

# Liberty

*"Never yet has law formed a great man: 'tis liberty that breeds giants and heroes." –J. C. F. von Schiller*

The Man *vs* the Environment  
The Strange Ecology of Libertarian Opinion  
*by Murray Rothbard and John Hospers*

AIDS and the FDA

*by Griffin Cupstid, William London and Sandy Shaw*

The Mathematics of an Immoral Policy:  
Testing the Drug Tests  
*by William Wingo*

Reaganomics Without Tears  
*by William Niskanen and Leland Yeager*

Plus: Election Commentary by Russell Means, Ron Paul,  
Chester Alan Arthur and others, and Articles and Reviews  
by Jane Shaw, Karen Shabetai, Sheldon Richman, Justin Raimondo,  
and others; and a short story by Jeffrey Olson

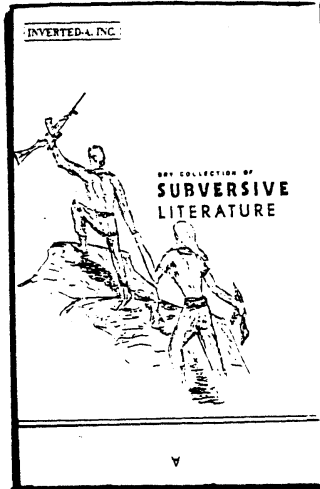
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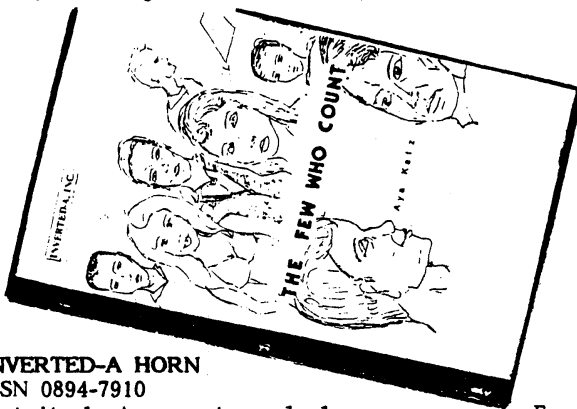
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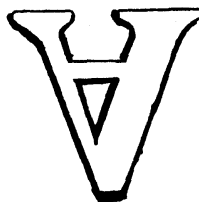
**SAMPLES:**

The idea of a 100% tax is attractive to the liberal element, because it has the potential of imposing the socialist tenet: "to each according to his needs."...We would all...be on welfare.

Amnon Katz.

Within a boarded up arcade  
That some dead mason's trowel laid,  
The voice of law and order said:  
"Just run. We want to shoot you dead."

Delta Zahner



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Murray N. Rothbard  
Douglas Casey  
Stephen Cox  
Karl Hess  
Ross Overbeek  
*associate editors*

Mike Holmes  
William P. Moulton  
Sheldon Richman  
David Ramsay Steele  
Ethan O. Waters  
*contributing editors*

Timothy Virkkala  
*assistant editor*

Kathleen Bradford  
*copy editor*

Rex F. May  
Bob Ortin  
*cartoonists*

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# Letters

## Naming Which Sacred Cows

In "Prophecy and Amnesia" (Nov. 1988), Mike Holmes passionately argues for the movement's need of self-criticism and kicking "a few [libertarian] sacred cows."

Then why, in the same article, does he make an about face and cloak the specifics of each libertarian "failure" in shadowy descriptions while also avoiding naming names? Just who are "the individual," "the well-known libertarian," and "the novelist"—and why the cover-up?

Since Mr. Holmes is interested in fostering constructive criticism, specifics would better enable those charged to respond and the rest of us to discern what he is alluding to. Otherwise he is doing the movement a disservice.

Michael R. Edelstein  
Kingston, N.Y.

## Prose, no Cons

Erika Holzer's short story ("Eye-witness," Sept. 1988) sure as hell gets off to a good start . . . "A car pulled up with its headlights turned off" is about as fast

as you can get . . . and then went on to set a record, probably, for the number of plot twists in five pages. I especially liked the lean, swift writing. Like Carl Lewis in prose.

Al Ramrus  
Pacific Palisades, Calif.

## Just Suppose . . .

William P. Moulton apparently feels that voting for Paul would have only philosophical significance and no political significance ("Why I Will Vote for George Bush," Nov. 1988). Sounds like demopublican propaganda to me!

50% of the eligible voters rejected both Bush and Dukakis. Bush only received 27% of eligible voters' votes. Paul could triple Bergland's total. Suppose the 1992 Libertarian candidate triples Paul's total. Suppose the 1996 Libertarian candidate triples the total of the 1992 candidate. Suppose the 2000 libertarian candidate for President triples the 1996 candidate. In other words, Libertarians could be getting 19 million votes by the year 2000. Suppose the demopublicans continue their fantastic

trend of losing electorate interest. Suppose the 1992 Presidential winner gets 35 million votes. In 1996 one of the two demopublicans gets 25 million votes. In 2000 the top demopublican gets only 16 and 1/2 million votes. Suppose, too, that the electoral college has been eliminated in the interim. We would have a Libertarian President in the White House in the year 2001 (and Mr. Moulton would not be given any position in the Libertarian Administration).

I would suggest that Mr. Moulton learn the difference between a conservative and a statist pragmatist.

Chip R. Boven  
Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

## Which George Bush?

I can hardly contain my surprise at reading in my first issue of *Liberty* the statement of one of your editors, William P. Moulton, that George Bush should be elected President because he is, Mr Moulton says, "the kind of person" he wants to be president. For Mr Bush, he says, "has led a life of manly virtue."

Tell me, Mr Moulton: is this the same George Bush who said to Ferdinand Marcos, "Sir, we love your adherence to democracy"? Is this the same Bush who was director of the CIA, and who during his supervision thereof, found nothing to expose or significantly to change in that esteemed organization? The one who said that over half of "homeless" people are "mentally ill," and then amended that figure to "about a third" in the second debate, and who speculates that "maybe we went too far" in letting "them" out of the mental "hospitals" in which they were incarcerated, drugged, tortured, lobotomized? The Bush who promises me, a 26-year old who pays over one third of his income in taxes, that the Social Security system is now "fiscally sound," and asserts that Social Security is *not* a welfare program? Who made lynchpins of his campaign his desire to compel (let us be realistic) children to recite the Pledge of Allegiance, and to redouble the persecution of drug users and sellers, this time complete with *executions*? Who in the second debate quite deliberately *lied* about the involvement of previous administrations with General Noriega? Or is there another George Bush, an *honorable man*, whom I don't know about and am confusing with the George Bush of "manly virtue" known to Mr Moulton.

Were Mr Bush speaking about incarcerating Jews, or executing blacks or homosexuals, I doubt that Mr Moulton

## Inside *Liberty* . . .

The election just past captivates the interest of libertarians of all parties. Our analysis centers on the Libertarian Party: the 1988 LP presidential nominee, plus three past nominees and one past candidate, explain what the election meant and where the LP should go from here. Minor party expert Richard Winger advises what went right—and wrong—with the campaign. LP supercandidate Larry Dodge tells what he's learned about running as a Libertarian, and former LP activist Justin Raimondo explains why it's foolish to stand for office as a minor party candidate.

Our pseudonymous political commentator "Chester Alan Arthur" looks at the LP's record in five elections, and argues that the future of both the LP and of liberty is bright. The Kansas election offered an opportunity to provide an answer to the question: How much do TV ads increase vote totals? The answer is "a lot." To find out how much TV helps and how much it costs, see my article on page 35.

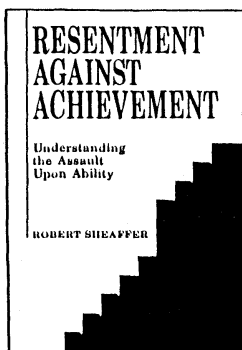
Elsewhere in this issue, William Niskanen and Leland Yeager evaluate Reaganomics and the Reagan "Revolution," and Jane Shaw explains how "public choice" economics can help us understand how the world works. William Wingo argues that there are serious and unavoidable flaws in drug testing and Sandy Shaw responds to tough criticism of her views of AIDS.

A *strange ecology*: Libertarian environmentalist John Hospers responds to criticism (page 46), while Murray Rothbard savages Hospers' views (page 13).

And as usual, our Editors offer their contentions on the passing scene . . .

— R. W. Bradford, Editor





# What's Behind The Politics of Envy?

## RESENTMENT AGAINST ACHIEVEMENT

### Understanding the Assault Upon Ability

by Robert Sheaffer

“**E**very once in awhile a book is published that is marked by a bold and original thesis that seems to make life more intelligible. Usually it breaks taboos or tacitly agreed-upon silences, and says things that are not ‘supposed’ to be said with a directness that hits like a slap in the face.

I am thinking of such works as Jose Ortega y Gasset’s *The Revolt of the Masses*, Nock’s *Our Enemy, the State*, and Schoeck’s *Envy*, and of such authors as Nietzsche, Mencken, and Rand.

It is to this company that Robert Sheaffer’s new book **RESENTMENT AGAINST ACHIEVEMENT** belongs. It is a work of cultural interpretation of high courage.

#### Envy vs. Achievement

The thesis of Sheaffer’s book is that there are two opposing moral codes at work in society. One is the morality of achievement, of work, competence, and accomplishment. The other is the morality of resentment against achievement. When the first predominates, we witness human accomplishments in one area after another. It is responsible for the rise of civilization. When the second predominates however, we witness the rise of spite, envy and hostility to achievement. Social parasitism and appeasement of envy and resentment rise until civilizations go into decline.

Sheaffer analyzes the nature of achievement and the benevolent life-force that makes it possible, contrasting it with the nature of resentment, and the roots of both in childhood. His analysis here is especially acute, and it is unusual to find someone at ease in broad historical generalization who also understands anything about individual psychological development on this level. Take, for example, this profoundly simple yet penetrating explanation of why poor children so seldom find success:

The fact that children of the lower classes are bombarded with lower-class values every day of their lives suffices to explain why so few of them ever accomplish anything. The powerful resentments within the lower classes, which punish deviation from norms with not only verbal abuse but frequently with physical violence, act as exceedingly powerful deterrents to upward mobility.

Then Sheaffer shifts to the broader picture, and the book moves from one outstanding passage and insight to another. The chapter on social classes analyzes resentment as a manifestation of lower-class values, and exposes the rival consequences of young people coming to imitate, alternately, the values of those who value achievement and those who scorn it. Sheaffer turns on a powerful social X-ray here, and the results are penetrating.

#### Institutionalized Resentment

The book goes on to analyze the political consequences of appeasing resentment, particularly the rise of the welfare state and the ideology of collectivism. Socialism in his hands fares about as well as it did at the hands of Ludwig von Mises and Ayn Rand: their special scorn for it is his, also. His defense of science, technology, and economic growth is flamboyant and uninhibited. And his celebration of human achievement and all the glories it makes possible rivals both the poetry of Nietzsche and the passion of Ayn Rand.

Sometimes Sheaffer’s reach exceeds his grasp, and there are passages in this book I found embarrassing, such as his ruminations on American foreign policy or his attack on popular and rock music.

But never mind. I admire this book greatly, and am happy to hail it as a wonderful achievement. Reading it is that rarest of pleasures: an exciting experience that doesn’t let up from the first page ‘till the last. Bravo! ”

—Roy A. Childs, Jr.

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would consider Mr Bush the *kind of person* he, as a "lover of liberty" [sic] wants to be President. Is the imprisonment of the "mentally ill" or the execution, for God's sake, of drug sellers, really any different? Or is the difference merely that Mr Moulton feels confident that *he* will not be incarcerated in a mental hospital, or executed for dealing drugs?

I read apologies by and for political hacks and liars every time I pick up a newspaper. I don't need them from libertarians, or those who posture as libertarians. It is one thing to advocate, as a necessary evil, voting for George Bush whilst holding one's nose. It is another thing altogether to characterize one's support of him as part of a "love of liberty and of our civilization." Even Republican Party reptiles, Mr Moulton, will usually not go that far.

Nathan Crow  
Brooklyn, N. Y.

## Atlas Drugged

Have you ever come across the rumor that what later came to be known as *We The Living* (the book) was written in the early 1930s by one Elmo Glazunov of Goshen, Indiana with the title *Honeymoon in Irkutsk*? That, while looking for the office of a literary agent, he accidentally left the only manuscript of his *opus* in the backseat of a cab near the corner of Vine and Whitney in LA? That, dejected, he returned home to grow sorgham and okra on his 70-acre spread and never learned that an obscure Russian-American show-biz hanger-on had hailed that same cab?

Bill Jacobsen  
West Lafayette, Ind.

## Pseudo-Something-or-Other

"Ethan O. Waters" accuses me of systematically misrepresenting him ("The Two Libertarianisms, Again: What Is Wrong With Richman," Sept. 1988). I think he is wrong about this, but I will leave that to the readers. What puzzles me is why someone so concerned with being accurately represented would use a pen name—without letting his readers know this.

Sheldon Richman  
Woodbridge, Va.

## An Infinite Debate, or Is There a Natural End In Sight?

I read with interest the debate between Prof. Hoppe and his critics in your November issue ("Breakthrough or

Buncombe?"). I am sorry to say that I have not yet read Prof. Hoppe's book, so I will not comment on it. I do, however, have something at stake in his reply to Prof. Rasmussen. One of Prof. Hoppe's arguments in rebuttal to Rasmussen is that one cannot get an ought from an is because of an infinite propositional regress. This is a response that Prof. Rasmussen and I have dealt with at length elsewhere (hence my stake in this debate). To simplify matters let me simply cite the reference for anyone interested: *Journal of Libertarian Studies*, Vol. VII, No. 1, Spring 1983.

Secondly, a great deal of Prof. Hoppe's response appears to depend on the distinction between "establishing a truth claim and instilling a desire to act upon the truth." Of course there is this difference, as I believe Plato first pointed out in *Gorgias*. But the issue here is not whether people can act reasonably or not, but whether they ought to. Prof. Hoppe's response amounts to claiming that this question cannot be answered because the gap between ethics and what he calls "socio-psychology" is unbridgeable. Such a response is fine given the rationalist perspective on moral theorizing Hoppe takes. But the real issue, and the one behind Rasmussen's criticism, is whether and why we should adopt this mode of theorizing. It has been a popular—and virtually unquestioned—assumption since Hobbes and Hume that reason is not a motivator and that reason and desire are distinct and separate phenomena (each with their own logic). This approach to ethics, however, is by no means beyond question. An older and longer tradition of natural end ethics denies that such assumptions are foundational. This is the framework from which Rasmussen and I work, and why I believe that Prof. Hoppe's rebuttal simply missed the point. Nevertheless, his reply did bring us to the critical juncture, and perhaps some of your readers will wish to explore classical ethical theory more carefully as a result.

Finally, I could not help but think of John Finnis and Germain Grisez when reading Prof. Hoppe's responses and about his mode of argumentation. Prof. Hoppe's discussion of the gap between "is" and "ought," for example, is the same reading that Finnis gives of Hume's distinction, as is the appeal to "transcendental" truths whose denial leads one to self-refuting contradiction. It may just be that the mode of argumentation Prof. Hoppe prefers, as Finnis-Grisez claim, leads to a longer list of first

principles of practical reasoning, not all of which are so compatible with Libertarianism. I will certainly be looking for that when I read Hoppe's book. Others who are ahead of me in that respect may want to check these authors out and make the comparison themselves.

Douglas J. Den Uyl  
Louisville, Ky.

## Responsibility, not "Rights"

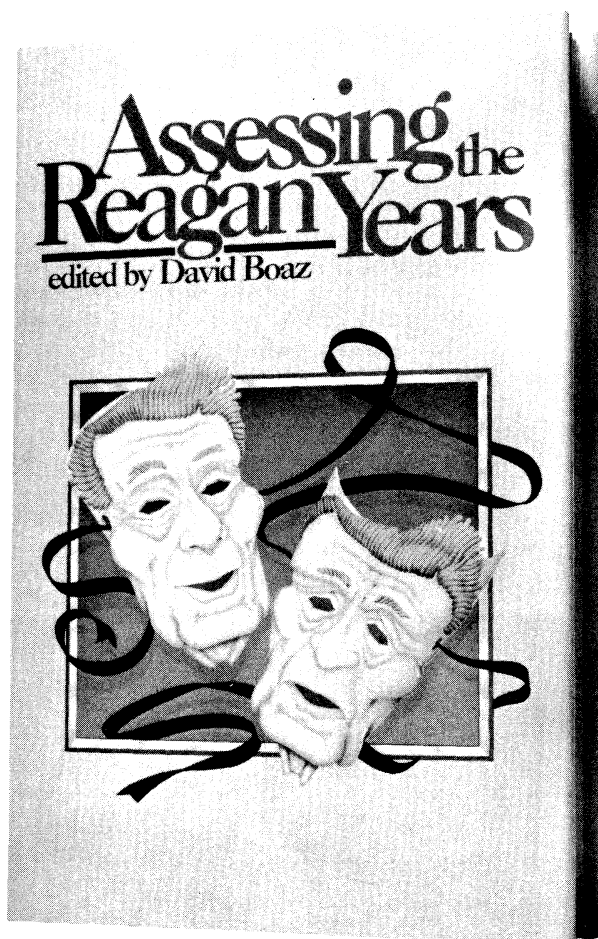
Professor Hoppe opened a "can of worms" with his new look at the basis of "rights" ("The Ultimate Justification of the Private Property Ethic," Sept. 1988). Clearly, judging from the November symposium ("Breakthrough or Buncombe?"), it is not a concept easily agreed upon. I too have been thinking on this subject for a number of years. With regard to the historic justification of "Natural Rights," I find myself in concert with Prof. Mises, who defines the concept as follows:

An illusory right supposedly conferred upon an individual by natural law. The emptiness of appealing to any "natural" right becomes evident when an opponent claims a contrary or inconsistent "natural" right. Such differences can be resolved only by resort to sound and effective reasoning.

Prof. Rothbard rests his "natural" rights, at least partially, on self-ownership or self-rulership. I believe the concept of "self" ownership to be entirely correct. It becomes confusing when one refers to this as the "right" of self-ownership. Self ownership is not a right, it is a fact. It is part of the nature of Man. Rose Wilder Lane premises her excellent work *Discovery of Freedom* on man's control of his own energy. To her "Freedom" is "self control." She believed that personal freedom comes, and eventually societal freedom will come, with the realization of this fundamental fact. Each of us must rid himself of the notion that we are controlled by some outside force whether it be embodied in our parents, the church, the state or any of a myriad of other foreign entities. Each of us is in control of his own life. Because we are in control, we are responsible for ourselves and for our actions. It is true we are sometimes confronted with very difficult choices. To me this is what the Nuremberg trials were all about. These trials, had they been carried to their ultimate conclusions, would have destroyed the very foundation of the state. Difficult choices do not, cannot, absolve us of

continued on page 8

# The Reagan Revolution. Revisited.



## Was there a Reagan Revolution?

### If not, why and where did it fail? If so, will it have lasting effects?

The Reagan administration came to Washington with a policy agenda that was more ambitious than any since the New Deal. In this volume 31 distinguished analysts evaluate the administration's policies in a wide range of areas, from the deficit to civil rights, from military spending to education, from the environment to taxation. Although they acknowledge the administration's real achievements, many of the contributors to this book conclude that President Reagan squandered much of his potential and that his crusade for reform ultimately amounted to business as usual. *Assessing the Reagan Years* is the most comprehensive analysis yet of the successes and failures of the administration.

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## Letters, continued from page 6

responsibility.

Since the most important requirement for ownership is control, we can be said to "own" ourselves. The fundamental fact, however, is that of self control, not ownership. This approach avoids confusion on such questions as the ownership of "slaves." Slave ownership has to do with title, not fact. In a sense, "slave" is a legal, in addition to a philosophical term. The owner of slaves can tie them up, he can imprison them, in some cases he can kill them, but he cannot control them against their will. Try it some time with your kids. This is the basic argument against the state. Individuals acting in the name of the state attempt the impossible through the use of force or fraud, usually a combination of both. Since the state's attempt to control the individual must ultimately fail, tyranny is always the final result.

Since the principle argument against Dr. Rothbard and Dr. Hoppe dealt with the question of ownership, perhaps a different but related approach may be useful. My belief is that the concept of "rights" has been so confused and distorted over time as to be useless in defense of liberty. In many cases "rights" clearly have been destructive of liberty. We do not need some complex logical construct such as Prof. Hoppe's to support a free society. We only need to help ourselves reject the myth of outside control and accept the fundamental fact of "self control." Most of us love freedom, but we try to avoid responsibility.

C. R. Estes  
Camarillo, Calif.

## The Irrelevance of the Ayn Rand Cult

I recently received my first issue of *Liberty*, which I found quite interesting, accompanied by a free copy of Murray Rothbard's "The Sociology of the Ayn Rand Cult," which I found quite offensive. I assume Rothbard's description of the Randian cult is true, albeit exaggerated in his typical fashion. Even assuming its truth, I question the judgment of those who would distribute such a piece as an enticement to subscribe to a libertarian magazine.

Rothbard describes events of 20 to 30 years ago, events which have long since ceased to be relevant. What is relevant now is the content of Rand's philosophy, and for libertarians her powerful ethical grounding of individual rights. In addition, I would ask libertarians to take a

fresh look at the remnants of the "Rand Cult." Like most libertarians, I have carried a mental image of Dr. Leonard Peikoff as a rigid, negative, logic-chopping, intolerant ideologue. However, that image has undergone a radical revision after I listened to his taped lecture series, "Understanding Objectivism." Peikoff is trying to lead Objectivists away from the very sort of mental processes caricatured by Rothbard.

Clearly, there must be a lot of bad blood between Rothbard and Peikoff, between leading libertarians and Objectivists. As a long-time Objectivist and libertarian, I am offended that this small-minded personal squabble continues to divide natural allies into hostile camps. Objectivism provides the best philosophical basis for libertarianism, and libertarianism (*sans* some of its fringe positions) is the natural political derivative of Objectivism. For the sake of new libertarians, if not Rothbard's generation, it is time to bury the hatchet and stop taking potshots at targets 20 years out of date.

Frank Bubb  
Swarthmore, Penn.

## Shot Down Over Facts and Principles

Murray Rothbard ("Iran and Korea: The Ominous Parallels," Sept. 1988) accepts "an uncanny resemblance" between this event and the 1983 destruction of KAL 007, facts to the contrary. KAL 007 was a regularly scheduled flight, whose pattern and appearance was well-known to the Soviet radar operators; Iranair was *delayed* one hour from its scheduled departure, from an airfield that supported simultaneous and frequent operations by Iranian F-14s and other military aircraft. There was a state of peace existing during the KAL 007 event; there was a state of military conflict in effect during the Iranair 655 event. The Soviets had 2 1/2 hours of tracking and visual contact with KAL 007 before ordering it shot down; the *Vincennes* commander had 7 minutes between first contact and his order to fire, during which time the ship was engaged in surface combat and undertaking maneuvers resulting in 30-degree list and consequent physical commotion in the combat information center. There is absolutely no evidence the Soviets ever attempted to contact KAL 007, including the fact that their interceptors were not equipped with international communications channels; there is

incontrovertible evidence that the *Vincennes* attempted numerous messages to Iranair 655, on several international frequencies. The KAL 007 was distinctively identifiable by navigational strobe lights as a commercial airliner; the Iranair 655 was mysteriously indicating a Mode 2 military transponder signal. No possible justification exists for shooting down a visually-identified commercial flight, even if it transited sensitive military installations; given the apparent military identity of the Iranair 655 and the known consequences of delay in the *Stark* event, the decision to engage the airliner was regrettable, but rational under the circumstances.

There is one more point on which Mr. Rothbard seems willfully confused, namely: his statement that U. S. warships "have no business" in the Persian Gulf. He should be well aware that the Persian Gulf is an international body of water, and that free passage by any nation is rightful. Moreover, it is manifestly within the rightful powers of a government to defend sovereign property on the high seas. We can well agree that the U. S. government may have mendacious intent behind its policy in the Persian Gulf, but we cannot suppose that the policy, *on its face*, is violative of accepted international law and principles of libertarian foreign policy. I, too, would prefer the U. S. government to get out of the Persian gulf—because the presence is predicated on a sham of flag registry, because nothing of consequence to American citizens is at risk, and because the region is the naval equivalent of a box canyon. The principle of defending sovereign property on the high seas (and self-defense of military forces) is absolutely correct, nevertheless.

Michael J. Dunn  
Auburn, Wash.

## Unequal Rights

In "Ecology and Liberty" (Sept. 1988), John Hospers raised some important questions for libertarian principles. However, in saying that libertarians have not "devoted much thought to the relation of human beings to animals," Hospers has overlooked the thinking of libertarians such as Nozick, Burris, Riggensbach and Foldvary, none of whom are listed in his endnote references.

An example of a serious attempt to deal with animal rights is Fred Foldvary's book, *The Soul of Liberty*, which has a chapter entitled "Environmental Ethics." In a section

continued on page 52



# Reflections

**Pourquoi Quayle?** — Still at this late date there are contradictory theories. One of my favorites is that in order to keep Pat Robertson followers from defecting to Ron Paul, Bush opted for a running mate with a squeaky-clean voting record on the "social agenda." Maybe. Another notion, rather more far-fetched, is that Bush picked Quayle *because* he would be attacked by the press, taking the heat off Bush himself, and distracting practically all attention from the Democrat ticket. I'm dubious, though, because could anyone have predicted that it'd work that way? More specifically, could *Bush* have?

And then there's the generational idea, that Quayle was chosen to attract people his own age. And of course the pretty-boy theory, that Quayle was likely to get female votes.

All these notions are attractive, and any or all may have a grain of truth in them, but the real truth is much simpler: Why did Bush pick Quayle? For the same reason that Caligula married his horse—to show that he could do anything he wanted and get away with it. —RFM

**Election aftermath** — I like the horserace aspect of an election as much as the next guy, but I despise the inevitable pish-posh about the sanctity of democracy that the pundits feel compelled to indulge in. Of the late election, Roger Rosenblatt wrote, "Something in the nation's system rises to the occasion. Something about the clean equality of the enterprise, the shared control of a corporate destiny effected by a single decision and a simple gesture." (*U.S. News & World Report*, Nov. 14) Humbug! There's nothing hallowed about an election. Democracy is an opiate dispensed periodically to keep us quiet the rest of the time. Statistically, no one's vote means anything. The choice given the public is meticulously preselected, and no candidate who isn't of the official two-party system has a chance because the system guarantees no one will hear about him. There's nothing high-minded in the entire phony-baloney exercise. Rather, as Mencken said, an election is merely an advance auction on stolen goods. I like the slogan scrawled on a bridge in Boston: "If voting could change anything, it would be against the law." —SLR

**Who isn't who** — Lloyd Bentsen started something. Let's finish it. True, Dan Quayle is no Jack Kennedy. (Parenthetically, why the hell should that fact *upset* him so?) Lloyd Bentsen is no Lyndon Johnson. (Or is he?) Mike Dukakis is no Socrates, George Bush is no Richard Nixon, Jesse Jackson is no Frederick Douglass (but he *may* be a William Jennings Bryan), *Teddy* Kennedy is no Jack Kennedy. Dan Rather is no Edward R. Murrow (Why wasn't he *there*? Was he afraid of being asked an embarrassing question?), Pat Buchanan is no Westbrook Pegler, Bob Dole is no Elizabeth Dole, Bruce Babbitt is no George F. Babbitt.

Whew! Garry Trudeau is no Walt Kelly, Tammy Bakker is

no Aimee Semple McPherson, Kermit the Frog is no Godzilla, Pee-Wee Herman is no Tor Johnson, Jerry Falwell is no Cotton Mather. Mikhail Gorbachev is no Peter the Great, Garfield is no Krazy Kat, and Howard Metzenbaum is no anybody at all.

I'm sorry if the truth hurts.

—RFM

**In these times** — Who would have thought, even as recently as twenty years ago, that the Democratic Party would soon become the party of protectionism and xenophobia? The party that once stood for free trade and was the friend and political representative of newly arrived citizens is now run by the likes of Michael "the Japs are buying up America" Dukakis and Richard "don't buy a Hyundai" Gephardt. —WPM

**Television, lawn darts and toy guns**— The other day, President Reagan announced that he would not sign a bill regulating the advertising on children's television programs, on grounds that the legislation was unconstitutional. There is nothing in the Constitution empowering government to regulate children's television, the President noted. This raises two issues.

1. Is it or isn't it a proper action for the executive to veto bills he believes unconstitutional? When Reagan's annointed successor, George Bush, attacked the dreaded Michael Dukakis for his veto of a Massachusetts law extracting a flag pledge each day from every public school inmate, Dukakis defended his veto on grounds that he believed the law unconstitutional. The Bush campaign responded that it is function of the judiciary, not the executive branch, to determine constitutionality, and that besides, various courts have ruled the flag pledge constitutional. Well, various courts have ruled regulation of children's television constitutional as well. I wonder, does Bush believe that his sainted predecessor has overstepped his authority in the same way as the evil Dukakis?

2. The same day that President Reagan announced his pocket veto of the kid TV law, he signed laws to outlaw lawn darts and toy guns that look like real guns. Has President Reagan located the passage in the Constitution that empowers government to regulate lawn games and children's toys?

At any rate, we shall have an opportunity to see once and for all whether the opponents of the lawn dart law were right when they predicted, "When lawn darts are outlawed, only outlaws will have lawn darts." —RWB

**No comparison**— It's somewhat after the fact, but going back to the primary season, I remember a profound sense of irritation with some of the nomenclature. When the Democratic candidates were referred to as the Seven Dwarfs, I thought it was appropriate. But when the Republicans had been winnowed down to, I believe, Bush, Dole and Robertson, I was hor-

rified that some journalists chose to call them the Three Stooges. In the context, the terminology was obviously meant to trivialize the group. What a travesty!

Those of us with a proper grounding in the cultural and political history of America saw right away that the commentators were off base. Let's look at the Three Stooges. Actually, there were six of them—Moe Howard and Larry Fine were the regulars, and the third Stooge was portrayed at different times by Curly Howard, Shemp Howard, Curly Joe DeRita, and Curly Joe Besser. But at the peak of their powers, it was Moe, Larry, and either Curly or Shemp. (Curlyites and Shempians can be thought of as the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks of the movement.)

Now, cast your mind back to those delightful hours spent contemplating the not nearly omnipresent enough Stooge short films on the tube. How did the Stooges live their lives? Thoreau-like, they lived them deliberately. An ad in the paper for three accomplished brain surgeons? Did the Stooges defer, like European peasants? Hell, no—they answered the ad!

When confronted by initiated force, did the Stooges kowtow like Oriental mass-men? No! With an "Oh, superstitious, eh?" or a "Nyuk, nyuk, nyuk," they poked their assailants' eyes or slugged them with shaving-cream pies.

Always ready to participate in the free market, the Stooges readily became greeting-card salesmen, oil prospectors, covered-wagon pioneers, plumbers, auto repairmen, botanists, explorers, restaurateurs, detectives, tailors, physicians, dog-washers, scientists, night-club musicians, and in one very refreshing sequence, even college professors.

George Bush the most qualified man for President this century? Palpable nonsense! Watch Moe Howard in action to refresh your memory. A hands-on manager. A can-do entrepreneur. A practical and philosophical leader of men!

Bush, Dole and Robertson as Three Stooges? Hardly! Three lackluster types, indeed. A preppie, a wheeler-dealer, and a yahoo. What do they teach kids in journalism school these days? To paraphrase Al Haig, not a one of the candidates is fit to tie the shoes of the least of the Stooges.

—RFM

**Holiday revisions** — I've had it with the incessant whining about what "we" owe the military veterans. Every Republican and Democratic candidate panders to this special-interest group, and the toothless tigers of the media regard this shameless prostration as wholly uncontroversial, even commendable. There soon will be a cabinet department for veterans affairs!

Enough! Why should people who were (or are now) in the armed forces be accorded such obeisance? The standard answer is, "they served—even sacrificed for—their country." Nonsense. They did no such thing. Anyone familiar with the revisionist history of America's wars knows that no one in the armed forces ever did anything to defend the American people from danger, because there was no such danger. The American people have been repeatedly lied and tricked into wars by, in Albert Jay Nock's words, "the men who by devilry and chicane and compromise and all the devious ways of the professional 'statesmen,' get into office and make up governments." The veterans, in other words, did not serve their country, they served the state and its villainous officers. Most veterans—especially the conscripts—did so unwittingly, having been deceived along with the rest of us. But that does not change the fact that what they did was not objectively in the service of the

American people.

Veterans Day and Memorial Day are national holidays and that's not going to change any time soon. But libertarians could put these days to good use by devoting them to the promotion of revisionist history—especially regarding World War I, II, the Cold War, and Vietnam.

—SLR

**Canadians say the darndest things** — Driving to Indianapolis late at night recently, I was channel-hopping on the radio, and came in at the middle of a really hair-raising program out of Canada. The subject was Trudeau's constitution, which he wheedled out of the Brits several years ago. I never thought much about it, just assuming that if Trudeau wanted it, there must be something seriously statist about it. Well, I wouldn't have dreamed what it was in this Constitution that would upset these particular Canadians so much. It was the Bill of Rights.

I presume (can't find a copy of it) that their Bill of Rights is roughly equivalent to ours. Everything I heard discussed had a counterpart in ours, at any rate. Everybody on the program rushed to assert that rights were not "absolute," that they con-

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*One commentator said that Bill-of-Rights-type rights were in conflict with more important rights, like the rights to a job, education, a certain standard of living, and the "right to be assisted by government."*

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flicted with one another. That was the good part. One fellow explicitly stated that he opposed the Bill of Rights because it "might limit the expansion of government." There you have it. Though we hear that garbage down here, no politician would dare, I think, to put it in those words. Another chap (or maybe the same one—they all say "aboot" for "about") was actually afraid that Canadians would think they really had rights instead of, as he put it, conflicting claims. And another fellow was afraid that corporations might get rights by accident. He said there had been a case where freedom of religion was invoked to strike down a law prohibiting stores from being open on Sundays. He stated that this was a perversion of freedom, and that it conflicted with employees' rights to have the same day off every week. He didn't mention anything about the rights of the stores' customers.

And the best commentator of all said that Bill-of-Rights-type rights were in conflict with more *important* rights, like the rights to a job, education, a certain standard of living, and the "right to be assisted by government."

A lot of drivel was spewed about how the Bill of Rights was antidemocratic, because a law passed in good faith by Parliament could be overturned by courts if it was in violation of the Bill of Rights. This was said to be a thwarting of the will of the people expressed through their elected representatives. To be fair, another chap said that though democracy was a laudable goal, freedom was also desirable, and that perhaps it was worthwhile to give up some democracy to allow for some freedoms.

Unless I was fooled by a very deadpan NatLampCo produc-

tion, this was an actual Canadian program. Not something coming out of Albania. I'll get a little sentimental here, and say that no matter how exasperated we all get with Ed Meese and the IRS and Gary Hart and the other usual suspects, it is sobering to realize that this is probably the only country on the globe whose politicians are forced by tradition and public opinion to give at least lip service to the Bill of Rights and the basic concept of individual freedom. I mean, when some Yahoo Senator endorses a law to heave Jehovah's Witnesses in the pen for refusing to Pledge Allegiance, he has to say that the law *doesn't* violate the First Amendment. He can't politically, come out *against* the First Amendment.

But up in the land of the Beaver and the bureaucrat, it appears, you can come out against freedom and be taken seriously. Don't anybody tell Lyndon LaRouche about this. —RFM

**Silver linings**—Few libertarians will greet the election of George Bush with more than one cheer. His defects are obvious. Luckily, however, they are obvious not merely to us. Everyone can see them. Consequently, he may lack the gut-level political strength that can be so dangerous in a national leader.

But Bush does have strengths. He is a decent man, the nicest guy on the board of directors. His campaign, now famous for its "negativity," wasn't half as negative as it could have been. It didn't publicize all the damaging facts about Dukakis and his associates that might have been publicized. Nor was it half as negative as the Dukakis campaign, which featured Carter's charge that Bush was "effeminate," Gephardt's charge that Hitler would be pleased with the Republicans, and Bentsen's, Jackson's, and Dukakis' charge that the Republican effort was "racist." Even this violent negativity, however, was not half as violent as the sort of charges routinely made in campaigns fought before the era of television-imposed blandness.

More heartening than Bush's victory is Dukakis' defeat. He was defeated not just because he was perceived as, psychologically, a Nixon of the left, but because Americans found prosperity better than protectionism, equal opportunity better than preferential entitlements, and peace through strength better than peace through self-castigation. Libertarians should not be displeased by this display of common sense.

They may be displeased, of course, by the usual relatively poor showing of libertarian candidates—those labelled

"Libertarian" who were nominated and lost, and those labelled "Republican" or "Democrat" who generally did not achieve nomination. This is no reason for people who have a talent for and an interest in electoral politics to stop fighting the good fight. Much can be accomplished in the use of election campaigns for educational purposes—especially if libertarians (1) avoid ridiculous sectarian battles among themselves and (2) provide positive, constructive views of the advantages of freedom, rather than specializing in self-demeaning and self-isolating attacks on other people as "Demopublicans," "banksters," "phonies," and all the rest of it. We can give people a reason to feel good about voting for libertarian alternatives, not just to feel bad about voting their traditional loyalties.

In any event, electoral politics is merely one specialized area of libertarian life. Libertarian ideas have made remarkable progress during the last twenty years, and most of this progress

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has come from people working in academic research and teaching, in public-policy institutions, in corporations and community organizations, and in the truly private worlds of family and friendship. We've come a very long way without winning elections. —SC

**The health hazards of bureaucracy**—Having just survived an enormously expensive nine hours of open-heart surgery (and a long hospitalization) to repair a ruptured aorta, I was resting comfortably in the contemplation that my wife's insurance policy, on which she had been paying a goodly extra premium to have me included, would pay the bills.

I reckoned without the pernicious collusion of many large insurance companies with the government's health care program for which my wife, as a dutiful taxpayer, also had been providing funds all along.

As a *practice* of the insurance company, not even mentioned in our policy, when a person is *eligible* for Medicare (not whether a person *has* Medicare, but just when they are eligible for it) then they are kicked off the private policy.

I was eligible for Medicare last May when, innocently, I became 65. My assumption was that I did not need Medicare because I was covered by a private policy—a proper free-market alternative.

Alas, trying to be a responsible individual once again crashed headlong into the Redtape Curtain. I had without knowing it, been kicked off the private policy on my 65th birthday, in May, two months prior to my heart surgery!

When we enquired whether, in simple equity, the insurance company shouldn't refund the extra premiums we had been



"One more crack about the First Amendment, counselor, and I'm slapping a gag order on you!"

paying since May, for a service they had already decided they wouldn't render, we were told, simply, "no."

Bureaucracies all become alike, whether private or public: arrogant, thoughtless, scarcely concerned with their founding purposes but only with their own internal protocols. And when private bureaucracies can collude with the public ones to their own advantage, the results can be—as in our case—an ugly reminder of the unending conflict between individuals and all institutional bureaucracies, whether they are called private or public. —KH

**Post-election euphoria** — Surely the best outcome of the elections on November 8, 1988, was the end of political advertising that the day signalled. Only the miracle of an LP election victory could have matched the bliss occasioned by the cessation of the blatant statist mendacity that has tormented us this election year.

The spectacle of political aspirants selling themselves on television and through the mails like so much laundry detergent is one of the less inspiring aspects of life in a democracy. Actually, this simile is an insult to detergent advertising, which after all meets such standards of truth as consumers (and the FTC) require. The best that can be said for political advertising is that it provides valuable ammunition against those knee-jerk anti-capitalists who see in commercial advertising one of the worst elements in capitalism. "The worst element of capitalism" shines in moral purity when compared to democracy's analogue, political advertising.

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pecially grating because no matter what you do at the polls, you are still likely to wind up with a product you despise. When you vote you are not buying a product, like a shopper in a store, you are merely "helping decide" what product will be bought, so to speak. The influence that an individual has on the election of a public official is very negligible indeed. It is possible for a person to go through his whole life without ever casting a vote for a person who gets elected (this is my case, in fact). And during all this time, that same ineffective, uninfluential voter has borne with the most vile of advertisements promoting the most vile of "public servants."

This last year has been the worst in my memory. It is not that this year's campaigns have been, as the pundits have claimed, especially "dirty"—it is that they have been so purely and clearly anti-liberty. The big issues this year have been anti-drugs, pro-social security, pro-public education. I have seen not one advertisement express a libertarian theme.

It is no wonder, then, that I look forward to evenings spent in front of the TV watching and thinking about commercials

that can have a substantial effect only if I let them. I can contemplate the truly harmless issues of our time:

Does Schudson's theory of "Capitalist Realism" really best explain the nature of advertising in modern society?

Do the New Surrealistic commercials really sell anything? (Are any of them worse than the programs they interrupt?)

Can the Hamm's bear walk a straight line? —TWV

**Does she or doesn't she?**— "This country needs," Editor-Publisher Bob Poole opined in an editorial in *Reason*, "the kind of rebirth of freedom that Ronald Reagan promised—but only Margaret Thatcher delivered. The next decade requires a president with moral vision, rooted in the principles of individualism and liberty, and the strength to plan and carry out fundamental, long-term reforms. Margaret Thatcher, we could sure use you."

Things in Britain don't look nearly so rosy to the editors of *The Economist*, the vaguely classical liberal English newsweekly:

It is a familiar story. Politicians in opposition denounce the government for centralizing power, passing too many laws and exercising excessive patronage. They earnestly promise to do none of these when they are in office. Then they win an election—and start centralizing, legislating and patronizing as if there is no tomorrow. Thus the story up to 1979. But Mrs Thatcher is that rare being, a fiercely anti-government prime minister. Surely she has been different from her predecessors? Far from it.

There follows a disappointing record: more legislation (about twice the quantity, in fact, of the Conservative MacMillan government of 25 years ago) and more centralization of power (e.g., the education minister acquired 415 new powers in one recent bill). Mrs Thatcher had some limited success in cutting the size of the bureaucracy during her first couple years in office; but during the past few years the number of government employees has increased, and presently stands well above the number of bureaucrats under Prime Minister Edward Heath.

In a recent editorial, *The Economist* noted Mrs Thatcher's response to the suggestion (at a seminar a decade ago) that Britain needs a Bill of Rights. "When," bridled the future prime minister, 'did a Conservative government ever trample on the liberties of the subject?'" Mrs Thatcher's question was not answered at the seminar, but *The Economist* is willing to answer it now.

Should the prime minister ever ask her question again, "October 1988" will do as an answer. In this one month the government has banned radio and television from interviewing the representatives of legal organizations in Northern Ireland; sacked workers at GCHQ, its communications-interception station, for refusing to leave a trade union; prepared to reverse the burden of proof in criminal trials for those found with a knife or whose hands have traces of explosives, and to end (at once in Northern Ireland, later in mainland Britain) a suspect's right to stay silent when questioned by the police without having damaging inferences drawn in court as a result.

So . . . under Mrs Thatcher, the number of laws has grown, the power of government has been centralized, and the quantity of government employees is growing. And in a single month, Mrs Thatcher violated the right to association of government employees, the right to free speech of British journalists, proposed violations of the right against self-incrimination, and proposed that the burden of proof in criminal cases be on the defendant. This is the result of what Bob Poole calls a



"moral vision, rooted in the principles of individualism and liberty"?

It is true that Britain had suffered under Socialist rule and that Mrs Thatcher was swept to office on promises to reduce the size and power of government. Somehow, this fact seems more impressive from Los Angeles than it does from London, where people actually have to live under Mrs Thatcher's rule. That may explain why Bob Poole penned this remarkable apology for Margaret Thatcher.

London, home to both Mrs Thatcher and *The Economist*, is more than 5,000 miles from *Reason's* Los Angeles office. It's easi-

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er to be seduced by Mrs Thatcher's rhetoric and look past her record when you are separated by a continent and an ocean from her actions.

The episode is reminiscent of the apologies Western democratic socialists offered for Soviet Russia in the 1920s and 30s. They were so blinded by the excitement of socialistic organization that they could not see the dictatorship.

We who love liberty should not be blinded by any politician's libertarian rhetoric, a few acts of privatization, or the contrast between any government leader and her predecessor.

Moderate statism may be preferable to extreme statism. But statism, moderate or otherwise, remains the enemy of those who value liberty. Statism is the enemy, whether or not accompanied by libertarian-sounding rhetoric, whether it occurs in our own neighborhood or 5,000 miles away.

This is no time for ideological myopia.

—RWB

**Greenhouse defects** — Of all varieties of statists, I find the environmentalists the most annoying, since they take an outrageously anti-human (i.e., pro-animal, pro-insect, pro-tree) position, in the name of a High Moral Stance that everyone else seems ready to grant them. So while the rest of us are selfish, narrow-minded, and pro-human, the environmentalists take the Cosmic (i.e. non-human) View. They speak for the Universe.

Those of us who place human beings over insects, animals, and plants are dismissed by the environmentalists as speciesists. The proper word for us, buster, is human-ist.

Animals that are cute and cuddly have "rights" that man must respect, environmentalists claim, even though other animals never respect them. Even environmentalists do not claim that cockroaches or mosquitos are cuddly; these reviled species are defended by the environmentalist fall-back anti-pesticide stance.

Why must we worry about "endangered species"? Species have become extinct since the world began—before humans had anything to do with it. Why must we worry about the snail darter? What has it ever done for us? Why shouldn't every spe-

cies on earth stand (or swim, as the case may be) on its own? Why should man grant any species special privileges? Do any of these species worry about man?

Environmentalists try to turn every natural event into a catastrophe: and whatever the problem, the cause is always industrial technology and use of energy (oil, coal, or nuclear), and the solution is always to suppress technology and to adopt some form of socialism.

Take, for example, the "greenhouse effect." So what if the temperature of the earth goes up, or goes down, a few degrees? The earth has been getting either warmer or colder through recorded history. Why is one temperature more optimal than another? Can you imagine the headaches if man were able to push a button and control the weather? Think of the collective decision-making process: urban folks lobby for sunshine, farmers will vote for rain, warm-blooded and cold-blooded types will squabble over temperature . . . chaos will result. Forget it!

Ironically, the same environmentalists who gripe about the "greenhouse effect"—the earth's getting warmer—also warn us of the "icebox effect"—the world's getting colder. They conjure up images of a new Ice Age descending upon us. Well, I am no scientist, but one thing I am pretty sure of: the earth *cannot* be getting warmer and colder at the same time.

And then there is the dread hole in the "ozone layer." Curiously, the solution proposed for this problem is the same as for the dreaded "greenhouse effect": stop using energy and bring in socialism. Okay, if there is too little ozone up there because of air-conditioners and aerosol cans, then why is the hole over the Antarctic where, the last time I looked, there were darn few air-conditioners or other blights of our energy-using civilization? You say the hole blew south from the civilized regions? So why are environmentalists *also* griping about *too much* ozone over such energy-using civilized centers as Los Angeles, New York, etc? We now have governmental restrictions on technology that creates ozone. Don't these very environmentalist regula-

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tions deplete the ozone layer up yonder?

Aren't the environmentalists engaging in the old shell game? *Whatever happens at all*—whether the temperature gets warmer or colder, whether ozone increases or decreases, the answer is always the same: crack down on industrialization and capitalism.

We all revile Lord Keynes's cynical dictum that "in the long run we are all dead." But doesn't he have a point that is relevant here? If the long run is very *very* long, who the hell really cares? Why *should* we care? Why should we care if clearing the rain forest or using aerosol cans changes the climate in

four hundred years? Why not let the future take care of itself? Human beings in the future, after all, will have far greater technological knowledge and—as long as the environmentalists are kept from having their way—more capital equipment. They will be far more able to take care of themselves than we are to take care of them. Besides, what the hell has the future ever done for *us*? What is the proper time-horizon anyway? Why don't we let the market decide on the rate of time discount, and stop griping?

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*Here, folks, is the bottom line about the dreaded entropy: In 30 billion years, give or take a few million, our sun will burn out . . .*

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The ultimate absurd nightmare in the environmentalist fantasy world is the fear that "entropy" will do us in—unless (of course) we turn to socialism. Here, folks, is the bottom line about the dreaded entropy: In 30 billion years, give or take a few million, our sun will burn out. So what? Try as I might, I simply can't work up any real emotional concern about mankind thirty billion years in the future. Hell, by that time, men may have found a way to transport themselves to some younger, more hospitable and non-burned out planet, as science fiction writers have suggested for decades.

Why, with plenty of real problems on earth in the here and now, do the environmentalists persist in manufacturing phony ones? And why do the rest of us take them seriously? —MNR

**Pop Marxism** — The August issue of *American Libertarian* carried a news item reporting that a recently re-elected Libertarian Party candidate had been accused by his opponent of having "17th century views" in a nearly 21st century world. I took notice because I have long been an informal collector of such remarks. I recall that when William F. Buckley ran for mayor of New York City in 1965, *Playboy* editorialized that Buckley's "17th century views would hardly be relevant to the New York of even a century ago." A year earlier, the *York [PA] Gazette and Daily* called Barry Goldwater "the finest mind of the 14th century." Sometime in 1983 a contributor to *The Nation* accused President Reagan of "applying 18th century nostrums to the 20th century." (One wonders whether the author knew that the idea of a constitutional republic with a bill of rights is an 18th century nostrum.)

Of course, the 19th century is the most common reference point in such accusations. Who among us has not heard that conservatives or libertarians possess 19th century views, outlooks, values, policies, limitations or mindsets?

I wonder, do the authors of such remarks really *mean* anything by them? Or are they just ranting abusively? My inclination is to think that, when a century prior to the 19th is cited, the reference is to nothing specific. Those who use such rhetoric are seldom historical scholars, and it seems doubtful that, if challenged, they would be able to state what attributes of, say, the 16th century are exemplified by the object of their scorn.

To return to the first case cited above, it would be hard to claim that the 17th century, with its savage religious wars in

both Britain and the Continent, its mercantilism, its widespread guild monopolies and other trade restrictions, and its periodic outbursts of witch-hysteria, was particularly evident in the views espoused by a rural Libertarian county commissioner from northern California.

When the 19th century is the temporal locus of accusations of reaction, I suspect the promulgator may have something more specific in mind, although in most cases the remark is probably intended to convey a vague motion of being behind the times. To the extent that any real meaning is intended, the reference is usually to an image of the century preceding ours as an era of unrestrained capitalism, sweatshop working conditions, lack of "social consciousness," oppression of women, and other ghastly things.

Why these rhetorical references to past centuries? I suppose hearing that someone is "old-fashioned" is always going to produce negative vibes in some people. But it seems to me that what we are dealing with is a variety of pop Marxism, one that has become so diffused throughout our culture that its intellectual origins are long forgotten. Marxists are not the only ones who believe that things tend to improve over time, but they are

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*Marxists are not the only ones who believe that things tend to improve over time, but they are the only ones who believe that the economic nexus between mankind and the material forces of production proceed along rigid lines, with our control over these forces constantly increasing and improving. Thus to the Marxist the past is always worse than the present.*

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the only ones who believe that the economic nexus between mankind and the material forces of production proceed along rigid lines, with our control over these forces constantly increasing and improving. Thus to the Marxist the past is always worse than the present. (Yes, classical liberals had an idea of progress also. It was, however, centered around the idea of a conscious, voluntary modification of institutional relationships, not on alleged iron laws of history.)

The way in which this particular Marxist notion has become a cultural cliché follows a pattern of vulgarization that is common to all mass-media societies.

Before arriving at its final form it has become mixed with a folk belief, which may or may not owe anything to Marxism, to the effect that the farther "back in time" one goes, the more socially and sexually repressive was the society—a totally incorrect historical assumption.

A final question remains. Is it even accurate to maintain that libertarians in some way hearken back to the values of an earlier period? Sure it is, providing one is careful with definitions. We do draw much inspiration from the intellectual heyday of classical liberalism (about 1775–1845) and from its political apogee (roughly 1830–1870), but we also receive sustenance from people and events both earlier and later. The problem lies not with us, but with those nitwits who believe that history is a simple linear progression from worse to better.

—WPM

## Introduction

# Public Choice: A Useful Tool

*by Jane S. Shaw*

A few years ago, a television journalist interviewed James Buchanan, the recipient of the 1986 Nobel Prize for Economics. Much to the journalist's consternation, the economist objected to the label "conservative," preferring the terms "classical liberal" and "libertarian." In this article, Ms Shaw explains why libertarians should pay attention to the work of Buchanan and *his* school of free-market economics.

Economics traces its origins to the "political economy" of the 18th century.

Adam Smith, generally recognized as the father of economics, studied how individuals allocate their resources to obtain scarce goods, and how they used both government and markets to do so. Over the years, however, economists (except for Marxists) gradually abandoned the political side of their enterprise. The subject narrowed to a study of voluntary decision-making in a market setting (microeconomics) and, more recently, the aggregate effects of individual and collective decisions (macroeconomics). Economists left study of the political process itself to political scientists.

But the growth of government—and, perhaps, the failure of political scientists to develop useful theories to explain its operation—has led to a return to the concept of political economy. About thirty years ago, a few scholars started applying economic thinking to the workings of government. Their ideas, labeled the theory of public choice, came of age in 1986 when James Buchanan, their most eminent theorist, was awarded the Nobel Prize.

Public choice analyzes how decisions are made by voters, politicians, and government employees. It supplements traditional economic thinking and offers libertarians something they desperately need if they want to reduce or eliminate government—a clear-eyed view of how government really works.

Public choice "replaces a romantic and illusory set of notions about the

workings of governments by a set of notions that embody more skepticism," says Buchanan. Classical liberals can embrace this view of government because it provides good reasons for restraining the power of the state. It is distasteful to mainstream economists and journalists and other opinion-leaders who favor government power. For example, Robert Lekachman wrote in *The New York Times* that the Nobel committee's decision was "far more a testimonial to the fashionable popularity of conservative politics" than a tribute to Buchanan's "rather modest achievements."

In my view, critics of public choice—and that means many mainstream economists and political scientists—dismiss public choice because their own view of politics is unrealistic and they don't want to admit it. The prevailing view of government is the romantic notion that democratic governments can solve society's problems, particularly by correcting the market's failures (unfair competition, unequal distribution of income, and so forth). According to this body of opinion, anything seriously wrong with government is the result of the wrong

people being put into office, not of some inherent problem with the system.

Public choice grew out of the economic subdiscipline of public finance (how governments tax and spend) and was given its greatest impetus by Buchanan and his colleague Gordon Tullock, with the publication of their landmark book, *Calculus of Consent*, in 1962. A major contribution of that book was to show (with some mathematics) that simple majority rule does not have any peculiar moral or efficiency justification.

Public choice applies the central tenets of economics—in particular, the recognition that people are self-interested—to people in government. (An early term for public choice was "non-market decision-making.") In other words, the behavior of people in government (voters, politicians, bureaucrats) is studied as if those people are acting in their own self-interest, just as economists assume that people are acting in their self-interest when trading with one another. Of course, economists don't presume that people always act to promote their own goals, but they consider such an assumption as a useful tool in

understanding and predicting human action. Similarly, public choice economists don't deny the existence of public spirit or ideology, but they find that assuming self-interested individuals helps them to analyze government actions.

Thus, public choice economists treat people in a government setting the way they treat people acting privately. Differences in people's behavior in the two settings stem from the incentives and information they receive. In the collective decision-making process, the incentives and information reflect the fact that government, with its coercive power, separates authority from responsibility.

In the private sector, people generally bear the responsibility for their decisions. If they want something, they have to give up something they own—their labor or property—in return, so that if they make a mistake, they pay for it. Thus they have a strong incentive to make wise purchases and intelligent decisions in pursuit of their personal goals.

In the public sector, people in authority do not bear personal responsibility for their decisions the way they do in the private sector. They are not personally rewarded for a good decision (their property does not increase in value) nor do they suffer for a bad decision (their property does not decrease in value). In theory, they are accountable to the people, but the diffuse public is largely ignorant of their activities and unable to communicate its views except indirectly.

When legislators pursue the "public interest," they do so by spending other people's money. They have little personal incentive to make sure that government expenditures are efficient or wise. They may, of course, intend to spend the taxpayers' money wisely. However, they gain no personal reward for doing so—they aren't saving their own money and they won't receive any portion of wealth they create. Since the public is largely ignorant of what the politician does, voters offer little discipline. Finally, the politician's self-interest—it typically includes a strong desire to be re-elected—tends to push in the opposite direction from wise and efficient use of resources. The interests of the overall populace and

of future generations are continually rejected in favor of the here and now of the narrow special interests of particular individuals and organizations—individuals and organizations whose campaign support may be critical in the next election. Indeed, when a politician helps a narrow constituency at the expense of the general Treasury, the cost of the project often is the benefit.

### The Wisdom of Ignorance

This way of looking at people in government—methodological individualism, or the assumption that the individual is the unit of calculus—is a fundamental tenet of public choice.

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Another is the rational ignorance of the voter. This discovery was made by Anthony Downs in his 1957 book, *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. After introducing this crucial insight, by the way, Downs largely left public choice to pursue other interests and hasn't been a major actor in the field. Curiously, he favors a strong and sizable government. Yet, he gave public choice an enormously useful idea: the notion that the voter is regularly, routinely ignorant, but rationally so, not from a lack of intelligence.

The typical citizen, Downs found, often has little incentive even to vote. Voting takes time, and obtaining the information about the candidates takes even more time. Furthermore, the reward is elusive. While the outcome of an election may be tremendously important for a nation or city, an individual's vote will rarely be decisive in any election. Gordon Tullock points out that the voter is statistically more apt to be killed in traffic on the way to the polls than to determine the election's outcome. And once the politician is elected, the voter will have virtually no impact on the resolution of the multitude of issues that will be decided legislatively.

Have you ever wondered why more than half of all voting-age Americans do not know the name of their congressman? The explanation is rational

ignorance. Economist Richard Stroup points out that people will spend more time and effort finding a place to buy cheap gasoline than they will to learn about a candidate. The reason: they receive the benefit of the cheaper gasoline, but their vote is, to all intents and purposes, largely wasted.

Upon this rock of rational ignorance, much of the framework of public choice is built. Because the voter is largely ignorant, special interest groups can cut deals with legislators on many issues that the voters will never know anything about. Through log-rolling—vote trading—legislators build coalitions for projects that help the special interests that help them. A rural congressman supports housing subsidies in return for support of the farm program. One result is a growing government budget, since money is spent on both farm and housing programs.

Moreover, the ignorance of the voter means that politicians must appeal for votes through "image" and "perceptions" rather than content. With the exception of a few bedrock issues (you have to be against gun control in Montana and have to be for tobacco subsidies in South Carolina) the election will always turn on superficial characteristics—the politician's "image" with the voters. To convey the proper image, politicians need appealing advertising and by and large only special interests (groups that will benefit directly from government expenditures) have an incentive to supply substantial funds for campaigns. They usually supply these funds in exchange for access to the politicians.

Because the voter is ignorant and because politicians have no stake in their decisions (the way they would if they were making decisions about property they owned), government actions are usually shortsighted. Legislation will tend to offer immediate, easily identifiable benefits (Social Security payments, for example) at the expense of future costs that are difficult to identify (such as heavy payroll taxes thirty years hence). In spite of what you read about the short-run outlook of business executives, shortsightedness is more typical of government than business; a company that obtains short-term benefits at the



expense of future costs quickly sees a reduction in its net worth, and thus its stock price.

### The Logic of Bureaucracy

Public choice helps us understand civil servants as well as voters and politicians. Think of bureaucrats as no different from people in the private sector. They too believe in the importance of what they are doing and they naturally want to increase their office's impact and prestige. But in the private sector, professional pride and narrow focus are constrained by the marketplace or, more specifically, by the priorities of a company that is restrained by the marketplace.

For example, the timber manager of the major forest products company may want to cut down a lot of trees (that's what they teach you to do in forestry school), but if lumber isn't selling well, he or she cannot do it with abandon. In contrast, the Forest Service will cut down trees because forest managers want to do it and because they gain funds by doing so, even though they often sell these trees below the cost of the harvest. A private timber company will go out of business if it loses hundreds of

millions of dollars a year for a long time, but the Forest Service does it every year. The taxpayer (largely ignorant of the whole subject) pays the difference.

This brief summary of the foundations of public choice doesn't really indicate its breadth or depth—it is intended only to illustrate that public choice is a useful tool. Once you get beyond the basics, public choice splits into several schools, most notably the "Virginia" and "Rochester" schools. James Buchanan leads the Virginia School, named after the University of Virginia, where he taught in the 1950s. He and his colleagues are especially concerned with constitutional issues and, under Buchanan's leadership, have moved into normative discussion of the need for constitutions to restrain government power.

Buchanan and his colleagues believe that government can be fair only if it follows rules that everyone agrees to before the process of governing begins. The reasoning is that in any particular vote or negotiation, each person has specific interests motivating him; but before particular issues arise, each person will agree to rules that are universally fair. One of Buchanan's current concerns is the elaboration of rules for the U.S. government

(such as a balanced budget amendment) that will make up for constitutional rules and traditions (such as the tradition of balancing the budget) that have eroded over time.

The school that has developed around William Riker of the University of Rochester, on the other hand, is mathematical and statistical. Largely composed of political scientists rather than economists, this school applies game theory to analyze voting (in committees, assemblies, and general elections), party strategies, coalition formations, and agenda manipulation. Adherents can pursue this branch of public choice without taking any position at all about whether more government activity is a good or bad thing.

For those in the Virginia school, however, it's hard to ignore the implications of what they find out—things like the fact that government decisions tend to serve the few rather than the many and accomplish little while costing a lot. Not surprisingly, it is the Virginia school that evokes controversy. And it is the Virginia school that offers libertarians some useful insights that will help them extend their influence as they try to cut back the power of the state. □

## *The Dogs of Capitalism*, by Mitchell Jones, proves that natural rights are not a myth.

It is a fact that the natural rights position cannot be validated by ethical or by economic arguments. This, however, does not mean that natural rights are a myth. What it means is that natural rights are the creation of jurisprudence, and are logically derivable only by means of juridical reasoning.

Historically, the doctrine of natural rights traces back to the tradition of the English Common Law. This tradition developed over a period of some 600 years, during which English judges had an incentive, in most cases, to maintain a strict impartiality and to attempt the reasoned settlement of disputes. Natural rights are the juridical methodology which resulted from this attempt, and which necessarily must result whenever judges make a sustained attempt to settle disputes on the basis of reason. The same methodology arose independently, from the same cause, in the courts of the Roman Republic. To the Romans, the methodology was known as *jus naturale*, or natural justice.

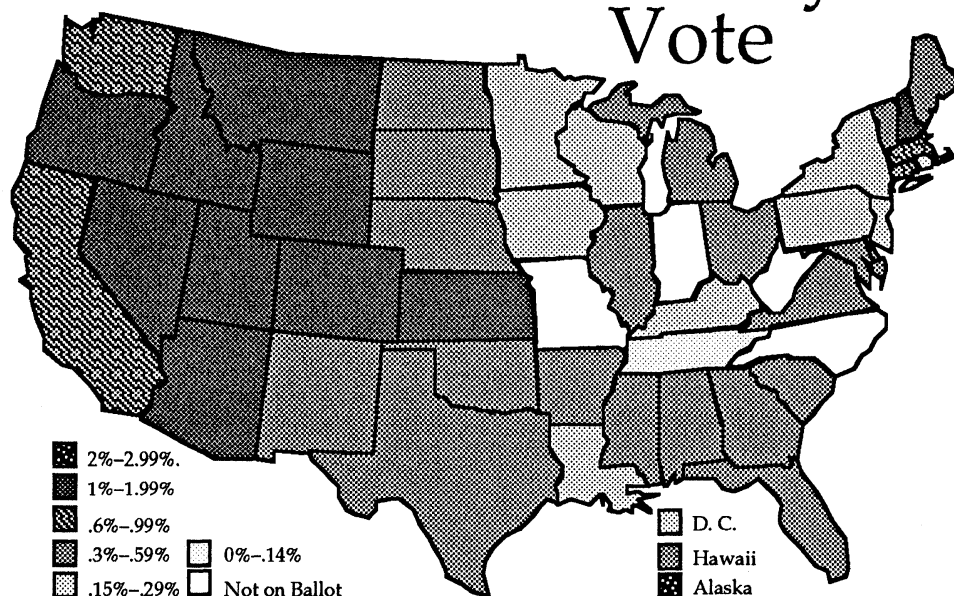
The arguments deriving natural rights from jurisprudence are presented in *The Dogs of Capitalism*. The explanation is detailed, yet easy to read and understand. If you want a refutation of the notion that natural rights are a myth, this is it. For the advocate of liberty who wants to be able to defend his position, this is must reading.

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*The Dogs of Capitalism*, hardcover, 336 pages, 44 illustrations. Price in the U.S. is \$24.95 postpaid. Texas residents add \$1.50 sales tax. Send order to:

**21st Century Logic, Dept. A32 • P.O. Box 12963 • Austin, TX 78711**

# 1988 Libertarian Party Presidential Vote



## State by State Totals

Alabama	6,500	.48%
Alaska	5,459	2.75%
Arizona	12,662	1.10%
Arkansas	3,164	.38%
California	88,836	.73%
Colorado	15,746	1.14%
Connecticut	12,831	.89%
Delaware	1,156	.46%
Dist. of Columbia	529	.28%
Florida	19,488	.46%
Georgia	8,435	.46%
Hawaii	1,999	.56%
Idaho	4,934	1.20%
Illinois	14,974	.33%
Indiana	not on ballot	
Iowa	1,760	.14%
Kansas	12,464	1.25%
Kentucky	2,237	.16%
Louisiana	4,115	.25%
Maine	2,348	.42%
Maryland	6,799	.41%
Massachusetts	22,625	.86%
Michigan	18,567	.50%
Minnesota	5,109	.24%
Mississippi	3,116	.33%
Missouri	not on ballot	
Montana	4,914	1.35%
Nebraska	2,606	.39%
Nevada	3,520	1.00%
New Hampshire	4,602	.99%
New Jersey	7,208	.23%
New Mexico	2,712	.52%
New York	9,180	.14%
North Carolina	not on ballot	
North Dakota	1,314	.44%
Ohio	13,042	.29%
Oklahoma	6,261	.53%
Oregon	14,723	1.23%
Pennsylvania	11,858	.26%
Rhode Island	649	.17%
South Carolina	4,780	.49%
South Dakota	1,076	.34%
Tennessee	1,959	.12%
Texas	30,317	.55%
Utah	7,394	1.14%
Vermont	1,000	.41%
Virginia	8,414	.38%
Washington	15,211	.90%
West Virginia	not on ballot	
Wisconsin	4,779	.21%
Wyoming	2,206	1.14%

## Vote Totals by Party

Republican	48,130,478
Democrat	41,114,068
Libertarian	418,881
New Alliance	201,430
Populist	44,135
Consumers'	30,074
American Independent	26,053
Independent (LaRouche)	23,713
Right to Life	22,560
Workers' League	18,645
Socialist Labor	11,435
Prohibition	7,868
Workers' World	6,628
Peace & Freedom	3,968
American	3,443
Socialist	3,412
Grass Roots	1,949
Independent (Youngkite)	363
Third World Association	229
None of the Above	6,923
Total	90,076,255

## America's "Third" Party:

The Libertarian Party finished third in the presidential election, with 51% of the minor party vote. The LP finished third in 38 states. It was beaten by the Populist Party in Arkansas, Mississippi, Louisiana and Kentucky, by the New Alliance Party in Virginia, South Carolina, the District of Columbia and Florida, and by the Consumers' Party in Pennsylvania. It was not on the ballot in Missouri, Indiana, West Virginia and North Carolina.

## West vs East . . .

For the fifth time in succession, the LP ticket did at least *twice* as well in the West (states lying west of Texas) as in the East:

Area	1970	1976	1980	1984	1988
West	.11%	.76%	1.89%	.64%	.90%
East	.00%	.20%	.87%	.23%	.37%

## Highlights and lowlights . . .

Of the 37 states on whose ballots the LP candidates appeared both in 1984 and 1988, the 1984 ticket outpolled the 1988 ticket in at least 9: Alaska, Hawaii, Montana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Vermont, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. New York and Massachusetts are too close to call. The 1988 ticket outpolled the 1984 ticket in the remaining 26 states.

There were two states in which the 1988 LP presidential ticket established new records for the highest vote ever:

State	1988 Vote	Old Record
New Hampshire	.99%	.55% (1980)
Connecticut	.86%	.61% (1980)

There were six states in which the LP ticket had its lowest vote ever:

State	1988 Vote	Old Record
Alaska	2.75%	3.05% (1984)
Hawaii	0.56%	0.66% (1984)
Montana	1.350%	1.353% (1984)
Oklahoma	0.53%	0.72% (1984)
Vermont	0.41%	0.43% (1984)
Wyoming	1.14%	1.27% (1984)

In addition, it appears likely that New York and Massachusetts will have their lowest LP vote total ever.

The data reported on this page were gathered from a variety of sources. It is the most reliable data available as we go to press; however, it is *preliminary* data and will likely change as more accurate returns come in. Vote totals for Alabama and New York are estimates based on extrapolations of partial returns

## Political Commentary

# High Noon for the Libertarian Party?

*by Chester Alan Arthur*

As usual after a presidential election, many Libertarians are disappointed with their vote totals, and cries of "Abandon Ship!" can be heard. *Liberty's* political correspondent was not disappointed. He thinks Libertarians should take this opportunity to rationalize their expectations and get about the business of building a free society.

On November 8, for the 50th time since the founding of the Republic, American voters elected a President. Republican nominee George Bush carried 40 states; Democrat Michael Dukakis carried 10 states and the District of Colombia. As usual for the past 160 years, the Presidential race was a two party affair.

The machinations of the Republican and Democratic contestants for the Presidency have been reported and analyzed in such detail by press and television that we are confident that any interested party has formed his own judgments and has no appetite for further advice.

The Republicans and Democrats also monopolized the House of Representatives and the Senate, the state legislatures and governors' offices, even such offices as sheriff and drain commissioner. Races for these positions have also been reported, analyzed and discussed by the "major" media in such detail that interest in them is almost universally exhausted.

There were other parties involved in the elections, though they were practically invisible to the average voter. Foremost among these was the Libertarian Party. Like the editors (and presumably the readers) of *Liberty*, the Libertarian Party favors the radical diminution of the power of the state and the concomitant maximization of human freedom.

For these reasons, this discussion of

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the 1988 election will concentrate on the Libertarian Party, its performance in the 1988 election, and the directions in which it might develop in the future.

### I. "Is that all?"

That was Russell Means' reaction when he heard that the Libertarian Party candidate for the Presidency had received a popular vote of about 420,000.

Most Libertarian Party activists had believed that 1988 might be a breakthrough year. For the first time in its history, the LP had nominated a successful politician for the Presidency. Ron Paul had been elected to Congress four times. He had an independent political following among conservatives, a substantial fund-raising base, and a professional staff experienced in the art of electioneering. Paul promised to raise more money than previous LP candidates, to reach out to new constituencies, to bring new members into the party, to campaign actively on its behalf.

Early in the campaign, the candidate had suggested he might receive as many

as 5 million votes. This figure is more than 20 times the LP vote in the 1984 election and more than 5 times the highest vote total the LP had ever achieved. Not surprisingly, most LP members and observers concluded that the 5 million vote figure was hyperbole.

But gradually, the expectations of LP supporters began to rise. The candidate was seen on public television, on cable television and in local newspapers. He reportedly raised (and spent) \$3 million, about five times as much money as the 1984 nominee. Spokesmen for the Paul campaign repeatedly told the press that national television advertising would be forthcoming.

Shortly before the election, I asked a number of prominent LP activists and observers to estimate the popular vote. Their estimates ranged from about 650,000 to 1,500,000.

Initial estimates from the partial returns election night indicated that Paul would receive between 425,000 and 475,000 votes. As results continued to drift in, the picture didn't get any better.

As we go to press, the best estimate is that the LP candidate received approximately 420,000 votes.

Many Libertarian Party partisans were shocked and discouraged when they heard the news.

What had gone wrong?

Probably the most important reason that the Paul campaign failed to meet expectations was that the expectations themselves were unrealistic. Libertarians seem to be optimistic by nature; they have a historic tendency to overestimate their appeal to voters.

This tendency to over-estimate is enhanced by two other factors. After the almost invisible campaign in 1984, LP activists wanted substantial growth. There was an auction of sorts during the fight for the nomination between Congressman Paul and Indian activist Russell Means. Both contenders for the nomination and their backers sought to fill this demand by escalating their predicted vote totals.

By the time of nomination, backers of both candidates were predicting vote totals of 5 or 10 million. These were absurd, but in the rarefied atmosphere of the LP Convention, they seemed within reach.

Libertarians were also victimized by the natural tendency to raise expected returns as they increased their efforts. The LP member who thought Paul might get 500,000 votes when the campaign began, thought that he might get 750,000 after six months of work and contributions, and 1 million after another three months of work and cash contributions. This process is accelerated by the campaign itself, which typically escalates expected vote totals to motivate volunteers.

In making their prognostications about the Paul vote total, libertarian pundits failed to take into account a surprising decision by the Paul campaign: the decision to eschew television advertising. They had good reason to believe that the Paul campaign would buy ads: virtually until election day, spokesmen for the Paul campaign intimated that television campaigns would be forthcoming. Shortly before the election, for example, a news item in *American Libertarian* reported: "According to campaign manager Nadia Hayes, the plan is to fund two sets of 3-day 'spurts' the week before the election. 'The goal is to expose viewers to two to six exposures to our message immediately prior to the election, so that voters will remember us,' said Hayes."

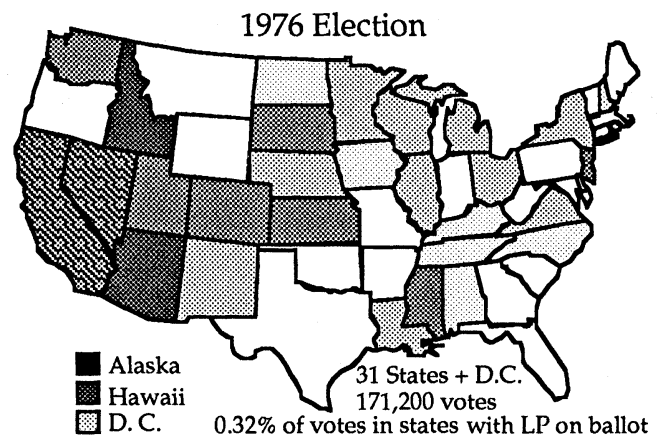
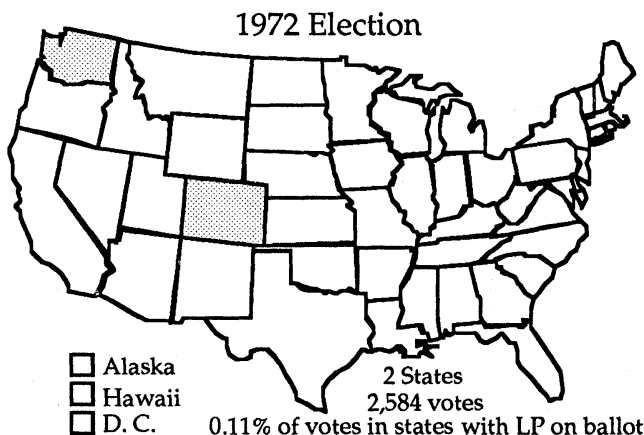
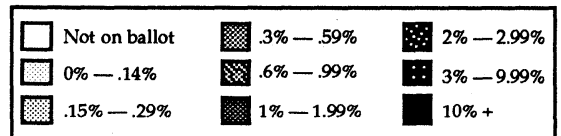
But the ads never were run on national television. Instead, a single television ad was prepared. At a cost of about \$7,000, a TV spot was edited from the 8 minute campaign video shown at the nominating convention. The ad presented Paul as an opponent of the IRS and a supporter of taxpayer rights. It was made available to local LP groups, a few of whom raised funds and showed the ad on local television stations. But no Paul campaign funds were spent on television advertising.

The Paul campaign's decision to shun television advertising undoubtedly suppressed the vote total. In a post-election interview, Ed Clark, LP presidential candidate in 1980, argued that the lack of television advertising made a tremendous difference: "The reason that we didn't do as well this time as we did in 1980 is national TV ads. I think that national TV ads are required for a substantial vote

in order to reach the non-newspaper reading public (at least half the people get all their news from TV and a big majority get most of their news from TV) . . . Most people don't really see the candidates unless they see them on TV. That's probably the reason for roughly half the vote total we had in 1980."

The Paul-Marrou ticket did much better in places where local supporters purchased significant television advertising. This was demonstrated very powerfully in Kansas, where enthusiastic local LP activists purchased TV spots, using both the anti-IRS spot provided by the Paul campaign and a more generic Libertarian ad prepared by the Utah party. In the Wichita market area, where television spots were used, the Paul ticket garnered 4.70 times as many votes as the Bergland ticket in 1984. In counties where no TV spots were used, Paul got 2.58 times the Bergland totals. Put another way, LP vote totals in the counties where TV advertising was used ran 82% ahead of the pace in counties where no television was used. (Cf. "TV Advertising and Minor Party Campaigns," p. 35.)

Why weren't any national television ads purchased? It was a matter of cash, according to Ron Paul. In a post election interview, Paul agreed that national television advertising would have made a big difference: "I'd be the first one to say that. But how do you put it in if you don't have it? You can go only so far with the \$3 million or so that we had, and you don't get TV for that. I mean,



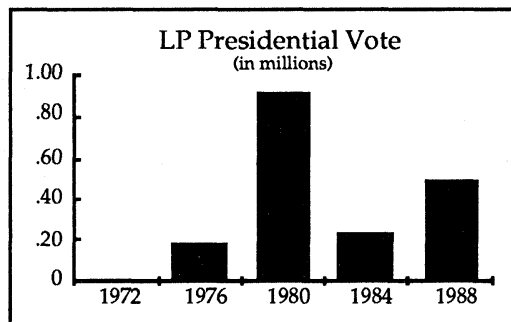


that's travel expenses, overhead and mail. That's what it takes care of. You need \$10 million to get on television."

The failure of the Paul campaign to buy ads upset many libertarians. "I was very disappointed," Russell Means told me a few days after the election. "I kept telling people all over the country, 'Well, just wait. You'll see our candidate.' They said they'd never heard of him, you know. I'd say, 'Just wait. You watch TV, his national ads will be coming. They'll be coming... probably in the last two weeks.' Paul didn't fulfill his three major campaign promises at the convention: national TV, fifty states, and he was going to raise \$5 million." Some of those in the Paul camp were also upset: Murray Rothbard called the failure of the Paul campaign to buy national television spots "outrageous."

It was not really surprising that on election day, only 420,000 Americans voted for the Libertarian Party's ticket of Ron Paul and Andre Marrou.

## II. What it means



The graph above shows total LP votes in the five elections since the party was organized.

As you can see, the growth seemed tremendous between 1972 and 1980: the 1976 vote topped the 1972 vote by about 6400%; the 1980 vote topped the 1976

vote by 436%. The total LP presidential vote increased from 2,648 to approximately 920,000. The 1984 election showed a strong reversal of that trend: LP vote fell by more than 75%. This year's vote marks an increase of about 90%.

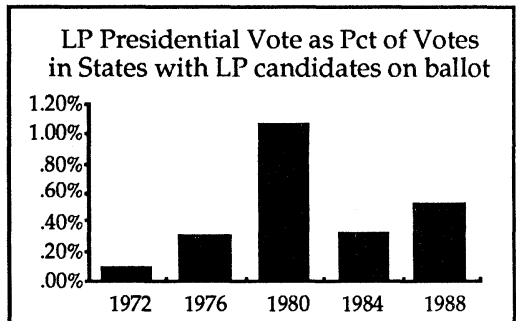
But this is misleading. For one thing, the LP's candidates appeared on the ballots of only two states in 1972. Only voters who lived in Washington or Colorado had the opportunity to vote for the LP ticket of John Hospers and Tonia Nathan. Not surprisingly, the 2658 votes the ticket received does not even show on the graph.

The situation was different in 1976. That year, most Americans could vote for the LP ticket of Roger MacBride and David Bergland, whose names appeared on the ballots of 31 states. Even so, voters in several large states (Texas, Florida, Pennsylvania) could not vote for the LP candidates.

The well-financed Clark campaign of 1980 appeared on the ballot in every state. For the first (and, to date, only) time, voters in every state could cast their ballots for the LP ticket. Not surprisingly, the LP had its best showing ever.

The names of David Bergland and Jim Lewis appeared on ballots in only 38 states in 1984, as the party was rent by internal squabbles and hobbled by inadequate funding. Again, many voters were not able to vote for the ticket. The 1988 ticket of Ron Paul and Andre Marrou appeared on ballots in 46 states. The chart in the next column corrects for the number of voters able to vote for the ticket. It reports the percentage of the total vote the LP candidate received each

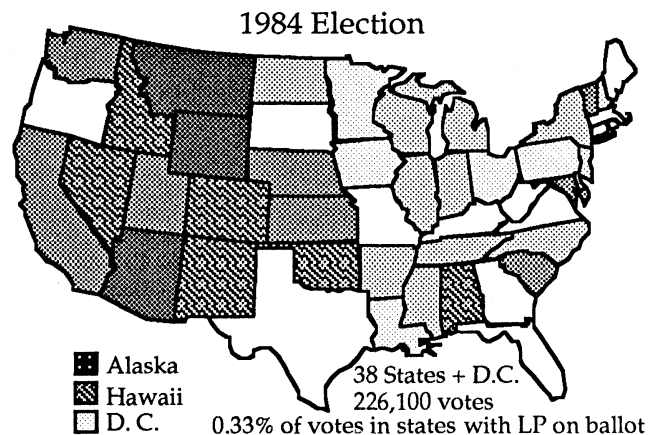
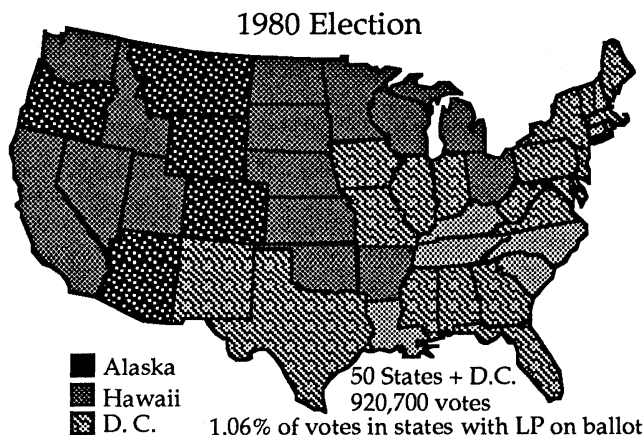
year of the total votes cast in the states where the LP candidate's names appeared.



You will note that the variation from one year to the next is much less. The growth of voter support from 1972 to 1980 is still impressive, but it is much less. Similarly, the falloff in the 1984 election is much less pronounced.

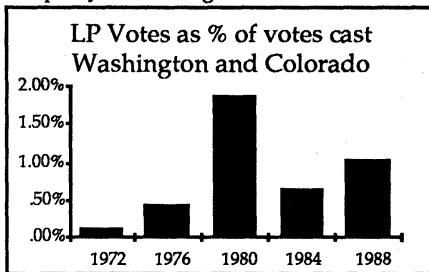
But there are problems with these data as well. The LP ticket has considerably more appeal in certain states than in others. The 1976 figures, for example, are held down a bit by the failure to obtain ballot status in Montana, which has consistently been the LP's second strongest state, after Alaska. The LP has obtained ballot status in Oregon, one of its strongest states, only twice, which helped increase the figures for 1980 and 1988. On the other hand, getting on the ballot in Pennsylvania, with a lot of voters but little LP support, in 1980, 1984 and 1988 has driven down the percentage.

There are other variables. The LP's showing in Alaska was driven significantly upward by the political organizing of Dick Randolph in 1976 and 1980, when the LP took over 10% of the vote, but fell sharply after Randolph left the party. (Relative regional strengths of the LP presidential candidates can be



inferred from the maps on pages 18, 20 and 21.)

There are only two states in which the LP's candidates have appeared on the ballot in all five elections: Washington and Colorado. The graph below shows the party's showing in these two states.



This graph appears very similar to the graph on the previous page. The most important differences are that the growth of the LP vote from 1972 to 1980 is slightly stronger than the national average, the falloff in 1984 is somewhat less, and the increase in 1988 is a bit greater.\*

But this graph, like the previous, shows one major anomaly: the tremendous showing in 1980, when the LP captured nearly 2% of the votes cast in Washington and Colorado. Many factors were unique to the 1980 election. For one thing, as David Bergland pointed out in a recent interview, "the media, not caring much either for Carter or Reagan, were real excited by the Anderson campaign. Their steady coverage of [the Anderson campaign] validated voting for alternatives." For one of the few times in American history, there was no particular stigma attached to voting for a third party candidate. The media opened themselves to other third party candidates as well, including not only the LP but also the small leftist Citizens' Party of eco-freak socialist Barry Commoner.

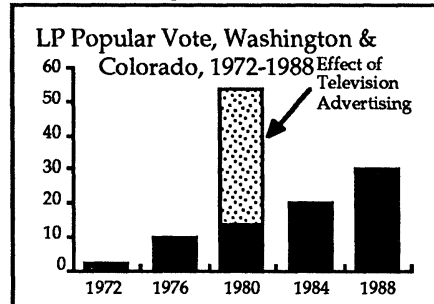
But without a doubt, the biggest difference between the Clark campaign and other LP campaigns was the television advertising. The evidence of the Kansas experience this year indicates that a modest program of television

\* When analyzed in terms of the 30 states on whose ballot the LP ticket has appeared in the last four elections, the LP's vote-attracting record looks slightly less impressive because the 1984 ticket ran behind the 1976 ticket. Here are the numbers:

1976	0.76%
1980	1.84%
1984	0.62%
1988	0.86%

It should not be surprising that the 1984 campaign fared so poorly: it featured neither the television advertising of 1976 and 1980, nor the aggressive personal campaign of 1988.

advertising can increase voter response by as much as 80%. The somewhat fanciful graph below shows the LP presidential vote in Colorado and Washington, taking into account the power of television advertising.



This is a record of steady and substantial growth. Despite its vicissitudes, its internal splits, and its controversies, the LP has continued to show steady growth throughout the first two decades of its existence.

### III. No Defeat, No Breakthrough

Approximately 1 voter in 200 voted for Ron Paul. That is up substantially from 1984 when 1 voter in 300 voted for the LP ticket. That is an increase of approximately 50%, which is certainly not "the death rattle of the Libertarian Party," as Eric Garris of the Libertarian Republican Organizing Committee (LROC) argues.

The problem for advocates of the LP is that, once again, the LP has failed to break into the ranks of the major political parties. In the context of past elections, the LP ticket did very well. But in the context of the major-party system, the LP did disastrously.

Almost since the LP's inception, party members have hoped for a breakthrough. Many party members believed that the well-financed campaign of Roger MacBride in 1976 might well put the LP on the national stage. The LP ticket finished third, with 172,000 votes that year, its third place finish achieved as the result of a split in the nutty right-wing American Independent Party.

By 1980, many LP activists were convinced that a breakthrough was imminent. Party activist Ed Crane decided early on to plan an LP campaign committed to ballot-status in all 50 states and a professional campaign, and he secured the financing of the campaign from a wealthy donor. The party had an attractive, articulate and enthusiastic

candidate in Ed Clark. Libertarians again hoped for a breakthrough. Their hopes were dashed when Clark got "only" 920,000 votes. And again in 1988, hopes for a breakthrough were dashed on election day.

Why is it that the LP has failed to achieve a breakthrough?

The reason is so obvious that it is hard to understand why so many LP activists fail to grasp it.

The Libertarian Party program is radical. It offers a vision of a very different America: one in which individual freedom is far greater than it is today, one in which government has radically less power or is abolished altogether.

Americans have a long and well established record of dislike for radical solutions. Most Americans are relatively satisfied with their sociopolitical environment. Many are simply indifferent; in fact, approximately half don't even take the trouble to vote. Those who do vote prefer candidates and parties that they feel comfortable with. Those who want social change generally favor relatively slow change, probably to minimize the risk of a radical change affecting their circumstances. Americans do not vote for programs that promise sweeping change except in times of social or economic crisis.

This inherent conservatism of the American voter is the root of the preference most voters have for candidates whom they perceive as moderate or centrist. It also explains why they almost always vote for candidates of the mainline, established parties.

In addition, most Americans believe that the only way change will be effected is through the two major parties. Even most voters who want a radical change, therefore, vote for mainline parties. This is a problem that all third parties face. Radical parties of both left and right tend to get minuscule votes, except when they are the vehicles of well-established politicians (whose reputations were made in major parties) or there is a serious crisis.

"People will vote for one of the two parties," said John Hospers shortly after the 1988 election. "I know people who voted for Bush or Dukakis thinking a vote for Paul would be wasted. They feel that they are wasting their vote if they don't vote for somebody who might win . . . so they wanted to get their vote in for one or the other even

though other things being equal they would have preferred the libertarian candidate, Ron Paul." The leading leftist third party in 1988, the New Alliance Party, was on the ballot in all 50 states but got only 200,000 votes; it is certain that many who prefer its radical leftist program voted for Dukakis, who gives lip service to their goals and is preferable to the hated Bush. The largest right-wing third party this year, the Populist Party, got only 40,000 votes; many who prefer its program cast their ballots for Bush, who defended such right-wing programs as mandatory flag pledges and an aggressive, anti-communist foreign policy.

To convince a normal American to cast his vote for an LP candidate is a complicated and difficult process. It usually requires that the voter be convinced of three different propositions:

1) that the radical libertarian program will benefit the country, the voter, or for both;

2) that the radical programs do not risk the voter's or the country's security or well-being; and

3) that by voting for the LP candidate he is likely to help realize that program.

Given the difficulty of this process, the steady growth of LP vote totals during its first 16 years is an impressive achievement. But only a tiny segment of the population votes for LP candidates, and the LP's growth is likely to remain unspectacular. The vision of a breakthrough election victory might help motivate LP activists. But it is simply unrealistic.

It is not surprising that many LP supporters cling to the hope of a breakthrough victory. Libertarians are not like most Americans and often have difficulty understanding them.

Many libertarians see the major parties exclusively as agents of the increase of state power. This profound alienation leaves them with little appreciation of the appeal of the two party system, or of the typical voter's reluctance to "waste his vote." The LP program seems eminently sensible and practical to libertarians, so most have difficulty understanding that voting for the LP is alien to most Americans.

Most libertarians tend to believe that if they present their program to their fellow citizens in a rational way, their fellow citizens will see its logic and be quite willing to vote for an LP candidate.

Given the radical nature of the libertarian program and the inherent conservatism of the American voter, the substantial growth of the Libertarian Party to date is an impressive achievement. The prospects of continued growth seem good, provided LP activists continue to pursue their goals with the energy that they have invested to date.

But the prospect of a breakthrough, for the magic campaign that elevates the Libertarian Party to the status of the Republicans and Democrats, is small. If an

*Despite its vicissitudes, its internal splits, and its controversies, the Libertarian Party has continued to show steady and substantial growth throughout the first two decades of its existence.*

economic or social crisis should engulf the U.S. the chances would be better. But barring a crisis, the best an LP activist can hope for his party is continued growth.

An electoral breakthrough is a pipe dream. It's time LP members come to grips with this and lower their expectations. Failure to do so can only result in repeated disappointment, frustration and "burnout."

#### IV. Time to Abandon the LP?

Some LP activists have concluded that their inability to win elections as LP candidates is good reason to leave the LP and join a major party. In 1986, Eric Garris and Justin Raimondo, two long-time LP activists, left the party and organized LROC. Thanks to their efforts and the generosity of their backer—entrepreneur Colin Hunter has reportedly financed LROC to the tune of \$150,000—LROC has sought to convince LP activists to leave their party and join the Republicans.

"The minor party gambit is a *strategic* question, a tactic to be tested by experience and verified over time," Raimondo writes. "By any fair standard of success, the LP has clearly failed the test . . . The

evidence is in, and the verdict is clear. Libertarian Republicans are the wave of the future—that is, if libertarianism is to have a future."

In the election just past, Art Pope, an LROC member in North Carolina, was elected to his state legislature as a Republican, and a candidate supported by LROC was elected to the legislature in Vermont. "While LROC does not take credit for these victories—both candidates entered their races on their own, and have their own campaign organizations—we *do* claim that they verify our strategy," Raimondo writes. "There is a way out of the political dead-end in which the LP activists find themselves. Libertarian Republicans are entering the political arena as serious contenders—and they are *winning*."

There is no doubt that LROC is attractive to some frustrated LP activists. But most people do not join the LP only to win elections. They join because they want to advance liberty. And it

remains to be seen whether campaigning as Republicans will advance liberty.

As I make out the join-the-Republicans argument, it consists of three propositions: 1) Libertarians cannot win elections as LP candidates; 2) Libertarians can win elections as Republican candidates; 3) as Republican office holders, libertarians can effectively advance liberty.

The first of these propositions is fairly convincing: after 16 years of contesting partisan offices, LP candidates can count their victories on their fingers: three state legislators in Alaska, a town council member here, a county commissioner there. I have already discussed the reasons that LP candidates have difficulty winning elections. The prospects for LP electoral victories will remain poor until such time as more people agree with libertarian ideas and are willing to abandon the two party habit.

Can libertarians win elections as Republicans? Certainly, their chances of winning as Republican Party candidates are better than their chances of winning as LP candidates. But the libertarian seeking office as a Republican has

serious problems. First, he must be nominated, either in a primary election or by a convention. Because libertarians disagree with most Republicans on many fundamental issues, winning nomination can be difficult. Libertarians will have to make their views palatable to Republicans to win nominations, either by misrepresenting their views or by soft-peddalling them. (Of course, libertarians will be able to capture Republican nominations more easily in areas where Republicans are greatly outnumbered by Democrats. But in these areas they will be unable to win elections.)

The libertarian running as a Republican has two advantages over the LP candidate: dogmatic, straight-ticket Republicans will vote for him, and he needn't overcome the American prejudice against third parties. Aside from these, his electoral problems are the same as those of the LP candidate. He must convince the electorate that the free society he envisions would be a good place to live, and that the radical change he advocates does not put the comfort, security or well-being of the electorate at risk. Since most Americans dislike and fear libertarian ideas, this is a very formidable task.

Needless to say, the libertarian running as a Republican will face the same sort of incentives that Republicans (and Democrats) face: to get votes he must present a program that the electorate likes. Since the electorate does not like the libertarian program, he will be sorely tempted to downplay his libertarianism or to misrepresent his views.

And what if he is elected? How effective can he be? Only as effective as his constituents allow him to be. If he is elected on a wimpy platform, people are going to expect him to stand on that platform once in office. His ability to make significant changes will be no greater than if a middle-of-the-road Republican had won the election.

Reducing the size and power of government was one of Ronald Reagan's major themes in his 1980 campaign. Yet once in office, he failed to "get government off our backs." In fact, the size and power of government contin-

ued to grow. Was this because Ronald Reagan is a dishonest man? I doubt it. I think a much more plausible explanation is that he realized that the electorate liked his rhetoric, but didn't really want the size and power of government reduced. So he merely reduced its growth rate a bit, and changed its priorities in a few small ways.

In 1972, *Reason* magazine reported, "libertarians were on the ballot in several states. Most surprisingly, to almost

*Libertarian political activists face a paradox: As LP candidates they cannot be elected; as Republicans they cannot be libertarians. The constraints of holding office as a Republican preclude effective advancement of liberty.*

everyone concerned, was the fact that one of these candidates was elected! Steven Douglas Symms won the Republican primary and then the general election to Idaho's 1st District in the U.S. Congress . . . Symms' campaign was remarkably explicit in its call for cutting back on government, abolishing minimum wage laws and other laws which restrict free entry into the market, breaking the government monopoly in education, etc."

During his first few months in office, he introduced bills enacting two of libertarians' favorite causes: legalization of gold ownership and postal competition. In his first year in office, he hired young libertarians to his staff and put articles by F. A. Harper in the Congressional Record.

Sixteen years have passed since libertarian Republican Steve Symms was elected to Congress. No longer is Symms an idealistic libertarian Congressman. Today he is a pragmatic conservative Republican, distinguished from other right-wingers by the zeal of his military adventurism.

I do not know the circumstances of Symms' metamorphosis; perhaps it was a genuine change of heart. But there is no doubt that he faced powerful incentives to change the programs he advocated. Americans prefer unradical, safe conservatism (or for that matter, unradical, safe liberalism) to radical libertarianism. And candidates who offer the safety of the mainstream prosper.

Consider the political career of Dick

Randolph. He was elected to the state legislature in Alaska as a Republican and found it impossible to accomplish anything. He broke with the Republicans and became an energetic and active LP candidate. It was a challenge, but he managed to get elected to the Alaska legislature as a Libertarian. The difficulty of winning elections as a Libertarian and the challenge of building a radical libertarian movement ultimately discouraged Randolph. But his brief career as a Libertarian legislator was much more effective than his Republican tenure: he managed to abolish the state income tax, for example.

Libertarian political activists face a paradox: As LP candidates they cannot be elected; as Republicans they cannot be libertarians. The constraints of holding office as a Republican preclude effective advancement of liberty.

I am sure that there are individuals who are working to advance liberty within the Republican Party, and I am sure that they are having some positive effect. But they have put themselves in an environment that results in frustration and presents them with incentives to dilute or abandon their libertarianism.

## V. What good is the LP, anyway?

The fact that Libertarian Party candidates seldom win elections is not evidence that the party is a failure. Rather it is evidence of how early we are in the struggle for liberty.

The purpose of the Libertarian Party is to advance human liberty. Liberty is an idea; it is advanced whenever a person comes to understand it better. Advancing liberty is a slow and gradual process. The libertarian revolution occurs one person at a time. And it still has a long way to go.

Only when liberty is more widely understood and valued by more people will it be possible to elect libertarians. That day *will* come, I am convinced. But it will come only after much more hard work. Ideological revolutions do not occur overnight.

There is no magical way to advance liberty, no magic wand that we can

wave that will realize liberty in our life-time, no magic strategy that will break through the hostility to liberty in our culture. In the meantime, the Libertarian Party has proven to be an effective means of advancing liberty by three different, inter-related means:

**The LP educates people about liberty.** The task faced by those who want to advance liberty is an educational battle. Liberty is advanced when people increase their understanding and appreciation of it.

Most Americans do not have much enthusiasm for political matters; they are much more interested in living their own lives. Only during electoral campaigns will most Americans even consider political issues. By presenting libertarian ideas in the context of electoral campaigns, the LP presents them in the only way that most Americans will even consider.

Have you ever tried to sell liberty in your neighborhood? If you went from door-to-door during an election campaign, offering your neighbors information about liberty, listening to their concerns, answering their questions, and relating to them as human beings, the chances are that some paid attention to what you said and a few increased the esteem in which they held the idea of liberty. If, on the other hand, you approached your neighbors without the context of an electoral campaign, you likely had far more doors slammed in your face, with most of your neighbors suspecting you were a dangerous fanatic of some sort.

The LP gives you a foot in the door, an excuse to discuss the idea of liberty with your neighbors while they are in a receptive mood.

It is argued by some that this is an inefficient means of education. Better to educate the elite—intellectuals, teachers, professionals—and let them educate your neighbors. The problem with this argument was pointed out by Ed Clark:

I think there are many, many people who wouldn't, or couldn't do anything for libertarianism without the party. They don't write articles, they are not intellectuals, they are not people who are in communications jobs or positions, and the campaigns give them a chance to volunteer their time and their efforts and their money . . . LP campaigns bring forth resources that are not available for

any other type of libertarian endeavor. The Libertarian Party is a valuable way to reach the 5 or 10% of the population that is seriously interested.

The Libertarian Party provides the most effective available means of publicizing libertarian ideas. As John Hospers pointed out in a recent interview, "Without the Libertarian Party I think there would be less public knowledge of libertarianism than there is now . . . When I ran in 1972 it provided the public on newspapers and TV with the

knowledge that there was such a view as libertarianism, and what it stood for, what the term meant. Most people had never heard of it. At least the word 'libertarianism' is familiar to most Americans now."

**Every vote cast for any Libertarian candidate helps advance liberty.** Each vote cast for a libertarian is a positive action. No matter how casual his choice of a Libertarian candidate, the act of voting Libertarian leaves an impression on the

*continued on page 38*

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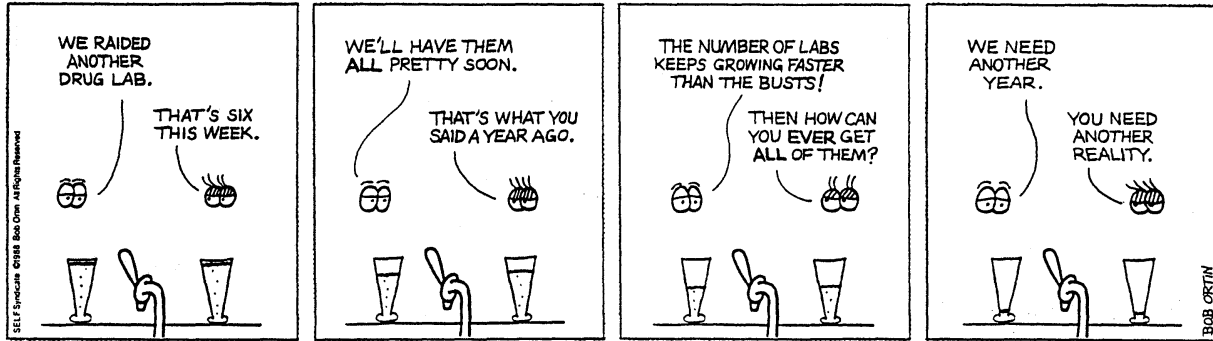
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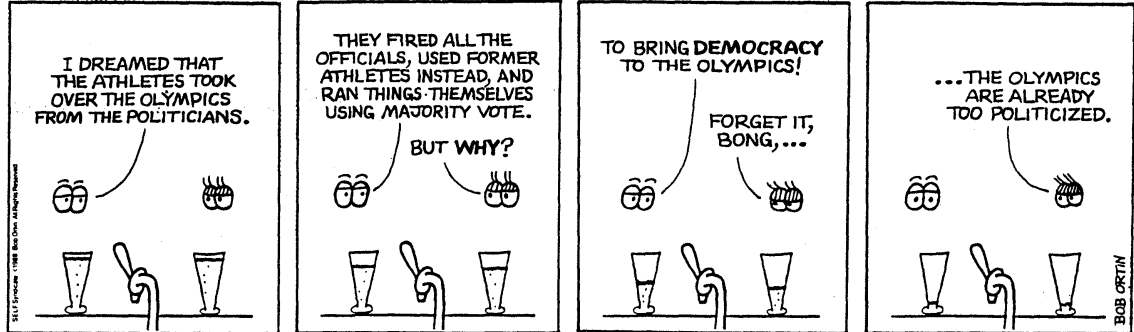
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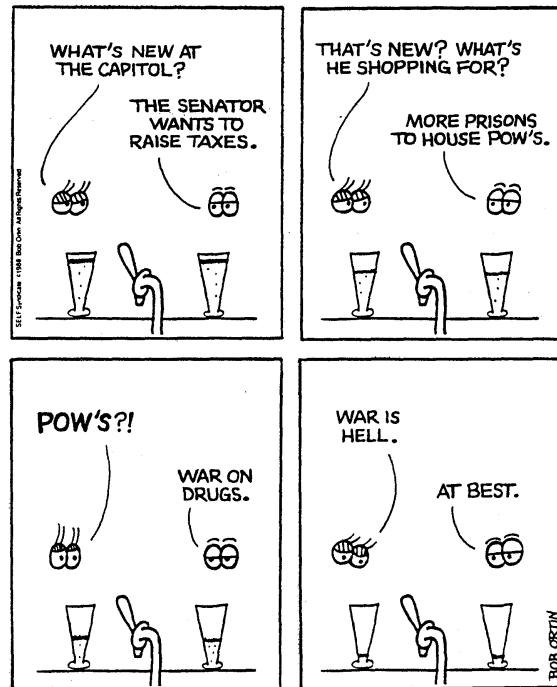
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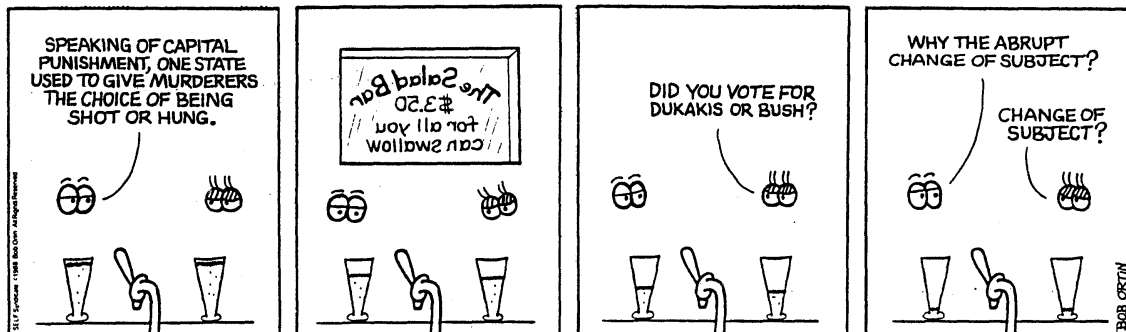
# BURONS

A speculation on the source of headlines  
by Bob Ortin

Just say "no" to POW!



## Dukakis and Bush: Capitol punishment



## Perspectives

# Assessing the 1988 Campaign

*comments by Ron Paul, Ed Clark, John Hospers,  
Larry Dodge, Richard Winger, Justin Raimondo  
and David Bergland*

Libertarians are a contentious lot, especially when discussing strategy for change. Here is what several important Libertarian Party leaders and observers had to say a few days after the election.

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### Looking Back and Looking Ahead

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Ron Paul

*Ron Paul* was a Republican member of the U.S. Congress from 1976 to 1984, and was the 1988 Libertarian Party candidate for President. The following was excerpted from an interview with him of November 19, 1988.

If anybody should be disappointed or discouraged it should be me. I'm the one who was on the road for 18 months and I feel good about the whole thing. The people that called me, the big donors, thought the vote was almost inconsequential. They wanted to know what they could do, how to help the next project, and how to get this program going, how to keep the *Freedom Trail* coming out. They just really loved the *Freedom Trail* and its optimistic approach, so I just ignore people who want to be negative.

I was making some calls the other day to people who had donated a good bit of money to me, and especially to one guy who had donated \$5000 to the ballot access plus the campaign. So I called and talked to him and I swear that the guy voted for Bush. But he sent \$5,000. In other words there is tremen-

dous support, and sympathy and wishing us well, but this guy perceived Bush as being more libertarian than Dukakis. Now, I sometimes think Republicans are less libertarian than Democrats, and they get away with more, but in his speeches Bush came out for a lot less government than Dukakis. Dukakis was a socialist, and the donor was darn glad that Dukakis didn't get in. And yet he was still willing to send me \$5,000. So I think that's a lot of what's happening out there: there's a lot of sympathy and wishing us well, but it has just not translated into a lot of votes.

It's always nice to have more votes. But considering what we did in the campaign and how many places we went and how many people we talked to, I thought it was very successful. I was very pleased; I thought the reception was exceptionally good.

I would say that more than 90 percent of everything that I got in the media was always very, very respectful. One of the articles I disliked the most was the *LA Times* article . . . the one that kind of poked a lot of fun at me, "Yeah he's out there campaigning, but who cares?" That one annoyed me, but that was one of the very few that annoyed me.

Three years ago James J. Kilpatrick

wrote an article on libertarians and he just blasted us to Kingdom Come. But I loved the piece he did on my campaign this year, even though some others didn't like it. It was half and half. The title of it was "The Nutty Sanity of Dr Ron Paul." Yet he captured the whole thing, in spite of the difficulties, the practical impossibility of us getting our

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*Actually, it comes down to the votes being irrelevant—although I don't like the totals, I'd like to have 2 million or something—but they're irrelevant as far as whether or not we're having an impact.*

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views down. The other half of the article was, we ought to pay attention to the libertarians and what Ron Paul is saying because it makes a lot of sense.

I just felt that that was what most people were doing. I was really basically very pleased with all the interviews and the respect.

Matter of fact, this is not firm yet, but I just had a call yesterday from Ran-

dom House to do a book for them—they wanted me to sign a contract with them—on libertarianism. They just think it is marketable, and the time is right. You know, the guy obviously had libertarian understandings . . . he said, "You know, this whole thing with Bush is going to be a disaster." They were very fascinated with this, so I've been working with them and I think maybe in the next week or so I might come up with a deal with them.

That to me is a powerful sign. In spite of the vote totals . . . actually, it comes down to the votes being irrelevant—although I don't like the totals, I'd like to have 2 million or something—but they're irrelevant as far as whether or not we're having an impact.

Looking back, ballot access probably should have been handled by the state parties or the national party rather than the candidate worrying about petitioning and all that. I got one bill from the travel agency for \$30,000, and it was just for taking people out of Texas and sending them off to different states around the country at the last minute. That to me was the sad part of it.

Another recommendation that I would like to make would be to move

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*The nominating convention time should be changed for public relations purposes. Picking the candidate in September of the year before the election is less likely to get attention than it would have if it was sandwiched in between the other two.*

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the nominating convention time, for public relations purposes. Picking the candidate in September of the year before the election is less likely to get attention than it would have if it was sandwiched in between—or immediately before or immediately after—the other two. Anywhere in the summer of the election year.

I get letters every single day arguing that I should have taken federal matching funds. I have given that a lot of thought. Nobody writes me and says, "Hey, hang fast. Don't do it, and thank you for not considering it." I probably

got a hundred letters on this subject and every one of the letters I got said, "Take the money." And these are from libertarians.

Of course, the people who feel this way are more motivated to write me than those opposed. But if you go into a libertarian or libertarian-conservative group with, say, 100 people in the room, and poll them—and I've polled those groups maybe 20 times during the campaign—I would say that my rough estimate is that two thirds of those are not in favor of taking the funds. About a third feel very strongly about it, but they're more vocal and outspoken. Personally, I still come down on the side of saying, "No, don't take it." But I still listen to the other arguments. □

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## Summing Up

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Ed Clark

*Ed Clark was the 1980 Libertarian Party candidate for President. His campaign received more votes than any other LP campaign before or since. The following was excerpted from an interview of November 12, 1988.*

A lot of good work, a lot of hard work, campaigning, and ballot access and a good job was done overall. I think it was a good effort, not a great barn-burner, but a good effort—and in my view, well worth the trouble.

Ron Paul ran a very good campaign. He worked very, very hard; he worked harder than any other candidate has ever worked. He started campaigning right after the nomination and campaigned very steadily since.

Andre Marrou did more than any Libertarian VP candidate has ever done. He campaigned very hard, he went to a lot of places. He had the nice idea of turning over all the names (that he got) to libertarian organizations. I think that is a nice, building thing.

The ticket did well in New Hampshire because of good coverage from the *Manchester Union Leader*. They gave Paul quite a lot of coverage. They didn't like Bush. They emphasized Ron's more conservative stands. They wanted to make a protest.

Alaska's poor showing is still the Randolph factor. Randolph built the party and it hasn't really come back since he left.

I don't know why California slacked off so much. California is a big media

state and it's very hard to crack the media here. Utah and South Carolina, on the other hand, both did better than 1980 because they both have strong local parties. The strength of local parties is a very important factor.

All this shows that building a big party is going to be difficult. We had in 1980 the thought that we might be able to build a big party. Then in 1984 we had a lot of in-fighting and a very bad situation. This time we came back very substantially, with most people in the party supportive, and those who weren't supportive were at least not in opposition. We had good—not fantastic—but good overall support from party people in 1988, we had a pretty well run campaign, we had a candidate who had some support outside libertarian groups, and we got—what was it?—about half of one percent of the vote.

I think the reason that we didn't do as well this time as we did in 1980 is national TV advertising. I think that national TV ads are required for a substantial vote in order to reach the non-newspaper reading public (at least half the people get all their news from TV and a big majority get most of their news from TV) so that most people don't really see the candidates unless they see them on TV. So I think that's probably the reason for roughly half the vote total we had in 1980.

We were able to raise enough funds for national TV in 1980 because we had a vice presidential candidate who had a lot of money. Frankly, election laws being what they are and our numbers being what they are, a well-to-do candidate has an unusually strong appeal. But I don't think it's the only way to raise the necessary money. □

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## The Whys of the Libertarian Party

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John Hospers

*John Hospers was the Libertarian Party presidential candidate in 1972, the first year Libertarians ran anyone in the United States. The following was excerpted from an interview of November 13, 1988.*

In any year when the election is perceived to be anywhere near close, then people will vote for one of the two major candidates, feeling that they are wasting their vote if they don't vote for somebody who might win. Even though this election was not close, many people felt

it was going to be close, so they wanted to get their vote in for one or the other even though other things being equal they would have preferred the libertarian candidate, Ron Paul. I know people who voted for Bush or Dukakis thinking a vote for Paul would be wasted.

The future success of the party depends on infusions of big money. If you've got a 1980 over again, and got 3 or 4 million dollars from Charles Koch, in 1992 you would have a showing like

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*The issue of accepting or not accepting federal money is one of pure vs impure libertarianism. The so-called pure libertarians will say, "No, you should not accept federal money under any circumstances." But if you follow through with that position, a president should not accept a salary, and you shouldn't use government roads . . .*

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you did in 1980, when there were television spots and people were aware that the LP was there. Most people when I asked them if they are going to vote libertarian they just say, "Huh?" They didn't know we were around any more. When they go to the California polls they see the LP is on the ticket. Most of them did not see it until that moment. There was virtually no publicity.

I know that Ron Paul appeared on the *Today* show and a late night show and a couple of other ones. But it was very incidental compared to the two major candidates' barrage.

Getting federal money and using it for television advertising would have increased the number of votes, of course. He would have gotten about as many votes as Ed Clark got in 1980, which would have gotten the party more visibility.

The issue of accepting or not accepting federal money is one of pure vs impure libertarianism. The so-called pure libertarians will say, "No, you should not accept federal money under any circumstances." But if you follow through with

that position, a president should not accept a salary, you shouldn't use government roads, and so on.

I don't really go along with that. I don't believe in polluting the atmosphere, but if everybody is polluting the atmosphere, and you're the sole, lone holdout, you're not going to do much good. You might as well accept the matching funds.

In any case, America has never been much of a three-party country. I've always had doubts about whether forming a political party was the way to go. Sometimes you start an ideological current which is not represented in a party—the Fabians in England are a famous example, who in a generation dominated Parliament but never floated a party.

When we started the party in 1972, Roger MacBride thought that the LP would become the second party by 1988. Of course, it hasn't happened. I didn't expect it to happen, but I thought it was worth a whirl.

At this point the Libertarian Party doesn't seem to be going anywhere. It

could, as I say, with a lot of money. But I just don't see it becoming the second of two major parties. Too bad, but realistically I don't see it happening. Which doesn't mean that it was a bad thing to go the party route. It depends on what the alternative would have been. The alternative would simply have been to develop the ideas. Then where would you get the publicity?

Without the Libertarian Party I think there would be less public knowledge of libertarianism than there is now . . . When I ran in 1972 it provided the public in newspapers and on TV with the knowledge that there was such a view as libertarianism, and what it stood for, what the term meant. Most people had never heard of it. At least the word "libertarianism" is familiar to most Americans now. □

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## Retrospect and Prospect

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Larry Dodge

*Larry Dodge, an entrepreneur who lives in Helmsville, Montana, has run for state-*

## No Hats in Ring

The 1988 LP Presidential nomination was hotly contested by Congressman Ron Paul and Indian activist Russell Means. Neither seems to anxious to seek the 1992 nomination:

*Liberty:* Do you expect to be a candidate for the 1992 Presidential nomination?

*Means:* No, I don't.

*Liberty:* You won't be a candidate in 1992?

*Means:* Not unless the LP wants me to be. That's sensible. I will not actively seek it.

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*Liberty:* Do you have an interest in being a candidate again in 1992?

*Paul:* No. I'll probably stay active, mainly with the goal of . . . the only goal I've had in 15 years, and that's been to spread a message . . . and then second is to enhance the vehicle, which to me is the Libertarian Party. But I don't have any plans to run again.

I'd like to do what I can to make it easier for the next guy. I think we're on more ballots now than we have been, and I hope that's the case and I hope it's easier . . . If anybody wants to do anything to help the next guy, just make sure the ballot access business is less cumbersome. I mean that was just horrendous: all the worry. And we sure could have used that money on advertising.

*Liberty:* Do you plan to return to your medical practice?

*Paul:* Well, no not the way it was. For quite a few different reasons. I'm shopping around a little bit. I'd love to do some medicine; I enjoy it and I believe that if you have skills you ought to maintain them. And I wouldn't mind the income from it. So I've been looking around for something. If I do it it's going to be part time, a weekend-type deal. I have a television program I'm working on, and I want to start a political action committee, and now if I add that book onto it I'm going to be really pretty darn busy.

wide office three times, including a race this year for Secretary of State. The following was excerpted from an interview of November 12, 1988.

I was very satisfied with my campaign, but I think I could have got more votes . . . I would have been happier yet with more votes. But I am very happy with the placement or location of those votes. They split the Republican and Democrat so that no one got a majority, and they preserved our ballot status by quite a margin.

I got enough votes that I more than accounted for the difference between winner and loser. The headline reads, "Story blames loss to Cooney on Libertarian Dodge." The Republicans are already paying a lot of attention to libertarian programs. That's probably where my votes went.

My campaign was medium financed, \$17,000, which isn't a lot for 16,000 votes, so that's a bargain. I went door to door, distributed about 8,000 pieces of literature by hand and got about another 7,000 pieces distributed by volunteers. I got on TV in almost every town I went to. Good interviews all the way through. Then I bought 214 television spots spread over

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*It's fine to sit in an armchair and contribute a \$50 bill and think that you're educating the world, but until you've gone out and been on the road for 30 days straight, washing your clothes in a laundromat in the middle of the night, and shaking hands until you can't see straight and jumping from bar to bar from school to school and farm to farm trying to keep your shirts pressed will you understand how hard it is. There have got to be more efficient ways to get things done.*

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11 stations. It's a small state.

This race nobody cared about either the Republican or the Democrat. I banged on 8,000 doors. People would say, "Well, who is in this race? I didn't even know we elected a Secretary of

State." I went around the whole state. Everybody loved my presentation, my literature, everything. I had a wonderful time, I got good receptions. And I figured here's my third statewide, I ought to have some name recognition by now. And it's a lowdown middle of the ticket office, and people are going to say, "What the hell, this office doesn't matter so much that we can't try out a libertarian" . . . all those things going for it, you know.

The other LP candidates did not do very well. Ron Paul got 1.35%. It's 4,915 votes, which was less than Bergland. There was no gain.

If this means there has been a diminution of the party, it's a national problem. We supported Paul all the way here. We had nobody resentful of the outcome in Seattle, nobody went away mad or wouldn't support Paul. We all did it. We all went everywhere and arranged things as best we could. He came here three times and we were there. We got him real good media every time.

The Paul campaign could have depended more on local organization rather than running everything from the top. That's not strictly fair. I know they also had some bad experiences when things were left too local. The Clark campaign managed to develop enthusiasm in local areas and managed to get things cooking with longer lead times. Times were probably a little easier then. The nation was a little more unsettled.

It seems like the Clark reception at UM (University of Montana) was terrific. We didn't do so good a job of setting Paul up but I don't think it would have made too big a difference. By now the press has hardened up a lot. They don't want to talk to libertarians any more. We're not new. We're just sort of a persistent pain in the ass. And that's different from being a fresh new option. So it's harder to get big crowds and things lined up.

But you know we were short on materials all the time. We didn't have any posters and they were out of bumper stickers and crap. It was real hard to make a place look like it was excited about him.

I also think that we would have done ten times better had Russell Means been the candidate. I watched the conflict between Dukakis and Bush. There were no issues, it was all emotions, all mud and slime. You need someone who

can play that game. The public just loves it and what they elect people on is emotion. And Paul is not an emotional person. So that's not a fair thing. I can't say that the Paul campaign should have been more emotional. He's not. I think we nominated the wrong guy, as wonderful a candidate as he is. He's just too intellectual, and Americans don't care about that.

I think Means will be nominated in 1992. He is more persistent than a lot of people believe. And he really is a libertarian. So I'd say, just guessing, and I'd hate to speak for anyone else, that he'll run a hell of a campaign for that nomination and probably get it.

I think the party should accept federal matching funds. I accepted state matching funds when I was running for governor. That's an additional dollar. If you want to put a dollar voluntarily into the campaign fund in Montana you may and then your taxes go up one dollar. So I didn't mind that, that's what it was for. Everyone knows there is a libertarian party and some of it's going to go to 'em. So I didn't feel bad about that.

At the national level, that's an involuntary dollar. However we are up against so many involuntary problems, such as ballot access. I would be willing to see that money allocated to ballot access fund. That's sort of like using their money against them, you know. It's money that they're going to take anyway, from people who have expressed some concern that it should be allocated to candidates and then they're not getting their full measure's worth because there are candidates who are not going to be able to get on the ballot unless the money is spent to open doors. So I don't have a lot of problem with that. If the money were used some other way, then it would make a big difference in what I say. I wouldn't want it spent willy nilly. But on that problem it is sort of legitimate.

I'm a libertarian and as long there is a party I'll be a member and I'll be supportive. But I think it should be doing other things other than trying to elect candidates.

It's fine to sit around in an armchair and contribute a \$50 bill and think that you're educating the world, but until you've gone out and been on the road for 30 days straight, washing your clothes in a laundromat in the middle of the night, and shaking hands until you can't see straight and jumping from bar to bar from



school to school and farm to farm trying to keep your shirts pressed and millions of phone calls and sleepless nights . . . only then will you have an idea of how hard it is. There have got to be more efficient ways to get things done.

I'd like to see the LP turn into a libertarian PAC and just focus on a few people regardless of labels, and get 'em in there. Come up with liberty money that is competitive with special-interest money.

If the national party, which has a lot of well-to-do people in it and has fund-raising capabilities, it has spirit, and so forth . . . were to function as a sort of combination caucus and PAC, independent of any party, and then go ahead and have a convention, everybody brings in a list of candidates from his or her own area that they themselves have personally screened through and studied and talked to. Then it's sort of like an NFL draft: who gets the money? You make a case for the candidates in your area, regardless of the ticket. And some fraction of the total PAC money is allocated and everybody goes home. It would be great. We'd get something done.

We're going to find out at the next Libertarian Party convention. I'm not going to suggest that we disband. I'm going to suggest that we change our focus from candidate nominations to candidate support strategies based on the philosophies of what the individuals we are going to support are saying, or have done, what their track record is, regardless of ticket. □

## Problems With Paul, Problems for Libertarians

Richard Winger

*Richard Winger is the editor of Ballot Access News, a newsletter devoted to ballot access issues of minor political parties. The following is excerpted from an interview with him on November 12, 1988.*

I think Ron Paul's message was muddled. He talked too much about the Federal Reserve Bank and that Gold Standard and how much he hates the IRS. Ed Clark had a more general, positive message. I think the LP presidential candidate needs to explain all the benefits to ordinary people of our policies. I think the only thing that came through clearly was taking troops out of Europe, Japan and Korea. That was the only clari-

ty when I talked to ordinary people who aren't libertarians about Ron Paul. And

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*I think Ron Paul's message was muddled. He talked too much about the Federal Reserve Bank and that Gold Standard and how much he hates the IRS.*

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he was excellent on drugs.

But most people that I know who aren't Libertarians just never heard of Ron Paul.

Still, given Ron Paul, I don't think we could have improved our showing this year. He is a very stubborn person who has his own ideas of what he wants to

talk about. The Party had no control over him.

I think we have to figure a way to have more integration of the party with the Presidential campaign. We just never have any control over it. I don't know how you do that, but certainly there is no problem with that in other third parties. I mean, the candidate does exactly what he or she is told. There isn't a split.

We'll also have to figure out whether we want to arrange so that our Presidential candidate will qualify for Federal matching funds. That's a huge question.

I also think we are going to have to concentrate much more about tailoring our message to the concerns of people who are worried about the environment. I think that is the coming issue. It's not easy. You just can't say: privatize the ocean. We have to work harder to clarify and maybe add to the theory. □

## The LP "Loyalty Oath"

*"I hereby certify that I do not believe in or advocate the initiation of force as a means of achieving political or social goals." To join the LP requires an individual must sign this statement. Liberty asked David Bergland and Larry Dodge about the oath.*

*Liberty:* Do you think that the LP's "loyalty oath" should be abandoned? I have heard it claimed that the oath is an impediment to membership growth, and that there are libertarians who will not join the party because of the oath.

*Bergland:* I think maybe there's four or five of those. I don't see it as any problem. If you read it, what does it say? It isn't an oath. It just says, "I certify that I do not advocate or use the initiation of force to achieve political or social goals." To me the good outweighs the potential negative. I agree that there are some people who say, "Gee, I think I am interested in the Libertarian Party, and I might want to sign up, but wouldn't want to sign something that says that." Those numbers are (1) miniscule, and (2) who cares?

*Liberty:* What do you see as the positive benefits of the oath?

*Bergland:* I think the positive benefits, there's one, basically, and that says: we really mean it. This is a party of principle that it's important for people to realize that when push comes to shove we're simply not going to compromise those principles in order to achieve some short term goal that will undermine the basic principle or the purpose for the existence of the organization.

*Liberty:* You're not troubled by the fact that Ludwig von Mises would not be allowed to be a member of the LP?

*Bergland:* No.

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*Liberty:* Does the LP "loyalty oath" cause any problems?

*Dodge:* The oath sure does keep some libertarians from joining the party. It's sort of our own little measure of force. We force you to sign this or you can't be a member. We can always argue that membership is voluntary and if you don't like it you don't have to sign it but you can't become a member.

But I don't think it's in our interest as a party. We hedge it in Montana and we'd love to get out of it. In Montana, the application states that libertarians don't advocate the use of force to achieve social and political goals. It doesn't require you to take an oath.

## Setting the Priorities for Freedom

Russell Means

*Russell Means*, for years active in the American Indian Movement, campaigned in 1987 for the nomination as Libertarian Party candidate for President. The following is excerpted from an interview with him on November 14, 1988.

The only thing we can evaluate is, did we advance individual liberty through this campaign. And with the vote total, it is very . . . self-deprecating.

The low vote total is a big disappointment—especially Alaska's. I know. I was up there. Twice.

I was very disappointed in Andre Marrou's campaign not spending more

return to the precepts of the United States Constitution, and therefore, freedom. That's the only reason I'm in the party. I'm in the party naturally to make it grow, but the more important part is it is a revolutionary party.

We should get off trying to reach those people who vote because the people that vote in this country come from the sector that is of the herd mentality. And we should pay attention to people who desire, want, and are willing to listen to the ideas of individual freedom. I do believe that the Libertarian Party and its strategy towards national politics is necessary. However, if you're going to have a policy toward national politics then you have to have emotion. You have to have love. And the Libertarian Party has shown the opposite. In order to advance the cause of freedom, one has to have love.

Unfortunately, the LP is involved in tribal politics. And I don't want to get into the nit-picking, self-destructive modes of tribal politics. As I've said in my campaign, as the American Indian goes, on the reservation, so goes the American people. And for my people to be free, Americans have to be free. I know where my priorities are.

The LP, however, is going the same route that tribal councils have gone, and that is they have their private little world that only feeds into internal squabbling because they don't have the backbone to take on the big boys. It's always confounded me why the LP wants to be the David in a battle with two Goliaths in their arena, and the LP doesn't have a slingshot or any rocks.

The priorities have to change. The amount of monies that libertarians give for the cause of freedom could be better spent electing county commissioners, electing people to city hall.

When I look out specifically at Alaska, California, Colorado, Texas, Florida, Michigan, Vermont, the state of Washington . . . areas where libertarian people are very strong; and I can see that if those people really got together and se-

lected a city, a township, a county that we could begin the groundswell in the fight for liberty by electing people in our local areas.

I think the LP should call for a national convention to determine where it's going. A national convention to reorganize. I really do. I think it's that serious.

When I joined the LP I joined the liberty movement, a freedom movement. I'm not fooling around. Everything I said in my campaign still goes.

I really do think the LP has to suck in its stomach and bite the bullet so to speak, start looking at itself in the mirror. The California Convention will be an excellent place to kick off the new look of the LP. □

## Electorate to LP: "Wake Up and Smell the Coffee"

Justin Raimondo

*Justin Raimondo* is the editor of *The Libertarian Republican*, the magazine of the Libertarian Republican Organizing Committee (LROC). The following is excerpted from an essay he wrote about the 1988 election.

The Paul campaign is the final proof that the third party strategy doesn't work. Paul's poor showing may come as a surprise to those who read the campaign's cheery newsletters, which invariably reported that the candidate received a great reception everywhere he went. But there is no reason to believe that the Paul campaign was being dishonest. At a time when the free market is in vogue and American politics is undergoing a significant generational change, libertarian ideas have never been more popular. How, then, do we account for Paul's poor vote totals?

The chief lesson of the Paul campaign is that it is much easier to sell libertarianism than it is to sell the concept of a third party. Marketed in a third party package, libertarianism is made to appear exactly as what it is not: exotic, removed from the problems of ordinary people, and completely out of the mainstream of American political life.

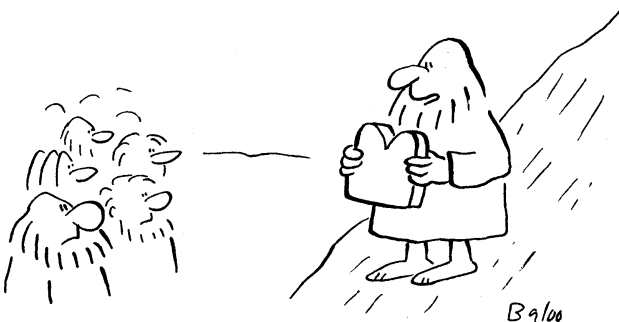
By taking on this third party baggage, libertarians set up a whole series of unnecessary obstacles to electoral success and succeed only in making their message inaccessible to the voters. First and foremost among these obstacles are restrictive ballot access laws, which make it

*It's always confounded me why the LP wants to be the David in a battle with two Goliaths in their arena, and the LP doesn't have a slingshot or any rocks.*

time in Alaska. Having been there twice with Andre, I think both parties, Ron and Andre, missed the boat by not paying more attention to Alaska, and utilizing TV ads in Alaska. I proposed that to Andre's campaign in July, after we had been up there. I tried to talk Andre into it, but I guess he didn't want to.

I believe that now the LP has to look at itself very seriously, and redesign, re-strategize its approach to electoral politics.

I believe that the Libertarian Party is the only rational hope for a nonviolent



"To make a long story short, these are your new community standards."

so costly and time-consuming to secure ballot access that a relatively small, under-funded ideological movement such as ours has little or no resources left over to mount a real campaign.

Secondly, LP candidates are up against the "wasted vote" syndrome, the not unreasonable argument in the mind of the sympathetic but still hesitant voter that to cast a ballot for a third party candidate with no chance of winning is equivalent to abstaining altogether. In effect, the third party strategy confines libertarians to the "protest vote" and the status of a party of permanent opposition, forever doomed to rail against the political status quo without ever having the slightest opportunity to change it. This further reinforces the idea of libertarianism as a marginal sect rather than a vital and growing movement, and gives the impression that the libertarian program exists only to be enunciated, but never actually implemented.

Thirdly, the failed third party strategy encourages those tendencies in the libertarian movement that are, indeed, marginal. Because American political culture has traditionally relegated third parties to the fringes of the political landscape, the result is that LP activists are constantly having to compensate for the handicap of being a third party. The history of the LP since the 1980 campaign has been a search for a way out of self-imposed isolation, some gimmick that will allow the LP to suddenly break the bi-party barrier and reach the hearts and minds of the American people. The latest example of this was the 1988 presidential candidacy of Ron Paul, widely touted as the Libertarian Moses who would lead the LP out of the desert.

Ron Paul not only failed to lead the LP into the land of milk and honey, he also led his followers even deeper into the political wilderness. Searching for some way to overcome the inherent limitations of a third party presidential campaign, Ron Paul and the LP went off on a somewhat strange and certainly counter-productive ideological tangent. Minor parties are, by their very nature, prone to get-rich-quick schemes, and naturally tend to abandon principle in the interests of making some tangible progress, if only for the sake of retaining their base of dedicated but increasingly burnt-out activists and financial contributors and this is precisely what happened to the Paul campaign.

Frustrated in the task of reaching out to the mainstream, Paul turned to the strategy of making the campaign a pole of attraction for groups perceived as even more marginal than the LP: the followers of the anti-libertarian Pat Robertson, conspiracy theorists, and others for whom the phrase "international bankers" makes perfect sense. As the election results demonstrate beyond the shadow of a doubt, instead of broadening the libertarian movement, this tack succeeded in narrowing the horizons of the LP. In attempting to implement the impossible third party strategy, the LP has ended up doing considerable political damage not only to its credibility as an electoral vehicle, but to the political principles it claims to uphold. The LP

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will pay a high price for the Ron Paul scam; this will include not only the cost of mounting an expensive and exhausting campaign with very little to show for it, but also the loss of its greatest asset: ideological clarity. In their eagerness to show some results, the architects of the Paul campaign tried to merge the Libertarian Party with followers of Pat Robertson, the New Right, and John Birchers looking for a political home. The result was a monstrous hybrid creature, neither fish nor fowl, a political mutant that could not succeed and cannot be expected to survive more than six months after Election Day.

However long it may linger, the Libertarian Party is finished as a serious political force. Instead of evading political reality, those activists who have labored in the LP vineyards for years must now investigate other options.

What will become of the LP? Its future is not promising. The Paul campaign will color the politics of the

Libertarian Party for years to come, quite possibly transforming it into an unrecognizable parody of its former self. The LP is well on its way to becoming an idiosyncratic right-wing sect, a somewhat sanitized version of the old Wallaceite American Independent Party (AIP). □

## Focus on Growth

David Bergland

*David Bergland was the Vice Presidential candidate on the LP ticket in 1976, and the Presidential candidate in 1984. The following was excerpted from an interview with him of November 13, 1988.*

I've been playing the Cassandra role for a good many years on this vote count or vote percentage approach to what the LP is trying to do. As I insisted during my campaign, and as I have counselled other libertarian candidates, a focus on vote totals or vote percentages is misplaced—unless you have a specific reason for going after a particular vote total, such as in California when ballot status is at stake. The focus on vote totals is misplaced because it causes you to conduct a campaign differently than if you had your goals set on something more appropriate, such as building membership or getting people elected to offices that are attainable at our present level. But nobody wants to listen.

I think we should measure the efficacy of a campaign by establishing certain objectives for a campaign when you begin, and then measure the success at achieving those objectives. For a presidential campaign, we might ask: how many people have been added to the membership roles of the LP, both national and state? What has been the effect on the growth and effectiveness of state parties? Have campus organizations been created, and will they continue to be viable? These are the kind of measurements that are relevant to the LP at this time, and have been since its beginning.

## Errata

G. Duncan Williams, in his essay "Better Duke Than Bush" (*Liberty*, November 1988), inaccurately reported that John Hospers was one of the "usual suspects" of "libertarians and pseudo-libertarians who have come out . . . for Bush." John Hospers supported the Libertarian Party candidate, Ron Paul.

The amount of grassroots libertarian activity in a given state is more relevant to the presidential vote total than anything else.

I would say that until a campaign

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*The basic question that the LP has to ask itself is what business it's in. It's a people business. We want as many people as possible to think more along the lines that we do—politically and philosophically. We are in the membership business and I think our strategic goal is to have as many members as possible.*

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gets enough money to get on the ballot in all the states and to buy a substantial amount of television advertising, you are not going to cross that threshold where the media begins to pay attention to you. This time, unlike in 1980, I think there was a very clear attempt by the media to exclude consideration of anyone except the Republican or Democratic candidates.

Just as I have told libertarians over the years that focusing on the number of votes you are going to get and designing your campaign to get specific vote totals is wrongheaded, I will say now that to focus on the number of votes that the Presidential campaign receives or that high visibility candidates receive is to get your head aimed in the wrong direction and to ignore the more important work

that has to be done at the grass roots level. That's where the foundation we want to grow on is going to have to be created.

The experience that we had with the Clark campaign was—oh, what's the right word?—inconclusive as far as what its effect was on making the party grow. I think there was some opportunity there that the party was not in a position to take advantage of. The organization did not pull together, did not take full advantage of the goodly number of people who inquired to the party—who got interested because they saw Ed Clark, his TV ads, that sort of thing.

What we ought to be talking about is how likely the idea that the LP is promoting will find an audience. I think those prospects are steadily improving, as more and more people process themselves through the LP.

One of the mistakes that people make is thinking that just because someone joins the LP, is active for a while, and then leaves it, that this somehow is evidence that something terrible is happening. But this isn't realistic in light of how most people deal with politics and other interests in their lives. They get involved for a period of time and then they move on to something else. So I can't get nearly as exercised as some people about the fact that some people say, "Oh to heck with it I'm not going to beat my brains out in the LP, I'm going to join the Republicans but still work for libertarian goals," I can't see it as such a tremendous loss.

We shouldn't worry about a mass exodus from the LP to LROC. Whatever exodus means, it sure as hell isn't Eric Garris playing Moses and leading us all to the promised land.

Still, there is no one true way. If a libertarian wants to work for a freer world, a better world, toward the libertarian model, in one kind of context, whether its being Democrat or Republican, being nonpolitical or working with the LP or in some other way, wherever that person feels most comfortable, that is where he is liable to do the most good.

One of the major prospects for us is the Democratic Party, and it has been since the Carter Era, and even more since the Mondale and Dukakis losses. I recommend that libertarians try to promote the idea within Democratic circles that the political philosophy of the founding fathers is the one that will appeal to a whole lot of people and that it is the one the Democratic Party ought to adopt.

The advice I would give to the next LP candidate is that we start out today working for ballot access and that particularly during the nomination period that in as many states as possible that ballot access is obtained as early as possible. Credibility and creating a grass roots context for the development of the party at the grass roots level is the most impor-

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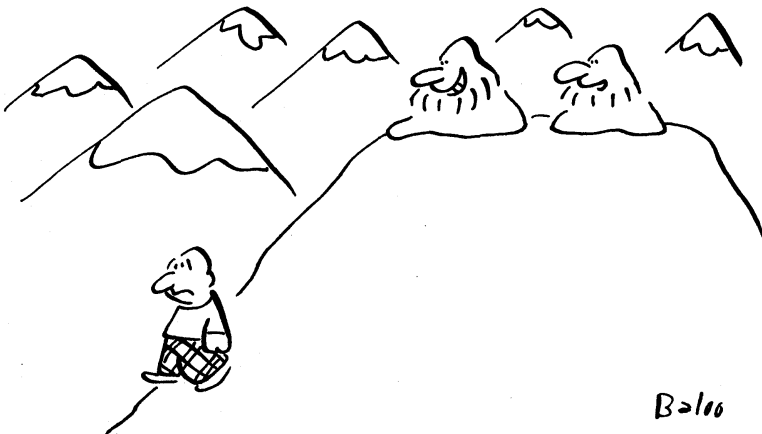
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tant thing we can do.

The basic question that the LP has to ask itself is what business it's in. It's a people business. We want as many people as possible to think more along the lines that we do—politically and philosophically. We are in the membership business and I think our strategic goal is to have as many members as possible.

I think every planning session of every LP organizational meeting—whether national or state or local—should start out with the pledge of allegiance to the principle that we are going to build membership. □



"That was cruel, telling him that the meaning of life is classified."

## Analysis

# TV Advertising and Minor Party Campaigns

by R. W. Bradford

In Kansas, partisans of Libertarian Party presidential nominee Ron Paul bought television advertisements in about half the state, leaving the other half unexposed. The election results enable us to measure the impact of television advertising on vote totals—and the cost of each vote gained.

Commercial enterprises have long known that the most efficient (i.e. lowest cost) way to get an advertising message to a broad range of Americans is to use television advertising. In recent years, the people who run the campaigns of America's major political parties have learned this lesson: nowadays, the majority of the funds spent for political campaigning is spent on television advertising.

Because of the huge numbers of people who watch television, television is not as efficient in delivering messages that are targeted to specific segments of the population. If you want to reach motorcyclists, for example, it is more efficient to buy advertisements in motorcycle magazines, or to mail advertising directly to individuals who own motorcycles. Since the major parties try to appeal to all segments of the population—more precisely, to all voters—television works very well for them.

But the question of whether television works for minor parties, whose appeal may be limited to a smaller segment of the population, has remained unsettled. Only two minor parties have used television advertising in recent history: the Libertarian Party and the Lyndon LaRouche party in its various incarnations. The LaRouche parties, however, have never achieved widespread ballot status, and their appeal has been very limited. In addition, the overwhelming bulk of their television advertising has been in the form of 30 minute programs, usually taking the form of lectures by LaRouche. This form of political advertising is not used by the major parties, who learned long ago that most television viewers (and practically all uncom-

mitted voters) either change channels or turn off their television when confronted with a half-hour political program.

The Libertarian Party's use of national television advertising in its 1980 campaign is widely credited with its relatively high vote total that year. (The 1980 LP campaign yielded more than 5 times its 1976 total, about 4 times its 1984 total, and more than twice its 1988 total.) However, the extent to which the 1980 vote total was the result of television advertising rather than other factors remains conjectural.

Ron Paul, the LP nominee in 1988, decided against buying national television advertising. Instead, his campaign produced a single 30 second commercial that stressed Paul's hostility toward the IRS, and made it available to local LP groups for use on local television stations. In making this decision, the LP presidential campaign created an opportunity to arrive at a reasonably accurate evaluation of the impact of television on voting.

Some markets were exposed to Ron Paul television advertising while others were not. By comparing the vote totals in areas with television spots to vote totals in similar areas without television advertising, we can arrive at answers to the following questions:

- How much, if any, impact on vote totals did television advertising on behalf of the LP ticket have in the 1988 election?

- How efficient is television advertising? How much does it cost to obtain a vote by advertising on television?

To answer these questions, we must isolate two areas of the country that are reasonably similar in their past voting habits, in only one of which was television advertising used.

The vote totals from Kansas offer an excellent opportunity. There are 7 different television market areas that are all or partly in Kansas. In two of these, including approximately 58% of the state's voters, local Libertarian Party groups purchased television advertising. No television advertising was used in the remaining markets.

In addition, the variation in other campaign activities between the two areas was minimal, and such other campaign activities can be isolated and taken into account.

Around population centers, party members were fairly active, but in most rural areas, the only impact of the campaign was via television. Both the advertised area and the non-advertised area consist of a mixture of rural and urban areas.



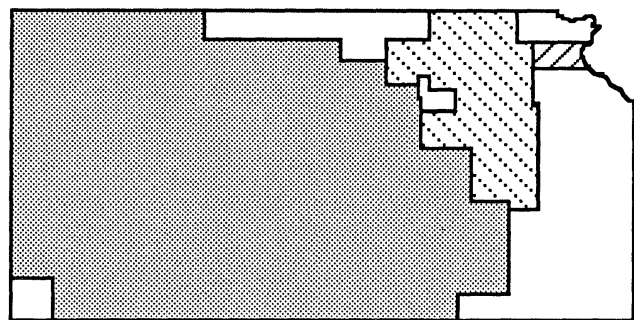
In addition, the two markets which used television advertising chose different approaches: one used the anti-IRS spot provided by the Paul campaign; the other a more generic libertarian ad produced by the Utah LP.

By dividing the state into three areas corresponding to the amount and type of advertising seen in each area, it is possible to get a good idea of the impact of advertising and the relative merits of the two advertising approaches.

## The Data

The following analysis is based on a comparison of what happened in each of the three areas, which are determined (with one minor exception) as the television market areas as defined by *TV & Cable Factbook*. With a single exception, every county in the state is included. The excluded county had substantial variables present that made it anomalous with each defined area, as I explain below.

Kansas TV Market areas



- ☐ No Advertising      ☒ Topeka Market Area  
☒ Wichita Market Area      ☒ Atchison Co (not in study)

**Wichita area:** The Wichita market includes 63 of Kansas 105 counties, whose citizens cast 438,729 (44.2% of the state total) votes in the presidential election. In addition to metropolitan Wichita, it serves most of the rural hinterland of western Kansas through a series of repeater transmitters.

**Topeka area:** The Topeka market area includes 12 counties, whose citizens cast 141,213 votes (14.2% of the state total) for president. Topeka, with 115,266 residents, is the only large city in the market area. Even so, this is the most urban of the areas considered, with 34% of its population living in Topeka, and a total of 51% living in cities of 25,000 or more.

**No television area:** The remainder of the state lies within television markets centered in other states. The largest by

far is the Kansas City (MO) market, which includes 14 Kansas counties (315,626 votes, 32.9% of state total). Several substantial suburbs of Kansas City lie within this market area. The Joplin (MO) market includes eight counties (58,534 votes, 5.9% of state total). The Lincoln (NB) market includes six counties (20,534 votes, 2.1% of state total) along the Nebraska border. The Tulsa (OK) market includes two counties (16,562 votes, 1.7% of state total). The Amarillo (TX) market includes one county (1,667 votes, 0.2% of state total).

Within these television markets there is one county where there was an extraordinary local campaign on behalf of the LP ticket. In Atchison County, LP activist and former Mayor Doug Merritt purchased a full page newspaper ad plus 27 radio spots at a cost of \$600 and campaigned extensively for the ticket in his weekly newspaper column. Because these activities were so much more intense than activities elsewhere in the state, I have excluded Atchison County from the "no television market area" category. (It should be noted that Atchison is a very small county—it cast

only 1.6% of the votes in the no advertising area—and including it would change the following analysis only very slightly.)

Each of these areas contains a single city of more than 100,000 people. Wichita, population 279,835, contains about 27% of its area's population; Topeka, population 115,266, has about 34% of its area's population; and Kansas City, population 168,213, contains about 17% of its area's population.

The areas are predominantly rural. In the Wichita area, 35% of the population lives in cities of 40,000 or more; in the Topeka area 44% live in cities; and in the no advertising area 31% are city dwellers.

## Does TV advertising win votes?

The following table summarizes the

campaign activity in each area:

Table 1: LP Advertising in Kansas

Area	Advertising	Cost	Cost per voter
Wichita	40 TVspots	\$4,075	
	180 radio spots	\$1,625	1.37¢
Topeka	12 TV spots	\$1,200	
	40 radio spots	\$ 365	1.12¢
No advertising	none	\$ 0	0.00¢

As we can see, substantially more money on a per capita basis was spent in the Wichita area than in the Topeka area. It should be noted that the radio advertising did not cover the entire market area: in the Wichita area, radio advertising reached about a third of the electorate; in the Topeka area, about a tenth.

The table below summarizes the voter response in each area:

Table 2: 1988 LP Voting by Market Area

Area	Total Votes	LP Votes	LP %
Wichita	438,729	8,037	1.83%
Topeka	141,213	1,310	0.93%
No Advertising	406,309	2,907	0.72%

It is apparent that the ticket was strongest by a wide margin in the Wichita area. Nearly twice as many Wichita area voters chose the LP ticket than did Topeka voters; about 2.5 times as many did as those voters not exposed to television advertising. Given the greater expenditure in the Wichita area, it is not surprising that it had the highest voter response.

It is a mistake to generalize from these data. Rather than reflecting variations in television advertising, it might reflect the disposition of voters to choose the LP. That is, it might be that voters in the Wichita area are simply more inclined to vote Libertarian than voters in other areas.

This is in fact the case: in past elections, voters in the Wichita area have tended to give a higher percentage of their votes to LP candidates than voters in other areas. Table 3 summarizes voter response by area in the 1984 election.

Table 23 1984 LP Voting by Market Area

Area	Total Votes	LP Votes	LP %
Wichita	455,851	1,778	0.39%
Topeka	146,617	383	0.26%
No Advertising	412,588	1,142	0.28%

Note that the No Advertising area and the Topeka area had approximately

the same LP vote percentage in 1984, and that the Wichita area outvoted the others by only about 50%, much less than the margin by which it outvoted them in the 1988 election.

This suggests a way to project how many voters in the Wichita and Topeka areas would have voted LP if television advertising had not been used in those markets. Since voters in the No Advertising area increased their response rate by a factor of 2.58, it is reasonable to conjecture that voters in the other areas would have increased their response rate by a similar factor.

The table below shows what the projected LP vote would have been if television advertising had not been used:

Table 4: Projected "no advertising" 1988 vote

Area	1984 LP vote Pct	Projected LP 1988 Pct	Projected LP 1988 vote
Wichita	0.39%	1.01%	4,423
Topeka	0.26%	0.68%	953

The difference between these projected vote totals and the actual vote totals in these markets is, presumably, the product of the television advertising in those markets:

Table 5: Projected "no advertising" 1988 vote

Area	Projected LP 1988 Vote	Actual LP 1988 Vote	Votes gained by advertising	Gain as Pct
Wichita	4,423	8,037	3,614	+ 81.7%
Topeka	953	1,310	357	+ 37.5%
Both mkts	5,376	9,347	3,971	+ 73.8%

It is apparent that these relatively small purchases of television spots had a dramatic impact. The schedule of 40 television spots plus 220 radio spots resulted in increasing the LP vote by more than 80%. The 12 television spots run in the Topeka market increased voter response by 37%.

All told, the areas in which television advertising was purchased voted much more strongly for Paul than if no television spots had been used. In fact, the television advertising gained approximately 3,970 votes for the LP ticket. That is an increase of 73.8%.

### What does it cost?

What do results like these cost? In terms of raw dollars, the Wichita advertising program was more efficient than the Topeka program, as is evident from Table 6 in the next column.

As you can see, it cost nearly 3 times

as much to obtain additional votes in the Topeka market as in the Wichita market.

Table 6: Cost of Votes Obtained

Area	votes gained	Cost	Cost/Vote
Wichita	3,614	\$5700	\$1.58
Topeka	357	\$1665	\$4.66
Both Mkts	3,970	\$7365	\$1.86

In part, this may be the result of the relatively large expenditure for radio advertising in Emporia, a small city within the Topeka market, well away from population centers. It also may be the result of the variation in the ads used in each market.

But one conclusion is obvious: the marginal cost of obtaining votes by television advertising is less than the average cost of obtaining votes by the means employed by the Paul campaign, which reported it spent approximately \$3 million to obtain about 420,000 votes, for an average cost of \$7.14 per vote.

National television advertising is much more efficient than buying ads in local markets. That is, the cost to reach each viewer is less for national ads because of economies of scale. It is therefore likely that had the Paul campaign purchased national television spots, it would have acquired additional votes more cheaply than the

\$1.86 per vote average cost of the Kansas LP.

### What about radio advertising?

I attempted to use the same technique to isolate the influence of the radio ads; that is, I isolated the areas where the radio ads were heard, compared the improvement from 1984 to 1988 in both the radio influenced areas and the non-radio areas, projected the vote totals for the radio areas if the radio spots had not been aired. In an effort to maintain the interest of those who have been bored or annoyed by all the tables and projections I have reproduced so far, I shall not reproduce the study step-by-step here.

The study indicated that the cost of votes gained by radio advertising ranged from -\$1.05 to \$18.25, depending on the definition of radio market area used. The negative vote cost occurs because when using one definition of radio market area, the projected vote total

without the spots actually exceeds the actual vote total. (In other words, it showed that the radio ads actually *reduced* votes for the LP ticket.)

This confusing result is the product, I believe, of two factors: 1) radio market areas do not correlate nicely with the voting data (because radio markets are smaller, they do not correspond so closely to county lines); and 2) radio advertising is not nearly as effective a means of reaching voters as television advertising. The major parties, which have studied the effect of radio and television advertising, spend only a tiny proportion of advertising funds on radio, presumably because they know that it doesn't work as well as television advertising. And commercial advertisers have long been convinced that television advertising is the cheapest way to reach a general audience and that radio is better employed for reaching specific target audiences.

But it may be a mistake to conclude that radio advertising is ineffective, or less effective than television advertising, without further study.

### Which television spot worked better?

Even when all radio advertising expenditures are excluded from the analysis, the cost per vote gained was much cheaper in Wichita where the generic ad was used than in Topeka where the IRS ad was used. This supports the thesis that the generic ad was more effective.

But in my judgment, it is not conclusive.

The difference in cost per vote received may be entirely the result of the higher cost of advertising in smaller markets, where economies of scale are not available. There are 132,100 television households in the Topeka market area, and the ads there cost an average of \$40 each. Thus the average cost per thousand potential households for these ads is 30.3¢. The Wichita market has 413,000 households, and its ads cost an average of \$100 each, so the cost per thousand potential households is 24.2¢.

In addition, there were 3.33 times as many spots run in the Wichita market as in the Topeka market, yet Wichita's expenditure was only 22% higher in terms of cost per voter within each market.

A more conclusive answer could be drawn if the ratings of all the ad spots were known, so that cost per exposure

*"TV Advertising and Minor Party Campaigns," continued from previous page*

of each ad to each voter could be estimated.

**What does all this mean?**

The experience in Kansas clearly demonstrates that the use of television advertising can substantially increase LP vote totals at a low cost. Television advertising can greatly increase voter response to minor party campaigns, just as it increases voter response to major party campaigns.

Television advertising in Kansas increased votes for the LP ticket by 3,970

votes (73.8%) at a cost of \$7,265, or about \$1.86 per vote.

Given the fact that Kansas is a fairly average state for the LP (in 1976, the LP got .34% in Kansas versus .35% nationally; in 1980 [when Kansan David Koch was on the ticket] the LP got 1.48% in Kansas versus 1.06% nationally; in 1984 the LP got .35% in Kansas versus .34 nationally), it is likely that the effect would be similar in a national campaign.

However, the cost of obtaining the additional votes would likely be lower in a national campaign, since national adver-

tising reaches voters at a lower unit cost.

In addition, the data suggest that radio advertising is not so effective as television advertising and that the generic advertisement produced by the Utah LP was more effective than the IRS spot produced by the Paul campaign.

Further analysis of the relationship between election returns and specific campaign techniques would be very useful for those pursuing electoral politics. □

*Special thanks to Karl Peterjohn and Douglas Merritt of the Kansas Libertarian Party, who pro-*

*"High Noon for the Libertarian Party?" continued from page 25*

voter. The next time he sees an advertisement for a Libertarian candidate, or a book espousing libertarian ideas, or a magazine article about liberty, he will be more inclined to read it and consider what it has to say.

The more votes an LP candidate receives, the less he (and other LP candidates) will be viewed as "extremists" or

"oddballs" in future elections. Higher vote totals increase the willingness of the public to listen to the LP message. The more votes any LP candidate receives, the more likely the news media will pay attention to his next campaign, or the next campaign of the LP. This reduces the cost and increases the effectiveness of future campaigns.

And the effect may go further than the news media. It may extend to the academic world. According to Murray Rothbard, who has spent decades advancing the idea of the free market in the academic marketplace, the 920,000 votes for the LP presidential candidate in 1980 is the only explanation for the sudden increase in both the number of economics textbooks presenting free market ideas and the number of universities that used them.

Americans respect success and growth. When the libertarian movement grows or libertarian vote totals grow, it adds to the credibility of libertarian ideas. The more the libertarian movement grows, the less dangerous and radical its program will seem to most Americans. The more it grows, the more receptive Americans are to its ideas.

**The LP advances liberty in the political sphere even in elections it loses.**

It is not necessary for the LP to win elections—that is, provide its candidates with government jobs—for it to influence public policy.

In the election just past, LP candidate Larry Dodge got only 5% in his race for Secretary of State in Montana. He raised

two issues in his campaign: the sale of state lands and freeing up the initiative process. Midway through the campaign, "They copied my initiative plan and claimed it for their own," Dodge says. "Even Story [the Republican candidate] changed his stand on the sale of state land toward the end of the campaign. These things cost us votes."

Dodge is undoubtedly correct: the appropriation of his campaign issues by his major party opponents certainly cost him votes, since it enabled voters to support his program without leaving the comfort of the two party system. On election day, only one Montanan in twenty voted for Dodge. But his campaign goals were advanced when the major party candidates stole his issues.

Dodge ran to promote the idea of advancing liberty by opening up the initiative process and encouraging the sale of government owned lands. These ideas are now advanced by the major parties.

The dedicated and heroic efforts of Larry Dodge, the days he and his volunteers spent talking to voters, the lonely roads he traveled, the sleep he missed, the money his supporters gave him, was wisely spent. It did not result in electoral victory. But it resulted in his ideas being advanced.

**VI. Conclusion**

The Libertarian Party is not the only way to advance liberty. Election of LP candidates is not the only way the LP wins. Progress sometimes seems agonizingly slow.

But when all is said and done, the Libertarian Party is an effective means of making the world freer, more prosperous, and more humane. □

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## American Libertarian

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### California Party Elects New Leadership

San Diego, CA. The state chapter of the Libertarian Party held its annual convention in San Diego, California, on March 1st and 2nd. The convention was held at the Sheraton Hotel and was attended by over 100 members and guests. The convention was a success and the new leadership was elected. The new leadership includes: President, [Name]; Vice President, [Name]; Secretary, [Name]; Treasurer, [Name]; and Executive Committee members, [Names].



### An Eyewitness Account Jim Lewis on Trial

by John Burt

San Diego, CA. After a year of preparation and a long performance during the trial of Jim Lewis, the Libertarian Party's vice presidential nominee, the trial of Jim Lewis was a success. The trial was held in San Diego, California, and was attended by over 100 members and guests. The trial was a success and the new leadership was elected. The new leadership includes: President, [Name]; Vice President, [Name]; Secretary, [Name]; Treasurer, [Name]; and Executive Committee members, [Names].

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## Disputation

# *AIDS and the FDA*

Some letters-to-the-editors seem especially important, addressing issues or challenging our authors in vital ways. Recently two of our readers took on Sandy Shaw and Durk Pearson, and we thought that their letters and Ms Shaw's reply deserved more prominent display than in our regular letters section: so here they are. *Caveat lector!*

---

### **AIDS: Biting the Magic Bullet**

H. Griffin Cupstid

The AIDS epidemic would not be "stopped right now" by a home HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) test, as Sandy Shaw argues ("AIDS: More Than Just a Virus," Sept., 1988). Such specious reasoning is the same as that used by right-wing homophobes and paranoid public health advocates who extend this logic to universal testing and mandatory quarantine. HIV testing is not quite as simple as a home pregnancy test and the decisions precipitated by test results are far more complex.

A negative test does not guarantee the absence of HIV infection because many months can elapse between exposure (and presumably infectivity) and a positive test. Another serious consideration is the high number of false-positive tests. A *New England Journal of Medicine* editorial reviewed this problem (1987; 317:238) and reported false-positive rates as high as 6.8%. If we were to assume that a rate of only 0.5% false-positive could be obtained, then for every woman actually infected discovered by widespread testing, 50 women could be falsely identified as HIV carriers.

Of course, in a free society there would be no barriers to wasting your money on indiscriminate testing and possibly destroying your piece of mind with inaccurate results. The FDA's motivation in banning these tests is more of a benign paternalism than a malignant attempt to perpetuate an epidemic.

The contention that the FDA is "the

main reason for the lack of AIDS treatment" is an exaggeration which diminishes the credibility of Shaw's argument. This argument was perhaps valid in the cases of some drugs for some diseases. But for AIDS there is no "magic bullet" waiting on the drug shelves of the world but held up at the border by FDA thugs.

The abolition of State regulation is an admirable goal, but it is a mistake to believe that the emancipated self-regulatory mechanisms of Science will magically open the doors to fantastic advancements. Scientific, medical and pharmaceutical institutions behave in many self-regulating ways and State action, like FDA regulation, merely adds another layer (albeit an inflexible and redundant one).

Researchers will continue to adhere to the scientific method, even though this will delay widespread use of promising new drugs; the pharmaceutical industry will continue to restrict the distribution of potentially dangerous drugs in order to limit their legal liability; insurance companies will continue to pay only for "accepted therapy" to minimize their financial risk; and physicians will continue to adhere to a community "standard of care" because their patients will demand it and deserve it. The progress of Science depends on the ordered behavior of its institutions. All of these behaviors would exist independent of State action.

Let the demagogues of the Left and Right abuse the AIDS epidemic to further their political agendas. The argument for Liberty does not require such

tactics. AIDS is a tragedy. The FDA at its worst is an inconvenience. Let us keep them both in perspective.

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### **And Now . . . A Word On Behalf of the FDA**

William M. London

The argument of Sandy Shaw and Durk Pearson that FDA restrictions on the labeling of drugs costs the American public billions of dollars and hundreds of thousands of lives ("Free Speech and the Future of Medicine," March, 1988) is pure nonsense.

Quite the contrary, what is actually costing the American public billions of dollars annually and inestimable human suffering is the unchecked promotion of scientifically unsupported and disproved health claims made for ineffective and hazardous products. If enacted, the Shaw-Pearson proposal that drug manufacturers be able to say what they want on half of each label of their products (with the FDA having their say on the other half) would serve to further the enrichment of manufacturers' pocket-books while threatening both the health and freedom of consumers.

Shaw and Pearson argue that FDA regulations on drug labeling violate freedom of speech. However, freedom of speech is not an absolute. To yell "fire!" in a crowded theater when there is no fire threatens the safety of the audience and therefore cannot be protected by freedom of speech. Similarly, making false claims about products to be used for the enhancement of health also threatens the safety of consumers and

cannot be morally justified by freedom of speech. Moreover, consumers have no true freedom of choice unless they are provided with valid information.

Since 1962, the FDA has required manufacturers to provide scientific evidence for both the safety and efficacy of drug products before it grants approval for marketing. Even so, unexpected problems may arise after a drug is on the market for some time.

Shaw and Pearson suggest that the FDA become merely an advisory agency pending its abolition. They conclude their article with the unsupported assertion that "the FDA's approval delays have killed more Americans than have all wars since the Civil War." However, they fail to note that out of 100 investigational new drugs that the FDA approves for experimental testing on humans, about 80 will fail to pass the three phase test required for pre-market approval.

Apparently, Shaw and Pearson would let the seller be free to promote life-threatening nostrums to unsuspecting, gullible, and desperate people, which can include just about anybody, even libertarians. Such a policy is a perversion of the concept of a free market and a threat to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

### Contexts and Clarifications

Sandy Shaw

The home AIDS test that Dupont has developed is available in England and has about a 1% error rate (false positives and false negatives), provided the test subject is producing AIDS antibodies (a small number of persons infected with the AIDS virus have been found who don't). The FDA will not allow Americans to buy the test kit nor allow Dupont to inform consumers or physicians of the availability of that test kit in England.

I disagree with Cupstid that the FDA is a mere inconvenience and that its motives are a mere form of "benign paternalism." In my article with Durk Pearson, "Free Speech and the Future of Medicine" (March 1988, *Liberty*), I provide a quote (with reference) by an FDA spokesman that the FDA didn't want widespread distribution of experimental drugs to AIDS victims because then how could they do a placebo controlled study since nobody would take a placebo. This is not "benign paternalism"! It sounds a lot more like Nazi concentration camp

doctoring to me. It is a clear example of how people who probably had good intentions to start with were corrupted because they had power coming out of the barrel of a gun.

The class of medical drugs called beta blockers (used to treat high blood pressure and cardiac arrhythmias) were available in Europe for 16 years before they were approved for use in this country. The lowest figure we have seen for the number of lives saved each year by beta blockers is about 25,000 (some estimates are as high as 80,000). During those 16 years, at least 400,000 people died because they did not have access to beta blockers. I wouldn't call this an "inconvenience." Cupstid contends that, in the case of AIDS, there is no effective treatment being held up by the FDA. What he fails to realize is that the FDA is preventing the investment of the large sums of money and time that would be required to find effective treatments by erecting a huge barrier to the marketing of these high tech R & D products. For example, a vaccinia virus could be developed that would produce an antisense RNA strand to the RNA strand that codes for HIV reverse transcriptase. This sequence is highly conserved in HIV, unlike the envelope protein. But why should anybody do this if it is going to cost \$125 million and several years plus whatever it takes to develop the new drug entity? And you may never get it approved after doing all that work!

Reader London says that our statement that the FDA's approval delays have killed more Americans than have all wars since the Civil War is an unsupported assertion. He will find several references in our "Free Speech and the Future of Medicine" article that show our statement to be a fact, including economist Dr. Sam Peltzman's outstanding study in "Regulation of Pharmaceutical Innovation" (American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, Washington, D.C.). We devoted an entire section of *Life Extension*, *A Practical Scientific Approach* to the subject of the costs of government regulation of drugs; Appendix E: "What is the Government Doing About Aging Research" takes up 53 pages of analysis plus an additional several pages of references.

Reader London seems to believe that a heavily regulated market and a free

market can be the same thing. As we show in our "Free Speech" article (and in much greater detail in our *Life Extension*), the FDA does not permit free speech in the marketing of health products (drugs, medical devices, and even foods). You cannot legally make *truthful* statements in commercial speech about drugs (or even foods and nutrients) unless the FDA allows you to do so. For example, you cannot legally say that vitamin C is necessary for healing on a bottle of vitamin C supplements. This, according to the FDA, is a health claim and renders your vitamin supplement a drug which must pass their long, expensive drug approval process. That vitamin C is necessary for healing has been known since the 1940s. People have been jailed by the FDA for marketing vitamin E next to books about vitamin E that made unapproved "drug" claims for it (e.g., that vitamin E is useful for more than just the treatment of vitamin E deficiency conditions). Drug companies are not permitted to provide information to

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*There are a good many false claims being made for health products, but the best defense against that is competitive free market mechanisms, not a government monopoly on "truth."*

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the public or even to doctors about new drugs that have not yet received FDA approval, not even about research studies that have already been published about these drugs in peer-reviewed scientific publications! Valuable drugs that have been used safely in other technologically advanced countries for many years (such as deprenyl, an anti-Parkinson's disease drug used in Europe for 20 years) are not available here for sick Americans. The company trying to get deprenyl approved in this country can't talk about it here.

There are a good many false claims being made for health products, but the best defense against these claims is competitive free market mechanisms, not a government monopoly on "truth." I am amazed that anyone reading *Liberty* would not already know this. I refer reader London to *Free To Choose* by Milton and Rose Friedman and to the works of other free market economists. □



## Explanation

# Random Drug Testing: Mathematics and Morality

by William H. Wingo

Proposals for mandatory drug testing are ubiquitous these days. Unfortunately, proponents ignore certain fundamental facts about the nature of testing, and in the real world the efficacy of drug testing is questionable . . .

Libertarians object to any aggression against the individual; and surely random drug testing ranks high among such aggressions. Unfortunately, this argument—like many other libertarian arguments—does not impress the uninitiated. In this kind of situation, some advocates of free-markets recommend a flexible approach. If you expect agreement (they say), then you should stress principle; if you expect disagreement, then stress results. Since libertarians are used to disagreement, we will save the constitutional arguments for another article and start out with “pragmatism,” although some principle may sneak in later on.

I will present a pragmatic and somewhat technical argument against random drug testing. The mathematical treatment is quite general and applies equally well to other kinds of medical screening such as AIDS testing, cancer screening, or kindergarten eye examinations.\*

It should first be pointed out that all medical tests have both false positives and false negatives, no matter what anyone says to the contrary. Every day, laboratories and physicians are sued over bad lab results and the decisions based on them. There will always be sample collection errors, labelling errors, custody errors, storage errors, human errors, instrument errors, computer errors and unknown errors, to mention only a few. Technical problems and errors in drug testing can be reduced; and sometimes some of them can be “traded” for others; but they cannot be completely eliminated.

\* See any introductory epidemiology or biostatistics text: for example, Mausner and Kramer, 1985, pp 214-238; or Woolson, 1987, pp 59-71.

Next we must define some terms, starting with the epidemiologist’s classic “two-by-two” table (figure 1). In this table, the columns indicate the test results (positive or negative); the rows indicate the tested-for condition (drugs, cancer, AIDS, etc.) Thus, “a” represents the number of subjects who test positive and really have the condition (true positives); “b” is the number who test negative, but have the condition anyway (false negatives); “c” is the number who test positive but do not have the condition (false positives); and “d” is the number not having the condition who test negative (true negatives.)

C o n d.	Test		
	+	–	total
+	a	b	a + b
–	c	d	c + d
total	a + c	b + d	a + b + c + d

Figure 1. Epidemiologist’s two-by-two table, general form.

The row and column totals are also significant: “a+b” is the total number having the condition, regardless of test results; “b+d” is the total number testing negative, regardless of presence of the

condition; and so on. In the lower right corner we find  $a+b+c+d$ , the total tested population (tpop).

Now we must review a few terms from introductory epidemiology, referring to the two-by-two table (figure 1):

The *false positive rate* (fpr) of the test is the fraction of persons with positive test results who do not have the tested-for condition. It is equal to the number of false positives divided by the total number of positives: that is,  $c/(a+c)$ . The false positive rate may be low, but it will never be zero.

The *prevalence* (prev) of the condition is the fraction of the tested population who have the condition. It is equal to the number of affected persons divided by the total number of persons tested; or,  $(a+b)/(a+b+c+d)$ . Prevalence turns out to be inversely related to the false positive rate, as we shall see below.

The *sensitivity* (sens) of the test is a measure of the test’s ability to correctly identify a person who does have the condition. It is equal to the fraction of persons with the condition who test positive, and is given by  $a/(a+b)$ .

The *specificity* (spec) of the test is a measure of the test’s ability to correctly identify a person who *does not* have the condition. It is equal to the fraction of persons not having the

condition who test negative, and is given by  $d/(c+d)$ . Like prevalence, specificity is inversely related to the false positive rate.

From these definitions and a little high-school algebra, we can derive the following relations:

$$\begin{aligned} a+b &= \text{prev} \times \text{tpop} \\ a &= \text{sens} \times \text{prev} \times \text{tpop} \\ b &= (1-\text{sens}) \times \text{prev} \times \text{tpop} \\ c &= (1-\text{spec}) \times (1-\text{prev}) \times \text{tpop} \\ d &= \text{spec} \times (1-\text{prev}) \times \text{tpop} \end{aligned}$$

Now we can express the false positive rate in terms of the sensitivity, specificity and prevalence, a very important relationship which we will call the false positive rate equation.

We omit the details of the derivation, except to note that the total population figure, tpop, cancels out (see appendix). Algebra students can try it as an exercise.

$$\text{fpr} = c/(a+c) = \frac{(1-\text{spec})(1-\text{prev})}{[(\text{sens})(\text{prev}) + (1-\text{spec})(1-\text{prev})]}$$

Those who recall their first-year calculus will note that as the prevalence decreases toward zero with all other quantities constant, the false positive rate approaches unity. This means that as the condition being tested for becomes rarer, approaching zero, the false positive rate increases, approaching 100 percent.

To see how this relationship works, let us suppose that the tested population is 100,000 persons; and that the sensitivity and specificity of the test are both fixed at 99 percent. (In real life, sensitivity and specificity are often trade-offs, and it is unlikely that both would be this high for the same test.) We will construct the two-by-two table for various population prevalences, and calculate the corresponding false positive rates. The same figures could be calculated from the false positive rate equation.

For a prevalence of 50 percent (figure 2), the false positive rate is 500/50,000 or 1.0 percent. Thus, even if the condition is very common, one out of 100 positive tests will be incorrect.

As the prevalence falls, the false positive rate rises rapidly. For a prevalence of 20 percent (figure 3), the false positive rate is 800/20,600 or 3.9 percent. For a prevalence of 10 percent (figure 4), the false positive rate is 900/10,800 or 8.3 percent.

As the condition becomes increasingly rare, the false positive rate approaches 100 percent and the test becomes worthless. For a prevalence of 1.0 percent (figure 5), the false positive rate is 990/1,980 or 50 percent. In other words, if only one person in 100 has the condition, one-half of the positive tests will be erroneous. For a prevalence of 0.1 percent (figure 6), the false positive rate is 999/1,098 or 91 percent.

At this point, the drug testing advocate (and perhaps the reader, too) may think of making the test more "accurate" (specific) to avoid this difficulty. It is true that the false positive rate can be reduced (although not to zero) by using a test with higher specificity. However, it seems to be a fact of scientific life that the more specific tests are also more complicated, and often much more expensive. One approach devised to overcome this difficulty is to use a cheap "screening" test with a high sensitivity; and then to retest all positives using a more expensive "confirmatory" test with a high specificity.

Despite all this, the fundamental problem remains: although modern confirmatory tests are good, they are not perfect. If large, low-prevalence populations are tested, *innocent persons are still going to be reported positive*.

Figure 7 shows the relationship between prevalence and false positive rate in graphical form, assuming a constant sensitivity of 99 percent. For each assumed specificity, the false positive rate equation generates a unique curve: we have shown three for simplicity. It is clear that at a constant prevalence, increasing the specificity does reduce the false positive rate; however, a sufficiently low prevalence will overcome this effect and cause the rate to rise again. Even for a specificity of 99.99 percent (one error in 10,000,) as the prevalence declines below two percent, the false positive rate again rises inexorably towards 100 percent.

The false positive rate equation can be used to determine the specificity required to achieve any desired ("acceptable") false positive rate at any given prevalence and sensitivity. For example, if we were willing to accept a single false positive—one person—in our hypothetical population of 100,000 (a false positive rate of 0.001 percent,) we can calculate that the specificity would have to be to achieve it. We will assume that

C o n d.	Test		
	+	-	total
+	49,500	500	50,000
-	500	49,500	50,000
total	50,000	50,000	100,000

Figure 2. Table for 50% prevalence

C o n d.	Test		
	+	-	total
+	19,800	200	20,000
-	800	79,200	80,000
total	20,600	79,400	100,000

Figure 3. Table for 20% prevalence

C o n d.	Test		
	+	-	total
+	9,900	100	10,000
-	900	89,100	90,000
total	10,800	89,200	100,000

Figure 4. Table for 10% prevalence

C o n d.	Test		
	+	-	total
+	990	10	1,000
-	990	98,010	99,000
total	1,980	98,020	100,000

Figure 5. Table for 1.0% prevalence

C o n d.	Test		
	+	-	total
+	99	1	100
-	999	98,901	99,900
total	1,098	98,902	100,000

Figure 6. Table for 0.1% prevalence

there are 100 affected individuals in the 100,000 (prevalence = 0.1 percent,) and that the sensitivity is still 99 percent.

Rearranging the false positive rate equation and plugging in these figures (see appendix,) we obtain a required specificity of 99.99999901 percent—less than one error in 100 million. At any lower specificity, there will be more than one false positive per hundred thousand tests. Now no one has more respect for

modern analytical instrumentation than I, but I do not believe that any technique available today even approaches such a level of accuracy. Even if the instruments were theoretically capable of it, they are constructed, operated, calibrated, and repaired by human beings. Human error becomes the dominant factor, and more improving of the instruments will have little or no effect.

That's probably enough mathematics for one day, so let's talk about the implications. First, of course, *any random drug testing program must falsely incriminate innocent persons*. That single "acceptable" false positive hypothesized above is a human being, whose life will be permanently affected by the erroneous test result—and in practice, it won't be just one.

It is as if an angel (or devil) offered us a proposition: we can have random drug testing, but at the cost of ruining the lives and careers of many innocent persons. We don't know who they are, but they're out there.

An extreme example of this problem is the recent proposal in a southern state to test first-and-second grade "pee-wee" football players—certainly a low-prevalence group. If this program is implemented, innocent seven-year-olds are going to be falsely identified as drug users. (If you're going to ruin people's lives, I guess you might as well start early.) When people advocate testing as a deterrent—"to give the kids a reason to say 'no,'" for example—this is part of what they are advocating. Their own innocent children, or yours, or mine, may be the victims.

The testing phenomenon is not new in American history. In the 1930's there was widespread mass screening for syphilis, motivated by much the same emotions. Persons with no reason to believe they had syphilis were persuaded to take the Wassermann test by government propaganda and social pressure. Those who tested positive suffered both the social stigma of syphilis and the long, painful 1930's-style treatment for it. Today it is clear that those early tests were highly inaccurate, and that many

innocent persons were subjected to the ordeal for nothing (Brandt, 1988).

Forty years later, in the early days of military drug testing, there were all kinds of problems. Many military personnel were disciplined or dismissed from the service for drug use, many of whom later turned out to be innocent. To cite only one example, in 1981 the U.S. Navy "... had to reverse all positive findings for a certain number of tests, clear the records, and rehire the people it had fired" (Marshall, 1988). No

few things the individual can do to fight this trend. One thing is to resist random testing on technical grounds, and I hope this article will provide some ammunition for that part of the struggle.

Before submitting to a random drug test, we should inquire officially as to the test procedure and instruments to be used; the quality control and calibration procedures of the laboratory; the best available estimates of the sensitivity and specificity of the procedure (and whatever the specificity is, it is *not* 100 percent); and the estimated prevalence in the tested population. This would allow us to calculate the false positive rate, which could then be used as further technical grounds for resisting the test.

Individuals can also think twice about *agreeing* to be tested (for example, signing an employment contract with a random drug-test clause; or entering into a situation where this agreement is implicit, as in some high-school athletic programs.) Libertarians have less objection to testing by mutual agreement than to mass random testing; but still, such agreements should certainly

not be entered into lightly.

Ideally, a drug testing contract should specify the drugs and metabolites allowed to be tested for; the test procedures and instruments to be used in the analysis; procedures for confirmation of any positive test by a second laboratory before any action is taken based on the test results; and above all, appeal procedures. In the case of a "screening-confirming" sequence, all positive results in the screening test should be destroyed as soon as the confirming test is reported negative, and no records traceable to the individual should be kept of this procedure.

Since the subject runs the risk of dismissal and other heavy penalties for testing positive, but incurs no benefit at all for testing negative, a desirable feature of drug-testing agreements would be a bonus or raise to be paid for each negative test—perhaps equal to the individual's current salary multiplied by the false positive rate of the test. This would bring the expectation closer to even, and would also make it less likely that

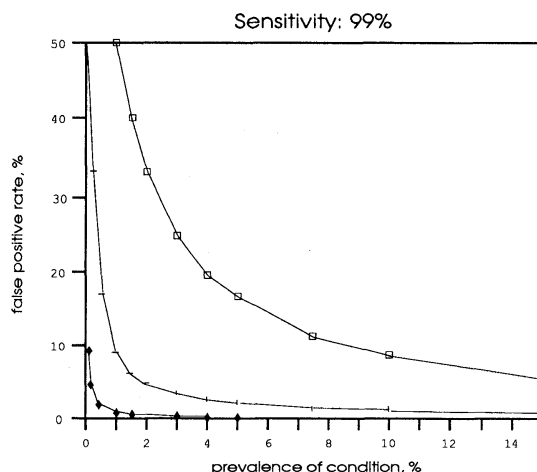


Figure 7. Relationship of prevalence, specificity, and false positive rate. Squares: 99.00% specificity; cross-lines: 99.90% specificity; diamonds: 99.99% specificity.

doubt this was a great morale booster for the Navy. Today, of course, the military assures us that the tests are conducted without error, and false positives are no longer a problem.

Despite the problems inherent to any screening program, drug testing has established itself in the United States, and is rapidly developing powerful economic pressure groups. Analytical laboratories, instrument and reagent manufacturers, and suppliers of "laboratory disposables" such as needles and urine cups are only a few of the business interests with a growing stake in mass drug testing. We can expect the pressure for testing to increase for the next few years, at least.

As testing is expanded, the number of innocent victims will increase. Many of them will forfeit their careers, their reputations, and their illusions about a supposedly free society with its supposed presumption of innocence. The possibility of a false positive hangs over us all like the sword of Damocles.

But it's not all bad news. There are a

repeated testing would be used as a harassment tactic.

Probably few drug-test agreements today will have such features; if not, those asked to sign such agreements should try to get them included—or at least require a higher salary to compensate for the risk of a false positive. As libertarians, we can hope that market forces will eventually result in inclusion of these safeguards. In the meantime, we will at least be *aware* of the risks.

Finally, we should keep drug testing in its proper perspective, both in official policy and in our own minds. In the absence of other evidence, *a positive drug test is just a probability*, and should be regarded as such. There is always the possibility of a false positive.

If we imagine ourselves as jurors in a drug case, in which the *only* evidence was a positive result in a random test conducted without prior suspicion—even ignoring for a moment the libertarian views on drug use in general—we should realize that doubt does not have to be large in order to be reasonable: "Sorry, Mr. Prosecutor—not guilty." This approaches the constitutional argument, of course—but I warned you at the beginning that some principles might sneak in at the end. □

## Appendix

### I. Derivation of the false positive rate equation:

$$fpr = c/(a+c) = \frac{(1-spec)(1-prev)(tpop)}{(sens)(prev)(tpop) + (1-spec)(1-prev)(tpop)}$$

Since tpop appears in every term, it cancels out:

$$fpr = \frac{(1-spec)(1-prev)}{(sens)(prev) + (1-spec)(1-prev)}$$

### II. Determination of required specificity from the false positive rate equation.

$$fpr = (1-spec)(1-prev) / [(sens)(prev) + (1-spec)(1-prev)]$$

We want specificity in terms of everything else.

$$fpr[sens)(prev) + (1-sens)(1-prev)] = (1-spec)(1-prev) \\ (sens)(prev)(fpr) + (fpr)(1-spec)(1-prev) = (1-spec)(1-prev)$$

$$(sens)(prev)(fpr) = (1-fpr)(1-spec)(1-prev)$$

$$1-spec = (sens)(prev)(fpr) / [(1-fpr)(1-prev)]$$

$$spec = 1 - (sens)(prev)(fpr) / [(1-fpr)(1-prev)]$$

Filling in sensitivity = 99%, prevalence = 0.1%, and fpr = 0.001%, we have:

$$spec = (0.99)(0.001)(0.00001) / [(1-0.00001)(1-0.001)] = 0.999999901 = 99.99999901\%$$

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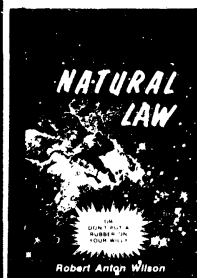
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## Reply

# Property, Population and the Environment

by John Hospers

Ms Jane Shaw's response (Nov. 1988) to my "Freedom and Ecology" (Sept. 1988) contains a curious collection of misunderstandings of what I was saying. Let me try to clear things up a bit . . .

### Property Rights

For a good many years I have defended property rights in land, first of all in my book *Libertarianism* (1971; now published by Cobden Press, San Francisco). I also endorsed Rothbard's advocacy of property rights in areas of the sea. It is a bit strange, after all this, to be told that I "have little room" for property rights.

I do plead guilty, however, to tracing their limitations. Property rights are not a magic wand that can be waved indiscriminately to enable libertarians to solve difficult problems.

I did say in the article that government ownership or management of land is *usually* more wasteful, inefficient, and irresponsible than private ownership and management, because an individual owner is more motivated to make the land serve his or her interest. However, (1) the owner's *long-term* interest may not coincide with his *short-term* interest, just as a garageman's long-term interest (keeping his customers) may not coincide with his short-term interest (making all the money he can and getting out). In the long run it's not in our interest to allow animal species to become extinct, but short-term interest often leads people to do it just the same. If you're tilling the soil for just a few years before selling out, it may not be to your short-term interest to consider ecological factors (the new owner may not care or notice), but

if you're going to hold it for your children, you only defeat your own interests by overcultivating and overgrazing. The same is true of a car.

Thus, by preferring short-term to long-term interests, a person may cause a lot of damage. Not only that: (2) it may not serve a person's interests *at all* to help preserve the environment. Is it really in the Nepalese's interest *not* to cut down the forests, since he needs more space for farming and for his children? How could you convince him that he should refrain from a move that is profitable to him, even if it does result in alternating floods and droughts in nearby India? ("Why should I care about India?") It's not in his interest to refrain unless numerous people of various nationalities come to some enforceable agreement about preserving the environment. For him to be a lone martyr preserving an infinitesimally small part of the environment would be pointless—a great sacrifice for him without a favorable outcome for either himself or others.

For both these reasons, then, a person might *not* persevere in the preservation of his own land. And empirically, individual ownership of property is something of a mixed bag. Individuals are more likely to tend land carefully if it is theirs than to do so if the land is communally owned (if they take care and others don't, the usual rewards of

care will not occur). At the same time, however, following one's own short-term interest may result in catastrophe. In not one but literally dozens of African nations, the *only* places where lions, leopards, elephants, giraffe, and the numerous species of antelope survive on any large scale is in those areas designated as national parks—and even then only in those national parks in which conservation of wild life is rigidly enforced. On all the non-government lands, the wild life has almost totally disappeared. Traveling through central and southern Africa, as I did in 1983, 1986, and 1988, you can usually tell whether you're in a national park by whether there are any game animals around. If there were no such parks, almost all African wild life would by now have become extinct. The same, I am told, is true in India and elsewhere.

But that's not the main point I was making, which was that no matter under *whose* auspices the forests are destroyed, the deforestation is an ecological catastrophe, presenting great danger to all the residents of the earth. Whether individual owners do it, or collective owners, or government owners or managers, the deforestation is equally tragic. Suppose the residents of the slums of northeastern Brazil decided, without benefit of government subsidy, to homestead in the jungle and cut down trees to

make farms. Perhaps they later regret it when they find that the soil is so thin, but meanwhile the forests have been cut. Does Ms Shaw really mean that the damage is less if the forests are cut down by private owners than when they are cut down through the action of governments? I would think not; but to my remark that "the effects would have been the same if individuals without government subsidy had homesteaded the jungle," Ms Shaw retorts, "Environmental analysts disagree" (p.56). But disagree about exactly what?—about private ownership being usually superior (with which I agree as a general principle containing numerous exceptions)? There seems to be a confusion between

1. X is as damaging when done by A as when done by B  
and

2. Under government ownership, X is more likely to occur.

Her remarks address only (2) without ever touching (1), and it was (1) which I was discussing when I said that deforestation was equally tragic no matter who did it.

What I was trying to oppose was a general tendency of many libertarians to rely on *stock formulas* rather than to think through a new or different kind of situation. The stock formula in this case is "It's a problem caused by governments; so if we got rid of government ownership, the problem would disappear." Just blame the government, as libertarians already do, and we wouldn't have to think about ecological problems any more! I suggest, on the contrary, that this stock formula just won't do. Individual ownership is important, but not a panacea. It all depends on *what each individual does* with the land that he or she owns.

## Overpopulation

Another stock libertarian formula is, "There is no overpopulation problem as long as the free market reigns; you can have more and more people in the world, and you can still sustain them as long as you have a free-market economy."

There is more truth to this libertarian response than the world gives it credit for: if ecologists had been believed fifty years ago, the additional billions of persons the world has sustained since 1900 should by now be starving or dead—and yet on the whole (and with many exceptions) they have survived better than most populations have in most previous centuries. Production has more than matched population-increase in most parts of the world. That is the truth in the libertarian response. Why then do I not share the consoling feeling expressed in the remark, "We can have more and yet more people on this planet and everything will still be all right"?

1. Some of it, I suspect, is libertarian wishful thinking. In international relations, libertarians have often sidestepped the problems of dealing with aggressive nations under libertarian theory by saying that after all those nations are *not* aggressive, and consequently there is no *need* for a collective defense (compulsory collective defense being the core of the libertarian problem)—thus sidestepping the whole issue. And so here: If an ever-increasing population

*Is it really in the Nepalese's interest not to cut down the forests, since he needs more space for farming and for his children? How could you convince him that he should refrain from a move that is profitable to him, even if it does result in alternating floods and droughts in nearby India?*

can be comfortably sustained on this planet, there is no need to consider environmental matters—the problem need not be addressed because (it is thought) it doesn't really arise. I strongly disapprove this kind of diversionary tactic. At least one should ask, "What should we do if it did arise?"

2. With more and more people, the already acute problems of toxic wastes, pollution of rivers and oceans, ozone layers, and greenhouse effect, will become simply intolerable. It's already bad enough with five billion people on the earth. There is already too much garbage for the ocean to digest, even at five billion; how long could the oceans endure 25 billion? Presumably we would just destroy ourselves that much faster. In

either case, however, a radical change in human polluting habits is necessary. The greater the polluting population, the more mortal the danger.

3. It's true that the statement "The earth is overpopulated by people" is an evaluation, not a straight-out empirical fact (as discussed in the article). But evaluations can be justified or unjustified, defended or attacked. How can I defend this one?

During the recent hurricane it struck me that every piece of land that could possibly be settled by human beings appears already to have been claimed, with no "give" in the system, nothing to take up the slack in case of crisis. "People are being shipped out from Padre Island," said the announcer—and so it came home to me that this pitiable little strip of land a couple of feet above sea level, inhabited by a few seals when I visited it as a child, is already populated by humans. A hundred years ago there were virgin lands where a diversity of animals roamed; today even the wetlands, on which many birds and animals depend for their survival, are being converted into tract-houses, and soon the non-human creatures will dis-

appear. Shouldn't we find this alarming, not only for their sake but for our own? When people, to survive, invade the national game preserves in order to slaughter the few remaining Indian buffalo, and the tigers as a result lose their food supply (an example from my September article), is this not a cause for concern? Ms Shaw chides me for being "in a panic." Perhaps the noun is not quite apt, but I believe that "panic" is a more appropriate term in the situation than the more vanilla-flavored "concern."

When rabbits, not native to Australia, were introduced there by men some decades ago, they multiplied by the millions and became the scourge of the land, killing off the more vulnerable marsupials that had evolved there (without danger from mammals) over millions of years. Everyone would surely call this an overpopulation of rabbits. And when people hang on to every bit of habitable land, eliminating other animals from it regardless of the need for



those animals in the balance of nature, is this *not* to be called an overpopulation of human beings?

Thanks to Western medicine, millions of infants who would otherwise have died of malnutrition or infectious diseases now survive to adulthood. As a result, populations increase, more people become parents, and those parents in turn have more living children. In a couple of generations the birth rate far exceeds the death rate.

To provide more room for the additional population, forests are cut down with monotonous regularity all over the world. And the forests are needed as rain-producers and as underground preservers and dispensers of moisture. The destruction of the forests is directly attributable to increased human population. In Nepal, the destruction of the forests breeds disaster for India below. Throughout the Andes chain, where the increased population is forced to migrate ever eastward, up into the mountains, and to de-forest the topsoil that soon blows away, it means slow starvation for the Indians who must always be on the move to ever more hostile soil. The "desertification" of much of Africa, thanks to the loss of topsoil, is expanding the Sahara and rendering uninhabitable the parts of Ethiopia that armies have not already destroyed. All these twentieth-century developments stem from the expansion of the human population. With the population doubling every forty years or so, is this *not* a matter for grave concern? If everyone thinks it to his interest to get rid of the forests

("let someone else sustain them"), and yet these forests are vitally necessary for plant and animal life, how indeed *are* they going to be sustained? Can't it at least be admitted that this is a problem?

In the land that became Rhodesia it was a time-honored practice to "use up" the land, then abandon it and go to another site when the soil had washed down to the rivers. After the Europeans arrived there around 1890, European

*"It's a problem caused by governments," the libertarian says, "so if we got rid of government ownership, the problem would disappear." I suggest that this stock formula just won't do. Individual ownership is important, but not a panacea.*

medicine expanded the population from 0.5 million in 1890 to 5.5 million in 1930. The old practice of using up the soil and moving somewhere else could no longer be continued because with so many more people there wasn't enough virgin land left. The Land Apportionment Act of 1930, requiring land-owners (both European and native) to terrace and in other ways retain the soil on their land, would have been condemned, no doubt, by libertarians as a paternalistic interference with their property rights, but it was enacted into law in order to save the ever-increasing numbers of people from starvation. (See A.J.A. Peck, *Rhodesia Accuses*.)

Since so many ecological points are usually thrown together into one package, and a person who defends one is assumed to be defending all, let me sort them out a bit. I am *not* contending that we are about to run out of energy sources: whether this would occur, at least without nuclear energy, is a separate question. Nor am I contending that even a rather considerable amount of water- and air-pollution will kill us: we won't suffocate in Los Angeles, and in fact the situation is a bit better than it was a decade ago. But other things could well be lethal: the ever increasing mountains of

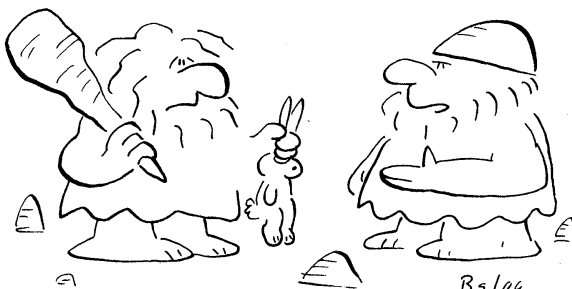
garbage and toxic waste being dumped into rivers and oceans every day; the continuing rapid loss of forests and wetlands; the holes in the ozone layer, our only protection against the sun's ultraviolet rays; the increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide and the ensuing greenhouse effect; the wholesale elimination by human beings of entire species of organisms on which human life may depend in the future. Would we have thus fouled the planet on which we live, if the increase in human population had not occurred so rapidly? The earth held about 2 billion people in 1900; it holds over 5 billion today; and at the present rate of increase this number

will double in the next 30 to 50 years. Under the circumstances is it not perfectly rational, indeed imperative, to worry about human overpopulation? How long can we afford to fiddle while Rome burns?

### Quality of life

Among writers on ethics a distinction is often drawn between the *total quantity* of a good and the *average quantity* of it possessed by individuals. Let's suppose that being happy, content, flourishing, fulfilled, or living the life peculiar to human beings (à la Aristotle) are good, and their opposites—pain, frustration, misery, grief, etc., are bad. (We call these things *intrinsically* good because they may not be good *instrumentally*: pain is bad and not good "for its own sake," i.e. when pursued as an end, but when a child's fingers are burned after touching a hot stove, the pain serves as a useful warning not to touch a hot stove again. Something may be intrinsically bad and instrumentally good, as well as intrinsically good and instrumentally bad.) Ask, then, what you would consider better, better intrinsically, of the following two alternatives, and which of the two following worlds you would think it better to create if you could do so by pressing a button:

World One is full of people, 15 billion of them, each scratching on the insufficient soil to eke out a living, and often in conflict with each other because of their endless close proximity to one another, and the absence of wide open spaces anywhere. Still, each person, let's



"Okay, buddy—let's see your hunting-and-gathering license."

say, can enjoy a little bit of happiness: if each of the 15 billion people had one unit of happiness, there would be in this world a total of 15 billion units of happiness.

Now imagine World Two: it contains only two billion people, much like the actual world of 1900. People are not crowded together; the ecology is still fairly sound; thousands of species have not been exterminated, and any toxic waste problem is still minimal: most people can sustain themselves directly from the land, without killer chemicals. Each person in World Two has 5 units of happiness. The *total* quantity of happiness is less in World Two (2 billion X 5) than in World One (15 billion X 1)—but the *average* quantity is much greater in World Two (5 units per person as opposed to 1). Isn't the second world preferable to the first one—one more worth creating—the one *you* would have created had you been given the choice? If so, you would have chosen what I was arguing for in my article—a lower population with a higher average of well-being.

## Solutions?

My discussion has not been very long on solutions. Here I have only a few suggestions:

1. On privately owned property: In general, private ownership is to be preferred to government ownership or control. But it is not always so (the Botswana case); nor is it a cure-all. In Brazil, private ownership and control would help, for there would be no government subsidy for people to migrate to the jungle and cut down the trees. But in Nepal it's difficult to see how the situation would be improved. Owners now cut down forests to make way for industry and larger population. Government ownership might have the *same* effect (if the rulers decided that further industrialization was called for), or it might have a *better* effect (if the rulers were environmentalists); who can tell? Doesn't that depend on who they are and what they do?

The problem of the manatee *could* be solved by private ownership of rivers and waterways *if* the use of the manatee for meat *and* the clogging of

the streams, was occurring on the same owner's property. Then the owner would probably decide that it's better to keep the rivers clear of weeds than to eat the creature as food. But the need to clear the stream at one place would probably have no effect on the temptation to use the manatee as food at another place hundreds of miles away, where ownership was in someone else's hands. Perhaps they could enter into a contract with each other? (Involved here of course is the large issue of private ownership of waterways.)

2. On population control: instead of punishment for having children, as in China, there could be *inducements* for *not* having them, as in Singapore. This would mean state intervention in either case, which is not likely to please libertarians. But if it requires a coercive authority to keep people from having babies, it would no less require a coercive authority to encourage people, via subsidy, not to have them. (Just giving them a pep talk wouldn't help much.)

3. On preserving the environment: It is to the interest of everyone in the world to preserve (rescue?) our global ecology; we only contribute to our own destruction by fouling our own nest. *But* it is to one person's interest not to pollute (for example) *only* as long as others also refrain. If everyone else's factory is polluting the air, you are not saving the environment by being the lone holdout and heroically spending money (and using up profits) on anti-pollution measures. It is in your interest to refrain only if all or most other persons refrain.

One step in this direction could be for the major powers—yes, governments—to agree with one another not to pollute, not to kill endangered species, and in other ways to refrain from harming the environment. (We could even deny foreign aid to proven polluters!) Yes, there would be an enforcement problem, but this would be far less when the major nations can *agree* that preserving the environment is a desirable goal, than when they are on opposite sides confronting one another, as in the arms race, where violation can pay handsomely. Indeed, there is some hope that the major nations of the world can come to agreement on this vital matter, for their mutual safety and survival, and that each will enforce conformity within its own borders. □

## ON VIDEOCASSETTE THREE FILMS THAT CHALLENGE GLASNOST

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B&W, 55 minutes. #377



HARVEST OF DESPAIR

THE UCRAINIAN PEASANTRY

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KATYN FOREST MASSACRE

THE UCRAINIAN PEASANTRY

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## Clarification

# The Absurdity of Alienable Rights

by Sheldon L. Richman

Some philosophical problems just never seem to go away, and others keep on popping up with annoying persistency—in this essay Mr. Richman takes on one of those ideas: the idea that rights can be sold or “given away” . . .

There was good reason for Jefferson to characterize the rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness as “inalienable” when he wrote the Declaration of Independence. For rights to be meaningful, they must be inalienable. Rights (unlike some of the things one has a right to) are not possessions to be bought, sold and alienated at will. They are essential to self-ownership, a concept that is central to libertarianism.

But some libertarians have missed the point.

Ethan O. Waters, for example, argues that if all the people in a geographical area “agreed to vest all ownership of real estate in a corporate body (and to subject themselves to) periodic payment of fees (called “taxes”) and various other controls (called “laws and regulations”) on the behavior of those who might live on the corporately owned land,” that a political system identical to our own statist society might develop in a way that would be entirely consonant with libertarian principles. In doing so, Waters overlooks the one essential element of self-ownership: the inalienability of individual rights. By agreeing to form the hypothetical, forever-binding corporation, the hypothetical persons have to be able to alienate their rights to life, liberty and property.

Similarly, several of the critics of Hans-Hermann Hoppe’s rights theory objected on grounds that slaves can discuss philosophy, thereby disproving Hoppe’s thesis that argumentation implies self-ownership. These critics also overlook the fact that, by definition, a slave is a person who does not possess the right to self-ownership; that is, a person whose rights have been alienated.

Because they do not understand that

rights are inalienable, Waters and Hoppe’s critics have failed in their endeavors. Only by understanding the nature of rights can we come to grips with the philosophical issues involved. Apparently, some elucidation is still needed.

### Self Ownership

Many people find the concept of self-ownership rather peculiar. After all, in all other forms of ownership, we have two things, a person and an external, alienable object. Isn’t it contradictory to say, as Locke said, that “every man has a property in his own person”?

Not at all. Property rights do not refer primarily to relations between men and things. “Property rights are understood as the *sanctioned behavioral relations among men* that arise from the existence of things and pertain to their use.”\* “Rights” is a moral concept; people’s relations with things are neither moral nor immoral. Thus rights address the issue of how people may and may not treat one another. Self-ownership, then, does not describe a relationship between a person and himself, but between a person and all other persons. This is made clear by James A. Sadowsky when he defines one’s right to do certain things to mean “that it would be immoral for

another, alone or in combination, to stop him from doing this by the use of physical force or the threat thereof. We do *not* mean that any use a man makes of his property within the limits set forth is necessarily a *moral* use.”†

Some philosophers ask why we need to talk about ownership of the self at all. But how can we help it? Ownership refers to the rightful and ultimate control of a thing. It becomes an issue when something of value is scarce. Life is such a thing. It is not only a value, but the source of the *very possibility* of value. It is obviously scarce. The successful development of a life requires the use of that life in self-sustaining action and thus the rightful and ultimate control of it. Without this control each life would be at the mercy of anyone’s whims. Ethics, as a discipline devoted to the flourishing of life (it can have no other purpose) therefore must concern itself with who owns each individual life. Even if the term self-ownership is never used, the issues involved cannot be escaped.

In an article I wrote ten years ago § I took up the question of whether voluntary slave contracts were enforceable. Whether a man could agree to become a

\* Erik G. Furubotn and Svetozar Pejovich, *The Economics of Property Rights*, p. 3, second emphasis added.

† “Private Property and Collective Ownership,” *Property in a Humane Economy*, ed. Samuel Blumenfeld, p. 85.

§ “Slave Contracts and the Inalienable Will,” *Libertarian Forum*, July-August 1978.

slave had been controversial among natural-rights theorists for centuries. Hugo Grotius, a seventeenth-century espouser of natural law, believed one could literally give oneself away. So does Robert Nozick (though if you rent yourself to him, you may be subject to rent control).

Lysander Spooner, on the other hand, disagreed. "No man," he wrote, "can delegate, or give to another, any right of arbitrary dominion over himself; for that would be giving himself away as a slave. And this no man can do. Any contract to do so is necessarily an absurd one, and has no validity." \*

By "absurd" Spooner did not merely mean ridiculous. He meant *logically* absurd, *impossible*. Spooner was absolutely correct and that this point applies to any argument against self-ownership.

A slave is one who belongs—mind and body—to his master.

He is one who doesn't own—that is, does not possess the right of use and disposal of—his will and person. He lacks the right to control his actions. All slavery entails the subordination of one will to another. A clue to the contradiction involved is that we can't help but use the possessive "his" regarding the slave's will despite his (there we go again) status.

A slave contract would mean the willful giving up of one's own will. How can one give up one's will? What is giving up what? If the will is being given up, what's doing the giving? If the will is doing the giving, what is it giving up?

A person can never transfer control of his will. It is inseparable. Nor can anyone directly control the will of another. A will can only control itself and no other. If Jones commands Smith to perform an action, the action will be performed only if Smith wills it. Threats of force notwithstanding, Smith has to exercise his will to perform the action. Jones cannot exercise it for him. "[N]o man can delegate, or impart, his own judgment or conscience to another."<sup>†</sup> In the strictest sense all actions are voluntary.

(This by no means undermines the

moral condemnation of aggression. To say that an action is involuntary or "against one's will" means not that the aggressor exercised the victim's will, but that the victim would not have exercised it a particular way in the absence of the threat of force.)

If you cannot give up control of your will, how can you give up your right to control it? The receiver of this right could never exercise the right. A right that cannot be exercised is absurd. Thus the right itself cannot be transferred.

Furthermore, because the right of contract presupposes a free and sove-

slave permission to "borrow" the will, the slave would first have to exercise it in order to listen to and grasp the nature of the permission. But as one who has given up his will, he cannot legitimately exercise his powers of understanding *before* being granted permission. He would first have to get permission to use those powers for the purpose of getting permission to carry out the original command.

But that obviously leads to an infinite regress of permission-granting. Thus the "voluntary" slave could never carry out an order without violating his contract. But couldn't someone enter a

*Ownership becomes an issue when something of value is scarce. Life is such a thing. Ethics, as a discipline devoted to the flourishing of life, therefore must concern itself with who owns each individual life. Even if the term self-ownership is never used, the issues involved cannot be escaped.*

permanent, unconditional, binding contract simply to carry out every order given by the owner? No: the will cannot be carved up, as such a contract would require. Before the slave could distinguish an order from anything else, he would have to assume control of his

power of understanding, which includes control of his body (brain and ears, for example).

But if that is retained in the contract, what has been given up? For the contract to be meaningful, nothing less than complete ownership of the body would have to be given up. In a normal labor contract the harshest penalty for not obeying an order is dismissal, that is, the end to orders and expulsion from the owner's property. This could not be the case in a slave contract. What makes it a slave contract are the master's right to use force against the slave and the slave's obligation to submit. Thus a slave contract must entail the surrender of title to one's body. This is what produces the contradictory result already mentioned: the illegitimacy of the slave's using his body (regaining title) to understand and carry out orders.

Could one surrender the right to control just one's body and not the will? The answer again is no. The question rests on a mind-body dichotomy. The body cannot be surrendered without the will. The will obviously cannot "act" without a body. The will is required to sustain the body, and the owner of the body could easily extinguish the will by withholding sustenance. Moreover, no master wants only the body of the slave, for it would do little good to have a

reign will, where there is no free and sovereign will there is no contractual obligation. To invoke such an obligation is to be guilty of a contradiction. As Ayn Rand would say, this is the fallacy of the stolen concept—using a concept while denying its roots. "To take rights like those of property and contractual freedom that are based on a foundation of the absolute self-ownership of the will and then to use those derived rights to destroy their own foundation is philosophically invalid." §

The upshot is that a contract slave could have no obligation to obey his master.

But we can take this further. Not only would there be no obligation to obey, but an act of obedience would actually violate the "contract" because the slave would have to assume control—ownership—of the will in order to obey. In other words, to carry out any order, the slave would have to exercise control of his person. It may be objected that the master, in giving a command, is in fact giving the slave permission to resume control of the will, temporarily, for a specific purpose, just as you could give someone permission to borrow the car you just bought from him.

But this objection fails: to give the

\* Lysander Spooner, "Letter to Thomas F. Bayard," 1882.

† Spooner, "A Letter to Grover Cleveland," 1886.

§ Williamson Evers, "Toward a Reformulation of the Law of Contracts, *The Journal of Libertarian Studies*, Winter 1977, p. 7.

right to the slave's body without having a right to direct the will. Liberty is indivisible.

To sum up, if slave contracts are valid, the slave can have no obligation to honor his owner, but he also has an obligation to refrain from honoring his master—a contradiction if ever there was one. That which makes a contract binding—a free and sovereign will—is what makes a slave contract invalid. As Rousseau wrote, "To renounce liberty is to renounce being a man, to surrender the rights of humanity and even its

duties. . . . Such a renunciation is incompatible with man's nature; to remove all liberty from his will is to remove all morality from his acts." \*

It's now time to apply this point to the general question of self-ownership. Because obligation and action require self-ownership, if one makes an argument against self-ownership, one is compelled by logic to concede that one's listeners (who after all are not self-owners) have no obligations and that they are obligated to refrain from all ac-

\* J. J. Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, book 1, chapter 4.

tion—including grasping the arguments. Both parts undercut argumentation *per se*. Every argument is based on what Frank Van Dun calls the obligation to be reasonable. If one did not at least implicitly believe that people *ought* to respect argumentation and accept valid conclusions, one would never make an argument. Yet the substance of the argument denies that anyone has the right to do what the arguer implies one ought to do. Such an argument is, as Spooner would have said, "necessarily an absurd one, and has no validity." □

## Letters, continued from page 8

called "Flora, Fauna, and Martians," Foldvary presents a natural rights view different from the "animal rights" theory presented by Hospers. As Foldvary states, "there is no objective reason to exclude any living being from the concept of 'harming others.'" However, in Foldvary's treatment, though all living beings have rights, these rights are not equal.

Hospers' presentation of "animal rights" would be better labeled an animal "equal rights" theory, as contrasted with Foldvary's "unequal rights" principle. If libertarians recognized that animals and plants have rights, but not necessarily rights equal to humans, many of the problems so well presented by Hospers would find a moral resolution. As Hospers himself noted, humans may obtain the utility of animals without inflicting undue harm to them or to the environment. Foldvary also deals with the challenging issue of whether

future generations have rights that the present must respect.

What is needed is perhaps not so much the development of new libertarian theory but a wider survey of the vast and unorganized literature that already exists.

Janet Klein  
Berkeley, Calif.

### FYI

Not so much as a matter of self-advertisement—though I cannot say I would never resort to that honorable practice—but more to inform those who are interested, let me add something to John Hospers' observations on libertarianism and ecology.

In a book edited by Professor Tom Regan for Random House, *Earthbound: New Introductory Essays in Environmental Ethics*, I contributed "Pollution and Political Theory." In this piece I do make an effort to discuss certain ecological

problems from a libertarian viewpoint. Robert W. Poole, Jr., my colleague at the Reason Foundation, also made a contribution to the study of ecological and related problems by editing *Instead of Regulation* (Lexington Books, 1982). Several of the essays therein begin to address issues Professor Hospers considers important.

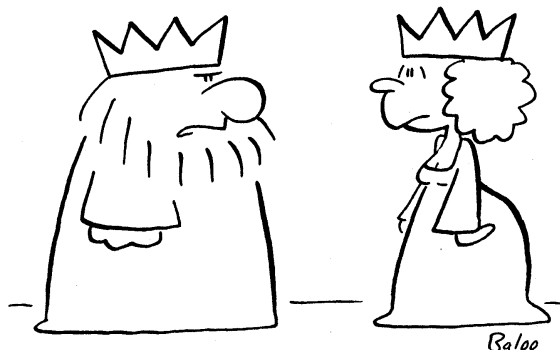
That the libertarian alternative is gaining some attention is evi-

dent from a book recently published by the SUNY Press, Peter S. Wenz, *Environmental Justice* (1988), in which various libertarian authors (e.g., Murray Rothbard, Tibor Machan, John Hospers, Robert Nozick, et. al.) are discussed in connection with ecological/environmental topics.

One problem with applying libertarian theory to various problems is that such applied scholarly or scientific work occurs in specialized journals. But such journals are edited by mainstream statist scholars who tend to dismiss revolutionary ideas as unpalatable. So this kind of work is stuck in fringe journals or treated in journalistic fashion (e.g., in *Reason* magazine, *The Freeman*, etc.). There are some exceptions—both *The Journal of Libertarian Studies* and *The Cato Journal* have published interesting pieces dealing with the topics John Hospers considers—I am actually surprised he did not mention some of these.

Libertarianism and its best philosophical background, natural rights theory, are indeed radical and revolutionary positions—compared, say, with Marxism, which in the final analysis is a scientific rehash of Christian eschatology. One does well to keep this in mind—as Rand once said, "It is earlier than you think." With so much received opinion standing in the way it is no wonder that we simply cannot address everything. We are still out there trying to show that our fundamental ideas—the broad outline of our thinking—are worth considering.

Tibor R. Machan  
Auburn, Ala.



"Just yesterday I signed the National Health Insurance bill, and this morning everybody called in sick!"

# The Walden Gulch

*John Kramer looked at the irate man on the other side*

*of his desk, wishing for a moment that he could drop his facade of dispassionate arbitrator and tell this indignant taxpayer that he was just doing his job—a miserable, thankless job—and that he didn't deserve to be shouted at, browbeaten or otherwise abused.*

But he knew that pleas for understanding would fall on less than sympathetic ears.

The man stormed out. Kramer remained behind his desk, tapping a pencil—waiting with vague apprehension for his next appointment. I should have stayed a field agent, he thought ruefully. At least then I could get out of the office.

Since he'd been promoted to the Problem Resolution Office he had been forced to handle the most difficult, quarrelsome customers the Internal Revenue Service had to offer. And he had dealt with the eyestrain of ingesting whole new volumes of public policy and regulations—all seemingly in fine print. Along with the eyestrain came a chronically sore lower back and an old ulcer getting a second lease on life.

My problem is, I'm too nice a guy for this, he thought.

If only I could stop feeling so damn guilty and defensive. After all, we couldn't have civilization without tax collectors, could we?

A sharp rap shook his door, and Kramer called in his next appointment.

A  
story  
by  
Jeffrey  
Olson

How often have you  
wanted to tell a bureau-  
crat just where to go?

In this tale, two  
bureaucrats wind up in  
a very strange place  
indeed . . .

Jerry Hide's crusty, liver-spotted hands rested on the letter, and he couldn't decide whether to wad it up or merely tear it to shreds. Some kind of sick joke, he thought. A letter written by some whining nut.

Dear Mr. Hide:

In accord with Resolution Three of the International Peace Coalition, you are hereby informed of your induction into the Committee for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament. Please report to IPC headquarters immediately for indoctrination and briefing.

Jerry Hide's fingers clenched. The letter crumpled. He shoved it into the wastebasket and took a few deep breaths to slow his palpitating heart. Easy, Jerry, Old Boy. Remember your blood pressure.

He stared at the miniature flag on his desk and thought about how he'd served his country as a lieutenant in World War II, as an honorary colonel in the Armed Services Committee during Korea, as a member of the Selective Service Board through most of Vietnam—and now, finally, as the Deputy Director of the newly revived Selective Service Agency. Forty-three years of unswerving dedication.

Only one thing to say to these creeps, he thought.

Love it or leave it.

John Kramer lay in bed, staring up at the ceiling. Once again the rock music blaring from next door was oppressively loud—the bleating and belching of electric guitars



were raucous extensions of his overworked nerves. He thought sleep was a long way off, but suddenly a surreal sense of tranquility overcame him. The music drifted away and he floated in serene silence.

He began a strange dream. He was starting out on a long trip . . .

♦

Jerry Hide sat before the fire sipping his wine, staring with bleary eyes at the photographs of his wife on the mantelpiece, and at the collage of medals, commendations and war memorabilia on the wall above it. The good old days. Not the same without her. Oh hell!

He took another long drink, and felt himself dozing off.

♦

Kramer opened his eyes and sat up slowly, blinking in the bright sunlight. To all apparent purposes he was sitting in a meadow somewhere in a green, forested area on a balmy spring day. Nothing like where he lived.

No, Kramer thought, I'm home asleep. He shook his head, trying to clear his vision. It was all so vivid—

Then Kramer heard a groan. He turned to see an old man straining up a few feet away. It was the man's crusty, embittered features that finally convinced Kramer that this was no dream.

"Horseshit." The old man rubbed his head. "I must have tied on one too many last night. Where am I? . . ." He faced Kramer accusingly. "And who are you?"

"John Kramer." The accusation in the old man's stare irritated him. "And who are you?"

"The name's Jerry Hide. What the hell's going on?"

"I don't know. The last thing I remember is being home in bed . . ."

"Yeah? Well, I was sitting in front of a fire . . . and it was snowing outside."

"We must be in a warmer climate. Maybe California . . ."

"Sure, that would explain everything," snickered Hide. "Just the sort of thing you'd expect in California."

Kramer scowled. "Well unless you have any better ideas, I suggest we try to find out where we are."

"And who brought us here," growled Hide.

Kramer helped Hide up and they started across the meadow into the forest. They had gone a few hundred yards when the trees cleared and the outlines of a small town shimmered about a mile distant. On a dirt road leading to it, a sign read: WALDEN.

"Walden, huh?" Hide snorted. "Never heard of it."

The town consisted mostly of small shacks, shoddily constructed but lined in a series of very straight rows. A few people

were out and about, but Kramer and Hide received little attention as they followed the dirt road between the shacks. Everything seems too lethargic, thought Kramer . . . much like the slow-moving, sullen indifference he would have expected in some dilapidated village in South America. Only the people here were mostly white.

In the midst of the shacks a two-story building of brick and logs stood out like a mansion. It bore the bold sign: WALDEN CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION.

"That sounds pretty official," said Kramer.

Inside, they found themselves in a labyrinth of hallways and offices. They stopped at the first open door. CENTRAL INFORMATION PROCESSING. A middle-aged woman was sorting through a ream of papers. Kramer coughed to get her attention.

"We were wondering . . . could you tell us where we are?"

She pointed sideways without looking up. "You want Admissions. Down the corridor to your left."

They knocked on a door marked ADMISSIONS PROCESSOR. A bored voice called them in.

A man with a pleasant round face and an unctuous smile greeted them from behind a desk of unfinished pine. "Ah, yes. Please take a seat."

"We don't need a seat," snapped Hide. "We want to know what the hell is going on here."

"I quite understand. Why don't we begin by reading our brochure?" The man handed them two crudely printed pamphlets entitled WELCOME TO WALDEN. "They'll answer many of your questions, I'm sure."

Hide and Kramer sat down reluctantly and began reading. Walden, claimed the brochure, was an artificial enclosure of eleven thousand acres, ringed by a solid wall of rock that rose two hundred yards up to the sky—which was not really a sky but a sheet of transparent synthetic that was estimated to be sixteen yards thick (daylight was thought to come from some method of solar refraction). The location was unknown, but it was supposed to be an endogenous rock mass, perhaps a mountain range in the U.S. or elsewhere. Temperatures ranged from sixty-five to seventy-five degrees . . . normal day lengths . . . population of seven thousand . . . all people formerly U.S. citizens attached to some branch of government . . .

Kramer paused. All former government employees? He resumed reading.

In effect, Walden was an isolated country, complete with a strong central government that actively indulged in resource/community planning, zoning, social welfare and economic management.

Jerry Hide threw down his brochure and turned to Kramer with a leer of utter contempt. "We weren't born yesterday."

"I quite appreciate your position," said the Admissions

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Processor. "But I must assure you that this material is all factually true. We all came here the same way, and we have only theories regarding why. We're simply endeavoring to facilitate our stay here insofar as possible."

"And everyone here is an ex-bureaucrat?" Kramer asked incredulously.

"All former employees of the U.S. government, yes," replied the man somewhat airily. "I assume you gentlemen are no exception?"

"I was with the Selective Service Agency," said Hide, and then they looked expectantly at Kramer.

"Ah . . ." Kramer cleared his throat. "Environmental Protection Agency . . ."

The man lifted his hands. "You see?"

"But why?" Kramer demanded. "Why all ex-government people? And how did they get us here?"

The Processor pulled out a corn cob pipe, lit up, and began puffing thoughtfully.

"Well, we don't know with certainty, of course, but most of us hold the theory that we were placed in this protective isolation by the United States government." He smiled smugly. "Perhaps to safeguard our society's most valuable

members in the event of, say, a nuclear exchange. Possibly we are some form of social experiment, set up as a model of an ideal society—a hypothesis that I, myself, favor. As to how we got here . . ." He lowered his pipe and shrugged. "An underground tunnel, we suppose. We know where some of the arrivals take place, but we've never actually witnessed one. Apparently, the new entrants, themselves, are heavily drugged."

Kramer sat back, struggling to clear his head. It was hard to believe that anyone would consider him important enough for protective isolation, and he doubted his qualifications for belonging to an ideal society.

Jerry Hide made a grunting sound. "Makes sense, I guess . . . That is, if you're leveling with us."

"I'm being quite straightforward, I assure you."

"So what do we do now?"

"There is the matter of your citizenship papers, and a few other documents that must be completed for our records."

"What if we don't sign these papers?" asked Kramer.

"Then I'm afraid you won't be eligible to obtain work permits or lodging."

Kramer blinked at him. "Work permits?"

"Naturally," said the man smoothly. "But gentlemen, please don't think I'm endeavoring to pressure you. It is required that you sign via your own volition."

The man looked at them expectantly.

"All right, all right," Hide grumbled. "Since you were all with the U.S. government . . ."

They looked at Kramer, who nodded belatedly.

An hour later the two men had completed and signed their forms.

"Now then," said the Processor. "There's the matter of your employment."

"I have extensive administrative experience," Hide an-

nounced quickly.

"Don't we all," the man sighed. "However, I regret to say that all positions in public service are filled. I'm afraid that only the private sector is offering employment at this time. In particular, I understand Landon's Mining Company could use a few men . . ."

The two-mile walk to the mining camp took three hours and most of Hide's remaining stamina; he walked the last half mile into camp hanging on Kramer's shoulder. A man with a florid, jovial face met them as they walked in.

"I'm Alec Landon, the owner of this dump," he said, taking Hide by the arm. "I take it you boys are looking for work."

They walked into a barn-like building filled with bunk beds; Landon led them to an office area at one end and pulled some folders from a cabinet.

"Better get these out of the way first," he said.

"Not more forms . . .!" Kramer groaned.

Landon laughed.

"You'll get used to it. Anyway, it's just some tax-withholding forms."

"You withhold taxes here?"

"Why certainly. Social security, disability, the works." He shook his head and chuckled. "Makes me

wish I was in the paper business, but Nelson Mill has the official monopoly on that. Too much competition would deplete our forest resource, after all."

Hide snorted. "What I want to know is, just what kind of work would we be doing here?"

"Shoveling rocks, mostly."

Hide's face assumed a pained expression. "The last time I shoveled rocks I was sixteen, helping my old man spread gravel in our backyard. Isn't there anything in supervision or at least in the office?"

"Not here. And there haven't been any jobs in government since the early years, except when someone dies. When I think of all those regulatory officials, administrators, judges—even a few congressmen—shoveling rocks and digging ditches . . ." He sighed mournfully and lowered his eyes. "All that productive talent going to waste . . ."

"All right, all right," said Jerry Hide. "How much are you going to pay us for this . . . shoveling rocks?"

"Minimum wage. One Waldendollar an hour, six hours a day. After that, the government requires that we pay double for overtime."

"Six dollars a day?" Hide made a choking sound.

"It goes a lot farther here than back home, my friend. Though inflation is starting to cut into it a bit."

"Inflation?" Kramer's voice rose.

"Well, the government had to print up a little extra money to cover the Walden Conservation Project. And the welfare rolls have been swelling a bit lately."

"So where does that leave us?" Hide demanded.

Landon shrugged. "With a little left over after tax withholding, and your room and board . . ."

"Approximately how much is tax withholding, and how much is room and board?" Kramer asked.

Landon put a finger to his lips. "Hmm. Well, it's two bucks

*"When I think of all those regulatory officials, administrators, judges—even a few congressmen—shoveling rocks and digging ditches . . ." He sighed mournfully and lowered his eyes. "All that productive talent going to waste . . ."*

for the room and board, and I think about three twenty-something in withholding . . ."

"You're saying that more than half of what we make will go to the government?" Kramer rasped.

"It's goddamned Communism, that's what it is," sneered Hide.

"Hey . . ." Landon held up his hands. "Don't you think plenty of people paid that and more back home?"

"What did you do before you got here?" Hide demanded of Landon.

"Bureau of Mining," said Landon wistfully.

Even in the mild mid-day temperatures the sweat ran over Kramer's face and stung his eyes. He paused in his shoveling to study Jerry Hide. The older man looked about two shovel-fulls away from digging his own grave.

"Christ . . ." Hide wheezed. "I was supposed to retire next year . . . Why couldn't they invent something for me in administration?"

A young man named Kevin Flaherty, who sported a pony tail and a flaming red beard, was working nearby. "Why don't you just go on welfare?" he demanded. "You couldn't qualify for social security yet, but the welfare should at least cover your food and housing."

Hide favored the long-haired man with a sour stare. "I've never been on welfare in my life."

"Course if you got real sick—had a heart attack or something—then you could get disability or maybe even medicaid."

Hide wiped his brow and stared contemptuously up at the artificial sky.

"I can see why so many people end up on welfare," said Kramer. "After you've paid off the government here there's hardly anything left to make working worthwhile."

"You just have to learn the system," said Flaherty, his smile conspiratorial. "There are other ways of making money, if you're more flexible."

"What the hell are you babbling about?"

"I'm just saying that some people will hire you, you know, off the record—if you're willing to work longer than six hours without overtime or go below the minimum wage."

"That sounds illegal to me," said Hide.

"Illegal?" Kramer turned to him. "You think these people have the right to set themselves up as a government and dictate to us?"

Hide made a puzzled face, then shrugged. "Seems to me that anybody can set up a lawful government, long as it's democratic."

Kramer scowled and turned back to Flaherty. "Is there much risk in working off the record?"

"Not really. You just have to look out for the tax man."

Kramer winced. He was glad he'd told everyone he'd worked for the EPA.

They resumed shoveling, but Hide languished in the shade, fanning himself. At last, a distant bell signalled the end of the workday.

"You wouldn't happen to know of any, ah, off-the-record jobs, would you?" Kramer asked Flaherty quietly as they headed back to camp.

Flaherty cast a nervous glance back at Jerry Hide. "Well . . . actually, I do a little smelting for old man Landon on the side.

We could probably use some help."

Over the next few months Kramer worked four hours every day in Landon's basement smeltery after his six hours in the quarry—earning an extra two Waldendollars off the record. Jerry Hide, unwilling to continue strenuous labor, qualified for welfare and disability and even a little medicaid (which he split with his doctor), settling into a comfortably sedentary life that included nightly poker games with the other welfare recipients living in the camp.

"You know, I was pretty hard on these people when we first came in," Hide confided to Kramer one evening, mellow on the corn whiskey his medicaid had bought. "But you know, if this had been some capitalist survival-of-the-fittest society I never would have made it. I've never been much for this welfare business, but I can see now that people got to be protected from the, uh, ravages of nature."

Meanwhile, Kramer was discovering the pervasiveness of underground exchanges in Walden. A ring of trade ran through private industry and the Walden government itself. Hot items were tools, tobacco, meat and alcohol, items for which demand seemed insatiable. Kramer and Flaherty worked out a deal with Landon to use his smeltery for casting metal parts on their own, and then went into business making tools.

In their second month of producing tools, Kramer and Flaherty journeyed to the CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION BUILDING to obtain the permits necessary to build a workshop of their own outside the mining camp. They met with an employee of the Bureau of Land Development and Housing.

"You must understand that land allocation is a strictly governed procedure," said the man. "With such limited space and resources, conservation is a first priority."

"I've noticed thousands of acres of trees and land lying unused," said Kramer. "Just what are all these resources being conserved for?"

The man gave him a wintry smile. "Of course, we have to plan for the future, don't we?"

After filling out some applications, Kramer and Flaherty were referred to the Walden Zoning Authority.

"How long will we have to wait?" Kramer demanded, after they'd completed the zoning forms.

"Your applications will be examined in due course," came the reply. "However, before we can proceed further, it will be necessary to complete an Environmental Impact Assessment."

When the interviews and forms were completed seven hours later, the two men had toured most of the building, and come away with little more than vague promises and noncommittal reassurances.

"This place is a madhouse!" Kramer exclaimed as they left the building. "God! I've only been here five months, and I think I'm going insane."

"I've been here for seven years."

A month later, still waiting for the various required building permits, Kramer and Flaherty received a visit from the Walden Internal Revenue Division.

The WIRD man spent most of an hour making casual insinuations, then he lowered the boom: Flaherty and Kramer had failed to keep records and file quarterly estimated tax state-

ments on their new business.

Kramer listened in fuming silence as the tax man reviewed a host of new forms and explained the penalties that would apply to late filing. Suddenly Kramer jumped to his feet, hands clenched, and stood glowering.

"Mr. Kramer . . ." The WIRD man drew back. "Was it something I said . . .?"

"Out!" Kramer rasped.

"Pardon me?"

"Out! Get the hell out!"

"Mr. Kramer, think of the consequences—"

Kramer made a lunge for him, but he managed to get away.

"You're going to get us in jail," Flaherty noted.

"What's the difference? We can't do anything, own anything, be anything—without their permission. We're already in jail, Kevin. Everyone here is!"

"Okay." Flaherty held up his hands. "But sooner or later we'll have to pay . . ."

"One way or another," said Kramer grimly.

Two weeks later the Walden Council, complaining of profiteering and "unjustifiable price increases," declared a price freeze on all alcoholic beverages and tobacco.

The night of the announcement, William Altwater, owner of Walden's only still, showed up at the mining camp with a case of corn whiskey in a wheelbarrow. He talked with Flaherty and Kramer in a quiet corner.

"I heard you had some trouble with WIRD," Altwater explained. "I thought maybe you might be able to use this to convince them of the merits of your case."

"Bribe them?" breathed Kramer.

Altwater shrugged. "They say justice is blind. Well, if some were to drink a case of this stuff, that would about do it."

They laughed.

"So what are you up to?" asked Flaherty. "Why bring this to us now?"

"Nothing better to do. Closed down the still when the price freeze was announced."

"But you'll be opening up again after the price freeze is lifted?"

"Nope. Just thought this would be a good time to do a little remodeling."

Kramer remembered those words when later that night they heard that the Altwater Still had burned down. According to witnesses, Altwater had started the fire himself and was presumed to have perished in it, since no one had seen him afterward.

The next day President Robert B. Tomasi issued a directive temporarily banning private ownership of alcohol and ordered an immediate call-in of all private stocks, to be placed under the authority of the Bureau of Alcohol and Tobacco. Penalties for withholding alcohol ranged from steep fines to a sentence of compulsory labor in public service capacity.

Alec Landon approached Flaherty and Kramer with the an-

nouncement that he knew about their stock of corn whiskey and was wondering how they planned to respond to the President's new directive. Kramer looked to Flaherty, who shrugged.

"I plan to keep it," said Kramer.

"I understand how you feel," said Landon. "But seeing as how you have so much, and supplies are so short, I was thinking you might consider sharing."

Kramer's jaw tightened. "I wouldn't consider it at all."

"Maybe you should think some more about it."

"Maybe you should go to hell."

"You've forgotten who owns this place," said Landon coldly. "I'll give you a day to reconsider, then you'll have to find somewhere else to stay—not to mention work."

When Landon was gone, Flaherty said quietly, "All of a sudden we're making a lot of enemies."

"I'll understand if you want to give in," said Kramer, "but for me this is it. I'm sick to death of this place, of all these damn parasites!" Kramer kicked one of the bunks, his face flaming red. "Have you ever thought of what it could be like if people were free to exchange things as they saw fit, without all this wasted energy—and all these bureaucrats? Can you imagine what we could achieve?"

Flaherty met his eyes and did not smile. "I can imagine it."

Kramer exhaled, sagging down on his bunk. "I don't know. Something seems to have snapped in me. Maybe that's what happened to Altwater."

*"We don't know with certainty, of course, but most of us hold the theory that we were placed in this protective isolation by the United States government. Perhaps to safeguard our society's most valuable members in the event of, say, a nuclear exchange."*

The next day, when Kramer and Flaherty refused Landon's ultimatum, Landon ordered them out. But before they'd finished packing, an official from the Bureau of Alcohol and Tobacco entered the camp with two members of the

Walden Justice Enforcement Division in tow. A search warrant was shown, followed by a quick search that discovered the twelve bottles of whiskey beneath Kramer's bunk mattress. Kramer and Flaherty were placed under arrest.

"Don't worry," Landon sneered as they were led away. "I'll look after your things while you're gone."

In addition to their "withholding of government property," Kramer and Flaherty were also charged by WIRD with failure to file. Judge Evans sentenced them both to the maximum term of four years compulsory labor in Public Service.

Of the four other prisoners serving time in Public Service, two were there for theft, one for rape, and one for assaulting the Police Commissioner. One of the thieves claimed to be a political prisoner, since he believed that "property was theft." Their supervisor was also a prisoner, a large man who was doing five years for murder.

Their duties consisted mainly of cleaning garbage off the streets and outlying countryside, with an occasional foray into a clogged sewage line or some other public operation. Home was a flimsy stockade that a child could have escaped from—but escape seemed pointless here.

"I just can't believe we're the only ones to end up here," said Kramer to Flaherty as they gathered refuse along the streets of

Walden. "You think everyone just brought in their booze like docile sheep?"

"I'd be surprised if they hadn't," said Flaherty.

"There must be others who rebelled."

"True. A few others."

"What happened to them?"

Flaherty stopped sweeping and stared at him. "They aren't here now."

"Meaning what? They were killed? Escaped?"

"No one's sure. They just disappeared."

"You mean, like Altwater?"

Flaherty shrugged.

"Do you think they found a way out?"

"I don't know, John." Flaherty was avoiding his eyes. "They say that people who fight the system are . . . removed. For the good of the community—by those who built it."

"Why didn't you tell me this before?"

"The timing . . . didn't seem right."

They walked in silence for a few moments, taking token sweeps at the street.

"Kevin . . . do you believe all this about Walden being a refuge for 'valuable people' . . . or some kind of experimental utopia?"

"I don't know. It doesn't make much sense either way, does it?"

"That's just it. It doesn't make sense either of those ways . . ."

Kramer's forehead furrowed. "And I think that's the key: figuring out why we're here."

"The key to what?"

"To getting out of here."

It was the middle of the night. Kramer eased out of his sleeping bag in the stockade and crawled over to the loose plank in the wall. It gave way easily, and he was outside.

Thirty minutes later he slipped into the Administration Building through a partly open window. He found some matches.

All the paper made for a beautiful fire.

Kramer sat in one corner of the stockade, hands and feet chained to a beam. A gathering of Justice Division people encircled him, and had been taking turns questioning and reviling him for the last half hour. Even President Tomasi was in attendance, though he looked less than happy to be there.

"Up until now, we have not deemed it necessary to have a death penalty," said Judge Evans. "But with you, I think the founders of Walden might appreciate being spared the trouble of removal."

"Mr. Kramer," President Tomasi addressed him in ponderously patronizing tones. "Do you realize how many valuable records you've destroyed? Do you have any idea how much it will cost us to replace them?"

"You should talk to your building inspector," said Kramer. "All that red tape was a fire hazard."

Tomasi cut off an angry rumble with a raised hand. "Mr. Kramer," he grated. "I will most definitely consider recommending changes that will bring our penal code more in line with your offense. It is neither responsible nor just for us to rely

on someone else to clean up our affairs."

Sometime, very late, Kramer opened his eyes. A beam of light abruptly flashed out and struck the wall beside him. As in a dream, Flaherty emerged from behind the light. He was grinning.

A metal object glinted in his hand, and he inserted it into the lock securing Kramer's chains. The chains sprang free.

"Remember when you told me about wanting to find the key to getting out of here?" Flaherty whispered. "You found it."

Jerry Hide smiled contentedly and dropped back on his bed. One hell of a day, he thought. A lot of excitement, and he even managed to win a little at poker. Still, that business with Kramer had carried the day. Sure, I knew him, he'd told the fellows. Yeah, we came in together. An odd bird.

Hide breathed deeply, enjoying the lingering buzz from his last cup of whiskey. It sure was good to have the guys for friends, he thought. Nice to live in a place without all those damn troublemakers like back home. Kramer had been a troublemaker. The people that had built this place had seen that. Good riddance to him. Hide rolled over on his side and smiled to himself. Love it or leave it, he thought.

Loud music pulsed through him like a second heartbeat. Kramer opened his eyes, squinting disbelievingly at the familiar ceiling, the walls, closet, windows. He was in his bedroom. It was early morning. His next door neighbors had on their usual bass guitar reveille.

He remembered Flaherty unlocking the chains. Then everything drifted away. He hadn't blacked out exactly, but he had lost awareness of everything around him. And now he was here again.

The phone rang. Kramer stared at it, uncomprehending for a moment, then picked it up. It was his supervisor at work, Larry Nelson.

"Glad to have you back, John," his boss boomed at him. "I trust you had a productive leave of absence? Chance to clear your head a bit, eh?"

"I . . . never took a leave of absence . . ."

"Well, according to *my* records you did! Ha, ha. Ready to get back to work?"

"No . . . I mean, I can't work there any more, Larry—"

"I understand. By the way, Flaherty sends his regards."

Kramer stared at the receiver numbly.

"John, you still there?"

"Yes . . ." He exhaled. "I'm not sure I understand . . ."

"There'll be time for explanations later. The main thing is, we need your help here now—at least for awhile longer. You can do a lot of good, John . . . if you know what I mean."

Kramer shook his head. There was a key lying beside the phone. He bent for a closer look, his lips twitching into a smile.

"Ah . . . Larry . . . I think I do understand—at least some of it."

"Great. Then we'll see you Monday?"

"I'll see you then."

He put down the phone and picked up the key. *What else can you unlock?* he wondered. □

# Reviews

*Revolution*, by Martin Anderson  
Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1988, 457pp., \$17.95

## The "R" Word

William A. Niskanen

Martin Anderson is a friend, a sometimes colleague, and the only avowed libertarian to serve as a personal advisor to a President of the United States. We share a vision of the importance of limiting government in order to preserve individual freedom and a healthy economy, the joy of selective victories, and the agony of failures and missed opportunities. And I am also the author of a book on the Reagan years.\* So I am more than usually cautious about criticizing Anderson's book on the Reagan "revolution." There is a lesson to be learned, however, from the difference in our perspectives on this shared experience.

Anderson correctly describes his book as

primarily a story about Ronald Reagan's rise to power in the United States, on what kind of man he is, the public policies he thought were important, and the main consequences of these policies. . . .

The book is not a comprehensive treatise. It is a combination of stories and analyses of selected events and policies, many of which I participated in, that constitute the heart of what has become known as the Reagan revolution . . .

This book is a story about the power of ideas, about how ideas come out of the intellectual world, are transformed by the world of presidential campaigns into items on the national policy agenda, and then

how these ideas become law in Washington, D. C., and govern us and affect our lives. (p. xxi)

He brings a wealth of personal experience to these stories. Anderson was the senior domestic policy advisor to Nixon's 1968 campaign and a special assistant to Nixon in 1969. He performed the same role in Reagan's 1976 and 1980 campaigns and led the White House office of Policy Development in 1981 and early 1982. He later served on both the President's Economic Policy Advisory Board and the Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board. Most of this book involves stories related to these personal experiences. As a longtime fellow of the Hoover Institution, Anderson has also written extensively on urban renewal, welfare, and the military draft. His political philosophy, like mine, is best described as that of an incrementalist libertarian, a view that recognizes the importance of some government roles and leads him to work closely with politicians to achieve realizable reductions in other government roles.

For Anderson, as for me, Ronald Reagan seemed to be the only politician who had any prospect for reducing the role of government in the American community. His early speeches criticized a wide range of government programs and demonstrated good convictions on most economic issues. He claims to have been influenced by the writings of Smith, Bastiat, Mises, and Hayek, and he periodically sought the advice of Milton

Friedman and other contemporary free-market economists. Reagan did not originate the ideas that he promoted but he was a principled and discriminating synthesizer of these ideas, and he was the best communicator of any leading American politician since Roosevelt and Kennedy. Anderson recognizes that Reagan is not an intellectual and was a rather casual manager but he genuinely admires Reagan, as do I.

This book provides many interesting details about Reagan, other key officials, and the major events and issues in which Anderson was personally involved—the 1976 and 1980 campaigns, the transition process, the critical first year of the administration, and the role of the economic and intelligence advisory boards. The writing is lively but somewhat too enthusiastic for my tastes. These stories will provide a valuable reference for future historians, but one will have to look to other books for a more thorough treatment of the political tensions within the diffuse Reagan coalition and an evaluation of the Reagan record. Anderson was incorrect, I believe, in attributing a substantial role to the two advisory boards. Although the economic advisory board included a substantial number of distinguished economists and businessmen who had a more important role in the prior Reagan campaigns, it had no identifiable effect on any subsequent economic policy and it drifted into insignificance. Although I was not privy to intelligence issues, I found it wholly implausible to attribute the "Iranmok" affair to the October 1985 purge of the intelligence advisory board. The only critical tone in the book involves the two episodes in which Anderson believes that he was treated unfairly, in both cases involving these two advisory boards. Otherwise, there is no mention of Reagan's major failures and missed opportunities.

My major criticism of the book involves its title and the theme that it represents. My own dictionary, and apparently Anderson's, defines a

\* Reviewed by Leland Yeager in this issue of *Liberty*, page 61.



revolution as a "total or radical change, a fundamental change in political organization . . . by the governed" (*Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*, Springfield, Mass.: G & C Merriam & Co., 1949). In conventional terms, Reagan accomplished a great deal. His initial economic program, developed largely from Anderson's first policy memorandum of the 1980 campaign, promised to reduce the growth of government spending, to reduce tax rates, to reduce regulation, and to reduce inflation. In direction, if not in magnitude, Reagan delivered on each of these promises. The annual growth or real federal spending was reduced from 5 percent during the Carter administration to about 3 percent during the Reagan administration, despite a record peacetime increase in defense spending. Individual and corporate tax rates were reduced more than anyone first anticipated. Some further deregulation followed the considerable deregulation approved late in the Carter administration. And the inflation rate was reduced more rapidly than anyone first anticipated. Moreover, among the more important developments were the dogs that didn't bark. The Reagan administration was the first administration in two decades that did not impose some form of price and wage controls. And until last year, few new programs were proposed that will increase the budget in future years.

General economic conditions are also quite favorable. The current recovery is now completing its sixth year, the longest peacetime recovery on record. During this recovery, the U. S. economy generated over 16 million additional jobs, with especially high employment growth for young people, minorities, and women. The unemployment rate is now the lowest in 14 years. This condition is the envy of the world, especially in Europe where total employment has been stagnant for two decades. The growth of productivity and real earnings has increased relative to the dismal record during the Carter administration. Productivity growth has been especially high in those industries most subject to foreign competition—earnings have been highest for women,

especially minority women. Since the end of the Carter administration, both the inflation rate and long-term interest rates have declined about 6 percent percentage points. Moreover, in the absence of a major policy mistake, there is no reason to expect a recession in the near future.

This is a substantial record, for which Reagan deserves credit. It is implausible to believe that President Carter or whoever else may have been elected in 1984 could have accomplished as much.

*There was no Reagan revolution. Although the growth of federal spending was reduced, the federal budget share of GNP continued to increase. Although individual and corporate tax rates were reduced more than anyone anticipated, much of the reduction in tax rates was financed by shifting taxes to the future (via the deficit) or by increasing the taxes on new investment.*

In the end, however, there was no Reagan revolution. Although the growth of federal spending was reduced, the federal budget share of GNP, until recently, continued to increase. Although individual and corporate tax rates were reduced more than anyone anticipated, much of the reduction in tax rates was financed by shifting taxes to the future (via the deficit) or by increasing the taxes on new investment. Some deregulation was offset by a net increase in trade restraints. Although inflation was reduced more rapidly than anyone anticipated, there is still no consensus on a rule for the conduct of monetary policy. Although the economic recovery has been sustained longer than usual, average economic growth in the 1980s has been about the same as in the 1970s.

In the absence of any significant change in the institutions, incentives, and constraints on federal policies, the substantial achievements of Reaganomics could be reversed in one term of a new administration of either party. The future of Reaganomics will depend critically on how its one major adverse legacy—the huge federal deficit—is resolved. Only sustained budget restraint can sustain the major achievements of Reaganomics. A policy to reduce the deficit by either tax rate increases or by reflation would

reverse these major achievements.

Moreover, there was little reason to expect a Reagan revolution. As candidate and president, Reagan endorsed the major surviving programs of the New Deal and the postwar consensus on foreign policy and defense. Most of the initial Reagan program represented a rather cautious evolution of policies supported by a broad bipartisan consensus beginning in the late 1970s. One does not achieve a revolution by appointing known advocates of the conventional wisdom to head several domestic departments. A revolutionary president would appoint competent revolutionaries, not the mediocre crowd of "horse-holders" from California. One might expect better managers, so that the huge increase in federal spending for agriculture, defense, and medical care generated

more demonstratable benefits. One might hope for a chief of staff to maximize the president's policy agenda, rather than the president's personal popularity. A different set of appointments and a different political strategy would have been more controversial but would have added to Reagan's considerable achievements.

The primary reason why Reaganomics did not prove to be a revolution, however, is that there has not yet been a fundamental change in the perceptions about what the federal government should and should not do, at least among our elected officials. Ronald Reagan offered a vision that represents the best of our heritage. He left us, however, with some major new problems and an electorate that is still vulnerable to those who promote the competing vision of an expansive state. The most distinctive characteristic of this century has been the pervasive growth of government. Reaganomics may prove to be only a temporary pause in this progressive loss of liberties. A more general sense of outrage about the contemporary role of government, one or more constitutional amendments, and new leaders who share Reagan's vision are probably necessary to protect and extend history's most noble experiment—the American revolution. □

*Reaganomics: An Insider's Account of the Policies and the People*  
by William A. Niskanen, Oxford University Press, 1988, 363pp., \$22.95

## Political Sabotage of Economic Sense

Leland B. Yeager

William Niskanen, a former member of the Council of Economic Advisers and now Chairman of the Cato Institute, completed this book in the summer of 1987. It is not another kiss-and-tell exposé. Still, incidental remarks about members of the Reagan Administration do provide a welcome change of pace from a generally sober review of economic conditions and policies.

The President himself, we learn, "has been the most transparent person in American public life" (what you see is what you get); and Niskanen generally likes what he saw. Vice President Bush was a puzzle; his views never came across clearly; still, Niskanen thinks he could be a good president. Presidential counsellor Edwin Meese, though a decent man, "was the most conspicuously mediocre man in American public life." He "could not set priorities or manage his own in-box"; his "concept of management was to rearrange organization charts." When he left the White House for the Justice Department, a former aide argued against replacing him; instead, his office should be put to some "more worthwhile use, such as the National Museum of Lost Memos or Abandoned Briefcases." Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldrige "never met an import restraint that he did not like" (aside from trade bills proposed in Congress). Budget Director David Stockman deserved his reputation for brilliance and hard work, but Niskanen's regard for him barely survived publication of Stockman's book in 1986: after failing to cut the Federal budget as much as he wanted, he "concluded that it wasn't worth trying." CEA Chairman Martin Feldstein was a brilliant economist but became delighted with the attentions of the press and relished

disagreeing with his own Administration in public. Economist Martin Anderson "was both principled and professional, a rare combination in the White House"; but after he "resigned in frustration in 1982, there was no consistent supporter of Reagan economic policies in the White House."

Reaganomics turns out to be neither a distinct brand of economic theory nor a well-worked-out policy program. Instead, it is an attunement to the President's instinct that government has grown too big and intrusive and that efforts should be made to slow down this growth and even reverse some of it. Some of the supporting developments in economic theory have been the displacement of Keynesian macroeconomics by monetarism and the theory of rational expectations, the public-choice school's application of economic analysis to government itself, and the supply-siders' emphasis on taxes and other factors affecting incentives to work and produce. (No one in the Administration, Niskanen says, relied on the irresponsible Lafferite promise that tax-rate cuts would actually increase tax revenues.)

Niskanen sees two major achievements of Reaganomics: a reduction in inflation and the reform of income taxes at reduced marginal rates. Perhaps its chief failure traces to a political system that continues to display a schizophrenic preference for federal spending at about 23 percent and federal taxes at about 19 percent of GNP. Niskanen hints at the need for political, perhaps constitutional, reform.

Readers should be prepared for long sections on economic and political history—which even get into details of budgetary negotiations and successive drafts of tax-reform legislation—and for long sections of economic analysis. Niskanen pays attention to such analyti-

cal issues as relations among budget and trade deficits, tax and interest and exchange rates, savings propensities, and investment incentives. Relatively interesting to me were discussions of possible reasons for the sag in monetary velocity since the summer of 1981, the adverse implications for the old monetarist rule of steady money-supply growth, and possible alternative rules, such as one calling for targeting on the growth of total nominal domestic final sales.

In substance, degree of technicality, and style, Niskanen's exposition falls somewhere between scholarly journals and the popular press. Complete with tables and sentences full of numbers, long sections read very much like the annual issues of the *Economic Report of the President together with the Annual Report of the Council of Economic Advisers*. A fan of these economic reports will enjoy the book.

Niskanen has attempted an objective analysis, and with considerable success; his book is not a libertarian tract. Still, libertarians can find many examples in the book to bolster their arguments about how and why the democratic process cannot grind out sensible economic policy and about why, therefore, the economic powers of government should (somehow) be drastically restricted.

Niskanen gives examples of the low quality of political discussion of economic issues. Officials indifferent to or even suspicious of economics, such as James Baker, were influential. At a public meeting in December 1981, Niskanen reviewed several studies of the relation between budget deficits and interest rates and suggested that the opportunity to import capital from abroad might be one reason for the apparent absence of a relation. Three times he stated that these results did not mean that deficits were of no concern. Nevertheless, the newspapers generally headlined "CEA Member Reports That Deficits Do Not Matter." The vice president, the White House press secretary, and the CEA chairman divorced themselves from Niskanen's supposed remarks, and three conservative senators demanded his resignation. On other occasions Niskanen tried to explain to members of Congress and the cabinet the accounting identities that describe logically necessary relations between domestic saving and investment, the budget deficit, and the trade

(current-account) deficit; yet for the most part he could not make his listeners understand these fundamental relations, or admit that they understood them. Perhaps, he suggests, misconceptions about the trade deficit provided a convenient rationalization for measures considered politically expedient. Anyway, "our contemporary mercantilists apparently are either dense or deceptive."

Throughout the book, further examples turn up of how political considerations, ignorance, and pandering to ignorance have distorted policymaking:

- The respect paid to proposals for wage-setting according to notions of "comparable worth," and the chastisement Niskanen received for correctly characterizing those proposals as "truly crazy."
- Flat inconsistencies between the assumptions employed in the Reagan Administration's early programs for disinflationary monetary policy and for the Federal budget.

- Nixon's wage and price controls, Carter's wage and price guidelines, and the damaging credit controls imposed early in 1980. The natural-gas controls, first imposed by a court decision back in 1954 and later complicated by a dubious distinction between "new" and "old" gas. President Ford's absurd "Whip Inflation Now" (WIN-button) campaign of 1974, supported by Alan Greenspan, then his chief economic adviser.
- The "bizarre" program, enacted in 1972, of sharing federal revenue with

1983 were projected to be \$2.9 billion; actual outlays turned out to be \$22.9 billion plus nearly \$10 billion of commodities distributed under the payment-in-kind program.

- Trade policy—hundreds of years of bad examples. In 1986, in an effort to save several Republican Senate seats, a determination was made that lumber shipments from Canada were being subsidized. Recently, "voluntary" restraints imposed on Japanese automobile exports were estimated to cost U.S. consumers \$240,000 a year for each job saved in the U.S. auto industry. Japan-bashing has flourished despite little or no basis in economic facts or analysis. "The United States has now embarked on a dangerous series of small trade wars, at the expense of both this nation and other countries,

*Reaganomics turns out to be neither a distinct brand of economic theory nor a well-worked-out policy program. Instead, it is an attunement to the President's instinct that government has grown too big and intrusive and that efforts should be made to slow down this growth.*

the states.

- Distortions from very short time horizons and from logrolling. Budget Director David Stockman was reportedly too much concerned with near-term budget savings, even at the expense of bad policy for the longer run. Stockman agreed to a quota system on imported sugar in exchange for a few "boll weevil" votes on the omnibus reconciliation bill. Seeking Congressional approval of his foreign-policy and defense proposals, President Reagan sometimes had to accept unwanted increases in spending for other programs. Congress pays too little attention, Niskanen thinks, to basic defense missions and too much attention to minor issues such as keeping open military bases that even the services consider redundant. (It is futile, Niskanen suggests, to expect much savings from cutting out waste; most waste in government programs is there for real, if political, reasons.)
- Subsidies and tax preferences (included even in supposed reform laws) justified neither as aid to the poor nor by other economic arguments, such as favors to owners of private planes and boats, users of cheap electricity, producers of ethanol from grain, reindeer hunters, and tuxedo-rental firms.
- Federal milk orders, and the farm program in general. Outlays for farm income and price supports in fiscal year

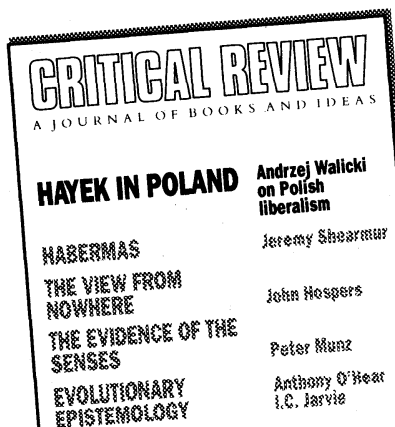
for no apparent purpose other than to demonstrate our potential for an irrational international economic machismo."

- The long record of bungled monetary policy, sometimes deflationary and sometimes inflationary. Niskanen finds the Volcker years something of an exception; but even today, three-quarters of a century after its creation, the Federal Reserve still lacks clear and appropriate instructions.
- The evolution of the deposit-insurance system in a way that practically invites shaky depository institutions to gamble with the taxpayers' money.
- Many other examples that might be mentioned, including: large gold reserves still being held at zero return; an antitrust suit expensively maintained against IBM from 1969 to 1982 in connection with mainframe computers, resulting in substantially increased prices; and laws mandating health and safety standards of lowest feasible risk, regardless of the incremental benefits and costs of meeting this standard.

Over the years we have heard many calls for national economic planning or an industrial policy—the name changes from time to time as the old one develops a bad odor. Such a policy would intentionally skew the national pattern of production and resource allocation away from the supposedly irrational pattern

*"In [Polish] underground schools, workers were reading... as fast as they could be translated..."*

*Robert Nozick [ & ]  
Friedrich von Hayek...."*  
—The New Republic



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that results from leaving market forces alone. Perhaps the chief sources of such proposals have been quasi-economists associated with the Democratic Party (but not many genuine economists among the Democrats; Carter adviser Charles Schultze, for example, has eloquently attacked the pretensions of the would-be planners). The planners will often acknowledge the inappropriate politi-

cal and bureaucratic biases and the policy bumbles of the past but will have the gall to twist those biases and bumbles into an argument of sorts for still more legislation and still more agencies whereby *nous allons changer tout cela*. We should challenge them to explain just how they will change all that. Niskanen's book provides plenty of material for use in throwing down the challenge. □

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### *Beyond Good Intentions: A Biblical View of Politics*

by Doug Bandow, Crossway Books, 1988, \$9.95

### *Christians for Freedom: Late Scholastic Economics*

by Alejandro J. Chafuen, Introduction by Michael Novak  
Ignatius Press, 1986, \$15.00

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## God and Man at Bay

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Jeffrey A. Tucker

Literally hundreds of books have been written to reconcile Christianity with political ideology. Some are challenging (e.g., those by Ron Sider). Some are even brilliant (e.g., those by James V. Schall). Alas, Doug Bandow's book, *Beyond Good Intentions*, is neither. And that's too bad; its thesis deserves better.

Bandow attempts to show that the Bible and conservative libertarianism are compatible, not because this can be proven exegetically, but because the Bible's "themes" and "overall principles" provide support for such a view. Thus: we should help the poor, but not set up a massive welfare state; we should defend the nation, but not engage in militarism; we should abstain from personal immorality, but not coerce others to do the same.

The trouble begins early in the first part of the book, which is devoted to the role of government in Christian history. The errors, blunders, and omissions are so numerous that any one chapter would elicit a failing grade in a first-year course in theology or Christian history. His treatment of medieval papal history reads like a bigoted anti-Catholic tract of the sort distributed at airports. He provides no citations for his diatribes, so we have no reason to assume they aren't

drawn from such sources. The only religious viewpoint that emerges unscathed is Pentecostalism, the most deeply anti-intellectual and emotionalist strain in Christianity.

Other errors are more subtle. In recalling the 4th century Donatist controversy, Bandow rewrites history by reversing the orthodox and the heretical positions. Nor can Bandow come to grips with the role of the State in Old Testament Israel, which, he tells us, took on a salvic function, contrary to historic fact.

Should the laws of the Old Testament apply today? Bandow argues they should not, but to make his point, he cites the authority of R. J. Rushdoony, the originator of the doctrine of "Theonomy," which calls for an Old Testament-style theocracy. Rushdoony surely won't appreciate this sleight-of-hand. And other than a few minor references to St. Augustine and Calvin, Bandow leaves the impression that no one thought about Christian politics before this century. But this is typical of many low-church thinkers who ignore or suppress the first eighteen centuries of Christian thought.

Only in the final two chapters, which deal with specific policy issues (regulation, pornography, the environment, etc.), does he get on a bit safer ground. Remove the Bible verses and they read

like a long string of op-ed pieces. The relationship between many of these issues and the Bible is tenuous, to say the least, making it all the more curious that Bandow doesn't mention inflation, a topic on which the Bible has much to say.

Bandow's book has a casual style. He cites lots of Scripture, though the verses are not always relevant to his argument. This book may prove popular among laymen in Pentecostal churches. But its popular appeal comes at the expense of scholarly integrity.

*Christians and Freedom*, by Alejandro Chafuen, is by contrast an exceptional piece of scholarship. Dr Chafuen has translated many of the works of medieval Christian theologians from Latin and Spanish and discovered that many were advanced economists and self-conscious libertarians. Chafuen touches briefly on the ideas of St. Thomas Aquinas and earlier scholars, but the bulk of his work centers about a dozen monks and priests who studied and taught at the Spanish universities of Salamanca, Complutense at Alcala, and others, between 1400 and 1650.

He finds, for example, that St. Bernardino of Siena taught in the 15th century that economic value comes from individuals evaluating the relative scarcities of goods on the market (something Adam Smith never figured out). Domingo de Soto of the Dominican order made progress on labor economics in the early 16th century, demonstrating (among other things) that there is no involuntary unemployment in the marketplace. Jesuit scholar Luis de Molina, writing in the 16th century, showed how prices come from the interaction of supply and demand and thus the state should never interfere with "the common estimation of men." During the same time, two Dominicans were writing on inflation: Martin de Azpilcueta articulated the quantity theory of money and Tomas de Mercado showed how inflation disrupts debtor-creditor relations.

On libertarianism, the late-scholastics taught the right of private property, the fallacies of collective ownership, the immorality of taxation, and the necessity of enterprise. Whenever the state intervenes through taxation or inflation, the Schoolmen said, it should pay reparations to the damaged victims. Few libertarians today would dare to take such "extreme" positions.

There are implicit lessons in this book

for economists, libertarians, and Christians. The discipline of economics did not begin with Adam Smith. Great minds have tackled economic problems for over half a millennium. Libertarians should take the Christian tradition seriously; its emphasis on free markets and private property predates classical liberalism. For Christians, there can be harmony between the demands of science and Christian faith; there is no reason to throw out one when studying the other.

There is a tendency (exemplified by Bandow's book) for Christians to think that an easy chair and a Bible are sufficient tools for social theology. But that is not the way Christian doctrine developed (it took three centuries to hammer out the idea of the Trinity, for instance). If Christians dare to take up the task of social exegesis, they must, at the very least, look at what the Christian tradition has to say. Dr. Chafuen's model is a good one to follow. □

### **Mary McCarthy: A Life**

by Carol Gelderman, St. Martin's Press, 1988, 430pp., \$24.95

## *The Passion for Exactitude*

Karen Shabetai

Mary McCarthy is one of the most elegant stylists in modern American literature, and one of literature's most formidable opponents of political pomposity and dogmatism. But you wouldn't know it from the reviews she gets. After one characteristically nasty encounter, in which she was dubbed "our leading bitch intellectual," McCarthy wondered—not unreasonably—if "the book reviewing profession [were] made up of personal enemies" (Gelderman, p. 304).

McCarthy's critics may seldom be actual and explicit enemies, but they are often sexist, anti-intellectual, and frankly insulting. Her novel *The Oasis*, one critic asserted, "should never have got beyond the file of a competent psychiatrist" (147). Another reviewer wondered, "Why does she have to be so goddamned snooty, is she God or something?" (170).

Certainly she is, for lack of a more erudite phrase, "snooty," especially when she is skewering intellectual pretensions. In *The Groves of Academe*, for instance, she characterizes Mulcahy, the literature professor, as "A tall, soft-bellied, lisping man with a tense, mushroom-white face, rimless bifocals, and graying thin red hair [;] he was intermittently aware of a quality of personal unattractiveness that emanated from him

like a miasma; this made him self-pitying, uxorious, and addicted also to self-love, for he associated it with his destiny as a portent of some personal epiphany" (*Groves*, New York: Bard, 1981; p. 13). She is no kinder to historians: "Dr. Muller, like many historians, had certain regressive tendencies arising from the nature of his subject, which called forth a tolerance for the past, in the same way that some occupations, like sandhogging, give rise to their own occupational diseases" (210).

Fortunately, Carol Gelderman, McCarthy's most recent biographer, appreciates her subject's wit, her elegant syntax and challenging diction, and especially her relish for polemical intellectual battle throughout the turbulent political maneuverings of the New York intellectuals of the thirties and forties.

Gelderman judiciously notes that while McCarthy's public image suggests that she is not amiable, her personal friends and even acquaintances overwhelmingly describe her in such terms as "pleasant, witty, charming" (xiii). Gelderman says of her: "She has imitated no one. The order in her life shows up in her impeccable syntax; the perfectionism, in her obsession with moral distinctions, the honesty, in her passion for naturalistic detail" (350). What Gelderman praises

have been the very qualities that have brought McCarthy so much scorn from a public uncomfortable with a combination of femininity and ironic skepticism.

McCarthy's views on some aspects of democracy have been particularly provoking to her critics. She can, they whined, be so "elitist." For better or worse, her ideas about literature—that one must take morally responsible positions in fiction, that one must have the courage to criticize popular positions—do corroborate such a view. These aesthetic beliefs are complemented by her equally iconoclastic cultural activities: relentless critiques of psychoanalysis and Marxism, determined advocacy of the intellectually capable. During much of her career, McCarthy has been out of sync with prevailing trends. She is nostalgic for a time, like the eighteenth or nineteenth century, when such authors as Fielding and Dickens could in *propria persona* "comment on what is happening and draw the necessary conclusions" (169). That authors of fiction cannot comment in their own voices any more, McCarthy remarks, "probably has something to do with the spread of democratic notions, no one wanting to claim omniscience" (168).

McCarthy has been an unrelenting scrutinizer of positions held by the political left. Skeptical of any theory that could not take into account the particularity of historical situation, she was especially horrified by Stalinesque Marxism and its treatment of Trotsky. She was swept into support of Trotsky when she was persecuted by communists for defending his right to defend himself. She was moved not by Trotsky's particular politics—which at the time she knew little about—but by her sense of justice. Criticizing the editors of the *Partisan Review*, she wrote: "It never occurred to them that there should be a connection between what they read and wrote and their own lives, how they were living and what they believed in" (119).

Gelderman points to this as a crucial concern in McCarthy's novels: "An abhorrence of lives lived according to abstractions was a peripheral theme in *The Groves of Academe* and *A Charmed Life* and a central theme of *The Group*" (113); "characters in a McCarthy novel who find ideas more true than the data of reality are depicted as foolish and deluded" (51). McCarthy's deftness in exposing the dangers of living by a controlling

abstraction—such as those most prestigious intellectual fashions, psychoanalysis and Marxism—often sparked revealing comments from her critics. Doris Grumbach, one of her biographers, maintained that “McCarthy’s fiction suffers from that insistent voice, which sounds everywhere in her work. It is always elitist” (170); John Aldridge remarks, “her characteristic tone of voice . . . is that of a self-righteous little girl lecturing her elders on matters that they have grown too morally soggy and mentally fatty to comprehend” (170). But the morally soggy and mentally fatty as well as the dogmatists are not, to McCarthy, the objects of childish petulance. They are objects of a philosophical aversion and fear; they are ethically dangerous: “The assertion of any absolute idea is really a claim on the part of the poet to control the world, to control reality” (50).

McCarthy’s politics are difficult to pinpoint, in part because she is an independent thinker and in part because, as a true empiricist, she constantly reevaluates and revises her positions. One important influence was the Italian anti-fascist journalist and intellectual Nicola Chiaromonte, whom she befriended in 1945. He was important not only because he introduced her to new ideas, but even more because he gave her confidence in some of the unorthodox positions that she held. He confirmed her doubts about psychoanalysis and Marxism, which he found “vague and illogical.” “Nicola Chiaromonte was a rarity among intellectuals of the time,” Gelderman notes, “in that he was a disciple of neither Marx nor Freud” (120).

The closest this biography comes to pinning a label on McCarthy is when she is described (and describes herself) as part of the anti-communist left. But even this label is inadequate. McCarthy was an ardent anti-Stalinist before it was popular to be such. She was a pacifist, though after the second World War she felt she had been wrong. She was an elitist, though she regrets to confess her anti-egalitarianism. She has always been an active advocate of personal freedom, and a feminist, though she has always been critical of “party positions.” McCarthy’s words about Chiaromonte might well

serve as a description of herself: “His ideas did not fit into any established category. He was neither on the left nor on the right. Nor did it follow that he was in the middle; he was alone” (121).

Part of McCarthy’s problem is her honesty: “Pure in her food, her opinions,

political struggles celebrate “the strong, unsentimental, moral voice that speaks for a just and ordered world” (169). Gelderman’s stance is one McCarthy would approve of: her celebration is achieved through scrupulous attention to detail and fact.

*Perhaps the most notorious and amusing example of McCarthy’s passion for honesty is her famous nationally televised attack on the credibility of Lillian Hellman, the far-left’s idolized playwright, fiction writer, and memoirist: “every word she writes is a lie, including ‘and’ and ‘the.’”*

Perhaps the most notorious and amusing example of McCarthy’s passion for honesty is her famous nationally televised attack on the credibility of Lillian Hellman, the far-left’s idolized playwright, fiction writer, and memoirist: “every word she

her life,” remarks her brother. In her essay, “Crushing a Butterfly,” she remarked: “To vow to tell the truth, whether pleasing to the authorities or to your readers, is genuine literary commitment. I myself do not know any other kind” (*Writing on the Wall*). She links honesty to a respect for the empirical and to novelistic verisimilitude. She defines the novel by “its concern with the actual world of fact, of the verifiable, of figures, even, statistics” (*Writing on the Wall*). Gelderman’s analyses of both McCarthy’s fiction and her personal and

writes is a lie, including ‘and’ and ‘the’” (332). McCarthy insisted that the attack wasn’t political: “To me the woman is false through and through. It’s not just the fresh varnish she puts on her seamy old Stalinism” (335). Hellman responded with a law suit which was terminated only by Hellman’s death. McCarthy was left disappointed, for she had been preparing to go to trial to prove Hellman a habitual liar (338). She had already “twenty-two typed pages” of Hellman lies, and she was just beginning to prepare her case. Gelderman notes that

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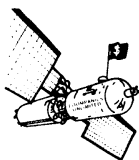
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"Many people stepped forward and offered McCarthy examples of Hellman's dishonesty" (339).

In "what purports to be a real-life memoir," Hellman even lied about her own family: "Hellman turned her uncle into a swashbuckling, romantic gunrunner and tycoon who lived in a mansion with ten servants, drove fast cars, and had a hundred-foot yacht, an apartment at the old Waldorf, and a hunting lodge on Jekyll Island, when in real life he was a potentate of the Shriners" (342). McCarthy later said, "I didn't want her to die. I wanted her to lose in court. I wanted her around for that" (342). By discrediting Hellman, McCarthy wins for herself a characterization she offers of the college in her academic novel: a "reputation for enthusiasm and crankishness" (*Groves*, p.56). But her cranky dedication to truth and love of controversy—indeed, her passion for malicious exactitude—have

served McCarthy well in her literary career.

Gelderman's biography offers not only a clear account of McCarthy's life, literary and personal, but also intelligent interpretations of her fiction. She provides plenty of provocative historical detail to surround her subject with a vivid context. One can detect a real fondness for McCarthy in this biography, from the moving depiction of the six-year-old child orphaned during the 1918 flu epidemic, through her fifty-five years as a writer. The biography opens with a conversation in which McCarthy says that orphans must work especially hard to "distinguish themselves favorably," and she admits: "I know that I have a great, still have, alas, a great attention-getting business, seeking to call attention to myself" (1). A novelist who has pursued the literary life with the rarest integrity is eminently worthy of our closest attention. □

## Booknotes

**Yahoo Rights**—Leftist I. F. Stone is, undoubtedly, a "card-carrying member of the ACLU"—which is all to the good, of course. In his most recent book, *The Trial of Socrates* (Little, Brown, and Company, 1988), he takes his dedication to free speech and applies it to one of the most memorable events in history and philosophy: the trial and death of Socrates. (Socrates, as you will recall, was sentenced to death by hemlock for the crime of corrupting the youth of democratic Athens.)

The book is revisionist history at its most enjoyable: at once careful and joyously unafraid of breaking new ground. Stone's thesis is simple: Socrates did not really defend himself, but instead taunted Athenians into executing him. He did this because he was profoundly anti-democratic, profoundly against the idea that regular people were capable of self-governance. Socrates was the theorist of "the man who knows"—the Philosopher King—even if he was humble enough to know that he was not this man. His contempt for Athenians has always been evident, but Stone masterfully puts it into its proper light. Though Stone devotes a chapter to the question of "How Socrates Easily Might Have Won Acquittal," it would have been hard in his time—or in

ours—to make the effort to defend him; it would have been much easier to let this Athenian Yahoo commit what amounts to a bizarre form of suicide.

But Yahoos should be prevented from becoming martyrs when their martyrdom entails the corruption of justice. The case for granting Yahoos the freedom to "corrupt the youth" with their blatherings was as strong then as it is now, and I.F. Stone is to be congratulated for showing that this is precisely the case.

### State-of-the-Art State Theory?

— Readers should note that sociologist Franz Oppenheimer's classic little work *The State* is once again in print, this time published by Copley Publishing Group (1988), with an able introduction by Jeremy Millett. Oppenheimer makes the distinction between "the economic" and the "political" means "whereby man, requiring sustenance . . . satisf[ies] his desires," and discusses the evolution of the State in relation to these two methods of human interaction. The "economic means" is nothing less than work and trade, while the "political means" is his term for robbery, or expropriation!

The skeptic might suspect that Oppenheimer was just another minor *fin de siècle* anarchist, but he was actually a

respected sociologist and economist. This work, which is the only section of his *System of Sociology* to be translated from the original German, contains one of the best expositions of the "conquest theory of the origin of the state." It also contains an interesting view of the "future"—as seen by Oppenheimer in the early days of this century. It is fascinating because it is so pleasing to libertarian dreams and hopes; it is challenging because it is obviously far off the mark.

### ***Present and Accounted For—***

The twentieth century has been a very disappointing era, politically, for libertarians. Herbert Spencer, after seeing his hope and optimism for the future dashed during the late nineteenth-century rush to collectivism, predicted the world would have to endure "a century of war and socialism" before individualism would come into its own. Alas, Spencer proved to be as good a prophet as social philosopher: the peace, prosperity and progress of the 19th Century gave way to the war and socialism of the 20th.

And the 20th Century is what Robert Nisbet's most recent book is about: *The Present Age: Progress and Anarchy in Modern America* (Harper & Row, 1988)—despite its uncongenial usage of the word "anarchy"—is one that libertarians should find a delight and a challenge.

The first of the three chapters deals with U. S. foreign policy. It is a first rate performance, presenting to the reader a very skeptical view of the U. S. mission in the world, without ever sinking into a morass of unbelievable revisionist contentions. The real problem with American foreign policy, according to Nisbet, is the "Great American Myth, the myth of Can Do, of effortless military strategy and valor, that is, American Know How." His dissection of the characters of Wilson and F. D. R. is right on the mark, it seems to me, as is his discussion of how the Great American Myth led to the Iran/Contra scandal, among other catastrophes.

In this book Nisbet plays a simple intellectual game: what would the Founding Fathers have thought about their country two centuries after the Constitution was ratified? After considering foreign affairs, he takes on two other aspects of modern life that would draw their "immediate, concerned and perhaps incredulous attention": the "Leviathan-like presence" of the federal government

and "the number of Americans who seem only loosely attached to groups and values such as kinship, community, and property, and whose lives are so plainly governed by the cash nexus." This last subject is one that every individualist should give much thought to, and is one that is sure to be controversial among libertarians. Many might read his discussion and *not get the point*, not see what his fuss is about—after all, the loose individual is many a libertarian's ideal of freedom. But there is something important here, and I can think of no more congenial place to read of it than in the writings of Robert Nisbet.

### ***America: Free and Balkanized***

— The chief problem with fantastic literature is the same as with that of any popular genre: it tends to become hackneyed, its main concepts and storylines overused and uninteresting. The special problem with *fantasy*—as opposed to

science fiction—is that it tends to be so politically reactionary. I, for one, can easily get by without ever reading another story relating the adventures of a young lad who discovers that he is actually the rightful heir to some imperial or kingly throne.

Orson Scott Card, the author of one of the most unforgettable dystopian stories ever written ("Unaccompanied Sonata"), has begun a fantasy series that is breaking new ground. "The Tales of Alvin Maker," at present contained in the books *Seventh Son* and *Red Prophet* (Tom Doherty Associates, 1987, 1988), with some upcoming installments previewed in *Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*, are set in an alternative American past, sometime during the early 1800s. There are the United States, of course, comprising New York and Pennsylvania. There is New England, which is called simply that, New England. Georgia and the Carolinas are the Crown Colonies, "The

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### ***Personal***

Gay libertarian man, 28, would like to contact other gay libertarians. Nonsmokers only. Occupant, 4 Bayside Village Pl. #307, San Francisco, CA 94107.

Duchy of Virginia" and "Appalachee" have just revolted (under the guiding hand of Thomas Jefferson), and the "Irakwa" have their own, independent state. Louisiana is under the rule of Spain, and is called Nueva Barcelona. But most of the action takes place in the Noisy River, Wobbish and Hio Territories (Illinois, Indiana and Ohio, respectively). Benjamin Franklin, the world's most renowned "Maker," believes—according to emigré William Blake, who travels around the New World as a "Taleswapper"—that his most important creation is the concept of "Americans."

But what makes this other world so very different from ours is not the politics: it is that folk magic—of both White and Red Indian variety—*works*. Little Alvin Miller is the seventh son of a seventh son, and has gifts that are unimaginable by normally talented people, some of whom can "doodlebug," "torch" and "divine," etc. He is, in fact, the greatest "Maker" the world has seen . . . at least in a long time.

Card pulls off some technical *coups*: he actually makes the old "Order vs Chaos" cliché seem new and vital, and his treatment of Indian-White relations is masterly. But for the most part he simply uses this backdrop to tell very human and moving stories. These tales are unlikely to please those libertarians who seek only strength and individualism in the literature they read; Card is probably not a libertarian, but what makes his work worth reading is that he understands human beings, that he has his own, magic talent, that of empathy. It is in Card's direction that fantasy and science fiction are moving, I hope. And libertarian SF and fantasy writers could learn something from his strange purposes and artful methods.

**Purity of Money** — Monetary theory is becoming a hot topic once again, if the increase in the number of books and articles on the subject can be considered a proper gauge. Libertarian notions are now being taken more seriously than at any time since the mid-nineteenth century, and libertarian economists are gaining deserved renown for their work in this field. Their various proposals are given careful consideration.

Now, in my opinion the issues of monetary theory are not yet settled, and monetary *policy* remains open, too. Libertarians disagree on the proper con-

stitution of a money supply. There are two distinct positions libertarians tend to take on the production of bank notes—free banking and 100% reserve banking. Though I favor the former, Mark Skousen's second edition of his *Economics of a Pure Gold Standard* (Praxeology Press, 1988) makes a pretty good case for the latter. It also makes a fine introduction to the whole subject for the layman, which is why I strongly recommend this little book. Few discussions of monetary theory avoid getting bogged down in mathematics. Skousen's dissertation is blissfully free of that sort of thing, and his reasoning never depends on concepts that the marginally

well-read intelligent non-economist should find abstruse or opaque. Skousen presents a fair account of the history of the debate, and he includes a bibliography that both beginners and economists will find interesting and useful.

Libertarians often express strong opinions on the subject of the proper monetary standard, and a greater degree of awareness of the issues and problems involved with the "money question" is of great importance. (It never hurts to back up strong opinions with facts and valid reasoning!) If monetary theory confuses you, Skousen's book is a good place to begin to increase your "economic literacy."  
—Timothy Virkkala

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*It's a Wonderful Life*, directed by Frank Capra, starring James Stewart, Donna Reed, Lionel Barrymore, and Henry Travers, 1946

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## It's An Altruistic Life

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Nathan Wollstein

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The winter holiday season is one of benevolent celebration for most people. In an apparent attempt to exploit this fact, in mid-December, TV stations trot out Frank Capra's film *It's a Wonderful Life*.

You are familiar with the story. As a boy, George saves his brother's life and prevents a druggist from accidentally poisoning someone. When he grows up, he plans to be an explorer. Instead, he grows up to be Jimmy Stewart. After graduating from high school, he works at his father's building and loan company, saving money so that he can "see the world," go to college and then build things. In one scene, George's father asks him if he'll come back after college to work at the building and loan. This upsets George, and he says no. He wants to do something big and important. He says intensely that "if I don't get away, I'll bust."

Unfortunately, George's father dies. George gives up his trip to Europe to straighten his father's office. Eventually, he is ready to go off to college, but Potter, the greedy banker, threatens to close

down the building and loan. George knows that the town needs the company, so he gives his college money to his brother and stays in town.

Four years later, George excitedly looks through travel brochures while he waits for his brother's return to take over the building and loan. At the train station his brother mentions that he wants to take a job elsewhere. Upon hearing this, George is numbed and shocked. He vacantly stares off into space as he realizes what this means. Predictably, he decides to let his brother take that job offer.

Later, newly married and about to go on a honeymoon to New York and Bermuda, a bank run starts; so George and his new wife pay out the \$2000 they had saved for their trip to the people clamoring for their money at the building and loan. Finally, after years of apparent happiness—many children, new houses built, etc.—disaster strikes: Uncle Billy loses \$8000 of the company's money. They can't find it anywhere. George gets angrier and angrier, yells at his children and smashes the model of a bridge he'd been designing.

He's about to kill himself to collect

on his insurance policy, when his guardian angel, Clarence, comes to help him.

Looking back over these events, we can see they have something in common. It is clear that George repeatedly puts aside his own dreams and goals for the sake of others. And just as clearly, this makes him unhappy. When his brother accepts the job offer, for example, George's excitement and happiness turn to anger, cynicism and bitterness. And this is just what we should expect to see, because George has just given up his lifelong dreams and hopes. He is leading a life of self-sacrifice.

And so how does George's angel show him that he should not kill himself? How does he prove that George should go on living? Clarence shows George what the world would have been like if he had never been born.

The angel shows him that his brother dies. The druggist poisons a child and goes to jail. Potter takes over the town, which becomes seamy and sleazy. Uncle Billy goes to an insane asylum. His mother becomes a harsh, angry woman. Mary, his wife, becomes an old maid. Clarence then says "See, you really had a wonderful life."

To put this more clearly and bluntly, Clarence is saying that George's life is wonderful because of all the people he has helped. His life has value and meaning because of how he has influenced the lives of others. He should want to continue living just because of all the good things he has done for others, and presumably so he can continue to help oth-

ers regardless of the expense to himself. Recall the scene when Potter insults George's father, who George defends by saying with admiration, "He never thought once of himself." Just pause for a moment and think about what that statement means.

You may remember the end of the movie when all of the people that George has helped give him the money he needs. They are grateful for all he has done; they care for him. But their gratitude and help are not meant to vindicate George's life. Remember that he had already been convinced that his life was

*Contrary to what many people claim, it is immensely difficult to pursue your own individual interests, happiness and values. It is even harder to make your values real in the world because there are so many people telling you that your worth as a person depends solely on what you do for others.*

wonderful, even before his friends helped him.

This movie is trying to show that a life like George's, a life of almost complete self-sacrifice, is wonderful and good. George went beyond mere kindness and benevolence towards others; he lived most of his life for the sake of others. He renounced those things that he had wanted his whole life, which means that he gave up a large part of his self. And he wasn't happy.

What is dangerous about this movie is that it upholds the ancient ideal of self-sacrifice, the ideal of living for others.

Kindness and benevolence are vir-

tues, but self-sacrifice is not. Think about how precious your own life is, how important it is for you to pursue your own values, to use your limited time here in the ways that you believe are most satisfying and fulfilling. And don't make the mistake of confusing the pursuit of your own values, goals, ideals, happiness, or interests with the mistreatment of others. The idea of pursuing the interests of your self is completely separate and different from the idea of treating others benevolently. One does not imply the other.

Contrary to what many people claim, it is immensely difficult to pursue your own individual interests, happiness and values. It is even harder to make your values real in the world because there are so many people telling you that your worth as a person depends solely on what you do for others.

They imply that you are your brother's keeper, and encourage you to renounce your own goals and values. It is not only religious people who ask this of you; the government customarily beseeches self-sacrifice. And even family members play this dangerous game. Think of how many times you have been made to feel guilty for doing what you wanted to do. Think of the times you have been mentally bullied into acting against your judgment. This is self-betrayal. Remember how it feels.

There is nothing wonderful, or good, or noble about it. Helping, kindness and benevolence are virtues, but self-renunciation is not. It is horrible.

Every time I see *It's a Wonderful Life*, I wish Clarence would show George what his own life would have been like had he left Bedford Falls when his brother came back from college. Or if he had left after straightening up his father's company. Or if he had left right after his father died.

Rather than seeing how everyone else's life would turn out had not George embarked on his journey of self-denial, I want to see what George's life would be like. Maybe he would have become a famous explorer, or built great bridges. But we will never know. I wonder how often this sort of story is replayed outside of the movies, with real people, real lives and real feelings of self-betrayal, anger and depression. □

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# Notes on Contributors

*Chester Alan Arthur* is *Liberty's* political correspondent.

"*Baloo*" is the *nom de plume* of Rex F. May, whose cartoons appear in numerous periodicals.

*R. W. Bradford* is the editor of *Liberty*.

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

*H. Griffin Cupstid* is a family practice physician living in Spartanburg, South Carolina.

*Karl Hess* is the editor of the *Libertarian Party News* and is an associate editor of *Liberty*.

*John Hospers* is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Southern California and editor of the international philosophical journal *The Monist*.

*William A. London* is an Assistant Professor in the Health Education Program of Kent State University in Kent, Ohio.

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

*William A. Niskanen* is Chairman of the Cato Institute and a former member of the Council of Economic Advisers.

*Jeffrey Olson* is a self-employed musical instrument repairman living in Woodland, California.

*Bob Ortin* lives in southern Oregon, where his "Burons" are regularly featured in a local paper.

*Sheldon L. Richman*, a contributing editor of *Liberty*, is director of public affairs at the Institute for Humane Studies at George Mason University.

*Murray N. Rothbard*, an associate editor of *Liberty*, is S. J. Hall Distinguished Professor of Economics at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas.

*Karen Shabetai* is a scholar of Romantic Literature who teaches in the Dept. of English at the University of Washington.

*Jane S. Shaw* is Senior Associate of the Political Economy Research Center of Bozeman, Montana.

*Sandy Shaw* is a research scientist specializing in life extension.

*Jeffrey A. Tucker* is managing editor of *The Free Market*, the monthly publication of the Ludwig von Mises Institute.

*Timothy Virkkala* is assistant editor of *Liberty*.

*Nathan Wollstein* lives in Charlottesville, Virginia.

*William Wingo* has a Master of Science degree in biochemistry and is a Ph. D. candidate in toxicology.

*Leland B. Yeager* is the Ludwig von Mises Distinguished Professor of Economics at Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama.

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