to the tenants living in the newly controlled apartments.

These tenants, when they move, often sell the usurped rights to new tenants; such transactions may be

Efficient, permanent dismantling of the Social Security system requires it to be suspended in a single stroke.

illegal, but they occur nonetheless.³ These new tenants may not reap any of the gains from rent control. Indeed, if rent control were abruptly rescinded, they would essentially have to pay the market price of the apartment twice: once to buy out the previous tenant and once in the form of suddenly higher rents. Some might argue that they shouldn't have to bear so much of the cost of past intervention into the housing market.

In this case the opposed constituency consists of current tenants. An oft-suggested method of phasing out rent control is to remove restrictions on apartments as they are vacated. This is a step in the right direction, but it gives tenants an incentive to remain in an apartment indefinitely; for many landlords, that will be a long wait. Furthermore, to the extent that tenants are able to sell their leases, this proposal would still have an opposed constituency problem: current tenants would suffer a loss when they move, since their leases would no longer have resale value.

A better method would be to phase out rent control over a given period, during which time all rent increases would be tax-deductible. Tenants would have to adjust, they would have time to adjust, and they would be partially reimbursed for their losses. But the gradual nature of the change may make the reform difficult to carry through: every relaxation of rent ceil-

ings would be likely to reopen the debate.

So it's probably better to end rent control as quickly as possible. How can the process be sped up? In contrast to Social Security, the losses from a given rent restriction are localized. Landlords thus have an incentive to buy off the opposed constituencies themselves. They might be allowed (but not compelled) to buy out rent-controlled leases and escape controls thereafter. Ideally, of course, the beneficiaries of the expropriation should repay the gains they enjoyed. Better still, the politicians who passed the expropriating laws should be required to repay the losses the landlords suffered. But this is impractical. Perhaps, once again, some "housing bonds" (paid for by taxes and sales of public property) should be issued to buy off current tenants.

The Postal Service

Libertarian postal reform entails both ending government ownership of the Postal Service and establishing a free market in mail services. The major opposed constituency consists of postal workers, who are well aware of the advantages of working for a government monopoly and will fight to retain those benefits.

A second opposed constituency is less obvious: postal service consumers living in distant rural areas. Right now, the Postal Service charges the same rates for first class mail regardless of destination. For 32¢, you can mail a one-ounce letter from San Diego to Los Angeles or from Rising Fawn, Georgia to Trout Creek, Utah. Not only is the distance involved in the first route much shorter, but the per-unit processing cost is lower in large population centers (where a lot of mail is processed and economies of scale can be enjoyed) than in isolated rural areas (where the volume of mail is limited). Revenues from short, dense routes thus subsidize service on long, sparse routes. People in distant rural areas might have to pay higher rates after privatization than under the current system, as would people who mail a large proportion of their letters to distant rural areas.

Of course, the greater efficiency of a free market may more than offset this

loss. United Parcel Service delivers to virtually every physical address in the continental United States without discriminating in price, except for distance and weight. It costs no more to ship a package from New York City to Terlingua, Texas than to ship the same package to El Paso, despite the higher cost of delivery to hard-to-reach Terlingua. The reason? UPS absorbs the extra costs, in order to offer their clients a simple, easy-to-understand rate structure. Federal Express, on the other hand, sometimes charges a small premium in the form of restricted service. It does not offer morning delivery to some obscure locations, and charges a small fee for afternoon delivery.

It is worth noting that rural residents are accustomed to paying more for certain goods and services than do city people. Most consumer goods cost more in Quilcene, Washington than in New York City, thanks to higher transportation costs and to less efficient, less competitive marketing. But not all goods: a cord of firewood that costs \$100 or more in New York can be had for \$45 in Quilcene. The price of land and housing is also much less than in thinly populated Quilcene than in densely-populated New York.

The point is that rural people are accustomed to paying different prices than residents of metropolitan areas. There is no inherent reason that they should find paying different postal rates — if higher rates were to develop — any more offensive than paying higher rates for gasoline. It is entirely possible that they would not oppose postal privatization.

The pragmatic case for compensating postal workers is clear: they are a political force to be reckoned with. The case from equity is harder to make. One might argue that postal workers made their career decisions based on expectations that were distorted by the promise of lifetime employment at high wages; had they known the

Postal Service would be privatized, they might have taken a different course. Even so, whether a given postal worker would have been better off in another career is a difficult empirical question. Young postal workers have time to adjust and old postal workers have enjoyed years of high wages.

Besides, the notion that someone deserves monopoly privileges simply

ise of inexpensive postal services. Any argument for compensating rural postal customers must be based in pragmatism, and thus depends on their ability and desire to block reform. And, as noted above, the desire might not be there.

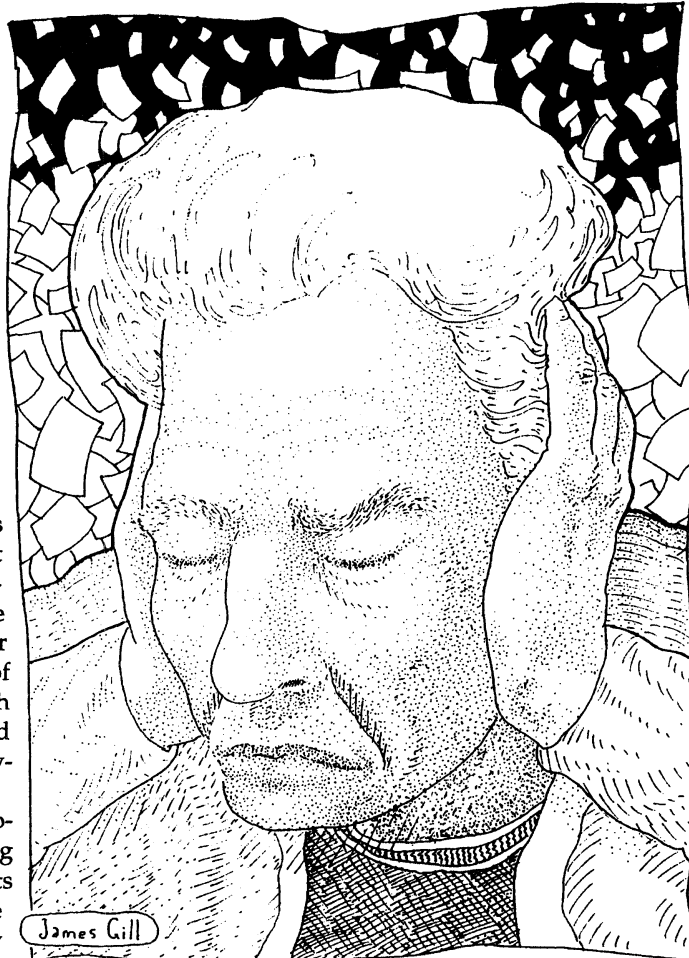
A natural transition policy thus suggests itself: remove monopoly protection from the Postal Service and distribute all ownership shares to members of the opposed constituencies. Alternately, sell the Postal Service to the highest bidder and distribute the cash proceeds to the opposed constituencies.

The first method saves the government the marketing costs of selling the shares. Furthermore, to the extent the postal workers receive the shares, it gives them a stake in the profitability of the new company. This stake may not be enough to induce them to go along with restructuring, however. For example, workers faced with immediate layoffs would probably vote their shares against restructuring even if it is in the company's long-term best interest. Furthermore, distributing fractional shares of the Postal Service to rural customers is impractical — the transactions costs for individuals to trade such small amounts of stock would be prohibitive — but offering them tax credits funded by the sale of shares is feasible.

Of course, if the political clout of the opposed constituencies is low, the Postal Service could simply be sold to the highest bidders — minus its monopoly protection, of course — with the proceeds used to compensate opposed constituencies in other areas.

Grazing Rights on Public Lands

The current debate over federal lands reflects their varied potential uses. Environmentalists value wilderness, and would prefer public lands be



because he has come to expect them is morally unconvincing. Does the postal worker who made his career choice expecting life-long high-wage employment deserve more sympathy than someone who chose to become a skilled buggy-whip-maker in 1905, or a college student who pursued an academic career in Marxist economics in 1988?

Equity arguments for compensating rural postal customers are weaker still. It seems unlikely that any of them were lured to rural areas by the prom-

left alone. Ranchers value the lands as a source of feed for their animals. Needless to say, these intentions are inconsistent with each other.

Currently, ranchers pay government-set fees for grazing permits. The permits are not freely tradeable — the government must approve all transfers of ownership — but when they do trade it is at a positive price, suggesting that the grazing fees the state charges are below market value. The permits typically have a ten-year term, but they are renewed yearly, so that ranchers always have a ten-year horizon. They grant only limited property rights, however: the government can change grazing fees or the maximum allowable intensity of grazing at any time. The clash between ranchers and environmentalists thus takes the form of legal and political battles over grazing fees and intensity.

A sensible approach to these problems would rely on profit-maximizing landowners deciding how the land should be used. But even a small step in that direction, such as allowing permits to be traded without restriction (and to be purchased by environmental groups who wish to prevent their use) has been met with strong opposition. Environmentalists seem to believe they can exert better control through regulation than through ownership — in short, that their money is better spent on lawyers than on land.

Fortunately, as with the Postal Service, the government owns resources it can use to buy off the opposed constituencies. As current

permits expire, the government should, instead of selling further grazing rights while maintaining federal land ownership, dispose of the land.

To buy off the ranching constituency, current owners of grazing permits could be given the first chance to buy the land at below-market prices. To buy off the environmental constituency, some federal lands could be set

The reason liberty has not supplanted statism is that government intrusion confers benefits on some constituencies. In a transition to a free society, these people may have to be bought off.

aside and given to environmental organizations. The author's dream is to deed Yosemite to the Sierra Club and Yellowstone to Earth First!, then watch the optimal amount of logging and mining that would undoubtedly take place. This is not the fantasy of a cynic: it would not take long for rational environmentalists to understand that the resulting income could be used to further their agenda elsewhere by purchasing additional land.

The Road to Laissez Faire

In addition to creating winners and losers, government intrusion shrinks the economic pie. For that reason, the winners' gains are usually significantly

smaller than the losers' losses. Even if the winners could somehow be forced to remit their gains to the losers, the latter would be insufficiently compensated. And they usually can't be forced to do this anyway. The biggest winners from Social Security are deceased. Many of the winners from rent control have sold out and moved on. Furthermore, reasonable notions of fairness might preclude reversing commitments the government has made and people have come to count on.

Thus, the chief cost of libertarian reform is reimbursing those who benefited from interventions past; how and to what extent they should be bought off depends on the nature of the intervention. In the case of government ownership, they could receive shares in the privatized assets. In the case of forced transfers, they might be issued bonds. Where individual losers from such transfers can be easily identified, as with rent control, they can be allowed to buy out the opposed constituencies themselves. In any case, taxpayers might kick in with cash or bonds — one time only — to ease the cost of transition.

Above all, it is absolutely crucial that the transition be credible. No intelligent landlord will buy out a rent-controlled lease if future politicians are likely to reimpose controls. A well-worded constitutional amendment prohibiting government ownership and forced transfers is probably essential.

The old Soviet bloc is already attempting the difficult transition to liberty. America has much less far to go, but difficult issues remain to be resolved along the way. Freedom-lovers should do more than praise the destination: we should create a good road map to it. □

Notes:

1. Hardy, D., *Social Insecurity: The Crisis in America's Social Security System and How to Plan Now for Your Own Financial Survival*. Villard Books, 1991.
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Connection

The Greening of Liberty

by Randal O'Toole

Understanding environmentalists: a guide for libertarians.

I know prominent environmentalists who worked on Barry Goldwater's presidential campaign and admired Goldwater's speechwriter, the late Karl Hess. I know prominent libertarians who like nothing better than hiking, fishing, or rock-climbing in pristine wilderness. Most

libertarians place a high value on clean air, clean water, and beautiful scenery. Most environmentalists place a high value on personal freedom and support a nonviolent philosophy.

Despite these and other similarities, libertarians and environmentalists have a difficult time communicating with one another. The two groups use different jargon and often apply different meanings to similar terms. Misunderstandings often lead to rancorous debate with no resolution.

Yet libertarians and environmentalists have much to gain from an alliance. Libertarians can gain from the sheer size of the environmental movement: more than two out of three Americans call themselves environmentalists, and more than one in five actively work to protect the environment. And environmentalists can gain from a strategy that relies on individuals rather than big government.

The 1994 election has left environmentalists running scared. Up through the 1970s, environmentalism was supported by almost everyone, Democrat or Republican, conservative or liberal. But the strongly Democratic Congresses of the 1970s and '80s, combined with the polarization generated by the Reagan administration, led

environmentalists to hitch their star to the Democratic Party. Now that the Democrats are out of power and likely to remain so for some time, environmentalists need a new strategy.

But an alliance between libertarians and environmentalists can only happen if libertarians make an effort to understand environmentalists, to learn their language, and to emphasize the things they have in common rather than the things they do not.

Movement Dynamics

People who equate "environmentalists" with high-powered Sierra Club or National Wildlife Federation lobbyists see only the tip of the iceberg. In fact, the environmental movement is extremely decentralized.

The National Wildlife Federation's *Conservation Directory* lists nearly a thousand different environmental activist groups in the U.S., most of which have paid staff. It omits hundreds of groups with paid staff, and I conservatively estimate that for every group with staff there are at least five that rely solely on volunteers. All totaled, the U.S. has between 5,000 and 10,000 organizations committed mainly to environmental causes.

The largest groups have hundreds of thousands (a few claim millions) of dues-paying members and dozens or even hundreds of staff members. But most activists believe that the real work is done by the locally-based volunteer and near-volunteer organizations. Those groups lead the way in finding new issues and provide the backbone for grassroots lobbying.

One of the effects of this decentralism is a tremendous tension within the movement. If you think a libertarian convention is contentious, try going to an environmentalist meeting. Groups fight over everything — strategy, tactics, and goals. Underlying the outward differences is a competition for members, media attention, and foundation support.

Most environmental activists think that the main conflicts are between national and local groups. In fact, the real tension is between staffed and volunteer groups. The volunteer groups tend to focus on a single goal: saving a particular scenic area or stopping a particular project. Once a group has a staff, it has a new object: staying alive. This leads it to broaden its range of activities and makes it more likely to compromise — that

way, politicians are more likely to view it as a group they can deal with.

The volunteer groups accuse the staffed groups of selling out. The staffed groups view the volunteers as unreasonable. Meanwhile, the staffed groups contend with one another for members and donations, leading to further changes in behavior and further conflicts.

Tactically Strong, Strategically Weak

Each group develops its own tactics. Some emphasize litigation; others organize local volunteers; still others hire lobbyists. When one group finds a successful tactic or issue, others follow; a new, successful tactic often spreads through the movement like wildfire. This diversity, I believe, accounts for the movement's success. Of course, "success" is measured more by media attention or funding than by the ultimate effects on the environment.

But for all its tactical skills, the movement is strategically inept. With hundreds or thousands of groups competing for resources, environmentalists have little incentive to develop a cohesive strategy. As a result, environmental "strategy" is little more the sum total of individual tactics. Sometimes those tactics work together with amazing success, as they appear to have done (at least for now) in the northwest forests. Most often, the movement can hope to do little more than temporarily stall activities it opposes.

This tactical strength and strategic weakness has backed the environmental movement into a corner. One of the best tactics for any political movement is to demonize its opposition. This mobilizes supporters, draws media attention, and enhances the fundraising of any group that uses it. The success of polarization is illustrated by the fate of two environmentalist organizations. In 1980, the Wilderness Society and American Forestry Association each had about 100,000 members. When Reagan was elected, the Wilderness Society used the tactic of polarization, while the American Forestry Association positioned itself as a middle-of-the-road group. By 1985, the Wilderness Society had doubled its membership, while AFA's had declined by two-thirds.

But polarization carries a long-term cost: it also polarizes the opposition. The environmental movement had no real enemies in 1970, when everyone from Richard Nixon to Newt Gingrich was an environmentalist. Demonization of corporate America, corrupt politicians, inept bureaucrats, and private landowners produced short-run benefits in the form of greater activism and more donations to environmental

No central planner told the trees where to grow, no judge decided which deer the wolves could eat, no legislature allocated land to individual species.

causes. But it also became a self-fulfilling prophecy: corporate leaders, elected officials, agency employees, and property owners turned into opponents of environmental causes.

The strategic weakness of the environmental movement was highly visible by 1993, when environmentalists tried to form a coalition to reform national forest management. The organizations involved couldn't agree on how to accomplish their goals, or even what their goals were. So they settled for a kitchen-sink strategy that combined all the groups' legislative goals while pretending to ignore the many conflicts between these ends.

The resulting package of proposals had something to anger every other forest interest group: private landowners, public land users, public land managers, state and local government officials, even timber companies that don't buy from public lands. It made enemies of everyone but the true-believer environmentalists. Needless to say, the package was never implemented.

In saying these things, I am not casting aspersions on any environmental leader or group. The tactical situation of the past few years has been beyond their control. So long as the Democrats were in power, the benefits of polarization outweighed the costs, so the groups that embraced polarization were the most successful. Today,

with a Republican Congress, polarization is a recipe for failure, and groups that are willing to make friends rather than enemies may have an advantage.

Libertarians deny that the environment has "enemies." Instead, they argue, environmental problems are institutional: lack of property rights for certain resources and government interference in the market for others. This insight is of immense value to environmentalists; it gives a libertarian-environmentalist alliance real potential.

Unfortunately, the latest opposition provoked by environmental polarization calls itself the "property rights movement," leading environmental activists to be immediately suspicious of anyone defending property rights. Consequently, it is especially important for libertarians who wish to build an alliance with environmentalists to learn to speak their language.

Thinking Like an Ecosystem

Probably the biggest difference between environmentalists and libertarians is their worldviews — their intuitive understandings of how the world works. The libertarian model is primarily an economic one, and libertarians probably understand basic economics better than any other political group. By contrast, the environmental model is primarily an ecological one, and most environmentalists pride themselves on their knowledge of ecology and biology.

This shouldn't be a problem, because economics and ecology are really the same subjects. "The theory of natural selection is uncannily similar to the chief doctrine of *laissez-faire* economics," says noted biologist Stephen Jay Gould. In fact, he adds, "the two theories are 'isomorphic' — that is, structurally similar point for point, even though the subject matter differs."

If, as most environmentalists agree, a natural ecosystem is best, what does that ecosystem tell us about the best way to order our political-economic system? The ecosystem has millions of individual plants and animals, all working for their own selfish ends. No central planner told the trees where to grow, no judge decided which deer the wolves could eat, no legislature allo-

cated land to individual species. Yet the system as a whole thrives. In fact, environmental doctrine holds that attempts by humans to interfere with or plan the ecosystem will be ultimately destructive.

In addition to thinking of the economy as an ecosystem, libertarians should keep a few other things in mind when talking with environmentalists. First, environmentalists are end-oriented: they want a cleaner environment. Libertarians argue that the best means to this end are markets and property rights, not big government.

While environmentalists are suspicious of markets, they are also suspicious of government. Few feel happy with any of the federal agencies originally created to protect the environment: these agencies have become environmental destroyers, not saviors. The hard part is to convince environmentalists that markets will do better.

The answer lies in a basic understanding of environmental issues.

Every environmental problem consists of a market resource that threatens a non-market resource. The conclusion that environmentalists erroneously reach is that markets caused the problem. The reality, of course, is that non-markets caused the problem.

Libertarians who want to work with environmentalists ought to give up at least one of their cherished goals: privatization of federal lands.

The solution is to create markets for environmental goods. This isn't always possible, but it is possible more often than not.

Another point to bear in mind: environmentalists often confuse symptoms with problems. But this doesn't mean that the problems aren't real. There may be considerable debate about global warming, the toxicity of dioxin, or the threats to the spotted owl or grizzly bear. Rather than dismiss these concerns, libertarians who want to work with environmentalists should treat them as genuine symptoms of a serious underlying problem.

This means focusing on environ-

mental problems not as technical issues but as big government and property rights issues:

- "Will dams make the salmon go extinct?" is the wrong question. The right question is: "Why is the government subsidizing dams?"
- "Will timber cutting make the spotted owl go extinct?" is the wrong question. The right question is: "Why are there no property rights for owls and salmon, and how could property rights help protect these species from extinction?"
- "Do pulp mills damage rivers with dioxin pollution?" is the wrong question. The right question is: "Why are there no property rights to the rivers and how could property rights protect them from pollution?"
- "Is burning of hydrocarbons changing world climate?" is the wrong question. The right question is: "Why are people allowed to emit pollutants into the air that trespasses onto my property?"

Nearly all environmental problems are rooted in the failure to adequately define property rights in some resource. An ecosystem doesn't solve such problems by passing a prescriptive law or creating a regulatory agency; it relies on individual self-interest to produce a balance. The important thing is to show environmentalists how thinking of the economy as an ecosystem leads to decentralized free-market solutions to environmental problems.

Trading Off Dogmas

Another point: libertarians and environmentalists will never reach an accord if they both tenaciously stick to their respective dogmas. Libertarians who want to work with environmentalists ought to give up at least one of their cherished goals: privatization of federal lands. I would rate such privatization as more politically feasible than repealing Social Security — but not by much. And even if it were feasible, privatization is neither necessary nor sufficient to improving public land management.

The real key is not "Who owns the land?" but "What are the incentives facing the land managers?" Both pub-

lic and private resource managers have incentives to seek subsidies from Congress. Environmental problems will be resolved — and taxpayers will save billions of dollars — only when a new political philosophy becomes dominant that rejects such subsidies, no matter who owns the land.

My proposal is to decentralize federal lands into particular units — forests, parks, or whatever — and fund each unit exclusively out of a fixed share of the net income it earns from a

Thinking of the economy as an ecosystem leads to decentralized free-market solutions to environmental problems.

broad range of user fees. Each unit might have a board of directors elected by users, but each would be expected to return funds to the Treasury each year as "rent" for using public land. This arrangement should satisfy both libertarians and environmentalists who are familiar with the current state of public land management.

Finally, libertarians should not expect to successfully reach every environmentalist. Some environmentalists are more rational; others are more spiritual. The spiritual ones will be the harder sell — even the rational environmentalists have a difficult time talking with them. Still other environmentalists are dedicated extremists determined to polarize every situation by taking the most radical positions possible.

The great majority of environmentalists, however, are open to new ideas. Not surprisingly, those most willing to embrace libertarian ideas have operated their own businesses or worked in the private sector at some time or another. So if at first you don't succeed, try again.

Some libertarians worry that the environmental movement threatens liberty. While this is true of some of the tactics used by some of the environmental groups, it is not true of environmentalism in general. Treating environmentalists as a threat will simply polarize them into an anti-libertarian stance. □

Portfolio

Bond Market Babylon

by Caroline Baum

The wit and wisdom of an on-line columnist.

Monday, July 18, 1994

11:00 a.m. EDT

When last seen, Carter administration economist C. Fred Bergsten was rattling around in a trunk in the White House attic. He had been so confined because every time he ventured out, he ended up in Tokyo, where his words are taken to heart. Fred is a certified Friend of Bill. (On the other hand, maybe they think Clinton I is Carter II.)

For as far back as you can remember, Fred has been sharing with anyone who would listen his prediction that dollar/yen would drop to ¥90-100. When he spoke, almost always during Japanese hours (wouldn't you play to the most attentive audience?), currency traders listened, and you could watch the dollar/yen start to slide. It wasn't for nothing that they called him "Dollar Dead Fred" around the Treasury Department.

When the Clinton administration finally realized that its weak dollar policy was not doing U.S. stock and bond markets any good, it decided to recall Fred from the Far East and shut him in a trunk in the attic.

But he was in good company. David Gergen was up there for retooling, and he was glad to put his talents to good use by helping Fred redefine his public image so as to more effectively promote the administration's

agenda. That's no easy task when you consider that for these folks, everything is on the table, and everything is being reinvented, including its policy toward the dollar.

Once the president realized that spin was spin was spin, he decided that the administration could use a little of it in the foreign policy department. So he had the movers come and cart Gergen off to State.

That left Fred to the likes of Bentsen, Brown, and Kantor, who were in need of a fourth for bridge now that Gergen had been reassigned.

One day, Clinton media advisor Mandy Grunwald was taking lunch up to the boys in the attic. She saw Fred studying the material Gergen had given him, and she had an idea. If the weak dollar was not playing well to the international audience, why not try a strong dollar?

And so Fred's stay in the attic was cut short. He was dispatched to spread the new testament. It will come as no surprise to learn that Fred is a born-again dollar bull, which is the worst kind. Fred has a new image, tailor-made for him by spinmeister Gergen. He has a new expense account, courtesy of the Clinton administration. And he even has a new message, which is that the dollar's travails may be over.

Tokyo ran the dollar up when Fred's *WSJ* interview ran on the wire

last night. The dollar ebbed against the European currencies, however. Europeans aren't into Fred the way the Japanese are. But with Bentsen, Brown, and Kantor incorporating to form a new ad agency, with a little help from Gergen, they will be ready to go to work on the dollar/mark.

Monday, August 15, 1994

4:00 p.m. EDT

Never have so many waited so long for so few to do so little.

They waited all morning for the afternoon. When the afternoon rolled around, they waited until it was time to go home. They will wait through the night till the dawn's early light. They will wait and watch all day tomorrow until they see the puffs of white smoke billow from the chimney of the Eccles Building at 20th and C Streets.

Perhaps around mid-day an emissary will be sent forth to calm the crowds congregating in the square to await the decision that will affect the lives of millions of people around the globe. He will tell them that no decision has been reached yet; that the eminences have a great and noble task before them; that they will seek divine guidance to do God's work on Earth; that they are presently taking a repast of poached turbot, boiled potatoes and string beans to better fortify themselves for the business at hand.

The masses will return to their vigil until the middle of the afternoon, at which point they will conclude that the College of Cardinals has not been able to come to a decision.

And while the masses are waiting for the cardinals to agree on matters most holy, the secular leaders will offer counsel that is neither requested nor desired nor warranted. They will tell them of the travails of the unemployed, the homeless, the disabled. They will tell them of the lives destroyed because of the work the cardinals must perform to preserve the sanctity of the Church. They will tell them not to institute yet another tithe to suppress the underclass, even as they connive to push through legislation that would give them more power, more income to redistribute, more spending that will have to be funded by even higher taxes.

The cardinals will search within themselves to find the strength to resist the preachings of these misguided souls, whose sole concern is life on Earth. The cardinals' work, after all, is designed to have impact on the here-after, when the soul leaves the body.

They will look within, not without, because they must answer to a higher power.

Tuesday, September 27, 1994
11:00 a.m. EDT

I am walking down a long corridor. At the end of the corridor, I see a large room where lots of men in white shirts, dark pants and red ties are staring at TV screens that display an array of numbers and graphs.

Everyone appears to be waiting for something to happen. Some kind of announcement.

After a time, people realize that there will be no announcement. All the men in white shirts, dark pants and red ties scurry to fill up the big hole that they dug in the middle of the floor. Once that is done, they go back to waiting. For something. Or someone. No one shows up.

The leaves on the potted plants start to fall off. (Hint: the leaves are green.) In the distance, there is a glittering object that catches everybody's eye. While they are watching the leaves fall and the glittering object get

brighter, the roof caves in.

A dream? Hardly. It's a bond trader's nightmare scenario. With dealers faced with the prospect of underwriting \$17.25 billion of two-year notes

Hillary Rodham Clinton is looking for a kinder, gentler image now that it is apparent that she will be remanded to the practice of law, Little Rock style, in 1997.

with the outcome of the FOMC meeting hanging in the balance, a potentially damaging durable goods report on deck and \$11 billion of five-year notes as an encore, what is a prudent trader to do?

"You bid either 6.50% or 6.70%," a trader said. "6.50% if you need them; 6.70% if you don't." While dealers do

not expect the Fed to raise rates today, they know in their heart of hearts that it would be much better for the market if the Fed took the initiative and acted sooner rather than later.

"Everyone knows that gold is going up through \$400" if the Fed does nothing, a trading manager said.

His recurrent nightmare is that the Fed does nothing, the Street covers its short in the front at the auction, the market has a reflex pop (the front end, at least), buyers fail to show up, durable goods prints up 5% and "the bond goes down two points. All of the expectations are on today, but the real action comes tomorrow."

So what would he suggest?

"I have puts on everything," he said. "Euros, fives, bonds. I can't lose."

Not surprisingly, customer activity is subdued in front of the old-est est-taaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa-blished per-ma-nent floooooooooooooat-ing crap game in New York. There was a large overseas buyer of

continued on next page

Who is Caroline Baum?

by Victor Niederhoffer

The U.S. government debt market is the biggest securities market in the world, regularly trading \$50 billion per day in the futures markets and another \$190 billion in cash transactions. The total outstanding debt of the U.S. government is approximately \$4.5 trillion, and, of course, growing. Comparing these figures to the dollar volume for all New York Stock Exchange issues combined — approximately \$10 billion per day — gives one a sense of the colossal proportions of the Treasury market.

For those involved in marketing, trading, analyzing, and investing in U.S. Treasury obligations, the definitive source of market information is Dow Jones Telerate, a real-time on-line system consisting of around 150,000 terminals and computers providing global price data and a scrolling news-wire. Foremost among Telerate's subscriber services is the twice-daily column by Caroline Baum, whose bond market analysis appears on

screens 9400 and following.

Baum consistently writes about debt market events with wit and insight. She also provides just the right balance of sexual innuendo and market analysis to keep the traders attentive. When the Fed increased the Fed Funds rate in February 1994, Federal Reserve Board Governor Lawrence Lindsey tried to calm market fears by saying that "once is enough." When the market went down on the comment, Baum suggested that more firming was in order:

No day would be complete without a small dose of Fedspeak. . . . Parry, in a rare challenge to the collegial atmosphere of the Fed, took his colleague, Governor Lawrence Lindsey, to task and said that it was unlikely that once would be enough. Amen.

With commentary like that, it is no wonder that Alan Greenspan introduced Baum to his significant other,

continued on next page

five-year notes and some random nibbling in the intermediate sector. Traders are talking about a hedge fund unwinding part of a flattening trade — buying twos and fives, selling bonds — but most of the focus this morning is on, What if.

What if the Fed tightens? What if the Fed doesn't tighten? What if there is no announcement by auction time? What if durable goods is up 7%?

There does seem to be a consensus emerging: market participants want to sell strength, assuming, that is, that there is strength to sell. The idea of a relief trade is losing proponents, and the estimated time of existence for any uptrade is growing shorter with each passing hour.

"You have to remember that the curve is going to flatten at higher, not lower, yields," a trader said.

If there is a consensus position, it is short. If there is a consensus trade, it is one that profits from curve flattening.

"We realize that we may be wrong

for a few basis points," said a salesman whose shop has a flattener in place. "But we're willing to risk it."

Nothing can really supersede the focus for the day, which is the Fed. Especially not consumer confidence.

As usual, the administration has it ass-backwards. Instead of telling the market what the fundamentals are and where the dollar should be, it should take its cues from the markets.

The conference board reported that its consumer confidence index dipped two points to 88.4 in September, with the present situation showing more of a tail-off than expectations. This is the third month in a row that the conference board's index has ebbed, which is

not confirmed by the University of Michigan sentiment index. While the trend is important, the total decline in the conference board index — from a high of 92.5 in June to 88.4 in September — is not statistically significant.

Think of it this way. If you had to respond to questions on a day when you dropped a quick 100 grand of someone else's money, would you be all sweetness and light when asked about your present situation?

Tuesday, January 10, 1995

5:00 p.m. EDT

While the government hasn't mandated it as such yet, Tuesday was National Image Day. And nowhere was it more evident than in the corridors of power in the nation's capital. Everyone who is anyone, it seems, was searching for a new image for the new year with a new majority party in power.

The first make-over candidate was

Niederhoffer, "Who Is Caroline Baum?," *continued from previous page*

Andrea Mitchell, as "the only person who can make the flattening of the yield curve sound pornographic."

When I arranged to have Baum speak at a monthly seminar I host, all the traders from my office arranged to show up to see her. She's just as feisty and provocative in real life as she is in her writing, and a great time was had by all — especially after she read some of her columns, where she loves to flagellate traders for clinging to the long side too long.

Baum's perspective is as praiseworthy as her style. She understands that *price* is a wonderful machine that, with the minimum expenditure of energy required, delivers to individuals in the marketplace essential and timely information as to the kinds and quantities of things desired, as well as the level of appetite currently obtaining for each thing. In doing so, the market's invisible hand gathers up all the millions of points of view regarding the value of the thing traded. Some points of view are more valuable than others, having special insight; others are the merest result of rudderless emotion. But in aggregate the market is always right,

even, as some say, when it is wrong. As Baum put it on February 25, 1994:

Whatever the market is, be it overdone, oversold, extended or cheap, the market is where it is for a reason. Just as it has an invisible hand, it has an unconscious that operates in subtle ways. That's why the market always turns before the fundamental reasons for the turn become apparent.

The market may be a mystery at times, but it is a mystery that must be respected.

And the market is never more right than when it is giving the lie to the machinations of purportedly selfless, disinterested politicians, who in fact ceaselessly conspire to tinker with the market in any way that will help them gain or keep a job, or increase the scope of their power and sexual perks. Baum rarely lets pass an opportunity to shine a bright light on their skullduggery, as in this analysis of the disastrous Clinton U.S. dollar policy (November 7, 1994):

Then there's the problem of the dollar, which the Treasury finally had to address last week with a double

dose of intervention. The administration would have us believe that the foreign exchange value of the dollar does not appropriately reflect the strong fundamentals of the U.S. economy. Instead, the dollar's depressed level is the result of speculation against the dollar by traders looking for a replay of the famous *Soros v. Bank of England* match of September 1992.

As usual, the administration has it ass-backwards. Instead of telling the market what the fundamentals are and where the dollar should be, it should take its cues from the markets.

Caroline Baum's daily commentary is a sparkling and integral particle of the dynamic feedback loop that embraces the market, its direct participants, and the myriad political and economic events that shape and are shaped by the market from moment to moment. But why try any longer to describe that which can be presented? Just read the accompanying samples of some of the best of Baum's recent writing. □

none other than the first lady herself, Hillary Rodham Clinton, who told the *New York Times* that she was looking for a kinder, gentler image now that it is apparent that she will be remanded to the practice of law, Little Rock style, in 1997, a career whose capitalist aura gives her public image a much harder edge than her present persona of a bolshevik crafting social policy for the masses from the People's White House.

While the *Times* allowed as to how Mrs. Clinton ("Rodham" never made the first cut by the media consultants) "spoke in the relative comfort of an informal lunch with reporters who do not usually cover hard news," one wonders why the *New York Times* sent one of its food writers to cover the event. Perhaps the first lady is looking to beef up her cookie recipe file, having already taken a good chunk of beef out of the cattle market in the late 1970s.

As she has so many times in the past, Lady Hillary again resorted to blaming the failure to communicate as the source of her tarnished public per-

sona, recently encapsulated in the one word conveyed by mother-of-Newt to wife-of-Maury.

Alas, she and hubby Bill just don't get it. They communicate just fine; as a matter of fact, it's what they do best. What the American people recently rejected was their policies, the worst of

Perhaps the first lady is looking to beef up her cookie recipe file, having already taken a good chunk of beef out of the cattle market in the late 1970s.

which (health care reform) was fortunately never enacted.

In testimony submitted to the Senate Finance Committee, Treasury Secretary-designate Robert Rubin set out to prove to the committee that he was no Lloyd Bentsen. While Mr. Rubin used all the appropriate buzzwords — "strong dollar," "deficit

reduction," "tax reduction," and "cuts in government regulations" — to demonstrate that he had the right stuff to keep the dollar afloat in the foreign exchange market, his emphasis on "public investments" (a.k.a. government spending) as "critical to future productivity" exposed him for the liberal he is.

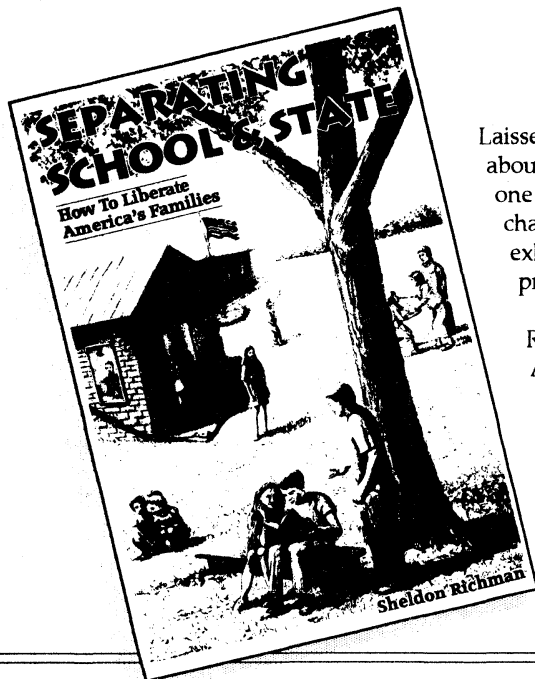
While the first lady was working the luncheon circuit and the Treasury secretary-designate was sailing through the Finance Committee on a voice vote, a new image worthy of Maestro Gergen was taking shape in the House of Representatives. House minority leader Richard Gephardt, still reeling from a fall flat on his face on nationwide TV last Sunday when he argued for an increase in the minimum wage to help those that are earning it, told the Ways and Means Committee that the Democrats were working on a "flatter tax" than the 17% one proposed by House Majority leader Dick Armey. His tax would lower the rate to 10%–11.5% for most Americans.

Struggling to shed his old image as a tax-and-spend liberal, Mr. Gephardt

"This Book Should Be in the Hands of Every Teacher and Every Parent."

—John Hospers

Professor Emeritus of Philosophy
University of Southern California



Laissez Faire Books, the world's largest source of books on liberty, says this about *Separating School and State*: "This is a thrilling book! It goes where no one has dared go before. This book mounts the most fundamental challenge to the government school monopoly and provides an exhilarating vision of how much better off everyone will be with 100% private, voluntary schools."

John Taylor Gatto (New York Teacher of the Year) says: "Mr. Richman is right—state schooling doesn't work because it can't work." And Dr. Walter E. Williams (John M. Olin Distinguished Professor of Economics at George Mason University) calls this book "a powerful contribution." You'll call it an essential addition to your bookshelf.

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went on record to say that the federal government should tax as little of the American people's income as it can.

While fiscal policy makers were knocking the socks off their audience with their high-wire image transformation act, representatives of the monetary authority were busy at work, too. Fed Governor Lawrence Lindsey, appalled at the explosive growth of consumer credit (what did he expect when the Fed was giving out free loans to banks for so long at a real funds rate of 0%?), sounded as if he were finally coming around to the view that once might not be enough for the Fed after all. A supply-sider during the Reagan administration, Governor Lindsey appears to have abandoned free market values in favor of a government-knows-best approach when it comes to

borrowing and lending.

He worries that consumers are "in over their heads" and suggests that banks limit their credit lines before problems arise. With so many Democrats posing as Republicans, it looks as if Governor Lindsey sought to recreate himself in the image of the Democrats.

While various government heavyweights were trying to reinvent themselves and their public image, the Treasury market was content to revel in its old image of a stationary runner. After Monday's down day, the market was due to reverse, as it has done on every trading day this year, and trade higher. And that is exactly what it did.

The PPI came in as expected, with a .2% increase in the December index, both overall and core. Price increases

are busting out all over at the crude and intermediate goods level, but that story is sounding like a broken record. Eventually, you've got to see it to believe it.

The non-directional trade in the Treasury market was driven by large orders, many of which entailed liquidations in the 30-year sector (bonds and long principals). Leveraged buyers were active in the front end, meanwhile, which continues to have a good bid in anticipation of long-end supply, a Fed tightening already priced in, the financial crisis in Mexico, the political crisis in Russia, and the real or imagined crises in a host of other Latin American countries — Argentina was the rumored one today — that no doubt would have been glad to participate in National Image Day. □

Wooster, "Africa Unbound," continued from page 32

that only trade will encourage African economies to grow. No one appears to support the time-honored practices of the World Bank and other lending agencies that gave money to African governments to develop ecologically damaging projects unwanted by the people.

In my view, Duignan's proposals would help Africa more. It's hard to see how development agencies that have spent billions in wasteful projects can suddenly reform themselves and learn how to give responsibly. Equally persuasive are Duignan's arguments that aid bloated African governments

and partially subsidized weapons purchases.

This debate is taking place without much input from ordinary Americans. Perhaps the best way for the media to focus people's attention on real African issues would be to devote more space to non-political African news. When the American press bothers to write about Africa, they tend to only see Africans as victims of disasters who deserve our pity. We rarely see or read about Africans when they are happy, at festivals, weddings, dances, and sports events. Nor do we know very much about the entrepreneurial ener-

gies of many Africans, particularly women, who are able to cut through red tape and bring goods to the poor at a reasonable cost. Nor do we know very much about African literature and culture.

There is a great hunger for knowledge about the way people in other countries live, a hunger not being met by the American press. If Americans knew more about the culture and society of African countries, they would understand them much better than if they only read about Africans grasping submachine guns or clutching begging bowls. □

Letters, continued from page 6

— except the relentless trendline of government outlays that hits 50% per capita GNP in 2010, equal to the confiscatory war effort of 1943-44. I trust you understand what that means. Every hour of productive output, every service beyond minimum maintenance will be confiscated and rationed by government, precisely one generation hence. I dare you to assert that Generation X has the attention-span requisite to see the light and save us. Even if the Xers ran to libertarian principles like lemmings, they'd still be outvoted 20:1 by Great Society retirees. Face the facts. We blew it. We failed

as a libertarian wing in the Republican Party; we failed as an independent Libertarian Party. There is no third chance.

Alan Smith
no fixed address

Libertarian Scientism

I find it illuminating that libertarians are whooping up *The Bell Curve* ("Not to the Swift, But to the Smart," January 1995). For years many of them have denounced the collectivist methods of sociology as fraudulent scientism, rank mumbo-jumbo; Hayek wrote a book on the subject, *The Counter-*

Revolution of Science. Murray and Herrnstein use the same methods, but I guess mumbo-jumbo is okay as long as the mumbo-jumbists are on "our" side.

As for I.Q. tests, the ostensible data on which the book is based, I'm with Thomas Szasz, who in *The Untamed Tongue* defines "intelligence test" as follows: "Hocus-pocus used by psychologists to prove that they are smart and their clients stupid. The general acceptance of these tests suggests that this claim may not be without foundation."

Kyle Rothweiler
Bozeman, Mont.

Geography

Straight Outta Brooklyn

by Chris Matthew Sciabarra

Take Manhattan — please.

During the recent election campaign, upstate backers of conservative GOP gubernatorial candidate George Pataki were fond of pointing out that “liberal” New York City is not the capital of New York State. It was the kind of swipe that city dwellers are used to, but it didn’t deter our feisty mayor from retorting that Albany may be the capital of the state, but the Big Apple is the capital of the world. Rudy Giuliani may have his faults, but he surely is one of New York’s greatest cheerleaders.

In the January 1995 issue of *Liberty*, we were treated to additional New York cheers from Richard Kostelanetz. The title of the article — “I’ll Take Manhattan” — offended my Brooklyn sensibilities (I was born, raised, and still reside in the most populous of New York’s five boroughs), but I was delighted to see somebody noting the kind of spontaneous order that New York can generate. But Richard, if you’re in search of good pizza, you can take Manhattan; you’ve never had real pizza or real Italian ices until you’ve been to the L&B Spumoni Gardens in Bensonhurst.

Yes, Manhattan has its Greenwich Village and Central Park, Broadway and Times Square, World Trade Center and Empire State Building. But you haven’t experienced real New York neighborhood life until you’ve strolled through Sheepshead Bay, Brighton Beach, Flatbush, Bay Ridge, Canarsie, Boro Park, Brooklyn Heights, and Park Slope.

Believe me, Brooklyn ain’t what it

used to be — nothing is. Plenty has changed since ‘dem Bums left for the City of Angels. But Brooklyn still has its share of charming sights and sounds. We have a Brooklyn Museum, an exquisite Botanical Gardens, an Aquarium, a Brooklyn Academy of Music, and the original Nathan’s. We even have our very own Arc de Triumph (a huge monument to Civil War veterans that adorns the entrance to Prospect Park) and our very own Eiffel Tower (a now-abandoned parachute jump near the Coney Island Boardwalk, an artifact of the once glorious Steeplechase Park).

You want charm? Walk along the waterfront on Shore Road in Bay Ridge, under the string of pearls that is the Verazzano Bridge. Or the Brooklyn Promenade in the Heights, under the glow of lighted harp-like cables that suspend the bridge named for our borough. The Manhattan skyline seems so close from here, you’re sure it can be touched if only you stretch far enough...

We’ve got modern condominiums and Victorian brownstones, huge mansions and small two-family homes with rents that are cheap rela-

tive to anything you’d find in the city. (Yes, we Brooklynites still call Manhattan “the city.”)

Civic pride? As my Italian *paisans* would say: “Fah-get about it!” Our borough remains a gateway for every immigrant group in America; one out of every seven families in the United States can trace its roots back to Brooklyn. My own grandparents came here from Sicily and Greece, and my family has stayed here ever since. I’ve lived my whole life in Gravesend, a community established by the Dutch under Lady Deborah Moody in the seventeenth century, but home to Native American tribes such as the Canarsees long before the Dutch arrived. And the talent! Brooklyn is the birthplace of Walt Whitman, W.E.B. DuBois, John Steinbeck, Richard Wright, George Gershwin, Jackie Gleason, Jackie Robinson, Lena Horne, Mae West, Mary Tyler Moore, Barbra Streisand, and hundreds of other noted personalities.

Just recently, I went on my first plane trip. (How’s that for a New York-centered lifestyle?) I went to Colorado in search of Galt’s Gulch, and was awestruck by the majestic mountains, the deer, bison, elk, and

cleanliness. On my return, I was just as awestruck by the sight of New York from the air. But I knew that upon landing at LaGuardia, urban reality would have a sobering effect on me. To drive back home, I had to deal first with the unbearable traffic on the

While it has become a mantra in this town that "New York is not among the top 25 urban crime centers in America," I don't know a single New Yorker who really believes this.

Grand Central Parkway, en route to the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway (an oxymoron if ever there was one).

Perhaps Richard's vision of New York is a bit rose-colored because he's never been a motorist here. Living in Manhattan, he couldn't own a car unless his last name were Trump or Onassis — only they could afford the

parking! But out here in Brooklyn, I drive. After travelling urine-drenched, congested subways for over a decade, I have chosen to risk a nervous breakdown on the worst roads in America.

In this town, a road construction worker has a guaranteed lifetime job (or a lifetime wage, at least). You can't travel from point A to point B without major traffic delays, re-routes, and rude, positively dangerous drivers doing their imitations of Michael Douglas in *Falling Down*. In New York, traffic regulations are mere suggestions.

And then there's "alternate side of the street parking," when New York motorists have to move their cars from one side of the street to the other so that sanitation workers can "clean" one half of the block — that is, when they're not playing basketball on city time. At least two days a week, we are subjected to this street ritual, when a "slow-moving vehicle" drags trash under its filthy brushes from one end of the block to the other. And while this is transpiring, the Department of Transportation gestapo descends on our neighborhoods in a rare display of bureaucratic industry, ticketing every parking violator in sight. Nothing can be more aggravating than getting up before 7 a.m. to legally double-park your car to avoid those fines, only to discover later that today is the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, and alternate side parking has been suspended, and now you've been fined for illegal double-parking. It's a wonder the motorists haven't staged a civil insurrection.

I am familiar with those neat libertarian arguments for road privatization. But in this town, it would probably be cheaper to dynamite the roads and start from scratch. It took longer to repair Brooklyn's Eastern Parkway than it took to build it — probably because today's construction crews consist of one man working and three drinking coffee. They've just announced a two-year closure of a segment of the FDR Drive. Savvy New Yorkers know that no construction project here takes only two years. Maybe Richard's subways might be worth risking after all, despite the urine, the panhandlers, and the firebombs.

Of course, Richard is right about

one thing — New York has much more to offer than dilapidated highways. New York has great radio and television stations, nightlife, museums, and recreational and professional opportunities, and unparalleled social tolerance. You don't have to live in Greenwich Village to enjoy an alternative lifestyle. Even "2001," the sprawling Brooklyn disco on whose glittering floors John Travolta danced in *Saturday Night Fever*, has become a gay and lesbian club.

As Kostelanetz attests, New York does have specialized schools. Almost 20 years ago, I graduated from one: John Dewey High. It was one of the finest, most individualistic, most genuinely progressive schools I've ever attended. But today's city schools are slowly degenerating into vast criminal havens of drug traffic and gang warfare. Indeed, the only virtue of prayer in the public schools is that it will give teachers and students alike a moment

After travelling urine-drenched, congested subways for over a decade, I have chosen to risk a nervous breakdown on the worst roads in America.

of reflection — on whether or not they will make it home alive.

While it has become a mantra in this town that "New York is not among the top 25 urban crime centers in America," I don't know a single New Yorker who really believes this. In my own middle-class neighborhood, I have seen homes burglarized, cars stolen and vandalized, and people assaulted. Even sanitation seems out of control, as the trash piles up in both commercial and residential areas. This, coupled with the fact that many people who live here are unadulterated slobs, does not make for the most aesthetically pleasing way of life.

More distressing is how this town, which draws so much of its strength from diversity, has become Balkanized. Boroughs divide along racial and ethnic lines, at war with one another and with

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Challenge

The Electoral Quagmire

by Wendy McElroy

Do libertarians have any excuse for getting involved in politics?

In 1982, George Smith, Carl Watner, and I founded the Voluntaryists to promote non-political libertarian strategies. We rejected electoral politics, both in theory and in practice, as inconsistent with libertarian-anarchist principles. In the opening editorial of our newsletter, *The Voluntaryist*, I wrote:

[Our] rejection of the political process . . . is a moral one based on the insight that no one has the right to a position of power over others and that any man who seeks such an office, however honorable his intention, is seeking to join a criminal band.

. . . [T]his rejection of the State has been eroded to the point that anarchists . . . can hear the words "anarchist Senator" without flinching. No longer is libertarianism directed against the positions of power, against the offices through which the State is manifested; the modern message — complete with straw hats, campaign rhetoric, and strategic evasion — is "elect *my* man to office" as if it were the man disgracing the office and not the other way around. Those who point out that no one has the right to such a position, that such power is anathema to the concept of rights itself, are dismissed as negative, reactionary, or crackpot.

Pursuing political office is consistent with advocating limited government, but for anarchists, for whom the state is fundamentally evil, it flies in the face of the theory and tradition they espouse. If a political office is inherently unjust, then how can one aspire to it?

The standard rationale of anarchist political action goes something like this: if a "well-intentioned" person rises (or sinks) to the level of, say, senator, couldn't he sabotage the state, by vetoing bills or filibustering?

The answer is no. My reasons for saying this follow from an institutional analysis of the state and from the need to delegitimize the state.

Institutional Analysis

An institution is a recognized and stable method of pursuing a social activity. Universities, for example, are institutions for the pursuit of learning. Institutions exist apart from the actions and intentions of the individuals involved in them.

As George Smith argues:

An institutional analysis of an automobile factory would examine the role within the factory, the efficient order of roles in relation to each other (Which job should be done first? Where is the best location within the plant for a particular job?), and the relations of these roles to the desired outcome. . . . We can speak meaningfully of the production *process*, the production *result*, and the contribution of roles to both process and result — even if

these are unintended from the standpoint of individual workers. The welder may insist that his intention is to contribute to the building of boats — he may adamantly denounce cars as dangerous and swear his eternal hostility to them — but insofar as he fulfills the institutional role of automobile welder, we will insist that he does, *in fact*, contribute to the building of cars. ("The Ethics of Voting")

The state is an institution with the goal of monopolizing power over a given territory. As long as a person functions as a politician, using the tools of the state, he contributes to this goal. A well-meaning libertarian who holds office thus contributes to the injustice and oppression of government. His intentions are irrelevant; the outcome will be shaped by the institution he is attempting to use.

When a well-meaning socialist proposes providing a guaranteed income to all Americans in order to ensure national prosperity, you do not question his intentions. Rather, you describe the realities of the institution known as the marketplace, demonstrating how his policy would have unintended consequences — indeed, would actually produce the opposite

of what he intends. The same is true when a libertarian proposes to use the state as a means of providing liberty. The state can never be used to create freedom; that is its institutional reality.

Delegitimization

In mid-sixteenth-century France, Etienne de la Boétie, in the book *Discourse on Voluntary Servitude*,* explored why people consent to their own enslavement. Why do they vote, pay taxes, cheer kings, and obey the law? His conclusion was that *people consent to their enslavement because they believe the authority being exercised against them is legitimate*. However much people complain about Clinton, they never question the office of the presidency itself.

Contemporary government's main prop is the notion that it rests on the consent of the governed. Just as totalitarian states go through the charade of "free elections" to justify their rule, Western democratic states base their claim to legitimacy upon consent via the ballot box. While it is clear to most people that they do not consent to state authority the way they consent to an ordinary contract, they nevertheless

For centuries, non-politicals — from Tolstoy to Gandhi to Tucker — have spelled out alternative strategies in great detail.

accept the notion that by "participating in the electoral process," they have given consent in one important manner.

This claim has a major flaw. Even if a voter does — in some sense — consent to the results of an electoral process, he or she cannot similarly bind non-voters. No one can acknowledge the authority of the state over anyone but oneself. But this is the clear implication of voting. One man's ballot implies the right to bind another man to an election's results.

In *No Treason*, Lysander Spooner

denies the possibility of such a right:

No man can delegate or give to another any right of arbitrary dominion over a third person; for that would imply a right in the first person, not only to make the third person his slave, but also a right to dispose of him as a slave still to another person.

Voting is an act of implicit violence, because it is an essential aspect of a system that binds others to the will of the state. Moreover, voting provides the legitimacy upon which the state lives and breathes.

Personal Ethics

So — all things considered, can a libertarian anarchist hold political office without violating his or her principles? No.

I am not questioning the sincerity or good intentions of political anarchists who seek office; I have no window through which I can glimpse their souls. I have to judge people by their words and actions. And a political anarchist who seeks electoral office can do so only by violating his or her principles.

Which brings us to Harry Browne's pursuit of the office of U.S. president. Browne's candidacy is a remarkable development, given his long history of opposition to participation in the political process. As recently as 1993, he wrote, "Don't waste your time trying to reform government. You can't make an agency of coercion be efficient or benevolent."

If Browne were to be elected president, he would be required to take an oath to uphold the laws of the United States. Every day he would have to confront the problem of enforcing laws that he considers to be unjust. Would he violate his oath? Or become an active agent of injustice?

Perhaps he might consider his public oath a trivial matter. A person in that position might, I suppose, lie in public to the American people about upholding the law, while telling the truth in private to libertarians. But why should anyone trust him, if he is willing to violate his oath?

The point is not that Harry Browne lacks integrity. The point is that anyone seeking to hold political office will violate libertarian anarchist principles,

simply because holding political office is a violation of these principles.

Strategy

Strategy is the process by which we try to affect social and political change. This sort of change usually occurs over a long period of time, usually as the product of uncoordinated efforts — many people pursuing the same goal in independent ways.

Many libertarians arrogantly dismiss people like me who eschew political action, claiming we have no strategy. That is absolutely false. For centuries, non-politicals — from Tolstoy to Gandhi to Tucker — have spelled out alternative strategies in great detail. One is countereconomics, a strategy based on participating in the black market. Another is the creation of non-statist "parallel institutions" to provide goods and services currently

Libertarian anarchist strategy should aim at social, not state, power.

provided by the state; homeschooling is a magnificent example. Another is nonviolent resistance. Another is participating in *ad hoc* attacks on state power, such as Families Against Mandatory Minimums.

Many politicians dismiss these as non-strategies, because they think a real strategy must embody centralized organizations, coordinated efforts, parties and platforms, and a media blitz. This reveals how thoroughly they have swallowed the statist line that only electoral politics can roll back government. If anything, the opposite is true. Political parties exhort people to "cast their vote" for much the same reason that churches advise them to "worship at their place of choice." Respect for worship benefits all churches; respect for voting is the mechanism by which governments seek legitimization.

Libertarian anarchist strategy should aim at *social*, not *state*, power. The former is individuals controlling their own lives; the latter is the state controlling individuals. These are

* Also published under the titles *The Politics of Obedience* and *The Will to Bondage*.

antagonistic conditions; one can expand only at the expense of the other.

Libertarian anarchism's most important strategic goal is to delegitimize the state. William Godwin wrote, "Government is founded on opinion. A nation must have learned to respect a king [or the position of kingship], before a king can exercise any authority over them." Without such legitimacy, the only means by which a government can enforce its will is naked force, something most governments — for P.R. reasons alone — want to avoid.

Another important goal of libertarian strategy should be to dispel the myth of the state's invulnerability. The state tries to project an image of massive strength, of a self-perpetuating, self-contained institution upon whose good will the people depend. The reverse is true. The state is no more powerful than the human resources, skills, knowledge, and obedience it is able to command. The power of the people lies in the ability to resist and to withhold cooperation.

There is a strategic point on which all libertarians supposedly agree: the need for education. And LP anarchists often fall back on the argument: "we don't expect anyone to be elected; running for office is merely an educational ploy to get the message out."

But what message is being disseminated — that libertarianism is just another political party? How can

The state is no more powerful than the human resources, skills, knowledge, and obedience it is able to command.

libertarian anarchists persuade people that the state is inherently evil while clamoring to join it? How can they claim the state is a criminal band while wearing an "Elect My Man to Office" button? Do they wish to amend Acton's famous principle — "Power corrupts; absolute power corrupts

absolutely" — by adding an asterisk and a footnote, "Except for us"?

First as Tragedy, Then as Farce, Then as the Libertarian Party

Twice before in American history, libertarian energy has been diverted into third-party politics. Both times, the outcome has been disastrous — not merely for the political parties, but for the movement as a whole.

Historical precedent is a weak foundation on which to argue, because history does not always repeat itself. Nevertheless, the past provides us with cautionary tales. Even those who discount the foregoing arguments should acquaint themselves with the tragic compromises of the mid-nineteenth-century Liberty Party and the turn-of-the-century Georgist Party. This history has convinced more than one libertarian that electoral politics is the riskiest, least productive strategy they can adopt. □

Sciabarra, "Straight Outta Brooklyn," continued from page 46

new arrivals, some of whom go directly on welfare, others of whom pool their resources to open productive businesses that compete with established ones. Justified resentment mixes freely with xenophobic envy as each group scapegoats the other, never looking at the system responsible for the mess.

New York's bloated municipal government is to blame for many of our problems. These are, after all, *public* roads and *public* schools and *public* subways. Despite his ill-fated endorsement of Mario Cuomo (perhaps an attempt to thwart the corrupting influence of Senator Al "Pothole" D'Amato), poor Mayor Giuliani is trying at least to move the city toward lower taxes, lower spending, and a balanced budget. While most of the city's career politicians deride Rudy as a little "Mussolini" (more out of ethnic bigotry than political analysis), New Yorkers are still giving the mayor their overwhelming support. His style is pure New York. When the City Council rejected his "draconian" budget cuts, Rudy refused to implement

their alternative budget. The Council took him to court and lost. Now, in an unprecedented and historic confrontation, Rudy has unilaterally imposed another \$800 million in cuts, impounding City Council funds, and calling on New York's citizens to become more self-reliant. Imagine that!

But our problems are not strictly political or economic; they stretch into the realm of culture and social psychology. In the early 1960s, when Kitty Genovese was raped and murdered as neighbors ignored her pleas for help, New Yorkers were shocked and shamed. Today, an occasional hero might appear on our streets, but we silently witness too many injustices. For all of our "instinctive anti-authoritarianism" that Kostelanetz writes about, too many of us have become anesthetized to urban squalor and brutality. In just the past two decades, I

have observed a very real decline in common civility. Despite our complaints and our inimitable — and justified — cynicism, we are humbled by the thought that we can't fight City Hall. The players change, but the system endures.

One last thought: the very day I read Richard's statement that we have no "vulgar chains" here in New York, K-Mart announced that it would open one of its largest stores yet on 34th Street at 1 Penn Plaza. Now even New Yorkers can shop at K-Mart! □



"I'd like you to meet Mr. Jones — Mr. Jones is one of the new breed of Republicans."

Document

"We the Living"

by Y. Gvozdev and D. Costygin

The first novel by one of Russia's most famous writers has at last been translated — into Russian. Here is a translation of the translators' introduction to Ayn Rand's "We the Living" . . .

Ayn Rand is a well-known American writer. Tens of millions of copies of her works have been printed. It is amazing that her name is not yet known in Russia. This fact becomes even more amazing when we take into account that she was born in St. Petersburg in 1905. She suffered, along with her family, all the want and misery the refugees of the Civil War faced. After the defeat of the White Army, the family decided to return to Petrograd. Beginning in 1921, Ayn studied history at Petrograd University.

From the time of her return and as the new regime was establishing itself, Ayn was obsessed with the desire to make a break for freedom. In 1926 her dream came true: the Soviet government permitted her to visit the U.S.A. She never returned to Russia.

"If they ask you in America, tell them that Russia is a big cemetery and that we are all slowly dying." These were the words that her family and friends said in parting. She promised to gratify this request and wrote *We the Living*.

This is her first novel. It is about Petrograd-Leningrad in the early 1920s. About the starvation of the vanquished and the semi-starvation of the victors, allowed to pick crumbs from under the tables of Power. About how people forgot their honor, dignity, and integrity, committing big and small infamies, betrayals, treacheries. About the time when people stopped trusting each other.

Recently, there appeared a widespread opinion that it was the Bolsheviks who spoiled the Russian nation. This book by Ayn Rand, an expatriate who hated Communism along with any other form of totalitarian regime, questions this idea, so convenient for the "national self-esteem."

The main idea of the book is individualism — the ability of a human being to remain an independently thinking creature, irrespective of the environment. Let everyone else around turn into a submissive, obedient herd; those with will-power and a clear objective must strive for happiness. Such people exist in this book.

For Kira Argounova, the heroine of the novel, happiness is doing the job she loves, and living with the man she loves. She is not interested in politics; she is nearly indifferent to other people's convictions and aspirations. She has her own

purpose; she has a loved one. But the State System cannot allow a separate individual to lead a private, independent life. That is why, as events unfold, Kira becomes increasingly convinced of the necessity of leaving Russia.

Ayn Rand writes about this book, "Ideologically, I had said exactly what I wanted, and I had had no difficulty in expressing my ideas. I had wanted to write a novel about Man against the State. I had wanted to show, as the basic theme, the sanctity of the supreme value — of human life, and the immorality of treating men as sacrificial animals and ruling them by physical force. I did so."

The novel was completed in 1933. Now, 60 years later, the novel about Russia returns to Russia. We think that the ideas of Ayn Rand, expressed in this book and in her later works, are very important to us, the Russians of today. In this time of unrest very much depends on whether we have enough people capable of accepting responsibility for their words and deeds, willing and able to do their work persistently and professionally. It is to these people that Ayn Rand's works are dedicated.

Since Russian people are about to meet the works of this amazing woman for the first time, a few more words about her are in order.

"My philosophy, in essence," Rand tells us, "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."

In 1991 the U.S. Library of Congress conducted a poll among its readers in order to find out which books had influenced their lives to the greatest extent. The list began with the Bible; *Atlas Shrugged*, another novel by Ayn Rand, came second.

"The Soul of Capitalism," "The Only Man in America" — that was how Americans themselves characterized the writer. What names shall we, her compatriots, find appropriate? The future will see. One thing is doubtless: her books will become favorite reading for millions of Russians.

On behalf of all the participants in the first publication of the collected works of Ayn Rand in Russian, we congratulate Russian readers on the appearance of the first volume, containing the novel *We the Living*. □

Fiction

Feed the Children

by J. Orlin Grabbe

Lithgow first met Karen at The Delphic Oracle, a café-bar in the East Village, where she had listened to the bartender's tape: the one made an earlier night when the performer, a folk singer, had stayed on after closing time, and a few of the regular customers had had a sing-along, and — moved by the mood and the wine — Lithgow had given an economic diatribe in the style of a Southern preacher. Something like:

Well, brethren, I have called this Council together because there is evil in the land, and we've got to root it out. Now there are those who talk about their multiple regressions. And econometric transgressions. But I want to tell you, I looked at the housing market, and — brother — I saw sin!

Oh, I say we got to get those interest rates down! Say Amen!

Oh, I say we got to get those interest rates down! Say Optimal!

Something like that. A few days later Lithgow came in and saw a woman sitting across the corner of the bar. She stared at him and he said hello.

What do you do? he asked.

Guerrilla theater, she replied.

He sipped his wine, wondering what that meant.

I'm an unemployed actress, she said. I type 120 wpm and live in Indianapolis. My name is Karen.

I'm Lithgow. What brings you to New York?

Who is this guy? she asked the bartender.

He did the sermon on the tape, the bartender replied.

Umm, she said. I'm here looking for a job. I used to be with the LaRouche organization, and we were trying to feed the starving children, before I was fucked over by some of the top people. Do you know anything about his theories?

Unfortunately, Lithgow said. LaRouche is a fascist.

She looked at the bartender. Is he for real?

I think he's for real.

Okay, I guess I'll listen to what you have to say then.

She came around the edge of the bar and sat beside Lithgow.

What do you do? she asked.

I'm trying to write a play, but I do research to make a living. I took economics in school.

She looked at him with an open gaze that in another context he would have interpreted as a sign of sexual interest.

We need to have a discussion about what to do about the

housing situation, and the homeless, and how we are going to feed the hungry of the world, she said. Do you know that six million children will die of starvation this year alone?

He didn't answer. He hadn't come to the bar to talk about global problems he could do nothing about.

Before you came in, the bartender related to Lithgow, Karen was having dinner with this social worker. And there were three Englishmen who had come in, and Karen says in a loud voice to the social worker that she'd had no money the previous night and had to give someone a \$5 blow job for cabfare.

Lithgow looked at Karen. She didn't seem to mind that the bartender was relating the story in front of her.

So the social worker starts yelling, the bartender continued, that she had promised to be decent in public and stomped out saying he would call her later.

What did the Englishmen say?

Two of the three Englishmen were having a good time, but felt inhibited in front of their boss. But they all turned to listen when Karen started talking about blow jobs.

Karen looked at Lithgow with pride. I'm very good, she said.

Lithgow didn't know what to say. Are you always this way? he eventually asked.

As long as I've known her, she's always been Crazy Karen, the bartender said.

I'm crazy as my Lord is insane. I've been fucked over a lot. Once I was grabbed by the Secret Service at a Dukakis rally. I had a sign, and I started yelling at him, asking him what he was going to do to feed the children, and the SS grabbed me and threw me in a car.

What happened then? Lithgow asked. But her attention was already elsewhere, and she began to talk to another person who had sat at the bar. A stranger, apparently.

After a while she turned back toward him.

Harry meet Lithgow. Lithgow is an economist. I don't know much about economics, but one thing I do know is when money cancels out debt, there will no longer be an excuse not to feed the hungry. Lithgow, would you be so good as to explain to Harry what MV = PT means?

Startled, Lithgow attempted a quick explanation, then felt foolish. He did not know why he felt a need to answer, or

why Harry should care, or why an explanation was relevant.

What do you think, Karen asked Lithgow, if we had the Concorde fly over Africa and drop tons of Wonder Bread?

He looked at her carefully. He decided she meant it as a serious question.

I don't know. I don't think it will work. Anyway, I'm not interested in solving social problems.

You're already on record! she screamed at him, slamming her fist on top of the bar.

Lithgow buried his attention in his wine glass.

How old do you think I am? she asked calmly.

Her age was indeterminate. Somewhere in the thirties, he decided. Early thirties.

I'm 40, she said. You know, it's getting past time for me to have a child. I want to have the first child born on the moon. Or conceived on the moon and born on Mars.

They talked for a while in a manner that Lithgow found distressingly desultory. To have a conversation with this woman, he thought, I'll have to find a way to condense anything I have to say about any particular topic into a single sentence. That's all I get before the subject changes.

When he was ready to leave the bar, he told her he lived in midtown, and she said she was staying with a friend in the nineties. She asked if he would walk her by the cash machine on Second Avenue. They walked to the automatic teller near St. Marks, where her hometown bank balance stood at \$12 after withdrawing \$30 in cash.

Why don't you come uptown and play pool with me, she asked. There's a table in a bar near where I'm staying. We can stop at your place on the way, if you want.

He shrugged consent and waved down a cab. She introduced herself to the cab driver, and asked him how he was doing. The driver complained there was no money in driving a cab all day.

This is Lithgow, an economist, she said. Perhaps the two of you should discuss the labor situation in this country.

Lithgow nodded at the driver but didn't say anything, and was grateful to receive silence in return. After a time, he put his arm around Karen. He wasn't sure why. It seemed natural and cozy.

She looked at him. Do you want to make love to me?

Maybe, he said. He didn't know if he did or not. He was embarrassed by the cabdriver's attention to the conversation.

You must, you have your arm around me, she said.

When they got out of the cab, he stopped on the sidewalk and kissed her with sudden passion. She felt his erection with her hand. Do you like oral sex? she asked. I'm not using any birth control.

I don't have any either, Lithgow thought to himself. He didn't do this often.

They walked along the sidewalk.

You know this may only happen once, she said, just this time.

I know that.

When they reached the lobby of his apartment building she looked around and said You must be rich.

I'm not rich, but I'm not poor.

This is just between me and you, right? she asked in the elevator. You aren't going to tell anyone?

He shook his head. He didn't know why she was so con-

cerned. When they entered the apartment, he left the lights out, and they went out on the balcony and looked at the city. He kissed her again and she said Feel how wet you are making me. He felt her through her dress and she said No, put your hand inside my panties. Then she asked Do you want to make love now, and he said Yes and pulled off her panties, and then said Let's go inside. In the bedroom she said No, don't make me come, I want to be hot like this for the rest of the night.

Sometime later she said: I want you inside of me. Lithgow thought about the lack of birth control, and the people she might have been with, and then he entered her and didn't think about it anymore.

There was a full moon shining through the bedroom window. She said Oh I'm coming, and then lay strangely still. She lay inertly, without emotion.

There is nothing for you to do but come now, she said.

I came the same time you did.

She turned her face toward him. You shouldn't have done that. I told you I wasn't using any birth control.

It's a dangerous game, he said.

But you would support the child, she said, looking into his face and seeming to find something reassuring.

They took a shower together, and he soaped the blemishes on her back, and she wanted to know if she should put on makeup and he said he didn't care. She tuned in a rock station on the stereo, and then borrowed his hairdryer. He didn't like the station, and after a minute turned it off and put on a CD by the Doors. Then he watched her try to smoke the tail end of a joint using scissors as a roach clip. He decided it was futile, and rolled some pot of his own, and they both smoked it rapidly.

Why don't you give me a job, she said. You can dictate your plays to me, and I can type them.

I'm sorry, I can't work that way. I write and edit them directly on a word processor. It's the only way I know how to work.

They took a cab to the bar near where she was staying, and she ordered a sweet drink with tequila and madeira. The bartender was a big man, and fat, and wore a beret, and she knew him. When he was closing he stood beside them pressing his stomach into them like a barricade, and said It's time to go now. Lithgow was annoyed.

They decided to walk on down the street to another bar which was still open, as they hadn't had a chance to play pool. On the way there she said We could go back to your place and make love. He didn't respond because he wanted more time to think about it, and he was feeling very drunk. At the bar Karen ordered White Castle hamburgers, which were available for a dollar each, and he got a martini. At one point he ran his hand up her skirt and she said angrily Will you stop it.

Sorry, he said, taken aback by her shift in mood.

The fat bartender from the previous bar came in, and the familiar way he acted with Karen made Lithgow wonder if he was the recipient of the \$5 blow job of the previous night. Another man, a dancer in his early twenties came in also, and Karen started talking to him, and then the four of them paid for a pool table. But Lithgow was so drunk he decided to walk home.

I leave Karen in your capable hands, he said to the dancer.

The dancer followed Lithgow to the door. Who is the big guy? he asked. Is she with him?

Don't worry about him, Lithgow said. He's just a bartender from up the street.

Then Karen came to the door, and asked Lithgow if he would be all right.

I think so.

Will I see you again?

At the café.

I do want to get together for a serious discussion of economics, she said.

She's crazy, you know, the bartender at The Delphic Oracle told him the following night. I knew her when I was staying in Rome, and one night after she had come to visit, she ran naked through the streets and tried to hijack a bus.

Lithgow thought about his conversation with Karen, and then he realized the problem. The economic diatribe that the bartender had recorded and then played for her was actually an excerpt of a skit Lithgow had written a previous year. But — listening to the tape — Karen had interpreted Lithgow's sermon as a spontaneous visionary possession, which made him a performance artist like herself: an agent for geopolitical change through public scenes in establishments for eating and drinking.

What was it she had said? One random statement without context: Draw people into the scene so they are at first unaware of what is really going on.

The bartender answered the phone and then handed Lithgow a note with a phone number. Call Karen at Samuel's apartment, it said.

Who's Samuel?

Samuel is the social worker who was here with Karen the other night. He's a friend of hers.

Lithgow called the number and a man's voice answered.

I have a note to call Karen, Lithgow said.

Well you can't call her at this number, the voice responded firmly, and then in the background, before the receiver clicked, he heard the same voice screaming: You have your lovers call here! After the way I loved you!

Lithgow returned to the bar.

What did Karen have to say? the bartender asked.

Samuel answered and said I couldn't call her there.

Well, that's Samuel. The bartender looked at Lithgow. Are you okay?

Lithgow was thinking about the previous night. It's just between you and me, she had said.

Would Karen set me up like this? he asked the bartender. Have me call her at Samuel's, just so some man would be calling her there when Samuel answered the phone?

No, I don't think so, the bartender replied. She doesn't want to deal with that.

Lithgow, preoccupied, forgot to ask him what it was she didn't want to deal with.

The following evening Lithgow found Karen sitting at the bar at The Delphic Oracle with a haggard, indifferently dressed man in his late thirties.

Lithgow, this is Samuel, Karen said.

Samuel didn't appear to recognize him as the person who had called the previous night.

I'm a psychologist, Samuel said. I'm working to prevent psychiatric abuse.

Like with Karen? Lithgow asked.

Karen is the Harry Houdini of institutions, Samuel said. She gets in or out whenever she wants.

I'm doing better, aren't I? Karen asked Samuel.

You're not crazy, Lithgow told her.

Thanks, she responded. How much sorrow has to be endured before you can say it is finished?

Two gay men, apparently friends of Karen, came in, and she went and sat with them at a table across the room.

Samuel looked at Lithgow. I was one of the first people Karen asked to marry, Samuel said. Did she say anything about that?

Samuel searched Lithgow's face.

She didn't mention it to me, Lithgow said. Samuel looked relieved.

I guess you know I've had a thing for Karen for a couple of years, Samuel said. But now I've met this 21-year old Yugoslavian girl with long blonde hair who is helping me get over her.

That's good, Lithgow responded.

Karen told me you were her lover.

Lithgow shook his head at the question, thinking It's none of your business. He saw Samuel looking at him. Let him interpret the gesture however he wants, he thought.

She tells everyone that everyone is her lover, Lithgow said.

He saw Samuel was pleased with the response, a reaction that puzzled him for a moment. Then he realized that Samuel had probably never slept with Karen.

A pale woman in a flowered dress came in and sat by Samuel. She was one of Samuel's colleagues.

Lithgow knows Karen, Samuel said to the pale woman.

The problem with Karen, the woman said, is her praxis. For example, Karen is concerned about world hunger, but she still eats meat.

Hmm, Lithgow answered. He looked at both of them with distaste. There is a whole industry of problem solvers, he thought. Politicians, bureaucrats, demagogues, counselors, and charity workers who have found the way to power, fame, and wealth lies in championing lost causes and mucking about in other people's lives. They're really just parasites and vampires who are healthy only when others are sick, whose well-being increases in direct proportion to other people's misery, and whose chief occupation is giving the appearance of working on the problems of others.

What is your play about? the woman asked Lithgow, when he told her what he was doing.

It's a drama based on the Gnostic Gospels, Lithgow said.

Karen came back to the bar with the two gay men.

We're going out, she said to Lithgow. Will you still be here later?

Probably.

Where are you going? Samuel asked. He looked distressed.

We're going down the street to play pool, Karen said. Why don't you stay here and talk to Lithgow? Lithgow is an economist, you know.

We were talking about the Gnostic Gospels, Lithgow said.

Why hasn't God forgiven Satan? Karen asked. His prodigal son? She turned toward the door without waiting for an answer.

Samuel watched them leave. I'm afraid she'll stop in every

bar, he said to Lithgow. No telling what kind of trouble she'll get into.

Why don't we go to Blimpie on Sixth Avenue? the pale woman asked Samuel.

Lithgow stayed at The Delphic Oracle until closing, but Karen did not return.

The next morning was Saturday, and Lithgow slept until noon when he was awakened by the phone. It was Karen.

What are you doing? he asked.

There is nothing to do but make a joyful noise. I was calling because Samuel and I are going to have dinner at Cozy on Amsterdam at 5:45. Why don't you join us? Afterward maybe we can go to The Delphic Oracle and have Rolling Rocks or whatever.

Okay, he said, where are you now?

I am currently at the Helmsley Hotel with Freddy, she said.

Who is Freddy?

He is a rock singer who has several gold records. I sang for him. He says I have a pretty good singing voice, but it needs some work. Last night we made a tour of the drug scene in Harlem.

You've been up all night?

I want to experience what the children are experiencing. If they're shooting up, I want to shoot up. If they're smoking crack, I want to smoke crack.

Be careful, Lithgow said. It was the only thing he could think of to say.

How can anyone be careful when there is death all around? She hung up.

Lithgow showered and dressed and was making coffee when Karen called again.

Something's come up, she said. Samuel and I won't be going to Cozy after all. I apologize. Will you be at The Delphic Oracle later? I just want to spend time with cool cats who know how to hang out and stay calm and have a good time. Do you know what I mean?

Maybe I'll see you there, Lithgow said.

Karen came into The Delphic Oracle at eight. She was wearing a Cleveland Indians T-shirt and baseball cap. Her face was covered with red makeup and she was wearing dark glasses. She said she had been doing coke all night with Freddy.

And I didn't sleep with him, she said vehemently.

I didn't ask, Lithgow thought. Why is she telling me this?

I'm just trying to get the rock music industry to focus on the starving children, she said. Live Aid — what was that? One day, one week. That isn't shit.

Come, and I'll introduce you to my friends, Lithgow said.

Later, she said. I have to go out. But I will come back and we can have dinner.

It was a hour or two later before Karen returned. The cap and dark glasses were gone, and she had changed her T-shirt. All that remained of the Cleveland Indians outfit was the red makeup still smeared over her face.

She slammed a manila folder down on the counter twice. This city is filled with nothing but hypocrites, faggots, and whores, she said to the bartender — the one she had visited in Rome.

The bartender looked at Lithgow. Sounds pretty accurate to me, the bartender said.

Lithgow opened the folder. Inside was a letter to George Bush. It was about world hunger.

What do you think of Karen's crusade? the bartender asked Lithgow.

I don't believe in crusades. My first responsibility is to take care of myself, so I won't be a burden to other people.

Can the children take care of themselves? Karen asked.

I don't believe in fighting evil. The universe disposes of its own evil. I think I read that in *Dr. Sax*.

It's disposing of the children. Are they evil?

You are controlled by what you love and what you hate. But hate is the stronger emotion. Those who fight evil take on the characteristics of the enemy and become evil themselves.

Would you just read the fucking letter? Karen demanded. Read it out loud so everyone can hear.

Lithgow read the letter silently and then replaced it in the folder. Someone was playing Streets of London on the piano.

Would you like to dance? he asked Karen.

No, she said. But after a moment she changed her mind.

Aren't I a good follower? she asked.

Yes.

Isn't anyone going to cut in? I want to be had by all the men at the bar.

Lithgow looked at the bar. Anyone in particular? he asked.

That one, she said, pointing to a man with a long blond ponytail.

They returned to the bar, but the man with the ponytail was not interested in talking to Karen.

Lithgow was at The Delphic Oracle the following evening when the bartender passed him the phone. Karen seemed to be speaking with her head turned.

Ready to go? The brothers are ready? They want to see the children fed?

Now the voice came through distinctly.

We're having a demonstration. A mid-night vigil before the U.N. Food riots are happening all over the world. We're going to hold all things in common. You want to come to 42nd Street and join us?

He didn't. But what he said was: Maybe.

continued on page 67

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Reviews

Dead Right, by David Frum. Basic Books, 1994, 230 pp., \$23.00.

Blunder on the Right

Paul Piccone

Hardly over, the 1994 elections are already being heralded as the end of the Clinton era and a new beginning of right-wing hegemony in American politics. When all the dust settles, however, the Republican leadership is unlikely to have much of an alternative to offer. 1994 will probably be remembered more as a resounding rejection of the Clinton administration than as the unqualified triumph of Newton Gingrich and his gang.

In fact, the victory was made possible only by the Republicans' strategy of turning what historically has been an electoral contest concerning largely local matters into a national referendum on an immensely unpopular Democratic administration. Successful as it may have been, this was no conservative strategy. It simply extended the statist trend of nationalizing all politics and disempowering localities (at a time when such a move would have and in fact did benefit Republican interests), thus setting the stage for an increase rather than a decrease in central authority and more rather than less government. Even the main Republican P.R. document, the "Contract With America," exhibits none of the standard conservative tenets. There is no call to end "affirmative action," which has

almost single-handedly destroyed American higher education; there is no reference to subsidiarity, the principle of devolution of governmental functions to their lowest possible unit, or to federalism, the privileging of localities in restructuring governance. The Contract's main objective seems to be nothing more than a minor rationalization of existing practices — even though some of their plans, such as "welfare reform," are in principle impossible without any major reconstitution of governing institutions.

This is not the first time Republicans have managed to defeat their Democratic opponents by deploying the very strategies they otherwise deplore. The Reagan success a decade and a half ago was predicated precisely on such a gambit. These Pyrrhic victories, however, end up delegitimizing rather than advancing conservative objectives. This is one of the main points of David Frum's well-written and well-argued book, *Dead Right*. In the midst of all the Republican euphoria, Frum's book stands out as a reminder to conservatives that winning is not enough, unless victory is based on sound principles. Worse yet, Frum argues, the conservatives' opportunistic borrowing of the opposition's strategy betrays something more ominous: the embarrassing extent to which the conservative emperor may have no clothes and the unlikely pros-

pects of finding some new ones anytime soon.

As an evaluation of the Reagan years from the viewpoint of an insider committed to the cause, Frum's account is devastating. His short but brutally honest history of the 1980s carefully documents the high price conservatives have had to pay for their success during the Reagan and the Bush years: a *de facto* repudiation of their most cherished principles. Frum does not mince words: "through the 1980s, the conservatives failed to do their job" (p. 38). All the rhetoric concerning cutting government spending was shipwrecked on the hard rocks of massive deficit spending: "Ronald Reagan's two administrations piled up more debt, in inflation-adjusted dollars, than Roosevelt and Truman had incurred to win World War II. In just four years, George Bush accumulated three times more debt (again adjusting for inflation) than Woodrow Wilson had taken on to fight World War I" (29). As a result — as the blurb on the cover bluntly puts it — after twelve years of Republican tenure of the White House, "Government is bigger, taxes are higher, family values are weaker."

The problem is not merely one of practical political necessities taking priority over philosophical principles. Frum's analysis of the 1992 Republican Houston convention clearly shows how efforts to appeal to a broad, heterogeneous constituency watered down and marginalized whatever principle might have distinguished the Right and the Republicans from the Left and the Democrats. When it was time to vote, it simply came down to charisma, and Clinton turned out to have more of it than Bush. The 1992 Clinton victory brought to an appropriate end a sad failure in reversing a statist trend in American politics.

According to Frum, the problems did not begin with Bush: there was a massive failure of nerve very early on within the Reagan administration, resulting in a statist involution and,

eventually, massive failure. Reagan's success had been predicated all along on a "no fault" implementation of the conservative agenda. Unlike Goldwater a generation earlier, the Reaganites never meant to roll back government, but simply to rationalize it: "Reagan promised in 1980 that no needy person would lose any benefits under his administration" (34). He kept his promise: "Federal spending rose by an average of 2.75 percent a year after inflation

This is not the first time Republicans have managed to defeat their Democratic opponents by deploying the very strategies they otherwise deplore.

during the Reagan administration" (39). While most of the growth was in the military, it still represents a significant retreat from conservative principles.

Aside from the conservative leadership's failure of nerve, Frum documents an even more fundamental flaw much more difficult to rectify. Over the years, much of the so-called conservative movement had itself become addicted to the statist narcotic and would have balked at the kind of reduction of spending necessary for the kind of substantive difference the more doctrinaire conservatives wanted. Rather than confront opposition within its particular constituencies, the Reagan administration simply rolled with the punches and expanded the despised welfare state policies it had originally promised to roll back. Even in areas where conservative therapy could have been carried out swiftly and relatively painlessly, as in the elimination of affirmative action through simple executive action, Reagan did not dare do anything. He allowed existing measures to stand, no matter what debilitating consequences they entailed. Frum quotes a 1993 study to the effect that "the direct, indirect, and opportunity costs of affirmative action denied the U.S. economy 4 percentage points of potential gross national product every year" (72), not to mention its even more devastating impact on higher education, meritocratic principles, and

institutional rationality in general. Frum's indictment of the conservative predicament is devastating. Not only has there been a leadership failure and a corruption of the rank-and-file, but there does not seem to be anything in particular that the conservatives now stand for. His meticulous analysis of Barbara Bush's speech at the Houston convention convincingly drives home the point that even the rhetoric of "family values" had long since been compromised into meaninglessness.

The only redeeming feature in such a situation is that the opposition is in even worse shape. Whatever the shortcomings of conservative politics, they cannot be remedied with standard liberal politics. The most pathetic outcome so far of the 1994 election has been the Clinton administration's abrupt redirecting of its agenda to accommodate the worst features of the Republicans' ersatz remedies (such as his willingness to negotiate concerning school prayer and his irresponsible call for a demagogic middle-class tax cut — fiscally irrelevant from the viewpoint of the recipient, but significant in further burdening an already strained budget).

Unfortunately, Frum has no idea where to go. The book ends with a call for conservatives to bite the bullet: "practice honesty, and pay the price" (205). Conservatives need to do what their predecessors did in the 1950s, to lead "by discarding all considerations of what the public wants to hear, and telling the public what it needs to know to respond intelligently when the crisis does arrive" (200). But what if conservatives have forgotten what it is that they are meant to conserve? What if all the instinctive revulsion at welfare state policies and further state expansion does not amount to any coherent alternative philosophy?

Then the conservatives will probably end up behaving exactly the way they did in the 1980s and in 1994: aping the Democrats while demagogically trying to appeal to the most desperate constituencies.

Is there any clearly identifiable conservative tradition able to provide an alternative vision, one that could translate into a program of political reconstruction? Frum is skeptical: "Conservatives have never had much use for the utopian or the visionary"

(204). Even when, having given up on reducing government, conservatives focus on the cultural arena, there is nothing very explosive they can fall back on. The emphasis on "bourgeois values" does not sufficiently distinguish them from the liberals and, at any rate, they no longer seem very appealing in a context that presents very few risks. Thus the future looks bleak indeed: more of the same.

Not surprisingly, Frum's obligatory survey of the factions constituting the current conservative front adds up to a haphazard bunch unable to agree on much of anything. The neoconservative "optimists" are ex-liberals who have lost none of their bad habits and now simply recycle them as conservative virtues. The equally neoconservative "moralists" are not much better off, seeing decline as a result of elite betrayal. Similarly, the "nationalists" (the old conservatives rallying around Buchanan) and the religious Right do not seem able to threaten anyone, nor have they generated any program able to appeal beyond their narrow constituencies.

This part of Frum's analysis is also one of the weakest. Focused too close on Kemp, Bennett, Buchanan, and the

Much of the so-called conservative movement had itself become addicted to the statist narcotic.

fundamentalists, the divisions are too personalized and their resulting wooden character does not explain even the internal differences within the Republican Party. Paul Gottfried's alternative typology in *The Conservative Movement* makes much more sense and throws much more light on the internal dynamics of conservative politics. Distinguishing neoconservatives from paleoconservatives, libertarians, and the New Right allows a better understanding of what is at stake within the conservative ranks — and helps locate possible domains of ideological reconstruction. After all, if liberalism really is in a state of terminal exhaustion, a concrete alternative might have to come out of the internal conflicts of the only potentially viable opposition.

If the main internal division within the conservative movement is paleoconservatives *vs* neoconservatives, it may be possible to envision a somewhat brighter future. Frum notwithstanding, it is the vision of the future that defines the nature of the past. Thus, conservatives are defined less by what they want to conserve than by what they want to see "restored." Here paleoconservatives cannot be reduced to mere "nationalists." In fact, many of them are *federalists* concerned more with defending a specific culture than with safeguarding particular borders. Unlike the neoconservatives, they have never really given up on a project of drastic governmental reduction. The paleoconservatives have a much more definite sense of what society should be like: they remain committed to individual responsibility and have a more rigorous understanding of American culture.

Frum dismisses the paleoconservatives (the "nationalists") as a bunch of multiculturalists intent on defending what their Left opponents identify as white, middle-class, Eurocentric values. But their defense of American culture cannot be reduced to any of its particular subcultures. American culture provides the metacultural framework within which the very concept of "multiculturalism" receives its particular meaning. After all, where does the U.S. Constitution come from? If pluralism is not a natural attribute of all cultures, from which particular cultural context did it develop as a value? Even multiculturalism is conceivable only within a cultural framework where fundamental values have already been objectified into an institutional arrangement strong enough to allow particular subcultural elements to thrive within it. Such a metacultural framework is "the American model," which cannot be subsequently reduced to any of the subcultural species it tolerates and actually encourages. So the vindication of a particular American culture is not the same as defending Kwanzaa or matzoh balls within some sort of cultural rainbow. Rather, it has to do with those more general climatic conditions that make rainbows possible. This may be the forgotten core of American conservatism.

What defined Americans as a people was the colonial experience and the need within that experience to safe-

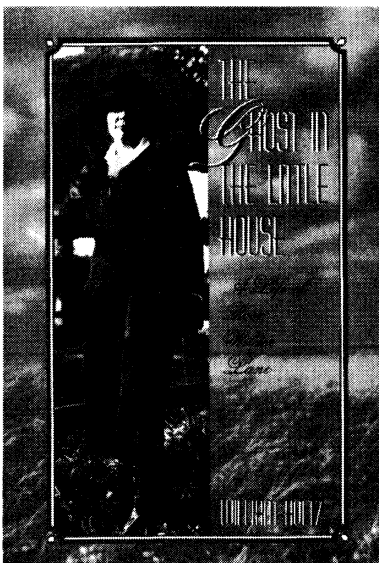
guard cultural particularity and political autonomy. Americans were Protestants, but also cast-offs unable to fit into the predominant European orthodoxies. The original federal system spelling out the country's fundamental values objectified these Protestant values into a political system predicated on individual responsibility, participatory politics, and religious autonomy. The U.S. was not created as a unitary "nation" to be homogenized by a central government enacting laws and reg-

ulations to that effect — that is to say, it did not follow the standard European national model — but as a federation of *particular* communities willing to give up only as much autonomy as absolutely necessary for unity (*e pluribus unum*). The U.S. was multicultural from the very beginning, but not in the current abstract and relativist sense. It sought to guarantee the particularity of territorially defined communities seeking to identify themselves on the basis of their cultural specificity. This is the

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essence of American individualism and character.

If this traditional dimension constitutes the paleoconservatives' core, then conservatism may not be, at least in the long run, as bankrupt as Frum thinks. The defense of a broad set of paradigmatically "American" traditions predicated on local autonomy, individual responsibility, non-statist communitarianism,

Unlike Goldwater a generation earlier, the Reaganites never meant to roll back government.

participatory democracy, and other individualist values remains essential, and these particular traditions are still able to generate a concrete political alternative to the existing state of affairs. It does, however, call for something considerably stronger than the Contract With America, demagogic calls for enforcing school prayers, and ritualistic appeals to evanescent "welfare reform." Here the vindication of local and autonomous federal units is essential. Why do tax dollars have to go to Washington first, to be diminished by bureaucratic redistributions (and the funding of an immense and expansive redistributive bureaucracy), to come back down to localities with particular mandates as to how to spend them? Why is it necessary to have Washington decide what is "appropriate" housing, education, welfare, etc.? Why is it not possible to redistribute existing bureaucratic functions away from Washington and back to the states, counties, cities, and villages? Whatever happened to democratic control? At a time when everyone knows that Washington does a bad job, why not call for radical decentralization?

The myth of centralization has long been exposed as a political fraud. The assembly line was not cheaper, more efficient, and more rational. Rather, it was an excellent way to impose a mode of political domination for the enrichment of a few.

The most long-lasting implications of the collapse of the U.S.S.R. — the discrediting of the superiority of the "central plan," the decline of "modernity," and the almost universal acceptance of

market mechanisms as the only rational mode of resource allocation — has also affected liberal bureaucratic centralism. It is becoming increasingly clear that what the libertarians have been claiming for more than half a century was absolutely correct: Washington is only a less developed version of the same centralized system that has so thoroughly devastated the U.S.S.R. and Eastern Europe. Today, the U.S. federal government may need shock therapy even more than Romania and the Ukraine. So why aren't conservatives calling for it? Why is there no mention of it in the Contract With America? Why aren't mediational institutions, such as churches and other voluntary associations, called on to perform their historically democratizing role as informed constituencies able to participate in that process of consensus formation presently mediated by special interests (the most powerful of which is usually the federal government itself)?

Although there are no documents outlining any particular "conservative" program, it is certainly not difficult to list the sort of necessary components that would be part of one. Frum himself fulminates against so much current waste, irrationality, and duplicity that any short list of what he implicitly proposes as alternatives could function as a rational conservative program. The bitter truth is that such a program would strike at so many conservative constituencies as to make it a non-starter. When all is said and done, Frum is right in locating the conservatives' Achilles' heel in the complacency that has penetrated even the most orthodox conservative groups, none of which are likely to stand for measures that would reduce what they presently receive as benefits — Medicare, Social Security, educational subsidies, etc. Even if it is clear that much of this could be delivered cheaper, more rationally, and more efficiently at a local level with local means, no one is likely to risk losing what is already available.

The solution to this quandary will not consist of developing a new and improved Contract With America, nor in devising more of the gimmickry that kept Reagan popular for so long. Rather, it will be a function of the gradual unfolding of what the Frankfurt School half a century ago identified as

the "Dialectic of Enlightenment" — the growing irrationality of efforts to rationalize in the absence of a supervising subjectivity. Only by restoring a legitimate moral authority at a level accessible to all — the local community — will it be possible to tackle problems such as illegitimate teen pregnancies, crime, and lack of education. But moral authority does not operate in a vacuum: it needs access to legitimate power and self-determination in order to be effective. Here is where a rigorous program of refederalization may have an impact. Real communities based on stable kinship groups and long-standing traditions are the surest guarantees for autonomous individuality, responsible citizenship, and a meaningful existence not tied to the superficial pleasures of consumerism.

This is what Frum means, in the closing pages of his book, when he calls on conservatives to forget about immediate success at the price of principles and instead develop a perspective necessary for the long haul. Such a strategy will probably not win elections next year,

The conservatives will probably end up aping the Democrats while demagogically trying to appeal to the most desperate communities.

but it will help reinstate conservatism as a serious pole in future political discussions. Here conservatives may run into surprising allies. The same Old Left that once sought economic justice in the central plan has realized all too well the error of its ways. Far from guaranteeing economic justice, the plan introduced relations of domination even more pervasive and difficult to eliminate than those imposed by capitalism. But where can this Old Left go to find satisfaction once it gives up on the plan? The communitarian option becomes increasingly attractive.

Already, during the NAFTA and GATT debates, it became normal to find paleoconservatives and Old Leftists on the same side, fighting to defend local jobs, community, and traditional institutions. Aside from the possibility that such a struggle may have been mis-

directed, it is clear that a new similarity of interests tends to bring together old enemies, now that the mystification of immediate economic salvation is no longer taken seriously.

And who are the new enemies of this unlikely alliance? Here Bill Clinton and Newt Gingrich suddenly join ranks. Along with the new class of technocrats, administrators, rationalizers, and other "experts" tucked away in the myriads of Washington bureaucracies, professional politicians thrive on the pretense that their knowledge, skills, and expertise

can best decide what needs to be done, away from direct democratic control and legitimated only by a coterie of like-minded colleagues.

Frum may be right: given its disgraceful record during the Reagan and Bush administrations and the demagogic character of the post-1994 Republican Party, the Right may well be dead. Its legacy, however, still shows signs of life. Conservative virtues may yet be resuscitated within new modes of political oppositions that have not yet found institutional expression. □

***Who Stole Feminism? How Women Have Betrayed Women*, by Christina Hoff Sommers. Simon & Schuster, 1994, 319 pp., \$23.00.**

She Said, She Said

Jesse Walker

When Christina Hoff Sommers' *Who Stole Feminism?* was published last year, the ensuing debate followed the same course as most disputes over politically controversial books. One side proclaimed it a brave exposé of an entrenched feminist establishment. The other denounced it as a right-wing assault on the gains of the women's movement. And almost everyone ignored the author's point.

Sommers argues that "equity feminism," which she likes, has been overshadowed by "gender feminism," which she does not. The former is a liberal movement for social and political equality; the latter is a cult of victimization, built on a foundation of New Age jargon, mod multiculturalism, and bad science. Sommers' dichotomy is an oversimplification, but it is a useful oversimplification. It raises important issues about what feminism is and what it has accomplished — issues most pundits apparently prefer not to discuss.

Most of *Who Stole Feminism?* is a critique of the studies and statistics gender

feminists have used as scientific support for their ideology. Some of this research, such as the American Association of University Women's 1991 study of girls' self-esteem, is almost self-refuting; Sommers had to spend more time trying to get her hands on the AAUW's data than she did showing how it contradicts the results the AAUW claimed. The Wellesley report on discrimination in education is also rather easily refuted, as are Sheila Kuehl's claim that 40% more women than average are battered on Super Bowl Sunday and Naomi Wolf's assertion that 150,000 women die of anorexia each year. Other research has more value: while the Ms. Report on rape on campus draws some dubious conclusions, the data it gathers is not in itself useless.

Sommers has won the statistical debate hands down. The proof of this lies in the kind of criticism her book has drawn: there has been a lot of carping over trivial errors, such as Sommers' misstating the date of the 1993 Super Bowl, but little effort to defend the statistics under attack. I noticed a few more insignificant mistakes in the book (e.g., a few references to NPR as "PBS radio"),



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but few substantial factual errors.

The most troubling inaccuracy, if that's the word, is Sommers' simplistic summary of the philosophy of Michel Foucault, who she portrays as proto-totalitarian. It is difficult, of course, to sum up Foucault's thought in a few paragraphs, especially when one considers how much his worldview evolved, from neo-Marxist to left-anarchist to quasi-libertarian. But then, it's unclear to me why Sommers tries to summarize his ideas at all.

Sommers argues that Foucault was a key influence on two popular and influential gender-feminist books, Susan Faludi's *Backlash* and Naomi Wolf's *The Beauty Myth*. But she concedes that Faludi never acknowledges any debt to Foucault, and that his only appearance in *The Beauty Myth* is in the bibliography. Sommers believes his influence is there nonetheless, since both Faludi and Wolf write about invisible power structures, a favorite theme of Foucault's. She buttresses her case with a quote from Faludi: "The lack of orchestration, the absence of a single string-puller, only makes it harder to see — and perhaps more effective. A backlash against women's rights succeeds to the degree that it appears *not* to be political, that it appears not to be a struggle at all. It is most powerful when it goes private, when it lodges inside a woman's mind and turns her vision inward, until she imagines the pressure is all in her head, until she begins to enforce the backlash too — on herself" (p. 232).

But this is an idea much older than Foucault. It is the old Marxist notion of false consciousness enforced by an ideological superstructure. Sommers' half-baked critique of Foucault only distracts the reader from a more important point: that Faludi seems unwilling to believe someone might make a decision she disapproves of without being brainwashed by the patriarchy. For Sommers, this disrespect for individual women is a key difference between equity feminists and gender feminists — bringing us back to the advantages and disadvantages of that dichotomy.

One disadvantage is the sheer size of the two categories. The equity feminist camp includes libertarians whose political goals are limited to establishing equality before the law and a woman's right to control her own body, liberals

who would have the government ban private sexual discrimination, and socialists with an even broader agenda. Gender feminists are even more varied. Some would have the government pay women for housework; some would have women stop doing housework; some would return *all* work to the home. Some claim that women are naturally more "nurturing" and "lateral-minded" than men; others believe virtually all sexual differences are socially constructed. Some are willing to ally themselves with the religious Right; others hate the idea. Some love Foucault; others ignore him; others, *contra* Sommers, despise him. One of the commonest complaints reviewers have raised against this book is that it paints gender feminism as more ideologically unified than it really is. They have a point.

Of course, the great differences within the animal and plant kingdoms do not prevent us from distinguishing animals from plants. Splitting the women's movement in two isn't a bad idea; it allows Sommers to point out the most important ways the academic Left has betrayed feminist ideals. But there are subtler distinctions to be made within each camp. By ignoring them, Sommers has given feminists an excuse to ignore her critique.

Another potential problem is the blurry boundary between the two groups. One might think Katha Pollitt should be classified as an equity feminist. After all, she wrote "Are Women Morally Superior to Men?" (*The Nation*, December 28, 1992), as well-argued an attack on Carol Gilligan's "difference feminism" as I have ever read. But she only appears in *Who Stole Feminism?* to be attacked for her defense of the *Ms. Report's* rape statistics. And Sommers ignores those pro-sex, anti-censorship, individualist feminists who nonetheless espouse a radical critique of society, such as Susie Bright and the iconoclastic publishers of *Bad Attitude* and *On Our Backs*. These women are hardly part of the equity mainstream, but they aren't MacDworkinite collectivists, either. Sommers' dichotomy has no room for them.

All this may seem to be beside the point. So what if I can list some aberrations from Sommers' model? Her point still stands, doesn't it? The noble movement for women's equality *has* been sto-

len by a bunch of P.C. nuts, right? Well, yes — but theft works both ways.

In her preface, Sommers cites a 1992 *Time/CNN* poll in which 57% of women said they think America needs a strong women's movement, but 63% refused to characterize themselves as feminists. This trend is replicated throughout our society: the great majority of Americans now believe that women should have the same legal rights and social opportunities as men, but only a minority will adopt the "feminist" label.

As recently as 1980, most anti-feminist rhetoric was frankly patriarchal: women, we were told, should stay in the home. Period. Today, challenges to feminism almost always come from maverick feminists — Katie Roiphe, Camille Paglia, Sommers herself. Phyllis Schlafly has moved on to more winnable culture wars, and George Gilder is busy building shrines to the microchip. The "post-feminist" wave of a few years ago — women deciding they might prefer husband and hearth to career — was just that: *post-feminist*. There was no attempt to destroy a woman's right to choose to pursue a career; many women simply decided that they would prefer to exercise that right by turning wage-work down. The choice itself was never under dispute.

Opponents of Sommers' book like to point out that it was partially financed by the neoconservative Bradley, Carthage, and Olin foundations. The critics' intent is to imply that Sommers, a self-proclaimed feminist and a registered Democrat, is actually a closet conservative. Few stop to consider whether they've got it backwards — whether today's conservatives are actually closet feminists.

Consider two events at the 1992 Republican convention, remembered in political folklore as an assembly of unadulterated reactionaries. One was Marilyn Quayle's speech, in essence a discussion of balancing family and career. *This was a feminist speech*. If you doubt that, ask yourself how it would have played at the Republican convention of 1972.

The other was Pat Buchanan's address, a cannonball blast against Pat's opponents in the culture wars. At one point, turning his fire on the environmental movement, Buchanan related the story of a woman he'd met who had lost

her job because of environmental regulations. Left-liberals watching the speech on TV were probably too busy seeing red to notice that the most right-wing candidate for the Republican nomination had just complained that *a woman had lost her job*. Could you imagine Pat Robertson doing that?

Buchanan is no feminist, of course. And that's just the point. Basic feminist precepts have wormed their way so far

From the gender feminists' point of view, their fortified Ovary Tower is an embattled liberated zone, a safe space surrounded by a swamp of sexism. In fact, it is just another bureaucratic niche.

into our society — so far into what the vast majority of us think is right and just — that Pat Buchanan simply didn't notice the implications of what he was saying in Houston in 1992.

These cultural changes have been accompanied by a dizzying economic shift. Most feminist activists think of the 1980s as a disastrous decade in which the gains of the '70s were attacked and often reversed. The statistics Sommers has gathered belie that claim. The wage gap — the difference between men's and women's salaries — narrowed steadily from 1980 to 1989. In the '60s and '70s, women made about 59% of men's salaries. By 1990, they made 72%. This figure includes marginal older workers; exclude them, and the picture grows rosier still. Younger women "now earn 80 cents for every dollar earned by men of the same age" (239). The bulk of this progress took place in the vilified 1980s.

In 1970, 41% of college students were women; by 1992, the figure was 55%. In 1970, 5% of law degrees were granted to women; in 1991, 43% were. Sommers quotes Diane Ravitch of the Brookings Institution to show how far women have moved toward professional equality: "in some [fields], such as pharmacy and veterinary medicine, women have become the majority in what was previously a male-dominated profession" (238-239). This progress

took place throughout the 1970s — and the 1980s.

This is not meant as an argument for the Republicans. Reagan's reign simply proves it's possible for significant social change to take place even during a hostile administration's watch. What has happened to American women in the 1980s and '90s is not a *political* change, in the sense of a changing of the guard atop our governing institutions. It is social, economic, and cultural change — change in the way millions of individuals are living their lives and viewing the world, change that goes much deeper than anything the state could impose. One might reverse the Susan Faludi quotation cited earlier: "The lack of orchestration, the absence of a single string-puller, only makes it harder to see — and perhaps more effective. Feminism has succeeded to the degree that it appears *not* to be political, that it appears not to be a struggle at all. It is most powerful when it goes private, when it lodges inside a person's mind." This is not to deny that there were and are important political battles to fight and win. But the most important battles are taking place, not in legislatures or courtrooms, but in our day-to-day lives.

Which goes a long way toward explaining the anger Sommers' book has inspired. *Who Stole Feminism?* is more than an attack on a particular brand of feminism or a particular group of feminists. There is feminism, and then there is Feminism; there are feminist doctrines, and then there are feminist institutions. Sommers has undermined the latter.

While women made these incredible gains, gender feminists spent their time accumulating power in government and the academy. From the gender feminists' point of view, their fortified Ovary Tower is an embattled liberated zone, a safe space surrounded by a swamp of sexism. In fact, it is just another bureaucratic niche, as the stories in Sommers' book make clear. There is an irony here. Here is a movement that prides itself on its opposition to "male" hierarchy and "vertical thinking," but has found the male-dominated vertical hierarchies of the university more congenial than the chaotic, lateral sea of civil society.

So the distinction between equity

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and gender feminists is a useful one, especially for those of us who would like to be able to identify ourselves as feminists without running the risk of being mistaken for a crypto-Stalinist. But more significant, I think, is the distinction between those whose respect for human dignity draws no distinction between male and female, and those who are still hung up on the gender divide. The first category includes a lot of people who shun the feminist label;

the latter includes quite a few who wear it on their sleeves.

Optimism is out of style, I know. And it's true that the revolution is not yet complete: abortion rights are under attack; some wage discrimination persists; rape and battery are still pressing social problems. But the fact remains: when it comes to sexual equality, the world has been steadily improving.

Feminism is winning — despite the feminists. □

***Dictatorship of Virtue: Multiculturalism and the Battle for America's Future*, by Richard Bernstein. Knopf, 1994, 367 pp., \$25.00.**

The Sensitive Jacobins

David Boaz

Careful followers of the public debates over multiculturalism and political correctness may occasionally get the feeling that every list of P.C. excesses contains the same items, that maybe there have only been half a dozen such outrages on America's campuses, each one recycled endlessly by Dinesh D'Souza, George Will, and Rush Limbaugh. Richard Bernstein's *Dictatorship of Virtue* will be valuable to such readers, because it offers a plethora of P.C. stories large and small that will likely be news even to the best-informed reader:

- In Brookline, Massachusetts, the public high school decided to eliminate its celebrated and demanding advanced placement European history course because it was "incompatible with multiculturalism."
- At Hans Christian Andersen Contemporary Schools in Minneapolis, a fifth-grade social studies teacher says that she wants students to come away from her class knowing four American historical figures, all black: Crispus Attucks, Sojourner Truth, Harriet

Tubman, and Frederick Douglass. Pressed, she adds Tecumseh, but says "it wouldn't be traditional white heroes" like George Washington.

- At Dallas Baptist University — yes, Dallas Baptist — an untutored professor of sociology and the dean who defended him were both dismissed after the young professor gave a talk critical of feminism.

According to Bernstein, a *New York Times* reporter, the noble idea of civil rights and multiculturalism has been perverted into "a dictatorship of virtue." As in the French Revolution, which "skidded from the enlightened universalism of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen into the Committee of Public Safety and the Terror," the multiculturalists — like Robespierre — have become so sure of the rightness of their cause that nothing, not reason or privacy or civilized debate, must be allowed to stand in its way.

Bernstein makes a strong case that multiculturalism has metamorphosed from an attempt to make American society and especially the academy more inclusive into "a cult [with] no differing points of view" and a mandatory attitude toward the politics of race and gen-

der. He argues that an elite generation of '60s rebels who "see the United States, its role in the world and its record in history, as more tainted by iniquity than infused with good" have won a "secret victory" by becoming the very establishment they once criticized. "The victory of ideological multiculturalism is not in the numbers or in the polls, because there it would always lose. It is in the penetration of the new sensibility into the elite institutions, in the universities, the press, the liberal churches, the foundations, the schools, and show business, on PBS and *Murphy Brown*, at Harvard and Dallas Baptist University, on editorial boards and op-ed pages, at the Ford Foundation and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, the National Education Association, the American Society of Newspaper Editors, the National Council of Churches, and the Pew Charitable Trusts."

The multiculturalists have won, he says, "but their victory depends on their declining to claim it. . . . They thrive by maintaining the fiction that they are nothing but small voices struggling to be heard," even as students are hauled before star chambers and professors are told to get psychotherapy to cure them of their insensitive ideas. In the end, though, Bernstein concludes, "the multiculturalist fortress is empty." If conservatives and liberals fight back, the dictatorship of virtue can be replaced by

The multiculturalists have won, Bernstein says, but their victory depends on their declining to claim it.

a traditional but increasingly inclusive American system of reason, science, liberty, academic standards, and genuine pluralism.

Bernstein's book seems not to have sold well, apparently because liberals don't want to hear about the P.C. problem and conservatives don't need a liberal reporter from the *New York Times* to tell them about it. Bernstein has fallen prey to the most unfortunate fact about bookselling in the United States: that people only buy books they expect to agree with by authors they like. □

John Cage: composer, writer — and athlete?

I Saw John Cage at Madison Square Garden

Richard Kostelanetz

For many fans of competitive running and jumping, the annual Millrose Games is the apex of the New York City indoor track season; for me, it is the epitome of nonhierarchic, noncentered Cagean performance. The floor of Madison Square Garden, essentially a basketball court and hockey rink some 60 yards by 20, is covered with a four-lane wooden track that runs circularly along the edge and is drastically sloped ("banked") at its narrow ends to compensate for sharp turn-to-reversal. Whereas the standard outdoor track is 440 yards long, requiring four laps to a mile, the Garden's is approximately 150 yards long, requiring eleven laps to the mile. Inside the track is paraphernalia for the pole vault, the high jump, and the long jump, as well as another, straightaway track for the 60-yard dashes and hurdles. The events begin promptly at 5:45 p.m. with a series of relays, and continue past 10:30 p.m., with no clear break for roughly five continuous hours. Incidentally, five hours was the length of Cage's greatest theatrical creation, *HPSCHD* (1969), which likewise took place in an indoor sports arena (Assembly Hall at the University of Illinois).

What first of all marks the Millrose Games as Cagean performance is that two and often three events occur simultaneously. While runners go around the main track, pole vaulters and jumpers are flinging themselves to various heights and distances. This means that spectators must constantly choose where to look. More than once I heard some members of the audience cheering something that had completely escaped my attention. Curiously, the announcer describing the running is not the same man identifying the pole vaulters,

which means that the voices sometimes interrupt each other. More than once I saw a pole vaulter in mid-air about to execute his concluding moves over the crossbar just as the starter's gun coincidentally sounded. In its diffusion of spectator attention, the Millrose Games resembles the traditional American three-ring circus — which, incidentally, also takes place in Madison Square Garden later in the spring. The three-ring circus was always an esthetic ideal for Cage (exploited and compromised though it was by the Rolyholyoover exhibition, which was subtitled "A Circus" though it scarcely was).

What also makes the Millrose Games Cagean is the abundance of participants within an absence of hierarchy. The same indoor track hosted a wide variety of men's and women's 1,600-meter relays, with teams representing local universities, Ivy League universities, public high schools from each borough and from the suburbs, Catholic high schools, local club teams, and "masters" teams (limited to runners 40 years and older). One of the more amusing races, "Chemical Bank Women's 4x400 Meters Indoor Challenge," pitted the Board of Education's team against Memorial Sloan-Kettering, Citibank, IBM, and the FBI. (IBM won, while the FBI finished fifth, apparently amicably. The parallel male race was won by the Board of Education.)

This was the same track on which some of the meet's stars ran — Marcus O'Sullivan in the Wannaker Mile, Hassiba Boulmerka (an Olympic champion) in the Women's Mile, Reuben Reina in the 3,000 meters, Maria Mutola in the 800 meters, Mark Everett in the 800 meters. Also here, before the same audience, was the High School Boys' Solo One-Mile Run, the women's equiv-

alent, a 400-meter race, a 500-meter race, 3,200-meter relays, etc. — all of them staged with roughly an equal amount of fanfare. Of the total of 44 events, 36 were run on this track. One could identify with the thrill for a young person (or even a master) running on the same boards trod by a world-class star only a few minutes before or after.

(Some runners barely negotiated the banking, for which they lacked experience; it was both sad and amusing to see amateur runners losing their balance around the turns. One fell flat on his stomach, his forward force propelling him up all the way to the track's outer edge.)

I've written elsewhere that the common mark of Cage's masterpieces, as distinct from his lesser pieces, is an abundance of disconnected activities. There is no doubt that the Millrose Games by most measures ranks among the most populous sports shows, with so many events within such a small space — and that this abundance is key to its esthetic quality. Though the newspapers and television networks covered only the competitions starring celebrities (most of whom did not win this year), I found the whole games superior to any of its parts.

The first time I saw the Millrose Games, I sat in the expensive seats, several rows from the edge of the track, but could not see the runners directly in front of me. Essentially, the slope of the Garden's seats is designed to make the center stage visible to all, while the space beyond the sidelines of, say, a basketball court can be seen only from the seats on the other side of the Garden. Since this design hides so much of the track directly below, spectators in front of us began to stand in order to see better, obscuring the entire scene. The surprise this time was that the cheapest seats, at the very top of the house, provided the best view, precisely because the greater slope angle up there enabled one to see more of the entire scene. No one ever stood up, except of course to move out of or into his seat. An anti-snob anarchist to his gut, Cage would have liked the notion of the cheapest seats being best.

What I mean to say is that the Millrose Games bear John Cage's theatrical signature, even though, in fact, he had nothing to do with them. □

Booknotes

Cato on NATO — Ted Galen Carpenter is the only serious strategic thinker left in Washington, as demonstrated by his latest book, *Beyond NATO: Staying Out of Europe's Wars* (Cato Institute, 1994, 180 pp., \$18.95). The book calls for scrapping NATO and letting the U.S. military return to doing what it's supposed to be doing: defending the United States. —Leon T. Hadar

Relatively Speaking — If you're sick of hearing conservative critics whine about philosophers they've never read, but nonetheless have raised your eyebrows over some of the nuttier elements of contemporary thought, you'll appreciate James Harris' *Against Relativism* (Open Court, 1992, 228 pp., \$54.95 hc, \$19.95 sc). In this book, Harris (an actual philosopher!) provides capable critiques of Thomas Kuhn, Richard Rorty, Willard Van Orman Quine, Paul Feyerabend, Helen Longino, and other epistemological relativists.

Since I sometimes teeter-totter on the edge of relativism myself, this book was a useful reminder that I've been playing footsie with paradox. Kuhn, for example, cannot claim that his paradigm theory of knowledge is any more correct than Karl Popper's falsification theory because, if Kuhn is right, there is no standard for judging between them. And so on.

Harris' book may not be the final word on this topic, but it is a valuable addition to the debate. —Michael Levine

Bad Medicine — A comprehensive critique of this country's civil rights policies is long overdue. I had hoped that Byron Roth's *Prescription for Failure: Race Relations in the Age of Social Science* (Transaction Publishers, 1994, 392 pp., \$41.95 hc, \$21.95 sc) would be it. But while Roth has collected some important data, he is unwilling to stray far enough from the bounds of respectable thinking to draw the conclusions his data clearly implies — and some of the conclusions he *does* draw are just plain weird. For example, Roth writes that the "first and most important" way to reduce youth crime "is to enforce in a serious way the truancy laws that are currently on the books" (p. 252). He

offers no solution to the crime wave that would sweep the public schools once the criminal class is rounded up and put into study hall.

Ultimately, Roth only wants to tinker around the edges — get the kids into the classroom, "reform" welfare, support "equality of opportunity" over "quotas." In short, rearrange the deck chairs on the Titanic, and perhaps the seating arrangements at the captain's table as well. I have a different plan: stop treating blacks (or anyone) as wards of the state, and instead treat them as citizens capable of running their own lives and their own communities. If they have children, allow them to make arrangements for their care. If they commit serious crimes, lock them away instead of "understanding their rage." If they aren't satisfied with the service at Denny's, suggest they try Shoney's. —Clark Stooksbury

Dead On — Ruth Rendell is, on the face of it, a writer of mysteries. But the bulk of her most recent crime novels do not rehearse the process of professional crime investigation; they instead explore the personal worlds of criminals, victims, and witnesses. She has developed several of her own formulae (most spectacularly under the well-known pseudonym Barbara Vine), which may someday qualify her as an important literary figure.

Her best books, I think, are *Live Flesh* and *Talking With Strange Men*, two novels with trendy themes. The former convincingly and chillingly fleshes out the standard theory of the psychopathology of the rapist. The latter is a clever, subtle thriller about child molestation, of all things. Her latest to hit American paperback racks, *The Crocodile Bird* (Dell Publishing, 1993, 374 pp., \$5.99), shows that Rendell wears no politically correct blinders. It deals with a *female* serial killer who homeschools her daughter, and how this legacy of murder casts shadows on her daughter's life. The tension in this odd coming-of-age story derives from the implied *Bad Seed* theme: will the young woman take up her mother's hobby of casual murder?

The crocodile bird of the title is an animal with a fascinating ecological

niche: it enters the willing jaws of the reptile and safely feasts off the decaying flesh lodged there. In this book the daughter plays the bird's role, but Rendell's faithful readers know that the label applies to them as well.

—Timothy Virkkala

X Offender — If you're only going to read one homoerotic political novel this year, make it Matthew Sandler's *The Sex Offender* (HarperCollins, 1994, 206 pp., \$22.00). Part *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and part *Lolita*, Sandler's surreal tale follows a man through his government-imposed therapy for having an affair with a teenage boy; along the way, he gets involved with underground rebels and with the clandestine salon where the authoritarian government's officials get their faces worked on. (In this dystopian vision of Seattle, the government practices socialism with a happy face: officials' faces are carved up so they can look good for the people, appearance being everything.)

—Tom Loughran

Armageddon! — P.J. O'Rourke has carved out a distinctive niche as a writer. A conservative humorist, he writes books that are not just collections of articles but sustained think pieces about issues that interest him — yes, funny think pieces. The issues are almost always grim: recent titles include *Holidays in Hell* (his travels through war-torn countries) and *Parliament of Whores* (about the federal government).

His latest, *All the Trouble in the World* (Atlantic Monthly Press, 1994, 344 pp., \$22.00), takes on the apocalyptic extremism that has been the rage over the past five or six years — all the scare stories you've heard about overpopulation, pollution, famine, and deforestation. The book is partly a reasoned response to doomsday claims and partly a vivid political travelogue to such places as Bangladesh and the Peruvian rainforest. (He visits some war-torn countries for this book, too.)

O'Rourke's humor isn't a series of one-liners; he usually takes a few lines to build to a humorous point. And while he does skewer liberals now and then, the jokes are often directed at himself — particularly himself as an adolescent or young adult.

For example, to illustrate the tragedy of the commons, he asks, "Which is

safer, your yard or a city park? Which is cleaner, your bathroom or the pissors of Paris? Which is more palatable, the dinner you cook or school lunch? If you're a male bachelor under twenty-five, skip the last two questions."

When he does mock liberals, the put-down is just but not harsh. He points out that Paul Ehrlich's book *The Population Bomb*, designed to scare us into zero population growth, started with a description of "one stinking hot night in Delhi," full of "people, people, people, people." Says O'Rourke: "Notice that Paul Ehrlich is not panicked by being caught in the tremendous squash and jostle of rich folks around the bar in the Churchill Downs clubhouse on Kentucky Derby Day."

Since humor is intensely personal, this book will not suit everyone. But O'Rourke is literate, mostly libertarian, and refreshingly realistic about human nature. In his twelve years of international travels, says O'Rourke, he has yet to meet a person "who was any worse than some of the people I hung out with in high school." He recognizes that what causes harm is bad institutions and bad ideas — and he has met with plenty of both.

—Jane S. Shaw

O.J.'s Rage — O.J. Simpson's *I Want to Tell You* (Little, Brown & Co., 1995, 842 + xxvi pp., \$17.00) was a guaranteed bestseller, thanks to the media spectacle surrounding the Simpson trial. It would have been easy for O.J. to churn out yet another quickie celebrity cash-in paperback of no merit. Instead, he has produced a work that recalls the best of Jorge Luis Borges, Flann O'Brien, and (especially) Italo Calvino — a book that is at once a novel, an autobiography, and a brooding, powerful meditation on what America once was and could yet become. Multilayered, visionary, and thoroughly readable, this volume heralds the arrival of a startling literary genius.

The hero of *I Want to Tell You* is Tyrone Martin, an African-American athlete who bears a striking resemblance to Simpson himself. But there are important differences. Unlike O.J., Martin is a failure — a once-promising talent who burned out early, a victim of Demon Gin. When the novel opens in 1989, Martin has been unemployed for five years. He lives in a welfare hotel in Portland, Oregon, where he drinks,

smokes, watches TV — and, in the middle of the night, writes. Martin becomes obsessed with a pretty waitress named Nicole, but finds himself unable to speak with her. Instead, he mails her chapters from his novel-in-progress about a fictional football player named Homer Simpson. As O.J. explains in his brief preface, Homer Simpson is, in all respects except his first name, O.J. himself; indeed, he insists that all of Martin's "novel" is actually true.

Readers hoping to find new revelations about the death of Nicole Simpson will be disappointed; O.J. wisely keeps mum about the case. He does, however, confess to five other murders, as well as a rape and a botched burglary, and hints that he was involved in the World Trade Center bombing of 1993. He also

writes extensively about his experiences on the set of *Airplane!*, the Zucker-Abraham-Zucker film that established him as a movie star. Most of all, he discusses at great length his surprisingly sophisticated social and political philosophy. While some of his ideas are unusual, to say the least (viz., his proposal that America adopt a "tricameral" legislature), others are nothing short of brilliant. Describing himself as "socially liberal but fiscally conservative," Simpson outlines the most workable scheme yet devised for privatizing Social Security, makes an original case for second-trimester abortion rights, and offers a "constructive critique" of NAFTA — all in witty, sometimes side-splittingly funny prose.

To Martin's horror, Nicole falls in

love, not with him, but with Homer Simpson, the character he has invented. Mad with jealousy, he adds more and more disquieting characteristics to his creation. Homer begins to drink heavily. He habitually beats up his many lovers. He has an affair with his girlfriend's adopted Korean daughter. None of this dissuades Nicole from her love, but it does plant within her a seed of hatred for Martin. Finally, in the penultimate chapter, she breaks into the writer's apartment and kills him. This leads to the book's surreal conclusion, which I shall not reveal here; suffice to say that it is perhaps the most penetrating comment on the human condition I ever have read, as well as the most humane.

Bravo!

—Jesse Walker

Star Trek: The X Generation



videonote

Things in Life That Are Certain —

It's been twelve years now since federal police killed tax rebel Gordon Kahl. For the government and the media, Kahl was a racist, a religious nut, a man obsessed with dubious legal arguments against the income tax. And, so far as that went, they were right: Kahl doesn't seem to have cared for non-whites or Jews (though he didn't advocate racial repression and never engaged in KKK-style terrorist violence), and he did hold to some weird theological and legal beliefs. But that should have no bearing on his civil liberties: even the apparently kooky should have the right not to be assassinated by their government.

Death & Taxes (Country People

Productions, 1993, 113 min., \$12.95) is an unusual documentary. It opens with a montage of apparently unlinked footage and uncaptioned interviews; as it gradually fills in the gaps, the facts of the Kahl case begin to emerge. The result is occasionally confusing but always fascinating. And in the wake of recent events at Waco and Ruby Ridge, it is newly relevant as well.

Director Jeffrey Jackson emerged from the '60s counterculture, not the populist Right; perhaps because of this, his film is generally (and thankfully) free of special pleading for Kahl's worldview. Jackson is content to relate his tale of government terror, then allow viewers to draw their own conclusions about the state of freedom in America today.

If other filmgoers draw the same conclusions as I, I don't think our Keepers in Washington will be very happy that this movie was made.

—Jesse Walker

Mixed messages from mixed media . . .

Knowledge Compact

R.W. Bradford

CD-Rom technology has revolutionary potential. A CD-Rom player is a device that can be added to a computer and read information from compact disks. A single CD-Rom disk, identical in appearance to an ordinary music CD, can store an incredible 700 megabytes of information, which amounts to about 350,000 pages of text. This information can be accessed very quickly. And the cost of manufacturing a disk is absurdly cheap, about a dollar or so. To top it off, a CD-Rom drive is hardly more expensive than an audio CD player. At *Liberty's* office, we have four units that cost us between \$50 and \$300 each, depending on their speed and (more importantly) when we acquired them (like every other form of computer hardware, their prices are dropping like

public confidence in Bill Clinton).

Theoretically, an entire encyclopedia can be recorded on a single CD-Rom disk, with lots of room left over. In fact, the entire 20-volume *Oxford English Dictionary* has been published on a single disk.

The implications of CD-Rom technology are mind-boggling. Suppose you want to see what your encyclopedia has to say about Mexican art. With a printed encyclopedia, the process is cumbersome: you look up "Mexico, art" in the index, then look up articles in several different volumes. With an encyclopedia on CD-Rom, one merely has to type "Mexico, art," and in a second or two a list of all relevant articles is on your screen. In another second, you're reading the articles you find most useful. The CD-Rom is not only faster and easier to use, but cheaper to manufacture and easier to store as well. In addition,

because of its gigantic capacity and low cost, CD-Roms are ideally suited for storing graphic images, which take up a lot of storage space in digital form.

That's the theory. In practice, CD-Roms have proved disappointing: slow, hard to use, and often containing disappointingly small amounts of information. The widely-used CD-Rom encyclopedias, for example, contain far less information than a decent print encyclopedia, despite the advertising promises of their publishers.

Why the disparity? Because publishers are convinced that the public wants a lot of glitz but doesn't really care about information. *The New Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia*, for example, doesn't mention Ayn Rand or Ludwig von Mises, in contrast to the *Britannica*, which has brief entries and bibliographies for both. But *Grolier* does have a swell movie of Martin Luther King, Jr., delivering a few seconds of his "I have a dream" speech. The movie is only two inches square, and the picture is very jerky. But the *Britannica* doesn't have any movie at all. Similarly, *Grolier* has only 600 words on Egyptology, versus 2,000 in *Britannica*, but it does have a nice little seven-second animation of how a xerox machine works.

Unfortunately, CD-Rom disks are generally not terribly cheap, and the optimistic buyer is frequently disappointed at what he gets. Here are my evaluations of some of the titles I have acquired, along with my rating of them on a scale of one to four stars. From the foregoing comments, I hope you've noticed that my prejudice is in favor of good, easily accessible information. Prices quoted are "street" prices, i.e., what you are liable to pay from a dealer, as opposed to list prices, which are often very heavily discounted. I list the versions that I am reviewing; in some cases new (and possibly better) versions are available.

The New Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia. Grolier Electronic Publishing, 1992, \$80. ★★★ This is not a bad reference book, but don't toss your printed encyclopedia. As I noted above, the cost of fitting in lots of glitzy junk (color photos, sound recordings, film clips) is the omission of tons of the information you expect in an encyclopedia.

Microsoft Bookshelf. 1994, \$60. ★★★★★ An amazing amount of informa-

tion and a fast, virtually flawless interface makes this an essential reference resource for students, writers, and anyone else. It includes the full text of *The American Heritage Dictionary*, *The Concise Columbia Encyclopedia*, *Roget's Thesaurus*, *The Hammond World Almanac*, *The World Atlas*, *The Book of Quotations*, *The People's Chronology*, etc., all arranged for fast searches and easy access. I use it for fact-checking when I write, for looking up data, for checking the etymology of a word, and for a hundred other little tasks.

Furthermore, data can easily be exported from *Bookshelf* to database programs and spreadsheets, making further exploration of information easy and accessible. For example, recently I needed a list of the 100 least densely populated counties in the United States. It was an easy matter to copy the lists of each states' counties from the *Almanac* into a spreadsheet program, add a column to calculate population densities, and sort — a task that ordinarily would have taken so long I wouldn't even attempt it by other means, but which I completed in less than an hour using *Bookshelf*. Data can also be exported with ease to processors, page layout programs, and graphic programs.

At its street price of about \$60, this is a genuine bargain. *Bookshelf* does for CD-Rom what spreadsheets did for early

microcomputers: it justifies the purchase of a CD-Rom drive (now available for under \$100) and transforms what was for most people a toy to a necessity.

Cinemania '95. Microsoft, 1994, \$55. ★★ ★★ This is another terrific reference disk from Microsoft. It contains the full text of Leonard Maltin's *Movie and Video Guide* and selections from Pauline Kael's *5001 Nights at the Movies*, Ephraim Katz's *The Film Encyclopedia*, and Roger Ebert's *Video Companion*, plus excerpts from other film references, and stills, short video clips, and recordings of dialogue from a handful of films. The interface is virtually flawless. For example, you can put together a list of, say, all westerns in which Ronald Reagan appears in a few seconds, and call up capsule reviews of them in a few seconds more.

One minor criticism: its references contain reviews of only about 21,000 films. Maltin has eliminated thousands of reviews from his book in order to keep it from getting too large; wouldn't it make sense to restore them to the CD-Rom version of his guide? Similarly, not all the biographies (let alone the other entries) from the past edition of Katz are included. All this information exists in machine-readable form. *Cinemania* would be all the more valuable if it were included, using up some of the disk's 150 megabytes of empty space.

Even so, this is a tremendous product. With it, you can find just about any piece of information you want about just about any film or film actor. And you can find it fast.

Small Blue Planet. Now What Software, 1993, \$50. ★★ ★1/2 The promise that CD-Rom makes of flashy video is usually kept only in the breach. This disk is the only one I have seen whose video is worth the investment of storage space. *Planet* contains a gallery of maps, satellite photographs, and other images of Earth. You can zoom in to see incredibly fine detail (e.g., individual buildings in cities). If you're a geography nut like I am, you have to have this disk.

World Atlas. Software Toolworks, 1992, \$20. ★1/2 Second-rate maps with very little detail, plus a modest amount of statistical information, flags, and national anthems. The interface is fine, I guess, but the amount of information is so negligible and so easily available from other sources (it's all in *Microsoft Bookshelf*, for example, along with a lot more information), that this is simply a waste of time.

U.S. Atlas. Software Toolworks, 1992, \$20. ★1/2 See comments about *World Atlas* above.

Street Atlas U.S.A. Delorme, 1994, \$50. ★★ ★ The good news is that this incredible product contains detailed maps of every city, town, and county in

continued on next page

Grabbe, "Feed the Children," *continued from page 54*

Is regurgitation biodegradable? she asked, and hung up.

After a while Lithgow walked up Second Avenue to 42nd Street and over to the U.N. building. There was a group of six or seven people on the sidewalk. They were watching Karen, who was in the middle of the street arguing with a policeman. The policeman put his hands on her shoulders and began pushing her back in the direction of the sidewalk. At the last moment she jerked away, then tripped over the curb and fell into a police barricade.

She sat up and Lithgow came and sat beside her.

Do you think there are politics in the Kingdom of God? she asked Lithgow. She seemed to be all right.

He knew what he wanted to tell her.

The universe is basically indifferent to human joys or suffering, he would say. What happens just happens. It doesn't warrant labels of "good" or "bad," or human reactions of sympathy or hatred. Effort to control or alter the course of events is wasted. One should cultivate detachment and learn to go with the flow. Because the sage strives not, no man may contend against him. He who attracts to himself all that is under Heaven does so without effort. He who makes effort is not able to attract it.

He wanted to say all these things, but he didn't. He didn't say anything.

Kill me or let me have my freedom, Karen said.

After a while she looked at Lithgow: Did I ever tell you I had an abortion?

The doctor so fucking butchered me I'll never be able to have children.

Can I take you somewhere in a cab? Lithgow asked.

No, I have to stay here. I'm the only one who cares.

Lithgow did not see Karen at The Delphic Oracle the following night. But when he returned home there were two messages from her on his answering machine.

The first one said: *I'm at Penn station. Amtrak fucked me over. The police fucked me over. The next stop is bus stop. I'd like to fly home United tonight. Tonight! In the flesh I'd like to kick up my heels. Tonight!*

The final message was shorter: *This city has defeated me. I've done all I could. Now it's up to you.* □

the U.S., right down to the street level. The bad news is that its interface is slow and, quite frankly, doesn't always work.

In theory, you can enter a zip code and a street name and it will find the location. Sometimes it works. Some-

times it doesn't. I don't know why. When it doesn't work, you can generally find the proper map (or proper view) by zooming in and out and moving your view about, a rather slow process.

Even so, the simple fact that for about \$50 you can get a disk with such detailed maps of everywhere in the U.S. makes this disk valuable to travelers who have portable computers.

Great Literature. Bureau Development, 1992, \$30. ★★★ The interface is inelegant, but this CD-Rom is a very impressive resource nonetheless. The reason? This single disk contains the complete text of 1,896 literary works. As nearly as I can tell, all are in the public domain (no doubt helping keep the price low), though for some reason the publisher in its tiny and almost useless manual claims to hold the copyright on everything here. The searching capability may be inelegant, but it works. The cost is about one cent for each work contained.

U.S. History on CD-Rom. Bureau Development, 1990, \$30. ★★★ The same inelegant interface as Great Literature (above), but nonetheless a comprehensive library of sources on American history. Virtually everything contained is in the public domain (again helping to account for the inexpensive price of the disk), and a lot of it is not necessarily first-rate. Even so, having at hand the full text of all sorts of documents, journals, and memoirs is pretty handy. A few days ago I was writing an article that mentioned the landmark Supreme Court decision *Wickard v. Filburn* and wanted to mention a few details. I popped *U.S. History* into my CD-Rom drive, told it to search for the word "Wickard," and in two seconds up came a relevant passage from *A National Historic Landmark Theme Study of Selected Constitutional Decisions and Other Sites*, saving me all kinds of time digging through my library.

History of the World. Bureau Development, 1990, \$30. ★★★ Like the two other Bureau Development disks listed above, this one combines an inelegant interface with a huge amount of public-domain information. Together with the previous two works, you can build a pretty impressive library consisting of thousands of books for around \$60. It's hard to argue with a price like that. □

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Gold, Greenbacks, and the Constitution, by Richard Timberlake "explains clearly and lucidly why legal tender laws and central banking violate the plain language of the American Constitution" —Richard Wagner, chair, Department of Economics, George Mason University. Send \$4.95 + \$3 s&h to Liberty Bookshelf, P.O. Box 1181, Port Townsend, WA 98368.

In honor of one of the most beloved Libertarians, Karl Hess (Goldwater speechwriter), you can obtain three articles that greatly influenced the modern libertarian movement: "The Death of Politics," "The Lawless State," and *The Playboy Interview*. Package cost is \$9 including postage. Mail to: Reliant Press, Box 41, Oakton, Virginia 22124.

The Market for Liberty, by Morris and Linda Tannehill. Anarchist classic, back in print. Forward by Karl Hess, introduction by Doug Casey. Send \$12.95 + \$3 s&h to Liberty Bookshelf, P.O. Box 1181, Port Townsend, WA 98368.

Pocket copy Constitution: \$3.95. Gerald Fitzgerald, 2831 Acorn, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48302-1003.

Refute Liberals! Handbook. \$4.00 to Showdown, P.O. Box 246512, Sacramento, CA 95824.

Periodicals

Directory of Libertarian Periodicals, updated latest edition, lists around 150 titles, with addresses, other information. All believed to be presently publishing. \$3 postpaid, \$4 overseas. Jim Stumm, Box 29LB, Hiler Branch, Buffalo, NY 14223.

Dispatches from The Last Ditch. Anarcho-pessimists, post-neo-Objectivists, crypto-Cop-perheads, and other enemies of the permanent regime opining monthly, from individualist and European-American perspectives, on the end of civilization. Write for free issue. \$15 for 4 issues; \$42 for 12. WTM Enterprises, P.O. Box 224, Dept. LIB, Roanoke, IN 46783. Make checks payable to WTM Enterprises.

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The Voluntarist — sample copy for two first-class stamps. Box 1275, Gramling, SC 29348.

Reflections, from page 14

he had coauthored a journal article concerning the various strengths of sunscreen). "Student evaluations indicate that Professor Rothbard's performance is significantly above the department average," wrote the chairman — yet he rated Murray's classroom performance as only "satisfactory."

More unbelievable was the chairman's claim that Murray's professional growth was "disappointing." That year, Murray had published two books in France, two smaller books in the U.S., and two scholarly articles, and had consulted on the publishing of a colleague's book. He was the editor of two scholarly journals and delivered papers at a number of conferences. All of this while teaching his classes, directing three graduate students' professional papers, and chairing one student's Masters essay and oral examination.

The chairman even had the nerve to write that he expected Murray "to teach more students," despite the fact that he had been instrumental in abolishing the Masters program in Theory and Policy that most of Murray's students, including this writer, elected to pursue. As Murray wrote in his protest, the chairman's "actions belie[d] his words."

Murray Rothbard was a treasure that the UNLV economics department attempted to keep hidden from students. Thus, there were very few of us fortunate enough to have studied under him. I think about Murray every day, and how lucky I am to be one of those few.

The last time I saw Murray was in mid-December of last year, prior to final exams. As usual, we talked and laughed about many subjects, including my trip to *Liberty's* Tacoma conference. We were going to have great fun listening to R.W. Bradford's "Why Libertarians Love to Hate" tape from that conference when Murray returned for the spring semester.

At Murray's memorial, his UNLV colleague Clarence Ray related that Murray Rothbard was, first and foremost, a nice man. There were many at UNLV who disagreed with Murray's ideology, but no one disliked him.

Murray Rothbard was a cheerful, sweet, likeable man who didn't hate anyone, especially fellow libertarians.

—Douglas French

Notes on Contributors

"Baloo" and "Shiong" are the not-so-secret identities of master cartoonist Rex F. May.

Caroline Baum is an on-line columnist for Dow Jones Telerate.

John Bergstrom is the real name of an all-too-real cartoonist living in California.

David Boaz is executive vice president of the Cato Institute.

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

Michael Christian is an American attorney living in San Diego.

Stephen Cox is author of *Love and Logic: The Evolution of Blake's Thought*, and other books and articles.

Douglas French is a writer in Las Vegas, Nevada.

James Gill is *Liberty's* staff artist.

J. Orlin Grabbe is author of a textbook, *International Financial Markets*, now in its third edition.

Leon T. Hadar is a journalist living in Washington, D.C., and author of *Quagmire: America in the Middle East*.

John Hospers is author of *Human Conduct* — a new edition forthcoming soon — and numerous other works of philosophy.

Bill Kauffman is author of *America First! Its History, Culture, and Politics*.

Richard Kostelanetz has written and edited several books about John Cage, as well as many other volumes about art and literature.

Val Lambson is associate professor of economics at Brigham Young University.

Michael Levine is circulation manager of *Liberty*.

Tom Loughran is editorial intern at *Liberty*.

Wendy McElroy is the author of a book on pornography, to be published by St. Martin's later this year.

Robert Lee Mahon is professor of English at East Central College in Union, Missouri.

Victor Niederhoffer is a trader in the international money markets.

Carl Oglesby is former president of Students for a Democratic Society and author of *The Yankee and Cowboy War*.

Randal O'Toole is editor and publisher of *Different Drummer*.

Durk Pearson is coauthor of *Freedom of Informed Choice: The FDA vs Nutrient Supplements*.

Paul Piccone is editor of *Telos*, the lost bridge between the Frankfurt School and the Rockford Institute.

Bruce Ramsey is a journalist living in Seattle.

Sheldon Richman is author of *Separating School and State* and originator of the "onion" theory of government.

Chris Sciabarra is the author of forthcoming books on Ayn Rand and F.A. Hayek.

Jane S. Shaw is a journalist living in Bozeman, Montana.

Sandy Shaw is coauthor of *Freedom of Informed Choice: The FDA vs Nutrient Supplements*.

David Ramsay Steele is author of *From Marx to Mises* and numerous articles and reviews.

Clark Stooksbury is assistant publisher of *Liberty*.

Timothy Virkkala is managing editor of *Liberty*.

Jesse Walker is assistant editor of *Liberty*.

Martin Morse Wooster is an associate editor of *The American Enterprise*.

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Terra Incognita

Seoul

Belated repatriations in the Far East, reported in the *London Times*:

Two thousand Korean noses taken to Japan by invading Samurai in 1597 were recently returned and buried near Seoul.

Washington, D.C.

Witty repartee from the nation's First Lady, reported in the *Washington Post*:

"It is not unusual for Hillary Clinton to end a conversation with a staff member by uttering, 'Okey-dokey, artichokey.'"

Japan

Cultural imperialism in action, as described by *World Press Review*:

Ticket sales jumped when Japan Airlines began plastering Disney characters on the outside of its planes. But flight attendants were less than pleased when told to wear Mickey Mouse ears on some routes.

Russia

Literary trends in the land of Dostoevsky, as reported by *The Economist*:

Russia's number-one nonfiction bestseller is *How to Become a Happy Cat*.

Washington, D.C.

Progressive labor regulation, described in the *Detroit News*:

In 1994, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission ordered a company to supply "any supporting documentation" it could to prove its claim that it hadn't conspired to monitor an employee's brain by putting a microchip in her molar.

Turkey

Intriguing slogan from a Turkish newspaper's safe-driving campaign, quoted in the *Detroit News*:

"People who are violating the traffic rules are, or are becoming, homosexuals."

Wichita, Kansas

Conclusions drawn from a recent Harris poll of Shriners, quoted in *The Wall Street Journal*:

"People look at the fez and say, 'Hmmm, wonder what kind of organization that is — does that have to do with Arabs?' The survey showed that the fez was not an attraction."

San Francisco

The intricacies of identity politics, as reported in *The Wall Street Journal*:

When a black lesbian was nominated for a San Francisco city commission, black supervisor Willie Kennedy exploded in outrage, insisting that black lesbians invariably favor homosexuals over members of their own race. "I want someone who is black all the way!" she bellowed.

Des Moines, Wash.

How police protect the innocence of young prostitutes, according to *The Highline Times*:

According to Police Chief Robert Thompson, undercover officers routinely expose themselves to women suspected of being prostitutes to prove they're not cops, unless the suspect appears to be underage.

Zion, Ill.

The legal enforcement of temperate cuisine, as reported by the *State Journal-Register*:

Charlie Hauck's Zion bakery is facing a legal challenge in this dry city because he makes rumcakes.

Liberia

Burroughsian revolutionaries in West Africa, as described by the *Nairobi Daily Nation*:

Liberian guerrillas with names like No Way, Pepper, and Dirty Dick have been photographed wearing a weird assortment of women's dresses and wigs.

Haugesund, Norway

Local pride, Scandinavian-style, as reported by *Dagbladet*:

A coastal village plans to erect a statue of Marilyn Monroe because the actress, an illegitimate child, may have been fathered by a man who may have had roots there.

Buffalo, N.Y.

Labor's ongoing struggle for employee benefits, reported by the *Associated Press*:

A Buffalo city official admitted stealing at least \$200,000 in public funds. After he resigned, he requested to be paid \$8,500 for unused vacation time.

New York City

Why Margaret Sung of the New York Civil Rights Coalition says she became estranged from former ally Michael Meyers, quoted in *The Wall Street Journal*:

"He was talking more about individual personal freedom and individual responsibility, more educational standards."

Washington, D.C.

Progress in the War on Fraud, reported in *Capitol Ideas*:

In 1993, the FBI purchased copies of 35 Medicare cards and sold them to a suspected fraud ring. Instead of using fake ID numbers, the FBI insisted on the genuine articles. So far, 23 clinics have charged taxpayers \$163,745 for services the actual cardholders neither requested nor received.

Since Medicare numbers are issued for life, the government can't cancel the 35 cards without wiping out the original beneficiaries' records.

(Readers are invited to forward newspaper clippings or other items for publication in *Terra Incognita*.)

The Voices of Liberty

***Our Right to Drugs* — Thomas Szasz** assaults the very foundations of the War on Drugs in this forthright defense of the individual's basic human right to put what he pleases into his own body. A probing talk, followed by a intense question-and-answer period. Szasz defends his thesis with wit and energy. Indispensable! Two-tape set. **Audio: \$12.95**



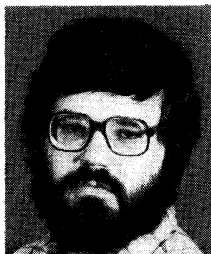
***Searching for Liberty* — Bill Bradford, Bill Kauffman, Durk Pearson, and Sandy Shaw** discuss the special kinds of freedom and community they've found living in different corners of rural America — the Pacific Northwest, upstate New York, and central Nevada. Then **Jim Rogers, Doug Casey, Scott Reid, Bruce Ramsey, and Ron Lipp** recount their quests for freedom around the globe — from Hong Kong to Canada to Botswana. Indispensable for anyone looking for freedom in an un-free world. Two-tape set. **Video: \$39.50; Audio: \$12.95**

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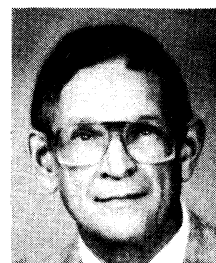
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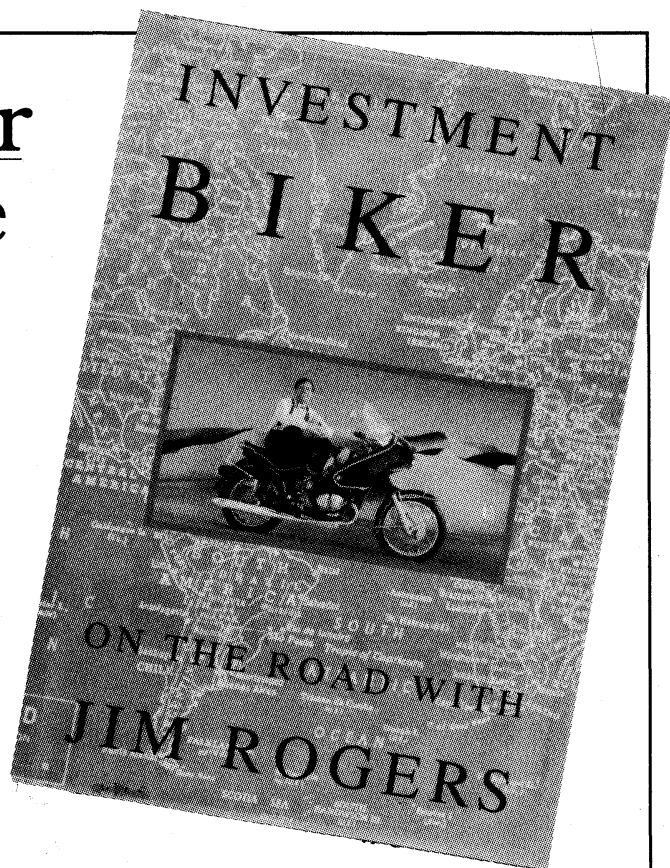
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