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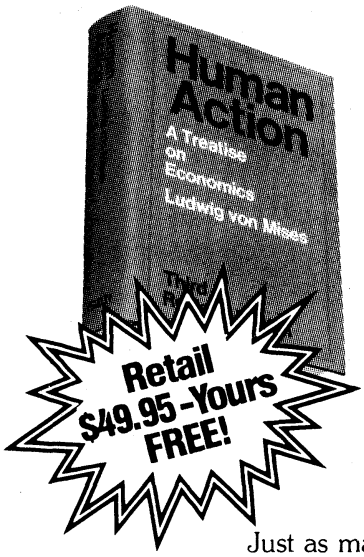

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Ethan O. Waters
contributing editors

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assistant editor

Kathleen Bradford
copy editor

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Mere Lines on a Ballot

Justin Raimondo's analysis of the futility of the Libertarian Party ("Assessing Campaign '88," *Liberty*, Jan 1989), and third party efforts in general, is right on the mark. A few years ago I researched the history of political parties in America, and reached the same conclusions. That was *after* I had spent three years working on Libertarian Party campaigns. Oh, well.

There's a solid legal reason behind the persistent failure of third parties in this century. "Progressive" era reforms of election laws in effect nationalized the major political parties late in the last century. The parties are defined and controlled by various state and federal legislation.

The major parties are not private organizations. They cannot exclude anyone, fascist, communist, or ignoramus from running under their ballot labels. The parties are not "parties" at all; they are state-controlled lines on a ballot.

Should any third party gain "major party" status, which requires 5% of the vote in many states, that party will also be taken over by the state. It will no longer be able to control what candidates run under its banner. So if the Libertarian Party dodges its likely death by failure, it faces death by success.

There is no reason why a serious candidate should put the millstone of a third party around his neck when he can espouse the *same* ideas while running on a major party ballot line.

Eric O'Keefe
Cottage Grove, Wis.

A Foul Flash-in-the-Pan

I am afraid that the inevitable postmortems will focus once again on all the wrong factors—faulty technique, media "bias," money, the *zeitgeist*, close races, crooked/incompetent aides, etc. etc.—rather than on the common thread that runs through all the LP's failures: the message. It's a foul combination of dogmatic ideological flashing and wimpy, gradualist prescriptions that presents as many problems as solutions, and excites few.

In its stead I propose a new pragmatic radicalism, based on the idea that freedom, unqualified, offers the hope of unprecedented wealth and opportunity to people of *all* socioeconomic backgrounds, as well as the prospect of solving many of our most persistent social ills. Else the LP will certainly continue to toil in obscurity, if it continues to toil at all.

Jorge Amador
Forest Grove, Penn.

A Vote For Evil

The attitudes expressed by Mr Moulton ("Why I Will Vote for George Bush," *Liberty*, Nov 1988) represent the most maddening of obstacles to Libertarian Party candidates. By that I mean the attitudes that might be called "Sunday Libertarianism," and which translate into, "I'll walk and talk like a Libertarian but I won't vote like one."

For anyone who thinks I'm too harsh with Mr. Moulton I suggest a comparison between his "I Like Bush" article and the one bearing his initials on page 5 of that same issue ("One nation, undeliverable"). Herein some guy named Robert Kuttner is soundly trashed (and rightly so) for defending the U.S. Postal monopoly. And editor Moulton makes no bones about the extent of Kuttner's perfidiousness; we are informed that Kuttner's attitudes "come close to actual evil." Right on, Brother!

But that's the maddening part. For it never seems to occur to this world's Moultons that, if Robert Kuttner holds views which come close to being evil, then the same must be said of George Bush. After all, Bush is the guy who has proposed such things as a national day-care plan, and who hopes to be remembered as the (public) Education President! In short, it never seems to occur to Moulton (or his fellow "Libertarian-Republicans") that George Bush is simply Robert Kuttner magnified many times over.

John M. Simons
Sheffield, Vermont

One Less Vote for Evil

I apologize for my mistake in stating that John Hospers was a supporter of the Bush ticket ("Better Dukakis Than Bush," *Liberty*, Nov 1988). I inferred from his statement of support for the Reagan-Bush ticket in 1984 that he had permanently abandoned the LP. I am happy to see Hospers return to the LP, and note the refreshing contrast of Hospers' path to the reverse course of the demented members of LROC. It is striking that Justin Raimondo, attacking the Paul campaign for its alleged trafficking with the likes of Pat Robertson and the New Right, rushes to embrace the Republican Party, which is presumably free of such contamination!

G. Duncan Williams
Melvin, Iowa

Quit Picking on Ron

I was disappointed with the criticisms of the Ron Paul campaign by Russell Means ("Assessing the 1988 Campaign," *Liberty*, Jan 1989). Means faulted Paul for three things: failure to run national TV commercials, failure to get on all fifty state ballots and failure to raise $5 million.

The lack of national TV is probably a result of too little money. But the Paul campaign did produce and show commercials in some cities.

As for 50 state ballots, I think the record shows the Paul campaign tried very hard and came very close. Perhaps if Russell Means had kept his promise to work on ballot drives among Native Americans in South Dakota, Arizona and Florida, it would have freed up enough resources for the Paul campaign to finish the job they nearly finished anyway.

While it is true that the Paul campaign failed to raise the $5 million that it had hoped to, it is certainly worth noting that it raised far more than any earlier LP campaign. It's hard to fault them for lack of effort.

Now, I'm glad Russell Means is a libertarian, but who is he to criticize others? Has he delivered on his promises? I already mentioned that he didn't work on ballot access as he had promised. I also remember him promising a $1,000 contribution to the Paul campaign. This is a much less ambitious promise than the the promises of the Paul campaign that he complains about. So far as I have heard, he never filled this pledge.

His own nomination campaign went into debt and according to the Freedom Is For Everyone (FIFE) caucus, which he founded, he still owed $20,000 nearly a

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year after the convention. Perhaps his time might be spent more profitably working on *his* fundraising problem rather than criticizing Ron Paul's efforts.

Emily Woodson
Jasper, Tex.

A Vote for the Unknown?

What happened to *Terra Incognita*? The January issue of *Liberty* was missing this department, one of my favorites, and I am concerned; you are not planning to junk it for good, are you?

Terra is not only funny, it also darest explore the unknown region that is contemporary public opinion and government activity. It would be a pity if *Liberty* were to abandon this, one of its most enlightening (as well as lighter) features.

John Reilly
Portland, Ore.

You (and the other readers who protested its absence) will be happy to learn that Terra Incognita *returns to its customary penultimate position in this issue of* Liberty. *It was omitted last issue to accommodate a last minute submission of a timely nature.* —Editor

The Unnamed Ideology

John Dentinger ("Envy *vs* Cooperation," *Liberty*, Nov 1988) refers to the familiar (to libertarians) two-dimensional chart of the political spectrum as the "Nolan chart." However, I remember seeing just such a chart in a book on the Supreme Court, published in 1965 or 1966. The authors used it to plot the views of every Justice serving from 1900 to the early sixties. They divided the chart into four quadrants. Justices who were high on civil liberties and low on economic freedom were labeled liberals; justices high on economic and low on civil were conservatives; justices low on both were called populists. Justices who scored high on both civil and economic liberty were called—it's academic, what they were called, because *no* justices scored high on both civil and economic liberty.

Taras Wolansky
Kerhonkson, N.Y.

Comparing Nuts and Bolts

Re Sheldon Richman's commentary on Quayle ("What the Quayle affair is really about," *Liberty*, Nov 1988): How can one logically or even emotionally compare Quayle's student days and the way he apparently thought then, and his days as a senator? If you want an example of a classic *argumentum ad hominem*, there you have it. Nuts!

Eugene Guazzo
Chaptico, Md.

Naive and Dangerous

I was shocked to read John Hospers' discussion of "units of happiness" in his section on the quality of human life in his most recent essay ("Property, Population and the Environment," *Liberty*, Jan 1989). I had thought that this sort of naive utilitarian calculus had died an ignominious death years ago, and am disappointed to see it resurrected in his writings.

The concept of measurable pleasure ("units of happiness") goes against the grain of methodological individualism, and has proven its utility only to those who wish to back up normative collectivism; that is, anti-individualistic policy prescriptions. If there is any justification for the sorts of population controls that Hospers somewhat hesitantly recommends, they should be defended using the terms that the more sophisticated "methodological individualists" (Buchanan, Mises, Hayek, etc.) have developed. Libertarians who resort to socially holistic notions tread on very dangerous ice, and the only breakthroughs we can expect from these methods are "all wet."

Hospers' discussion of population neither extended our knowledge nor honed our ability to deal with complicated problems. He is to be congratulated only for raising the issue and for challenging us to make the effort to sharpen our skills.

David Sheldon
Gresham, Ore.

Misplaced Malthusiasm

Prof. Hospers ("Liberty and Ecology," *Liberty*, Sept 1988) should be commended for his thoughtful discussion of environmental issues. But, the fundamental question is whether political or market institutions provide better incentives to provide environmental quality.

Hospers describes situations where no property rights exist, and then argues that growing population is causing environmental destruction. In backward nations, forests, plains, and wildlife are held in common. Growing population eventually causes an unsustainable "harvest" of firewood, lumber, fodder, and meat. The resources are destroyed. In developed nations, waste products are dumped into the air or water. Little or no harm was done when population density was low, but as population has grown, industrial pollution has caused environmental problems.

Property rights and markets create incentives to limit the harvest of resources, regardless of an individual's plan to provide for his children. Selling the resource provides more present consumption than an unsustainable "harvest." And, when waste products injure others, the pollution becomes aggression against their property rights. The individual who creates the waste products must be responsible for their containment and disposal.

If private property rights exist and are enforced, population growth does not destroy the environment. At worst, it causes lower per capita incomes until children become too expensive and population growth ceases. Improving technology can postpone this outcome. Because affluence seems to lead to smaller families the Malthusian solution might never be necessary.

Still, there are problems. It is difficult to "homestead" some natural resources. Proposed market solutions for conserving some types of wildlife or for maintaining the atmospheric balance between carbon dioxide and oxygen requires substantial political involvement. And, individuals can generate wastes that last for generations. Even the best approach to the disposal of toxic chemicals or nuclear waste might "force" future generations to maintain disposal facilities.

Unfortunately, political institutions create few incentives to promote

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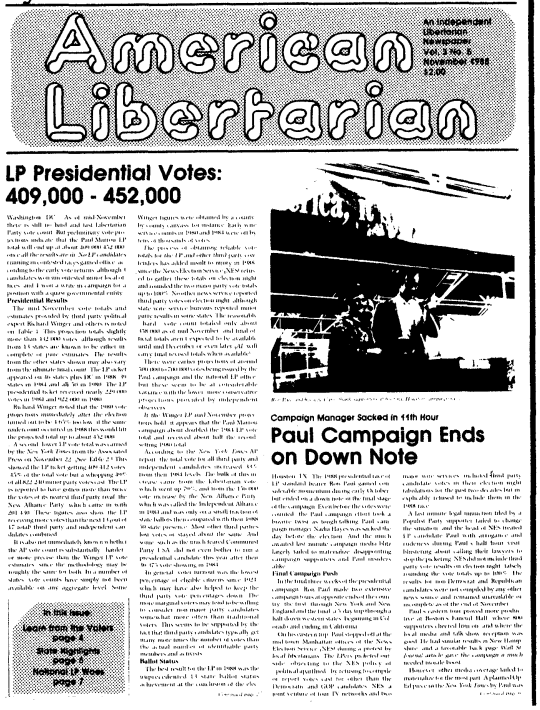
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LP Presidential Votes: 409,000 - 452,000

Campaign Manager Sacked in 11th Hour

Paul Campaign Ends on Down Note

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The 1988 Third Party Vote

The January issue *Liberty* we reported tentative vote totals for third parties, with an emphasis on Libertarian Party returns. As we go to press, nearly all the votes have now been counted (the one exception is in West Virginia). What follows is a summary of election data, correcting the incomplete data reported in the January issue. Our thanks to Richard Winger, editor of *Ballot Access News*, for his assistance in providing us with data.

Vote Totals by Party

Republican	48,130,478
Democrat	41,114,068
Libertarian	432,345
New Alliance	217,272
Populist	47,042
Consumers'	30,903
American Independent	27,818
Independent (LaRouche)	25,530
Right to Life	20,504
Workers' League	18,862
Socialist Worker	15,603
Peace & Freedom	10,370
Prohibition	8,000
Workers' World	7,845
Socialist	3,878
American	3,477
Grass Roots	1,949
Independent (Youngkite)	372
Third World Assembly	236
None of the Above	6,923
Total	90,124,276

America's "Third" Party

The Libertarian Party finished third in the presidential election, with 49.6% of the minor party vote. The LP finished third in 35 states. It was beaten by the Populist Party in Arkansas, Mississippi, Louisiana and Kentucky, by the New Alliance Party in Virginia, Ohio, and the District of Columbia, by the Consumers' Party in Pennsylvania and Minnesota, the Peace & Freedom Pary in New Jersey, the LaRouche independent candidacy in Iowa, and by both the Right to Life Party and the New Alliance Party in New York. 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%	.92%
East	.00%	.20%	.87%	.23%	.38%

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 9 states: Alabama, Alaska, Hawaii, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Vermont, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. The 1988 ticket outpolled the 1984 ticket in the remaining 28 states.

Of the 46 states on whose ballots the Clark ticket appeared in 1980 and the Paul ticket in 1988, the Paul ticket outpolled Clark in three states: Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Connecticut.

There were two 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)

State by State LP Presidential Total Vote

Alabama	8,460	.61%	Kentucky	2,118	.16%	North Dakota	1,315	.44%
Alaska	5,459	2.75%	Louisiana	4,115	.25%	Ohio	11,979	.27%
Arizona	13,351	1.14%	Maine	2,700	.49%	Oklahoma	6,261	.53%
Arkansas	3,297	.31%	Maryland	6,748	.39%	Oregon	14,811	1.24%
California	70,105	.71%	Massachusetts	24,251	.92%	Pennsylvania	12,051	.27%
Colorado	15,483	1.13%	Michigan	18,336	.50%	Rhode Island	825	.20%
Connecticut	14,071	.97%	Minnesota	5,109	.24%	South Carolina	4,935	.50%
Delaware	1,159	.47%	Mississippi	3,329	.36%	South Dakota	1,060	.34%
Dist. of Columbia	554	.29%	Missouri *	523	.02%	Tennessee	2,041	.12%
Florida	19,781	.46%	Montana	5,047	1.38%	Texas	30,355	.56%
Georgia	8,435	.47%	Nebraska	2,534	.38%	Utah	7,473	1.16%
Hawaii	1,999	.56%	Nevada	3,520	1.00%	Vermont	1,000	.41%
Idaho	5,313	1.30%	New Hampshire	4,502	1.03%	Virginia	8,336	.38%
Illinois	14,944	.33%	New Jersey	8,413	.27%	Washington	17,240	.92%
Indiana *	0	.00%	New Mexico	3,268	.63%	West Virginia *	28	.00%
Iowa	2,494	.20%	New York	12,109	.19%	Wisconsin	5,157	.24%
Kansas	12,533	1.26%	North Carolina *	1,263	.05%	Wyoming	2,026	1.15%

* Write-in votes. The Libertarian candidates were not on ballot in Indiana, Missouri, North Carolina or West Virginia. Write-in votes are not tabulated in Indiana. West Virginia total is incomplete.

Drug testing

There was a mathematical error in William Wingo's article "Random Drug Testing: Mathematics and Morality" (*Liberty*, January 1989).

Mr Wingo explains:

"The error occurs not in the equations or calculations, but in the definition of the false positive rate as 1/100,000. In this calculation, I erroneously redefined the fpr as false positives divided by the *entire population*, rather than as false positives divided by the *total number of positives* as I had originally defined it. It is not, of course, cricket after that to use equations which were derived using a different definition.

"Since the prevalence is postulated at 0.1 percent, the total number with the condition is 100. The false positive rate is 99.999 percent, not 99.999999 percent. Constructing the table would have been a better way to do it, and I wish I had done so.

"I think my main point survives, however, and I don't feel much better about a 99.999 percent required specificity than about a 99.999999 percent required specificity. Either way, when large, low-prevalence populations are tested, innocent people are going to be bulldozed. Thus I remain convinced that mass random drug testing is inherently dangerous, and I continue to advise caution when entering into drug test agreements. The difference between one error in 100,000 and one in 100,000,000 isn't very important if that error is *you*.

"I must apologise to *Liberty* and its readers for this error. In my defense I can only assure you that it was not intentional, and that I proofread the manuscript on three separate occasions. Because of its subtle nature, the error did not show up when the figures were worked out with a calculator, and it slipped by each time. I would like to extend special thanks to an astute reader, Mr Robert Hinkley, for pointing out this error.

"My high school algebra grade should be retroactively adjusted downward."

Reflections

Toward a free market in smoke — I recently went through a strange sequence of illnesses and hospitalizations, resulting in, among other things, my physician *strongly* recommending I switch from chewing tobacco to smoking a pipe. It's been ten years since I smoked a pipe, and things have changed.

I remember pipes being available everywhere—drug stores, supermarkets, department stores. And all different kinds. Pipe tobacco is still generally available, but not nearly as much as it used to be. I fired off a query to my old pipe dealer in Chicago, Iwan Ries, only to find out that its catalog is much tinier than it used to be.

Then I began to look around. In all of West Lafayette, a college town to the maximum extent, I can think of only one guy besides myself that smokes a pipe—not just one guy that I know, but only one guy that I've even *seen*.

I don't need to see any statistics to realize that pipe smoking is in serious decline, but what did it? It can't be the fact that tobacco ads are now illegal on TV, because those were all for cigarettes, weren't they? It can't be the price, because pipe tobacco is still at the same ratio it used to be with cigarettes, if not at an even greater advantage.

My tentative conclusion is: because pipe tobacco and pipe smoking remain legal, and the government propaganda is aimed entirely against cigarettes and illegal drugs, the idea of smoking a pipe with regular tobacco has lost its appeal. There's no glamour in doing something that is legal and has the tacit approval of the government.

So all you pipe smokers out there who are getting annoyed with the lack of availability of pipes and appropriate paraphernalia can do something. Write your Congressman requesting that pipe smoking and possession of pipes and pipe tobacco be made at least a misdemeanor. And, more importantly, that the government immediately spend a whole lot of money on TV advertising pointing out that pipes are unhealthy, immoral, and anti-social. Also request that glorification of pipe-smokers cease straightaway, and insist that Popeye cartoons be banned from children's programming. Then, we won't even have to go to K-Mart to get our corn cobs and Flying Dutchman. We'll have blue-cheeked thugs in business suits selling them to us on the streets and in school playgrounds. —RFM

Helga Claus is coming to town — Detroit, Dec. 18, 1988. It's Christmas season in the heart of Detroit's "Cultural Center." An arctic wind is sweeping down Woodward Avenue. Here and there, you can see an old man or woman struggling toward the entrance of one of the churches lining the avenue's eastern side. They are magnificent things, these churches. Gothic-Victorian, romanesque-Victorian, Byzantine-Victorian, they were built when artistic fantasy was large and confident enough to impose itself in mountains of white and rose stone. This year, the fourth Sunday in Advent is celebrated by groups of 50 or 100 in vaulted rooms made to accommodate 1000.

The cultural *action* in the Cultural Center is up the street at the art museum, where Santa Claus is holding court. Enthroned in a tinselly stage-set depicting his "village" at the "north pole," Santa is surrounded at all times by a mob of minicam-wielding parents—pink-cheeked suburbanites who, driven by a hunger for representational realism, have lugged all this expensive equipment downtown so that they may preserve forever each fleeting nuance of their youngsters' encounters with the god of the season. The encounters are fleeting, not easily captured. When one serious little boy produces a brief written list of desired presents and begins to read from it, Santa emits a jolly "ho, ho, ho," throws the list to the floor, and pushes the child toward an attendant elf who skillfully ushers him out.

But there is another reason why things are jumping at the Institute of Arts. Helga is here. Helga, in case you didn't know, is a woman whose portrait Andrew Wyeth sketched and painted hundreds of times during the 1970s and 1980s. Clever press agentry and tabloid speculations about Wyeth's relationship to a frequently nude model who was not his wife (!) have turned this exhibit of Helga's likenesses into an object of pilgrimage for thousands of people who would not walk so far as the gallery upstairs to see a Bellini or a Van Eyck. The Wyeth exhibit is packed shoulder to shoulder; the Renaissance rooms are empty.

But Wyeth's audience is curiously silent. What is one to say, after all, about 120 portraits of a woman whose apparent intention is to look as expressionless as possible, 120 portraits by an artist who is apparently incapable of varying either his technique or the dismal brown that is the prevailing color of his works? Of course, there are both indoor pictures and outdoor pictures, so one can choose between the Presbyterian nudity of Helga arranged on a bed and the lugubrious Hawthornism of Helga, wrapped in a dark cape coat, standing sullenly beside some sullen trees. The choice is not very stimulating. The openest, perhaps the healthiest, reaction to Helga comes from a pair of young people who walk through the galleries laughing softly to each other.

After 70 or 80 years of being told that abstraction of almost any kind is better than realism of almost any kind, the nice people who seek "culture" would like to have more contact with substantial and enduring forms of life than they can get from soulless canvasses in which painters "play" with "formal elements" but take care not to represent anything. Hence the grimly serious interest in Wyeth's studies of a real-life human being, studies in which, according to the Art Institute's brochure, "the artist, and thus the viewer, invades [sic] an intimate, private world." Hence our era's nostalgic vulnerability to as many fragments of traditional culture as can be dug up, jazzed up, and put on display.

In the absence of genuine drama, conflict, aspiration,

imagination, and belief, this sort of thing won't satisfy its consumers any longer than their videotapes of the kids' 15 seconds with Santa Claus. To think that it might is the saddest of fantasies. —SC

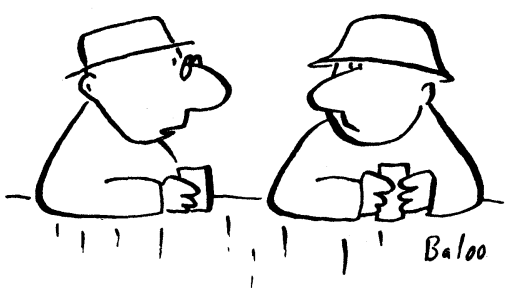
McCarthyism for moderns — It was a pleasure to read Karen Shabetai's review of the Mary McCarthy biography in the January *Liberty*. I would like to add an emphasis on Mary McCarthy's elegant, lucid, spare, and highly witty style, and also my heartfult belief that the style deeply reflects the mind of the author: "the style is the man." As Ms Shabetai observes, Mary McCarthy's famous conflict with Lillian Hellman was not simply ideological; there is an even greater contrast in their qualities of mind. And I think the issue goes beyond the simple matter of "honesty vs. dishonesty." What Mary McCarthy has reacted against all her life is the pretentious, humorless, flatulent, *pomposo* style of authors like Hellman and Arthur Miller. Her rejection of those twin twentieth century despotic intellectual fashions, Freudianism and Marxism, reflect the same rational, crystal-clear, satiric, anti-pretentious cast of mind, a mind that repudiates bad writing and murky thinking. —MNR

Ante up — Whatever else one can say about people in the contemporary American libertarian movement, it is certainly apparent that they are extraordinarily generous, particularly when it comes to funding libertarian political activity and the Libertarian Party.

Although precise figures aren't yet available, preliminary information indicates that the LP presidential campaign, the ballot access effort, the national party office and assorted local LP candidates raised at least $2.5 million in 1988. This isn't big money by the standards of major political players, but it's not bad at all when you consider that there are perhaps 25,000 contributors in all, by the most generous estimates. Unlike the 1980 LP political season, which benefited from having a billionaire (exempt from contribution limits) on the ticket, all the 1988 funds came from relatively small contributors.

This amounts to an extraordinary $100 per person on average. Given the relative youth of the contemporary libertarian movement, it's likely that most are early middle-aged or younger.

In addition to this largess, the funding for non-political libertarian endeavors such as think tanks, magazines and outreach groups (such as Advocates for Self Government and LROC) probably totals $5 million or more, though some of that comes from corporate sponsors or free-market oriented conservatives.



"I'm not implying that you're a bigot — I'm just saying that your prejudices seem less rational than mine."

Still, that's a lot of dollars per person, and a strong indication that most libertarians are willing to put their money where their mouths are when it comes to their intellectual and political beliefs. Whether this generosity is a good thing or not, it certainly belies the notion (inspired by Ayn Rand's anti-altruism) that libertarians don't care much about the future of their fellow man. —MH

Whether this generosity is a good thing or not, it certainly belies the notion (inspired by Ayn Rand's anti-altruism) that libertarians don't care much about the future of their fellow man.

The movement that satirizes itself — In the January *Letters*, Frank Bubb chides me, in "The Sociology of the Ayn Rand Cult" for raking over old bones, and claims, *only* on the strength of listening to some Peikoff tapes, that the Bad Old Days of the RandCult are dead and gone. Balderdash! The RandCult, even though decimated from the glory days of the 60s, still lives. Read Peter Schwartz, or better yet, talk to an orthodox Randian in the flesh, and in five minutes, the veneer of good fellowship disappears, and the old "how-dare-you-talk-to-me-that-way-about-the-greatest-person-of-all-time" RandCultist emerges in full flower. Sad to say, similar personality traits pop up even in the more numerous group of disillusioned ex-Randians. Even those who recognize and repudiate unfortunate aspects of the RandCult will still proclaim, at the drop of a hat, that "Ayn Rand is the greatest (novelist, philosopher, woman, person) of all time."

Mr. Bubb assumes that I exaggerated the grotesque features of the RandCult. I don't blame him. No one who was not a RandCultist, especially in New York City, the Randian Heartland, can grasp the full depths of that movement. Besides, as any veteran libertarian ought to realize, in our beloved movement, you don't *have* to exaggerate for dramatic or comic effect: a mere recital of the facts will do. —MNR

Who votes for third party candidates? — According to an exit poll published by the New York *Times*, individuals in the following categories are most likely to vote for third party candidates than others:

men
blacks
individuals with post-graduate education
Westerners
students
teachers
unmarried men

I am not certain whether there is a lesson in this for Libertarian Party partisans. But it certainly would not hurt to nominate a candidate who is likely to appeal to these groups. Now it may be difficult to find a black, unmarried man, who lives in the West, has a PhD, and teaches, and it would be foolish to require a candidate to meet these qualifications. Clearly, the abilities to articulate the libertarian vision, to command the attention of the media and the voting public are more important.

But it certainly wouldn't hurt the vote totals any if the LP had a nominee who met at least some of these qualifications.

Curiously, at least one individual whose name has been mentioned as a possible candidate meets all these qualifications. Walter Williams is an articulate advocate of libertarian ideas and a fine speaker. He also is male, black, has a post-graduate education, and is a professor at George Mason University.

Williams has also indicated an interest in being the Libertarian Party standard bearer. At the Alabama LP convention in 1987, according to *Alabama Liberty*, he stole the show with an impressive speech on individual rights. He denied interest in running for Vice President in 1988, but refused to rule out running for either President or Vice President on the LP ticket in 1992. He did rule out his running as a Democrat or Republican.

He endorsed the candidacy of Ron Paul, although he admitted that he had no hope of its election: "As far as winning the White House, that's out of the question, but the issue is who can further libertarians the most, and I think Ron Paul is one of the tops."

With both Ron Paul and Russell Means denying interest in the 1992 nomination, Williams would certainly have a good chance of gaining the nomination if he seeks it. And if nominated, he would certainly be a formidable candidate. —CAA

Corndogs and quiche — There are two basic kinds of libertarian. The first kind divides all libertarians into two kinds, and the other doesn't.

But seriously, I do perceive at least two large groups. The first is at home with quiche-eating liberals and knows just how to scoop them in and get them to thinking that maybe there's something to freedom after all. This group, however, is totally at sea when encountering Birchers, Wallaceites, and rednecks.

Then the *other* group of libertarians is the mirror image of the first. I belong to this group. When I run into somebody who likes gun control, I frankly am struck speechless. I can't think of a damn thing to say. And even if I've learned a good approach, I'm inclined to say the hell with it, I don't want to waste my time on folks like that. I presume that my colleagues who are more comfy with the white wine crowd have exactly the same feelings of exasperation when they run into a Bible Thumper or somesuch.

What to conclude from all this? Just that patience and tolerance are always in order. There are very few of us who were lucky enough to start *out* as libertarians. Most of us were lefties or righties, and a lot of our gut-reactions carry over from the old days. Just remember that they *are* gut reactions, and not rational responses. If one of you ex-McGovernites encounters Lester Maddox or Gordon Liddy in a receptive mood, and feels unable to control the situation, just send for me or someone like me. Contrariwise, if *I* happen onto Ed Asner or Jesse Jackson, I'll know damn well I'd better send for one of you. —RFM

Where is Ed Crane now that we really need him? — If there is one lesson that Libertarian Party partisans should learn from the 1988 campaign, it is the need for competent management. This means making long term plans to achieve its goals, based on reasonable expectations, and using the best information available.

But more importantly, now is the time to begin thinking about the 1992 campaign. Now is the time to set priorities. Now is the time to begin raising funds. Now is the time to think about possible nominees. Now is the time to build party structures. Better planning and preparation today means a better and more efficient and effective campaign in 1992.

Shortly after the LP's first nationwide campaign in 1976, LP national chairman Ed Crane made a personal commitment to planning and executing an effective and efficient presidential campaign in 1980. He critically evaluated the 1976 campaign and learned from its mistakes. He researched and developed a campaign plan, taking into account the resources—ideological, personal and financial—of the libertarian movement. He brainstormed about possible candidates and sounded out those he thought were attractive. He shared his thoughts with other activists. The result of his effort was the 1980 LP Presidential campaign, which garnered 920,000 votes.

This is not to say that the 1980 campaign was perfectly run. Anyone who attended the ridiculously botched "Alternative '80" video party can attest to that. And it enjoyed the advantage of a multimillionaire vice presidential candidate with very deep pockets. And the world was different in 1976 and 1980. But I have no doubt that the commitment and effort of Ed Crane contributed mightily to the success of that campaign.

Where is Ed Crane now that we really need him? —CAA

Chester Alan Arthur and the 1988 campaign — Congratulations to Chester Alan Arthur for a thoughtful and comprehensive article on the Libertarian Party and the 1988 campaign. The time after a Presidential campaign is the time for Libertarians to assess and reevaluate their strategy and tactics, and decide what to do from now on. Arthur's article deserves to be read by every libertarian, in or out of the Party.

We've already won several teeny local elections, and while this is great, these victories have hardly invigorated the Party as a whole. No matter how much we all love Podunk, let's face it, a victory there doesn't mean a helluva lot outside of Podunk's marketing area.

One fascinating contrast is Arthur's assessment of the Larry Dodge campaign with Dodge's own contribution to the post-election discussion. Whereas Dodge seems ready to liquidate the LP as a political party, Arthur makes the crucially important point that the Dodge campaign *succeeded* in getting its issues co-opted by the major parties in Montana! It should be emphasized that the LP does not *have* to actually win elections before it becomes politically significant: with a small fraction of the vote, e.g. Larry's 5 percent, the LP can have an important effect in pushing the major parties in our direction. Like the Socialist Party in the New Deal era, we would *love* to have the major parties adopting our programs! And we libertarians don't have to worry about running out of issues to push: we can *always* up the ante!

Several old chestnuts are being trotted out in the wake of the disappointing election results. (As Arthur points out, Libertarians are *always* being disappointed!) For example, the

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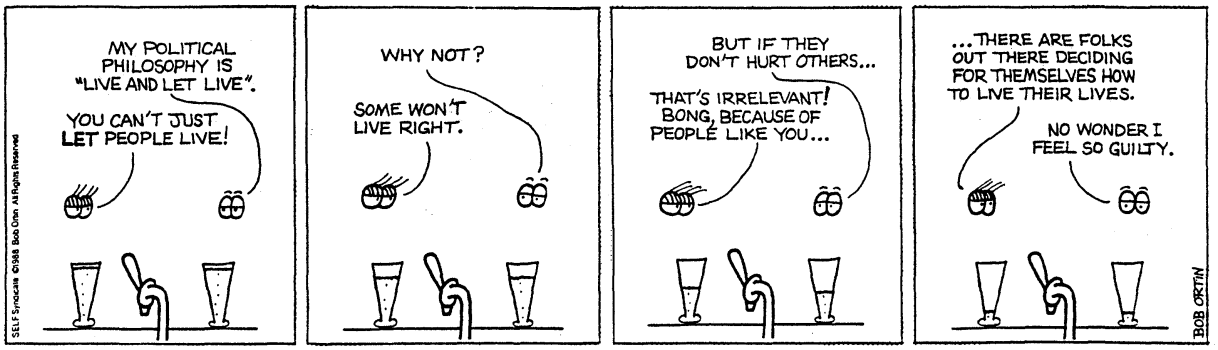
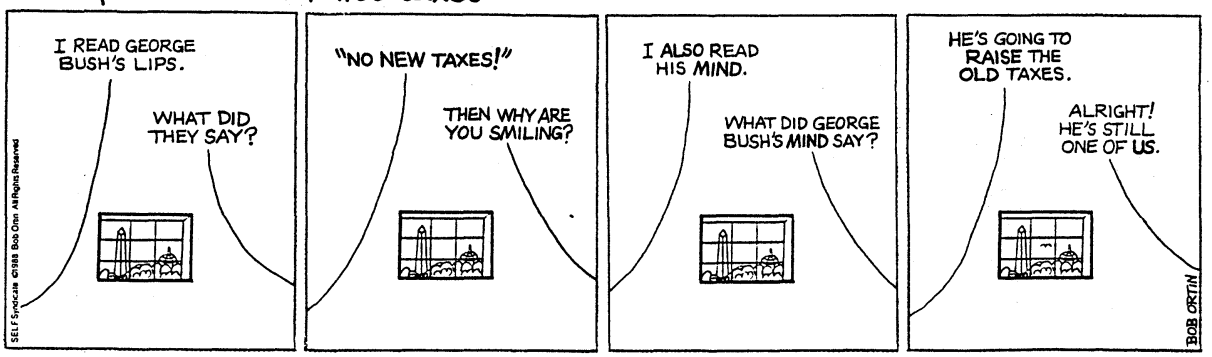
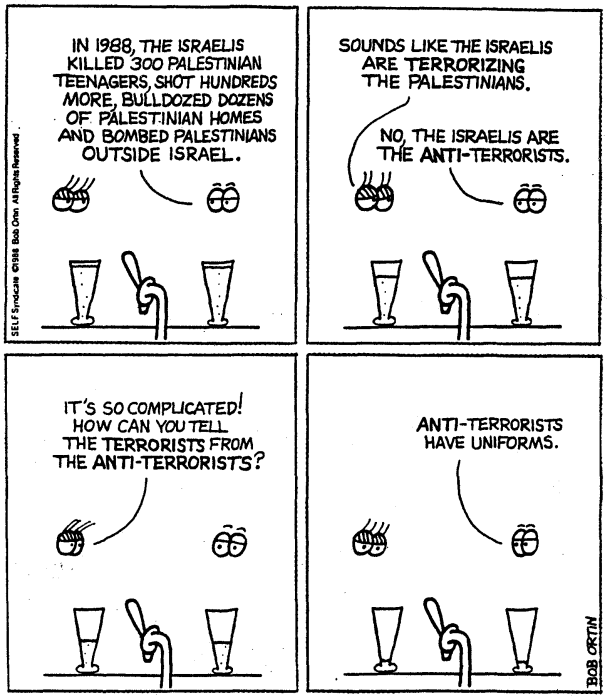
Live and let live?



Bush pressured to raise taxes



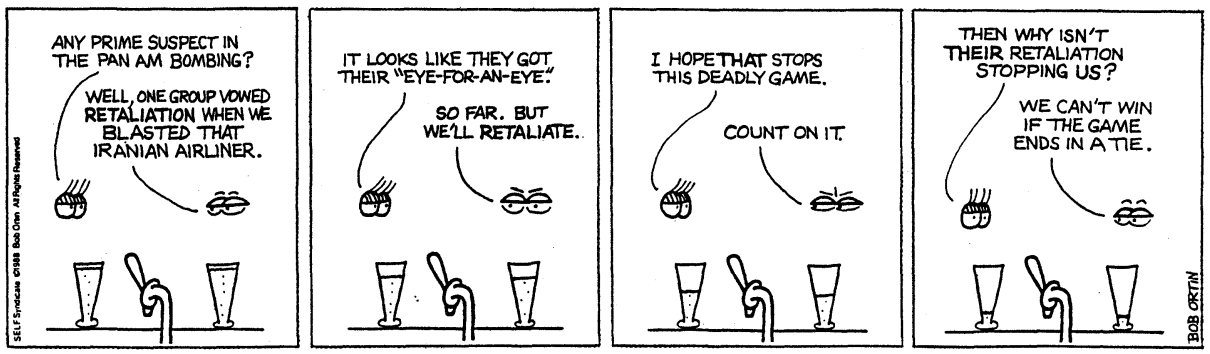
Terrorists vs. Anti-Terrorists



BURONS

A speculation on the source of headlines by Bob Ortin

Feds seek Pan Am bomber



Ronald Reagan: An Autopsy

by Murray N. Rothbard

Ronald Reagan has left America with a trillion dollar national debt, a renewed hostility toward personal freedom and an increased demand for jellybeans . . .

Eight years, eight dreary, miserable, mind-numbing years, the years of the Age of Reagan, are at long last coming to an end. These years have surely left an ominous legacy for the future: we shall undoubtedly suffer from the after-shocks of Reaganism for years to come. But at least Himself will not be there, and without the man Reagan, without what has been called his "charisma," Reaganism cannot nearly be the same. Reagan's heirs and assigns are a pale shadow of the Master, as we can see from the performance of George Bush. He might try to imitate the notes of Reagan, but the music just ain't there. Only this provides a glimmer of hope for America: that Reaganism might not survive much beyond Reagan.

Reagan the Man

Many recent memoirs have filled out the details of what some of us have long suspected: that Reagan is basically a cretin who, as a long-time actor, is skilled in reading his assigned lines and performing his assigned tasks. Donald Regan and others have commented on Ronald Reagan's strange passivity, his never asking questions or offering any ideas of his own, his willingness to wait until others place matters before him. Regan has also remarked that Reagan is happiest when following the set schedule that others have placed before him. The actor, having achieved at last the stardom that had eluded him in Hollywood, reads the lines and performs the actions that others—his script-writers, his directors—have told him to follow.

Sometimes, Reagan's retentive memory—important for an actor—gave his handlers trouble. Evidently lacking the capacity for reasoned thought, Reagan's mind is filled with anecdotes, most of them dead wrong, that he has soaked up over the years in the course of reading *Reader's Digest* or at idle conversation. Once an anecdote enters Reagan's noodle, it is set in concrete and impossible to correct or dislodge. (Consider, for example, the famous story about the "Chicago welfare queen": all wrong, but Reagan carried on regardless.)

In the early years of Reagan rule, the press busily checked out Reagan's beloved anecdotes, and found that almost every one of them was full of holes. But Reagan never veered from his course. Why? God knows there are plenty of correct stories about welfare cheats that he could have clasped to his bosom; why stick to false ones? Evidently, the reason is that Reagan cares little about reality; he lives in his own Hollywood fantasy world, a world of myth, a world in which it is always Morning in America, a world where The Flag is always flying, but where Welfare Cheats mar the contentment of the Land of Oz. So who cares if the *actual* story is wrong? Let it stand, like a Hollywood story, as a surrogate for the welfare cheats whom everyone knows do exist.

The degree to which Reagan is out of touch with reality was best demonstrated in his concentration camp story. This was not simply a slip of the tongue, a Bushian confusion of December with September. When the Premier of Israel visited Reagan at the White House, the President went on and on for three quarters of an hour explaining why he was pro-Jewish: it was because, being in the Signal Corps in World War II, he visited Buchenwald shortly after the Nazi defeat and helped to take films of that camp. Reagan repeated this story the following day to an Israeli ambassador. But the truth was 180-degrees different; Reagan was not in Europe; he never saw a concentration camp; he spent the entire war in the safety of Hollywood, making films for the armed forces.

Well, what are we to make of this incident? This little saga stayed in the back pages of the press. By that point the media had realized that virtually nothing—no fact, no dark deed—could ever stick to the Teflon President. (Iran-

Contra shook things up a bit, but in a few months even that was forgotten.)

There are only two ways to interpret the concentration camp story. Perhaps Reagan engaged in a bald-faced lie. But why? What would he have to gain? Especially after the lie was found out, as it soon would be. The only *other* way to explain this incident, and a far more plausible one, is that Ronnie lacks the capacity to distinguish fantasy from reality. He would, at least in retrospect, have *liked* to be filming Buchenwald at the end of the war. The wish was father to the fact: in his mind, he *was* filming at Buchenwald. Certainly, it made a better story than the facts. But what are we to call a man who cannot distinguish fantasy from reality?

Reagan cares little about reality; he lives in his own Hollywood fantasy world, a world of myth, a world in which it is always Morning in America, a world where The Flag is always flying, but where Welfare Cheats mar the contentment of the Land of Oz.

It is surely frightening to think that the most powerful position in the world has been held for eight years by a man who cannot tell fact from fancy. Even more frightening is the defection of the media, who early lost heart and played the role of a submissive receptacle for photo-opportunities and press-release handouts. One reason for this defection was the discovery of Reagan's Teflon nature. Another likely reason was that journalists who were too feisty and independent would be deprived of their precious access to the Presidential plane or to inside scoops or leaks from the White House. And a third reason was probably the desire not to dwell on the vital and hair-raising fact that the President of the United States, the "leader of the free world" and all that jazz, is nothing more than a demented half-wit.

But why the Teflon? Because of the incredible love affair that Ronald Reagan has enjoyed with the American people. In all my years of fascination with American politics (my early childhood memories are couched in terms of who was President or who was Mayor of New York City or who won what election), I have never seen anything remotely like it. Anyone else universally beloved? Franklin D. Roosevelt was worshipped, to be sure, by most of the American electorate, but there was always a large and magnificent minority who detested every inch of his guts. Truman? He was almost universally reviled in his time; he has only been made an icon in retrospect by the conservative movement. Jack Kennedy, too, is only a hero now that he has been safely interred; before his assassination he was cordially detested by all conservatives. *Nobody* ever loved Nixon. The closest to universal lovability was Ike, and even he did not inspire the intense devotion accorded to Ronnie Reagan; with Ike it was more of a tranquilized sense of peace and contentment.

But with Reagan, it has been pure love: every nod of the head; every wistful "We-e-ll," every dumb and flawed anecdote, every snappy salute, sends virtually every American into ecstasy. From all corners of the land came the cry, "I don't like his policies very much, but I lo-o-ve the man." Only a few malcontents, popping up here and there, in a few obscure corners of the land, emerged as dedicated and bitter opponents. As one of this tiny minority I can testify that it was a lonely eight years, *even* within the ranks of the libertarian movement. Sometimes I felt like a lone and unheeded prophet, bringing the plain truth to those who refused to understand. Very often I would be at free-market gatherings, from living rooms to conferences, and I would go on and on about the deficiencies of Reagan's policies and person, and would be met with responses like: "Well, of course, he's not a Ph.D."

Me: "No, no, that's not the point. The man is a blithering idiot. He makes Warren Harding tower like Aristotle."

Responder: "Ronald Reagan has made us feel good about America."

Perhaps that's part of the explanation for the torrent of unconditional love that the American public has poured onto Ronald Reagan. Lost in Hollywood loony-land, Ronnie's sincere optimism struck a responsive chord in the American masses. The ominous fact that he "made us" feel good about the American State and not just about the country is lost even on many libertarians.

But, in that case, why didn't Hubert Humphrey's egregious "politics of joy" evoke the same all-inclusive love? I don't know the answer, but I'm convinced it's not simply because Hubert was captive to the dreaded "L-word" whereas Ronnie is a conservative. It's a lot deeper than that. One of the remarkably Teflon qualities of Reagan is that, even after many years as President, he is still able to act as if he were totally separate from the actions of the government. He can still denounce the government in the same ringing terms he used when he was out of power. And he *gets away with it*, probably because inside his head, he is still Ronnie Reagan, the mouther of anti-government anecdotes as lecturer for General Electric.

In a deep sense, Reagan has *not* been a functioning part of the government for eight years. Off in Cloud-Cuckoo-Land, he is the obedient actor who recites his lines and plays his appointed part. Some commentators have been critical of Reagan for napping in the afternoons, for falling asleep at crucial meetings, for taking long vacations at his beloved ranch. Well, why not? What else does he have to do? Reagan doesn't actually have to *do* anything; like Peter Sellers in his last film, all he has to do is *be there*, the beloved icon, giving his vital sanction to the governmental process.

Reagan's handlers perceived early on that one threat to Reagan's Teflon rule would be allowing him to mix it up with members of the press. Away from his teleprompter, Ronnie was a real problem. So very soon, any sort of real press conference, including uninhibited questions and answers, was done away with. The only press "conferences" became shouted questions as Reagan walked quickly to and from the White House helicopter. One of his handlers has written that, despite all efforts, they couldn't stop Reagan from exercising one peculiar personality trait: his compulsion to answer every question that he hears. But fortunately, not much was risked, since the noise of the helicopter engines would drown out most of the

repartee.

The worst moment for the Reagan handlers came, of course, during the first debate with Mondale in 1984. For one glorious moment, during the give and take of the debate, the *real* Reagan emerged: confused, befuddled, out of it. It was a shaky moment, but all the handlers needed to do was to reassure the shocked masses that their beloved President was still sentient, was still *there* to be a totem to his flock. The handlers blamed Reagan's showing on "overcoaching," they made sure that he slept a lot just before the second debate, and they fed him a snappy mock self-deprecating one-liner about his age. The old boy could still remember his jokes: he got off his lovable crack, and the American masses, with a sigh of relief, clasped him to their bosoms once again.

The Reagan Years: Libertarian Rhetoric, Statist Policies

How did Reagan manage to pursue egregiously statist policies in the name of liberty and of "getting government off our backs?" How was he able to follow this course of deception and mendacity?

Don't try to get Ronnie off the hook by blaming Congress. Like the general public—and all too many libertarians—Congress was merely a passive receptacle for Ronnie's wishes. Congress passed the Reagan budgets—with a few marginal adjustments here and there—and gave him virtually all the legislation, and ratified all the personnel, he wanted. For one Bork there are thousands who made it. The last eight years have been a Reagan Administration, for the Gipper to make or break.

There was no "Reagan Revolution." Any "revolution" in the direction of liberty (in Ronnie's words "to get government off our backs") would *reduce* the total level of government spending. And that means reduce in *absolute* terms, *not* as proportion of the gross national product, or corrected for inflation, or anything else. There is no divine commandment that the federal government must always be *at least* as great a proportion of the national product as it was in 1980. If the government was a monstrous, swollen Leviathan in 1980, as libertarians were surely convinced, as the inchoate American masses were apparently convinced, and as Reagan and his cadre claimed to believe, then cutting government spending was in order. At the very least, federal government spending should have been frozen, in absolute terms, so that the rest of the economy would be allowed to grow in contrast. Instead, Ronald Reagan cut nothing, even in the heady first year, 1981.

At first, the only "cut" was in Carter's last-minute loony-tunes estimates for the future. But in a few short years, Reagan's spending surpassed even Carter's irresponsible estimates. Instead, Reagan not only increased government spending by an enormous amount—so enormous that it would take a 40 percent cut to bring us back to Carter's wild spending totals of 1980—he even substantially increased the percentage of government spending to GNP. *That's* a "revolution"?

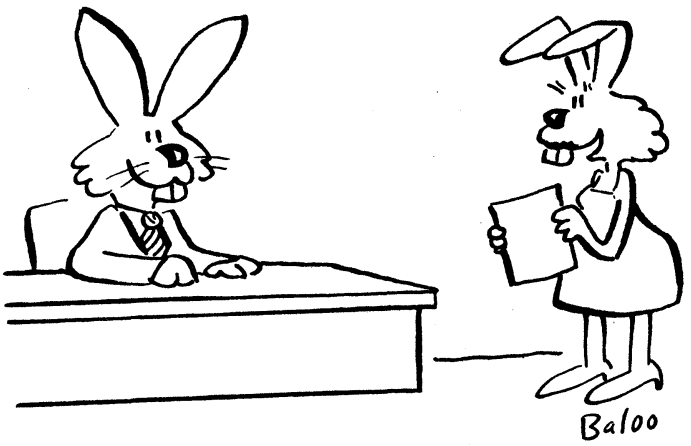
The much heralded 1981 tax cut was more than offset by two tax increases that year. One was "bracket creep," by which inflation wafted people into higher tax brackets, so that with the same real income (in terms of purchasing power) people found themselves paying a higher proportion of their income in taxes, even though the official tax rate schedule went down. The other was the usual whopping increase in Social Security taxes which, however, don't count, in the perverse semantics of our time, as "taxes"; they are only "insurance premiums." In the ensuing years the Reagan Administration has constantly raised taxes—to punish us for the fake tax cut of 1981—beginning in 1982 with the largest single tax increase in American history, costing taxpayers $100 billion.

Creative semantics is the way in which Ronnie was able to keep his pledge never to raise taxes while raising them all the time. Reagan's handlers, as we have seen, annoyed by the stubborn old coot's sticking to "no new taxes," finessed the old boy by simply calling the phenomenon by a different name. If the Gipper was addled enough to fall for this trick, so too did the American masses—and a large chunk of libertarians and self-proclaimed free-market economists as well! "Let's close another loophole, Mr. President." "We-e-ell, OK, then, so long as we're not raising taxes." (Definition of "loophole": Any and all money *the other guy* has earned, and that hasn't been taxed away yet. *Your* money, of course, has been fairly earned, and shouldn't be taxed further.)

Income tax rates in the upper brackets *have* come down. But the odious bipartisan "loophole closing" of the Tax Reform Act of 1986—an act engineered by our Jacobin egalitarian "free-market" economists in the name of "fairness"—*raised* instead of lowered the income tax paid by most upper-income people. Again: what one hand of government giveth, the other taketh away, and then some. Thus, President-elect Bush has just abandoned his worthy plan to cut the capital gains tax in half, because it would violate the beloved tax fairness instituted by the bipartisan Reaganite 1986 "reform."

The bottom line is that tax revenues have gone up an enormous amount under the eight years of Reagan; the only positive thing we can say for them is that revenues as percentage of the gross national product are up only slightly since 1980. The result: the monstrous deficit, now apparently permanently fixed somewhere around $200 billion, and the accompanying tripling of the total federal debt in the eight blessed years of the Reagan Era. Is that what the highly-touted "Reagan Revolution" amounts to, then? A tripling of the national debt?

We should also say a word about



"You're a shoo-in for re-election, sir—the other party nominated a tortoise!"

another of Ronnie's great "libertarian" accomplishments. In the late 1970s, it became obvious *even to the man in the street* that the Social Security System was bankrupt, *kaput*. For the first time in fifty years there was an excellent chance to get rid of the biggest single racket in American politics, a racket that acts as a gigantic Ponzi scheme to fleece the American taxpayer. Instead, Reagan brought in the famed "Randian libertarian" Alan Greenspan, who served as head of a bipartisan commission, performing the miracle of "saving Social Security," and the masses have rested content with the system ever since. How did he "save" it? By raising taxes (oops "premiums"), of course; by that route, the government can "save" any program. (Bipartisan: both parties acting in concert to put both of their hands in your pocket.)

The way Reagan-Greenspan saved Social Security is a superb paradigm of Reagan's historical function in all areas of his realm: he acted to bail out statism and to co-opt and defuse any libertarian or quasi-libertarian opposition. The method worked brilliantly, for Social Security and other programs.

How about deregulation? Didn't Ronnie at least deregulate the regulation-ridden economy inherited from the evil Carter? Just the opposite. The outstanding measures of deregulation were all passed by the Carter Administration, and, as is typical of that luckless President, the deregulation was phased in to take effect during the early Reagan years, so that the Gipper could claim the credit. Such was the story with oil and gas deregulation (which the Gipper *did* advance from September to January of 1981); airline deregulation and the actual *abolition* of the Civil Aeronautics Board, and deregulation of trucking. That was it.

The Gipper deregulated nothing, abolished nothing. Instead of keeping his pledge to abolish the Departments of Energy and Education, he strengthened them, and even wound up his years in office adding a new Cabinet post, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. Overall, the quantity and degree of government regulation of the economy was greatly increased and intensified during the Reagan years. The hated OSHA, the scourge of small business and at the time the second most-hated agency of the federal government (surely you need not ask which is the first most-hated), was not only not abolished; it too was strengthened and reinforced. Environmentalist restrictions were greatly accelerated, especially after the heady early years when selling off some public lands was briefly mentioned, and the proponents of actually using and developing locked-up government resources (James Watt, Anne Burford, Rita Lavelle) were disgraced and sent packing as a warning to any future "anti-environmentalists."

The Reagan Administration, supposedly the champion of free trade, has been the most protectionist in American history, raising tariffs, imposing import quotas, and—as another neat bit of creative semantics—twisting the arms of the Japanese to impose "voluntary" export quotas on automobiles and microchips. It has made the farm program the most abysmal of this century: boosting price supports and production quotas, and paying many more billions of taxpayer money to farmers so that they can produce less and raise prices to consumers.

And we should never forget a disastrous and despotic program that has received unanimous support from the media and from the envious American public: the massive witchhunt and reign of terror against the victimless non-crime of "insider trading." In a country where real criminals—muggers, rapists, and "inside" *thieves*—are allowed to run rampant, massive resources and publicity are directed toward outlawing the use of one's superior knowledge and insight in order to make profits on the market.

In the course of this reign of terror, it is not surprising that freedom of speech was the first thing to go by the boards. Government spies and informers busily report conversations over martinis ("Hey Joe, I heard that XYZ Corp. is going to merge with ABC.") All this is being done by the cartelizing and fascistic Securities and Exchange Commission, the Department of Justice and its much-hailed Savanarola in New York, Rudolf Giuliani. All this is the work of the beloved Gipper, the "free-market," "libertarian" Reagan Administration. And where are the "conservative-libertarians"? Where are the "free-market economists" to point this out and condemn it?

Foreign aid, a vast racket by which American taxpayers are mulcted in order to subsidize American export firms and foreign governments (mostly dictatorships), has been vastly expanded under Reagan. The Administration also encouraged the nation's banks to inflate and pour money down Third World ratholes; then bailed out the banks and tinpot socialist dictatorships at the expense of U.S. taxpayers (via tax increases) and consumers (via inflation). Since the discrediting of Friedmanite monetarism by the end of the first Reagan term, the original monetarist policy of allowing the dollar to fluctuate freely has been superseded by Keynesian Secretary of Treasury James Baker, who has concerted with foreign central banks to try to freeze the dollar within various zones. The interference has been, as usual, futile and counterproductive, but that will not stop the soon-to-be even more powerful Baker from trying to fulfill, or at least move strongly toward, the old Keynesian dream of one world fiat paper currency (or at least fixed exchange rates of the various national currencies) issued by one world Central Bank—in short, economic world government.

After many years as President, Reagan is still able to act as if he were totally separate from the actions of the government. He can still denounce the government in the same ringing terms he used when he was out of power. And he gets away with it.

But didn't Ronnie "bring down inflation"? Sure, but he did it, not by some miracle, but the old-fashioned way: by the steepest recession (read: depression) since the 1930s. And now, as a result of his inflationary monetary policies, inflation is back with a roar—which the Teflon President will leave as one of his great legacies to the Bush Administration.

And then there is another charming legacy: the reckless inflationary course, encouraged by the Reagan Administration, of the nation's savings-and-loan

banks. Virtually the entire industry is now bankrupt, and FSLIC—the federal agency supposedly "insuring" S&L depositors—is bankrupt. Instead of allowing the banks and their deluded depositors to pay the price of their profligacy, everyone of both parties, including our "free-market" Reaganauts, is prepared to use taxpayer money or the printing press to bail out the entire industry—to the tune of an estimated 50 to 100 billion dollars. (These estimates, by the way, come from government sources, which notoriously underestimate future costs of their programs.)

I have been cleaving to the strictly economic realm because even the staunchest pro-Reagan libertarian will not dare to claim that Ronnie has been a blessing for civil liberties. On the contrary. In addition to his reign of terror on Wall Street (who cares about the civil liberties of stock traders anyway?), Reagan worked to escalate toward infinity the insane "war against drugs." Far from the 1970s movement toward repealing marijuana laws, an ever greater flow of men and resources—countless billions of dollars—are being hysterically poured into combatting a drug "problem" that clearly gets worse in direct proportion to the intensity of the "war."

The outbreak of drug fascism, moreover, is a superb illustration of the interconnectedness of civil liberty and economic freedom. Under cover of combatting drugs, the government has cracked down on our economic and financial privacy, so that carrying cash has become *prima facie* evidence of "laundering" drug money. And so the government steps up its long-cherished campaign to get people to abstain from cash and into using government-controlled banks. The government is already insinuating foreign exchange controls—now the legal obligation to "report" large amounts of cash taken out of the country—into our personal and economic life.

And every day more evil drugs are being found that must be denounced and outlawed: the latest is the dread menace of anabolic steroids. As part of this futile war, we are being urged by the Reaganites to endure compulsory urine testing (supervised, of course, since otherwise the testee might be able to purchase and substitute black-market drug-free urine). In this grotesque proposal, government is not only *not* off our backs, it is now also insisting on joining us in the bathroom.

And in the bedroom, too, if Ronnie has his way. Although abortion is not yet illegal, it is not for lack of effort by the Reagan Administration. The relentless Reaganite drive to conservatize the judiciary will likely recriminalize abortion soon, making criminals out of millions of American women each year. George Bush, for less than twenty-four glorious hours, was moved to take a consistent position: if abortion is murder, then all women who engage in abortion are murderers. But it took only a day for his handlers to pull George back from the abyss of logic, and to advocate only criminalizing the doctors, the hired hands of the women who get abortions.

Perhaps the Gipper cannot be directly blamed—but certainly he has set the moral climate—for the increasingly savage Puritanism of the 1980s: the virtual outlawry of smoking, the escalating prohibition of pornography, even the partial bringing back of Prohibition (outlawing drunken driving, raising the legal drinking age to 21, making bartenders—or friendly hosts—legally responsible for *someone else's* drunken driving, etc.)

Under Reagan, the civil liberties balance has been retipped in favor of the government and against the people: restricting our freedom to obtain government documents under the Freedom of Information Act and stepping up the penalties on privately printed and disseminated news about activities of the government, on the one hand; more "freedom" for our runaway secret police, the CIA, to restrict the printing of news, and to wiretap private individuals, on the other. And to cap its hypocrisy, as it escalated its war on drugs, the Reagan Administration looked the other way on drug-running by its own CIA.

At first, the only "spending cut" was in Carter's last-minute loony-tunes estimates for the future. But in a few short years, Reagan's spending surpassed even Carter's irresponsible estimates.

On foreign policy, the best we can say about Ronnie is that he did *not* launch World War III. Apart from that, his foreign policy was a series of murdering blunders:

- His idiotic know-nothing intervention into the cauldron of Lebanon, resulting in the murder of several hundred U.S. Marines.
- His failed attempt—lauded by Reaganites ever since—to murder Colonel Khadafy by an air strike—and succeeding instead in slaying his baby daughter, after which our media sneered at Khadafy for looking haggard, and commented that the baby was "only adopted."
- His stumblebum intervention into the Persian Gulf, safeguarding oil tankers of countries allied to Iraq in the Iraq-Iran war. (Ironically, the U.S. imports practically no oil from the Gulf, unlike Western Europe and Japan, where there was no hysteria and who certainly sent no warships to the Gulf.) In one of the most bizarre events in the history of warfare, the Iraqi sinking of the U.S.S. Stark was dismissed instantly—and without investigation, and in the teeth of considerable evidence to the contrary—as an "accident," followed immediately by blaming *Iran* (!) and using the sinking as an excuse to step up our pro-Iraq intervention in the war. This was followed by a U.S. warship's sinking of a civilian Iranian airliner, murdering hundreds of civilians, and blaming—you guessed it!—the Iranian government for this catastrophe. More alarming than these actions of the Reagan Administration was the supine and pusillanimous behavior of the media, in allowing the Gipper to get away with all this.

As we all know only too well, the height of Reagan's Teflon qualities came with Iran-*Contra*. At the time, I naively thought that the scandal would finish the bastard off. But no one saw anything wrong with the Administration's jailing *private* arms salesmen to Iran, while at the very same time engaging in arms sales to Iran *itself*. In Reagan's America, apparently *anything*, any crookery, any

aggression or mass murder, is OK if allegedly performed for noble, patriotic motives. Only personal greed is considered a no-no.

I have not yet mentioned the great foreign-policy triumph of the Reagan Administration: the invasion and conquest of tiny Grenada, a pitiful little island-country with no army, air force, or navy. A "rescue" operation was launched to save U.S. medical students who never sought our deliverance. Even though the enemy consisted of a handful of Cuban construction workers, it still took us a week to finish the Grenadans off, during the course of which the three wings of our armed forces tripped over each other and our military distinguished itself by bombing a Grenadan hospital. The operation was as much a botch as the Carter attempt to rescue the American hostages. The only difference was that this time the enemy was helpless.

But we *won* didn't we? Didn't we redeem the U.S. loss in Vietnam and allow America to "stand tall"? Yes, we did win. We beat up on a teeny country, and even botched *that*! If *that* is supposed to make Americans stand tall, then far better we sit short. Anyway, it's about time we learned that Short is Beautiful.

The U.S. war against the *Contras* on the other hand, which has been conducted at enormous expense and waged hand-in-hand with Guatemalan, Honduran, and Salvadoran dictators, is going down the drain, despite illegal CIA mining of harbors and injury to neutral shipping. Even the nearly comatose American public is giving up on the idea of supporting bandit guerrillas, so long as they are anti-Communist, despite the best efforts of Ollie and Secord and Singlaub and Abrams and all the rest of the war crowd.

The Reagan Administration's continued aid and support to Pol Pot in Cambodia, the most genocidal butcher of our time, is more reprehensible but less visible to most Americans. As a result, Pol Pot's thugs are mobilizing at this very moment on the Thai border to return and take over Cambodia as soon as the Vietnamese pull out, presumably to renew their bizarre mass murders. But you see, *that's* okay with the Reaganites, because the Cambodian Commies are guerrilla fighters against the *Vietnamese* (pro-Soviet) Commies, who by definition are evil. Pol Pot's butchers as "freedom fighters" show us that, in the arsenal of the Reaganite Right, "freedom," like "taxes" and many other crucial words, means, as in the case of Humpty Dumpty, *whatever* they *choose* it to.

Grenada was the perfect war as far as many conservatives (and apparently much of the American public) were concerned: it was quick and easy to win, with virtually no risk of loss, and allowed ample opportunities to promote the military (and their Commander-in-Chief) as heroes while bragging up the victory on television—in short, allowing the U. S. to glory in its status as a bully. (It helped eradicate the awful memory of Vietnam, which was the perfect war for American centrist liberals: virtually impossible to win, horribly expensive in terms of men and property—and best of all, it could go on forever without resolution, like the War on Poverty, fueling their sense of guilt while providing safe but exciting jobs for members of their techno-bureaucratic class.)

> *Reagan's handlers, annoyed by the stubborn old coot's sticking to "no new taxes," finessed the old boy by simply calling the phenomenon by a different name.*
>
> *"Let's close another loophole, Mr. President."*
>
> *"We-e-ell, OK, then, so long as we're not raising taxes."*

While the American masses do not want war with Russia or even aid to the bandit *Contras*, they do want an ever-expanding military and other aggravated symbols of a "strong," "tough" America, an America that will, John Wayne-like, stomp on teeny pests like Commie Grenada, or, perhaps, any very small island that might possess the tone and the ideology of the Ayatollah.

Setting the Stage: The Anti-Government Rebellion of the 1970s

I am convinced that the historic function of Ronald Reagan was to co-opt, eviscerate, and ultimately destroy the substantial wave of anti-governmental, and quasi-libertarian, sentiment that erupted in the U.S. during the 1970s. Did he perform this task consciously? Surely too difficult a feat for a man barely *compos*. No, Reagan was wheeled into performing this task by his Establishment handlers.

The task of co-optation needed to be done because the 1970s, particularly 1973–75, were marked by an unusual and striking conjunction of crises—crises that fed on each other to lead to a sudden and cumulative disillusionment with the federal government. It was this symbiosis of anti-government reaction that led me to develop my "case for libertarian optimism" during the mid-1970s, in the expectation of a rapid escalation of libertarian influence in America.

1973–74 saw the abject failure of the Nixon wage-price control program, and the development of something Keynesians assumed *could never* happen: the combination of double-digit inflation *and* a severe recession. High unemployment and high inflation happened again, even more intensely, during the greater recession of 1979–82. Since Keynesianism rests on the idea that government should pump in spending during recessions and take out spending during inflationary booms, *what happens* when both occur at the same time? As Rand would say: Blankout! There *is* no answer. And so, there was disillusionment in the government's handling of the macro-economy, deepening during the accelerating inflation of the 1970s and the beginnings of recession in 1979.

At the same time, people began to be fed up, increasingly and vocally, with high taxes: income taxes, property taxes, sales taxes, you name it. Especially in the West, an organized tax rebel movement developed, with its own periodicals and organizations. However misguided strategically, the spread of the tax rebellion signalled a growing disillusion with big government. I was privileged to be living in California during the election year of 1978, when Proposition 13 was passed. It was a genuinely inspiring sight. In the face of hysterical opposition and smears from the entire California Establishment, Democratic and Republican, Big Business and labor, academics, economists,

and all of the press, the groundswell for Prop 13 burgeoned. Everyone was against it but the people. If the eventual triumph of Ronald Reagan is the best case against "libertarian populism," Prop 13 was the best case in its favor.

Also exhilarating was the smashing defeat of U.S. imperialism in Vietnam in 1975—exhilarating because this first loss of a war by the United States, many of us believed, was bound to get Americans to rethink the disastrous warmongering bipartisan foreign policy that had plagued us since the unlamented days of Woodrow Wilson.

On the civil liberties front, the *de facto* legalization of marijuana was a sign that the nonsense of drug prohibition would soon be swept away. (Ye gods! Was *that* only a decade ago?) Inflationary recession; high taxes; prohibition laws; defeat in foreign war; across the board, the conditions seemed admirable for a growing and triumphant libertarianism.

And to top it off, the Watergate crisis (my particular favorite) destroyed the trust of the American masses in the Presidency. For the first time in over a hundred years, the concept of *impeachment* of the President became, first thinkable, and then a living and glorious process. For a while, I feared that Jimmy Carter, with his lovable cardigan sweater, would restore Americans' faith in their president, but soon that fear proved groundless.

Surely, it is no accident that it was precisely in this glorious and sudden anti-government surge that libertarian ideas and libertarian scholarship began to spread rapidly in the United States. And it was in 1971 that the tiny Libertarian Party emerged, in 1972 that its first, embryonic presidential candidacy was launched, and 1973 when its first important race was run, for mayor of New York City. The Libertarian Party continued to grow rapidly, almost exponentially, during the 1970s, reaching a climax with the Clark campaign for governor of California during the Prop 13 year of 1978, and with the Clark campaign for the Presidency in 1980. The morning my first article on libertarianism appeared in the New York *Times* in 1971, a very bright editor at Macmillan, Tom Mandel, called me and asked me to write a book on the subject (it was to become *For a New Liberty*). Not a libertarian himself, Mandel told me that he believed that libertarianism would become a very important ideology in a few years—and he turned out to be right.

So libertarianism was on a roll in the 1970s. And then Something Happened.

Enter the NeoCons

What happend was Ronald Wilson Blithering Reagan. Obviously Reagan did not suddenly descend out of the clouds in 1980. He had been the cherished candidate of the conservative movement, its chosen route to power, ever since Goldwater's defeat. Goldwater was too blunt and candid, too much an unhandleable Real Person. What was needed was a lovable, manipulable icon. Moreover, Goldwater' s principles were too hard-edged: he was way too much a domestic libertarian, and he was too much an eager warmonger. Both his libertarianism and his passion for nuclear confrontation with the Soviet Union scared the bejesus out of the American masses, as well as the more astute leadership of the conservative movement.

A reconstituted conservative movement would have to drop any libertarian ideology or concrete *policies*, except to provide a woolly and comfortable *mood* for suitably gaseous anti-government rhetoric and an improved foreign policy that would make sure that many more billions would go into the military-industrial complex, to step up global pressure against Communism, *but* avoiding an actual nuclear war. This last point was important: As much as they enjoy the role of the bully, neither the Establishment nor the American people want to risk nuclear war, which might, after all, blow them up as well. Once again, Ronnie Reagan looked like the Answer.

Two important new ingredients entered into, and helped reshape, the conservative movement during the mid 1970s. One was the emergence of a small but vocal and politically powerful group of neo-conservatives (neocons), who were able, in a remarkably short time, to seize control of the think tanks, the opinion-moulding institutions, and finally the politics, of the conservative movement. As ex-liberals, the neocons were greeted as important new converts from the enemy. More importantly, as ex-Trotskyites, the neocons were veteran politicos and organizers, schooled in Marxian cadre organizing and in manipulating the levers of power. They were shrewdly eager to place their own people in crucial opinion-moulding and money-raising positions, and in ousting those not willing to submit to the neocon program. Understanding the importance of financial support, the neocons knew how to sucker Old Right businessmen into giving them the monetary levers at their numerous foundations and think tanks. In contrast to free-market economists, for example, the neocons were eager to manipulate patriotic symbols and ethical doctrines, doing the microequivalent of Reagan and Bush's wrapping themselves in the American Flag. Wrapping themselves, also, in such patriotic symbols as The Framers and the Constitution, as well as Family Values, the neocons were easily able to outflank free-market types and keep them narrowly confined to technical economic issues. In short the neocons were easily able to seize the moral and patriotic "high ground."

The only group willing and able to challenge the neocons on their own moralizing or philosophic turf was, of course, the tiny handful of libertarians; and outright moral libertarianism, with its opposition to statism, theocracy, and foreign war, could never hope to get to first base with conservative businessmen, who, even at the best of times during the Old Right era, had never been happy about individual personal liberty, (e.g. allowing prostitution, pornography, homosexuality, or drugs) or with the libertarians' individualism and conspicuous lack of piety toward the

As part of its war on drugs, the Reaganites propose compulsory urine testing (supervised, of course, since otherwise the testee might be able to purchase and substitute black-market drug-free urine). In this grotesque proposal, government is not only not off our backs, but is insisting on joining us in the bathroom..

Pentagon, or toward the precious symbol of the Nation-State, the U.S. flag.

The neocons were (and remain today) New Dealers, as they frankly describe themselves, remarkably without raising any conservative eyebrows. They are what used to be called, in more precise ideological days, "extreme right-wing Social Democrats." In other words, they are still Roosevelt-Truman-Kennedy-Humphrey Democrats. Their objective, as they moved (partially) into the Republican Party and the conservative movement, was to reshape it to *become*, with minor changes, a Roosevelt-Truman-etc. movement; that is, a liberal movement shorn of the dread "L" word and of post-McGovern liberalism. To verify this point all we have to do is note how many times Roosevelt, Truman, Kennedy et. al., properly reviled by conservatives while they were alive, are now lauded, even canonized, by the current neocon-run movement, from Ronnie Reagan on down. And *no one* calls them on this Orwellian revision of conservative movement history.

As statists-to-the-core the neocons had no problem taking the lead in crusades to restrict individual liberties, whether it be in the name of rooting out "subversives," or of inculcating broadly religious ("Judeo-Christian") or moral values. They were happy to form a cozy alliance with the Moral Majority, the mass of fundamentalists who entered the arena of conservative politics in the mid-1970s. The fundamentalists were finally goaded out of their quietist millenarian dreams (e.g., the imminent approach of Armageddon) and into conservative political action by the cumulation of moral permissivism in American life. The legalization of abortion in *Roe v. Wade* was undoubtedly the trigger, but this decision came on top of a cumulative effect of the sexual revolution, the militant homosexual movement "out of the closet" and into the streets, the spread of pornography, and the visible decay of the public school system. The entry of the Moral Majority transformed American politics, not the least by furnishing the elite cadre of neocons with a mass base to guide and manipulate.

In economic matters, the neocons showed no more love of liberty, though this is obscured by the fact that the neocons wish to trim the welfare state of its post-Sixties excrescences, particularly since these were largely designed to aid black people. What the neocons want is a smaller, more "efficient" welfare state, within which bounds they would graciously allow the market to operate. The market is acceptable as a narrow instrumental device; their view of private property and the free market is essentially identical to Gorbachev's in the Soviet Union.

Why did the Right permit itself to be bamboozled by the neocons? Largely because the conservatives had been inexorably drifting Stateward in the same manner. In response to the crushing defeat of Goldwater, the Right had become ever less libertarian and less principled, and ever more attuned to the "responsibilities" and moderations of Power. It is a far cry from three decades ago when Bill Buckley used to say that he too is an "anarchist" but that we have to put off all thoughts of liberty until the "international Communist conspiracy" is crushed. Those old Chodorovian libertarian days are long gone, and so is *National Review* as any haven for libertarian ideas. Warmongering, militarism, theocracy, and limited "free" markets—this is really what Buckleyism amounted to by the late 1970s.

The burgeoning neocons were able to confuse and addle the Democratic Party by breaking with the Carter Administration, at the same time militantly and successfully pressuring it from within. The neocons formed two noisy front groups, the Coalition for a Democratic Majority and the Committee on the Present Danger. By means of these two interlocking groups and their unusual access to influential media, the neocons were able to pressure the Carter Administration into breaking the detente with Russia over the Afghanistan imbroglio and in influencing Carter to get rid of the dove Cyrus Vance as Secretary of State and to put foreign policy power into the hands of the Polish émigré hawk and Rockefeller Trilateralist, Zbigniew Brzezinski. In the meantime, the neocons pushed the hysterically hawkish CIA "B" Team report, wailing about alleged Soviet nuclear superiority, which in turn paved the way for the vast gift of spending handed to the military-industrial complex by the incoming Reagan Administration. The Afghanistan and "B" Team hysterias, added to the humiliation by the Ayatollah, managed not only to kill off the bedevilled Carter Administration, but also to put the boots to non-intervention and to prepare the nation for a scrapping of the "post-Vietnam syndrome" and a return to the warmongering of the pre-Vietnam Era.

After eight years of Reagan, the mood of the American masses is to expand the goodies of the welfare-warfare state (though not to increase taxes to pay for these goodies), to swagger abroad and be very tough with nations that can't fight back, and to crack down on the liberties of groups they don't like or whose values or culture they disagree with..

The Reagan candidacy of 1980 was brilliantly designed to weld a coalition providing the public's instinctive anti-government mood with sweeping, but wholly nonspecific, libertarian *rhetoric*, as a convenient cover for the diametrically opposite *policies* designed to satisfy the savvy and politically effective members of that coalition: the neocons, the Buckleyite cons, the Moral Majority, the Rockefellers, the military-industrial complex, and the various Establishment special interests always clustering at the political trough.

Intellectual Corruption

In the face of this stark record, how were the Reaganites able to get away with it? Where did Ronnie get his thick coat of Teflon? Why was he able to follow statist policies and yet convince everyone, including many alleged libertarians, that he was successfully pursuing a "revolution" to get government off our backs?

The essential answer was provided a century ago by Lysander Spooner. Why does the public obey the State, and go further to endorse statist policies that benefit the Power Elite at the public's own expense? The answer, wrote Spooner, is that the State is supported by three powerful groups: knaves, who know

what is going on and benefit from State rule; dupes, who are fooled into thinking that State rule is in their and everyone else's interest; and cowards, who know the truth but are afraid to proclaim that the emperor has no clothes. I think we can refine Spooner's analysis and merge the Knave and Coward categories; after all, the renegade sellout confronts the carrot *and* the stick: the carrot of wealth, cushy jobs, and prestige if he goes along with the Emperor; and the stick of scorn, exclusion from wealth, prestige, and jobs—and perhaps worse—if he fails to go along. The reason that Reagan got away with it—in addition to his aw-shucks "lovability"—is that various powerful groups were either duped or knave-cowardly corrupted into hailing his alleged triumphs and deep-sixing his evident failures.

First, the powerful opinion-moulding media. It is conventional wisdom that media people are biased in favor of liberalism. No doubt. But that is not important, because the media, especially elite media who have the most to lose, are also particularly subject to the knave/coward syndrome. If they pander to Reaganism, they get the approval of the deluded masses, their customers, and they get the much-sought-after *access* to the President and to other bigwigs in government. And access means scoops, carefully planted exclusive leaks, etc. Any sort of effective opposition to the President means, on the other hand, loss of access; the angering of Reagan-deluded masses; and *also* the angering of their bosses, the owners of the press and television, who are far more conservative than their journalist employees.

One of Reagan's most notable achievements was his emasculation of the liberal media because of his personal popularity with the masses. Note, for example, the wimpy media treatment of Iran-*Contra* as compared to their glorious attack on Watergate. If *this* is liberal media bias, then the liberals need to be saved from their friends.

If the media were willing to go along with Reaganite duplicity and hokum, then so were our quasi-libertarian intellectual leaders. It is true of the libertarian-inclined masses as it has been always true of the conservative masses: they tend to be not too swift in the upper story. During the late 1970s, libertarian intellectuals and free-market economists were growing in number, but they were still very few, and they had not yet established institutions with firm ties to journalistic and mass opinion. Hence, the libertarian *mood*, but not the informed *thought*, of the masses, was ready for cooptation, especially if led by a charismatic, beloved President.

But we must not underweigh the importance of the traitorous role performed by quasi-libertarian intellectuals and free-market economists during the Reagan years. While their institutions were small and relatively weak, the power and consistency of libertarian thought had managed to bring them considerable prestige and political influence by 1980—*especially* since they offered an attractive and consistent alternative to a statist system that was breaking down on all fronts.

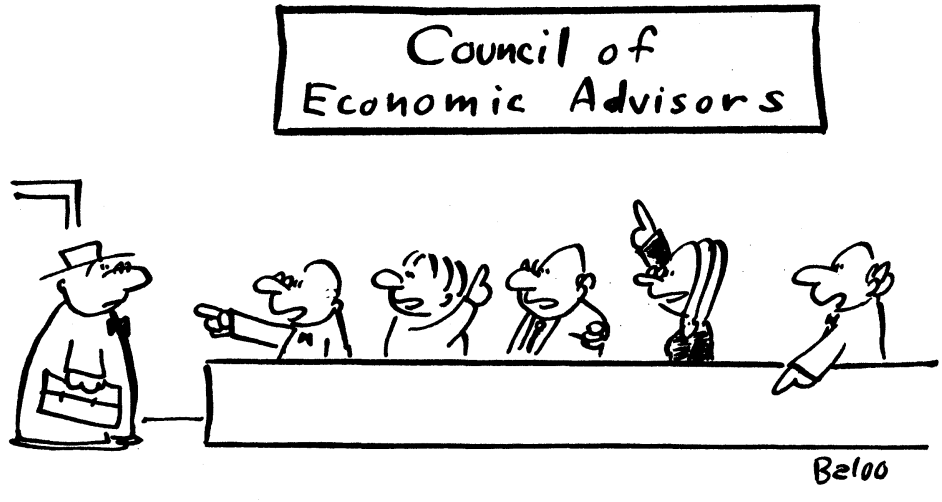
But talk about your Knaves! In the history of ideological movements, there have always been people willing to sell their souls and their principles. But never in history have so many sold out for so pitifully little. Hordes of libertarian and free-market intellectuals and activists *rushed* to Washington to whore after lousy little jobs, crummy little grants and sporadic little conferences. It is bad enough to sell out; it is far worse to be a two-bit whore. And worst of all in this sickening spectacle were those who went into the tank without so much as a clear offer: betraying the values and principles of a lifetime in order *to position themselves* in hopes of being propositioned. And so they wriggled around the seats of power in Washington. The intellectual corruption spread rapidly, in proportion to the height and length of jobs in the Reagan Administration. Lifelong opponents of budget deficits remarkably began to weave sophisticated and absurd apologias, now that the great Reagan was piling them up, claiming, very much like the hated left-wing Keynesians of yore, that "deficits don't matter."

Shorn of intellectual support, the half-formed libertarian instincts of the American masses remained content with Reaganite rhetoric, and the actual diametrically opposite policies got lost in the shuffle.

Reagan's Legacy

Has the Reagan Administration done nothing good in its eight ghastly years on earth, you might ask? Yes, it has done *one* good thing: it has repealed the despotic 55-mile-per-hour highway speed limit. And that is *it*.

As the Gipper, at bloody long last, goes riding off into the sunset, he leaves us with a hideous legacy. He has succeeded in destroying the libertarian public mood of the late 1970s, and replaced it with fatuous and menacing patriotic symbols of the Nation-State, especially The Flag, which he first whooped up in his vacuous reelection campaign of 1984, aided by the unfortunate coincidence of the Olympics being held at Los Angeles. (Who will soon forget the raucous baying of the chauvinist mobs: "USA! USA!" every time some American came in third in some petty event?) He has succeeded in corrupting libertarian and free-market intellectuals and institutions, although in Ronnie's defense it



"You've got the wrong room—the Treasury Department is that way."

must be noted that the fault lies with the corrupted and not with the corrupter.

It is generally agreed by political analysts that the ideological mood of the public, after eight years of Reaganism, is in support of *economic* liberalism (that is, an expanded welfare state), and *social* conservatism (that is, the suppression of civil liberties and the theocratic outlawing of immoral behavior). And, on foreign policy, of course, they stand for militaristic chauvinism. After eight years of Ronnie, the mood of the American masses is to expand the goodies of the welfare-warfare state (though not to increase taxes to pay for these goodies), to swagger abroad and be very tough with nations that can't fight back, and to crack down on the liberties of groups they don't like or whose values or culture they disagree with.

It is a decidedly unlovely and unlibertarian wasteland, this picture of America 1989, and who do we have to thank for it? Several groups: the neocons who organized it; the vested interests and the Power Elite who run it; the libertarians and free marketeers who sold out for it; and above all, the universally beloved Ronald Wilson Reagan, Who Made It Possible.

As he rides off into retirement, glowing with the love of the American public, leaving his odious legacy behind, one wonders what this hallowed dimwit might possibly do in retirement that could be at all worthy of the rest of his political career. What very last triumph are we supposed to "win for the Gipper"?

He has tipped his hand: I have just read that as soon as he retires, the Gipper will go on a banquet tour on behalf of the repeal of the 22nd ("Anti-Third Term") Amendment—the one decent thing the Republicans have accomplished in the last four decades. The 22nd Amendment was a well-deserved retrospective slap at FDR. It is typical of the depths to which the GOP has fallen that in the last few years that Republicans have been actually muttering about joining the effort to repeal this amendment. If they are successful, then Ronald Reagan might be elected again, and re-elected well into the 21st century.

In our age of High Tech, I'm sure that his mere physical death could easily have been overcome by his handlers and media mavens. Ronald Reagan will be suitably mummified, trotted out in front of a giant American flag, and some puppetmaster would have gotten him to give his winsome headshake and some ventriloquist would have imitated the golden tones: "We-e-ell . . ." (Why not? After all, the living reality of the last four years has not been a helluva lot different.)

Perhaps, after all, Ronald Reagan and almost all the rest of us will finally get our fondest wish: the election forever and ever of the mummified icon King Ronnie.

Now *there* is a legacy for our descendants! ❑

Murray Rothbard, "The 1988 Election," *continued from page 11*

the extreme grass-rootsers (e.g. Means, Dodge), who would have us abandon presidential campaigns and concentrate on a few local elections "which we can really win." Well, we've already *won* several teeny, local elections, and while this is great, these victories have hardly invigorated the Party as a whole. No matter how much we all love Podunk, let's face it, a victory there doesn't mean a helluva lot outside of Podunk's marketing area. As Arthur and many other people have argued, we can't expect immediate victory; the fight for liberty is a protracted struggle, and will not be over in a day. The grass-rootsers overlook the obvious fact that the presidential campaign is our centerpiece; not only does it get the national publicity, it energizes ourselves and our own troops. The national ticket defines our party, and, without it, the entire party would disintegrate and collapse into a few local campaigns, and, then, quickly, into oblivion. It is the national ticket that energizes and invigorates the various local campaigns throughout the country.

A disquieting development that Arthur does not mention is how badly our star local Congressional races did this year. The LP had four outstanding congressional races, where credible, articulate, and hard-working candidates got a lot of publicity, raised a lot of money, seemingly did very well, and then . . . flopped badly, getting the same one to two percent of the vote that our numerous paper candidates earned. More specifically, Jim Hedbor, Vermont, got only 0.75% of the total vote; Don Ernsberger, Pennsylvania, 2.8%; Dick Jacobs, Michigan, 0.76%; John Vernon, California, 1.9%. This, and not the Ron Paul vote total, was the most disappointing aspect of the campaign.

It seems to me that the lesson of the collapse of our star local campaigns is the reverse of that pushed by our grass-rootsers: that salvation for the Party and the cause does *not* come from the grass-roots. On the contrary, that we must redouble our efforts to wage successful presidential campaigns, because from such campaigns more grass-roots blessings will flow.

And I can't go for the pap that "votes don't matter." *Of course*, votes matter; getting votes is, after all, the point of running in elections. In the first place, vote totals are *perceived* by everyone, including the media and the public, as the crucial test of electoral success. The media and public exaggerate the importance of vote totals, because they don't understand the goals of an ideological party. But they *do* have an important point. Vote totals, after all, are the gauge of how many people have bought our message to the extent of pulling the lever for our candidates. There are, to be sure, *pace* Bergland, many other important criteria for us: e.g. growth in Party membership, and success in spreading our message. But this does not mean we should overlook the importance of votes. And besides, very often, votes will correlate well with party membership and the spread of the message.

In assessing and evaluating our campaigns, we should not suffer from false expectations followed by burnout; but, on the other hand, we should also not be Pollyannas for whom everything is always great, and ignore the accountability of the campaign to volunteers, to contributors, or to the cause of liberty itself.

To conclude: it should be clear from the January issue of *Liberty* and from our analysis that: the Libertarian Party is alive and well; that it did creditably, though not spectacularly, in the 1988 election; that the Party is vital to the cause of liberty and that all attempts to liquidate it, curtail it, or weaken its message should be repudiated; that LROC should be sent packing and told to peddle their papers to their "libertarian" buddy George Bush; and that we must never lose sight of the centrality of our presidential campaigns. —MNR

Article

A Kinder, Gentler Nation?
Fear and Loathing on the Campaign Trail in Canada

by Michael I. Krauss

Conjure up a country blessed with supplies of natural resources too boundless to ever be consumed by its small population, and a near-at-hand resource-hungry neighbor willing to purchase them at top dollar. Imagine that this country's democratic tradition is not tainted by a legacy of slavery, and that its educated electorate is adept in the world's two major trading languages. Suppose moreover that this state shares no border with third-world régimes anxious to export their demographic problems. Assume, finally, that this land has a vast territory to secure but still manages to maintain one of the lowest defense commitments *per capita* in the world. Surely this country would be the most prosperous in the world, right? Right, unless it happens to be Canada, destined (according to turn-of-the-century commentator Goldwyn Smith) to remain "rich by nature, but poor by policy."

The extraordinary election campaign just concluded north of the border should put the lie, for a long time, to the myth that Canadians are just (as the *National Lampoon* put it) "extremely boring white Americans." Nor are the Canadians "Americans who speak French" (most don't); or "Americans who aren't racist." (The few racially diverse areas of the country have severe racial problems; it is commonplace to see drunken Indians on the sidewalks of cities in Western Canada; 50% of Saskatchewan's prison inmates are drawn from its 8% native population; Canada's Asians were brutally interned during World War II; etc.) They're not even "Americans who like cold weather." (The demand for Florida vacations has proven surprisingly inelastic in spite of a decade-long decline in the value of the Canadian dollar.) Canadians are indeed different from Americans, in at least the following ways: they are poorer and an awful lot of them seem to want to remain so; they tend to frown on individual creativity and extol communitarian coercion; and a possible majority of them fear foreign influences as much as does the most xenophobic fringe of Americans. Last but not least, a substantial number of Canadians perceive envy of the Yanks as the public good needed to cement national unity. In the recent electoral campaign, these ugly Canadian traits barely missed embarrassing the country and costing its citizens dearly.

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Won by Prime Minister Brian Mulroney after a bruising 50-day campaign, the Nov 21 election was a three-party race pitting the governing Progressive Conservatives [1] against John Turner's Liberals and Edward Broadbent's socialist New Democratic Party (NDP). Both opposition leaders portrayed the election as involving one issue, the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiated with the U.S. by Mulroney but held up in Canada's Liberal-controlled Senate, about which more later. The Conservatives (whose slogan, "Peace and Prosperity, now and for the Future," was clearly modeled on the 1984 Reagan platform), on the other hand, de-emphasized FTA from the start.

Peace there has almost always been in Canada. The country spends less of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on national defense than any OECD country except Luxembourg, which has a tad less territory to patrol. Prosperity there *seems* to be as well: over one million jobs have been created in Canada since 1984, and the country currently enjoys the fastest growing economy in the West.

Whether this prosperity is more than skin deep is an interesting question, though. The Canadian federal government annually runs colossal deficits, to which must be added even larger provincial deficits generated by numer-

ous federal-provincial social programs. Total Canadian deficits exceeded 5% of GDP from 1982 till 1987, according to OECD figures (the U.S. figure is about 3%). Canadian public debt in 1987 reached 68% of GDP (50% in the U.S.), and Canada's foreign indebtedness (39% of GDP) rivals Brazil's. Canadian governments absorbed fully 48% of national wealth in 1986 (as compared to 37% in the U.S.). It is worth repeating that these expenditures came about despite a free-ride on U.S. taxpayers' defense spending: with similarly low military outlays Washington would probably balance its budget. Yet the deficit has never been a pressing public concern for Canadians, despite occasional op-ed laments for a population living well beyond its means and transferring the costs of prodigal social programs to future generations of taxpayers.

The Mulroney government appeared to have understood Canada's economic dilemma when it defeated the governing Liberals with an unprecedented 211 seats (as against 40 Liberal and 30 NDP) in September 1984. The new Prime Minister decreed an immediate freeze of federal hiring and spending, and summarily axed a few of the more outrageous Liberal programs (such as the National Unity Agency, an agit-prop office created to promote the election of friends of the federal Liberals in Quebec). At the opening of the new Parliament in November 1984, Mulroney declared that "the picnic has to stop." His Throne speech [2] promised to:

- reconsider the universality of many social programs;
- slash Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits by $1 billion. (All salaried Canadians must pay into this fund. Eight weeks' paid work entitles one to up to 51 weeks of UI payments at 66% of salary. The plan has been extended to protect, *inter alia*, self-employed fishermen in the Maritimes, who double up on payments by hiring their common-law wives as salaried "housekeepers" during the 8-week fishing season. The fish are then sold at a loss, and both "workers" live in leisure for the rest of the year . . .);
- implement severe cuts at the (left-leaning) Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC);
- kill the Foreign Investment Review Agency (FIRA), which had discouraged and at times prohibited American investment in Canada, costing the country billions in capital inflows and hundreds of thousands of jobs;
- dismantle the National Energy Program (NEP), which had resulted in the nationalization (without compensation) of a share of Canada's petroleum industry, as well as a massive transfer of wealth from Western Canada to Ontario and Quebec.

Most importantly for the new government, the Prime Minister (who had proclaimed during his 1984 campaign for the leadership of the PCs that "free trade affects Canadian sovereignty, and we will have none of it") took a crash course in economics from Derek Burney, then a top civil servant at External Affairs, [3] and urged negotiating a trade agreement to President Reagan at the "Shamrock Summit" in Quebec City in March 1985.

> *Canadians are different from Americans: they are poorer and an awful lot of them seem to want to remain so; they tend to frown on individual creativity and extol communitarian coercion; and a possible majority of them fear foreign influences as much as does the most xenophobic fringe of Americans.*

Unfortunately, whatever may have been the Mulroney commitment to freer markets and less intrusive government, these concerns were soon eclipsed by the need to salvage an administration mired in scandal. Was the Conservative team more dishonest than is usually the case, or had their troops simply been away from the troughs too long? The following incomplete chronology tallies the damage that greed and stupidity wreaked on the PCs:

- *February 1985:* Defense Minister Robert Coates was forced to resign in the wake of controversy surrounding his "relations" with a German strip-tease "artist" following a visit to a sensitive NATO base;
- *June 1986:* Justice Minister John Crosbie faced controversy over his sons' appointment as legal agents for the federal government in Newfoundland. Crosbie was also roundly criticized by the media and by feminist picketers after calling radical Liberal MP Sheila Copps "baby" during a heated debate in the House of Commons;
- *September 1985:* Fisheries Minister John Fraser was forced by Mulroney to resign after it was revealed that he had allowed tuna that he knew to be "tainted" (smelly but not unsafe) to be sold by private companies. Fraser's crime was that he felt that the market, not the government, should determine the quality of goods sold in the country;
- [same month]: Communications and Culture Minister Marcel Masse quit, as it was confirmed that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) was investigating allegations that he spent more than was allowed by federal law during the election campaign;
- *December 1985:* Environment Minister Suzanne Blais-Grenier resigned after it was revealed that she toured western France in a private limousine, at taxpayers' expense (to discover her "roots"), during an official visit to that country;
- *May 1986:* Youth Minister Andrée Champagne was fired following the leak of a letter in which she advised party executives that summer employment programs would be directed to members of the Young Progressive Conservatives, so as to boost membership;
- [same month]: Industry Minister Sinclair Stevens quit the cabinet amid allegations (subsequently confirmed by a judicial inquiry) that he and his wife received generous "loans" from firms that did business with his department;
- [same month]: PC Member of Parliament Michel Gravel was arrested by the RCMP on 50 counts of influence peddling and corruption;
- *October 1986:* the Auditor-General crit-

icized the decision to build a large federal prison in Mulroney's isolated riding in northeastern Quebec. There simply are not enough prisoners there, and the ones that must be shipped in will be far from family and support groups;

- *December 1986:* a Citizenship judge (appointed by Mulroney) in Ontario was suspended following news that he had strongly suggested that applicants for citizenship show support for the Conservative Party;
- *January 1987:* Junior Transport Minister André Bissonnette was fired after disclosure that he had made millions in a 24-hour "flip" of land near his home. The ultimate purchaser of the land was a Swedish firm whose defense business with the government had been subsidized on condition that it build a plant in Bissonnette's riding;
- *February 1987:* Minister of State Roch Lasalle resigned, amid controversy surrounding his involvement in fund-raising efforts linked to explicit promises of federal contracts;
- *April 1987:* the Conservatives' popularity is further eroded as it was revealed that the PM has a fetish for Gucci loafers (he owns 56 pairs);
- *February 1988:* Supply and Services Minister Michel Côté was forced to resign after failing to declare a $300,000 personal "loan" he had received from a friend who obtained several government contracts;
- *August 1988:* Ms Blais-Grenier (see Dec 1985), now a "backbench" MP, was expelled from the Conservative caucus after going public about an overt "kickback system" used in the granting of federal contracts;
- *October 1988:* It is revealed that a PC MP from Quebec had been convicted of armed bank robbery in the 70s;
- [same month]: Another PC MP from Quebec, Mr Ricardo Lopez, calls a press conference to declare that Labrador should be given to the Indians, since "the only thing we have up there is a military base [and] in any case, they [the Indians] don't have too much interest in the rest of society." Large-scale protests by whites in Labrador followed; for their part, Indians blocked bridges leading to Montreal. Mr Lopez also proposed legislation providing that the government pay mothers $100 per week per child to stay home, so that unemployed males can take their jobs. (Mr Lopez has a wife and 5 children.)

The cumulative effect of these and other *gaffes* swiftly eroded Mulroney's 1984 support, and diverted attention from his efforts to unite French and English-speaking areas of the country, reform the tax code *á la* Kemp-Roth, and decrease the federal deficit (it dropped from $38.6 billion in 1985 to $28 billion in 1988). By late 1987, the Tories were projected as clear losers in a future election.

Were the Conservatives more dishonest than is usually the case, or had their troops simply been away from the troughs too long?

The party apparently decided at that point that bribing Canadian voters with their own money was their last hope. A first glimpse of Mulroney's new policy followed protests by "activists" for the unemployed. The government then rejected out-of-hand a compelling (and very expensive) Royal Commission report urging massive cuts to the UI system, which the Commission held responsible for Canada's remarkably high unemployment rate (rarely below 10%). Then, in February 1988, Mulroney actually modified the UI system to allow for government-paid *paternity* leave for all.

Other pre-election protests also resulted in prompt government action. Thus, in 1987 and 1988:

- Health "activists" obtained a ban on all tobacco advertising in the country, *nonobstante* freedom of speech. This of course immediately diverted Canadian tobacco publicity contracts to American print and electronic media (widely circulated in Canada);
- Nationalists charged that Lake Superior and James Bay would soon be draining into American Jacuzzis. They obtained a "ban" on all sales of fresh water [4] to the U.S.A., now or in the future, FTA or no FTA. No fresh water is being sold presently anyway, and it was not clear what the legal validity of a pledge *never* to sell fresh water could be;
- Canadian Naderites got the government to extort from Canadian banks huge reductions in service charges (already much lower than in the U.S.);
- Yankee-haters and unemployed shipbuilding workers convinced Mulroney to increase defense expenditures by building nuclear-powered submarines (cost: $8 billion) to protect Canadian sovereignty from evil U.S. ships roaming Arctic waters without Ottawa's permission;
- The feminist lobby obtained a $1 billion massive child-care program. Unfortunately for Mulroney, a consortium of the Canadian Labour Congress, the Public Service Alliance of Canada, the National Action Committee for the Status of Women, and the National Anti-Poverty Organization proceeded to condemn his proposal, which was left hanging in the Senate at election time. Instead of establishing "peoples' Government Day Care Centers" as per these organizations wishes, Mulroney had essentially proposed a voucher system that would encourage competition among commercial day care providers. This "set a dangerous precedent" in Canada, according to the coalition;
- Last but not least, Maritime premiers obtained a blank check for a colossal deal in Newfoundland whereby private companies will develop Hibernia offshore oil fields that (in the absence of federal subsidy) are clearly uneconomical.

Lurking in the background of these moves, and to some degree compensating for them in the eyes of economically proficient Canadians, was FTA, which will eliminate most (but not all) tariffs on goods and services between the two countries over a ten-year period. FTA will (by the most modest estimates) raise Canadian manufacturing output by 10.5% and increase exports by 4%, all the while lowering factor and consumer prices and provoking job-creation and entrepreneurship. [5] Of course, unions and companies presently protected

from American competition opposed the agreement, and Canadians have from the start been of two minds about FTA.

The NDP (Canada's Labour Party) is constitutionally controlled by unions, and its opposition to the agreement was to be expected. Liberal Turner, however, was a Toronto corporate lawyer who, when announcing for his party's leadership in 1984, was photographed proudly reading Michael Novak's *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism.* He had sent his children to Stanford and Princeton, and had quipped in 1973 (when he was Finance Minister in a Trudeau government) that "real power was all about playing tennis with George Schultz." His opportunistic promise to "tear up the deal" if elected shocked Canada's business establishment.

Mulroney's 1987 conversion to the welfare state pulled his party ahead in the polls for the first time in 30 months in September 1988, although support for his government was plainly "shallow," as they say. His preference would undoubtedly have been to wait until 1989 to call elections (constitutionally, he had until September 1989 to do so). Turner forced his hand, however, by "asking" the liberal majority in the non-elected Senate not to pass legislation ratifying FTA.

The revolutionary nature of Turner's action might be difficult for Americans to grasp. Canada's Senate is devoid of political legitimacy. It is composed primarily of people who made generous donations to the party in power in the House of Commons at the time of their nomination. Since the Liberals have formed the government over 85% of the period since 1940, that party heavily dominates the Senate. This has never posed a problem for Conservative governments in Ottawa, as the appointed-for-life Senators follow an unwritten constitutional convention requiring them to approve bills adopted in the House of Commons. In April 1988, however, the Senate refused to pass without substantive amendment a House bill designed to obtain Quebec's approval of Canada's decade-old Constitution. A month later, the Senate stalled a bill destined to close a gaping loophole in Canada's refugee law. In September, as mentioned, it announced that it would not adopt FTA (which had to be ratified by Canada before January 1, 1989) unless Mulroney asked for and obtained another mandate at the polls.

Conservative promises would cost the federal treasury $3.8 billion over 4 years. Liberal promises would cost $27.5 billion over the same period. Neither party proposed any new taxes to pay for these pledges. By contrast, the NDP's "modest" $16.7 billion offering of goodies to Canadians was, to its "credit," accompanied by an NDP $13 billion "soak the rich" tax hike.

Finally, just as elections were called on October 2, the Senate proclaimed that it would not pass the child-care bill. Mulroney's advisers decided that, despite this virtual revolution in Canadian constitutional law, he would hurt the PC cause if he based the campaign on a call for an elected Senate. This says as much, if not more, about Canadian apathy for self-government than did Pierre Trudeau's popular 1968 opinion that "order in Czechoslovakia is much more important than democracy in Czechoslovakia."

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Several American journalists praised the Canadian electoral campaign as more "serious" than its U.S. counterpart. In reality, it was more patronizing, more demagogic and far uglier. Mulroney quickly yielded to feminist demands that one hour (the middle hour, to forestall viewers switching off their sets) of the three-hour national debates (about which more below) be exclusively devoted to "women's issues." All three parties multiplied disastrous promises. Mulroney announced three new laboratories and institutions for Manitoba following news of a Liberal resurgence in the polls there. He countermanded a Department of Defense order to dismantle an obsolete radar site in his home riding in Quebec. He promised $50 million in "new money" to small towns "to combat pollution," and $125 million to "clean up the Great Lakes," immediately after polls showed voter concern about the environment.

Meanwhile, John Turner announced new programs the like of which even Canada had never seen before. He proclaimed his party's support for "total pay equity" (equal pay to men and women for "work of equal value to society," as established by a government board that would supersede market determinations of salary). He unveiled a massive program whereby the federal government would cover a part of Canadians' mortgage and rent payments. He promised Montrealers that he would build a mammoth Space Agency in the city ($750 million). He ridiculed the Mulroney child care plan, promising a much more extensive program initially valued at $4 billion, but which he later admitted would cost $9 billion. He promised dozens of new Post Offices (Canada Post is a strike-prone, grossly inefficient money-loser that Mulroney had pared down). He vowed to impose "total sanctions" and to break off diplomatic relations with South Africa (but not with Ethiopia or Rumania). He pledged to restrict foreign investment again. He offered $1000 to every Canadian over 65. He announced huge new grants to inshore fishermen. (The Toronto *Globe and Mail* added, "Asked if [the fishing program] might be viewed as a subsidy by the U. S. under current trade laws, and thus provoke devastating countervailing duties, Mr Turner said yes. But that threat apparently had no impact on the party's plans.")

Toronto's C. D. Howe Institute estimated that Conservative promises would cost the federal treasury $3.8 billion over 4 years. Liberal promises would cost *$27.5 billion* (an amount equal to the federal deficit) over the same period. (These figures cover only direct outlays, neglecting the costs of lost productivity.) Neither party proposed any new taxes to pay for these

promises. By contrast, the NDP's "modest" $16.7 billion offering of goodies to Canadians was, to its "credit," accompanied by a typical NDP $13 billion "soak the rich" tax hike. (Marginal tax rates in Canada now routinely exceed 50% on incomes of about U.S. $25,000.)

Cynical as this pandering may seem to the reader, it pales when compared to the treatment of FTA by the opposition parties. John Turner obviously considered that the 1000-page document could never be understood by a public ripe for Yankee-baiting. On October 2, the first day of the election campaign, Turner announced his colors by proclaiming a Holy War against the Conservatives. "We will not allow Mr Mulroney to sell out our birthright," he asserted. "I happen to believe that you have sold us out!" was his accusation on Oct 24 and Oct 25, as Canada was treated to two debates (in French and in English) by party leaders. Liberal TV ads portrayed American and Canadian negotiators of FTA jointly erasing the border between the two countries. Liberal and NDP leaflets alleging that FTA would abolish the Canada Pension Plan and governmental health care were circulated in old-age homes and hospitals. Turner stated in New Brunswick that Canada's 750,000 food-processing jobs would be "legally wiped out" by FTA. (When challenged by a worker, the Liberal leader replied that he meant that competition would "put the jobs at risk.") Stephen Lewis, Canadian Ambassador to the United Nations and former Ontario NDP leader, contended that *all* of Canada's culture (including the CBC and the National Films Board, etc.) would "die" under FTA. When his interviewer observed that the agreement expressly exempts culture, Lewis rejoined that "One of the things I also learned at the UN is that the United States does not always honour international agreements."

Brian Mulroney seemed unprepared for an aggressive campaign, and especially for this assault on FTA, predictable though it was. During the debates, he apologized five times for government corruption. His improbable FTA television strategy was to attempt to explain, Adam-Smith-style, the advantages of free trade to two flag-waving opponents and to incredulous CBC questioners. Following derisive laughter by Turner and Broadbent, Mulroney resorted to an anxiety-creating claim that FTA was in any case no big risk, since if it did prove damaging it could be abrogated on 6 months' notice. The PCs' dumbest act was surely their response to the border-erasing ad: three weeks after its airing, the Conservatives produced their own TV spot showing the two negotiators *putting back* the border. This of course only reminded the voters of the Liberal publicity.

All this was enough to dissipate the Tory lead among a fickle Canadian electorate, only 41% of which had voted for the same party at the three preceding elections. A week after the debates, on October 30, the two main parties had roughly equal support, and (despite one Gallup poll that seems to have been deeply flawed) they remained neck-and-neck until about ten days before the November 21 ballot. By November 10, however, three things had happened that sealed the fate of the election:

1) On November 4, 89-year old former Supreme Court Justice Emmett Hall, the author of Canada's medical care program, held a press conference to dispute the claim that FTA legally gutted medicare. The image of this respected, frail old man accusing the opposition leaders of dishonesty was breathtaking, and considerably undercut the critique of FTA for the remainder of the campaign. Indeed, during the next two weeks Turner and Broadbent curiously shifted their argument, arguing that medicare might well be dismantled, *not* because it would be illegal under FTA but because it was inefficient and would make Canadian industry uncompetitive. Not surprisingly, this message carried less emotional punch than their previous one.

2) Canadian business, generally favorable to FTA, staged a major media blitz in the last two weeks of the campaign. Every newspaper in the

country was blanketed with ads proclaiming the beneficial effects of FTA and the horrors that would result if Canada turned it down. Since the Canadian dollar lost ground (from 83.5 cents to barely 80 cents in two weeks, an incredible loss of national wealth) in lockstep with Liberal advances, these claims seemed credible. One vivid TV interview showed John Turner condemning a four-page spread in 35 dailies (paid for by 150 Canadian companies) as "intellectually dishonest," and vowing that "big business, led by American multinationals, are now trying to buy this election. . . . Canada is not for sale, and I don't believe Canadian voters are for sale." In response to the next question, Turner admitted that he hadn't yet read the ad. Newspapers reporting this interview added that Turner had for many years sat on the board of a subsidiary (Bechtel Canada) of an American multinational.

3) Following the American lead, the Tories reacted to initial setbacks by hitting Canadians with the most extensive and expensive two-week bombardment of advertising the country had ever seen. The publicity diverted attention from FTA to the flagrant economic incompetence of the Liberal team (clearly the weakest Liberal slate fielded this century). The *average* Canadian viewer saw 20 TV spots during the final week of the campaign, some of them highlighting Turner's dismal record as Finance Minister for 2 1/2 years in the 1970s (unemployment had increased; inflation had doubled and greatly exceeded the American rate; the civil service grew at twice the rate of private employment; the Canadian dollar fell for the first time below $1.00 U.S.; federal spending had increased at a rate of 23%/yr; etc.). The Liberals' response consisted of wrapping themselves ever more tightly in the Maple Leaf flag (some zealots publicly burned the American one), but this appeared weak and indecisive.

The ultimate Conservative victory was a clear-cut one. It is simply false to claim, as have some U.S. commentators, that Mulroney was victorious only in French Canada. The Conservatives won Quebec, Ontario and the West, with the Liberals obtaining a modest majority of seats in the welfare-dependent Maritimes. The Tories remained Canada's only national party, as the NDP won none of the 107 seats east of Ontario and the Liberals only 6 of 86 seats in provinces west of Ontario. The Tories' 44% vote is quite respectable for a three-party Parliamentary system.

The final tally, 170 PC, 82 Liberal and 43 NDP, gave Brian Mulroney Canada's first back-to-back majority government in 35 years. The Canadian dollar has skyrocketed to near 85 cents U.S. since the election, and I predict it will go higher. John Turner's disastrous political career is, mercifully, finished. Socialism and isolationism have failed to gain ground. The Free Trade Agreement was pushed through a humbled Canadian Senate. All this is a wonderful thing, for Canada, the U.S. and indeed (following the GATT debacle in Montreal in December) the world. But it would be erroneous to see in the outcome of the Canadian elections an explicit ratification of FTA, about which the Canadian public remains ignorant and apprehensive. More likely correct is the explanation that Canada's vote was an ultimate rejection of what may well be the most extreme display of political demagoguery seen in North America this century.

It is said of Walter Mondale's 1984 campaign that it was "interest-group liberalism in its worst possible incarnation." Well, folks, welcome to Canada, where a kinder, gentler nation is still reeling from a close brush with Peronism. ❑

Notes

1 The name was changed from "Conservative" to "Progressive Conservative" at the instigation of Prime Minister John Diefenbaker in 1958. Diefenbaker feared that Canadians might misinterpret the Tory moniker as a sign of opposition to the all-encompassing welfare state. The new "Progressive" designation has allowed the PC's infinite flexibility in this field, as we shall see.

2 A Throne speech, read by the Queen's representative but prepared by the cabinet, is a declaration of intention at the opening of each Parliament, putting the country on notice as to the bills the government (i.e., the Cabinet) intends to propose to the House of Commons.

3 Burney was named Canadian Ambassador to the United States at the outset of the 1988 election campaign.

4 Estimates vary greatly, but it seems that Canada sees about 20% of all the world's fresh water runs through its land. Only an infinitesimal portion of this water is used: the remainder flows into the oceans.

5 For a detailed account of the genesis, the contents, and the probable effects of FTA, see M. Krauss, "The Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement: Now or Never," Cato Institute Policy Analysis #105, May 3, 1988.

Essay

Guns and Guilt:

The Impulse Toward Gun Control

by Allan Levite

The importance of facts and meaningful statistics in such a volatile issue as gun control should not be slighted—but these are not the only aspects of the problem worthy of consideration . . .

Few issues are more heated and controversial than gun control, especially in its current manifestation of handgun ownership bans. But are handguns the real issue? In accidents, shotguns kill approximately fives times more people than handguns, even though the numbers of handguns and shotguns in the U.S. are approximately equal. [1] It would therefore be foolish to think that gun confiscation would end with handguns; it more likely would begin with them. This prospect becomes clear when we examine the typical appeals used by the gun control movement.

Guilt As a Weapon

The gun control movement's use of guilt as a weapon is obvious to anyone who has listened to its appeals. If one declines to support their cause, one seems partly responsible when someone else misuses a firearm. (Or, at least, one seems to lack compassion for the victim.) Of course, we should consider ourselves as being in good company here, for this is precisely what has been insinuated about the taxpayers for the last half-century. Do the taxpayers have the audacity to think they have the right to spend their entire paychecks as they please? If social spending went underfunded, the expected increase in destitution would presumably be the taxpayers' fault. Who wants to think of himself as heartless enough to permit hunger or homelessness?

This is why most people hate the welfare state yet continue to vote for it. Most citizens do not know how to resist guilt, especially when it comes from unexpected quarters and is disguised as something else, such as compassion. The fact that the welfare state has made things *worse* for the poor, as Charles Murray aptly demonstrated, [2] is of course withheld from public scrutiny. No one could be made very remorseful about wanting to resist the welfare state if it were publicly acknowledged to be a failure.

In a 1986 article, Lucy Braun (a former assistant editor of *Reason* magazine) described her encounters with political opponents in college, and their use of guilt as a weapon against her:

> . . . when I dissented, my motives, rather than my beliefs, were questioned. It is, after all, easier to disarm political opponents by slandering their character than by facing and discussing legitimate ideological differences. [3]

And it is much easier to slander someone's motives and make him appear heartless and uncaring than to explain away the Second and Ninth Amendments.

To determine *why* anyone would resort to using such tactics, we must ask what *kind* of person would use guilt as a weapon. If a gun owner needed a weapon, he would presumably use a gun. A samurai would use a sword. J. Paul Getty would have used money as a weapon, and Bruce Lee would have employed Kung-fu. So what sort of person would use guilt as a weapon? Someone who is intimately familiar with it. But under what circumstances would someone be so familiar with guilt?

It is guilt-ridden people who so enthusiastically make themselves believe that their opponents harbor selfish, base, mean motives. How else could they exalt their own motives as pure and noble by comparison?

The Role of Social Class

To explain why so many different people come to use the same tactics, let us take an imaginary journey to the backwoods timber country of the Pacific Northwest. We enter a rustic tavern and observe that all the customers are loggers. Every conversation concerns some aspect of the logging life. Would we call this a conspiracy? No, we would instead conclude that the loggers' common background was the cause of their unanimity of interests.

This same principle explains, for example, the near-unanimous consensus of major-media journalists on the gun control issue. The journalists attended the same colleges or the same kind of colleges, studied the same curricula, became familiar with the same writers, and encountered the same range of views. They also came from, or soon

moved into, the same social class, with its similar spectrum of values and attitudes. In short, the journalists went to the university and became "liberals," which is neither a surprise nor a coincidence.

A good case can be made for the assertion that the journalists' unswerving support of gun confiscation is sociologically, not politically, based. If logic dictated their views, the journalists would have to spend eleven times more effort supporting a return to Prohibition, since alcohol is at least eleven times more deadly than handguns.[4] They could not cite Prohibition's failure in practice, nor its universal flouting, as reasons for not supporting it now, since gun control laws are also widely flouted and also fail in practice.[5] Its proponents, in fact, often claim that they expect no great results from it and favor it more as a symbolic gesture, a moral statement, than as a practical proposal. (They obviously do not expect even a bare majority of gun owners meekly to turn in their weapons if ordered to do so.)

Symbolic gestures are a special field. Who ever heard of poor people or working-class people making symbolic gestures? This is a class war in reverse. Whatever resentment against gun owners exists is based on the fact that they live mainly in the lower and lower-middle classes, with corresponding social attitudes. *All in the Family* may have been the best example yet of how wealthy Hollywood liberals disdain the workingman whom fifty years ago they eulogized.

The point is not that liberals, journalists, and intellectuals are prejudiced against the lower classes. They are not. The point is that they feel guilty about not *being* poor. To have to admit that one lives in such a safe neighborhood that one feels no need to have a gun for protection is an embarrassing reminder.

Journalists and Guilt

Journalists are always observers and never participants. They also have greater-than-average affluence and education. In Western cultures, these characteristics alone can be enough to produce guilt at least part of the time. When a normally sensitive, impressionable newscaster, who has a suburban home and a BMW, airs a story about starvation or homelessness, what else could he be expected to feel? He has done nothing wrong; he has not contributed in any way to these problems; yet he may feel as if he had. One's surname need not be Rockefeller or Kennedy or Fonda for one to feel remorse about not being poor; all one need do is not be poor.

Intellectuals never blame poor and average people for any problems, since intellectuals regret being neither poor nor average. Nor will they blame criminals (unless they are white-collar criminals), since criminals are also poor.

And so, when the lords of the welfare state imply that anyone who fails to support their efforts is a heartless misanthrope, journalists swallow this cant without protest, having accustomed themselves to think in these terms. What is worse, they make millions of others believe it too.

Similarly, when the gun control partisans tell journalists that all those who fail to support their efforts are callous boors who lack compassion for victims of gun accidents, the journalists believe this too. Why not? All guilt trips are created equal; the context differs but the content is identical. Big-city journalists are, to one extent or another, intellectuals, and guilt and intellectuals go together like love and marriage used to.

Whom Do We Trust?

The gun control movement does not seem to question the right of the police, the military, and other authorities to possess firearms. It questions only the rights of citizens. But why does it trust the government so much more than people in general? One might say that this reflects ignorance about government usurpation and corruption, but the gun control people are not unaware of these dangers. Who has done more to publicize and condemn police brutality than the liberals and journalists? We have learned so much about police malpractice in the last quarter-century because the journalists have told us so much about it. And now these same authorities and police forces, whom the liberals and journalists *themselves* have so often shown to be brutal and corrupt, are the *same* fellows to whom citizens' guns should be forfeited.

What the journalists and the gun control partisans really want is to be symbolically punished by an authority figure such as the state. And what kind of people *would* want to be punished? Would it be poor people, or rich journalists and cartoonists? Would it be laborers, or lawyers and professional politicians? Would it be people who live in the inner cities, or some of the people who live in comfortable suburbs like Oak Park and Morton Grove, Illinois, where handgun bans were passed? Why else would the gun control movement have so many notables and so few poor people? Fortunately, it is just as hard to make poor people feel guilty as it is easy to make the affluent and educated feel guilty.

Who Is To Blame?

When we understand the temperament of guilt, a great many political viewpoints become clear. Are people dying of cancer? The intellectuals say it must be the fault of the cigarette manufacturers. Are drunk drivers taking a heavy toll on the highways? The intellectuals say it must be the fault of the alcohol industry. The worst insult they can hurl at anyone is pecuniary motivation. This is understandable when we consider that the savants are already guilt-ridden about money and the status it gives. They cannot view money as morally good or even neutral.

Where there is guilt, there must be someone to blame. Intellectuals never blame "human nature" or "the way of the world." They look instead for some category of people to blame. But whom? Obviously, poor and average people will not be blamed for any problems, since intellectuals regret being neither poor nor average. Criminals will not be blamed (unless they are white-collar criminals), since criminals are also poor. Pete Shields, Chairman of Handgun Control, Inc., could never blame his

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Essay

Liberty and Death

What Do You Do When Your Mother Asks You to Kill Her?

by M. H. Endres

How do you feel about suicide? Does it violate your moral principles?

How do you feel about assisting someone else to commit suicide? Does action that results in the death of another person—at that person's request—constitute aggression? What is "action on your part?" Furnishing the means to commit suicide? Placing sleeping tablets on a person's tongue and holding the glass of liquid to wash them down? Do we have to draw a line at all?

Let me tell a short and very personal story—one that caused me no small amount of pain and agony and required me to rethink a number of previously assumed principles.

My mother was about as close to "good" as anyone I've ever known. She was the only person I ever knew who believed the very best of everyone she ever met and was never disappointed. She was a devout Roman Catholic and numbered her true friends in dozens. She wore very loving and very rose-colored glasses. The world and all that was in it were good. That was the way it was, as far as she was concerned. No evil lurked, no baddies were out there to hurt her—God was on her side.

Her world lurched a bit when my father died of heart disease after a year-long illness. That wasn't in the plan. But it must have been "God's will," and the loneliness was something to be borne and lived with.

This turned out to be not an easy task. After my father's death, Mom fell victim to grief; she developed cancer within a year. She was never afraid of death and had a love of life that gave her strength to put up a pretty good fight. She suffered a year of chemotherapy, with its violent illness and loss of life quality—and she did it knowing that it was just buying time, not curing her disease. Toward the end, when chemo was no longer recommended because of the damage it was doing to the rest of her body, she accepted the fact that she was going to die.

So she made up a rose-colored picture in her mind of how it was to be. She would go to the hospital, put on a clean white nightgown, fold her hands across her breast and God would take care of her. It was a peaceful picture.

And it was totally out of touch with reality. She died for six weeks—one inch at a time. My wife and I sat by her side every day and watched the rose fade from her vision. At first, she was confident that all would be well—a little uncomfortable maybe, but soon it would be over. Then, between sleeps brought on by ever-increasing doses of morphine (the only drug that would suppress the gagging pain of metastatic cancer spreading through her abdomen), she would awake and ask in wonder, "Why am I still here?" or "Why hasn't God taken me?" and she would weep until more medication was given and sleep returned.

The morning of the 33rd day, she awoke with me holding her hand. She squeezed my hand and with her eyes closed, said quite simply, "You know, Mike, God won't hate you if you kill me." A moment later, she said, "Please?" Then tears began to flow down her cheeks. I don't remember what I did then. My next recollection was standing outside her hospital room door, forehead resting against the concrete wall, crying with such intensity that a nurse came from the floor station to ask me if I was all right.

I wasn't.

What do you do when your mother asks you to kill her? A mother who held life not just as something important but as something sacred. A mother who never missed Mass on Sundays and never wavered in her belief in God, a God that had somehow abandoned her at the last minute.

I'll tell you what you do. You do what she asks you to do.

On the advice of her closest friend, she had executed a living will before entering the hospital. A living will is officially recognized in the state where she lived, but the hospital where she was confined was Catholic, and we feared this might complicate the process.

It did not. After a discussion with her attending physician, her doctor honored the document in the only way he could. With his assistance, we allowed my mother to die of dehydration, slowly and relatively painlessly.

Of course it was all unofficial. When

her blood pressure dropped to the point where keeping a vein open for drip IV became difficult, all efforts toward providing hydration were stopped. Medication was increased to keep her comatose and pain-free. She was kept clean and unconscious. It took her five more days to go into non-responsive coma and 20 more hours to die, poisoned to death with her own body wastes.

I wouldn't submit my dog to such tender, callous, and immoral care.

You must understand that the major reason for the hard, long dying was my mother's inability ever to discuss dying, let alone plan her own death. That was "God's will" and out of her hands. Then it was too late to do anything about it. She sadly discovered that God's hands were slow in her case. She did what she could. She asked for help in dying. Because our laws forbid euthanasia, she got no help except a passive "dope her up and let her dry out" death.

And that enrages me.

Dying is a subject avoided in our society because it is decidedly unpleasant. Dying is not a clean nightgown, folded hands upon the breast and a peaceful passing on some kind of cue. Dying is more likely to be weeks of pain, incontinence, more pain, tubes, pumps, slow loss of senses, more pain. Only long after all joy has gone and what is left is agony of the worst sort for both you and those you love, in spite of all the torture modern medicine can bring to bear to lengthen life just because it can be done, does death come.

Somewhere, somehow, you get left out of the picture. You become a thing to be kept alive regardless of expense, regardless of the mental anguish of those who must watch the life-stretching exercise and, most importantly, regardless of your own wishes. If you go into a hospital with a terminal illness (or serious injury) and haven't first touched all the legal bases to insure that your wishes are followed, those nice white-starched folks are going to keep your heart beating as long as they can in spite of any preference you might have—for no reason better than practice and the law and our collective moral standards.

Dying is as much part of living as is birth. It is something that happens to all of us. You do yourself and those you leave behind a terrible disservice by not giving at least as much thought to dying as you do to any other activity in which you will participate. Dying is the very last thing you will ever get to do in life. There is nothing that we can do to prevent it. All we can possibly do is plan how, when and where the dying happens.

At what point in the living process does one stop? How far does the quality of life descend before the benefits of dying exceed the costs of living? These questions concern quality of life and its costs and benefits; they call for a literally free-market evaluation of your own situation. Obviously, they are answerable only by you. No one can pick and choose the moment in time when the pain and suffering of a terminal illness or just age itself costs too damn much to continue living. I personally plan to kick and scream and fight and claw for every inch of life I can get—but it has got to be life—not a living death or a vegetative existence.

I wouldn't submit my dog to such tender, callous, and immoral care. Because our laws forbid euthanasia, she got no help except a passive "dope her up and let her dry out" death.

Is it morally wrong to plan the manner in which you wish to die and make the necessary preparations? I can see no reason to condemn any person (myself included) who makes a considered and intelligent decision on the subject. Each human being owns his body, having earned the right to life and defended that right throughout his life. An inherent part of this right is the right to stop one's life at any time one chooses.

What about the issue posed by my mother's request? It it wrong to assist another person to plan and execute their own death? This is a moral decision that each of us must make on his own, depending on the facts and conditions surrounding the request for assistance and his feelings toward the person and to the request.

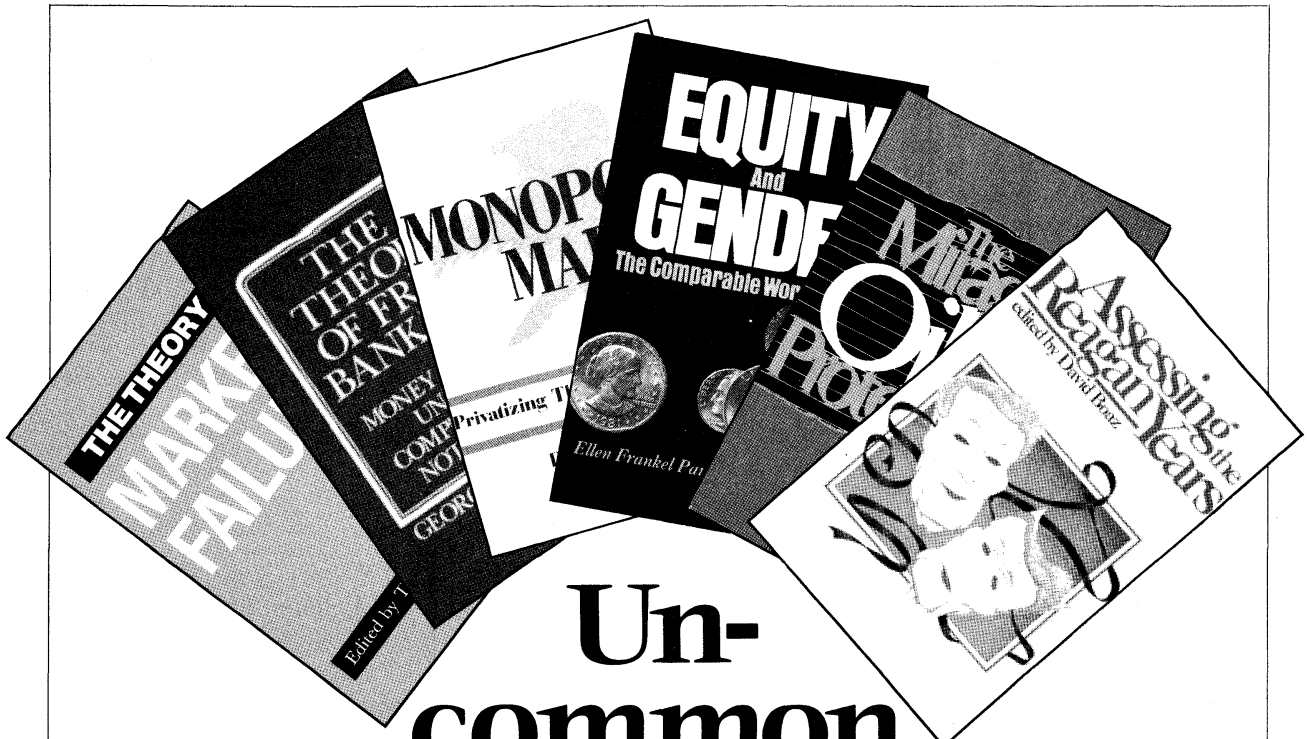
Of course, decisions of this sort cannot be made lightly. I would not even consider such a request unless I were sufficiently close to the individual that I could determine his mental state. Depression is a disease; severe despondency can bring on suicidal desires (and acts) in an individual that are sometimes not the product of rational decision-making processes.

If I am convinced that the individual is in full possession of his faculties and has carefully thought out the action and its consequences for both himself and others, I'd try and get the individual to figure out a way around the problem that caused the suicidal decision. I'd try to assist the individual in attempting to improve the quality of his or her life to the point where suicide is no longer an attractive alternative. If that fails, then yes, I'd do what I could to assist by furnishing information and what ever was necessary to allow that person to determine how to end his life.

There is a still tougher question: the one posed by my mother. Can one personally take the responsibility and perform the physical action necessary to cause another's death at their request if they should be unable to do it themselves?

Generally speaking, no. I could not. I cannot find it within myself to respond to another's request in such a manner. I make this statement in reference only to a hypothetical request, however, and reserve the right to rethink it if the occasion should ever arise and it certainly depends on who is involved in the situation. (Is this a cop-out? I have already told you what I did when my mother asked. I made my decision because I knew she was of sound mind and judgment and had thought out the action and its consequences. But most of all I did what she asked because I loved her very much.)

Society—all us individuals—has come a long way in this regard. Only a few years ago, most States followed the Catholic Church's edict and made suicide a crime—which raises the question: how do you punish someone who's dead? In times past, failed suicides were sometimes brought to trial and criminally prosecuted for the attempt! No more. In the last 25 years, all such statutes have been eliminated and suicide is



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no longer a crime in any state, so far as I know.

But assisting in a suicide still is a criminal act. We still have a long way to go in our group moral struggle with the real world. But helping another person take their own life is fairly simple and society's ability to punish it is extremely limited. Furnishing information (perhaps even the drugs) to do the job is well-nigh impossible to prove against even a moderately intelligent assistant.

Last November, California residents almost had the opportunity to make their moral judgment known via a ballot initiative for a Humane and Dignified Death Law, which would have allowed physicians to aid in the dying process of the terminally ill through the administration of appropriate drugs. Participation by physicians would be entirely voluntary, and the action itself would have been taken with many controls and safeguards to prevent abuse. Unfortunately, the initiative requirements were not met in time to allow the proposition to be placed on the ballot. We will see further efforts to bring such a law to the books.

The American Medical Association is taking a remarkably neutral stand on the subject considering their past conservative political stance. In fact, in a letter to the New York *Times* (March 19, 1988) the AMA refers to a recent article in the New England Journal of Medicine by a physician who actively assisted an elderly patient to die. (The physician remained anonymous for obvious reasons.) The AMA now openly acknowledges that a growing number of physicians take an ethical position supporting self determination and believe that suicide is a viable solution for some people in certain circumstances.

The ethics committee of the AMA has further determined that withdrawal of life support including food and nutrition is an ethical act for a physician under certain circumstances (i.e., when a patient is terminally ill and has no real chance for survival). This ethical verdict has been stretched to include removal of hydration as well in many cases, a much faster death—but still inexcusably slow once the decision has been made.

This is progress. Like all meaningful progress, it is unbearably slow, starting unofficially as the criminal aspects of the actions taken are "overlooked" for some time before laws are modified to acknowledge what is already taking place.

Practice, ethics and even law are far more progressed in the Netherlands. For many years, some physicians there have assisted suicide for some terminal patients upon request, first hesitantly, then more openly. The laws of the Netherlands are changing to reflect the everyday practices of physicians. The Netherlands has become the most progressive country in its moral thinking on the subject of suicide and euthanasia.

With the graying of America—myself included (damn it!)—this ethical question will crop up more and more often. As the general population grows older (and we hope smarter—but that's still open to question), more and more people will thoughtfully plan their own future.

Because that future will include dying, the planning process will inevitably encompass their own death. The sooner we come to grips with the morality and the social issues involved, the sooner we can get on with the much more important questions of how and when and why rather than whether. ❑

For further information on the subject and a detailed bibliography of references and books on the subjects of death and dying, write:
The Hemlock Society, PO Box 11830, Eugene, OR 97440-3900 (503) 345-2751

Levite, "Guns and Guilt," *continued from page 30*

son's murderer, since Shields is liberal and the killer was black, so the weapon used (and all the people who own them) are blamed instead. [6]

I should stress that all this has nothing whatever to do with psychology. To say that many people feel guilty about eating three meals a day is not an issue; it is simply a fact. The *issue* is: *should* we feel remorse about eating three meals a day? The answer, of course, is no, but more importantly, this is quite obviously neither a medical nor a psychological issue, but rather a moral and philosophical one. The guilt-ridden people I have described have no psychological problem. They have a *moral* problem. For all their learning, they are unable to comprehend just who is and is not responsible for what.

Will the State Keep Its Word?

Many people continue to believe that the government can be trusted not to confiscate long guns later if it confiscates handguns now. But this is the same government that promised that the 1964 Civil Rights Act would not require racial quotas, [7] the same government that routinely assured us that Social Security was an inviolate trust fund that would be safe from any encroachment or diminishment.

The gun control movement's myopic trust in the state does not deserve serious consideration. If we cannot convince people to desist from trusting the state, we should at least try to convince them that they have done nothing to feel guilty about, that the actions of others are not their fault. As important as facts are in the gun control debate, making people immune from guilt is of infinitely greater value. ❑

Notes

1. Don B. Kates, Jr., "Handgun Banning in Light of the Prohibition Experience," in Don B. Kates, ed., *Firearms and Violence: Issues of Public Policy* (San Francisco: Pacific Institute for Public Policy Research, 1984), pp. 143–146, and p. 146 ff.
2. See Charles Murray, *Losing Ground* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1984), especially chapters 4 and 5.
3. Lucy Braun, "God and Woman at Yale," *Reason* 17 (April 1986), p. 36.
4. See Kates, *op. cit.*, and Rashi Fein, *Alcohol in America: The Price We Pay* (Newport Beach, Cal.: The Care Institute, 1984), p. 14.
5. See David T. Hardy, "Gun Control: Arm Yourself with Evidence," *Reason* 14 (November 1982), pp. 38–41. See also Kates, *op. cit.*, and Gary Kleck, "The Relationship Between Gun Ownership Levels and Rates of Violence in the United States," in Kates, ed., *op.cit.*
6. William R. Tonso, "Gun Control: White Man's Law," *Reason* 17 (December 1985), p. 25.
7. See Thomas Sowell, *Civil Rights: Rhetoric or Reality?* (New York: William Morrow & Co., Inc., 1984), pp. 37–42.

Rebuttal

An Environmentalist *Contra* Rothbard

by Daniel M. Karlan

Murray Rothbard's *Reflection* in the January issue—"Greenhouse defects"— has caused nearly as much a stir as John Hospers' September essay, "Ecology and Liberty." In lieu of pages and pages of letters-to-the-editors, we instead offer this one response . . .

When I read Dr. Rothbard's piece on environmentalism in the last issue of *Liberty*, I knew it had to be answered. I started by highlighting with a yellow marker anything that suggested misinformation, but gave that up when almost the whole article was yellow. I'm fully prepared to answer his arguments point for point, but I suspect—from the tone of his article—that Rothbard is not open to rational argument. I'll try, anyway, for the rest of you.

"Of all varieties of statists, I find the environmentalists the most annoying." I am an environmentalist. I am not a statist. I resent being classed as one. I consider myself an environmentalist because I am pro-human. Human beings do not live in a vacuum, but in a context that has been developing for a million times as long as humans have, and which in fact gave birth to humanity.

Nor do I believe that "Animals that are cute and cuddly have 'rights' that man must respect." Animal rights are not universally promoted in the environmental movement; some environmentalists even regard the notion of animal rights as dangerous.

"Why must we worry about 'endangered species'? Species have become extinct since the world began—before humans had anything to do with it." I can offer a strictly mercenary reason—plants and animals that are extinct now might have included in their physiology the cures for cancer and AIDS, but we will never know that. Rare plants and animals have been found which yield profitable drugs and open new technologies. A new Green Revolution is in the works, based substantially on introducing into commercial crops traits discovered in older (about-to-become-extinct) cousins. If we had permitted those cousins to become extinct, we would have lost something valuable, without even knowing what it was.

That is one reason to oppose extinction, a reason that I think even Rothbard might be able to understand and accept. I offer it only to those who find nothing wrong with Rothbard's article. For the more open-minded among *Liberty*'s readers, I have another argument, one that I find more compelling.

Sure, species have become extinct for all of life's existence—some $3\,1/2$ billion years. But the rate of such extinction has taken an alarming quantum leap in just the past century. Prior to 1900, extinctions occurred once every few hundred years. During this century the rate has increased to something like hundreds per year. Ignoring the fact that among the thousands lost to humanity—forever—are some that we can well do without, *there is something wrong with this picture.*

We have encouraged this wanton loss with no concern, even for the *possibility* that allowing this is contrary to humanity's welfare. In fact, for most of this destruction of our heritage there was no consideration of the simple view that we *might* be doing something wrong. Such reckless disregard for our origins and heritage might—just might—be anti-human. But Rothbard will have none of that, and is ready to throw away the entire past life of this planet. That *might* not be bad—but Rothbard cavalierly refuses to consider the possibility that it might not be good, or even that people who consider that possibility are libertarians.

We're not talking about the snail darter—we're not even talking about the black rhinocerous and the red wolf. We're talking about the simple unity of life. The sensible person, without being a pack-rat, does not throw away everything for which he has no immediate use.

"Environmentalists try to turn every natural event into a catastrophe." Plainly false, as anyone reading the fallout from the fires in Yellowstone would recognize. Yes, Rothbard can catalog natural events that some environmen-

talist has called catastrophes. And if I chose, I could offer a *natural* event that environmentalists have *not* called a catastrophe (the 1988 drought) which could legitimately be called a disaster. That is not the point, as Rothbard recognizes. The point is the *particular* catastrophe that Rothbard is blind to: the dying of a planet.

I suspect that Rothbard's blindness stems from his suspicion of *all* environmentalists' motives, a suspicion that apparently has its origins in what he has heard *some* of them pronounce. But his inference (and suspicion) is ridiculous: Would I be fair to Rothbard's perspective if I rejected *his* pronouncements on economics simply because Paul Samuelson is also an economist?

"So what if the temperature of the earth goes up, or down, a few degrees? The earth has been getting either warmer or colder through recorded history." Only partially true, in fact. In all of recorded history (about 8,000 years), there has been only one significant deviation from the normal seasonal pattern: the Little Ice Age, ending about 1900, was slightly cooler than the preceding and succeeding centuries. For the rest of humanity's time on this planet, the climate has been quite stable, until recently, and we have fine-tuned our relationship with the natural world based on that stability. We *might* be able to adapt to another set of conditions: but at what cost?

Where has Rothbard read that "the same environmentalists who gripe about the 'greenhouse effect' . . . also warn us of the 'icebox effect'"? I would be astonished if he could provide a citation. I suspect that Rothbard is employing a cheap rhetorical trick: putting words in the mouths of those he disagrees with, then ridiculing those words. He should remember that environmentalists do not speak with one voice, any more than do libertarians. (How would Rothbard react when a non-libertarian argues on the presumption that he supports the Strategic Defense Initiative, just because *some* libertarians do?)

Of course, we can't become victims concurrently of both a global "greenhouse effect" and a global "icebox effect"—but that doesn't mean we can't suffer the consequences of *one* of those disasters. If one economist predicts that raising the minimum wage will reduce employment, and another predicts that it will increase employment, should we conclude that it will have no effect on employment, or that all economists are fools?

Rothbard tells us that "the solution proposed [to the problem of the greenhouse effect] is . . . stop using energy and bring in socialism." *False, false, false.* In fact, some environmentalists argue that if the poor people in the tropics would—somehow—use more of the modern fuels (oil, gas, nuclear, hydroelectric) and less of the primitive fuels (trees, dung, etc.), a large part of the ecological problems would be solved. Failing that, environmentalists urge all of us to use whatever fuels we *do* use more efficiently. Is that socialism?

True enough, some idiots insist that socialism will save us from an environmental nightmare. But the libertarian response must not be to reject out of hand the prediction of the nightmare. If we take that stance, we have lost, because we have surrendered the debate to them. Further, if the nightmare *does* arrive, we then have no argument at all. At least, Rothbard has no argument.

I am convinced that capitalism can meet any disaster more efficiently and with less human suffering than can socialism. More importantly, I am convinced that we must engage the issue, not simply dismiss it as a problem.

About ozone: " . . . why are environmentalists *also* griping about *too much* ozone over . . . Los Angeles, New York, etc.? . . . Don't these . . . regulations de-

True enough, some idiots insist that socialism will save us from an environmental nightmare. But the libertarian response must not be to reject out of hand the prediction of the nightmare. If we take that stance, we have lost, because we have surrendered the debate to them.

plete the ozone layer up yonder." No, they don't. Patterns of airflow and the lifetime of ozone prevent ozone down here from becoming ozone up there. Down here, it is toxic and *humans* suffer from it. Up there, it is salubrious and *humans* benefit from it.

"Why should we care if clearing the rain forest or using aerosol cans changes the climate in four hundred years?" Not four hundred years, but more like *forty*, is the current ballpark figure. In fact, 40 is probably an optimistic figure: some estimates place the global climatic change by 2000, which may just be in the lifetime of Murray Rothbard. If that is the case, would he *then* care?

"Why not let the future take care of itself." For starters, because—unlike Rothbard, apparently—I intend to spend the rest of my life there. I happen to think that fouling our own nest is not consistent with how we got here, and it is not compatible with our getting anywhere else. The future will take care of "itself" only if the present takes care of *itself*, and learns from *its* past.

Humanity is from this world, and of it. As long as this world is all we've got, we had better be more careful with it than Rothbard advises. Or Lord Keynes' "long run" may be a good deal shorter than some libertarians would like.

Libertarians who don't understand the technical issues shouldn't argue them. They will lose, and libertarianism will be worse off for their arguments. ❑

What if Everything We Know About Safety Is Wrong?

by John Semmens and Dianne Kresich

Motor vehicle safety is a sacred cow of public policy. For many, any act that purports to enhance or promote safety is deemed warranted. The common presumption is that the attainment of safety is a mere matter of engineering technology or appropriate regulation. After all, improved safety is something that everyone supports, and since everyone really wants it, when individuals appear balky or indifferent to safety measures touted by experts, then safety should be imposed on them for their own good.

Little thought seems to go into the question of whether resorting to coercion can really achieve a safer environment. Not surprisingly, the concept of safety is rarely even defined. Much of the literature routinely equates safety with accident statistics, assuming that a decline in a targeted accident rate represents a safety improvement. However, simplistic reliance upon this sort of a statistical method paves the way for misleading conclusions. Might the accident rates have declined anyway? Could some factor other than the assumed safety improvement have caused the change in accident statistics? Have accidents been reduced or merely shifted to other locations, times, activities or persons? These questions are not often asked, and the underlying assumptions rarely called to question.

If we go beyond the difficulty of defining and measuring safety, there is still the question of whether it is worth the cost. Those prone to cliché may be convinced that "no price is too high to pay for saving a life," ignoring the fact that society's resources are limited. Funds spent to save a life in one sphere of activity are funds unavailable to save lives in other spheres. The presumption that "no price is too high" also ignores the question of whose life is to be saved. More specifically, should some lives be saved at the cost of the lives of others? It is quite possible to agree that "all men are created equal," yet have reservations about, say, a safety program which provided that for every two vehicle drivers saved one additional pedestrian was killed.

Government mandates that require installation of certain kinds of safety equipment or compel specific behaviors for vehicle drivers entail a loss of freedom. Many cavalierly brush this loss aside, confident that it only involves the loss of unwarranted opportunities for endangerment. People too foolish to see the benefits of safety regulations ought to have these benefits thrust on them by benevolent force, it is said. Advocates of such "benevolence" find it insufficient, for instance, that seat belts are available for purchase; the belts must be required equipment and their use compelled under threat of punishment.

But removing a person's freedom of choice is not an undertaking readily accomplished in America. Most Americans harbor the notion that they ought to be free to make their own choices, and require good reasons for suppressing their freedom if they are to acquiesce to that suppression. Saving lives, it is said, is such a "good reason" for compulsory safety regulations. The question remains: do these restrictions actually save lives? If they do not, then there is no good reason for the restrictions on personal freedom.

Though the general public might never guess it, there is a lot of ambiguity surrounding the alleged achievements of safety rules. Not everything done in the name of safety clearly enhances safety. A large part of the reason is that the attempt to implement safety is generally done via the mechanism of government. Government, after all, is the institution that operates a money-losing railroad, subsidizes hopelessly profitless municipal transit, regularly gets swindled by highway contractor bid rigging, and cannot enact a timely transportation finance package without loading it with billions of dollars in pork barrel spending. Government regulations have added billions of dollars

per year to air passenger travel and surface freight transport. One would hardly expect this history of underachievement to lend confidence to a program of government mandated safety regulation, and yet few draw this inference.

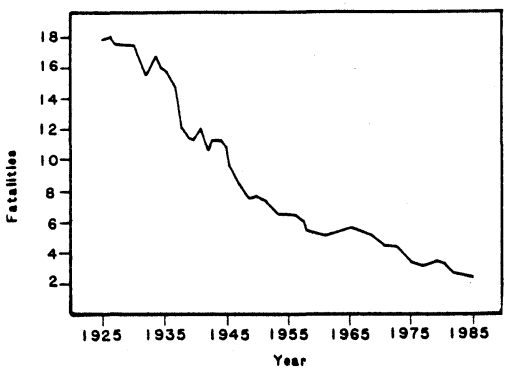
Ambiguous Implications

The long-term decline in vehicle fatalities per mile of travel seems to verify that safety meansures have been successful, and has encouraged advocates of those measures. (See graphs on this page.)

Legislators and safety regulation advocates are quick to credit their action when the years following some new law or rule reveal lower fatality rates. Closer examination of the trend lines, however, yields an odd fact: the fatality rate has been in a more or less steady rate of decline of 3.1% per year for 60 years. There is an absence of dramatic thresholds of new achievements following enactment of new safety measures, like the adoption of seat belts or speed limits. The long-term trend suggests that fatality rates may have declined regardless of any specific legislation or regulation.

This long-term decline in traffic fatalities can be attributed to Smeed's Law. Generally speaking, this law hypothesizes that vehicle fatality rates will decline as the number of vehicles per capita rises. [1] Even though the increase in numbers of vehicles implies a mathematically increased probability of collision, the gains in experience and driving skill more than compensate. Mandated safety improvements could also explain why fatality rates decline. But this possible explanation is countered by data from the relatively unmotorized Third World, where fatality rates are following a pattern very similar to those in the relatively unmotorized United States during the early part of this century, despite the fact that the vehicles in the Third World today are equipped with modern safety features and the vehicles in the U.S. early in this century were mostly Model T Fords lacking even such rudimentary safety equipment as turn signals or brake lights. [2]

U.S. Fatalities Per 100 Million Miles



Sources:
Statistical Abstract of the United States
Historical Statistics of the United States

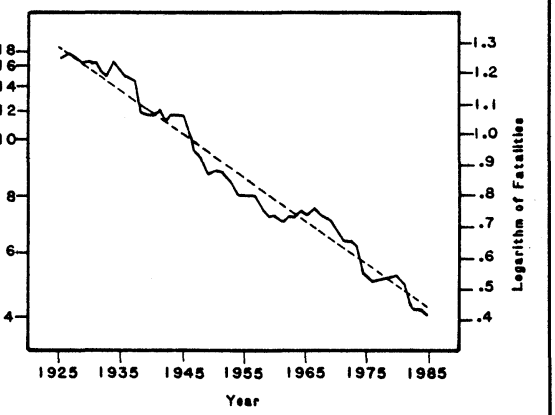
The inexorable downward trend in fatality rates combined with the cross-cultural comparison suggests that a simple model for how man and machine interact to produce accident statistics is inadequate. Though experts may profess to believe that the driver is the single most significant cause of accidents, projections of the life-saving impact of new safety equipment or regulations routinely overestimate the potential benefits. It seems clear that drivers are modifying their use of vehicles on the road in response to the safety programs in unexpected ways.

Behavior modification can produce some interesting and anomalous results from legislated safety programs. Some researchers have developed theories of "risk compensation" and "risk homeostasis" in order to explain the apparent negation of the intent of safety regulations. Other researchers vigorously deny that these behavioral changes can be as significant as proponents claim. The range of opinion varies, but can generally be classified into three broad theories:

1) The engineering model theorizes that behavioral adjustment will be minimal and most of the anticipated gains from improvements to vehicles or roadways will result in clear safety gains.

2) The economic model theorizes that the intended safety improvement is only one possible outcome, that drivers may opt for intensified vehicle performance as an alternative.

U.S. Fatalities On Logarithmic Scale



Sources:
Statistical Abstract of the United States
Historical Statistics of the United States

3) The risk homeostasis model theorizes that people have a set level of acceptable risk, that if this preference is unchanged, intended safety improvements will be nullified and risk will be redistributed rather than reduced. [3]

Examination of evidence relating to the effects of various safety-enhancement attempts seems seriously to undermine the engineering model. That this model still persists is more a testament to the fact that more transportation professionals are engineers than economists, statisticians, or psychologists. It is the engineering model that readily serves up the installation of traffic signals, the marking of crosswalks and improved driver training as obvious ways to reduce accidents. Yet, studies have shown that there is reason to challenge the effectiveness of each of these intended safety improvements.

When one considers the possible changes in human behavior in response to signalization of traffic intersections, it is perhaps less mysterious that the frequency of accidents is unchanged by the improvement. [4] A study of intersections in Milwaukee that had been signalized revealed 520 accidents in the three years before lights were installed compared to 522 in the three years after installation.

Of the pre-installation accidents, 134 involved injuries. Of the post-installation accidents, 154 involved injuries. Right angle impacts were down 34%, but rear-end, head-on and vehicle-bicycle collisions were up by 37 to 41%. [5] The types of accidents were altered, but the frequency and severity were not. Still, neighborhood committees of citizens are prone to demand that signals be installed in order to make intersections in their areas safer.

Obtaining painted crosswalks is another oft-launched neighborhood safety campaign, as are laws prohibiting mid-block crossing (jaywalking), and imposing fines for violations. One might think that painted crosswalks are clearly safer than unmarked locations for crossing streets. This is not the case. Statistics indicate that six times as many accidents occur in marked crosswalks. When adjusted for frequency of use, the accident rate is twice as high in the marked crossing. [6] Perhaps the "common sense" belief that painted crosswalks are safer may by itself account for the higher pedestrian accident rate at such places because they increase the pedestrians' sense of security more than is warranted, resulting in a greater incidence of heedless meandering into the path of vehicles that may be unwilling or unable to stop.

Traffic signals and crosswalks are rather passive means of influencing roadway user behavior. Surely, higher levels of driver skills should produce fewer accidents. Unfortunately, this premise, too, is shaky. Professional race-car drivers have higher accident rates in highway driving than the lesser skilled average drivers. [7] Drivers with the best vision, fastest reflexes and lowest likelihood of falling asleep (the young) have a 300% higher accident rate than older drivers. [8] Further, subjecting young drivers to mandatory driver education classes may not improve their accident record. Although insurance companies assert that driver education graduates have fewer and less costly accidents, [9] a study in Connecticut showed that the elimination of mandatory driver education classes in several high schools led to lower accident rates for the students of those schools. [10] Forcing students into mandatory driver education programs may encourage driving by those who would otherwise delay this experience and may contribute to overconfidence on the part of some other students. Clearly, even mandatory driver education—the most sacrosanct of safety programs—is not free of disconcerting statistical implications. Achieving safe roads may be more difficult than we would like to imagine.

Everyone "knows" that bad road conditions are more hazardous than good road conditions. How, then, does one explain the lower fatality rate per mile of travel in winter versus summer? How does one explain the lower injury rate for accidents on icy versus dry pavement?

The counter-intuitive statistics of accident reports should be enough to produce caution in claiming benefits of various safety programs. Alas, most of the safety claims made to the public show little of this needed caution. For example, everyone "knows" that bad road conditions (i.e: snow and ice) are more hazardous than good road conditions. How, then, does one explain the lower fatality rate per mile of travel in winter versus summer? How does one explain the lower injury rate for accidents on icy *vs* dry pavement? [11] These statistics would appear to support a "risk compensation" theory of driver behavior in which the greater care exercised under perceived hazardous conditions overwhelms the effects of the bad road surface. Conversely, the perceived greater traction in good summer weather may lead to a more than proportionate decline in driver caution. The very possibility that drivers modify their behavior results in uncertainty about the benefits of any safety measure.

Changes in driver behavior affect the risk to others using the highway system. At the same time safety legislators or regulators are patting themselves on their backs for making the vehicle and its driver more crashworthy, there is the very real possibility that unsuspecting victims are being created. If survival odds are enhanced for drivers, their willingness to risk crashes is apt to increase, thus increasing injuries and fatalities for pedestrians, bicyclists and motorcyclists.

Apologists for mandatory safety rules feel compelled to defend their theories at this point. Some argue that people do not willingly increase their risk-taking as a result of improved crashworthiness of vehicles. To bolster this line of reasoning, the case of the so-called invisible safety improvements is ushered in: It is argued that often the driver does not know that safey enhancements have been made; internal vehicle modifications may be invisible to the driver. Shock absorbing guardrails and breakaway light poles do not present a readily identifiable difference in appearance to the average driver in a moving vehicle. Therefore, some observers conclude that safety features such as these cannot affect driver behavior. [12]

The "undetectable" safety improvement may sound plausible on superficial examination, but drivers do not base their actions only on what they know. Drivers may assume and presume as well as know or not know the particular features of the roadway. Many an accident occurs because an assumption made by the driver has proven incorrect. Safety improvements are frequently advertised by either vehicle manufacturers or proud public highway officials anxious to make it known that the roads are safer because of better guardrails or light poles. Many drivers may assume that the safety improvements are more widespread or more effective than they really are.

Even those apologists for mandatory safety programs who concede that significant behavior modification takes place often take refuge in the apparent "net gain" achieved by the rules. Okay, so making cars safer induces drivers to assume more risk, and this may result in rises in fatalities for certain other users of the roadways. Even taking these increased fatalities into account, they argue, there is still considerable net gain in lives saved. This argument is prominent in the debate over mandatory seat belt use laws.

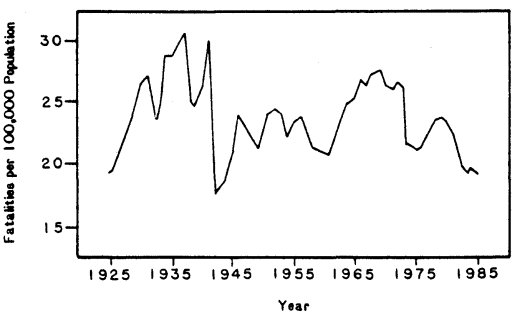
In a study of the effects of seat belt

legislation in Great Britain, support for the risk compensation hypothesis was found. Post-legislation data showed that fatality rates for drivers and front seat passengers were down by 18% and 25% respectively. Meanwhile, fatality rates for back-seat passengers were up by 27%, pedestrians by 8%, and cyclists by 13%. [13] If one considers only those fatalities among non-occupants caused by cars (the only vehicles affected by the mandatory seat belt law), the increase in fatality rates were 14% and 40%, respectively, for pedestrians and cyclists. [14] All of these increases and decreases added up to an estimated net gain of 200 lives saved.

Even if there is a net gain in lives saved (a matter by no means proven), is it acceptable to shift the carnage from drivers who have the option of buckling-up in the absence of compulsion and who control the havoc-wreaking vehicle, to non-occupants attempting to use the same roadways? While there is some controversy over the meaning of the increased fatalities among pedestrians, cyclists and back-seat passengers, these results were predicted by the British Department of Transport. Prior to the enactment of the compulsory seat belt use law, a DOT report forecast a potentially "alarming" rise in pedestrian deaths if the law were passed. [15] The study's examination of accident rates in countries with mandatory use laws found that in every case road accidents increased. All of the increases were small and not statistically significant. However, the odds against unanimity of direction of change on a random basis in the eight countries surveyed is 256 to 1. The study concluded that compulsory seat belt use could not be shown to have led to a detectable reduction of roadway fatalities. [16] Unfortunately, though, this report was not released for four years—two years after the mandatory belt use law went into effect.

Advocates of mandatory safety rules have called the rise in pedestrian deaths following enactment of seat belt laws "mysterious," [17] but the suppression of the DOT study appears even more mysterious. The prior trend in pedestrian traffic deaths had been downward, with 1000 fewer pedestrian fatalities in the ten years before the enactment of the seat belt law than in the decade before. [18] The reversal of this trend for fewer pedestrian fatalities following enactment of mandatory seat belt usage laws, of course, does not conclusively prove that the laws caused the increase in fatalities. But the flat denial of the possible cause-and-effect relationship is certainly not justified. Many of the proponents of compulsory safety take a very dogmatic stance regarding such disconcerting data. The refusal to consider the possibility that mandatory measures actually increase fatalities—even when such a forecast is made prior to the enactment of the law and seems to be borne out by the statistics—suggests that faith rather than reason fuels much of the debate over mandatory safety rules.

Motor Vehicle Fatality Rate



Sources:
Statistical Abstract of the United States
Historical Statistics of the United States

Of course, statistics on accidents give rise to differing interpretations. The real world in which the effects of safety measures must be observed is not a controlled experiment. Confounding effects abound. Multiple factors affect the behaviors of roadway users. Sadly, these confounding influences are often ignored by those with an abiding faith in the efficacy of compulsion. Advocates of mandatory seat belt use in Britain were quick to claim credit for the net gain in lives saved in the year after the law went into effect. Further analysis of the statistics showed an amazing disparity between a 23% decline in fatality rates during the prime drinking hours and a 3% decline in death rates for other times. The simultaneous initiation of an intensified enforcement of laws against drunk driving may have accounted for this disparity, yet this intensified enforcement received no credit from the advocates of seat belt laws. [19]

The devotion to the dogma that compulsion works persists even in the absence of compliance with the mandated behavior. The classic demonstration of this phenomenon was seen in the phrase "55 saves lives." The battle over the 55 mph speed limit is heavily flavored with this emotional appeal. Unquestionably, crashes occurring at speeds of 55 mph are generally less severe than crashes at higher speeds. The odds of dying in a 65 mph crash are greater than in a 55 mph crash. The claim that 55 saves lives would seem fairly solid—until, that is, one discovers that posting roads at 55 mph may have little effect on actual driving speeds. Studies by state highway agencies have indicated that over 70% of the vehicles traveling on the Interstate Highway System exceed the 55 mph limit. [20] In testimony for the House committee hearings on the 55 mph limit, the Director of the Arizona Department of Transportation pointed out that in 1973, when rural Interstate routes were posted at 70 to 75 mph, the observed normal speed was 68 mph. In 1986, when these same routes were posted at 55 mph, the observed normal speed was 66 mph. [21] How can the mere act of posting 55 mph signs be seriously credited with saving lives, if the traffic is moving as if the signs weren't there? If posting signs that are ignored saves lives, then perhaps a new theory explaining the mechanism is needed.

Accident Homeostasis

When one examines the long term trends in accidental deaths, one cannot fail to be impressed by the lack of progress in reducing the fatality rates on a per capita basis. The fatality rate per mile of travel has beat a steady retreat, averaging a decline of about 3% per year. But the fatality rate per capita shows no such salutary trend. The per capita death rate from motor vehicle accidents has followed an erratic path over the last 60 years (see graph above). The 1985 death rate of 19.1 per 100,000 persons is similar to the 1925 death rate. [22] The fluctuations in the motor vehicle fatality rate tend to undermine any confidence in the aggregate efficacy of imposed safety measures. Death rates

from all sources of accidents follow a similar trendless pattern. [23]

Mandatory vehicle safety rules may not be affecting the rate at which people succumb to accidental demise, but only the specific means. Saving people from death in a particular circumstance apparently is being offset by increased instances of risk-taking. This raises the very pertinent question of whether all the effort and expense is worthwhile. The naive cliché that "if even one life is saved, the effort is worthwhile," ignores the real issue of cost. We don't have to get into an unresolvable debate over the value of a human life in order to deal with the issue of cost. Resources are limited. Funds expended on one program to save lives are not simultaneously available for another program.

The cost of safety programs can be substantial. During 1985, over $100 million in federal highway fund money was spent on safety improvements. [24] Vehicle manufacturers incur about $20 billion per year in order to comply with assorted government regulations. [25] These costs, of course, must be covered by revenues from vehicle sales. The increased cost of new vehicles with these enhanced safety features deter purchase by many would-be buyers unable or unwilling to pay marked-up prices—thus keeping older, presumably less safe, vehicles on the road longer.

The insurance industry is a firm supporter of most mandatory safety rules on the theory that safety improvements help reduce damage claims and, therefore, insurance premiums. However, the insurance industry's own newsletter reports that the additional costs of required safety equipment on vehicles is three times as large as the anticipated savings in insurance premiums. [26] Paying three dollars in order to save one dollar in damages does not seem like cost-effective utilization of limited resources. Nevertheless, ineffectual expenditure of scarce resources is more the rule than the exception in government safety programs. A General Accounting Office study of the effectiveness of $1.3 billion in federal safety grants found "little demonstrated effect in reducing the traffic crash toll." [27]

The time and money invested in compelling the wearing of seat belts, for example, is time and money unavailable for the suppression of criminal activity. Since we have focused on fatality rates, perhaps it would be interesting to investigate the trend in murders over recent years. The figures are not trendless. Since 1960, deaths by homicide have more than doubled from 2.5/100,000 persons to 6.3 in 1982. [28] Can people genuinely concerned about the safety of other human beings seriously urge that police shift efforts from crime control to issuing citations for failure to wear seat belts? [29]

The unintended safety consequences of non-safety programs may be of greater impact than planned safety efforts. Trucking deregulation, for example, has actually resulted in increased road safety.

While the absence of a trend in accident fatality rates in the face of a multitude of government safety mandates may be baffling, the surge in homicides is alarming. In many parts of the country, people dare not wander outdoors during the hours of darkness. Providing for law and order is a prime reason for the existence of government. Can we neglect this responsibility in order to pursue a futile effort to save people from their own folly of not wearing seat belts?

The unintended safety consequences of non-safety programs may be of greater impact than planned safety efforts. Trucking deregulation, for example, has actually resulted in increased road safety. Critics of the loosening of operating, entry, and price controls achieved by the Motor Carrier Act of 1980 assert that increased accidents have been a result of this partial deregulation, and serve up lurid anecdotal accounts to bolster this claim. But the statistics tell a different story. Fatalities and accidents have actually declined since 1980. [30] This is exactly the opposite of the impression conveyed in the popular media.

One factor making deregulated truck transport safer is the decrease in empty backhaul miles. Operating limitations under the stricter regulations prevailing prior to 1980 resulted in more mileage for empty trucks. Accident reports show that empty trucks crash more often than loaded trucks. [31] Thus, the higher load factors permitted under loosened controls unintentionally contributes to reduced hazard.

Unintended reduction of hazards also resulted from the attempt to conserve fuel by downsizing vehicles. Not only do smaller cars burn less gasoline, they are also 28% less likely to crash into other vehicles or objects. [32] Drivers of smaller cars have been observed to exercise more caution in the way they operate their vehicles, by reducing their speed and leaving more headway between vehicles. These behaviors not only enhance safety for the small vehicle driver, but for other road users as well.

Individual Responsibility

Back in 1975, Professor Sam Pelztman shocked the safety establishment by arguing that many widely-touted safety regulations were useless, or worse, actually counterproductive. [33] Safety rules are not imposed upon inanimate objects. Human beings operate motor vehicles. They respond in ways that act to offset the gains in safety anticipated by rulemakers. Peltzman saw intended safety benefits being consumed

"I forgot to fasten my seat belt when I drove to work this morning, so I'd like to turn myself in."

as performance gains under what he termed increased driving intensity. [34] Whether drivers are more intense, or whether travel becomes more frequent, or shifts in mode, or whether the reduction of one element of risk (in this case, in transportation) is mirrored by an increase elsewhere, statistics do indicate a relative lack of positive impact from decades of safety regulation.

Although Peltzman's work has been widely criticized for failing to prove that safety regulations don't work, one has to wonder: on whom does burden of proof fall? Should the burden of proof lie with the advocates of expending billions of dollars to force highway users to consume intended safety benefits? Or should it be thrust upon those who challenge the use of coercion for purposes of undemonstrated benefit? (Incidentally, despite all the complaints about Peltzman's methodology, his method did precisely predict the fatality rate per vehicle mile for 1980 of 3.3/100,000 miles. [35]

It would seem that an equitable and efficient determination of the burden of proof would place the responsibility on the vendor of the purported benefits. In the market economy, it is the merchant who must persuade the customer that the value of the product is worth the price, not the customer who must prove to the merchant that the product offers no benefit. To stand this relationship on its head—as the proponents of compulsory safety rules insist on doing—perverts both equity and efficiency. It is not equitable for others to seize power over one's means for one's own good. And it is laughable to maintain that it is more efficient for the government to dictate the expenditure of time and money on each person's behalf. After all, waste of resources is standard operating procedure for government.

The key to creating safer roadways is not to turn engineers loose with someone else's money. Nor is it to relieve individuals of choice and the responsibility for that choice. Such efforts move in a direction opposite of progress. The acting human being is the most significant factor in whether accidents occur. Encouraging individuals to perceive and comprehend the significance of their actions is a more promising avenue toward improved safety than coercing them—even if "for their own good." ❑

Notes

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27. "GAO Questions Effectiveness of Safety Grants," *Status Report* (November 21, 1980), pp. 1–2.
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32. Leonard Evans, "Accident Involvement Rate and Car Size," *Accident Analysis and Prevention* (Vol 16), pp. 387 - 401.
33. Sam Peltzman, "The Effects of Automobile Safety Regulation," *Journal of Political Economy* (1975, Vol. 83, No. 4), pp. 677–725.
34. Ibid.
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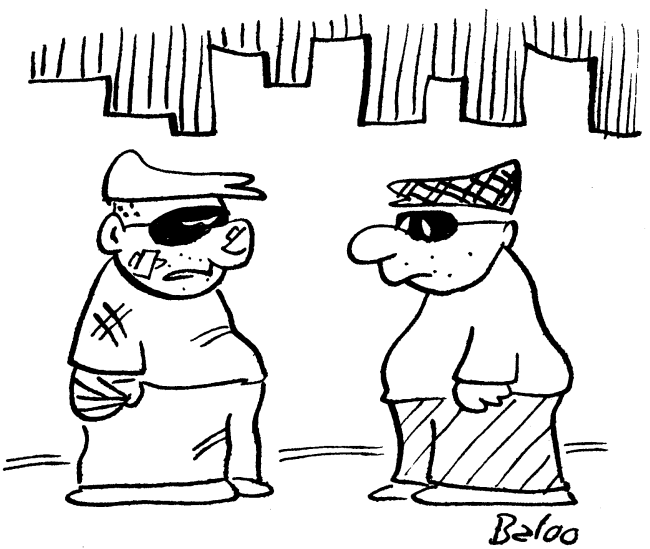
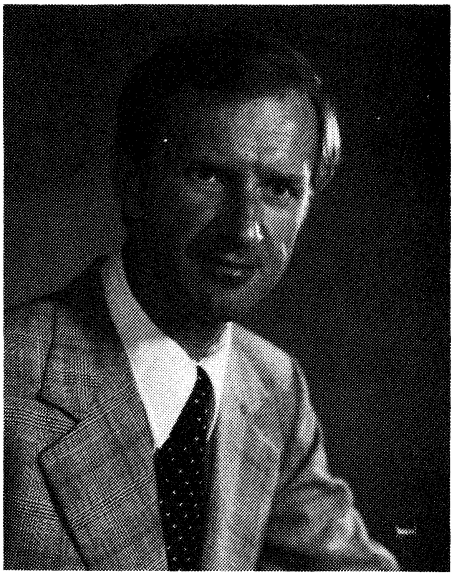


"You can't win — you finally get the City Council to pass effective gun-control legislation, and then the little old ladies stick *knitting needles* in you!"

DR. MATTHEW MONROE
Libertarian Party Chair



Past: Born in Warsaw, Poland, 1941, left in 1967 when his original scientific research was supressed for political reasons (later published in the *Journal of Biological Chemistry*). M.D., School of Medicine, Wroclaw. PhD., U.C., San Franciso & Berkeley. Attended Columbia University Libertarian Conference, 1971. Joined the Libertarian Party, 1975. Texas LP Finance Chair, 1980-1982. Elected to Libertarian National Committee, 1981. National LP Finance Chair, 1982-85. Developed and successfully implemented national LP telephone fundraising, the monthly Liberty Pledge program, and the Torch Club program. Finance Chair, Ron Paul Libertarian for President, 1988.

Present: Married with two children. Practicing cardiologist. Member, Denton Cooley Cardiology Society. Membership Chair of national LP, 1987-present. Developed "Instant Membership" program, which has brought in over 2,000 new members. Publisher, *American Libertarian* newspaper.

Future: "To carry out its mission, the Libertarian Party needs competent, professional management, entrepreneurial leadership, and more financial resources to fund important projects."

"The Libertarian National Committee is just too big to manage effectively. We don't need a mini-legislature. We need a capable board of directors with business and management experience to prepare the LP for the 1990's and beyond."

"The national LP should perform as a service organization. It should provide professional ballot access and political development services to state and local parties. Cut the overhead and provide more benefits to members, like a monthly party newspaper."

"The three central goals if I am elected as national LP chair are 1) **Managing for Growth** - finding, hiring and motivating the best people we can find to end stagnation, provide our organization with new prospects and members, and raise the necessary money to pay for new programs; 2) **the Permanent Campaign** - where full-time ballot access and political development professionals carry forward the work usually done only during major election years. This also means professional advertising (print, TV and radio), lobbying, public speaking engagements by LP representatives, and active public relations efforts; and 3) **the LP 2000 Program** - the LP in the year 2000 will be led and run by those we recruit and train in the next few years. This means starting an active student organization program, funding workshops and student conferences, and producing new literature and recruiting campaigns to find new members and develop future leadership in every state party."

"The Libertarian Party already has wonderfully generous and hardworking supporters, the best ideas in politics, and an American public increasingly fed up with the two-party choices. All we need now is solid, capable leadership for our party. I am assembling a team which will provide that leadership, and I sincerely hope you will join me in this very important work." - **Matt Monroe**

Monroe / Chair Leadership, for a Change

Join the Monroe / LP Chair team!

Send to: Monroe/LP Chair, Dr. Matthew T. Monroe, 1213 Hermann Dr., #655, Houston, TX 77004

Yes, I want to help!

- ☐ I want to join the Monroe/LP Chair Committee.
- ☐ I plan on being a delegate to the Philadelphia LP convention.
- ☐ I want to help; enclosed is my check for $_____ (payable to Monroe for Chair).
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Travel

You *Can* Go Home Again, But . . .

by Tibor R. Machan

Cleanliness, efficient driving, and pretty buildings *versus* racism, sexism and spinelessness before government.

I have a fantasy. I am watching a Woody Allen movie about a bunch of 14th century city planners in Venice, figuring out how they will play practical jokes on 20th century tourists. They make it impossible to park anywhere near their wonderful works; they design alleys so narrow that people can pass through only at a snail's pace; they guarantee that no one in their cities can speak a word of any language aside from an obscure Italian dialect.

It's just a fantasy. What I was much more conscious of as I traveled throughout Europe during the last few years—while teaching at Franklin College in Lugano, Switzerland—is the reality that too much of what is glorious and remarkable about Europe sits atop the blood and sweat and even bodies of the millions of poor blokes who were oppressed so that it could all be built. Tourists gape at the treasures, and take video-pictures and snapshots. But the substance of the experience that made all of it happen is mostly hidden from them. As one tours Europe one should bear in mind the fate of the masons, bricklayers, and others who built those marvelous palaces and cathedrals. Their fate is nothing Europeans can be very glad about, despite the fact that mixed in with the misery are two millennia of artistic and scientific achievement.

A European tour is of special significance for someone like me who was born in Europe but saw profit in leaving for America. Europe simply doesn't impress me as much as it would a tourist coming to terms with the remnants of Western culture there for the first time. These remnants are an impressive lot, I grant you, and if you don't watch out you may come home saying things like, "We in this country just don't appreciate culture, art, music, architecture, beauty, etc. enough."

There is an outrageous cultural nonsense that is part of virtually every inch of European society, a thoroughgoing ethnic prejudice that inflicts virtually everyone on the European continent. Furthermore, Europeans believe there is more culture in some tiny French, German or Austrian town than in entire states of the U.S.A.

There is no denying that Europe offers up a long list of impressive accomplishments of the Western mind and labors—from the canals in Amsterdam to the pitch dark tunnels in Norway, from the 10 mile long tunnel in Switzerland to the architecture and other marvels of Florence, Venice, Siena, Barcelona and, of course, London, Paris, Rome. But for me, this is not what I think of when I think of Europe. If I want to rekindle my visions of these cultural offerings, I can look at my books from Milan and Vienna or Ghent. When I think of Europe's culture, I rely on my own experience.

But what is it to live in Europe, to go through life there—not to see it from a tour bus for two or three weeks, as a cursory observer of literally outstanding items—but actually to live there?

I am convinced that Europe is in certain respects far more morally degenerate than America, contrary to received intellectual opinion. The impression given us by such intellectuals as the American novelist-misanthrope Gore Vidal is that America is a corrupt culture while Europe is a noble one. These literati continuously yap about how backward the U.S. is in this or that respect bearing on its social institution—can't you just hear the expression, "We, in this country, never . . . ," and "We, in this country, always . . ."—as if they had canvassed all the other places on the face of the earth and found them all morally and politically advanced beyond anything we could even dream of. But the truth is that amid the expensive ornamentation of European culture lives a deservedly dispirited population still exhibiting habits of mind and action they ought to have progressed beyond centuries ago.

Consider the matter of racial or

ethnic prejudice.You simply cannot escape it in Europe. Virtually every European hates some group just for being that group, never mind that he or she knows perhaps just one of these people personally. The northern Austrians I met were simply contemptuous of the lower Austrians. Most Italian Swiss hate the German Swiss, while the Danes generally despise the Swedes—the story is the same everywhere.

Or consider the role of women in European society. One can go from England to Italy, from Spain to Hungary, and from Germany through all the lands of Scandinavia, but one will never find women being accorded the status they usually have in the United States. Just attend a small dinner party in, say, Austria, and see what happens. The guests separate into groups of men and women and talk of matters presumed to be of interest only to members of their own sex. At a dinner party in Lugano, this segregation shocked me. The host's wife, an attorney who works in Milan, was confined to the company of the other women, talking about matters of the home, while her husband joined the men to discuss worldly matters. Any effort to mix the two groups was met with disdain.

Some see the way European men treat women as a kind of quaint romanticism. Never mind that it often has visibly painful effects on the women themselves who sense that something evil is going on but have no social support for fighting it! The notion of equality of the sexes seems unknown in Europe.

As you go further to the East, the unequal treatment of women becomes more and more evident. Some of my students hailed from Saudi Arabia, Syria and Iran. Arranged marriages were common in their cultures. Some even complained that their minds were assaulted adversely by all the casual coeducation that prevailed in the West.

To some, even among the American intellectuals who live and teach in Europe, this is all a matter of cultural pluralism to be regarded as just so much human diversity. "How dare you judge these societies?" they ask. I wonder, how is it that the segregation of women in Western Europe and the subjugation of women in Saudi Arabia is a mere cultural diversity, when the segregation of Blacks in South Africa or the persecution of Jews or profiteers in the Soviet Union is morally unacceptable. Perhaps the South African or Russian ruling classes are just a bit too diverse!

But this is just the beginning. Worse still was the persistent deference to public authority one finds everywhere in Europe, not to mention the inefficiencies of European bureaucracies or the medieval political traditions that still plague the inhabitants of that continent, despite their supposed emancipation to democratic polities.

Amid the expensive ornamentation of European culture lives a deservedly dispirited population exhibiting habits of mind and action they ought to have progressed beyond centuries ago.

As an American, I was simply not accustomed to being deferential to bureaucrats, and I had several run-ins with them. I shipped my small personal computer to Switzerland. When it arrived customs held it up, demanding I pay 72 Swiss Francs duty, which would be refunded when I took it out of the country after my year of teaching was up. It was an old, obsolete unit, and all this business of paying duty on it seemed idiotic to me. I told them so—moreover, it was hell finding a parking place near the train station, so I argued about it, saying "The rule is stupid. I can only remain here for a year anyway, the voltage is wrong on the machine so I will have to use a transformer. Why bother me with all this nonsense? Just let me have my computer." They looked at each other and finally decided to let me take the machine, not wishing to put up with me. This sort of thing occurred more than once, and on each occasion I defeated the bureaucracy.

But the locals did not stand up to the bureaucrats. Most of the time they were subjected to the stern stares of the authorities and did as they were told. In most of Europe the authorities are still the sovereign, the citizen is still a subject. The bureaucracies are so used to compliance from their "subjects," that they were entirely unprepared for any resistence. In contrast, here in the U. S. the bureaucracies are prepared for protests; the distinctive American mentality tends toward rebellion!

There are exceptions to this statist culture, of course. I had the opportunity to lecture to two university law school classes in Belgium, and both at Ghent and Brussels the interest in the individualist viewpoint—where I substitute a kind of Aristotelian or classical egoism derived from Rand for the more prevalent Hobbesian egoism—was pronounced. The questions were eager—all in English and fluent!—and insightful. Professors to whom I tried to explain the Lockean-natural rights, Aristotelian-Randian individualism were attentive and respectful, quite unlike the majority of the members of the academic political philosophers and legal theorists in the United States. In Austria and in Italy, too, surprising interest was shown in these kinds of thoughts. But, this should not be that surprising—the ideas are sound and many of them came from Europe in the first place.

But I am diverging into politics, something I had hoped to avoid as much as possible, though it is difficult in a culture where so much of a person's life is a political matter. Let me from here on stick to more cultural and social impressions, whether they touch on politics or not. In Europe the private and public sectors are not even as well distinguished as in America, so keeping one's focus to just one realm is virtually impossible. Politics will unavoidably creep into any cultural observation.

There are certain aspects of the European reverence for public authority that are welcome to any civilized individual. One finds, for example, very little public dirt in much of Europe. The act of littering has never seemed

civil to me, despite Walter Block's arguments in *Defending the Undefendable.* Happily it is not known to most Europeans, though there are exceptions in the seedier districts of Amsterdam, Zurich, and other larger cities.

But on the whole Northern Europe is clean and tidy. The road-side feculence—beer cans, Styrofoam cups, plastic bottles, tires, and whatnot that one finds along many roads in the U.S.—simply is not tolerated in most of Europe. The kind of grime one sees here on many abandoned buildings, cars, and machinery of all kinds just is not in evidence in the most of Europe. Driving 10,000 miles, from Norway to Spain, I saw practically none of the thoughtless litter one so often encounters on this side of the Atlantic. (Roadsides are a bit messier in Italy and Eastern Europe, but even in these countries the litter is far less evident than in much of the U.S.)

I was often annoyed by the slow pace and inflexibility of European life. In Switzerland the trading hours are written in granite and no one will even consider a change. Everything is closed on Sunday except some tourist shops and restaurants. In Italy, Spain and France the siesta seems sacred. And while these practices appear innocent enough and it seems like a sensible practice to follow the maxim "When in Rome do as the Romans do"—the resulting pace is irritatingly slow, at least for this American.

Even so, I must admit that the slower pace encouraged weekend relaxation. The enforced leisure, combined with the primitive quality of European television, encouraged me to read seven novels in as many months, a pace that quickly dwindled after my return to the U.S.

Motoring was the one exception to the slower pace that prevailed in Europe. There people tend to drive fast, which I found far more pleasurable and efficient than the constant moseying about that one finds in America.

Hardly anyone crawls about the roads. Men and women alike drive aggressively, tailgating those who drive slowly, passing at the first chance. Speed limits are a joke in most places; in Germany there are no speed limits at all. (Only in Denmark, Sweden and Norway are people very slow drivers and the authorities picky about speed limits.) The slow drivers make way for the fast ones, pedestrians don't linger, and the atmosphere is something near that found at Le Mans or Monza during the racing season. Despite the faster, more aggressive driving, I saw only one accident during my entire stay in Europe.

Europeans tend to regard their cars as precious toys and seem to think of driving as a skill that they must cultivate as a matter of pride. I suspect some of the motivations lying behind the phenomenon don't reflect nicely on the drivers. Some seem to take driving too seriously—as if their character or virtue depended on their speed. This makes for efficiency, again, but not for fellow feeling. Others seem to lord their powerful driving machines over the rest, in the fashion of ancient dukes or barons. Still, I'd much rather drive on the Autobahn than on an American expressway.

But when it comes to certain features of travel, watch out. The public be damned! If construction is going on in Europe, one may have to drive ten miles out of one's way and the public works authorities think nothing of it. If an accident needs to be investigated, traffic just halts and no one can move for several hours. On the Italian *autostrade,* between Milan and Bologna, I saw tie-ups that must have been thirty miles long, with no visible movement—people sitting atop their vehicles, eating lunch, waiting until the police decided they had had their look-see. To make a free lane for the cars simply didn't occur to anyone.

And the same could be found in several cities. When some street needed repaving, it was simply shut down and traffic was rerouted around town, period. Who cared for the public? No one. It is the authorities who are in command, it is the state that calls the shots, the people—you and I and the rest of us mere individuals—be damned!

Europe has a hold on me. I love many of its sights and sounds. But living there would be more than I could stand. ❑

Letters, *continued from page 6*

environmental quality. Like most political activities, environmental protection becomes another method of transferring income to the politically influential. And, complete central management of the environment is no more possible than central planning of the economy.

Fortunately, it is unnecessary to explain how every possible environmental problem will be solved in a libertarian utopia. Market-oriented solutions can be developed for concrete environmental problems. Some political involvement can end immediately. Perhaps, one day, all political involvement can end.

W. William Woolsey
Charleston, S. Car.

Political Limitations

What Mr. Hospers (*Liberty,* Jan 1989) does not seem to realize is that there is not just one answer to the environmental problem. If the government tries to solve the problem, however, it must, by its very nature, try to solve the problem by using only *one* solution. An example of this is the government's solution to the wild fires in Yellowstone National Park in the summer of 1989. By having set policies to solve problems the government is in no position to hedge its policies against the possibility that their understanding later proves to be incorrect.

Using market solutions to solve environmental problems may not give us the most optimal solutions in all cases, but it gives alternative solutions a chance to prove themselves, as well as hedging society against the disastrous consequences of using the wrong policy.

Solutions to the commons problem are emerging. I wish Mr. Hospers would spend more time analyzing these solutions instead of giving fuel for governmental, authoritarian control over the environment.

John Cralley Shaw
Houston, Tex.

Essay

The End of Political Activism

by Jeffrey Friedman

The trouble with political activism is that it encourages an unreflective dogmatism that serves neither to propagate liberty nor enrich the lives of its practitioners.

The most amazing thing about the Libertarian Party is how it still grips the minds of its supporters—and even its detractors.

There was a time when the notion of promoting libertarian ideas through politics did *not* seem as natural as rain. In fact, when the LP was founded in 1971, such figures as Murray Rothbard maintained that it was premature.

The counter-argument at that time was that the LP would be an educational vehicle that might effectively take advantage of Americans' brief election-year interest in politics. This implied an experimental, empirical approach of the kind that must characterize any good strategy. If the LP failed to educate, then presumably the likes of Rothbard would be proven right and the political approach would be abandoned.

But even before the 1972 campaign was over, the LP had taken on a life of its own. The question of abandoning the LP was never seriously debated, and the cycle of unrealistic electoral expectations, dashed hopes, burn-out, fresh illusions and renewed disillusionment had begun.

The Libertarian Party is like a black hole: the rest of the universe sees little of it, but it sucks in the energy and attention of those already inside, warping their perceptions of the outside world. Judged from a perspective at all removed from the tiny realm of the LP—judged by its impact on the rest of our society—the Libertarian Party is, unfortunately, a failure. If, as many believe, free-market ideas are gaining ground in the real world, it is no more the product of current LP efforts, as heroic as they are, than the acceptance of the welfare state is the product of the efforts of the Communist Party U.S.A.

This does not mean that the LP has done no good—far from it. It has put the word libertarian on the map. And it has gathered together most of the people who were already libertarians, in many cases making them aware of that identity for the first time.

But would anyone dispute that the task of changing minds, or at least of influencing young and still open minds, has *largely* gone unfulfilled by the LP? And in retrospect, could we really have expected otherwise? Can five-minute TV spots really be seen as a way to reverse the complex of moral, historical, and economic assumptions and ignorance we are up against?

The libertarian political strategy—in all its permutations, not just that of the LP—requires evading the fact that we are trying to change the course of our *culture*. There is no reason to assume this can be accomplished by running candidates for office. But that is just what the political strategy assumes.

The hold of the political strategy is evident in the public evaluations of the disappointing vote cast for Ron Paul. Many still cling to the hope that, with enough persistence and professionalism, the LP will (somehow) ultimately make a breakthrough. Others think more TV advertising, or accepting federal matching funds, will do the trick. Tellingly, even those who consider the possibility that the LP has failed are reduced to considering such "alternatives" as starting a PAC or joining the GOP. Regardless of its ultimate fate, the LP has long since politicized the libertarian movement, in the sense of making its members take for granted a very dubious but, in any case, *hypothetical* assumption: that the way to change society is through politics. Thus, even when they question the efficacy of the LP, libertarians now rarely ask whether political strategies serve any useful function, let alone the educational one they were supposed to.

"The educational strategy"—how dull and naive and, as we liked to say in the so-called Crane Machine, "plonky" that seemed in the salad days of the libertarian movement (1978–80). But it need not connote, as it did for us then, fruitless attempts to "convert" people, one by one, by shoving copies of pamphlets and magazines into their unwilling hands. That is an educational strategy that might have worked in the nineteenth century, when all sorts of crackpot ideas ran rampant because people were willing to listen to the street-corner hawker of ideological

nostrums. Those days are gone. In the twentieth century it is no longer possible for most people to take seriously political or other ideas that are not sanctioned by the cultural establishment.[1]

F. A. Hayek has detected the pyramidal structure of that establishment. The "second-hand dealers in ideas"—mass-media and entertainment figures and other opinion leaders—simply retail the original ideas of the creative thinkers, for consumption by the masses. The explosion of knowledge and of scientific expertise has conspired to make only those who are socially or culturally marginal receptive to views that have not been legitimized by the arbiters of respectable values and ideas. Ironically, the more knowledge there is, the more we need cultural gatekeepers to keep out the clutter. This is why, despite the accessibility to so many people of so much knowledge and the means of creating it, our culture is *more* homogeneous now than it was a hundred years ago (when we set aside the affects of the immigration of people from other societies).

The gate-keepers of cultural respectability Hayek calls intellectuals. He writes that they "are the organs which modern society has developed for spreading knowledge and ideas, and it is their convictions and opinions which operate as the sieve through which all new conceptions must pass before they can reach the masses."[2] Note Hayek's claim that the role of intellectuals serves a social purpose. Whether or not one agrees that it is the clutter-reducing purpose I have just suggested, one must, I think, come to grips with the fact that we do live in a society that is *structurally* averse to ideas that have not been legitimized by the top of the intellectual pyramid.

In our society, opinion leaders (Hayek's "intellectuals") take their cues from expert opinion—i.e., from those even higher on the intellectual pyramid—which they propagate not just by interviewing the likes of Lester Thurow on the news, but, much more importantly, by exercising the judgment moulded by their own years of secondary and post-secondary education under the tutelage of experts. If one wants to change the culture of our day and age, then, one goes to the top of the intellectual pyramid—to the professors who educate Hayek's intellectuals—and works one's way down. *That* is the twentieth-century educational strategy.

Political strategies, on the other hand, try vainly to work from the bottom up. Not only is this an inefficient use of resources, but it requires combating the constant stream of negative information spilling down the pyramid.

How can even the best-financed political campaign hope to compete with the entire culture? Debates over whether to accept matching funds or run TV ads pale into absurdity when we consider the actual position of the best-funded, most professional LP campaign, that of Ed Clark in 1980. The post-1980 debate over "principle vs. opportunism" misidentified the real tension Clark faced: he was constantly caught between, on the one hand, the effort to attain the cultural respectability he needed in order to be taken seriously, and, on the other, the fact that the more respectable he got, the less "educating" he could do. If his TV spots or personal appearances said anything really radical, they would be ignored; but if they were respectable enough to be taken seriously, what libertarian principles could they possibly communicate?

The Libertarian Party is like a black hole: the rest of the universe sees little of it, but it sucks in the energy and attention of those already inside, warping their perceptions of the rest of the universe.

But focusing on this aspect of the Clark campaign is itself symptomatic of the unquestioned premise that politics is an effective means of education. For it assumes that if there were a way to overcome the "principle vs. opportunism" dilemma—say, by packaging radicalism in a veneer of respectability, which the Clark campaign probably did as much as humanly possible—this would accomplish something important. But what evidence is there that merely *advocating* radical measures, or even explaining them cogently for a few minutes, as Ron Paul was able to do in TV interviews, will persuade anyone to abandon beliefs that have been, and continue to be, constantly reinforced by the rest of our culture—even if such advocacy *could* be made to appear respectable?

There are, then, at least two reasons political strategies inherently tend to fail. One is that it is difficult, if not impossible, to attempt to get a hearing for ideas the culture considers illegitimate. The other is that even given such a hearing, politics cannot persuasively communicate the *reasons* for holding such ideas. This leads to another familiar frustration of libertarian politics, one which, again, I witnessed almost daily during the Clark campaign: the fact that even those members of the media and the public who do try to take libertarian positions seriously are bewildered by their underlying rationale, and thus tend to focus on "laundry lists" of seemingly bizarre LP platform planks. This has less to do with any "media bias" against the LP than with a simple failure to appreciate the complex reasons libertarians have for, say, favoring a completely free market. This failure, I suggest, stems from the inadequacy of the political forum for communicating such reasons. As libertarians well know, politics is the most simplistic, irrational segment of modern mass culture; politicians invariably do their best to *follow*, not change, the basest, most idiotic passions of the electorate. So what makes us think we can use this forum to *educate* people about radically disturbing, hyper-rational ideas?

These fundamental dilemmas of the political strategy are easily lost sight of, however, because that strategy has become so much a part of libertarians' nature that they rarely stop to ask what it is supposed to accomplish, and how. Yes, of course, TV ads could have brought Ron Paul more votes in 1988. But what good does it do for the LP vote total to skyrocket from one-half of one percent to one or even two percent? Whose mind does that change? Matching funds would bring more votes. Taking over the Republican party would, too (!). But all of this, which passes for strategic debate, comes down to quibbling over *political* tactics.

The strategic question of whether *any* such tactics can *change anybody's mind* has been forgotten.

I have heard only one plausible at-

tempt to justify the political strategy despite its manifest failure as an educational tool. This attempt concedes the greater efficacy of attempts to reach intellectuals, but points out that there are lots of non-intellectual libertarians who need something to do; the LP fills the gap. Ed Clark is cited as a proponent of this view. [3] It should be noted that this is a backwards approach to strategy: rather than determine what would be effective and then try to secure the necessary resources, we are to tailor our strategy to the resources already available—regardless of how effective such a strategy is.

The LP can obtain the time and money of "non-intellectual" libertarians in one of two ways: either by draining them away from arguably more effective tactics aimed at the top of the intellectual pyramid, or by mobilizing "new" resources that donors would be unwilling to provide for such educational tactics. The LP unquestionably does divert *some* resources from what might be more strategically sound projects, such as the Institute for Humane Studies or the Reason Foundation. But most of the millions of dollars and hours spent by the LP are newly "created," not diverted from elsewhere. That is to say, for most people scholarship will never be as inspiring as a presidential campaign, so scholarly educational efforts can't be seen as harmed very much by the LP's use of resources: those resources would, by and large, otherwise be unavailable.

But how does the LP "create" those resources? By encouraging exaggerated expectations about the success of presidential campaigns and other political tactics. This is what moves people to give so generously of time, money and hope to the LP. Thus the cruel hype about millions of votes that never materialize is *necessary* if the LP is to generate the very commitment of non-intellectuals' resources that, by the Clark argument, is the LP's *raison d'être*. Leaving aside the ethics of raising false expectations, sooner or later they are bound to be dashed once too often. So with each disappointing campaign, disillusioned LP members will drop out.

This does not mean that, apart from supporting libertarian educational institutions, there is no strategically sound activity for "non-intellectual libertarians" to pursue. For instance, *nominally* political strategies may be useful in achieving educational aims—if those aims are kept firmly in mind. Even though politics is too superficial to persuade people of libertarian ideas, politics can present fleeting images which will affect people when they are later confronted with more substantive arguments. An educational strategy might give birth to political tactics which took advantage of this, by creating a favorable impression for libertarianism *among members of the intellectual class.* Clark's efforts to achieve respectability accomplished this in 1980. His campaign (and the LP in general, at least until then) if viewed as an adjunct to rather than a replacement for other efforts could be considered successful. On the other hand, every effort should be made to avoid candidates at any level who project a crackpot, right-wing or otherwise intellectually unacceptable image. Ron Paul's Robertson gambit could have been disastrous had it become widely publicized. (That it was pursued indicates that the LP has lost sight of educational goals in favor of fruitless efforts to mobilize voting blocs that are supposedly *already* well-disposed toward libertarianism.)

The important thing is that any political tactics be subordinated to a larger educational strategy. This is necessary not just because the current politics-as-an-end-in-itself approach is psychologically debilitating, ultimately self-defeating and eminently unsuccessful, but because of the more subtle effects of the politicization of libertarian thought.

I said before that the libertarian *movement* has been politicized by the LP's initial success; but the very notion that libertarianism must be a movement—or even an ism—rests on the political prejudice. Rothbard may have been a skeptic about the LP, but he soon jumped on the bandwagon because he saw that the political strategy furthered a style of libertarian thought he had already done much to establish—a polemical, dogmatism that is indispensable to a "movement," but which closes the minds of its members, narrows their interests and makes them less complete human beings. Witness the hue and cry about the "invasion" of Austrian economics by hermeneutics, or the reluctance to admit that serious environmental problems may not lend themselves to "libertarian" solutions—or even to admit that serious

environmental problems exist! A great deal of libertarian thought is devoted to developing ways to stick one's head so deeply in the sand that nothing can disturb one's devotion to the "pure cause."

Even among libertarian academics and intellectuals there is a pronounced inclination to be *political*:[4] to judge ideas by the support they lend to politically preordained (i.e., libertarian) conclusions, rather than by those ideas' validity. Naturally, those who indulge this inclination would not do so if they did not believe libertarianism to be valid; my point is not that one's politics is not based on one's perception of the truth. But rather than viewing that perception as a tentative and fallible conclusion that is open to argument, the "politicized" libertarian tends to view it as central to his personal identity, which is therefore threatened by different views. To label oneself "a libertarian" (or "a socialist" or "a conservative"), i.e., an adherent of an ideology called libertarianism, is to risk investing so much psychic capital in that ideology that one will not be open to persuasion.

Labels are useful, of course; the danger is letting one's label do one's thinking instead of one's mind. This is a profoundly unintellectual attitude, and although it is not unique to libertarians, it has narrowed and cheapened the quality of libertarian thought. Despite (or because of) their radical willingness to challenge political conventional wisdom, many libertarians have developed a conventional wisdom of their own that ill disposes them to be as open-minded toward those who disagree with them as they would have other people be toward libertarianism.[5]

Being closed-minded is no way to win a war of ideas, even if we do insist on viewing ourselves as soldiers in a war. A true intellectual, not as Hayek defines him but in the broader sense of someone who takes ideas seriously (regardless of his profession), understands the need deliberately to cultivate habits of self-criticism, in order to ensure that he believes what he does not because of his ideological stake in it but because he has good evidence for it. An ideologue, by contrast, is under no obligation to question whether his ideas are well-taken or are mere prejudices. Such self-criticism would get in the way of his being a polemicist; it would entail giving the benefit of the doubt to his "evil" enemies and looking for gray areas not conducive to political conflict with them. One who takes ideas seriously has little use for the Manichean view of the world encouraged by politics. The politician, however, must paint those with whom he disagrees as medacious, in order to mobilize his supporters' political energies. This is the least attractive and most effective feature of Ayn Rand's writing, and it will survive, in the view that libertarians are opposed to and by "The State" and its evil minions, as long as libertarians remain politicized.

Rothbard jumped on the LP bandwagon because he saw that it furthered a style of libertarian thought he had already done much to establish—a polemical, dogmatism which is indispensable to a "movement," but which closes that its members' minds, narrows their interests and makes them less complete human beings.

The moment the libertarian experiment with the political strategy was transformed into an article of faith, libertarian insights were of necessity frozen into an "ism"; openness to new ideas began to be anathematized as betrayal of the cause; and those who harbored new ideas were viewed suspiciously, as potential collaborators with the "enemy," rather than being welcomed as potential clarifiers of the truth. With that in mind, it is probably misleading to call what I advocate an "educational" strategy, for this implies that we have a set of fixed doctrines we are trying to "teach" the world. That is itself a politicized version of the intellectual approach, a version that transforms thought and even scholarship into thinly veiled (and often ineffective) propaganda by suspending our capacity to think critically in favor of the easy and gratifying reaffirmation of what we are already sure is true.

It is far healthier to inventory our beliefs and to view skeptically those that seem valid as *insights* we can share with the world but that do not prevent us from learning from the world, even from parts of it we used to see as "evil." Thinking of ourselves first as people (or intellectuals, or truth-seekers), and as "libertarians" second, and only contingently, is the path to effective influence on society, because only open-minded thinkers and scholars will transform the top of the intellectual pyramid. But this is not the ultimate reason to develop this self-concept. The real reason is that until we do, we are nothing more than ideologues, reduced to the level of party hacks, the victims of our own dogmas. This is a great position for a "revolutionary cadre" to be in, but not for self-respecting people with minds of their own. ❑

Notes

1. See Lawrence Goodwyn, *The Populist Moment: A Short History of the Agrarian Revolt in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), for a vivid description of this change.
2. F.A. Hayek, "The Intellectuals and Socialism" (Menlo Park, Cal.: Institute for Humane Studies, 1971), p. 10.
3. Chester Alan Arthur, "High Noon for the Libertarian Party," *Liberty* (January 1989): p 25.
4. I can already hear the rejoinder that there is nothing wrong with adherents of a political ideology being political! But my point is to question the imperatives of ideologies, political or otherwise. One can take political positions without doing so dogmatically—that is, without letting them become so firmly entrenched that they govern what views one is willing to listen to openly. Guarding against that kind of politicization is difficult, but it is the most important responsibility of anyone who takes political ideas seriously.
5. Moreover, the focus on politics and economics has either deadened many libertarians to the vast realms of life that have nothing to do with those subjects, or alternatively it has politicized their appreciation of those realms—e.g., art. For such libertarians, either nothing exists save politics and economics (and perhaps science), or all the other things that do exist must be evaluated by their political implications. I realize that these broad strokes are unfair to many libertarians, but it would be hard to dispute that the culture of libertarians is, by and large, a peculiar and narrow one.

   In the nineteenth century, Matthew Arnold (*Culture and Anarchy*) discussed a similar phenomenon among the classical liberals Cobden and Bright and their followers—whom politicized libertarians ask us to emulate. It was the shock of recognition from reading this book that made me question the dogmatic ways of thought into which libertarianism had led me.

Reviews

The Abolition of Work and Other Essays, by Bob Black
Port Townsend: Loompanics, 1986, 160 pp., $6.95.

The Abolition of Breathing

David Ramsay Steele

"You may be wondering if I'm joking or serious. I'm joking *and* serious," writes Bob Black (p. 18). There are certainly lots of jokes, some of them good ones, in this book, and there is plenty of evidence of serious intent, at least in the sense that a child wailing for more candy is serious. But readers seeking a coherent case for some kind of change in the way society is run will be disappointed. The unifying theme is not an argument, but a pose, the pose of being more revolutionary than anyone else.

"If you know how to spell 'poseur,' you *are* one," declares Black (63). Just how subtle is he? The Situationists who sired him were a well-bred crew who greatly admired street-fighters and other lumpenproletarian scum, from a safe distance and with a snobbish haughtiness they didn't try to conceal. They would never, for example, have written "I've got a Nietzsche trigger finger" (Black), because they knew that Nietzsche rhymes not with "peachy" but with "Pleased-ta-meetcha." When the cultivated bourgeois idolizes the ignorant street lout, this is OK for the bourgeois and his select audience, but it is beyond the lout's capacities to emulate the bourgeois and idolize himself in the same way, and for a half-educated fellow like Black, a rope stretched over the abyss between Raoul Vaneigem and Sid Vicious, there is extra work to do, rigging up some semblance of cultural background to be able to appreciate the yobbo correctly, and working on being a yobbo too. Yet this does have the advantage that what seems to be merely crass could always be defended as self-conscious slumming—or, ultimately, as merely crass. When Black informs us that he is a poseur, is he letting us know that anything he says could be part of the pose, and may therefore be discounted?

I think we can safely conclude, at least, that Black does not like the prevailing statist-capitalist-socialist world order, and would prefer to have it replaced with . . . what? Something a bit like anarchocommunism, but even more different. In particular, he wants to abolish work. Or so he says:

> No one should ever work.
> Work is the source of nearly all the misery in the world. Almost any evil you'd care to name comes from working or from living in a world designed for work. In order to stop suffering, we have to stop working.
> That doesn't mean we have to stop doing things. It does mean creating a new way of life based on play . . . (17)

So either 1) we have to do without electric light, appendectomies, bread, ships, houses, and sewage disposal, or 2) these will somehow appear if no one works to produce them. 2) seems obviously mistaken, and Black makes almost no attempt to present any evidence for it. 1) would mean the elimination of more than 95% of the world's population, and the reduction of the remnant to a condition lower than the Stone Age. The point here is not just that this would be bad, but that long before such a program had been consummated, society would collapse back to a stage where the potential for retaining knowledge of large-scale co-ordinated plans would be lost. Having embarked on the ambitious mission of stamping out social co-operation and technology, humankind would at some stage lose the means and the will to finish the job. Out of barbarism, commercial and technological progress would be reborn. We're stuck with civilization.

Avant-garde job enrichment

In places, Black indicates that by "work" he does not mean work, but something else. Exactly what? There are contradictory suggestions:

> Work is production enforced by economic or political means, by the carrot or the stick. . . . Work is never done for its own sake, it's done on account of some product or output that the worker (or, more often, somebody else) gets out of it. (18–19)

This seems at first to say that work is work if you do it because you have to or because you will be paid for it. Then it seems to say something different: that work is work if you do it for the sake of an anticipated goal. Thus, if I write this review with the idea of a finished article appearing in *Liberty*, it is work, and therefore bad, but if I set down a string of words without any point to them, that is not work, but play, therefore good.

Elsewhere, Black seems to have other criteria in mind, as when he denies that college professors work (146), but it seems best to view this as merely one of his ad hoc punk postures. As far as I can tell, Black's actual definition of 'work' comes out most clearly on pages 24–26. Here he praises the way of life of prehistoric hunter-gatherers:

> Their "labor," as it appears to us, was skilled labor which exercised their physical and intellectual capacities... Thus it satisfied Friedrich Schiller's

definition of play . . . (25. And see 144)

This contradicts what Black has said earlier, since primitive hunting *is* "enforced by economic . . . means, by the carrot or the stick." The carrot is a full belly; the stick is starvation. More immediately, the carrot and stick are the approval and disapproval of fellow-members of the tribe.

However, drawing on pages 24–26 and others, I conclude that by "play," Black means work which is skilled, varied, enjoyable, not too long or hard, and not very repetitive. By "work" he means work which lacks one or more of the attributes of "play." "Play" must also be "voluntary" in the special sense that your income isn't affected by whether you do it or not, which means that people must get the same incomes whether they work or not—this is "higher-phase" Marxian communism, which, as has been clearly explained many times (Pierson, Mises, Brutzkus, Polanyi, Roberts—even such socialist writers as Stanley Moore), is not practically feasible.

Thus, Black's "abolition of work" doesn't mean abolition of work at all. It mainly means what is usually called job-enrichment or enhanced work-satisfaction, a well-worn theme which preoccupies numerous sociologists and personnel managers, on which endless seminars and symposiums are held, and on which thousands of books and articles have been published. It is typical of Black that, for all his wittering about "work," he displays no interest in this body of theory.

Black writes that "Anyone who ignores or evades the issue of work itself may well be a 'libertarian' (or for that matter a Marxist) but he is no libertarian" (15). It is Black who is evading the issue, by pretending to be in favor of the abolition of work, meanwhile letting slip that he isn't. Not evading the issue entails speaking clearly, making out a persuasive case, listening to objections, and endeavoring to refute them. If Black has hit upon a way of improving everyone's working lives without a catastrophic drop in the output of things people want, he should explain it and offer his evidence. Alternatively, if Black does welcome that drop in output, he should openly reveal himself as a kind of ascetic. Actually Black has nothing to say about how to make people's daily lives more enjoyable. As far as I can tell, he has never given this topic a moment's thought. The pose is everything.

Why Work is the Way It Is

If a possible change in the organization of work both increases output of products (without increasing costs) and is more acceptable to the worker, it will be introduced within the market, if its possibility is noticed. But there are many cases where a more productive organization of work will be less preferred by the worker, or where making work more pleasant for the worker will lead to reduced output (of goods other than pleasurable work), *after* allowing for reduced absenteeism, reduced strikes, reduced sabotage, reduced turnover, and so forth.

Most workers disappoint the self-nominated elites by their comparatively high preference for more consumer appliances as against more leisure, just as they disappoint the same elites by preferring football to folk dancing. As an Oscar Wilde character enquires, of what use are the lower classes if they don't set us a good example?

Workers may choose to have a less productive but more pleasant work organization, by offering to work at sufficiently lower wages. This would enable the end-products to be sold to consumers at prices no higher than would be possible with the less congenial work organization. If workers are not prepared to offer a cut in wages, then this shows that they prefer the higher output, represented by that portion of their wages, to the more pleasant work organization. There's a trade-off between output of end-products and more pleasant work, and the combination which emerges is chosen by the workers.

This account does not depend upon workers being the ones to spot such opportunities or explicitly to volunteer wage reductions. Employers offer employees a package, of which money paid as wages is only one of many elements. If employers see a chance to make a job more attractive by some non-wage feature which costs them less than the equally attractive amount of wage payments, then it will be profitable for them to offer this feature, and less money. In a modern economy, with its abundant opportunities, virtually everyone knows of chances to make more money than they do, chances which they pass up because they wouldn't enjoy themselves so much in those activities.

Across much of industry a standard job package tends to emerge, but this, like the standard McDonald's hamburger, is the outcome of the consumers' choices. (In this case the consumers are the workers, who buy a package of job benefits by paying their time and energy.) Just as there are alternatives to McDonald's, so there are alternatives to working in a standard kind of job. If the preferences of workers shifted so that they valued congenial work organization more highly, in relation to payments of money, then employers who varied from the standard package by providing a more congenial organization would find themselves more advantageously placed than those who clung to the standard. If this change in workers' preferences were sufficiently widespread, the standard package itself would change.

There might be some desired styles of work organization which were so unproductive that even at a wage of zero they would not pay. It might be that if you tried to operate a steel mill with individuals who came and went whenever they felt like it, doing unpredictable stints ranging from five seconds to half an hour, the steel mill would be unprofitable, even without paying the workers, or indeed even if the workers paid the employer a sizeable fee for the fun of it all. Unprofitability shows that the resources consumed by this activity exceed the products created, including the recreational product. An unprofitable activity wastes society's resources, and will be discontinued in a free-market environment.

In some future free-market society with much higher incomes, it might possibly become commonplace for employ-

ees to pay employers to be allowed to work, and a high proportion of products might be made by people who had paid a fee for the opportunity to make them, or who worked for nothing. In this way, much of production might become more purely recreational. I don't know if this happens anywhere today. Are there any dude ranches which have the guests do the serious business of cattle-raising (not playing at cattle-raising, which doesn't raise cattle) and then sell the resulting beef? The fact that real examples are hard to think of indicates the gulf between work and play. Recreation sometimes looks superficially like productive work, but usually it's the case that precisely those adjustments which would have to be made to render play productive would destroy its charm. There's no law against this sort of thing—the only reason it doesn't happen is because (at present incomes and endowments) there's no way to make it happen.

The same applies to other aspects of work organization, for example the pattern of management. If management by workers' councils were more efficient in terms of end-products than conventional hierarchical management, then workers' councils would out-compete conventional corporations, which would disappear. But even if output, narrowly defined, were lower with workers' councils running things, yet workers were prepared to pay for workers' councils by accepting sufficiently lower wages to compensate for the reduced output, workers' councils would still come to predominate. (On the other hand, if workers' councils could out-compete hierarchical managements at the same wage levels, then workers who disliked attending tedious meetings and spending their evenings tapping away at Lotus might offer wage reductions for the satisfaction of having a specialized management which would get on with managing and let the rest of the workers know what to do.) Black, of course, objects to "workers' councils" (33), but only because of the name. As far as I can surmise, he'd be satisfied if they were renamed "players' councils."

At existing income levels and with existing habits and knowledge, workers do not prefer to opt for dramatic improvements in the quality of work along with lower wages. They are not even very keen on reducing hours worked—this would be a fairly simple matter in the industrially advanced parts of the world: if workers wanted to cut working hours by, say, 25%, most of them could do so, with their reduced money incomes being still several times a decent minimum of health and comfort. Black asks: "why hasn't the average work week gone down by more than a few minutes in the past fifty years?" (29). There is a correct answer to this question: because workers have chosen to take most of the gains of increased output in the form of more goods and services, and only a small part of these gains in the form of less working time.

Reduced working hours also compete with improvements in the recreational quality of work. Workers can cut their working hours by agreeing to accept less pleasant working conditions, or they can obtain a more congenial work environment by working longer hours. Some small part of the gains in output in the past 50 years may have been taken in the form of happier working conditions, though this is difficult to judge, as undoubtedly many improvements in working conditions have been concomitants of enhanced productivity, and therefore not subject to the trade-off.

Most workers disappoint the self-nominated elites by their comparatively high preference for more consumer appliances as against more leisure, just as they disappoint the same elites by preferring football to folk dancing. As an Oscar Wilde character enquires, of what use are the lower classes if they don't set us a good example?

An alternative way in which people could choose more congenial work would be by consumer discrimination. Just as some people now insist on goods made without cruelty to animals, paying higher prices for the guarantee of non-cruelty, purchasers of goods could manifest a willingness to pay more for goods produced in workplaces where people could come and go as they pleased, or democratically-managed enterprises, or whatever workplace arrangement they wished to encourage (no "cruelty to workers," the difference being that such cruelty occurs now only with the victims' full consent).

Work is necessary for survival, and if Black is concerned about the excessiveness of people's devotion to work, he ought to address himself to educating their depraved tastes. Yet I don't really see that he can claim to be a bringer of enlightenment. If people like or tolerate devoting much of their lives to hard work, why not just respect their wishes,

especially as most people's preference for more-work-and-more-products makes life a lot easier for the minority who opt for less-work-and-less-products?

Black points out that primitive hunter-gatherers didn't work very hard and spent a lot of their time loafing around. But we can't go back to those circumstances, nor can we approximate that lifestyle very closely and still maintain advanced industry, though we could gradually approach it by reduced hours and more flexible work schedules, and a few individuals can approximate it fairly closely by a combination of occasional work and living off handouts.

Part of the reason the primordial hunters didn't do more work might be that they saw little profit in it because of their restricted options. If you have one animal carcass to keep you going for the next week or two, it's a waste of effort to get another one, and what else is there to do except swap stories? When such hunter-gatherer societies encounter more technically advanced societies with a greater range of products, the hunter-gatherers generally manifest a powerful desire to get some of these products, even if this puts them to some trouble.

Most of humankind has been practicing agriculture for several thousand years, having at some stage found this more productive than hunting. Black suggests (19) that even the poor farmers who constitute most of the world's population are in some way better off than the denizens of advanced industrial societies. But these poor farmers also crave the products of advanced industry. Millions avidly migrate to the great cities, plantations, and mines, where they can improve their lot by becoming wage workers, often under harsher conditions than anything seen in the U.S. for many a long year. Though usually not in any danger of starving, these migratory laborers choose to reduce their leisure time and increase the harshness of their working lives, for the sake of bicycles, radios, stoves, dresses, and other appetizing fruits of capitalism. They don't seem at all keen to join the Bushmen.

The Usual Communist Fallacies

Of course, Black does not frankly acknowledge that submitting to workplace discipline in exchange for wages reflects workers' preferences. He repeats the usual communist claims that most occupations could be eliminated with no loss, and that "automation" can do almost anything:

> Most work serves the predatory purposes of commerce and coercion and can be abolished outright. The rest can be automated away and/or transformed—by the experts, the workers who do it—into creative, playlike pastimes whose variety and conviviality will make extrinsic inducements like the capitalist carrot and the Communist stick equally obsolete. (147)

Whenever Black strays into economics, he is out of his depth. He thinks the services sector is useless. Unless he can actually see something he can draw a picture of, like sausages coming out of a sausage machine, he can't see the point.

Work which serves the purposes of commerce cannot be abolished without a collapse of industry. In the absence of spontaneously-formed market prices of factors of production, maintenance of advanced industry is not practically feasible, as Mises explained in his writings on economic calculation.

In the market, automation occurs when it pays, a sign that the products are worth more to consumers than the resources used up. If automation were introduced where it did not pay, this would indicate that the resources deployed to install the automated plant were being drawn away from more urgent applications, and total output for society would fall.

As incomes continue to rise, automation will gradually become profitable in ever more areas of industry, but this does not mean that we can automate now as if we already had the higher incomes of tomorrow. (A less important, but symptomatic, fallacy in the above quotation from Black is his assumption that anyone who does a job is an expert on organizing that job.)

In slightly more detail, Black alleges that "Entire industries, insurance and banking and real estate for instance, consist of nothing but useless paper shuffling" (29). Again, no argument is presented, and Black does not explain how the allocation of resources would be conducted in the absence of insurance, banking, and a market for real estate. Even if this could be done by some planning system which employed fewer people than now employed in these industries (a planning system which so far no socialist or communist has been able to come up with, despite much attention to the matter since Mises's challenge in 1920) this would still mean that only the *difference* between employment in the planning apparatus and employment in banking, insurance, and real estate could be counted as a saving, and against that would have to be set any reduction in output elsewhere, due to the planning system's being a less efficient allocator than banking, insurance, and real estate.

It is likely that, as essentially an anarchocommunist, Black just vaguely imagines that no allocation is necessary, or that it will happen automatically by magic. Whenever he strays into economics or anything to do with the administration of industry, he is out of his depth. Black thinks the tertiary or services sector is useless (29). Unless he can actually see something he can draw a picture of, like sausages coming out of a sausage machine, he can't see the point. Planning, co-ordinating, communicating, organizing are all worthless activities. By analogy one might say that the brain is a useless organ in the body, since plainly it doesn't actually *do* anything.

Black continues: "we can take a meat-cleaver to production work itself. No more war production, nuclear power, junk food, feminine hygiene deodorant—and above all, no more auto industry to speak of" (29). As for war production, I agree with him. The difficult bit is first of all to eliminate the possibility of war. After that, abolishing war production is child's play. He offers no hint on how to eliminate the possibility of war. Cutting out nuclear power will mean more expensive electricity and more environmental damage from the burning of fossil fuels; everyone is to be made poorer and sicker, just to soothe the phobias of a handful of ignoramuses. Suppressing synthetic groin perfumes, cars, and so-called junk food is a simple matter of Black's wishing to impose his

personal preferences on people who differ from him.

It's Murder

According to Black, "work is mass murder or genocide" (26). He cites statistics showing the large numbers of people killed or injured at work, and adds, for example, nearly all auto casualties because these arise while "going to work, coming from work, looking for work, or trying to forget about work" (27). Work, says Black, "institutionalizes homicide as a way of life."

People can die or suffer injury in any activity. Any time you eat, you may choke to death. If an activity occupies a great deal of people's time, it will probably occasion a great deal of death and injury. A large proportion of serious accidents occurs in the home—people fall downstairs, electrocute themselves, and so forth. If we add accidents which hit people "going home, coming from home, or trying to forget about home," the toll is even higher. Does this show that housing is inherently murderous?

"What the statistics don't show is that tens of millions of people have their lifespans shortened by work—which is all that homicide means, after all. Consider the doctors who work themselves to death in their fifties. Consider all the other workaholics" (27). To the extent that there is anything in this argument, it shows that work can be *suicide* (not homicide, which is usually defined as involuntary on the part of the victim). And indeed this raises the interesting point that suicide is a matter of degree, and that no one is against any degree of suicide.

"Workaholics" are people who like to work hard and long. This may shorten their lives, it may make them miserable, but it is their choice. Climbing mountains or exploring the sea bed will probably shorten your life, as compared with being a supermarket sales clerk, but that's hardly sufficient to call those outdoor pastimes homicidal. Endless partying and self-indulgence, which Black seems to applaud, are probably more hazardous to your health than some varieties of hard work.

This is not to deny that many jobs are dangerous. Industrial manual workers who join the armed forces during a modern conventional war may run less risk of death or injury than by following their peacetime occupations—it would be an interesting exercise to make the empirical comparison. But as incomes rise, jobs become safer—workers have more alternatives and can insist on greater compensation for high risk. Even if we imagine a case where a worker has to take a highly dangerous job in order to avoid starvation, this is no more murderous than the situation of Black's hunter-gatherers, who can either starve or run the risk that they will be killed while hunting.

Work involves risks, sometimes great risks. But—and this is rather obvious—it is sometimes worth the risks because of the products. If work is homicide, it is justifiable homicide.

A Black View of Libertarianism

Black's many criticisms of libertarians mostly amount to belaboring the fact that they do not share his own proclaimed objective of "abolition of work." A libertarian, he indignantly declares, "is a Republican who takes drugs" (141). Aside from the fact that Black's not being quite candid when he pretends that abolishing work is his objective, it's easy to

pin guilt by association onto any position, from a preposterous standpoint which lumps all opponents together. Faced with the demand to abolish breathing, Bob Black is in the same conservative camp as Dan Quayle. The differences between them are purely cosmetic distractions; they're both abject apologists for respiratory oppression.

Black maintains (142–48) that since work, the market, the nuclear family, and other things he doesn't care for have been going on for centuries, along with the state, it's therefore foolish to try to abolish the state while retaining these other institutions. In a similar vein, it's myopic to seek to abolish slavery without abolishing the state, to abolish cannibalism without abolishing eating, to abolish witch-burning without abolishing religion, or to abolish work without abolishing breathing.

"The abolition of work is, of course, an affront to common sense. But then so is the idea of abolishing the state" (145). Exactly. But this doesn't show that abolishing work is as reasonable as abolishing the state. Common sense consists of theories held by millions of people. It can be wrong and it can be changed. The mere fact that some theory conforms to common sense, or scandalizes common sense, has no bearing on whether that theory is true or false. People who oppose a particular commonsense notion should try to make out a persuasive case against it.

Sticking His Tongue Out

I recommend Black's book as an entertaining mosaic of amusing, occasionally perceptive, frequently silly observations on various randomly-chosen aspects of our culture, from someone whose feverish efforts to be as radical as possible sometimes lead him to be an interesting reactionary. (But there are plenty of trendy-lefty shibboleths he can't let go of, as witness his animadversion on Proposition 13, on page 85. He wants to abolish the state, but as long as we have a state, Black prefers it to be a fat one.) From time to time, Black lapses, against his better judgement, into quite sensible arguments (pages 88, 135, for instance). My strictures on Black are exclusively concerned with his claim to be a revolutionary. He is a revolutionary the way Gene Autry was a cowboy.

Black makes cute remarks about New Wave ("withered on the vinyl"), Transubstantiation ("Man bites God"), Vegetarianism ("You are what you eat"), socialists ("sheep in wolves' clothing"), and himself ("secretly famous"). He doesn't care whom he upsets ("Sure the Jews are Christ-killers, but what have they done for us lately?"). He admires Robert E. Howard and deplores Woody Allen. Does any of this have anything to do with "abolishing work"? Almost nothing. Black apparently imagines he's saying things which all fit together into a grand analysis of culture and prescription for revolution, but he's just venting his sundry likes and dislikes.

Although I think that Black's desired form of society is unrealizable, what is even more indefensible is his theory of how this form of society can be brought into being. For example, Black praises and recommends the assassination of schoolteachers. While that may for him be an invigorating fantasy, its advocacy is wickedly irresponsible, because some foolish wretch, less slippery and more literal-minded than Black, might act upon it, resulting in one or more murdered teachers, one hopelessly blighted killer, and a great many people upset and alarmed.

Just as theft does not embody an alternative property system, and lying does not embody an alternative language, so absenteeism, strikes, sabotage, and the rest, do not embody an alternative system of organizing industry.

Apart from the wrongness of such an action, I cannot see how it is supposed to bring Black's (allegedly workless but actually job-enriched) form of society into existence. If all the teachers in the world were killed tomorrow morning, the result would not be the abolition of work, nor any movement in that direction, nor any improvement in the lives of the great majority of people. Nor would it be any weakening in the power of the state.

Our author has high hopes for the growth of non-voting, but these are misplaced. Lack of interest in elections reflects the fact that there's little difference among politicians, competing for the Middle. Voting is a waste of time because there are so many voters—the fewer the people who vote, the more powerful each vote becomes: if only a hundred people voted in a presidential election, those hundred would be the most powerful individuals in history. As people stop voting, the greater the incentive to vote.

General disenchantment with politics is not an encouraging sign for anti-statists, unless it is accompanied by belief in some positive alternative. Since 99 percent of the people who don't vote are every bit as convinced of the absolute necessity for a powerful state as the people who do vote, a major abstentionist trend might be a prelude to authoritarian rule. Yet I don't see non-voting as a serious challenge to democratic legitimacy, for the non-voters could vote if they chose, and their views on policy are very close to those of the voters. If it's thought desirable to have as many votes as possible used, then permitting people to sell or donate their votes to others might be a beneficial reform.

Black claims that since the workplace (in the habitual antiquarian argot of the pseudo-left, he says "the factory") is an instrument of social control, enforcing the division between decision-makers and order-takers, "the revolt against work—reflected in absenteeism, sabotage, turnover, embezzlement, wildcat strikes, and goldbricking—has far more liberatory promise than the machinations of 'libertarian' politicos and propagandists" (147).

Just suppose that Black were right about the goal of "abolishing work," where is the "liberatory promise" in the activities he recommends? How could they lead to what he calls the abolition of work? Undoubtedly such activities may benefit their practitioners in a small way, as may pilfering from employers. But these activities don't hold out any promise of eliminating or transforming work, any more than pilfering could eliminate or transform the institution of private property. As with pilfering, the main sufferers are other workers. And after all, it's very much in any worker's interest that most other workers do *not* sabotage, goldbrick, wildcat-strike, and so forth.

Just as theft does not embody an alternative property system, and lying does not embody an alternative

language, so absenteeism, strikes, sabotage, and the rest, do not embody an alternative system of organizing industry. If an alternative doesn't exist, then we can't improvise ourselves into it by an unconscious "revolt," and if an alternative does exist, then we don't need to approach it in such a hit-and-miss way; it can be explained and argued for, and if attractive to most people, adopted and implemented with conscious forethought. But the truth is that Black has no alternative. Hence his interminable attitudinizing. I don't really mind that Black is a self-proclaimed poseur, but why does he have to *work* so hard at it? ❑

***Robert LeFevre: "Truth is Not a Half-way Place,"* by Carl Watner**
Gramling, S. C: The Voluntaryists, 1988, 236 pp., $14.95.

The Wonderful Wizard of Liberty

Ethan O. Waters

If you strip away Robert LeFevre's reputation as a libertarian philosopher and teacher and look at the events of his life, you would think he was nuts. Well, maybe "nuts" isn't quite the right word. LeFevre was not simply nuts. There was a method to his nuttiness: the method of a marginally successful cult-leader. That is the most salient conclusion about the life of LeFevre that I derived from Carl Watner's pseudo-biography.

When I say "pseudo-biography," I am choosing my words carefully. In literally the last passage of the last paragraph on the last page of the book, Watner writes:

> In late November of [1984] Bob approached me about writing his biography. He had found it impossible to get a publisher for his 2,000 page autobiographical manuscript, and he wanted someone to pare his story down to manageable proportions. I accepted that challenge, and Bob lived just long enough to read and comment on the third draft of the book you are now holding in your hands.

There you have it: this alleged biography is actually a condensed version of an autobiography, edited under the watchful eye of the subject himself! This is but one example of the peculiarities that surround LeFevre.

A Libertarian Role-model?

There is no doubt that Robert LeFevre played an important role in the development of contemporary libertarianism.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, his Freedom School (1955–1968) educated hundreds in libertarian theory, including his own unusual anarcho-pacifist notions. Among faculty at one time or another were such libertarian luminaries as Ludwig von Mises, F. A. Harper, Leonard E. Read, Gordon Tullock, Arthur Ekirch, Bruno Leoni, W. H. Hutt and James J. Martin.

In the late 1960s, LeFevre helped organize and finance the libertarian revolt on the campus, publishing *Rap* magazine and sending "libertarian troubador" Dana Rohrabacher from campus to campus, singing and organizing for anarchism.

Many prominent libertarians, among them Rohrabacher (now a right-wing congressman), Charles Koch (multimillionaire oil baron who finances the Cato Insitute and formerly financed the Libertarian Party), Durk Pearson and Sandy Shaw (best-selling writers and talk-show personalities), Roy Childs (writer for Laissez-Faire Books), Sam Konkin (publisher of *New Libertarian*), and Robert Kephart (former publisher of *Libertarian Review* and several hard-money newsletters) have expressed admiration for LeFevre as a libertarian thinker, leader and teacher; in many cases their praise has been effusive. "Robert LeFevre was a libertarian prophet who had an immense influence on the modern freedom movement," writes Childs in his review-advertisement for this book in the Laissez-Faire Books catalog. "He had the kind of impact that lasts a lifetime."

LeFevre served as the model for Bernardo de la Paz in Robert Heinlein's libertarian science fiction classic, *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress*, and Kurt Vonnegut quoted and satirized him in his anti-capitalist novel *God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater*.

"It is a measure of the breadth of Robert LeFevre's influence and character," Karl Hess writes in the Foreword to this book, "that so many will remember him for so many different reasons. Teacher. Schoolmaster. Consultant. Businessman. Philosopher. Soldier. Religionist. Social Theorist. Debater. Author. Socratic Goad. Experimenter. Maddening Demander of Consistency. Searcher. Finder. Good Friend. Implacable Foe. All of that is detailed in this book."

And what a remarkable book it is.

I can scarcely recall reading a more hagiographic work. Even Barbara Branden's 1961 biography of Ayn Rand (*Who Is Ayn Rand?*, which has been out of circulation—reportedly suppressed—for the past two decades) achieves its idolatry by omission of unpleasant detail. It didn't portray its subject's bizarreries as virtues, as does the LeFevre tome, which explains them away by placing them in the most favorable possible light.

St LeFevre

Consider the treatment of LeFevre's involvement with the I AM Movement, a wacko religious cult that gained a large following during the 1930s. The movement was the work of the husband-and-wife team of Guy and Edna Ballard. She was a harpist and occultist; he was a theosophist and paperhanger. In 1930, Guy visited Mount Shasta, a favorite site for American religious cultists. On its slopes, he encountered one "St Germain," an eighteenth-century mystic and twentieth-century "ascended master." In his book *Unveiled Mysteries*, Ballard described St Germain as "a majestic figure, God-like in appearance, clad in jewelled robes, eyes sparkling with light and love." St Germain revealed to Ballard that Shasta is the home of Lemurians, refugees from the ancient kingdom of Mu, now lost below the Pacific Ocean. Lemurians, who can appear or vanish at will, are seven feet tall and display a walnut-sized sense or-

gan in the middle of their foreheads, with which they can communicate by ESP.

St Germain gave Ballard a cup of a strange liquid, which enabled Ballard's spirit to separate from his body. Wrapped in a sheet of flame, Ballard joined St Germain for a tour of the world, the highlight of which was a visit to Royal Teton Mountain. St Germain touched a stone, and the mountain opened to reveal large rooms filled with gold and silver, and a single room in which all the records of the world were written on golden sheets.

Ballard's beliefs, which form the core of the I AM Movement's teachings, were far more elaborate than this brief account suggests. But you get the flavor. "Daddy" and "Mama" (as Guy and Edna were known to their followers) soon had a lucrative business operation. They traveled from city to city, ministering to their followers. Robert LeFevre learned of the Ballards sometime in 1936 when he was an announcer at a radio station in Minneapolis. He resisted the faith for some time, only giving in to it after a fantastic experience:

> He was in Studio B at WTCN, standing next to the grand piano. The recordings he had played on his shift were stacked on top of the piano. His relief announcer was in the boot giving a commercial. Suddenly, Bob had a feeling of rising to a great height within himself. A voice spoke. Only two words were spoken. "I AM." That was all. Instantly, the studio was filled with the aroma of fresh roses. At the same moment, Bob heard a series of clicks in his mind and with each click a question about the ultimate reality that had baffled him, appeared answered. In that instant every doubt and fear that he harbored vanished.
>
> "I AM," was the answer . . .
>
> That night at home, Peggy [his wife] suspected that Bob had had a date. The perfume of roses so permeated Bob's scalp that it lingered in his hair for more than a week, despite daily showers and hair rinses . . . (pp. 21–22)

Is that the experience of a rational man? Or is it the hallucinatory experience of a religious nut, or the story of a man determined to gain a cult-like following?

LeFevre parlayed his mystical experience into a leadership role with local I AM cultists, eventually joining Mama and Daddy touring from city to city in their canary-yellow Chryslers, raking in cash from the faithful.

Whatever the nature of this peculiar experience, what it led to was a not terribly successful career as a cult-leader. LeFevre parlayed it into a leadership role with local I AM cultists, eventually joining Mama, Daddy and their entourage, touring from city to city in their canary-yellow Chryslers, raking in cash from the faithful. LeFevre was the announcer at their religious "classes." He eventually had his own conferences with St Germain, as well as other mystical experiences. On one occasion, for example, he entered the hotel room of Pearl Diehl, a beautiful fellow cultist on whom he had sexual designs, by walking along a four inch wide ledge between their hotel room windows ten stories above the street, all the while in a trance. At least that's what he told the beautiful Ms Diehl, though Watner does admit that this was "an incredible performance to say the least" (44).

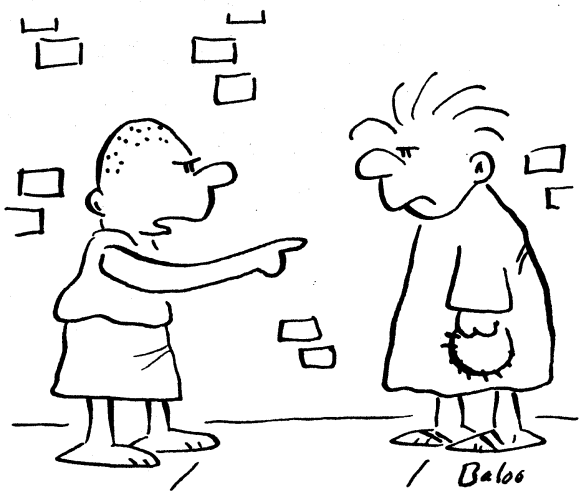
In 1939, LeFevre had a "dictation" from St Germain that he should leave Mama (by now Daddy was dead) and move to San Francisco to live with Pearl Diehl and her husband, and write a book about the movement. At first Mama turned him down flat. But then "a flash of light caused them both to look up. He experienced a momentary feeling, like [sic] he felt before going into one of his trance-like states." It was St Germain, Mama said, telling her to accept Bob's resignation.

So Bob moved into the penthouse in San Francisco belonging to Pearl and her husband Sidney, and set to work writing: "The book was titled, *I AM America's Destiny*, and dealt largely with Bob's own personal experiences in the I AM movement. It recounted the basic doctrine taught by Daddy and extolled the virtues of America by criticizing both the unions and the communists for undermining the government." But Mama apparently didn't care much for the book. She publicly attacked Bob in June, 1940: "The book was a fraud, she told students. He and Pearl were to be 'blasted' into eternity for having the gall to say that Bob had ever seen St Germain" (49).

A month later, Bob was indicted for mail fraud, along with other leaders of the I AM Movement. The indictment was particularly troubling to him because he had been expelled the previous month. But he persevered. Several of his most enthusiastic followers stayed with him after his expulsion from the movement. They were to form the nucleus of a "family" of women who followed him about the country, often providing him financial sustenance in his varied career as unsuccessful entrepreneur, right-wing political candidate, television news reader, anti-communist crusader, newspaper editorial writer and, in his later years, libertarian guru.

LeFevre the Entrepreneur

Shorn of hagiographic embroidery, LeFevre's adventures are impressive enough. Consider, for example, his



"My spiritual leader is more enlightened than your spiritual leader!"

entrepreneurial career, exemplified by his experience with the Ormond Hotel in San Francisco, which he purchased in 1946. Despite his investing heavily in the hotel, it lost money constantly, and he was in danger of foreclosure and bankruptcy. He convinced a group of his followers (called "the Group") to take title to the hotel and assume all liabilities, leaving him free of debt and them with a hotel that was a black hole for cash. Within a few days, he was contacted by "Gypsy" and Gerald Buys, who had earlier discussed trading his equity in the place for their equity in another real estate pink elephant, an old mansion in Los Angeles. They wanted to do the deal. So LeFevre went to his followers and asked them to trade the hotel for the mansion. Alas, none of "the Group" wanted to move to Los Angeles. No problem, he explained. He would move into the mansion and be its caretaker without salary, in exchange for using the place rent-free. All "the Group" would have to do is pay the taxes and the mortgage payments until a buyer could be found.

His covey of female followers provided the capital and labor for him to begin his famous Freedom School and his knack for getting contributions from multi-millionaire conservative businessmen kept it going.

And so LeFevre moved into Falcon Lair, the old mansion Rudolph Valentino had built for his mistress. Alas, Falcon Lair was no easier to sell for LeFevre and "the Group" than it had been for the previous owners, and "the Group" grew tired of paying its expenses. So LeFevre hatched another plan. He would organize a contest. The equity (and the liabilities) of Falcon Lair would be the prize awarded to the individual or group that came up with the best idea about how to fight communism and socialism and maintain peace and freedom in the world.

Three finalists were chosen (the contest's judges were not revealed, though one suspects LeFevre himself chose the winners): a group that "wanted to create a world religion with its center at Falcon Lair . . . a spokesman for the California Rocket Society [which] believed that peace and freedom were achieved by power and force [and that] the government should develop a missile armory to insure peace. . . [and] Reverend Singer [who] thought that education was the only answer."

But none of the finalists wanted the prize; all they wanted was the publicity. LeFevre tried to get them to accept it jointly and co-operate, but they refused: "The irony was conspicuous. They were people supposedly dedicated to peace but they couldn't cooperate long enough to even accept an award together." Irony? Indeed!

What became of Falcon Lair and "the Group's" financial obligations? Watner tells us that "Bob believed that it would be morally wrong for the Group to profit from the property since it had been offered as a prize. Therefore they were willing to let it revert back [sic] to the lien-holder." Whether "the Group" had to make good the other liabilities of the proposition is not specified.

LeFevre continued his career, taking his covey of female followers with him as he ran for office as a right-wing Republican, embarked on a nationwide anti-communist crusade, and tried to find employment with a variety of conservative and proto-libertarian organizations. Finally he landed a job as editorial writer for a radical libertarian newspaper, the Colorado Springs *Gazette Telegraph*.

LeFevre the Educator

Before long his "family" provided the capital and labor for him to begin his famous Freedom School, where he taught the freedom philosophy he had developed under the tutelage of Harry Hoiles, editor of the *Gazette Telegraph*, and evidently the origin of LeFevre's libertarian ideas. He developed a real knack for getting contributions from multi-millionaire conservative businessmen, which he used to build his Freedom School into the major radical libertarian institution of the 1950s.

But foolish business decisions proved his undoing. The creek on the property overflowed its banks in June 1965, severely damaging the buildings. LeFevre hadn't insured them adequately. He borrowed heavily to rebuild them. He decided to go on with earlier plans to organize Rampart College, a graduate school offering advanced degrees in history and economics. Later in 1965, he signed historian James J. Martin and economist W. H. Hutt to five year contracts to be his faculty. But Rampart College had difficulty attracting students and was a losing operation. The school's major source of income was Roger Milliken, a multi-millionaire cotton mill owner from South Carolina, who required many of his employees to attend LeFevre's seminars and paid him handsomely. Alas, even this was not enough. The operating deficits were covered by bank loans, using the real estate (whose value had appreciated considerably) as collateral.

In 1968, the bank refused to extend further credit and asked LeFevre to begin debt reduction. With the operation continuing to lose money, LeFevre had no choice. He would have to liquidate. Happily, the property had appreciated to the point where it could be sold, pay off the mortgage, and leave LeFevre with a nice pile of cash.

LeFevre had a stroke of good fortune when W. H. Hutt, realizing that his professional reputation was suffering from association with LeFevre, asked to be released from his contract, which still had four years to run, "and at least one large obligation of the school disappeared." Alas, he was not so lucky with James J. Martin. "Bob assumed that Martin wished to cancel his contract, too. He believed that Martin felt the same way as Hutt, and would be ready to leave the school. Bob called him into his office and unilaterally cancelled his contract, without giving Martin any say in the matter."

Watner has little sympathy for Martin's resistance to LeFevre's attempt to bully him. "A few days later, Bob received a letter from Martin informing him that Martin was prepared to hold him to the original contract. Only one year of the original five had gone by, so there were four more years in which the school would have to pay him a salary and provide housing. Bob tried to explain to Martin that financial reverses made it impossible to honor his contract, and probably necessary to close the school. None of this made any difference to Martin who insisted on having his contract filled to the letter."

Although Watner does not report how much the property sold for, it must have been a substantial sum. It was enough to pay off the mortgage, pay off Martin, pay LeFevre and his "family" twelve years of "back wages," buy LeFevre a new house in California, and re-establish Rampart College there "on a limited basis."

LeFevre the Thinker

"How he steals! How he spoils everything he steals! How he annoys me! But he won't annoy me any more; I have read a few of his pages and that's enough."—Marquise de Parolignac, in Voltaire's *Candide*.

Robert LeFevre long held a fascination for me, and I sought out and read several of his books. What I found in them was a dull, poorly written mishmash, mostly stolen from others who knew how to write and to think far better than LeFevre.

The only element that distinguished LeFevre's thought, it seemed to me, was his odd notion of aggression, which subsumed many acts that most libertarians (or anyone else with a lick of common sense) would regard as defensive. Suppose you are attacked on the street by a thug. You can defend yourself, LeFevre argues, by trying to block with your arm the knife that the assailant is preparing to stick in your gut. But if you punch him to ward him off, you are trying to harm him and therefore committing an act of aggression.

This bizarre notion generally elicits all sorts of responses from those first exposed to it. Suppose I were being raped, a woman might ask. Does this mean I cannot take the most effective direct action available to protect myself, a swift kick to the *cojones*? Suppose I were kidnapped and tied up? Does this mean that I could not cut the rope without committing aggression against the kidnapper's property?

The only element that distinguished LeFevre's thought, it seemed to me, was his odd notion of aggression, which subsumed many acts that most libertarians (or anyone else with a lick of common sense) would regard as defensive.

LeFevre's strange notion of aggression explains his opposition to voting: for him, voting was inherently aggressive; it made no difference whether one voted for conscription or against it. The first vote would violate the rights of those conscripted against their will; the second would violate the rights of those who actually wanted to be conscripted.

As I understand it, LeFevre had a quick mind and a great personal charm which somehow enabled him to handle objections. But even his admirers were generally not convinced. Many agreed with LeFevre's case against voting and political activism, but could not accept his opposition to self-defense, preferring to regard his radical pacifism as some sort of peculiar deviation from his essential philosophy.

A Waning Influence

Along with Ayn Rand and Murray Rothbard, LeFevre can be considered a "Founding Father" of the contemporary libertarian movement. These three individuals, born between 1905 and 1926, provided many of the ideas and much of the inspiration for those who broke away from other ideological disciplines in the late 1960s and gave the term libertarianism its special identity.

Although Rand died in 1982, her influence lives on. To this day, libertarians rarely engage in discussions of political, philosophical or strategic issues without considering what Rand had to say on the matter. Rothbard is as active and curmudgeonish as ever, continuing to influence libertarian thinking, to add words to the libertarian vocabulary, and to define the issues over which libertarians wrangle. Rand and Rothbard ranked first and second when *Liberty* polled its readers about who influenced their intellectual development. LeFevre ranked 21st.

Why this anomaly? Why is LeFevre's influence so low today, in comparison to that of the other libertarian pioneers?

The reason, I am convinced, is that LeFevre's influence was personal rather than intellectual. For the most part, his fans admire him for his manner and his manners, his gentleness and his style. Rand and Rothbard have written intellectually powerful books that influence us by the sheer force of their logic. But Rand's heavy Russian accent and her complete lack of humor, and Rothbard's New York accent and his sharp and often nasty wit, often alienate their admirers. LeFevre, in contrast, employed a silver tongue and salesman's tricks, practiced through years as a radio pitchman and religious cult leader, to gain his influence. His influence was felt not through writing but through personal charm. His influence today is limited to the memories of those who were touched personally by him.

Despite the weirdness of both the book and its subject, *Robert LeFevre: Truth is Not a Half-way Place* is fascinating. It is more revealing than it was probably intended to be, and benefits from critical reading. But the sheer nuttiness of its subject and its wealth of unintentional humor make it well worth the effort. ❑

The Real Life of Alejandro Mayta, by Mario Vargas Llosa, translated by Alfred Mac Adam, New York: Vintage, 1986, 310 pp., $6.95.

Against the Peruvian Apocalypse

Stephen Cox

In 1985, Alan Garcia took office as President of Peru. Young (as politicians go), handsome (as politicians go), center-left, and given to ad hoc tinkering with dangerous situations, Garcia was the generic third-world "John F. Kennedy." By late 1988, Garcia's political career was as dead as Jacob Marley.

Garcia's greatest political success—an economic "miracle" accomplished by raising wages, controlling prices, and using high tariffs to make everyone buy Peruvian—led to astronomical inflation. Meanwhile, Garcia alienated the right by nationalizing what remained of private banking in Peru, and he alienated the left by his failure to prohibit or punish the prison massacre of revolutionaries. By December 17, 1988, he had become so unpopular that he was forced to resign from the headship of his own party.

When Garcia leaves office after the election of 1990 (if a military coup doesn't remove him before then), he will leave a nation lying in economic ruins and convulsed by guerrilla warfare. The Sendero Luminoso ("Shining Path"), a Maoist group crazier than anything this side of the Khmer Rouge, harries the Andes and terrorizes the capital. Peru is nearing the "apocalyptic" events envisioned in Mario Vargas Llosa's novel *The Real Life of Alejandro Mayta*. And, just possibly, Peru is also nearing that rarest of literary events, an author's attainment of the power to prevent his fictions from becoming reality.

Vargas, 53, was once a leftist admirer of Castro. He was little different, in his political sympathies, from many other members of the Latin American literary establishment, which properly regarded him as one of its brightest stars. But Vargas was too good an intellectual not to be open to the empirical falsification of his ideas. Observing the ill effects of government manipulation of economies all over the world, he investigated and began to advocate free-enterprise ideas even before Garcia's experiments turned definitively sour. (In fact, he predicted their collapse while American media—e.g., *The New Yorker*—were still viewing them as hopeful.) He founded a movement, Libertad, that gave a polemical voice to the large segments of the Peruvian populace that were outraged by Garcia's bank nationalization. A coalition of right-wing parties now stands ready to nominate Vargas for President of Peru.

The 1990 campaign, in which Vargas will probably face a Marxist rival, should be one of the most dramatic intellectual contests of the century, a clear-cut struggle between philosophies of limited and unlimited government. The battle will be intransigently fought. Its stakes will be the ideological destiny of the third world—and its material destiny, too, because one can hardly imagine how the desperate economic problems of third-world countries can be solved unless an indigenous intellectual leadership arises that clearly understands the connection between freedom and prosperity.

It's not clear, of course, that Vargas will win his battle, either for the presidency of his country or, if he is elected, for its future. In both cases, there are substantial odds against his success. One battle, however, he has already won—the battle to keep his writing free from political dogmatism. Of his many novels, *Alejandro Mayta* is the most directly relevant to the current political crisis, but it is noteworthy for its breadth of concern and its freedom from overt political preaching.

Vargas has written himself into the plot—as an observer, not as a politician—by structuring *Mayta* as the story of a novelist attempting to understand the motives of a leftist revolutionary. His protagonist, Alejandro Mayta, is an impoverished urban intellectual who, in 1958, attempts to start a guerrilla movement in the Andes. The attempt fails, but it foreshadows more successful efforts, including that of Sendero, whose presence haunts the novel with its intimations of complete political destruction. Twenty-five years after Mayta's failure, a writer begins researching his life, talking to former friends and enemies to gain inspiration for a novelistic treatment of the story. All the while, the new revolutionaries are increasing their power. Enlisting the aid of Cuban troops and planes, they advance on Cuzco and Lima; the government staves off imminent defeat only by calling in American Marines.

Vargas's images of revolution are harrowing—and plausible. But they are just one element in his portrayal of the oppression and misery of Peruvian existence, from the Andes, where human life is a mere "animal routine" continued in scenes of medieval filth and ignorance, to the capital, where despair and cynicism turn even the wealthiest neighborhoods into open garbage dumps. Vargas describes a political culture that has always been saturated with coercion and irrationalism. Peru was once a seat of the Inquisition, and its methods have been carried into the twentieth century, with disastrous psychological and economic effects.

> At the entrance to the Museum of the Inquisition, I see that at least another dozen old people, men, women, and children have joined the family in rags I saw before. They constitute a sort of grotesque royal court of tatters, grime, and scabs. As soon as they see me, they stretch out their black-nailed hands and beg. Violence behind me and hunger in front of me. Here, on these stairs, my country summarized. Here, touching each other, the two sides of Peruvian history. (109–10)

It is predictable that intellectuals raised in a political culture characterized by violence and tyranny should learn and adopt the methods of violence and tyranny. Vargas draws implicit parallels between "the gentlemen Inquisitors, among whom there figured [their collaborators] the most illustrious intellectuals of the era: lawyers, professors, theological orators, versifiers, writers of prose,"

and the twentieth-century intellectuals who automatically collaborate with authoritarian movements and institutions (106). But Mayta, as the writer reconstructs him from the memories of his acquaintances, seems different from the others. Most of his intellectual generation are Stalinists; he is an eccentric Trotskyist. They want power; he wants action. They are bigotedly macho; he is homosexual. He is a socially marginal person who wistfully desires "to plunge right into the heart of the people" (94); they are smug ideological conformists to whom the word "heart" means nothing.

Expelled even from his seven-man revolutionary organization, Mayta takes to the hills with an army lieutenant, two peasants, and a bunch of schoolkids. Thus allied he hopes to precipitate a revolution that will make peasants the owners of their land and workers the owners of their factories, that will destroy the nation's choking bureaucracy and eliminate social, moral, and sexual prejudices, that will "abolish all injustices without inflicting new ones" (196). One of the points that Vargas is making is that to expect all this from a socialist revolution is transparently absurd; only the most extreme romanticism could imagine it as a practical aim. Another of his intended points is that Mayta, the ineffective idealist, is lovable partly *because* he is ineffective. If his plans had succeeded to any degree, the consequences might have been as oppressive as those of the Senderistas.

And a third point seems to be that characters like Mayta live only in the world of fiction. One of the formative influences on Vargas was William Faulkner, and much of *Alejandro Mayta* works on the Faulknerian information principle: the more data one has about a character, the more plausible stories one can make up about him, and the less sure one can be that any given story is the true one.

> I think I've read everything that came out in newspapers and magazines about this story, and I've talked with an infinite number of participants and witnesses. But the more I investigate, the less I feel I know what really happened. Because, with each new fact, more contradictions, conjectures, mysteries, and incongruities crop up. (139)

The possibility is created that the boyishly idealistic Mayta is only a "conjecture." When the narrator finally encounters a flesh-and-blood Alejandro Mayta, he finds him radically different from any Mayta he had imagined. He is unidealistic, perhaps even cynical. Is he the result of the idealist's disappointment and decay or does he represent a different type of personality, a different psychological explanation of revolution? Or perhaps the real Mayta is the one who converts to capitalism without even knowing it, the one who talks about conducting a "genuine revolution" when he starts a private business in prison, selling wholesome food and honest banking (294). Vargas's narrator rejects extravagant plots, resists any tendency to place Mayta's life in "the unreal world of thrillers" (89), but in the extravagant atmosphere of Peruvian politics, which is already removed from a good many vestiges of reality, who is to define the sort of character that is the most plausible source of revolutionary struggle?

While investigating the issue, however, Vargas supplies a virtually encyclopedic account of Peruvian social conditions—past, present, and possible future—and of some major varieties of political character. His respect for empirical fact emerges strongly in his meticulous re-creations of the way life is led in the slums and suburbs and prisons of Lima and in the remote Andean heights. He discredits leftist ideology (largely by *presenting* it), but he is able to view his leftist protagonist with a personal sympathy that keeps the character interesting and the author intellectually respectable. Vargas refuses to play with loaded dice—unlike the Nicaraguan poet Ernesto Cardenal, whom he satirizes, in a rare polemical passage, for subordinating plain truth to politics:

> He responded to the demagoguery of some agitators in the audience with more demagoguery than even they wanted to hear. He did and said everything necessary to earn the approbation and applause of the most recalcitrant: there was no difference between the Kingdom of God and communist society; the Church had become a whore, but thanks to the revolution it would become pure again, as it was becoming in Cuba; the Vatican, a capitalist cave which had always defended the powerful, was now the servant of the Pentagon; the fact that there was only one party in Cuba and in the U.S.S.R. meant the elite had the task of stirring up the masses, exactly as Christ had wanted the Church to do with the people. . . .
>
> And the final act of pure theater: waving his hands, he announced to the world that the recent cyclone that hit Lake Nicaragua was the result of some ballistic experiments carried out by the United States. (77–80)

On the evidence of *Alejandro Mayta*, there seems little chance that Vargas will ever make such a ridiculous figure of himself. But what, one wonders, will the Peruvian electorate make of literary productions like *Mayta*, with its challenging narrative method and its frankness about sex and politics and the nation's history? Of course, we on this side of the equator are ill-equipped to guess what may happen to a writer of brilliance who is also a politician. The last candidate for the American presidency who was even a *good* writer died about 70 years ago. ❑

At stake in Peru's 1990 election is the ideological destiny of the third world—and its material destiny, too, because one can hardly imagine how the desperate economic problems of third-world countries can be solved unless an indigenous intellectual leadership arises that clearly understands the connection between freedom and prosperity.

The Culture of Terrorism, by Noam Chomsky
Boston, Mass: South End Press, 1988, 269 pp., $12.00.

An Anarchist's Appraisal

Jeffrey A. Tucker

Noam Chomsky takes seriously Lord Acton's dictum that "official truth is not actual truth." A professor of linguistics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Chomsky revolutionized his discipline. All linguistics is now regarded as either pre-Chomsky or post-Chomsky. Over thirty years after his original work (*Syntactic Structures*, 1957) and his scores of other articles and books, linguists must still tackle Chomsky's ideas; and they do so with both praise and scorn.

Chomsky never felt a need to confine his research to the bounds of his primary discipline. For example, when Skinner's behaviorism became popular, Chomsky became its leading opponent, pointing out that the school was methodologically flawed and that its conclusions were essentially totalitarian. Again, when mysticism was gaining favor within the New Left in the late-1960's, Chomsky—who had tremendous credibility within radical circles—urged a return to reason and moral absolutes. (Some of these essays are reprinted in *The Chomsky Reader*, 1987.)

Chomsky was a leading anti-imperialist American intellectual critic of the Vietnam War. His chronicling of U.S. war crimes (which appear in *American Power and the New Mandarins*, 1969) played a important role in leading activists to civil disobedience against the war, a movement of unprecedented size and scope in U.S. history. Understandably, as Chomsky took the media to task for what he saw as its willing complicity with U.S. war-propaganda, his enemies among the media grew. He also held the intellectual establishment accountable for its silence and opportunism. To this day, he says, "I cannot abide them." In the seventies, he committed yet another sin by breaking the silence on the history and policies of Israel (*Peace in the Middle East?*, 1974, and later, *The Fateful Triangle*, 1982). He predicted that not granting the Palestinians a homeland would lead Israel to expand its use of police-state tactics and violence.

Chomsky continues to write and speak on world affairs. He is in demand to speak at American colleges and universities, but he finds his popularity greatest across the borders. Such is his influence abroad that the State Department has sent venomous letters to foreign magazines, denouncing them for publishing his articles on U.S. foreign policy.

Chomsky's critics can be fiercest on the left, however. Sometimes outsiders to leftist politics can forget that leftists are prone to sell out to the state. Just as Capitol Hill libertarians went on a mad rush to become cogs in Reagan's state machinery, so the left abandoned Chomsky to stay within the narrow bounds of "respectable opinion"—as defined by the state. It is largely true that the Reagan era eclipsed all kinds of radicalism, including Rothbardian and Chomskyian anarchism. As a case against Chomsky, leftists often point out that he allegedly "discredited" himself by defending the freedom of a holocaust revisionist to write and publish. For Chomsky the issue was one of civil liberties; he has no interest in the subject. Yet because the subject is taboo, the issue still causes him trouble (possibly because his "connection" with it is an excuse to dismiss his radical foreign-policy views).

The publication of Chomsky's *The Culture of Terrorism* was the catalyst to two more attacks on his work. In an interview on National Public Radio (and NPR's interviews are always flattering, allowing guests to answer slow pitches from a sympathetic interviewer) the alleged liberals and doves at NPR relentlessly grilled him, interrupted him, attacked his alleged extremism, and argued against his anti-imperialist views. Chomsky remained, as he always does, cool and articulate.

Brian Morton, editor of soft-left *Dissent* magazine, then took his turn in the pages of *The Nation* (May 1988). Instead of attacking Chomsky outright, Morton made a distinction between the old Chomsky (good) and the new Chomsky (bad). The old Chomsky was "gentle," "measured," and "calm." The new one is "chilling," "indignant," "angry." This is not, says Morton, consistent with the libertarian spirit of tolerance. Where have we heard that before?

If there must be such a distinction, the new Chomsky actually seems better. His new work is enlightening, articulate, and persuasive. More than that, it has the moral passion of the classical liberals and of the Old Right, which is sadly missing from today's academic officialese.

The result of the NPR piece and *Nation* article was a glowing essay in *Mother Jones* (October, 1988) praising his most recent work. Then, in November, Bill Moyers bravely aired a two-part interview with Chomsky on his public television show.

But Chomsky's articles won't soon be appearing in *The New York Review of Books*, as they so often did in the 1960s. Neither will *The Nation* soon forgive his attacks on its editorial board. I can safely predict that his new book on the media and American policy, *Manufacturing of Consent* (1989), will get a cold-shoulder from American political culture. His stinging and brilliant articles are still largely confined to *Zeta* magazine, a left-wing monthly of social, cultural, and geopolitical commentary published by South End Press.

Yet *The Culture of Terrorism* has brought Chomsky some exposure, and for good reason: there is no sharper analysis of how the Reagan warfare machine actually worked, how very far from true "conservatism" it turned out to be, how it has spread death and terror throughout the Middle East and Central America, and how America's official culture indulges in a willful neglect of all such unpleasant facts.

The primary tenets of Reagan's program, says Chomsky, are an "increase in the state sector of the economy, and growth of state power in general" and "an 'activist' foreign policy." The growth of the state sector came through the militarization and cartelization of U.S. indus-

try, which have siphoned off resources from the consumer market. An "activist" foreign policy is a code-word for "intervention, subversion, aggression, international terrorism, and general gangsterism and lawlessness."

Under the Reagan administration's management and financing, the Central American death toll reached over 50,000 in El Salvador and close to 100,000 in Guatemala. Most of these were "not ordinary killings," says Chomsky, "but rather Pol Pot-style atrocities, with extensive torture, rape, mutilation, 'disappearance,' and similar measures to ensure that the population would be properly traumatized." At home, Reagan created two government disinformation agencies—Operation Truth and the Office of Public Diplomacy—to cover the terror with distortions and lies and to insure that the river of blood flowed with virtually no acknowledgment from the American electorate.

Only a depraved system of ethics would advocate the intentional torture and killing of innocent people. Yet the U.S. guns in Central America were aimed at what the State Department called "soft targets," that is, innocent civilians. The CIA set up a system which made the effectiveness of the policy dependent on an escalation of terror. Since the goal is the subjugation of the civilian population, it makes sense to bomb health clinics, schools, and churches rather than military installations. The U.S. media treat this with silence, as Chomsky shows. For example, the media were outraged when the Nicaraguan government imposed a state of siege, but no one said a word when the U.S.-client government of El Salvador renewed its perpetual state of siege two days later. In El Salvador, says Chomsky, American "media coverage and outrage is inversely related to the extent of atrocities, though directly related to U.S. government priorities."

In the face of this, and much more, there is something which most institutions of American culture agree on: while the U.S. government's policies may not always be successful in promoting freedom and democracy, they are all, at least, certainly *intended* to do so. Chomsky gathers scores of quotations from liberal and left-wing pundits and publications to show how they fit squarely within the "respectable bounds of opinion" by branding American foreign policy as "mistaken" but never ill-intentioned. Chomsky will have none of it. He shows that U.S. foreign policy has been successful at doing exactly what it was intended to do: expand the U.S. empire through whatever means.

The Culture of Terrorism contains a dizzying array of footnotes on the sources of Chomsky's information. Most of his sources are publicly available. He merely presents the facts and asks the reader to evaluate them in terms of the standards the U.S. government says it requires from other governments.

What use is this book for libertarians? It is the perfect antidote for those who see nothing wrong with an administration that ran a global network of terror and death, just because it reduced marginal taxes rates somewhat. Thanks to Chomsky, such views cannot claim ignorance as an excuse. ❑

***Libertarianism: Fallacies and Follies,* by Robert James Bidinotto**
Newcastle, Penn: Broadsheet Publishers, no date, 23 pp., $4.50

Libertarianism and Diversity

Charles Curley

The question has come up again: What Is Libertarianism? Sigh. The question was precipitated by an essay written by Mr Robert James Bidinotto entitled *Libertarianism: Fallacies and Follies.* It is worth reading, in spite of the fact that a more accurate title would be: *Objectivism and Libertarianism: Fallacies and Follies.*

The chief problem is Bidinotto's ignorance. He appears to equate the Libertarian Party with libertarianism. The equation is invalid. Most libertarians are not members of the LP; some oppose it vociferously. He accuses the libertarian movement of concentrating on politicking, an accusation properly leveled only at a small minority of the libertarian movement: the Libertarian Party and the oxymoronically named Libertarian Republican Organizing Committee. Though one may argue that the act of running for government office is a violation of the libertarian rule, it is grossly unfair to the majority of libertarians to hold them *all* guilty of this.

Bidinotto confuses libertarianism with Objectivism. They are not identical, a point Ms Rand made over and over again. Rand rejected the libertarian label as an effort by libertarians to hitch-hike on her achievements. She also refused to endorse the Libertarian Party. She thought them a gaggle of self-aggrandizing politicians.

Rand was quite clear that she was espousing a complete philosophy. When she spoke to a Random House salesman prior to the launch of *Atlas Shrugged,* she was asked to sum up her philosophy "while standing on one foot." Her summary: "Metaphysics—objective reality; Epistemology—reason; Ethics—self-interest; Politics—capitalism."

Libertarianism, on the other hand, is not a philosophy. It is a concept, a core rule. It is not even an ethic, although ethics may call upon that rule. At most, libertarianism is that rule, with a systematic exploration of its implications for individuals and society. Libertarianism, by itself, does not address metaphysics or epistemology at all! It has implications for ethics and politics, but that is all. It is an ideology, like Marxism, since it makes prescriptions in the area of politics (but not, like Marxism, economics). Libertarian Christians may wish to address metaphysics or epistemology, but they must do so from the point of view of the underlying philosophy they bring to libertarianism.

The Libertarian Rule

The rule that defines libertarianism is easily stated:

Whatever may be open to disagree-

> ment, there is one act of evil that may not, the act that no man may commit against others and no man may sanction or forgive. So long as men desire to live together, no man may *initiate*—do you hear me? no man may *start*—the use of physical force against others. —Ayn Rand, *Atlas Shrugged* [emphasis in original]

Perhaps more to the point of this discussion is the blurb on the mailing cover of *APAlogia* :

> A LIBERTARIAN is a person who believes that no one has the right, under any circumstances, to *initiate* force against another human being, or to advocate or delegate its initiation. Those who act consistently with this principle are Libertarians, whether they realize it or not. Those who fail to act consistently with it are *not* Libertarians, regardless of what they may claim." [Emphasis in original]

You don't have to be an Objectivist to adopt the rule of libertarianism. The works of Lev Tolstoy, C. S. Lewis, Dorothy Day and others echo a Christian version: "Thou Shalt Not Initiate Force." Ceremonial magicians echo Aleister Crowley's version, "And 'Ye harm none,' do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law." Crowley died in 1947, ten years before *Atlas Shrugged* was published. Pagan libertarians continue to exist, having learnt something from being on the wrong end of the Inquisition. Communards are left anarchists or syndicalists. Their writers, too, have learnt to oppose the initiation of force. Josiah Warren, among the American anarchists, comes to mind. One can find libertarian ideas and concepts in almost every major religion, Marxism being a rather obvious exception.

Perhaps the first libertarian was Lao Tse (604–524 B.C.):

> He who by Tao purposes to help the ruler of men
> Will oppose all conquest by force of arms.

Lao Tse's understanding of the economic effects of government predates Mises somewhat:

> The more prohibitions there are, the poorer the people become.
> The more sharp weapons there are, the more prevailing chaos there is in the state.
> The greater the number of statutes, the greater the number of thieves and brigands.

Diversity

Among the implications of the libertarian rule is a vast pluralism: diversity. There are some very narrow-minded people out there who see libertarianism as meaning their own particular philosophy spread throughout the land.

A nation of Dagny Taggarts and John Galts would be *boring*! How do I know? Look at the spawn of incompetent pseudo-randroids we call yuppies: spoilt brats, interested solely in their own careers and in getting as rich as they can. A yuppie will do almost anything for "personal achievement," to advance his, her, or its career. Yuppies are too incompetent to be heroic, too narrow-minded to be anything more than paper pushers, bean counters, or computer salesthings, and too materialistic to see the aesthetic beauty of a tree. These are the people who read Ms Rand twenty years ago, and flunked the final exam: life.

Libertarianism is not a failure of theory or of nerve. Exactly the opposite: it requires considerable nerve to want to live in a society in which one's basic theories on life, the universe and everything, are constantly open to challenge.

The ones who read Ms Rand and passed the final exam are the ones who think for themselves. These are the people who learned a lot from Ms Rand, who picked up her core message: live for yourself, and think for yourself. There aren't too many of them (even Ms Rand ultimately flunked the latter test), and you don't necessarily know one when you see one.

A truly libertarian society will be a pluralistic one. Across the (private) street from the Catholic church offering the Latin Mass may be a pagan field with rituals in the nude or clothed, as preferred. Down that street, maintained by a neighborhood association and patrolled by a rent-a-cop, you might find a gold-standard bank issuing 100% reserve notes printed by an artists' syndicate. Across the street, an openly stated fractional reserve bank. Prominently posted are the buy and sell quotes for Constants.

May you walk upon the private road? Certainly, the filthy capitalist smiles, how else will you get to the shops and businesses that make up the neighborhood association. Why else would we maintain it? The capitalist, by the bye, is literally filthy; his personal habits are his own business. You are right, he is not a rich capitalist.

In the other direction, perhaps a commune of organic farmers. With no subsidies to their agribusiness competitors, the organic farmers do quite well: many people will pay a premium for quality even if they aren't "health nuts." See their outdoor restaurant, where they're serving lunch to the man in cammies, beret and combat boots?

Beyond that is the local Golf and Rifle Club. The gun range is in the middle of the property, where only fellow club members will be put out by the occasional private mortar practice. Sorry, tactical nukes are not allowed by club rules. You probably won't find the local Buddhists at the Sunday Survival game. ("Replace your divots.") The noise disturbs their "wa."

The one rule you will find throughout such a society is very simple: no one initiates the use of force. Everything else is open to discussion, and is often discussed. Such discussion is inevitable when people are free to think as they may. The answer to "Think as I tell you" is "Goodbye and have a nice life."

The Problem with Bidinotto

In his essay, Mr Bidinotto presents five arguments against libertarianism:

> 1) That "libertarianism," as a concept, is nebulous and vague; that it has been left so deliberately—first, to avoid any personal philosophical requirements, and second, so as not to shatter the illusion of a libertarian coalition . . .

Libertarianism is not vague. The rule that defines libertarianism, which I quoted above, and Mr Bidinotto complains libertarians stole from Ms Rand, is not vague.

If he finds that vague or nebulous, then Mr Bidinotto can't read. It is not a full philosophic system, nor does it need to be. None, save Mr Bidinotto, perhaps,

claims that it is.

2) [T]hat the focus on liberty, instead of on its philosophical roots, by-passes the real and decisive ideological battle in the world today . . .

Translation: *liberty is not as important as your conversion to my ideology.* What Mr Bidinotto is saying here is that it is not sufficient to be free to pursue one's own goals; one must also accept the particular philosophy which, as it happens, he espouses. He may—or may not—be correct, but that is a different issue. If the libertarian rule permits discussion and variety, then of necessity libertarianism permits different ways of life.

3) [T]hat libertarianism, as an *ideological* coalition, entails the untenable collaboration of logically opposing factions—with disastrous consequences . . . [emphasis in original]

What Mr Bidinotto sees as a fatal flaw is actually libertarianism's great virtue. Because it has only one rule, because it permits all things except the initiation of force, because it is nothing but a guarantee of diversity, libertarianism can gather in a coalition of disparate minorities: Buddhists, science fiction fans, Taoists, Ghu knows what else. Perhaps libertarians should adopt a pagan aphorism: "If they come for me in the night, they'll come for you in the morning."

Randroids will, mercifully, always be a small minority. Perhaps they should consider this coalition as a means to their own future safety. Which would you prefer to have as a neighbor, Mr Bidinotto: a libertarian Taoist, or a yuppie IRS agent?

As to the allegation of untenability, so long as the implications of the libertarian rule are carried out in a coalition organization, the organization is tenable, perhaps even comfortable (at least to those of us who cherish diversity). In a libertarian organization, one does not speak for anyone else on any subject except the libertarian rule. "I'm an X, she's a Y, he's a Z. But we all agree not to initiate force over our disagreements" is the proper form of such an organization's manifesto.

Here—as Mr Bidinotto points out—both the Libertarian Party and the Nathaniel Branden Institute failed miserably. Aside from the label in the former (stolen, typical of politicians), neither was libertarian for long, if ever. These examples prove, not that libertarianism won't work, but that there is justice in the universe.

On the contrary, a diverse, pluralistic libertarian movement can appeal to far more people than a narrow one dependent on one particular philosophy. A libertarian Bahai can talk to another Bahai far more readily than an Objectivist could talk to a Bahai. For one thing, the Bahai need only seek the other one's agreement not to initiate force. Contrast that with the Objectivist's apparent need to change his victim's entire world view.

4) [T]hat libertarianism, in by-passing epistemology, has no objective grounding for its most basic concepts, such as "rights" or "justice"—also with disastrous consequences . . .

As I have tried to make clear, libertarianism does not "by-pass" anything, least of all epistemology. Rather, libertarianism requires that one bring one's own epistemology to the table when one is considering the libertarian rule. Libertarianism requires that one have one's own thought-out position. It does not require that one accept, lock, stock and Inquisition, someone else's canned philosophy. More important, it requires that one be willing to learn enough about someone else's philosophy to understand his approach to the libertarian rule. One wonders: is Mr Bidinotto willing to undertake this task?

5) [T]hat libertarianism, as an aphilosophical movement, must evade the moral ramifications of individualism in structuring its organizations and cooperative projects.

Libertarianism is certainly not an aphilosophic movement. Getting someone to make conscious the libertarian rule in that person's philosophical terms requires a considerable application of philosophy, and a thorough knowledge of a great deal of different philosophies. How does one bring out an appreciation of the libertarian rule in a Muslim without a thorough grounding in Islam? By converting the Muslim to Objectivism? Not bloody likely!

Nor is it necessary that an aphilosophical movement ignore the moral ramifications of the individual. Silicon Valley businesses run by yuppies are as aphilosophical institutions as ever you are likely to find, yet they are forced by market pressures to take into account the moral ramifications of individualism. I don't work for the ones that don't.

Contrary to Mr Bidinotto, libertarianism is not a failure of theory or of nerve. Exactly the opposite: it requires considerable nerve to want to live in a society in which one's basic theories on life, the universe and everything, are constantly open to challenge. It requires considerable nerve to want to live in a society in which philosophic discussion is limited only by exhaustion, or the supply of beer, instead of by ridicule or force or psychological games. It requires considerable nerve to want to live in a world in which everyone has his own theory as to what is right, and in which that theory may be put to the only test that counts: reality. Not to the words in some book, nor to abstract ideas on how the universe ought to proceed, but to reality itself: how the universe does proceed. And certainly not to the coward's ultimate argument, force. Nor to his penultimate argument, intimidation.

If it requires nerve to want to live in such a society, consider the cowardice of someone who thinks that a libertarian society can be achieved only if we all think as he does. ❑

Booknotes

Start with a Bang — BarbaraTuchman is a successful populizer of both recent and past history, and her most recent book, ***First Salute: A New View of the American Revolution*** (Alfred A. Knopf, 347 pp., $22.95) sheds considerable light on the little-known but important side of the American Revolution.

The title refers to the symbolic event on November 16, 1776, when the trade-and-smuggling oriented governor of St. Eustatius—a small but prosperous Dutch outpost in the West Indies—took it upon himself to order a full naval battery salute in response to the welcoming salute from the U.S. Navy brigantine *Andrew Doria*, acknowledging the presence of a vessel of a sovereign power. This exchange of protocol was the first official European recognition of the revolutionary U.S. regime as a legitimate and rightful government.

The governor, Johannes de Graaff, acted solely on his own authority. He was in sympathy with the revolution, no doubt anticipating the huge profits to be gained by running embargoed merchandise to and from the American rebels. De Graaff, an otherwise unsung hero of the Revolution, is honored only by a portrait hanging in the New Hampshire state capitol. The government in Holland, in the wake of strong British protests over the incident, repudiated his action.

As Tuchman points out, the Dutch eventually sided with the Americans. The British successfully invaded St. Eustatius and captured de Graaff, but ended up losing both the island and the war. Years later de Graaff—surely a *de facto* libertarian if there ever was one—died a happy and prosperous merchant.

The focus of the book is three-fold: the early European intrigue and motivations to tacitly support the Americans—largely for historical and mercantile reasons involving the lucrative West Indies sugar trade; the machinations and politics of the Royal Navy, which saddled the British with inept, corrupt and half-hearted leadership; and the final diplomatic and naval breakthroughs that led to the successful blockade and defeat of Cornwallis at Yorktown.

Although some critics have contended that Tuchman's account overstates the importance of the naval side of the Revolution and of European military and financial aid to the Americans, she presents a compelling case for at least giving these factors equal weight with others.

Most surprising is the account of how poorly the British navy performed. Tuchman contends that it was saddled with a corrupt promotion system and poor admiralship (the execution of an admiral, decades earlier, for losing a sea battle he had no hope of winning partly explains this). Fierce Whig political opposition to George III's heavy-handed treatment of the rebellion also played a critical role.

Tuchman describes how the rigid "Rules of Engagement," the bible for English naval warfare, actually hindered British naval success in those chaotic battles. The French had better schooled and trained seamen and employed a beter naval strategy—namely, avoid fighting if at all possible.

Tuchman's emphasis on the sheer luck of the Americans and French and on the extravagant leadership failures of the British high command may be a bit overdone, but it does reinforce the axiom that wars are more often lost than won. —MH

A Liberal in Africa — "There is something reasonable about trade to all men, and you see the advantage of it is that when you first appear among people who have never seen anything like you before, they naturally regard you as a devil; but when you want to buy or sell with them, they recognize there is something human and reasonable about you."

No, those are not the words of an economist. It is the observation of a self-educated Victorian woman whose dream was travel to West Africa and who fulfilled that dream in three remarkable voyages. Her life has been detailed in a new biography by Katherine Frank (***A Voyager Out,*** Houghton Mifflin, 1986) that describes her unusual upbringing and development in England but mostly relates her trips to West Africa and the writing of her books about those experiences.

Mary Kingsley came from a well-known family. Her uncle was the novelist Charles Kingsley and her father George Kingsley a well-known physician and travel writer. It was also a family of eccentrics. One day Mary's mother took to her sick bed and spent the remainder of her life there, leaving to five-year-old Mary the resposibility for managing the household.

Her family moved to Cambridge as a convenience for her brother's education. Apparently, her father believed that education was a luxury not wasted on women: Mary received no formal education at all, not even tutoring. Mary made the most of her opportunities, educating herself in her father's library and making several lasting friends among the intellectual community at Cambridge, all the while caring for the mother who had refused to move from her bedroom.

Mary's freedom came with the death of her parents within three months of each other when Mary was thirty. Ten months later, she set out on her first voyage to West Africa.

Kingsley was no leisurely tourist: she prepared for her voyage by studying the fields of fetish and fish biology, and gathered a substantial collection of scientifically valuable specimens during her voyages. But it is her study of native cultures and observations that are of greater interest today.

She advocated a remarkably tolerant, *laissez faire* attitude toward African society. She believed, for example, that the most benign approach to local cultures was trade, and argued that local social structures and judicial systems should be left alone, with a separate judicial system for Europeans traders, and argued against hut taxes on the native. Frank often seems mystified by her views, but they are perfectly understandable in terms of the liberal view of her time.

Kingsley was an extraordinarily sensitive observer, remarkably free from the cultural superiority exhibited by many Europeans who ventured into the "dark continent."

> Imagine a gentlemen of inky complexion, mainly dressed in red and white paint, human teeth, and leopard tails and not too many of them, suddenly arriving in a village herea-

> bouts. After the first thrill of excitement his appearance gave passed away, and he was found anxious to sell something, anything, say bootlaces, he would be taken much more calmly than if he showed no desire to do business at all.

This is the story of a woman who had been brought up in a unusual manner and had no fear of leading an unusual life, in fact embraced it. The book presents a fascinating picture not only of Mary Kingsley but also of West Africa in the 1890's. —KRB

Southern Women — I suppose that Shirley Abbott is a feminist. That's a word I like to avoid, because it means so many different things. But Shirley Abbott transcends feminism in ***Womenfolks: Growing Up Down South*** (Ticknor and Fields, 1983).

Anybody born or raised south of Highway 40 will find something familiar in this book. Abbott neither wallows in nor denounces the hillbilly *mystique*, but gives us an enlightened insider's point of view on cultural elements from vocabulary to gender relationships to religion.

There are many passages in *Womenfolks* of particular interest to libertarians. For example, she writes about the Scotch-Irish ancestors of today's Southerners and hillbillies:

> Like the blacks, substantial numbers of whom were also being unloaded from ships' holds at about this time, the Scotch-Irish were a people apart. But unlike the blacks, they had a choice about where to go next. They did not linger in the ports or along the shoreline but scuttled immediately away into the backwoods like caged bears suddenly set loose on shore, making their way into a terrifying and savage wilderness where no houses or churches or trading posts or friends stood ready for them—nobody except the Tuscaroras and the Catawbas and the Cherokees—no laws, no courts, no vestige of civil government. There are eyewitness accounts of them landing in America and setting off from the docks the same day, in open boats upriver into the frozen forest, miles away from Charleston. They went with a strong resolve that must have been half insane.

In short, a bunch of instinctive anarcho-capitalists. Further on, she gives us a revisionist history of fundamentalist Christianity that led me to rethink some of my enlightened agnostic gut-reactions against that part of my personal cultural background. She writes:

> It is no mystery that fundamentalism sprang up and flourished in America—though few Baptists today might like to acknowledge their radical heritage. What the Baptists were, in fact, was the first counterculture in America. No hippie in the 1960s ever aroused more wrath among the righteous—violent, overt wrath—than the Baptists did in the eighteenth century. Among all American dissenters they have the oldest pedigree and certainly one of the most honorable. The founder of the Baptist church in America was that celebrated libertarian of our schoolbooks, Roger Williams . . .

I hasten to add here that Abbott points out very clearly that much of the original spirit of personal freedom has of course deteriorated in the South over the decades, and that the descendants of these rebels against authority have in many cases recreated the conditions their ancestors risked everything to escape from.

The book is a good read for many other reasons. If you have Southern roots yourself, or would simply like to get a better handle on what Scarlett O'Hara and Daisy Mae and Tallulah Bankhead and Minnie Pearl are really all about, you can't make a better start than *Womenfolks*.

—RFM

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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.

Kathleen Bradford is a former basketball player who looks down on most men.

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

Charles Curley resides in the People's Republic of Santa Cruz, where the number two outdoor sport is building or remodeling one's home without a permit.

M. H. Endres is a jack-of-many-trades, one of which is writing. He lives in paradise (viz. Maui).

Jeffrey Friedman is editor of *Critical Review,* a quarterly journal of libertarian thought and criticism. He was national director of Students for Clark and Students for a Libertarian Society.

Mike Holmes, a contributing editor to *Liberty,* is also editor of *American Libertarian,* a monthly newspaper.

Daniel M. Karlan is a computer programmer, a Life Member of the Nature Conservancy, and Chairman of the New Jersey Libertarian Party.

Michael I. Krauss, a Professor of Law at George Mason University, is a dual citizen of the United States and Canada, and until 1987 was Associate Professor at the Université de Sherbrooke (Quebec) Law School.

Dianne Kresich is a freelance artist and a research assistant at the Laissez-Faire Institute in Tempe, Arizona.

Allan Levite is the manager of a microcomputer distributorship in Dallas. His articles have appeared in *Reason* and in *The Freeman.*

Tibor R. Machan teaches philosophy at Auburn University, Alabama, and is the editor of *Reason Papers.*

Bob Ortin lives in southern Oregon, where his "Burons" are regularly featured in a local paper.

Murray N. Rothbard, a senior editor of *Liberty,* is S. J. Hall Distinguished Professor of Economics at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas and Vice President for Academic Affairs of the Ludwig von Mises Institute.

John Semmens is an economics instructor at Phoenix College and Senior Market Analyst for the Transportation and Planning Division of the Arizona Department of Transportation.

David Ramsay Steele, a senior editor of *Liberty,* is editorial director of the General Books Division of Open Court Publishing Company.

Jeffrey A. Tucker is managing editor of *The Free Market,* the monthly publication of the Ludwig von Mises Institute.

Ethan O. Waters is a lover of privacy and a connoisseur of the American booboisie.

Coming in the Next Issue of *Liberty* . . .

"Man, Nature, and State" Karl Hess, Jr, reconsiders man's place in nature in light of possible ecological catastrophe. Is there a place for individual liberty in our future? Hess, an "ecologist by training and inclination," believes that the answer to this question is *Yes,* because diversity is crucial to the integrity of ecosystems, and liberty and private property insures diversity better than any other political system.

"A Critique of Public Choice" Though Murray Rothbard sees considerable value in the approach of the "Public Choice" school of political economy, he has been able to restrain his enthusiasm. He notes that many of the school's most important insights have been staple to the libertarian movement for nearly a century, and *some* of their leading ideas are problematic, to say the least.

"Games and Rights" Stephen Boydstun explains how recent work on the theory of games has shed light on the nature of rights . . . and he isn't playing around: game theory not only can help us understand the problems of rights-theory, it can help lead to solutions.

Terra Incognita

U.S.A.

One reason that more than 30% of passenger trains in the U.S. arrive at their destination late, as reported by the Detroit *News*:

> Amtrak, the government owned intercity railroad passenger service, reports that it keeps passengers under surveillance who "arrive at the train station in a taxicab," and report them to law enforcement authorities as suspected drug dealers.

Great Britain

Advance in rail scheduling, as developed by British Rail, the government owned rail passenger service, as reported in the Seattle *Times*:

> British Rail refused to include its 10:59 a.m. train from the Liverpool Street Station to Ipswich in its published timetable. "If we don't put it on the timetable," a BR spokesman explained, "people won't travel on it. Then we can cancel it if there is no demand."

Washington, D.C.

How the Supreme Court protects the right to a fair trial by a jury of one's peers, as reported by *The Wall Street Journal*:

> The Supreme Court upheld a guilty verdict in a mail-fraud case, even though some of the jurors admitted drinking and taking drugs during the trial and often falling asleep in the afternoons. Two jurors conceded that their judgment may have been impaired, raising a question about what they might have decided if sober.

Wheeling, W.Va.

Latest advance in the War on Drugs, as proposed in the Metropolis of West Virginia, as reported in the Houston *Post*:

> City Councilman John Carenbauer called for passage of a federal law to increase the penalties for drug use and drunk driving. Conceding that his proposal "may seem a little radical," Councilman Carenbauer proposed that suspects who test positive for drugs or alcohol be held incommunicado in special holding tanks and "taken outside and shot the following morning."

Washington, DC

Man does not live on bread alone, and neither does the President of the United States, as reported by the esteemed newsweekly *Newsweek*:

> The Reagan White House has devoured approximately 12 tons of jellybeans, or an average of approximately 8.3 lbs per day during its tenure.

New York

Good news for those who argue that government deficits do not matter, as reported by *The Wall Street Journal*:

> Only 45% of high school students could identify a government deficit as "government spending in excess of revenue" on a multiple choice test given to 8,205 high school students nationwide.

Fort Worth, Texas

Evidence that police in Texas will no longer tolerate open displays of Christianity, as reported in the Houston *Post:*

> Rev. W. N. Otwell was arrested for giving away sandwiches to the homeless in a downtown park. He was charged with "operating a temporary food establishment without a permit," an offense which carries a fine of up to $1,000.

Boston

Demonstration of how the government of an advanced nation treats the issue of race, in sharp contrast to South Africa and Nazi Germany, which investigate the racial background of applicants for jobs, as reported by the *Associated Press*:

> Philip and Paul Malone have been suspended from their jobs as firefighters in Boston, pending a decision by the Supreme Judicial Court. At issue is whether Messrs. Malone qualify as blacks and therefore qualify for their positions. In addition, the racial backgrounds of 36 other firefighters have been investigated, and eleven others face hearings to determine their race.

Washington, D.C.

Evidence of how the IRS encourages the free flow of ideas about our tax system, as reported in *The Wall St Journal*:

> Prof Richard L. Doernberg was invited to deliver the keynote speech on "Change and Complexity as Barriers to Taxpayer Compliance" at the Internal Revenue Service's sixth annual research conference. After reading a draft of his remarks, the IRS requested he delete a discussion of the relationship between changes in tax law and large gifts from lobbyists to prominent Members of Congress, specifically Lloyd Bentsen, Robert Dole, Dan Rostenkowski and Bob Packwood. Prof Doernberg refused, so the IRS "disinvited" him. The IRS explained that the Service was not attempting to "censor" his remarks, but that some of the conclusions he drew were "unsupported."

LeGrande, Ore.

Latest advance in political science at the county level, as reported in *The Skeptical Inquirer*:

> The Union County Commission appointed Jenny Nicholson to the newly-created position of "County Astrologer" so that she could advise them the most propitious time to apply for "federal and state grants."

The People's Republic of China

The progressive way that family planning is encouraged in the Socialist Paradise, as reported by *The Wall St Journal*:

> The fine for having a second child is now $1,000, approximately four times the per capita national income, and "Officials are adopting new 'persuasion tactics,' such as cutting off water and electricity to families who refuse to practice birth control."

Quebec, P. Q.

The progressive way that family planning is encouraged in *La Belle Province*, as reported by *The Wall St Journal*:

> The government of Quebec announced that it would pay a cash bonus of $500 for the birth of the first and second child of any woman in Quebec, plus $3000 per each for subsequent children. These bonuses are in addition to the $29.64 per month for each of the first two children and $91.99 per month for each subsequent child that the Federal and Provincial governments pay to help defray the expenses of child raising.
>
> The province is concerned that its mostly French-speaking population might decline from its current level. "I cannot, as leader of Quebec's francophones, be impassive and indifferent in the face of a situation that could become serious within several decades," said Robert Bourassa, Premier of Quebec.

Study this summer at the "Ludwig von Mises University."

The Ludwig von Mises Institute's O.P. Alford III Center presents the ultimate Austrian economics week. At Stanford University in Palo Alto, California, from July 8-15, 1989, a full Misesian department will teach under the direction of the leading Austrian economist in the world, Professor Murray N. Rothbard.

Students will be able to "specialize" and programs will be available at the introductory, intermediate, and advanced levels. The 37 areas to be covered range from the history of thought to the future of Austrian economics. There will also be a seminar on effective writing.

The "Mises University" includes world-class teaching; dormitory housing; three excellent meals a day; study materials; library privileges (4.5 million volumes); extensive cultural, recreational, and athletic facilities; and a magnificent climate.

The normal fee is $695; students are $100. Some full scholarships and travel grants are available.

For more information, write the Ludwig von Mises Institute, Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama 36849, (205) 826-2500.

F A C U L T Y

Murray N. Rothbard, Chairman
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Robert Batemarco Marymount College	Roger Garrison Auburn University	Hans-Hermann Hoppe University of Nevada, Las Vegas	George Selgin University of Hong Kong
Walter Block Fraser Institute	David Gordon Ludwig von Mises Institute	Sheldon Richman Institute for Humane Studies	Mark Skousen Rollins College
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