

Liberty

March 1992

Vol. 5, No. 4

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JFK The Once and Future Controversy

Pat Buchanan: The Great Right Hope?

by C. A. Arthur

The Murder of My Homeland

by Kin-ming Liu

Who Really Wrote "Little House on the Prairie"

by William Holtz

P.C. or B.S.?

by Meredith McGhan

Acid Rain and the Corrosion of Science

by Edward Krug

Also: *Stephen Cox* on Albert Jay Nock;
John Baden and *Randal O'Toole* on the U.S. Forest Service;
Plus other Articles, Reviews, and Humor.



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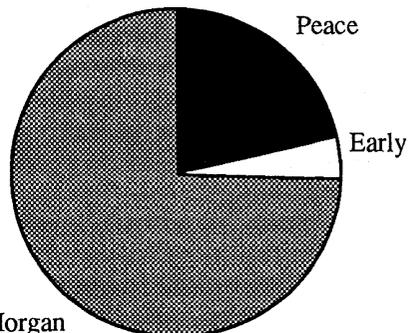
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Inside Liberty

March 1992

Volume 5, Number 4

4 Letters Our readers take *Liberty* into their own hands.

7 Reflections *Liberty's* editors on Presidents, living and dead; voters, active and inactive; breasts, implanted and deflated; taxes, cut and uncut; Russians, powerful and powerless; and other images, tightly focused.

Features

- 17 Patrick J. Buchanan** James Robbins talked with Bush's right-wing challenger about America, Japan, illegal immigrants, drugs, the names of sports teams, and libertarian should support him.
- 21 Inside Pat Buchanan** Chester Alan Arthur explores the mindscape of America's pre-eminent "paleo-conservative," looking for something even remotely libertarian.
- 29 Acid Rain and the Corrosion of Science** Edward C. Krug, a scientist on the Reagan Administration's infamous "acid rain" commission, explains the real nature of the political pressure bearing down on science.
- 31 P.C. or B.S.?** Meredith McGhan finds herself caught between the fascism of Political Correctness and the Stalinism of the Right.
- 33 America's Experiment in Sylvan Socialism** John Baden has prepared an environmental impact statement on the U.S. Forest Service. The agency runs about as well as you can expect a government boondoggle to run.
- 37 No Accounting for Waste** Randal O'Toole audits the U. S. Forest Service's accounting system: the bottom line is pork.
- 39 Albert Jay Nock: Prophet of Libertarianism?** The great libertarian writer was a riddle wrapped inside a mystery wrapped inside an enigma. Stephen Cox unveils the genius behind the nut beneath the master.
- 47 Hong Kong After Tiananmen** Kin-ming Liu examines the prospects for the future of his hometown.
- 51 The Ghost in the Little House Books** William Holtz examines the professional relationship between Rose Wilder Lane, libertarian novelist, and her mother, Laura Ingalls Wilder, the official author of *The Little House on the Prairie* books.
- 55 Economics vs Bionomics?** Ross Overbeek explains why he is not impressed with "bionomics." Michael Rothschild, bionomics' originator, explains why he isn't impressed with Overbeek.

Reviews

- 59 JFK, Conspiracies, and Me** Oliver Stone made a movie. Lee Harvey Oswald shot a president. Sheldon Richman wrote this review. Where's the controversy? *Read on . . .*
- 61 A Paradigm Shifts Gears** Jane S. Shaw puts the latest model of Public Choice through a test drive. Behind all the fancy new features lies a very practical development — constitutional politics — that means one thing: economics has gone into overdrive.
- 63 The Illusions of a Technique** Lawrence White enumerates the benefits and hazards of cost-benefit analysis.
- 65 Booknotes** on feminists, strangers, puns, lawyers, sports.

Departments

- 69 Notes on Contributors**
- 70 Terra Incognita** Excerpts from the real and unreal worlds of the media, the state, and the booboisie.

Letters

Steele's Aborted Argument

That David Ramsay Steele ("Peikoff's Objectivism: An Autopsy," January 1992) gave a critical review of Peikoff's latest book is an understatement. But do Steele's ideas (e.g., "a fetus is programmed with theories . . . we are born theorizing . . . we are all born into the world holding theories. . .") improve any on those ideas of Peikoff that he characterizes as "barely coherent"? I doubt it; in fact, one of my fetal theories that I've never seen fit to revise is that "Steele is full of shit." (Just for a brief in-kind review. So, sue my grandfather!) Steele sounds more like an abortion clinic picketer than a critic of philosophy.

Not by way of defending Peikoff, Steele is no better for "(stopping) . . . where the interesting questions start." Like: How is a fetus so programmed? By whom? or what? Is every fetus conscious of its theories? Starting when? What theories does a fetus have? What meaning can a theory have to, and how can it be understood by, an embryo with no language or concepts? What happened to adults who wouldn't recognize a theory if one bit them? Will my revised theories be passed on to any eggs I fertilize? What embryo would not reject pro-choice theories?

Did Steele have his super-theory ever since he was conceived? Why didn't the rest of us get that theory? Perhaps the embryonic Steele was just so much better than me at reviewing, comprehending, testing, invalidating, and revising the entire phylogenetic universe of innate theories, and now he's on a higher level; a normal person would have been mentally exhausted before birth! Perhaps, again, I mistakenly place excessive value on my concept of "theory" and the role it plays in human learning and achievement.

David A. Braatz
Mt. Mourne, N.C.

Letters Policy

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

P.C. in the Sixties

Henry Veatch, though mostly right, is a little wrong when he says that, some 25 years ago, Rand's objectivism "was a cult that touched only the students and not the professors — at least not those professors whose calling was 'academic philosophy'" ("Might 'Objectivism' Ever Become Academically Respectable?" January 1992).

Leonard Peikoff, for one, was expounding Rand's Objectivism at that time as an academic philosopher (at Denver University), and so was I at the University of Colorado. From 1962 onwards, I assigned various works of Rand in my classes in social and political philosophy. I even had an article published in Rand's *Objectivist*.

This is not to say that I did not suffer for my temerity in certain ways at the hands of my department. Students were told by the chairman of the department (a great exponent of non-conformity of thought) not to take my courses. There was even hostility to my getting salary raises. In 1964 I had eleven articles published in various philosophical journals, some of the highest repute (e.g.: *Phil. & Phenomen. Research; American Phil. Quarterly; Phil. Studies; Analysis; The Phil. Review; October; Dialogue, The Canadian Philosophical Quarterly; Ratio; The Review of Metaphysics*). This was a time when publication was being touted as the *sine qua non* of and most meritorious of scholarly endeavors. On the recommendation of the department — most of whose members had no publications that year, but did have correct thoughts — I received the lowest salary raise of anyone.

So I know from first hand, let me say, the penalties of advocating unpopular causes in Academe, where as nowhere else is P.C. comparably mandated. But, let me add, I am happy that I stuck by my ideological guns and in retrospect would, given the chance, do exactly as I did then. I guess what I mean is: honesty does pay, in the noblest coinage of them all — self-respect.

John O. Nelson
Boulder, Colo.

No Clue

Neither David Ramsay Steele nor Henry B. Veatch seem to have a clue as to

what the Objectivist movement is about. Mr Steele is inappropriately angry and vituperative, which are usually sure signs of a case without merit. Mr Veatch, whether intentionally or not, is a master at concealing the meaning of his sentences and paragraphs.

Robert J. O'Donnell
San Rafael, Calif.

Clue

R.W. Bradford ("Happy Anniversary, National Park Service," January 1992) has sharpened the horns of the dilemma of purpose faced by the National Park Service and by U.S. citizens. He illustrates the anguish caused by the impalement on first one horn and then the other. They can't rest on either point — that of permitted public access to, or absolute preservation of, National Park property. My mother, Lena Fletcher, daughter of the John Huelsdonk mentioned in the article, once wrote that the ideal National Park would be on the other side of the moon, hidden from view of the vulgar, and untracked or trodden by the feet of the elite.

My own characterization of "natural" National Parks comes from my experience and training in the administration of public zoos. The popular National Parks are oversized public zoological gardens, run by Park police rangers instead of zoo directors.

John A. Fletcher
St Paul, Minn.

Lesion: The Unkindest Cut

It's nice to see that *Liberty's* commentary on "Magic" Johnson treats him as an individual and not as a symbol. However, as former host couple of several swing clubs, and with one of us trained in epidemiology, we find Kostelanetz's assumptions ("Lesion lessons," January 1992) about sexual transmission of HIV dubious.

First, his notion of "lesions" is too simple. HIV may well be transmissible through unbroken mucus membranes of the vagina, penis or rectum; even if not, a penile "lesion" may be no more than a roughened or abraded area, not particularly painful, especially during sexual excitement, when pain sensitivity is much reduced. Vigorous intercourse with someone with coarse pubic hair, or with insufficient lubrication, can easily produce such abrasions without either party's awareness.

Second, Kostelanetz must not be very promiscuous himself, or he would know

continued on page 6

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- TOM GREY, Political & Economic advisor to the Prime Minister of the Slovakian Republic.
- ROBERT POOLE, JR., President of the Reason Foundation & leading authority on privatization
- DR. SVETOZAR PEJOVICH, of Texas A & M (authority on Yugoslavia and member of ISIL's Board)
- VICTOR DAVIDOFF, of the Free Market Foundation in Moscow -- also ISIL Rep for Russia
- KEN SCHOOLLAND, a former special advisor to the White House & current ISIL Board Member.
- PROF. RICHARD EBELING of Hillsdale College and the Von Mises Institute.
- BUMPER HORNBERGER, president of the Future of Freedom Foundation.
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Letters, *continued from page 4*

that among people with several hundred sex partners, remembering more than a few dozen is very unlikely. Given the sports groupie scene in which Mr Johnson was probably participating, he is unlikely to remember many of his sex partners at all, much less recall a single act of vaginal intercourse as unusual.

Gracie & Zarkov
Berkeley, Calif.

Ominous Non-parallels

How could David Friedman ("The New Alger Hiss," January 1992) equate Clarence Thomas with Alger Hiss? Any similarity is drowned by two major differences:

1. The specific offense Thomas was accused of was bad manners in asking out a woman who didn't want to date him and using ribald language in her presence. The offense Hiss was accused of was turning over American secrets to a foreign power whose stated goal was the destruction of America.
2. The evidence that Thomas was guilty of his "crime" consisted of the un-

supported assertion of a single witness. The evidence that Hiss was guilty consisted of the testimony of Whittaker Chambers plus extensive physical evidence.

Whether Mr Thomas was rude to Miss Hill we do not know, and I doubt we ever will. That is one of the problems one faces when making accusations years later without any evidence.

How Friedman could equate Thomas, whose guilt was never proven, with Hiss, who was proven guilty beyond reasonable doubt, is beyond my ken. Is *Liberty* finding it necessary to present both sides on major controversies even when the case is as clear-cut as this one?

Pat Williams
New York, N.Y.

A Question of Principle

I am disappointed by *Liberty's* treatment of the Thomas-Hill hearings. Libertarianism is supposed to stand for the rights of the oppressed, the whistleblowers, the courageous victims of irresponsible authority. Yet in the premiere journal of the libertarian movement, four voices are raised in defense of Clar-

ence Thomas, and not a single voice is heard defending Anita Hill. Indeed, Virkkala compares her to Tawana Brawley, and Kostelanetz suggests that Hill subconsciously "craved this week of celebrity." (This quickness to attribute Hill's testimony to psychological problems is not matched by any tendency to raise similar questions about Thomas.)

Thomas' support in the libertarian community is presumably due to the widespread perception that he is a closet libertarian. Of this I am skeptical; Thomas' record suggests that he is a traditionalist patriarchal conservative with some mildly libertarian views; his confirmation hearing suggests that he is a Bush-style pragmatist with no principled commitments. Neither prospect is heartening for defenders of liberty. But even if Thomas were the crypto-libertarian many take him to be, this would hardly warrant the unhesitating support he has received in the pages of *Liberty*. Shaw goes so far as to assert that even if Thomas is guilty of harassment, he was justified in denying it — and calling Hill's integrity in question — in order to win the nomination! And here I thought that as libertarians we were supposed to pride ourselves on not subordinating principle to expediency.

Roderick T. Long
Bowling Green, Oh.

No Cheers for Coase

I have not done any concentrated study in the ideas of Ronald Coase, but if David Friedman's elucidation of them ("How to Think About Pollution," January 1992) is accurate, I cannot concur in Friedman's cheer at his being awarded a Nobel.

Coase's notion of "least cost avoider" and Friedman's statement that "It is the joint decision — yours to pollute and mine to live where you are polluting that produces the cost" might seem strange to a libertarian. If you rewrite the sentence to read "It is the joint decision — yours to fire the gun and mine to be in the way of the bullet — that produces the murder," perhaps the problem becomes more clear.

Coase's ideas completely evade the notion of rights that should not be violated no matter *what* the cost of avoiding violating them is. He seems to imply that anyone has the right to anything he wants as long as he can convince a judge — who has no way, even theoretically, of calculating such a thing objectively —

continued on page 50

The Sound of Liberty

We captured the voices of *Liberty's* editors and guests at the top of their form at a conference we held some time back, and offer their wise words on tape. Here is some of the excitement:

- *Liberty and the Environment*, with Jane S. Shaw, Richard Stroup, John Hospers, R.W. Bradford and David Friedman (A-107, V-107)
- *Making Sense of Rights*, with David Friedman, John Hospers, Timothy Virkkala, R.W. Bradford, Loren Lomasky and David Ramsay Steele (A-108, V-108)
- *The Economic Case for and against Anarchy*, by David Friedman (A-109, V-109)
- *Does Economics Make Sense?* by David Friedman (A-112, V-112)
- *The Poverty of Libertarian Fiction*, by Stephen Cox (A-114, V-114)

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Reflections

Happy Bicentennial — On the two-hundredth anniversary of the ratification of the Bill of Rights, the American Bar Association sponsored a poll in which respondents were asked to identify the Bill of Rights among four possibilities in an absurdly easy multiple-choice question. According to the *New York Times* (Dec. 15, 1991), just one-third identified the right answer. Only nine percent knew that the Bill of Rights was intended to protect citizens against abuses by the federal government, while 33 percent thought it was intended to ensure equality for all citizens. Almost three-fourths of the respondents said they would like the Constitution to guarantee adequate health care for everybody.

Maybe some people really do get the government they deserve. — RH

State of the union — As we begin another presidential election campaign, it's time perhaps to consider what this display of a "democratic people in action" actually means in America. Less than one-half of the eligible voters bother to vote at all. Of these, the winning candidate generally garners a bit more than half of the votes. He wins these by routinely lying ("Read my lips"), by shamelessly lavishing the wealth of productive people on every kind of mooching special interest, and by a brainless barrage of thirty-second television spots — paid for with money looted from the taxpayer. Those who do bother to vote know virtually nothing about the issues: they bask in what economists call "rational ignorance" (hence the brainless commercials). This, in essence, is the much vaunted "democratic process." How it could conceivably bestow the slightest shred of moral legitimacy on the victor is beyond me.

Meanwhile, Pat Buchanan's entry into the Republican contest is welcome news. It's unlikely that even the pugnacious Pat can force the supremely banal Bush to engage in real debate. But at least he can make the campaign fun to watch. — RR

No old taxes — In an effort to get the economy going again, President Bush has announced a 90-day moratorium on new federal regulations. No doubt this is a great idea, but it raises an interesting question: if Bush's regulations are hurting the economy, why does he promulgate them in the first place?

But promulgate them he has. As of October, the administration was working on 4,863 regulations. According to a study by National Chamber Foundation, the cost of regulation fell under Carter and Reagan from \$5,800 per household per year in 1977 to \$4,100 in 1988. Under Bush, the cost of regulation has already increased to \$4,300. No wonder *The*

Wall St Journal calls Bush the "Reregulation President."

So while there is no doubt that the moratorium is a good thing, why stop at 90 days? And why not abolish some of the other regulations that cost the average household \$4,300 this year?

If the president wants a moratorium to goose the economy, here's one that will work a lot better than this wimpy 90-day holiday from new regulation: a moratorium on federal taxes. Let's see how hard people will work, how much they will invest, how prudent they will be if they can actually keep the fruits of their efforts.

Now there's a moratorium worth getting excited about!
— RWB

My breasts, my choice — Expect the FDA's recent decision to ban silicone breast implants to lead to a tragic rise in fatalities associated with unlicensed, back alley breast implants. — BD

The plastic age of comedy — As a hobby, I enjoy watching the various historic fantasies produced (as "documentaries") by the Public Broadcasting System. They offer some of the most hilarious entertainment on television.

Case in point: *LBJ*, a television biography.

The idea, as I understand it, was to present a revisionist interpretation of Johnson to try to dispel the portrait that emerges from Robert Caro's meticulously researched multi-volume biography. Although Caro is a left-liberal himself, he is no fool. He sees Johnson for what he was: a vain, cruel, nasty person, who sought to enhance his own power and wealth by advocating and enacting massive increases in the size and power of government. This view scandalizes most left-liberals about as much as a fundamentalist is scandalized by evolution. After all, under Johnson, government grew at its fastest, with conventional left-liberal ideology holding near-monopoly power in the academy and the media.

The problem for left-liberals is that LBJ sunk us into Vietnam, a war we lost at considerable cost in men and money. But from the liberal perspective, Vietnam exacted a far more terrible cost: it destroyed people's faith in government, their confidence that if government tackled a problem it could solve it.

So the general thesis of PBS's *LBJ* seemed easy to predict: LBJ was a larger-than-life statesman who accomplished superhuman feats (the War on Poverty, the Great Society, civil rights legislation), but who had a tragic flaw (Vietnam).

So when my local PBS station ran *LBJ* in two three-hour blocks on two consecutive evenings, I taped the whole orgy for future enjoyment. Since then, whenever I need a boost in spirits of the sort that can only come from fantasy, I put a videocassette into my VCR and chuckle at LBJ's antics —

they are genuinely funny, from our perspective a quarter century later — and roll in the aisles over the attempts of the “documentary” to portray him as a tragic hero.

The other night I finally got to the show’s last episode. And what a show it was! The story begins with film of the wedding of one of LBJ’s ugly daughters. The narrator pompously intones, “It was August 6, 1966. There was war in Vietnam and riots in the streets. But there was still more Johnson hoped to do.” What else, I wondered. War abroad and riots at home are pretty impressive accomplishments. Maybe a plague . . .

During the next 30 minutes, I was treated to perhaps the funniest television ever. Consider:

Several Johnson associates explain that he wasn’t lying to the American people when he told them the war was going well. He wasn’t lying because, for him, as a successful politician, the concept of truth had lost all meaning. All he cared about was saying things that would get people to do what he wanted them to do.

A black Johnson aide explained that Johnson met with him and other aides before dispatching them to Detroit to oversee the troops and tanks that Johnson was sending in to quell the race riots. LBJ delivered a histrionic little speech: “I don’t want any bullets in those guns,” he said softly. “I don’t want any bullets in those guns!” he repeated a bit louder. “You hear me,” he shouted, “I don’t want any bullets in those guns! “I don’t want it known that any one of my men are shooting pregnant nig . . .” Johnson stopped. “He was clearly embarrassed, and everybody in the room was embarrassed,” the aide recalls. When the meeting ended, he asked the aide into his office. “He didn’t say anything. I knew he wanted to say ‘I didn’t mean to say nigger.’ But he meant to say nigger. And I knew he wanted to apologize. So he walked me over to the french doors that go out to the rose garden, the area where Eisenhower had had his putting green. He looked out, and looked at me, and looked down. There were pock marks on

the floor from Eisenhower’s golf shoes. He finally looked at me and said, ‘Look what that son of a bitch Eisenhower did to my floor!’ That was his way of apologizing. Very human, I thought.”

The climax came when the narrator solemnly intoned an account of Johnson’s four-day around-the-world tour in 1966. After visiting the troops in Vietnam and stopping in Pakistan, the President went on to Rome: “It was like a campaign tour of old. Johnson paid a surprise visit to the Vatican where he assured Pope Paul of his desire for peace. His Holiness presented the President with a fourteenth century

Several Johnson associates explain that he wasn’t lying to the American people when he told them the war was going well. He wasn’t lying because, for him, as a successful politician, the concept of truth had lost all meaning.

painting. The President reciprocated with a foot-high plastic bust of himself.”

This, I submit, is humor of the absurd carried to its limit. The only thing more absurdly funny is that there are millions of PBS viewers who don’t get the joke. — RWB

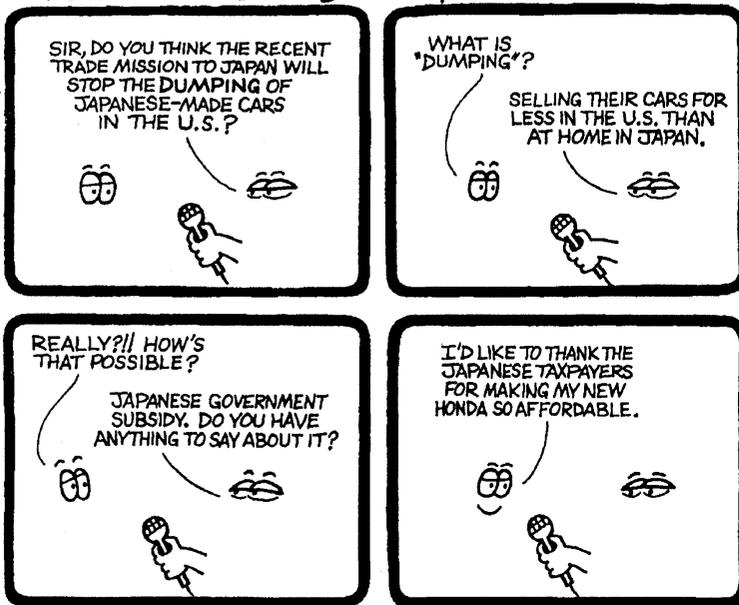
Bushwhacked — What can you say when the high point of President Bush’s trip to Japan was when he deposited his semi-digested lunch on the Prime Minister’s fine tablecloth and suit? He spent most of the trip trying to force the Japanese government to force the Japanese private sector to buy more American products, especially cars and auto parts. In other words, America is now an exporter of economic fascism. His traveling companions were a bunch of corpulent corporate CEOs, including those of the Big Three automakers. (Where are the antitrust people when you need them?) I can see how the auto-parts deal might work; the head of MITI (the Ministry of International Trade and Industry) will call in the Japanese auto executives and order them to buy more American parts. But how will Japan’s consumers be convinced to buy Chryslers, Fords, Buicks, and the rest? (It’s hard enough to convince Americans to buy more of the same.) Since Bush’s return, the Prime Minister has been saying that he made no promises. I hope he sticks to this line.

When Bush got home, he decided it was time to make a fool of himself in New Hampshire, where Pat Buchanan is hounding him. Doing his best impression of Daffy Duck, Bush sputtered that he was “sick and tired” of the Democrats hectoring him. (Coming from Mr Bush, this is an ominous phrase.) He said that when he wanted to go to war, he didn’t need Senator Kennedy’s permission; he just did it. (Anyone remember something called “the Constitution”?) In a burst of hysteria, he said that had he listened to the war opponents, we’d be paying \$20 a gallon for gasoline. I’ll save you the math:

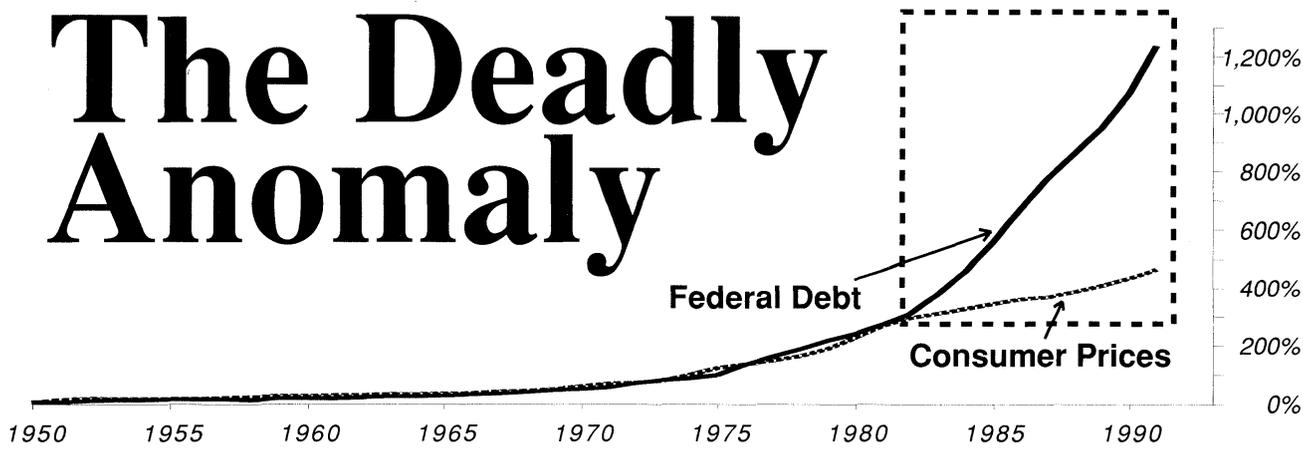
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A lucky call? A fluke? Not on your life. This was no guess. This was a certainty.

This remarkable investment call resulted from 20 years of research and analysis that has uncovered one of the biggest economic distortions in history!

The great majority of economists are oblivious to the link between inflation and government debt, and have not noticed this ominous divergence in the growth of these two key measures.

One observer, however, has watched it with increasing alarm. Economist and author John A. Pugsley, who discovered the divergence, calls it: "The Deadly Anomaly."

Why "deadly?" Because it is dramatic evidence that the U.S. is in the middle of an economic bubble of historic proportions, and the collapse of that bubble will have lethal effects on the fortunes of most savers and investors.

A CLASSIC MANIA

The great investment bubbles of history—the Tulip-Bulb mania of 17th century Holland, the Mississippi bubble, the Roaring Twenties—all have one thing in common: they were never seen as bubbles at the time. Infected by the virus of soaring asset prices, the public became blind to fundamental principles of value. Amateur and professional investors alike fell victim to a euphoria that led to disaster.

It is happening again. Only this time the potential consequences are even greater.

While manias historically have occurred in relatively small asset markets (tulips, regional real estate, stocks, etc.), this time the bubble is in the biggest asset market in the world: U.S. Treasury bonds.

In a landmark new work, *The Interest-Rate Strategy*, John Pugsley exposes the key elements that have led to this world-wide bond-market distortion.

The underlying problem is debt. More specifically, it is an avalanche of irredeemable government debt.

During this past decade the nation has been on the worst credit binge in history. Total federal debt has grown from \$800 billion in

1981 to about \$4 trillion today. In just 10 years Treasury debt has more than quadrupled!

The most fundamental economic laws say that as the quantity of anything increases, the price should fall, not rise. Yet, in the face of an unprecedented deluge of federal IOUs, T-bond prices have soared. It flies in the face of reason, logic, and economic law.

INVESTOR MYOPIA

Investors are oblivious. In their euphoria they see only the bait: these bonds are assets. They fail to recognize the trap: these "assets" are also liabilities. Liabilities that can never be repaid.

Supporting his premises with detailed graphs and historical comparisons, Pugsley makes a sobering and incontestable case—a correction must occur, and the evidence is mounting that the correction is already underway. The anxiety over the Treasury bond auctions, fluctuating interest rates, a stalled stock market, a crisis in the banking system...all are only tiny hints of the dramatic upheavals that lie just ahead.

Because the majority of investors are oblivious of this approaching storm, those who understand what is happening have a virtual license to steal over the next three years.

Bond-market positions entered 24 months ago have quadrupled. They could double again within weeks. And positions held for the next two to three years could result in gains of 1,000%, 2,000% or more. That's right, we mean potential returns of 10-to-1, 20-to-1, or even greater.

3 WAYS TO PROFIT

To capitalize on the coming change, *The Interest-Rate Strategy* outlines a simple plan that uses three independent bond-market mechanisms. Each has dramatic potential on its own, and each can be entered separately. Together they are an unbeatable combination.

You don't need to be a sophisticated investor to understand and profit from these ideas. *The Interest-Rate Strategy* sets out a 1-2-3 formula that anyone can follow. Best of all, there is no trading. This is a long-term, low-risk, buy-and-hold concept.

You can tailor the strategy to your own

profit objectives and the risk level that suits your temperament. Big investor or small, conservative or speculative, this idea should be part of every financial plan. These mechanisms are ideally suited to protect holders of bonds, savings accounts, trust deeds, and pension plans against losses due to rising interest rates and bond market turmoil.

Some investors have worried that the immense gains of the past few months mean that they have missed the opportunity. Far from it. Those gains have occurred in just one segment of the plan. Two parts of this easy-to-implement strategy are now at ideal entry points, and even the 300% jump in the third part is no more than one-fourth of the anticipated move!

THE AUTHOR

John Pugsley is an internationally respected economist and financial author. His 1974 best-selling book, *Common Sense Economics*, accurately predicted the inflationary explosion that followed the demise of the Bretton-Woods agreement. Many readers made fortunes following his advice.

In 1980, when most economists were convinced that Reagan's tax reform would balance the federal budget by the end of his first term, Pugsley's book, *The*

Alpha Strategy (8 weeks on the New York Times best-seller list), boldly warned that the U.S. would experience "the largest deficits in the history of the nation in the next five years," and showed small investors how to protect themselves.

His unique application of economic theory to commodity markets resulted in publication of *The Copper Play*, in which he predicted the price of copper had to double, and his original strategy resulted in dramatic profits for those who followed his system.

For 10 years John wrote and published *Common Sense Viewpoint*, a unique financial newsletter enjoyed by tens of thousands of devoted readers.

After a three-year vacation from financial writing, John has returned with fresh insights born of careful, systematic research. His new flagship publication, *John Pugsley's Journal*, focuses the powerful lens of science and simple common sense on world events. Like radar in the fog, these principles illuminate unseen

risks and opportunities that are invisible to conventional analysis.

As his loyal readers have acclaimed for two decades, nothing in the entire field of economic and financial publications approaches the clarity, consistency, and logic of John Pugsley's work. Reading it will dramatically improve your understanding of the powerful forces at work in the age you live in.

Now in *The Interest-Rate Strategy* John has once again used common sense economics to uncover what could be the investment opportunity of the century.

ACT QUICKLY

Even as you read this, world bond markets have begun to sense and react to the distortion, so we strongly urge you to read *The Interest-Rate Strategy* immediately.

The regular price is \$49. However, as part of a special offer, respond immediately, and your cost is only \$35 plus \$3 shipping.

Or, better yet, receive *The Interest-Rate Strategy* FREE with a 12-issue subscription to *John Pugsley's Journal* at the special introductory rate of \$95. (Regular price: \$125)

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477

that's \$840 per barrel.

George. I think you need a rest. A very long rest. — SLR

¡Contract sí, Pledge no! — Pat Buchanan's challenge to George Bush to take Bush's 1988 no-new-taxes pledge seems silly. Having broken his pledge before, why would anyone believe Bush would keep it this time? Why would we believe Buchanan's pledge, either, for that matter? After all, Buchanan has "changed his mind" on issues ranging from free trade to American military intervention; in the odd event that he was elected President, why should we believe he wouldn't change his mind on taxes?

The pledge is a contract without any provision for enforcement. But why not write the pledge in a way that it has teeth? Something like this:

The undersigned pledges that if he is elected President, he will oppose in good faith all efforts to increase taxes, including but not limited to increases in direct taxes, indirect taxes, user fees, and any other form of payment exacted from individuals or corporations by threat of fines, imprisonment, or civil action by the federal government. He further pledges to veto any such measure enacted by the Congress.

In the event that the undersigned fails in his above pledge, he agrees that:

1. He will immediately resign his office.
2. He will publicly apologize to the American people for his transgression.
3. He will turn over all his property, along with any income he might earn from any source whatever for a period of seven years, to a committee consisting of those members of the Senate who voted against said tax increase for the purpose of financing electoral campaigns of challengers to members of the Senate who voted for the tax increase.

In our present situation, a politician's word means nothing. Part of the reason is that most politicians are habitual liars. But so are members of other professions. The reason that politicians are able to lie with impunity is that they never accept contractual obligations. Now is the time to remedy this.

If Messrs Buchanan, Bush, Marrou and so forth want the voters to take seriously their opposition to future tax increases, then they should sign the contract. —RWB

Witness for the persecution — It has taken a year for it to happen, but at least it is happening. In October 1990 the American people and the U.S. Congress were appalled by the tearful testimony of a 15-year-old Kuwaiti girl

— known only as "Nayirah" to protect her family — who said she had witnessed invading Iraqi soldiers tear 15 infants from incubators in a Kuwait City hospital and leave them "on the cold floor to die." The horrifying report

helped fuel American anger against the Iraqi invasion of the distant emirate.

After the war, reporters were unable to find a single other witness to the atrocity. It has now been revealed that Nayirah is the daughter of the Kuwaiti ambassador to the United States and that her appearance before the Congressional Human Rights Caucus was arranged by the public relations firm Hill and Knowlton, which had a multi-million dollar contract to represent Kuwait after the Iraqi invasion. According to John R. MacArthur, the publisher of *Harper's Magazine* and source of these revelations, Hill and Knowlton contributes money to the chairmen of the Human Rights Caucus and supports their congressional Human Rights Foundation. Nayirah's testimony may have been instrumental in swaying a significant number of votes to President Bush's war policy in the Persian Gulf. Seven U.S. Senators cited the atrocity story in floor speeches before voting for a resolution to authorize the use of force. That resolution passed by only six votes. The Human Rights Caucus knew their witness's identity but did not reveal it. No reporter pressed to find out who the girl was or how credible her testimony was. In other words: we the people were suckered by the state and its boosters. That's how foreign policy gets made in the real world. — SLR

Owning organs — Being on the waiting list for a heart transplant, I am understandably fixated on the harvesting of organs from people who, having assumed ambient temperature, no longer need them. First of all, there are, literally, tons of organs which go to waste by going to burial grounds. Even when someone has signed an organ donor card, there is a common reluctance of relatives to let the contract stand after the donor dies. This rather mean-spirited possessiveness is a major factor in keeping the supply of organs far below demand.

Lack of a free market for organs is the overall problem, of course. If volunteer organ donors could sign contracts with organ harvesting companies, and be paid for it, it would be far more difficult for fussy relatives to get in the way.

But my wife, Therese, has come up with a variation on the idea that strikes me as immediately practical. Why not, she asks, have life insurance policies specify that, after death, the remains of the insurance holder become the property of the insurance company. The company could then donate or sell the organs according to their own policy. Organs and other body parts for transplantation, from corneas to hearts, livers, and lungs are greatly important in sustaining life for hundreds of thousands of people. What a waste to just throw them away in what amount to neatly landscaped landfills. — KH

Magic — This not being a sports magazine, I won't trouble you with my disagreement's with Bill Bradford's assessment of Magic Johnson's impact on basketball ("The tragedy of Earvin Johnson," January 1992). Still, Bill's overall point is sound; Magic was a unique presence who transcended, if not transformed, the game he played. The comparison to Babe Ruth is, in that regard, entirely apposite. But let me offer another comparison, one at which I fear some people will take offense.

Magic Johnson is to basketball much like what Jack



"Because a watched pot never boils."

Kennedy was to the politics of the early 1960s. Like Kennedy, Johnson brought enormous zest and energy to his calling. The one dispensed "Magic," the other "Camelot." Each unfurled a radiant smile wide enough to encompass a battleship. I was not politically precocious, but like others of my generation I somehow intuited that the world post-inauguration day was a new one. We were "Kennedy's kids" and remained such even once we came of age and began to scrutinize the darker side of his politics, even once we learned that paying any price and bearing any burden led ineluctably to jungles in Vietnam.

I will not say that Kennedy was as gifted a president as Magic Johnson was a basketball player. That isn't the point of the analogy. Rather, it is that each in his way defined an age. Both partook of greatness, but neither was without vices. Indeed, one vice they conspicuously shared. In Kennedy's case the craving for a continuous procession of fresh female flesh amounted to colossal imprudence partially redeemed by luck: for Johnson the luck has been terribly bad. Yet somehow what we now know about their appetites does not demean them as it does lesser men, as it surely does the youngest Kennedy brother. They — and Babe Ruth too, another conspicuously Dionysian figure — lusted as they did all else, with vitality and verve and a fullness of being that could not be confined within conventional limits, not as balm to middle-aged bloats.

Anyone of my generation will recall down to the small details just what he or she was doing on one awful November afternoon in 1963. For many of us another November day of sadness and loss is now to be indelibly etched in our consciousness.

— LEL

What was the CIA doing in Camelot? — I haven't yet seen Oliver Stone's *JFK*, and I am not sure when I will. Living 50 miles from the nearest first-run movie theatre has a marvelous way of helping one set priorities about which films to see.

But I've read enough about it to know that the premise of its whole argument is wrong. I refer to Stone's contention that JFK was murdered by a conspiracy of the CIA and other military-industrialist baddies who were upset that JFK was about to make peace with the communists and end the cold war. The fact is that JFK was the most militantly anti-communist of any American president in history, enamored of military solutions and the notion of restoring America's fighting tradition. The man who was elected by arguing that Eisenhower had let the Reds surpass the U.S. militarily (remember the "missile gap"?) and who founded the Green Berets would be the last man to want to make peace with the commies.

The etiology of Stone's fantasy is simple enough to understand. When Kennedy was assassinated, he was transformed in the minds of most people into a man of incredible virtue, almost a saint. His administration, which was beset with controversy and not particularly popular, became Camelot. If only Kennedy had been spared the assassin's bullet, then everything would have been okay. We'd have been spared the agony of Vietnam, the student demonstrations, the election of Richard Nixon . . .

On Jan 10, Professor Arthur Schlesinger, whose great

claim to fame is his role in Camelot as a Kennedy advisor, joined Stone's fantasy world. In an article in *The Wall St Journal*, the famous historian cited the following evidence that JFK had had a remarkable change of heart:

1. In June 1963, Kennedy gave a speech in which he called for an end to the "vicious and dangerous cycle in which suspicion on one side breeds suspicion of the other."

2. At some point (Schlesinger doesn't say when), JFK authorized his UN ambassador to explore the possibility of re-establishing relations with Cuba. Kennedy had broken off all relations in 1961. The source Schlesinger cites is a quotation

JFK was the most militantly anti-communist of any American president in history, enamored with military solutions and the notion of restoring America's fighting tradition.

from something Bobby Kennedy said the following year.

3. According to a statement made "later" by a deputy secretary of defense, JFK planned to withdraw from Vietnam by the end of 1965 (2 years later!), although for some reason (Schlesinger doesn't tell us) he continued to send additional troops to Vietnam while he was planning the withdrawal.

4. Sometime in 1962, Kennedy told Senator Mansfield, who had been critical of Kennedy's buildup of U.S. military forces in Vietnam, that he planned to withdraw in 1965.

5. In October 1963, JFK ordered the return of 1,000 American advisors.

That's it. A platitudinous speech, a recollection from his brother a year after the fact, a statement from a minor underling made some time later, a statement made to a powerful U.S. Senator who opposed Kennedy's policy, and an order to bring home 6% of the U.S. forces in Vietnam.

The January 18 *Economist* tells another story. Its book review section leads with a review of *Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963: Volume III, Vietnam, January-August 1963; Volume IV, Vietnam, August-December 1963*. These two volumes include virtually all documents from within the Kennedy Administration from 1963 relating to Vietnam. They were gathered from the JFK Library, the State Department, the National Security Council, the Defense Department, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Secretary of Defense.

The *Economist's* reviewer actually read all 1499 pages of this stuff. What he found was repeated rejections by Kennedy of any suggestion that the U.S. withdraw or scale back its military activity in Vietnam, even in the face of demands that he do so from his allies. Kennedy maintained the same position "in public and in private." The closest thing to a hint that a general withdrawal was contemplated is the October memo Schlesinger referred to. It ordered the return of 1,000 out of the 16,000 U.S. troops within the next 3 months, specifying that "no formal announcement should be made" of the minor withdrawal, probably to avoid anyone's misinterpreting the move as any sort of backing down.

"All through that difficult year," the reviewer writes,

"there is no evidence whatever of an 'independent' CIA policy, at odds with the president's, that might have served as the basis for an assassination conspiracy. Both before and after the coup [against the South Vietnamese government], the president had no discernible plans for a substantial withdrawal of American forces from Vietnam."

The reviewer quotes JFK's reiterating a policy of continuing American military presence in Vietnam, right up until his last statement on the subject a week before he was killed. "Did President Kennedy — as Oliver Stone contends in his controversial film *JFK* — plan to get out of Vietnam at an early date? This superb new two-volume documentary collection makes the answer clear; and it is no."

I enjoy a good conspiracy theory as much as the next guy, but c'mon. Let's keep them plausible. — RWB

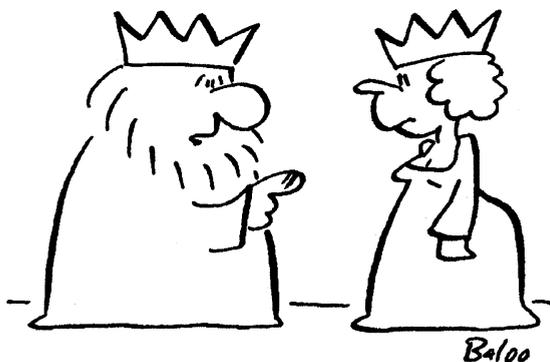
GNPap — In this current milieu of defense cut proposals prompted by the disappearance of the only power potentially able to challenge the U.S. militarily, you can be sure to hear in the coming weeks (I have already) this absurd canard from defenders of more, or at least the same, defense spending: "Defense spending as a percentage of GNP is lower than during the Kennedy presidency."

Even stifling the usual cavils about the validity of GNP as a measurement, one is left with an argument standing on pure air. The cost of a nation's defense needs do not grow in lockstep with its economic productivity. In fact, why shouldn't they decrease over time like most other costs, particularly ones based on new technologies?

Apparently the "learning curve" in providing defense works only in calculating new ways to mulct the taxpayer. — BD

Engaging art — There are times when a single phrase clarifies things for me as effectively as an entire book. It happens when I've been thinking about something for a long time but still feel uncomfortable that I'm not able to put it all in place.

Until now, the most notable example came in two words among the many thousands of superb ones in Charles Murray's masterwork *In Pursuit of Happiness and Good Government*. He sought and found the two words that exactly sum up, in my view, what most people want in their lives, the things that mean happiness. The words are "affiliation and engagement."



"I got a paper cut slashing the budget!"

Most of us want to be affiliated, to have friends, feel part of a shared culture or enterprise. And most of us want to be engaged actively in the construction of our future, rather than being mere victims of any untouchable determinism.

More recently, I have found in the writing of Albert Camus a single sentence that strikes to the heart of my own thinking about the unintelligibility of so much new art and music.

Camus, who earlier had clarified something else for me by saying, in *The Myth of Sisyphus*, that the only important philosophical question is suicide, is now revealed to me as having once said, "Art cannot be a monologue." In his view, it should *communicate* what the artist wants to say about the

I look at Jackson Pollack paintings and I see linoleum designs. Only later do I discover that there is deeper meaning because while spilling cigarette ashes on the canvas, Pollack was involved in some sort of psychic crisis which, when understood, should elevate his otherwise plain painting to master status.

world of mind and materialism that we all share.

Well, that sums it up for me. I look at Jackson Pollack paintings and I see linoleum designs. Only after reading an essay by Sam Hunter do I discover that there is deeper meaning because, at this or that moment, while spilling cigarette ashes on the canvas, Pollack was involved in some sort of psychic crisis which, when understood, should elevate his otherwise plain painting to master status. Right.

Atonal music strikes me the same way. It is absolutely boring. But there again, the composer is said to be stretching the envelope, going where no ears have gone before and so forth. No wonder. Five minutes of listening to the same note, or no note, or a non-melodic, discordant and seemingly random array of notes, simply cannot engage most people whom I know. (This is not to say that the people who find high meaning in all this should not go ahead and feel superior about their sensitive natures. Maybe I and my friends *are* clods. So what? When you prick one of us clods do we not bleed?)

Listening or looking at something that is an expression of an artist's secret, unknowable angst is exactly the thing that drives me from the gallery or the concert hall. I do not go to such places to see or hear some secret Rorschach puzzle. As a registered clod I go to be enlightened, edified, exalted. I do not want to be caught in a monologue. I want to be affiliated and engaged. — KH

Live long and prosper — As a long-time member of the Consumers Union, I always look forward to its magazine, *Consumer Reports*. As a human being I am interested in living a longer and healthier life. So naturally, I was pleased when my January CR arrived with "Can You Live Longer?" emblazoned on the cover.

Inside I found a report entitled "Can Vitamins Help?" It

summarized the research that suggests that anti-oxidants (vitamin E, vitamin C and beta-carotene) "may offer protection against cancer, cataracts, Parkinson's disease and other disorders . . . Anti-oxidants are thought to be protective largely because they can inactivate free radicals, destructive molecules that can damage cells. . . . High levels of anti-oxidants — measured both in the diet and in the blood — have been associated with lower rates of [cancer, rheumatoid arthritis, cataracts, and cardiovascular disease] . . . it appears that the higher the anti-oxidant level, the lower the risk of disease, and vice versa. In some studies of diet and cancer, for instance, people with the lowest intake of beta-carotene had up to seven times the lung-cancer risk of those with the highest intake. In other reports, people with the diets richest in vitamin C were at the lowest risk for cancer of the stomach, oral cavity, and esophagus. And in a large study of 16 European populations, there was a strong correlation between high blood levels of vitamin E and a lower risk of death from coronary disease."

After citing more studies with similar results, the article notes that researchers believe the amounts of these anti-oxidants that one can get from changing his diet to maximize his intake "are too low to afford optimal protection from disease" and that "it's virtually impossible to get what appears to be an optimal dose of vitamin E by diet alone." They note that "even the relatively high doses recommended by these scientists [who recommend taking supplements of anti-oxidants in pill form] appear to be safe; the levels of vitamin C, vitamin E, and beta-carotene they consider optimal have not been associated with adverse effects." Finally they advise that the cost of the supplements, including government-recommended levels of other vitamins and minerals, is "about a quarter a day."

To sum up, there is a growing body of evidence that taking supplemental vitamin C, vitamin E and beta-carotene will help prevent a whole variety of horrible diseases; there is no evidence of any risk associated with taking the supplements; and the cost is very low.

What does *Consumer Reports* recommend based on this evidence?

a) CR recommends spending the few cents and few seconds needed to take supplements of vitamin C, vitamin E and beta-carotene in order to reduce your risk of cancer, car-

diovascular disease, cataracts, and rheumatoid arthritis.

b) CR doesn't recommend taking supplements because the vitamin industry is completely unregulated.

If you guessed (b), you win. CR recommends against taking supplemental anti-oxidants, "although evidence is mounting" that they "slow aging and fight disease by protecting the body from free radicals." Why? "The nagging fact that the vitamin industry remains completely unregulated."

Personally, I'll take my chances on the unregulated marketplace, while loyal Consumers Union members are getting cancer, cataracts, rheumatoid arthritis, and cardiovascular disease, waiting for government regulation. — RWB

Creeping anarchism? — Anarcho-libertarianism is not for the faint of heart. Perhaps the hardest thing for most people to swallow is the idea that we need not have a government to provide police protection; the market could supply that service, too.

Remarkably, however, the United States has already moved far toward privatizing police services. According to the Justice Department's National Institute of Justice, as cited in *The Wall Street Journal* (November 15, 1991), "security companies spend \$52 billion annually and employ 1.5 million people, compared to a budget of just \$30 billion and a work force of 600,000 for public law enforcement agencies. Projections are that the balance will tip much further toward the private agencies by the turn of the century."

Unfortunately, responding to serious and violent crime continues to be mainly a government police responsibility. Are escalating rates of serious and violent crime any surprise? — RH

The unkindest cut — A common construction used by politicians these days is to say that if taxes are lowered, some way must be found to "pay for the cut." But they mean pay for state programs, not the tax reduction. Personally, I've never had any problems paying a tax cut — it's the tax hikes that have strained my finances. — JSR

Taking care — In a recent issue of *The New Republic*, Michael Kinsley takes journalistic note of the legal concept of "takings," developed by University of Chicago law professor Richard Epstein. Epstein argues that the provision of the Fifth Amendment that says "nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation" effectively requires the government to pay just compensation when it takes away the right to use property while leaving nominal title untouched.

Case in point. In South Carolina, a man paid \$975,000 for two beachfront lots on which he intended to build houses. Before he started building, the state passed a law making it illegal for him to do so, thereby rendering his property effectively worthless, or at any rate, worth far less than the \$975,000 he paid for it. He has sued, and the case will be decided by the Supreme Court later this year.

The possibility that the Court may decide in favor of the victim has a lot of advocates of a more powerful government upset. If the government had to pay for the property it takes, then it would have to raise taxes, which would make taking property a lot less popular with voters.



"I tried to mug Lee Iacocca, and he talked me into loaning him my gun!"

Kinsley acknowledges that "good liberals must take the Bill of Rights seriously, including parts that are inconvenient." Nevertheless, he has little sympathy for the victims or for this particular provision of the Bill of Rights: "My liberal heart does not bleed much for the 'victims' of democratically enacted government regulations . . . Is the man whose land is reduced through zoning more to be pitied than the man who has no land to begin with?"

Kinsley concludes with that question, leaving it unanswered. Thank God, I am among readers of *The New Republic*. Here is the answer: No, the victim of a taking is no more to be pitied than a man with no land to begin with, no more than the victim of a "democratically enacted government regulation" against freedom of the press is to be pitied more than a man who has no press to begin with. Or than a victim of a "democratically enacted government regulation" against freedom of religion is to be pitied more than a man with no religion to begin with.

I've got news for you, Mike. Pity is not the basis of law.

— RWB

Hmmm . . . Isn't it interesting that the same people who did their best to destroy the so-called junk bond market, lynch Michael Milken, and generally abolish the market for corporate management now rail against CEOs who make millions of dollars a year running lousy companies? — SLR

End of a killer state — And so, at last, the bitch is dead. The Soviet Union is no more. From atop the Kremlin towers, the Red Flag, with its deeply ironic hammer and sickle — a hammer and sickle as the symbols of progress on the verge of the twenty-first century! — has been furled for the final time.

It was, while it lasted, quite a story, the premier example of Richard Weaver's maxim that ideas have consequences. A group of ignorant but invincibly willful Marxist revolutionaries seized control of a great country and set about realizing

All throughout, there were the lies, lies on an unfathomable scale, lies that plague us still today. What a pity that so many of those who welcomed the lies are not with us to see how it all turned out.

the Marxist dream. They soon discovered, in the period of "war communism," that it fell afoul of certain laws of reality, as Ludwig von Mises could have told them. Then, for the next six decades, they and their successors lurched from one expedient to another, dependent on bits of private property, black markets, Western prices and technology, and slave labor to survive. In the meantime, they established the model killer-state of the century, wiping out some 25 million of their compatriots, and terrifying millions of Europeans into fascism. Their errors and crimes blighted three generations of their own subjects and two generations of Poles, Hungarians, and others of the gifted peoples of eastern

Europe. And all throughout, there were the lies, lies on an unfathomable scale, lies that plague us still today. What a pity that so many of those who welcomed the lies are not with us to see how it all turned out. I would give a lot to observe Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Lillian Hellman, Paul Robeson, Owen Lattimore, and all the rest as they tried to cope with the shabby end of their cherished dream. Or Kim Philby and his ilk, who sold out England for its sake. Or, most of all (for these are matters of personal taste), Bertolt Brecht. The Communist Brecht, the most celebrated German playwright of the century, made a career out of willing the death of the business classes and private property through his hate-filled, biting sarcasms. I have the feeling that right now his clever sarcasms would be sticking in his throat. — RR

Goodbye Gorbys — What a spectacle: mighty Mikhail Gorbachev, leader of the fearsome USSR, owner of the dreaded black suitcase with the codes to launch those thousands of nuclear rockets that could incinerate and poison the earth, mighty Mikhail — whiling away his final days in office on makework tasks, reduced to political nothingness by the simple withdrawal of the subjects he had once ruled. The leaders of the republics simply declared that the USSR no longer existed and — *poof* — it didn't.

At the risk of making more of these political relabellings than they deserve, I cannot help feeling elated by this extraordinary denouement. The idea that people need not make a bloody revolution, that they might be rid of their glorious leader just by withdrawing his country from him — it's simply a thrilling event.

Now, in a completely novel way, perhaps the downtrodden people of the United States can begin to ask themselves, "Can it happen here?" — RH

A new year to celebrate? — January 1 is reserved by tradition and necessity for the nursing of hangers. Most notable about this occurrence, however, is what did not hang over. The dawning of 1992 marked the first new year in seventy-five without the banner of the hammer and sickle waving over the heads of subject populations. What few of us believed we would see during our lifetimes has come to fruition. It is a new world that 1992 brings. But is it one in which we can lodge optimistic hopes?

The vanishing of the Soviet Union has not brought a vanishing of threats to peace and security. Some 27,000 nuclear weapons are lodged within the confines of the erstwhile empire. Although nominal central control over these has been established, four newly independent republics assert sovereign rights to their possession. Even before Gorbachev had vacated the presidential office, jockeying for position and power among the successor states had begun. Both borders and battleships became bones of contention. Civil war broke out in Georgia, and Armenians and Azerbaijanis evidenced their continued allegiance to mutual massacre. Shops are emptier than ever, and months of the long Russian winter loom ominously ahead. Increased civil unrest is certain. The world is understandably apprehensive.

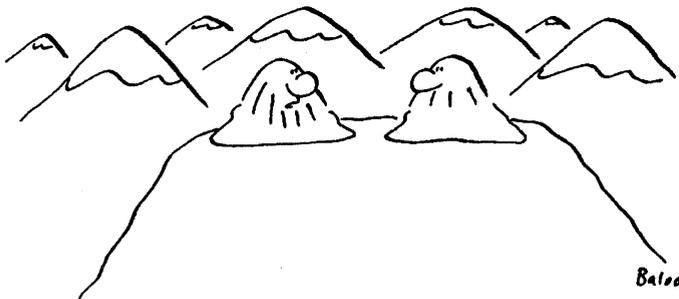
The collapse of communism in its first home is, then, not the coming of the millennium. This should surprise no one. It is inconceivable that so momentous a shift of political forces

could occur without substantial ancillary shocks. Three quarters of a century of despotism and economic dislocation are not erased by substituting the initials CIS for USSR. Movement to markets and the rule of law have barely commenced, and their costs will be felt before their benefits are enjoyed. The media, attuned as always to what could/has/will go wrong, reports with breathless excitement every portent of problems. It is more than a little ironic that the overriding theme of commentaries about the first days of the post-Soviet era is Danger, Dismay and Doubt.

Perhaps the glum mood of American observers is encouraged by a recession that doesn't seem to know how to go away and an Administration whose only consistent concern is that the electorate not compel it to go away. Whatever the cause, this outpouring of uneasiness about the demise of the Soviet Union is misguided. The years ahead will be challenging — when have they not been? — but by any reasonable accounting the change is overwhelmingly for the better.

The foremost reason for optimism is, of course, that there no longer exists a great power whose chief industry is the manufacture and export of oppression. That human beings ought to be allowed to live, think, and work freely is no longer opposed by any serious ideology. The decrepitude of communism has been so thoroughly underscored that the message has gotten through even to our university departments. Weapons of destruction that survive the demise of the Soviet empire are, admittedly, a grave concern. But is the threat they pose greater than was the case, say, a decade ago? These devices, after all, had not been pointed at some obscure spot in the Indian Ocean. They were the prized assets of a regime that took seriously the goal of world domination through military and other means. It is, to be sure, worrisome that they now reside in several hands rather than one, but a crucial saving grace is that none of the inheritors possesses the will or ability to join the Great Dance of international power politics. It is their own houses that need fixing — desperately. Whatever leverage the West held over the Soviet Union to restrain its power-flexing ambitions was much less than now obtains *vis a vis* the independent republics. We can realistically conjecture that they will be willing to pay for the aid they so urgently need through progressive dismantling of destructive forces that can do them no real good.

There is, it goes without saying, much political and economic work for the republics to do. We should not lose sight, however, of just how promising their initial strides have been. They have avoided both reconstitution of an omnipo-



"This is a great place to ride it out, but how will we know when the recession is over?"

tent central apparatus (as had been urged by Gorbachev) and fragmentation into jealously contending rump states. The loose confederal structure that has emerged promotes trade across borders without which economic survival is impossible, but it simultaneously encourages experimentation and emulation of those quicker off the mark by their stodgier brethren. Russia, under the direction of Boris Yeltsin's cadre of bright young economists who would more easily find themselves at home in the Libertarian Party than the Republican, has taken the lead in liberalization. It has instituted a bold program of price decontrol and privatization that will compel the institution of similar policies elsewhere. Ukraine, for example, is grumpily contemplating hordes of Russian shoppers descending on their shops and walking off

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with bushel baskets of subsidized goods. Politicos who prepped under Brezhnev may, for a time, attempt to send them packing. Eventually, though, they will be forced to concede that the only way to resist their incursions is by allowing prices to reach market-clearing levels.

This is a busy year for centennials: Columbus, the Bill of Rights. Nothing in human affairs is inevitable, but it is not impossible that our great-great-grandchildren will have another '92 to commemorate. In the meantime, only amnesiacs will fail to remember that a world with a Soviet Union was a considerably more chilling place than one without. — LEL

Economics, Russian style— I'm not sure Boris Yeltsin has got the hang of free markets yet. In January, he de-controlled prices, without privatizing enterprises. And I thought Richard Gephardt's understanding of economics was thin! — RWB

The Liberty scoop — On June 8, 1967, three days after the Six-Day War started, the Israeli Defense Forces launched a two-hour air and sea assault on the *USS Liberty*, an unarmed but clearly marked American intelligence ship in the Mediterranean Sea. Thirty-four crewmen were killed and 171 were injured in the brutal attack, during which even the life rafts were shot up as sailors tried to leave the ship.

The Israelis claimed they thought it was an Egyptian ship. The Johnson administration minimized the episode, publicly accepting Israel's explanation and offer to pay damages. No investigation was ordered and heavy suspicion that the Israelis knew exactly what they were doing festered. The Israelis reportedly warned the United States that pressing the issue would lead it to reveal details of long-time Israeli-CIA cooperation. The hush-up was so effective that until this year the crew and ship were not publicly honored the way they normally would have been. Over the years, some authors

have ventured into the realm of revisionist history in attempts to turn the public's attention to the incident. Among the motives proposed for the attack was the *Liberty's* having learned of Israel's plan to attack Syria the following day. Israel presumably feared that the United States would forward the information to the United Nations, which was trying to arrange a cease fire. It has also been written that the Joint Chiefs of Staff knew of the plan to attack the ship but delayed sending an order to move. The most complete account is James M. Ennes, Jr.'s 1979 Random House book *Assault on the Liberty*. Ennes was an ensign on the *Liberty*.

Now, 24 years later, syndicated columnists Rowland Evans and Robert Novak have published revelations that seem to show conclusively that Israel knew the ship was American. In their Nov. 6 *Washington Post* column they wrote that according to Dwight Porter, U.S. ambassador to Lebanon at the time, the American embassy in Beirut intercepted a message from an Israeli pilot to Tel Aviv stating, "It's an American ship!" Tel Aviv ordered the pilot to carry out the assault anyway. That Israel knew the nationality of the ship was confirmed by an Israeli officer (now an American citizen), Maj. Seth Mintz, who was in the war room when the *Liberty* was identified. "Everyone in that room was convinced it was an American ship," Evans and Novak quote Mintz as saying. (The U.S. embassy in Tel Aviv, per standard procedure, said at the time that it knew of no American ship in the area.)

This is a great scoop, but it is not the end of it. Two days after the column, *New York Times* columnist A.M. Rosenthal accused Evans and Novak of inventing the story by distorting what Mintz had said. Rosenthal had called Mintz and "got a furious denial that he had ever 'corroborated' that the Israelis knew. He said he had told the reverse to Mr Evans. . . . 'I was misquoted, quoted out of context, used, abused and screwed,' he [Mintz] said." In a letter to the *Washington Post*, Mintz repeated his charge, a serious allegation against two experienced journalists.

In a subsequent column, Evans and Novak stood by what they had written and surmised that the Israeli Mossad must have gotten to Mintz. Then in a letter to the *New York Times* they wrote that "a June 1991 videotape in our possession has Mr Mintz saying of the Israeli Defense Forces to a reunion of *Liberty* veterans in Washington: 'They knew . . . even when it was happening . . . pilots in the Mirage attack planes were saying it was an American ship.'" On the same page there



"Beats me — I haven't seen any Democrats or Republicans up here."

was also a letter from John M. Hrankowski, a survivor of the attack. He wrote: "We met [Mintz] again last June 8 in Washington at our U.S.S. *Liberty* reunion. What he told us then and

recently told Mr. Evans and Mr. Novak were the same. . . . I can have 12 crew members who were there . . . confirm what we heard." He also noted that "we the crew were told two hours after the attack never to speak of the attack, and that order remains in effect to this day."

Oh, yes. There was another letter to the editor that day, sandwiched between the columnists' and Hrankowski's. It was from Seth Mintz. "I want to thank A.M. Rosenthal," he wrote, "for his accurate account of the events of 24 years ago involving the sinking [sic; the ship was not sunk] of the United States intelligence ship *Liberty* exactly as I gave them." — SLR

Warren Brooks, RIP — The cause of liberty lost a good and highly effective friend when Warren Brooks, the syndicated columnist, died of pneumonia December 28 at the age of 62.

Warren started out in the business world and did not move into journalism until 1975. His flagship newspaper was the *Detroit News*, though he was based in the Washington, D.C. area. He devoted his column to investigating the many ways the government makes us worse off. No one was better at this. His columns were always jammed with data and other juicy information. His most memorable and important work was in exposing the environmental movement for the sham it is. He was unequalled in his ability to scour the data, find the real story, and show that the environmental emperor had no clothes. He repeatedly demolished the claims about global warming, acid rain, radon, ozone, etc. He was a one-man debunker of the Clean Air Act and other hokum. Perhaps his greatest tribute was that "60 Minutes," a program not noted for sympathy to the free market, looked to him as a source of information.

That was Warren Brooks the newspaperman. Warren Brooks the man was first-rate too. — SLR

George Stigler, RIP — I knew Nobel Laureate George Stigler (1911–1991) only through his books, so, unlike his students, friends and family, my sense of loss at his death is not personal. Moreover, what I have had of him will always remain, in the books of his I hoard in my library and in the words of his I cannot forget. A leader of the "Chicago School," and an eminent advocate of free markets, he was also that rarity, a master of wit and irony. The world is a richer place for George Stigler having lived in it. — TWV

Two good friends — Two friends of liberty and contributors to this magazine have fallen to horrible diseases.

Phillip Salin, who wrote a wonderful scholarly exploration of the life and times of Scrooge McDuck and a fine survey of Nevil Shute's writings, fell victim to liver cancer in early December. Phil was a successful entrepreneur with a lively intellect, whose interest in liberty never flagged.

Robert O'Boyle, who wrote about the use marijuana to relieve the daily horror of AIDS with which he had been living for several years, finally lost his battle. His courage in the face of his fate was heroic: he took upon himself the task of writing a regular newspaper column, "Living With AIDS," helping raise people's awareness at the cost of torrents of hate mail and telephone calls.

We shall miss them both. □

The Liberty Interview

Patrick J. Buchanan

Pat Buchanan has made headlines lately with his challenge to George Bush. He has gained the support of some libertarians with his call for no new taxes and a non-interventionist foreign policy, while alienating others with his call for trade restrictions. He explains why he thinks he merits your support.

On December 30, I made an appointment with Pat Buchanan's New Hampshire press attaché for an interview the following evening, at his hotel in Manchester, New Hampshire, at an unspecified time after his last press appearance. New Year's Eve with Pat Buchanan. Out with the old, in with the new.

After hunting up a parking space some distance from Buchanan's Ramada Inn (a performance of Peter Pan had filled its parking lot), I hiked to the hotel and hunted up Buchanan's aide. "I have bad news," she said. "Pat isn't feeling well. It must be the flu." The interview was off, but I would be able to see him before he went to Mass and flew back to Washington if I could wait until morning.

Great, I thought. It was after ten, I was a long way from home, and I hadn't brought cash or credit card to pay for a room. It looked like I'd be spending the next 8 hours in a donut shop. I asked the aide if she knew of a 24-hour restaurant nearby. She didn't know of any, but Buchanan's national press attaché offered to help. He apologized for my having to wait all night and offered me the extra bed in his room. Good idea. He gave me a room key and I went up to his room.

As I was reviewing my notes, the door opened. It was another Buchanan operative, who invited me down to the bar. Why not? "I don't know how libertarian you are," he said as we headed to the elevator, "but there's a young blonde from the local campaign who'd like to take you home. She likes intelligent men." I graciously turned down this courteous hospitality. Had this guy confused libertarianism with libertinism? I guess I was more enamored with "family values" than was the Buchanan campaign.

We joined the party of Buchanan staffers in the rear of the bar. I had hoped for some interesting political discussion, but the closest I got was a graphic description by one aide of how he had beaten up a homosexual who had disrupted a Buchanan appearance, and warned him to tell friends they could expect the same if they tried anything. I whiled away the night, imbibing their champagne. Midnight, with its obligatory shouting, party hats, noisemakers, and more champagne. One of Buchanan's aides embraced me. "Libertarians," he said. "I love you guys!"

I arose early, got dressed, went over my notes, and went down to the dining room. An aide waved me over to Buchanan's

table. A waitress appeared with a pot of coffee. We got down to the business.

— James S. Robbins

Liberty: You have used the term "America First" to describe your foreign policy views. Are you influenced in any way by the original America First Committee?

Buchanan: The original America First Committee's argument on the isolationist/interventionist issue is not really relevant today. That was over whether America should stay out of the war when Hitler was at the gates of Moscow and the Japanese were storming around China. I think that argument was really settled at Pearl Harbor.

A lot of the assaults on the people who supported America First are unfair. I think 83% of the American people wanted to stay out of the war before Pearl Harbor, and afterwards 99% said all the way to victory. It has been suggested that the phrase goes back to isolationism, and that's how Mr Bush is using it. What I mean by it is that Americans have got to start putting their own country, America, first. You have to make America first again, keep America first. It has to do with the struggles of the future that I see as shaping up between a dynamic Asian capitalism which wants to be dominant, and a European socialist super-state that's going to be headquartered in Brussels. In my view the phrase "economic nationalism," while inexact, comes closer to what I believe than the old term *isolationist*.

Liberty: What do you consider to be America's proper role in the international community, particularly in regards military force?

Buchanan: I like Jeane Kirkpatrick's phrase that America ought to become again a normal country in a normal time. I think that because we are a great, powerful nation that is envied by many other nations and in some cases despised by hostile dictators or hostile ideologies, we have to be the strongest nation in the world militarily — land, sea, air and space. I think we need a missile defense. But I don't think we are now in the same global struggle against Soviet Communism that we were in when I was a boy, when I was growing up and when I was in the White House. I think our enemy has collapsed in front of us. Its army has disintegrated and is walking home. While I think they were needed, our own ar-

mies can start coming home. And I think the burden of defense of countries like Japan and Germany can now rest almost fully on the shoulders of the Germans and the Japanese. To me that's not isolationism, it is common sense. It is not normal for a country like the United States, protected by two oceans, with two basically friendly neighbors north and south, to have huge land armies permanently on other continents. We are not an empire, we are a Republic. My idea is to try to restore the American Republic before it is lost in some globalist conglomerate called the New World Order.

Liberty: You were generally critical of the Gulf War effort, before and during. Do you have any criticisms given the aftermath of the war?

Buchanan: I thought a policy of containment would have worked with Saddam Hussein. I never saw him as Adolph Hitler or the Iraqi army as the all-conquering *Wehrmacht*. I didn't think Saddam represented a threat to the United States of America. Secondly, Saddam Hussein is obviously a thug and a killer. But I don't see any great moral distinction between his regime and that of Hafez el Assad and Rafsanjani in Teheran. It seems to be that the long-term threat, the greater threat to the Gulf and to the regimes which we support there, is going to come out of Teheran, not out of Baghdad. Iran is larger, it is driven by ideology and religious fanaticism, and it is virulently anti-American. Whereas Saddam Hussein is a single dictator who is one day going to pass from the scene. The single dictators have never impressed me as being as threatening to us as countries that are driven by an ideology that succeeds in one regime after another.

Liberty: Such as Islamic fundamentalism?

Buchanan: I thought the war would trigger an outbreak of anti-Americanism in the region, and while it was being fought it did, but it clearly subsided. But I think the long range danger in the Middle East doesn't come from Saddam

desire for hard work, their family structure, their belief in their country and society. But there are a lot of things in Japan we don't want in our country. We don't want their type of organizations and hierarchical structure and the banzai attitude, if you will. We are a free people. I think we want to win our battle while preserving our way of life. They have these people living in these little houses, they have no space compared to Americans, and we don't want that.

This is where I run into trouble with my free trading friends. I don't doubt that one black worker in South Carolina making eight dollars an hour in a textile mill and supporting his family is probably not as efficient as say sixteen Chinese making fifty cents an hour. But the question is, why shouldn't we protect the job of that one black worker who is a fellow American, rather than opt for super-efficiency and buy the prison-made products of Deng Xio Peng?

This gets into the heart of my disagreement with the free-traders. I would not get into an argument with Milton Friedman over what is a more efficient allocation of goods. But to me there are values higher than efficiency. So I think the policy that applied in this country between 1865 and 1914, that made us the greatest industrial power in the world, when the standard of living of the average worker went up faster than at any time in our history — I think growth in the U.S. was something like average 4% per year. There were a lot of injustices in the Age of the Robber Barons, but America emerged from that the greatest industrial power in the world. If you are a new America Firster like me, that's not a bad thing. My good friend Murray Rothbard is going to have to come down here and instruct me on free trade pretty soon.

Liberty: So you would seek both to open markets abroad and protect them at home?

Buchanan: I believe in reciprocity. For example, we don't call the Brits and say if you want to fly British Air around the United States that's your privilege, lowest price, good competition. What we say is, look, if you guys want to fly to Chicago and Houston, that's fine, but we want to fly to Glasgow and Manchester. You give us so many stalls there, we give you so many stalls here. That's the way you deal with them. George Bush has abdicated his role, in a sense. The American President has to be on the side of American business and industry and concerned that we do be number one, because the country that is number one in manufacturing is going to be number one in technological innovation, and eventually number one economically and I think that eventually translates into military power. And do I think that if the Japanese became number one economically they could become a problem? Yes, in the long run.

Liberty: What sort of immigration reform would you favor? Do you see a cultural component to immigration?

Buchanan: I sure do. I think you enforce the country's law. You could halt 90% of illegal immigration in the southwest. There's only about 200 miles where they come across, and in one four-mile area some 300,000 were apprehended in one year. You can stop that with a depression in the ground, and if the President of Mexico doesn't like it, he doesn't like it. So I think you could halt illegal immigration.

And yes, I do see a cultural component here. The institutions of assimilation in the United States are really collapsing. The ones we used to have — say school, family, home,

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Hussein marching all over that part of the world. You have the Turks, the Iranians, the Israelis, all very powerful, tough countries. The Saudis the United States can provide a defense for. So the way that region is going to change is internally, the way it is changing in Algeria.

Liberty: Getting back to trade policy. Do you think that, corresponding to America First, other countries are practicing, for example, Japan First, Europe First?

Buchanan: I don't think there's any doubt the Japanese practice Japan First. Do you think that when the head of the Sumitomo Bank gets together with the head of MITI and the boys from the twenty-four Keiretsu cartels that somebody gets up and says "all we want is a level playing field," and "we must not violate the spirit of anti-trust?" I think the Japanese are a different country and a different society than ours. They have a lot of things to emulate, in terms of their

church — that used to take the “refuse of Europe” and turn them into Americans in a generation or two, aren’t working as they used to. At the same time we have an assault, a hostility, in the intelligentsia to western culture. It’s manifesting itself in public schools and universities, attacks on the myth of heroes of the past, from trashing Christopher Columbus to taking the Confederate soldier out of the chair, taking the name off of Custer National Battlefield, “Hey hey, ho ho, western culture’s got to go.” You see it in the black community which was very Protestant Christian, patriotic, traditionalist in the ‘30s, ‘40s and even ‘50s. There’s a new militance and radicalism and a desire to secede from western culture. We are a multi-ethnic country, but multi-cultural countries are in deep trouble.

Liberty: Do you see a similarity with the Austrian Empire?

Buchanan: Well that, of course, was smashed down. World War I was just a horrific, stupid disaster on all sides. But the way they were working the Austrian Empire — the dual monarchy and granting autonomies — to grow organically was the way to do it. But it was smashed apart. They enlarged these nations far beyond what they ought to have been, they took the Germans and carved them all up and gave them to various places and set the stage for World War II. It was just utter insanity. Utter insanity, the Treaty of Versailles.

Liberty: Do you see the United States being carved up in any similar fashion?

Buchanan: I want to keep America one. Maybe it’s far down the road, what with some of these movements in the south-west, the militants in the Hispanic community. I think they’re probably wrong, because I think most of the Hispanic immigrants want to become Americans. They want to learn English, and they want to be part of America. Most of them are Catholic, of the Catholic Spanish culture. Puerto Rico is of the Catholic Spanish culture and they said “we are a Spanish-speaking people of the Spanish culture.” They voted that themselves. I think you can have an excellent relationship with Puerto Rico but it would be a mistake to make it a state.

Liberty: On the other hand, Canada seems to be carving itself up. The government recently gave half of the Northwest Territories to the Inuit, and the Quebecois are always threatening to leave.

Buchanan: I followed the Meech Lake Accord very closely, and I wrote a number of columns about Canada breaking apart. I was on television up there, and in a light vein I suggested we take over the Maritime Provinces and the rest of it. The Canadians went bonkers. The English-speaking Canadians have been leaving Quebec for a long time because there is sort of a cultural chauvinism in Quebec, but I understand the desire of the French Canadians to preserve their culture and heritage, and if more and more people are becoming more and more militant about this it’s no problem for me. I think we ought to have a free-trade agreement with Canada. We ought to tell them whatever you decide up there is your business; we want free trade agreements with everybody to our north. If Quebec goes free we’ll maintain the free-trade agreement with them. I think what’s going to happen though is that Quebec is going to try to maintain its cultural identity sort of like the dual monarchy.

I don’t think they’re going to break away and set up passport control and immigration control between Quebec and Canada, but I do see them telling the British speaking folk, if you want to leave, goodbye and good luck.

Liberty: Two months ago there was a controversy in the White House over Executive Order 11246 which established affirmative action in the Federal Bureaucracy.

Buchanan: I was involved in the fight over changing 11246 in 1986. I was on the side of Meese and Bennett and Linda Cha-

*I would continue the present drug policy. . . .
The truth is that the American people want the
war on drugs prosecuted.*

vez, and we were opposed by Bill Brock and, some said, by Vice President Bush.

Liberty: If you were President, what would you do?

Buchanan: I would rewrite 11246 to specifically rule out racial or sex-based quotas in hiring and promotion. You have to get back to the idea of justice — justice and merit. These are arbitrary and invidious forms of discrimination. For example, when you give four points on a test to a veteran who has served his country, that is not invidious. If you are of a certain race, color or religion, and you get or lose points because of that, I think that is just patently un-American. You have to get back to the idea of excellence and merit. It’s a problem in the whole country. Up here I went down to a plant I won’t name and I asked some guy “What do you do?” and he said “I’m in human relations.” I said, “Do the employees have problems with drugs?” and he said, “Yeah, but we also have to find out what the proper racial ratio is in this area.” I said, “What do you need racial ratios for?” It was quite obvious. They wanted to make sure a certain number of employees are this and that color.

Liberty: Some libertarians have been mentioned in connection with your campaign. I’m thinking of Ron Paul, Murray Rothbard, Lew Rockwell. . . .

Buchanan: Ron Paul has been very helpful. He dropped out when I indicated I had an interest in running. He’s been helping. Lew Rockwell is a good friend of mine. He’s been very helpful. Murray Rothbard wrote me a wonderful letter. He’s not 100% in agreement with me but he’s 100% behind me.

Liberty: Do you have any disagreements with them?

Buchanan: Yes, but I’m sure they’re with me. They’re in the John Randolph Club of which I’m a member, which is a paleo-conservative/paleo-libertarian alliance. I was trying to get down to their meeting in January, but I’m afraid they have me on a fund-raising trip to California. So I’m going to miss it.

Liberty: In the past you have supported Bush’s war on drugs. If you were President would you continue the drug war, or would you take a different approach?

Buchanan: I would continue the present policy.

Liberty: What do you think of legalizing soft drugs such as marijuana?

Buchanan: I’m against it.

Liberty: How about a Federally controlled program such as the English had for heroin addicts?

Buchanan: That failed, didn't it? My understanding is that most of the heroin programs in Britain have not succeeded. I wrote on it about fifteen years ago and haven't followed it closely, but my understanding is that they haven't succeeded. The truth is that the American people want the war on drugs prosecuted.

Liberty: What do you think about the Ninth Amendment? Do citizens possess rights not enumerated in the Constitution, and if they do, what are they and where do they come from?

Buchanan: Of course the Ninth Amendment is the one in whose penumbra they found the right to an abortion. I don't think there's any right to an abortion under the Constitution. There's a right to privacy inherent in a number of the Amendments, but I don't think it includes the right to an abortion.

Liberty: Do you take a positivist approach to rights? Do you believe that the rights written in the Constitution are the only rights? or are there natural or God-given rights that the Constitution only reflects?

Buchanan: I think there is a natural law which is consistent with Biblical Christianity, which tells you about man's moral obligations and moral rights. I don't think you can transfer those into the Constitution of the United States.

Let's get back to abortion, because that's the area where it's easiest to discuss it. There is no right to an abortion in the Constitution of the United States. Abortion is regulated by the states, some being liberal on abortion laws even in the '50s and '60s, and some being deeply restrictive. The Supreme Court had said that these are matters to be considered by the states themselves, and it was not a matter of Constitutional rights and prerogatives. There's no definition

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of how you deal with abortion in the Constitution of the United States prior to 1973.

Liberty: Do you find it ironic that the emanation of a penumbra resulted in *Roe v. Wade*, but the Supreme Court cannot get an emanation from the Second Amendment, which at least mentions the right to bear arms?

Buchanan: That's rank hypocrisy. I think the gun folks are exactly right that they ought to address the whole Constitutional issue. I'm surprised it hasn't come up before the Supreme Court. My guess is that some of these Federal laws are going to be tested before the Supreme Court. It seems to me that the right to keep and bear arms is clear.

Liberty: This is a "New Hampshire" question. Have you taken the Manchester *Union Leader* pledge not to raise taxes? Bob Dole didn't in 1988 and got into a bit of a pickle.

Buchanan: Don't worry, I'll take it. I will keep the promises that George Bush broke. Ask George Bush if he will retake it. It's sort of like Alcoholics Anonymous. George was up

here and he was attending all the meetings and he suddenly disappeared for three or four years. When he comes back you know where he's been, but he'll take the pledge again.

Liberty: The issue of multiculturalism was highlighted during the World Series with the Atlanta Braves tomahawk chop. Are you offended by the Boston Celtics?

Buchanan: Of course not. The San Diego Padres. For heaven's sakes! Look, you have to take a look at peoples' motives. I'm a Washington Redskins fan. The reason they call themselves Redskins is because they want to say they have the ferocity and bravery and perseverance associated with the fighting tribes. It's not a term of insult. You don't pick a name like that because it's derogatory about your favorite team. I think the trouble is that a number of these militant groups are looking for some way to make out credentials as victims, that they are being harrassed and abused, when the American people are an extraordinarily tolerant people.

Liberty: What do you think of Reagan as president?

Buchanan: I think Reagan was an excellent President bordering on great.

Liberty: Nixon?

Buchanan: Nixon is the most interesting man I ever met, a pivotal figure in American history. He carried us through a terrible decade, and was a casualty of it.

Liberty: Teddy Roosevelt.

Buchanan: There are lots of things about Teddy I admire, lots of them. In terms of the personality of the man. A good President.

Liberty: Abe Lincoln.

Buchanan: Lincoln, huh? A subject of controversy. My great grandfathers fought on the other side. There's no doubt he's probably the most influential president in American history.

Liberty: Jefferson.

Buchanan: Jefferson was a tremendous man. I think Washington was the greatest figure in American history.

Liberty: What would you say if George Bush were sitting here? What would be your biggest complaint, or the thing you'd most want to say?

Buchanan: I don't have any personal quarrels with George Bush.

Liberty: Policy quarrels?

Buchanan: I like George Bush, even with policy quarrels. I think George Bush is a New World Order man, he's a big-government Republican, and he is a man of his times, a moderate Republican. I like him. It's simply that we are on the other side of a political divide, and the country is moving off in a new direction. I think he is yesterday, and we are tomorrow. But there's nothing personal about my quarrel with George Bush. He's never said — of course he did break the pledge on no new taxes — he's never said "I am Mr Conservative," and after the Cold War, which was a huge area where we agreed 100%, and in Reagan's administration we agreed 100%, we got all these new issues, and we found out that he's simply on the other side, and I'm on this side of the river. Our tribe's moving off in our direction, and his is moving in the other direction.

Liberty: Any final thoughts for libertarians?

Buchanan: My friends, there are only two trains, and neither of them is going exactly to your destination, but mine is closer. So get aboard. □

Inside Pat Buchanan

by Chester Alan Arthur

What's inside Pat Buchanan? Blood and guts and . . . a love of liberty? Or authority? A brilliant mind . . . or an anti-intellectual's set of knee jerks? A heart . . . or a ticking time bomb?

Just when you thought the 1992 political race would amount to a showdown between Superwimp George Bush and some undistinguished (and indistinguishable) Democratic moron, Pat Buchanan jumped into the race and began to look as if he might mount a real challenge.

Happily for Buchanan, the nation's first primary is in New Hampshire. Granite state voters are different from voters elsewhere. For one thing, they are arguably the most anti-tax in the nation. Bush won their hearts in 1988 by promising no new taxes, a promise he cavalierly broke two years later, upsetting many New Hampshire people. (A naive lot, apparently: the promise of a politician is so worthless as to mean nothing.) Buchanan promises no new taxes, and invites Bush to take the same pledge. Bush is damned if he does and damned if he doesn't. Signing the pledge focuses attention on his broken pledge of 1988; refusing to sign opens him to charges of favoring higher taxes.

An extraordinarily high percentage of New Hampshire voters are Roman Catholic, like Buchanan. And like Buchanan they are not your big city, left-liberal Catholics: most are conservative economic refugees from feudal Quebec who find Buchanan's right-wing Catholicism far preferable to George Bush's elitist Episcopalianism.

Best of all for Buchanan, New Hampshire voters are not at all reluctant to slap a front-runner or even an incumbent President in the face. They almost knocked off Barry Goldwater in

1964; they embarrassed LBJ in 1968; they humiliated Ed Muskie in 1972. They are independent and not afraid to rub a bigshot's nose in dog dirt if they think it might be fun.

By all accounts, Buchanan is dead serious in his race. People close to him say he intends to be President. Of course, his chances of wresting the nomination away from George Bush are just about nil, and he surely knows it. The power of the Presidency is such that it is virtually impossible to deny him his party's nomination.

Only two incumbent presidents in this century have failed to win their party's nomination; in both cases, they withdrew. In 1952, the immensely unpopular Harry Truman, having botched the Korean War, lost China and eastern Europe to Stalin, and allowed Communists to infiltrate the U.S. government, dropped out early. In 1968, Lyndon Johnson, a man who truly loved the exercise of power, withdrew after having his nose bloodied in the primaries. But what really forced him from the race was the weariness engendered by his increasing awareness that he was losing the Vietnam War and a mad hope that he would be

remembered better by future generations if he withdrew to help the peace talks. His power over the nomination was undiminished: he passed it on to his clownish vice president, Hubert Humphrey, so weak a candidate that he was trounced by the unlovable Nixon.

The most unpopular Republican incumbents of the century all wanted their party's nomination and all got it. Taft in 1912 was so unpopular that when his challenger Teddy Roosevelt ran on a third party ticket, Roosevelt clobbered Taft in both the popular and electoral vote. In 1932, the Depression had reduced Republicans from the nation's overwhelming majority party to a pathetic minority. Yet they were unable to dump Herbert Hoover, the man most Americans held responsible for their plight. In 1976, Gerald Ford easily won his party's nomination, despite the following handicaps: (1) he had never run for office in a constituency other than his own Congressional district; (2) he had been appointed to his job by a President who by common consent was a crook; (3) he was a complete boob, whose only endearing characteristic was his physical klutziness;

(4) his challenger, Ronald Reagan, was the clear favorite of his party and would soon prove to be the most popular Republican in history.

In a contest with Buchanan, Bush has more than the power of the incumbency in his favor. Buchanan has never run for any office. His closest brush with running for office came in 1988 when he considered running for president. The last time voters elected a president who had never before held high office was . . . never. The last time a political virgin was nominated for president was in 1940, when Republicans nominated Wendell Willkie, a big-business internationalist.

What Buchanan is seeking is not the 1992 Republican nomination. He is too smart to believe he can capture that.

Pat Buchanan is not your typical conservative Republican. For one thing, he is a good deal smarter and more articulate than most.

What he is after is the role of leader of conservatives, far and away the most powerful constituency within the Republican Party and arguably the most important political group in presidential elections. The "office" of conservative leader has been vacant since Reagan left the Presidency and began his well-earned senility. Bush managed to capture the Republican nomination by bribing the votes of conservatives with his no-new-taxes pledge and in the absence of any really exciting conservative challenger. But Bush is no conservative, and conservatives know this. For one thing, he is a scion of the Eastern Establishment. For another, he came by such conservative views as he espouses only after he became part of the Reagan Administration.

What's at stake in the Buchanan campaign is important. A good showing in the primaries could have many effects. It might pull Bush toward Buchanan's positions on taxes and trade. It might embarrass Bush, and increase public support for lower taxes. And Buchanan might win the leadership of the

conservative movement, which could in turn lead to his capturing the Republican presidential nomination in 1996.

The hopes of those American conservatives who mistook Bush for one of their own have been dashed during his occupation of the Oval Office. Bush quickly backed down on gun control and the minimum wage law. Worst of all, he broke his "no-new-taxes-read-my-lips" promise, giving Congressional Democrats the tax increase they wanted in exchange for a compromise on spending that the Democrats immediately backed out on. For a while, he overcame his wimp image by invading Iraq. But he quickly lost it when for some reason he decided to leave the demonized Saddam in power and the situation in the Mideast as messed up as ever.

In the wake of Bush's surging popularity after the immensely popular invasion of Iraq, Buchanan put his presidential ambitions on hold. But as Bush's popularity plunged with the economy and it became increasingly clear Bush didn't have a clue about what to do about it, Buchanan saw his opportunity for a respectable showing and the prized leadership of conservative Republicans.

Pat Buchanan is not your typical conservative Republican. For one thing, he is a good deal smarter and more articulate than most. But he also differs from most conservatives on several issues:

- Buchanan opposes free trade, which he thinks creates unemployment. ("I don't want a level playing field," he told *Meet the Press*. "I want America to win."*)
- He worries that liberal immigration problems will ultimately result in white people becoming a minority in the U.S.
- He is critical of Israel, and of "Jewish influence" on American foreign policy.
- He has on occasion expressed isolationist arguments.

These views have earned him the enmity of many conservatives, inspiring William Buckley, for example, to devote virtually an entire issue of his magazine to a futile attempt to prove

* One wonders: Is America so badly off that it cannot win on a level playing field?

Buchanan to be an anti-Semite and inducing most office-holding conservatives to rally round Bush in hopes of future rewards.

All this plays into Buchanan's hands. As a lifelong resident of Washington whose life has been inextricably bound up in presidential politics, Buchanan has used the opposition of establishment conservatives as evidence that he is "outside the Beltway," a prerequisite of conservative leadership.

And so Pat Buchanan finds himself in New Hampshire, hectoring Bush for breaking his promise against new taxes and pandering to blue-collar voters with his nativism and opposition to free trade.

A Head Newly Buried

Like most libertarians, I welcomed Buchanan's challenge to Bush. Buchanan's tough stand on taxes is reminiscent of Bush's own 1988 stand. Buchanan's willingness to consider a less adventuresome foreign policy is refreshing. And best of all, Buchanan is the antithesis of Bush in matters of style: Bush is almost the platonic form of mush-mouthed wimp; Buchanan is articulate and forthright.

On the other hand, I wasn't about to join his crusade without learning a bit more about the man. For one thing, I didn't much care for his support of the war on drugs or his misgivings about freedom of speech.

Buchanan's isolationism also worried me. Traditionally, many libertarians argue against diplomatic entanglements and military intervention. At the same time, they support open immigration and free trade: "If goods don't cross borders, armies will." Critics of this position often caricature it as "let's bury our heads in the sand and isolate ourselves completely from the rest of the world." That's a cheap shot against the isolationism that libertarians traditionally advocate. But it seems a fairly reasonable way to characterize Buchanan's anti-trade, anti-immigration, anti-intervention view. Prior to Pat Buchanan's conversion to this odd form of isolationism, the only political figure I knew of who advocated this sort or extremely literal isolationism was José Rodríguez Francia, dictator of Paraguay from 1816 to 1840, who cut off all diplomatic relations

with other countries and outlawed foreign trade, immigration and emigration.

Buchanan's isolationism is quite recent. During the cold war, he was a voracious hawk, but when the Gulf crisis erupted in August 1990, Buchanan was articulate in opposition to U.S. intervention, and he remained opposed for several weeks before he flip-flopped and got on the bandwagon for the war. And he is not terribly consistent: currently, he calls for U.S. military intervention in Yugoslavia.

Far Right from the Start

What sort of man is Buchanan? Does Buchanan have libertarian inclinations of the sort that stirred the souls of Barry Goldwater and Ronald Reagan? I had followed his career as speechwriter and public relations flack for Nixon, Agnew and Reagan. I had read *The New Majority*, his rather silly 1973 *apologia* for Nixon (sample of his silliness: the first element of Nixon's legacy to America would be "an honorable end to American involvement in the war in Vietnam, a peace that does not disgrace the sacrifices of a decade"). I had read his *Conservative Votes, Liberal Victories* (1975), but about all I could remember about it was its call for a more powerful military and aggressive foreign policy, and its argument that conservatives should

Buchanan is the antithesis of Bush in matters of style: Bush is almost the platonic form of mush-mouthed wimp; Buchanan is articulate and forthright.

concentrate their efforts on capturing the presidency and increasing its power. I had read a fair sampling of his syndicated columns. I hadn't seen much of *Crossfire*, the television show that had earned him stardom, but I had seen a fair amount of him as a member of *The McLaughlin Group*.

From all this, I had a reasonable handle on Buchanan's views. But I had only a vague impression of his character and his underlying political philos-

ophy. So I got hold of a copy of *Right From the Beginning*, his autobiography. Written in 1987, it was the work of a Buchanan more mature than the public relations man who had written *The New Majority* or the fledgling political columnist who had written *Conservative Votes, Liberal Victories*.

Right From the Beginning is vastly different from his earlier books. For a start, its jacket is covered with praise from a variety of individuals ranging from George Bush to Diane Sawyer, from publications ranging from *Human Events* to *Catholic Standard*. On its cover, Buchanan smiles wryly at the camera, dressed in a well-tailored conservative suit, arms folded across his chest. This contrasts considerably from *Conservative Votes*, whose cover is bereft of reviewers' praise and shows a fat Buchanan with long greasy hair pulled back gesturing broadly as he speaks into a barrage of microphones.

It's a different book inside too. For the autobiography of a political figure, it is peculiar, detailing his childhood, puberty, college days, and the beginning of his writing career all along emphasizing his political and social views, but mostly ignoring his political career.

His story is of life in a very authoritarian Roman Catholic family: childhood filled with discipline, sports, and fighting; teenage years filled with drinking, driving, and fighting; a college career filled with drinking, partying, fighting, and a growing realization that he was a political conservative; a very brief career (6 weeks) as a reporter and 3 years as an editorial writer, during which time he continued to drink and party heavily, though he apparently gave up assaulting people he didn't like. His family was well enough off to have servants, vacation at the seashore, attend private schools and regularly buy new Oldsmobiles, which Buchanan and his brothers wrecked with drunken abandon.*

He was the third son in a family of nine children of an upper middle class Roman Catholic family in Washington,

D.C. His father taught him to accept and obey the teachings of the Church, to obey his parents, to have good manners toward women, and to fight whenever he or a relative or a friend was insulted or thought he was insulted. "To Pop, fighting was a concomitant of man's existence." From the age of seven, young Pat and his brothers were required to work out at the punching bags. "While other boys were being punished for getting into fights as toddlers," he said at the grave

His story is of life in a very authoritarian Roman Catholic family: childhood filled with discipline, sports, and fighting; teenage years filled with drinking, driving, and fighting; a college career filled with drinking, partying, fighting, and a growing realization that he was a political conservative.

of his father, "we were punished when we failed to hit a punching bag 400 times a day."

Not surprisingly, young Pat got into fights. With his training and the aid of his well-trained brothers, he fared better than most, and it is evident that he continues to take special pride in his fighting, especially his ability to "sucker punch" an unsuspecting victim, an ability he boasts of several times in his book.

His most serious brush with the law occurred in 1959 while he was a senior in college. Driving home his date, "a tall blonde from Virginia," he got stuck in traffic behind a slow-moving police van. He honked the horn to get it to speed up, but it didn't. So he honked some more and decided to pass. Not surprisingly, the police signaled him to pull over and began to write him a speeding ticket. Buchanan

* In his biography, Buchanan says his brothers wrecked six cars, but that he was only ever involved in one minor accident. Elsewhere in his biography, however, he tells of his involvement in other accidents, and *The Wall St Journal* reports that he "revels even now in talking about the 11 cars he and his three older brothers totaled in 24 months in a kind of juvenile demolition derby."

responded with a barrage of "X-rated language." He was ordered out of the car, at which time, he writes, "I can fairly be said to have been resisting arrest . . . I put a size ten-and-a-half cordovan where I thought it might do some good." Buchanan was finally subdued by the two cops and a passing citizen and tossed into the patrol wagon. Still feeling his oats, he "hammered with [his] fist on the thick glass pane separating the back of the truck from the front seat where the two cops were now observing the caged beast they had just apprehended." The two cops he had assaulted ended up in the hospital, and Buchanan was hauled to the police station where he continued to "mouth off."

Happily, Buchanan's father was well-connected, the appropriate lawyer was hired, the charges were reduced and he walked away with a \$25 fine. That was less, he notes with evident satisfaction, than he customarily paid to Montgomery County "for a routine disorderly conduct." His adventure cost him more than \$25, however: he lost his scholarship to Georgetown and was suspended for a year.

During his year away from school, he worked for his father's accounting firm and worried about his future. "Never again would I get arrested, and only once would I get into something that could remotely be called a fight. In that year, I grew up half a decade."

Twelve pages later, he recounts the last episode "that could remotely be called a fight." It seems another student had insulted Buchanan's friend, Oliver. "While I had nothing against [him], I had nothing for him either. However, Oliver was my best friend at school and I now recalled darkly" an episode where this person had made a sarcastic remark to him as well. "No one wounds me with impunity." Later that night he ran into his new found adversary in the library and directed "some caustic words" at him. When he responded in kind, "I sucker-punched him." Buchanan relates the story with detail, celebrating especially that he had *literally* "beat the shit" out of his victim.

Despite his tendency toward illegal behavior and his frequent arrests, Buchanan is proud that he was different from the '60s radicals who followed him:

While our hell-raising in the '50s might appear of a piece with that done by the radicals in the 60s, there was more than a small difference. Some of the 60s young openly despise the government and the "system"; they regularly reviled the cops as "pigs." We weren't in the least unhappy with the "system." We loved the world as we found it. We didn't want to change anything.

Of course, it's not difficult to fathom Buchanan's good relations with police. As the son of a wealthy, well-connected family, his punishment never amounted to more than a slap on

"No one wounds me with impunity. . . . I sucker-punched him." Buchanan relates the story with detail, celebrating especially that he had literally "beat the shit" out of his victim.

the hand. And shortly after graduation from college, even hand-slaps were a thing of the past. At the St Louis *Globe-Democrat*, where Buchanan wrote editorials, "we supported and defended the police and the FBI; and they, in turn, depended on us and fed us. They had a friend at the *Globe-Democrat* and knew it." The police reciprocated that friendship by granting Buchanan immunity: when stopped late one night for driving "suspiciously" (he provides no details, though he elsewhere explains he spent his evenings drinking heavily at a variety of bars and nightclubs), he simply "handed my *Globe-Democrat* press card to the officer, along with my driver's license. He straightened up: "Mr Buchanan, can you make it home; or do you want one of us to drive you?"

The End of the Beginning

At times, Buchanan seems extremely emotional. His eulogy for his father and his account of his oldest brother's sudden death, for example, are powerfully written, heavy with emotion. He writes with fiery emotion about his disgust at being prohibited from endorsing Barry Goldwater: "The fighting *Globe-Democrat* was taking a dive, going to the tank . . . this seemed craven and

cowardly . . . I was acting editorial editor — the man to whom all phone calls were transferred. By the score, state legislators, businessmen, conservative leaders, and common folk telephoned all day long, to tell me we were a pack of gutless cowards. The men were choking with rage; some of the women were crying. All day long I took the abuse. For the first time, I was genuinely ashamed of the St Louis *Globe-Democrat*."

At other times he seems cold-hearted. As a supporter of capital punishment, he thought he ought to attend an execution. So he and his roommate (a reporter for the *Globe*) arranged for tickets to a gassing, which he coldly describes in intimate detail. Still not sure whether he himself "could have pulled the lever and put a fellow human being to death," he returned to the execution chamber six months later, this time alone, and stood next to the executioner as he killed the prisoner, apparently imagining himself pulling the lever that released the deadly gas. "Watching a man's life taken away from him is not pleasant . . ." he writes, and moves on to a defense of capital punishment.

By 1965, he began "to feel as though I had achieved all I was going to achieve." As the *Globe's* assistant editorial editor, he "got no by-line. *Human Events* and other conservative publications might be reprinting my editorials, but nobody knew who had written them." He tried for a scholarship to Harvard, but blew it by getting into an emotional argument on capital punishment with his interviewer. Early in 1966, he figured another path to fame. He had "followed the tremendous press coverage of JFK's Special Assistants — men like Ted Sorenson and Kenny O'Donnell. To me they had the most glamorous jobs in national politics I could ever aspire to." He finagled an introduction to Richard Nixon, whom he believed would capture the Republican nomination for the Presidency, and convinced Nixon to hire him.

At this point his account of his life stops, though the book goes on for another 66 pages, consisting of a chapter detailing the tragic death by cancer of his oldest brother, two chapters on his political beliefs and his agenda for

America, and his eulogy for his father.

The Beginning of the End

As one might expect from the title, he also relates the development of his political thinking. "Development" might be too strong a word. I guess that's evident from the title too: his views were inherited from his father, not really developed at all. "I got my political education at a dining room table, at the head of which sat an authoritarian figure whose political heroes were Douglas MacArthur, Joe McCarthy, and General Franco."

His explains his father's admiration of Franco: "In 1935 and '36, reports poured in of the burning of churches and monasteries and the murder of priests and nuns for practicing the faith in which my parents believed. When Franco and his nationalist troops landed and marched on Madrid, they became the armed champions of millions of American Catholics."

To this day, he admires his father's choice of heroes, even in the case of Franco, the dictator of Spain from 1939

To this day, he admires his father's choice of heroes, even in the case of Franco, Spain's dictator from 1939 to 1975. "Franco didn't see himself as a dictator," Buchanan explained. "He saw himself as the Catholic savior of his nation. He did a better job for his country than some of the communist crowd."

to 1975. "Franco didn't see himself as a dictator," Buchanan explains. "He saw himself as the Catholic savior of his nation. He did a better job for his country than some of the communist crowd."

Despite the openly political tone of *Right From the Beginning*, there is precious little talk of first principles. Rather he seems a reactionary, yearning back to the 1950s, when he and his pals drank, partied and got into fights with Protestants, with his father supplying cars and money; when the Catholic was concerned only with obedience, confes-

sion and salvation; when the U.S. was rich and the rest of the world could go to hell.

This is as close as he comes to discussing his fundamental philosophy:

What we [of the right] believe, rather, is that faith precedes reason, that affection precedes understanding; that before we come to know, we first believe. Growing up, we did not have to have it explained to us that we should stand by brothers and sisters and family and friends. That came naturally. To us, the right and honorable duty of men of words and men of thought is not simply to seek and record abstract truth, but to deploy our talents, the arguments of the mind, to defend the treasures of the heart: family, faith and country.

The anti-intellectualism implicit here is a theme repeated throughout the book. For example, in his introduction (an explanation of why he decided against running for president in 1988), he explains that the reason he objected to George Bush's calling Reagan's economic policies "voodoo economics" was not that he didn't like the word "voodoo," it was because "we thought it was redundant." *The Wall St Journal* reports that he dismisses economics totally, saying "We don't believe in that stuff."

The Buchanan platform of 1992 is not discernible in this 1990 edition of his 1987 book. He is not an isolationist; instead he advocates increased military spending, a more powerful army, and a willingness to confront our enemies wherever they are.

His confidence in the U.S. economy is almost infinite ("Materially, we have never been better off; the United States is the most vibrant, energetic society on earth.") Keeping it strong depends on maintaining free trade, which requires (surprise!) a more powerful president:

In the fight to maintain open markets, worldwide, a strong President, again, is indispensable. Congress, composed of 535 moving parts, is incapable of resisting the concerted pressures of American corporations and unions.

Among the great American achievements of the twentieth century is free Asia, democratic and capitalist, which arose out of the ashes of World War II and Korea. Hundreds of millions of the most capable and energetic people in the world are prospering, on the side of freedom, because of the bravery of American

soldiers, sailors, Marines, and airmen, and the magnanimity and statesmanship of the postwar leadership of the United States and General MacArthur. *To squander all that in an absurd "trade war" because we cannot compete with Korean cars or Japanese computer chips would be an act of almost terminal stupidity.* [emphasis added]

What are America's other problems? Too much freedom of speech, for one thing:

Since Rachel Carson wrote *Silent Spring* a quarter century ago, Americans have shown a robust determination to preserve our natural environment, to clear lakes, rivers, and streams of the raw sewage of industrial society. No commensurate concern, however, has been manifest over the raw sewage that, simultaneously, began to flow through America's culture, courtesy of the Supreme Court. In the Secular City, what enters the mind seems of less concern than what enters the stomach.

And something better be done about homosexuals, who are the cause of AIDS:

Promiscuous sodomy — unnatural, unsanitary sexual relations between males, which every great religion teaches is immoral — is the cause of AIDS. Five years ago, when I wrote that New York City, on the eve of that celebration of sodomy known as "Gay Pride Week," should shut down the squalid little "love" nests called bathhouses, the incubators of the disease, I was denounced as a "homophobe" by the Governor and Mayor of New York. Because these men were morally confused, men and boys continued infecting one another in bathhouses, and continued killing one another. And, today, nine-year-olds are being educated in the use of condoms. But, it is not nine-year-olds who are bugging one another with abandon, spreading this deadly virus; it is not nine-year-olds who threaten doctors, dentists, health workers, hemophiliacs, and the rest of society by their refusal to curb their lascivious appetites.

A conservative president, he advises, should propose a second constitutional convention, with amendments to outlaw abortion, to authorize capital punishment, to make English the official language of the U.S., to fix terms of judges and allow Congress, with the President's approval, to overturn decisions of the Supreme Court, to abolish the constitutional provision limiting the President to two terms, to allow religion in the public schools, to outlaw

discrimination and affirmative action, and to allow the people to invalidate or make laws by initiative or referendum.

Mansions and Mercedes

How well will Buchanan do with the voters? It's really too early to tell, although his two big issues (his willingness to take the Bush pledge

No matter how much he tries to gain sympathy from the "little guys" by portraying himself as one of them, Buchanan is, and has always been, a wealthy individual. No matter how much he tries to play the role of someone from outside the halls of power, his entire career has been within the Washington political establishment.

against tax increases, his opposition to free trade) seem to be working pretty well so far. But Bush has just put his campaign in gear, and he has a very intelligent, well-seasoned staff, so I wouldn't necessarily count on Buchanan doing terribly well nationally, though I think he will do well in New Hampshire.

One obvious area of vulnerability is Buchanan's elitism. No matter how much he tries to gain sympathy from the "little guy" by portraying himself as one of them, the fact remains that he is, and has always been, a wealthy individual. No matter how much he tries to play the role of someone from outside the halls of power, his entire career has been within the Washington political establishment, mostly in the halls of power.

A couple months ago, a libertarian journalist told me a story that illustrates his problem. Over dinner, Buchanan and he were discussing taxation. Buchanan suggested that a national sales tax might be a good replacement for the income tax. "The problem with that idea," the journalist said, "is that taxes should be felt by

those who are paying them, and people don't much notice a sales tax. It's hidden in the price of what they buy." "How can you say that?" Buchanan responded. "When I bought my Mercedes the sales tax was \$5,000 and I sure remember that!" Similarly, Buchanan's mansion (nicknamed "Tara" by his friends) seems more like the home of a wealthy celebrity than the sort of thing Joe Sixpack can identify with.

His Mercedes, by the way, has become a minor campaign issue. Buchanan's critics have suggested that it is hypocritical of Buchanan to advocate restrictions on imports while driving an imported luxury car. Buchanan now claims that the Mercedes is his wife's car, which came as news to his friends. ("You seem to drive around a lot in your wife's car," said his *Crossfire* co-host Michael Kinsley when Buchanan tried that line on him.)

Illiberal from the Beginning

Aside from Buchanan's newfound isolationism and opposition to tax increases, his views seem either indifferent or hostile to liberty. In his view, libertarians are a small segment of the conservative movement:

There is also a libertarian annex in our conservative house now; its occupants see as the ultimate enemy of freedom the inexorable growth of government, which taxes away one in every three dollars America earns, and spends two in five. Dining with the social conservatives and the Religious Right, our libertarian cousins often appear ill at ease.

In a sense, Buchanan is correct. Many who value liberty do consider themselves as part of the political right. And many conservatives have strong libertarian impulses. Although they did not always live up to their rhetoric, the two most recent leaders of the American right were plainly inspired by libertarian ideas. Who can forget Barry Goldwater's stirring call to arms in *The Conscience of a Conservative*?

I have little interest in streamlining government or in making it more efficient, for I mean to reduce its size. I do not undertake to promote welfare, for I propose to extend freedom. My aim is not to pass laws, but to repeal them. And if I am attacked for neglecting my constituents' "interest," I shall reply that I

was informed that their main interest is liberty and that in that cause I am doing the very best I can.

Or Ronald Reagan's paean to liberty in the speech that thrust him onto the national political stage:

We are told we must choose between a left and right or, as others suggest, a third alternative, a kind of safe middle ground. I suggest to you there is no left or right, only an up or down. Up to the maximum of individual freedom consistent with law, or down to the ant heap of totalitarianism. Regardless of their humanitarian purpose, those who would sacrifice freedom have, whether they know it or not, chosen the downward path.

I could find no such corresponding homage to freedom from the pen or mouth of Pat Buchanan. In *Right From the Beginning*, I found the word "freedom" mentioned only twice. Once is his mention of "enemy of freedom" in his description of libertarians quoted above. Here is the only other mention that I found:

If we Americans no longer share the same religious creed, the same code of morality, and manifestly we do not, the day is not far off when we will no longer share the same idea of virtue or freedom or patriotism, because, ultimately, these, too, are rooted in one's deepest beliefs, one's "religious" beliefs.

Half a century of life has only persuaded me of the truth of what I was taught, even before I knew how to think. Country, family, and faith, these are the things worth dying for; these are the things worth fighting for; these are the things worth living for.

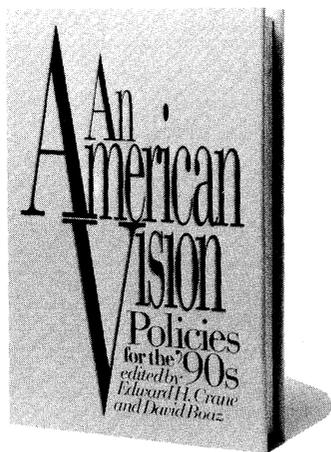
It would be far easier for libertarians to make common cause with a conservative movement led by Pat Buchanan if Buchanan showed some hint of a love of liberty, if Buchanan had employed his considerable talent as a writer and speaker articulating a love of liberty.

Something About the Sixties

The libertarian movement, as distinct from the conservative movement, was born in the cauldron of the 1960s, when many libertarians discovered that they didn't really belong in a movement that insisted on support for the Vietnam War, Richard Nixon, and especially the military draft. At the time, Pat Buchanan stood firmly against the libertarian position on all

// The high-beta think tank of the '90s will be the free-market libertarians at the Cato Institute. //

— Lawrence Kudlow, "Money Politics," March 25, 1990



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these issues. And there is no indication that he has changed his position.

Richard Nixon was Buchanan's "mentor," and for Buchanan Vietnam was a righteous cause; we lost it only because (you guessed it) those damn liberals were running the country:

The American military did not lose that war in Southeast Asia; the American soldiers fighting there never lost a major military engagement in seven years. When President Nixon approved the Paris Peace Accords in 1973, every single provincial capital was in South Vietnamese hands. No, the Vietnam War was not lost in the Mekong Delta, it was lost in Washington, D.C., in the corridors of our capital city, because the Establishment that had marched this country into Southeast Asia in the early and middle 60s lacked the mental stamina and moral courage to see that war through to victory. Vietnam was liberalism's last great adventure, and greatest debacle.

Buchanan has no sympathy for those who opposed the war or the draft. The demonstrators at the 1968 Democratic convention in Chicago, who were beaten wantonly by the po-

Critics often caricature isolationism as "let's bury our heads in the sand and isolate ourselves completely from the rest of the world." Though a cheap shot against the isolationism that libertarians traditionally advocate, it seems a fairly reasonable way to characterize Buchanan's anti-trade, anti-immigration, anti-intervention view.

lice in an orgy of violence that sickened most Americans, "got what they deserved."

Indeed, he writes nostalgically about the draft in the good old days:

What is remarkable about those years is how little protest there was about mandatory military service. While there was no martial enthusiasm among friends or classmates, there were no demonstrations either, on campus or off. No one doubted we had a duty to serve

our country. When JFK declared in his Inaugural, "Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country," he was speaking out of a tradition in which we, too, had been raised.

My own break with conservatism came earlier, and over different issues. By 1965, I was trying to convince my college's chapter of Young Americans for Freedom to withdraw from the national organization of young conservatives and to state boldly our own radical libertarian ideas. I heard that a new YAF chapter in a nearby city had named itself the "Francisco Franco Chapter" of Young Americans for Freedom.

My first reaction was that it was a joke. After all, Francisco Franco was a dictator. True enough, he had defeated a Spanish government that had substantial communist influence, and communism was a bad thing. But he was also a dictator, complete with secret police, and he ruled over a country with no free speech, no free press, no freedom of religion, and no freedom of contract. By no stretch of imagination could he be considered a force for "freedom," the stated goal of Young Americans for Freedom.

Perhaps some of the more right-wing elements of the conservative movement might want to honor a dictator like Franco, but surely not a chapter of YAF, an organization of young and apparently rational conservatives. But my friend who brought me the news maintained a straight face and assured me he was not spoofing me. And the story was verified by others.

This provided me a powerful argument for withdrawing from YAF. The fact that a chapter of YAF would choose to honor a dictator simply because he was anti-communist — and that the national organization would accept a chapter named for him — nicely illustrated the problem that libertarians of that era faced when trying to get along with conservatives. Conservatives were focused on one thing, and one thing only: the evil of communism. And anyone who opposed communism was their friend, no matter how awful he might be in other respects.

So I pointed out to my fellow YAF-

ers that we could hardly expect to be taken seriously in our attempt to articulate and realize the ideals of political freedom under the aegis of an organization that honors dictators. This argument, I believe, was critical. Shortly thereafter, what had been a YAF chapter was the Agorian Society, complete with a statement of principles that embodied radical libertarianism.

I doubt that libertarians want to be led by a man who considers Nixon his mentor and Franco a hero, who supported the War in Vietnam and supports the War on Drugs, who questions freedom of speech and waxes nostalgically about the draft.

Aside from an occasional rerun of *Saturday Night Live* from the mid-1970s (with Chevy Chase's running joke "Generalissimo Francisco Franco is still dead" leading his newscast), I hadn't thought about Franco in years. Until I began to investigate the presidential candidacy of Patrick J. Buchanan. Just as I wanted no part of a conservative movement that honored the Spanish dictator in 1965, I want no part of one now.

Will libertarians support Buchanan in his campaign for leadership of the conservative movement by means of making a respectable challenge to George Bush? This is a question that each will have to answer for himself. But my guess is that, as libertarians get to know him better, their support for him will dwindle. Although he agrees with some positions that libertarians advocate, his affinity with libertarian ideas seems negligible. Indeed, there seems to be a pervasive hostility to libertarian ideas.

Libertarians who feel at home within the broad conservative movement will shudder at the prospect of Buchanan as leader. Libertarians intent on building the libertarian movement (as distinct from the conservative

continued on page 54

Essay

The Corrosion of Science

by Edward C. Krug

The fears of the age have given rise to a new faith: environmentalism. This faith seeks the mantle of science, but eschews its methods. But science without its method is madness, leaving environmental policy tyrannous and vain.

Skepticism, not advocacy, is the heart of the scientific method. Thus, few human endeavors are so exclusively — and successfully — self-policing as is science.

Unfortunately, this is changing. Scientists face increasing incentives to abandon the scientific method as scientific hypotheses and conclusions are increasingly used to justify public policy. Many scientists have become environmental advocates, in the process abandoning scientific method, objectivity, and honest inquiry.

Advocacy disguised as science is this age's most powerful means of persuasion. But most people are unaware that many scientists have subordinated their science to political ends, so they continue to regard science as being objective "Truth." The well-misguided public has been suckered into concentrating authority into the hands of a "knowing elite." The earth is said to be in crisis. But it is the growth of scientific advocacy — be it concerning acid rain, global warming, or any of a number of other supposed "catastrophes waiting to happen" — that is the real crisis.

Acid Rain

I have direct experience with one such creative use of hysteria: the furor over acid rain.

Green activists screeched long and hard about forests and fish being devastated by acid rain. A "silent spring" was supposed to occur as acid rain overwhelmed the geochemical buffer-

ing capacity of soils, lakes and streams in extensive areas of eastern North America and northern Europe. Evidence was scant. Nevertheless, they were able to enroll certain agents within the scientific community and government in raising their stormy petrel. In 1980 the EPA asserted that the average lake in the northeastern United States was acidified 100-fold in the last 40 years by acid rain. Not to be outdone, the National Academy of Sciences claimed that acid rain would double again this damage by 1990.

The Norwegian national acid rain program of the 1970s was the forerunner of the national acid rain programs of the 1980s. The Norwegian parliament's enabling legislation (Nr. 172/1974) stated that the express purpose of the program is advocacy disguised as science: "to provide material for negotiations to limit the emission of SO₂ in Europe" (Rosenqvist, 1990).

President Carter called acid rain one of the two great environmental crises of the century. Into this we-have-our-minds-made-up atmosphere, the 10-year National Acid Precipitation Assessment Program (NAPAP) was launched with the EPA at its reins.

Under the auspices of Connecticut, I joined NAPAP's efforts in 1981.

By 1984 political pressure was so great that President Reagan was ready to forgo research and accede to the demand for an expensive crash program to stop acid rain. But the President required that the scientific experts agree with the accepted belief that the world would not last another five years under this "rain of acid." However, the scientists said that the world would not end within five years, so NAPAP and its research continued.

And the subsequent research results did not turn out as expected. For example, NAPAP researched the lakes of the Adirondacks — the area of the Northeast predicted most likely to have the massive lake acidification. We found, however, that the average Adirondack lake is no more acidic now than it was prior to the Industrial Revolution — not 100-fold more acidic as claimed by the EPA. And we found no measurable change in the acidity of lakes over the last 10 years, contrary to the National Academy of Sciences' 1980 claim that another 100-fold increase in acidity would occur by 1990 (Krug and Warnick, 1991).

The environmental community responded by charging NAPAP scientists with watering down our research results to appease political pressures. Yes, there were political pressures. But the pressures were to support the proposition that was the basis of NAPAP's exist-

Scientists have been sampling and analyzing the contaminants that make rain acidic for more than one century. But not as contaminants but as free fertilizer, "manna from heaven."

tence, not to oppose it. The pressure we felt was to support the notion that acid rain is an environmental catastrophe.

A Rose By Any Other Name

"Acid rain" sounds horrible. One envisions corrosive acid falling from the sky, burning and killing living objects below it. However, such acid rain as has been observed is anything but corrosive.

The nitrogen and sulfur "contaminants" that make rain acidic are essential macronutrients — elements required to sustain all forms of life on earth. It is a well-kept secret that European and American acid deposition monitoring networks started out of the national agricultural experiment stations. Agricultural experiment stations have been sampling and analyzing atmospheric deposition of nitrogen and sulfur for more than one century — not as contaminants but as free fertilizer, "manna from heaven."

The world's first national acid rain program (Sweden) determined the principal effect of acid rain was improvement of crop yield and crop protein content. In the United States, acid rain is fertilizing 300,000,000 acres of eastern forest. But rather than incur ridicule by reporting that the fertilizing acid rain *benefits* 99.9 percent of the forest, NAPAP emphasized only that acid rain *may* be damaging less than 0.1 percent of our forest — fertilization of red spruce in high altitude forest by acid rain *may* be increasing cold damage by making forest grow too long into the winter.

In the EPA-managed lakes program, the pressure to show damage was even greater. In assessing forest damage, we used the full amount of forest on which acid rain is falling to come up with the 0.1 percent damage estimate. But not so with lakes. Rather than use the full value of 200,000,000 acres of lakes receiving acid rain, only the approximately 2,000,000 acres of lakes most likely to be acidic were considered.

Statistics were used to exaggerate the acid-lake problem 100-fold. Only 35,000 acres of 200,000,000 acres of lakes are too acidic (pH \leq 5) to support sports fisheries; and most of this acidity is natural.

The EPA's own research (DDRP Project) showed that the principal effect of acid rain was to increase regional levels of sulfate in water but not the acidity of water. What sulfate principally did was to increase concentrations of calcium and magnesium in surface waters — the effect of which is to improve fish survivability in dilute water by increasing ionic concentration. Calcium and magnesium are also nutrients and their leaching (along with that of other nutrients) may also be improving lake nutrient (trophic) status and food supply.

The real crisis of acid rain is its use as a political weapon of eco-terrorism.

Beware the False Prophet

Since 1981, when I began to study "acid rain," I have become aware of how useful sheep's clothing can be.

Early on in my studies, I observed that the forest scientists — their specialty being the above-ground parts of trees — knew that acid rain was not harming the above-ground parts of the trees. However, they accepted the environmental propaganda that acid rain was harming trees from below the ground, that is, through soils.

In my case, I accepted the environmental propaganda that acid raining on the above-ground parts of trees was damaging the trees. But, as a scientist, I could find no evidence that acid rain affects soils, my area of expertise.

We accepted the environmentalist propaganda about areas beyond our expertise because we believed the motives of environmentalists justified their conclusions. What we scientists were doing was forgiving environmentalists their sins because of their name — environmentalists. We scientists, who are

trained skeptics, automatically and unthinkingly assumed that people associated with the "just cause" of the environment are themselves just.

But Jesus warned us of this error 2,000 years ago: False prophets wrap themselves in the "just cause" to get at the just people. They are like the proverbial wolf who wraps himself in sheep's clothing to get at the sheep. And we sharp-eyed Ph.D. sheep watched it eat red meat with all of those big sharp teeth and persisted in calling it a sheep.

Ten years later — after watching this "sheep" devour innumerable carcasses — I call the wolf by its name. Those who manipulate science as a tool of persuasion do not respect the sanctity of science. Nor do they respect the sanctity of an individual's right to self-determination. Their belief is that when given the truth people do not have the ability to make the "correct" decisions, so they must be lied to instead. Only the environmentalist manipulators of science have the ability to come to "correct" decisions.

These pseudo-scientific environmentalists view the present world order —

What we scientists were doing was forgiving environmentalists their sins because of their name, environmentalists. Trained skeptics automatically and unthinkingly assumed that people associated with the "just cause" of the environment are themselves just.

which places power in the hands of the people — as resting on bad faith. They must feel ironic validation of their low opinion of us scientists in using our own institutions to force the world through a form of boot camp in which they break us down and remake us in a new green image. □

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P.C. or B.S.?

by Meredith McGhan

"Political Correctness" is more than a reactionary leftist attempt to stifle dissent, as this frontlines report explains.

I first heard the term "Politically Correct" in 1985 as a freshman — excuse me, fresh-womb-moon — at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. Then, the phrase seemed to refer to a fashionable collection of ideas, expensive Peruvian sweaters, and drug stories to be trotted out at the

aply named "progressive parties" held in dorms. That year I lived in East Quad, generally known as the P.C. dorm. That meant that if you walked through the halls at four a.m. you'd smell incense and marijuana, and see kids with long hair sitting in the halls or the lounge discussing the Grateful Dead or how much they regretted being born too late to experience the sixties.

Six years later, the University of Michigan still seems the best place to hold a conference called "The P.C. Frame-Up — What's Behind the Attack?" Last November, a group of faculty and graduate students did just that.

The conference was held in the wake of Dinesh D'Souza's bestseller *Illiberal Education*, which includes a chapter about racial incidents at Michigan, and the May commencement address at which President Bush in one breath lambasted P.C.'s attempt to control free speech and said that "political extremists" were "abusing the powers of free speech" by protesting his appearance at the University.

Alan "Just Call Me Alan" Wald, professor of English in Ann Arbor, contributor to the Detroit-based social-

ist magazine *Against the Current*, and co-organizer of the conference, presented the event as a challenge to the criticism of the Left by a tiny, vociferous group of conservatives. In Ann Arbor, these critics are mostly Republican, whose only real means of expression is in the pages of the conservative bi-weekly, *The Michigan Review*. An equal or greater number of left-leaning critics of P.C. exists on campus, as silent as the conservatives are loud. (After all, who wants to be vilified by both your own camp and the enemy's?) Throughout the conference, it seemed that the loud got louder while the silent, save for one or two brave souls, sank deeper into their seats.

Wald and the other organizers, all tenure-track academics, posited that the charge of "Political Correctness" is a false one, made by right-wingers trying to stultify the discourse that would lift the oppressed out from under the White Male Establishment and create a truly multicultural university — and, ultimately, a more "equal" society. The first panel continued the decades-long debate about

whether social reform was really the university's job. If it is not, then the debate about P.C. is over.

Stephen Balch, of the National Association of Scholars, has argued that America's universities are being "harnessed for radical social change," and sometimes it seems like he is right. During my five years at Michigan I saw a short-lived speech code instituted after several incidents in which white individuals harassed black students.* Though the code was later ruled unconstitutional, it still seemed that all whites were being tarred with the racist brush, and inter-racial hostility continued to grow. Blacks suspected whites of racism and whites suspected blacks of suspecting them of racism. How many of us refrained from including our pink, peach, or guilty-liberal red in the new phrase "people of color?" How many of us, a few years later, remained silent when P.C. conference participant Jullianne Malveaux called the debate the "last gasp of the white male" and said that the black child who was

* See Charles Thorne, "The Orwellian University," *Liberty*, July 1990.

killed in Crown Heights died because "Hasidic Jews don't think they have to stop at red lights"?

It seemed that the anti-P.C. spokesfolks, glaringly in the minority, had been brought there to be attacked. Richard Bernstein, writer for the *New York Times*, was roundly hissed when he said he had "no political axe to grind," and Christina Sommers, a self-

Don't worry — prosecution will be under civil, not criminal law, and that'll make it okay. An Orwellian feminocracy, a spike-heeled boot stamping a human face forever.

described liberal feminist from Clark University, ended up being lumped into the right-wing category for criticizing the extremist positions of certain female-supremacists. Sommers pointed out that many women did not feel oppressed in their chosen roles as wife and mother, and that some even enjoyed wearing makeup and fashionable clothing. "Thanks a lot, Christina," Alan Wald later said, rolling his eyes, implying that Sommers' comments had done a real disservice to women everywhere.

This sort of ironic disingenuousness appeared elsewhere as well. During the panel on affirmative action, I fell into line at the microphone to ask David Horowitz, ex-Marxist co-author of *Destructive Generation*, to clarify his views on preferential politics. When he equated affirmative action with apartheid, I was appalled, as was most of the audience. He was trivializing the condition of black South Africans and overdramatizing the misfortunes of a few whites and men.

Unfortunately, the mediator had just told Horowitz, whose presentation of his ideas in person is not nearly as cogent as on paper, that he would not be allowed to answer any more questions; time was running out. One of the grad student organizers, a white male, came up to me and told me to cut in front of two men to ensure that

I, as a woman, would be heard. I was very uncomfortable, and refused. I wanted to be listened to as an individual, not as a token, I told the crowd when I reached the mike; several in the audience hissed and booed.

Later, I caught up with the organizer to explain further. I told him I had felt like I was in kindergarten again, my teacher pushing me to the front of the line, saying "Let the little girl go first." He was polite, though I could tell that he thought I was misguided. Though "sensitive males" are loath to admit it, it seems that paternalistic chivalry is not dead. It has only exchanged its armor for *de rigueur* ripped jeans below a cloak of rhetoric.

It is peculiar that a group of academics and intellectuals sees itself as the definers of the "rights" of the "people," while most of these "people" are not even part of the university community. The P.C. debate is irrelevant to the lives of most people and, as one audience member pointed out in the plenary session, merely a source of amusement to most of those who encounter it.

What does the Left want, anyway? This question was posed to law professor Catharine MacKinnon, a proponent of censorship and crony of Andrea Dworkin. "We just want to make the government ours," she answered, to the largely approving audience. Under the dictatorship of Catharine MacKinnon, the Constitution would be revised to preclude the First Amendment; "hate speech" (which does not, by the way, encompass the phrase "I hate you," but does include derogatory and epithetic words, even out of context), would be punishable. Government censorship of government-defined pornography would prevail. But don't worry — prosecution will be under civil, not criminal law, and that'll make it okay. An Orwellian feminocracy, a spike-heeled boot stamping a human face forever.

And speaking of epithets, "white male," once a purely descriptive term, is now a phrase as loaded as "Communist" used to be, at least at this conference. The Right charged everything they disagreed with as being "P.C.," but the Left was sure to come back with that phrase "white

male." It was like two six year-olds engaged in a "your mother" contest.

By Sunday, it was apparent that the P.C. Frame-Up "Debate" had clarified nothing and exacerbated much. Wald recapped the conference at the Plenary Session, reiterating his original claim, with no evidence of irony, that the whole P.C. thing was just a paper tiger. Those who made it through the whole conference seemed even more at odds with one another than before. One left-leaning critic, after speaking out against the actions of a now-defunct campus anti-racism group, was told by an organizer that he evinced "traces of racism" that were in need of critical examination. A young white man with considered questions about affirmative action, who said he was "here to learn and not to be screamed at," was indeed screamed at by a black woman about the endemic oppression of blacks by society. A Hispanic man was booed when he said he'd rather be appreciated for his hard work than his ethnicity. And so it went.

I felt like I was in kindergarten again, my teacher pushing me to the front of the line, saying "Let the little girl go first." Though "sensitive males" are loath to admit it, it seems that paternalistic chivalry is not dead.

As the conference ended, people filed out of the auditorium. Many of them looked as drained as I felt. I wondered how many others were in my position: respectful of the educational offerings of a multitude of cultures but repulsed by speech codes and preferential admissions. I wondered how many others, like me, had once thought of themselves as on the Left, but now were sympathetic to the conservatives — if only because, in this one instance, conservatives were the civil libertarian underdogs. I wondered how many were leaving the conference more alienated than before. □

Diagnosis

America's Experiment in Sylvan Socialism

by John Baden

More than two decades before the Soviets took over Russia, they took over the forests of America. John Baden shows how socialist management in America has fared no better than in Russia.

Nearly twenty years ago I debated Milton Friedman at the University of Montana on the issue of the ownership and management of the public forestlands. I argued that the externalities inherent to commercial forestry are so large and so pervasive that continued public management by the federal government, though seriously flawed, was preferable to private ownership.

I took this position reluctantly. I recognized the extent to which political opportunism skewed public management during the 1960s; the terracing of fragile timberlands in the Bitterroot National Forest of southwest Montana and the amazingly duplicitous efforts of the Helena National Forest's supervisor to develop the submarginal, high elevation timber lands of what is now the Lincoln Scapegoat Wilderness were impossible to ignore. Nevertheless, I held to my position.

But over the years, as I worked with Rick Stroup, Garrett Hardin and others, the evidence mounted: the failures of political management have become clearer to me, as has the potential of the non-profit and for-profit sectors to deal with negative externalities and provide public goods. The arguments for government ownership and political management vanish. Milton was right all along.

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) has custody over 192 million acres of na-

tional forest and rangeland — an area nearly equal to Texas and Louisiana combined. Like its younger cousin, the National Park Service, the Forest Service is commonly viewed as a stellar example of Progressive Era commitment and creativity in the area of environmental management. But the common view is an illusion:

- The Forest Service clearly and recurrently violates the spirit of its stewardship responsibilities.
- Its self-interest in budget expansion conflicts both with environmental protection and economic efficiency.
- It significantly injures private forestry.
- Further, the infamous below-cost timber sales of the Forest Service are becoming the forestry equivalent of the *Valdez* oil spill.

Far from being aberrations, these results are the predictable consequences of the institutional arrangements of the USFS. Not surprisingly, the Forest Service is similar to socialist enterprises elsewhere. When decisions are

made by bureaucratic entrepreneurs, and budgets made with a political calculus, we should not be surprised at the failure of most reasonable tests of efficiency, equity and environmental quality.

A Very Strange Business

Imagine a corporation with marketable assets of over \$50 billion, placing it in the top five of the Forbes 500 measured by assets. Its annual receipts are over \$1.5 billion, placing in the top fifty of the Forbes 500 measured by income. But for the past two decades it has lost several hundred million per year, something that neither the board of directors nor managers seem inclined to change. A very *strange* business...

Originally, the nationalized forests were managed by the Department of Interior. But that department's continued monetary losses prompted Gifford Pinchot, an official of the Department of Agriculture, to convince Congress to transfer the forests

to his agency.

Pinchot promised Congress that he would operate the forests at a profit. But despite the vast wealth represented by the forests, neither Pinchot nor his successors have ever kept that promise.

The reason is simple. The managers of the National Forests have overlooked the first principle of silviculture:

Trees like to grow, where it's wet, warm and low.

Unhappily for the Forest Service, many of the National Forests are located where it's dry, cold or high. Only a few of the National Forests — those in

When decisions are made by bureaucratic entrepreneurs, and budgets made with a political calculus, we should not be surprised at the failure of most reasonable tests of efficiency, equity and environmental quality.

the Pacific Northwest and deep South — are located where it is ideal for fiber production.

Consequently, Forest Service timber sales in Alaska, the Rocky Mountains, the Appalachian and Ozark Mountains, the Midwest, and New England generally sell for far less than the cost of simply arranging the sales. According to forest economist Randal O'Toole, money-losing timber sales cost U.S. taxpayers nearly \$400 million in 1990.

America's 156 national forests are managed by 120 forest supervisors. According to the government, 76 of these 120 forest supervisors reported that their units lost money in 1987. Yet, revenues from areas that produce highly valued timber, the Pacific Northwest and the Southeast, covered the losses reported for the system as a whole.

The U.S. Forest Service policies of below-cost timber sales generally lead to substantial environmental destruction, economic waste and the erosion of civic virtue as bureaucrats, politi-

cians and special interests defend continued support for money-losing and environmentally destructive practices. While managing timber for commercial harvest is economically feasible in the coastal Northwest and Southeast regions of America, massive subsidies are required throughout the central and southern Rockies. The 71 forests which, by Forest Service calculations, lost money in 1987 are located in regions outside the productive timber belts. These forests are environmentally fragile; for example, there is a high potential damage from sheet erosion.

The obvious solution is for the U.S. Forest Service to invest more in managing the productive forests of Oregon, Washington and the Southeast, while reducing expenditure in the Rockies. Alternatively, the Forest Service could abandon its socialist experiment by applying appropriate environmental safeguards and then transferring the productive commercial forests to the private sector.

The World's Largest Socialized Road-Building Company

Although the Forest Service presents itself to the public as the benevolent manager of the public's forests, it is more accurate to see it as the world's largest socialized road building company. Subsidizing the building of roads into remote areas is the most important way that the Forest Service subsidizes the harvest of timber otherwise unprofitable to log because of location (i.e., on steep slopes) or because of marginal commercial value.

The total mileage of roads built by the Forest Service is more than eight times the total mileage of the U.S. Interstate System. Almost 342,000 miles of roads have been constructed in the national forests and there are plans to nearly double this mileage.

Over the next 50 years, the Forest Services plans to construct 262,000 miles of new roads and to rebuild 319,000 miles of existing roads. The total mileage would go to the moon and back and then circle the earth four times.

Most of the logging that this massive program is designed to expedite is uneconomical and is dependent upon substantial subsidies from the federal government. To justify logging low-yield forests, the USFS lowers its stan-

dards: it classifies land as "commercial forest" if it produces 20 or more cubic feet of wood fiber per acre per year, while the standard for private firms is 3 to 5 times that amount. As a consequence of the incentives this low standard provides, the Forest Service consistently under-invests in its most productive sites and over-invests in money-losing, often environmentally fragile areas.

This is the predictable consequence of good management being hostage to political calculations. Decisions made in the political arena use political rather than ecological or economic criteria. As a result of these decisions, competing interests have created a budgetary "commons" with all the destructive competition that this entails.* The results include high environmental, ecological and economic costs and skewed private sector investment decisions in productive timber lands. Poor management of our public forests also places greater stress upon our ancient forests and upon rainforests throughout the world.

While building roads may seem to be a productive and harmless activity, the environmental consequences in mountainous forests are often far from benign. To build roads in mountainous terrain, it is necessary to strip the road site of its trees and then remove vast quantities of earth in order to make cuts, fills, and switchbacks, and to install pipes and culverts. Disturbing soil, sand, and rock destroys the network of vegetation that held it in place, making the area prone to erosion. Massive erosion and siltation from Forest Service roads adversely affect trout and salmon fisheries, farmers' and ranchers' irrigation systems, and the general quality of water. Road building entails clear tradeoffs between economy and erosion control. Efforts to reduce erosion are often expensive. Hence, the Forest Service managers are squeezed between economic costs and environmental demands. Private firms build roads to lower standards but also build far fewer miles of road — especially if they have to pay the full cost.

* See Garrett Hardin and John Baden, eds., *Managing the Commons*, W. H. Freeman and Company, 1977.

In the northern Rockies, some of America's finest trout and salmon rivers have been severely damaged by more than ten feet of siltation (mud) caused by Forest Service road building and logging. And, although some of Idaho's waters are finally recovering from road building and logging activities of the 1950s, the Forest Service is planning new developments on fragile soils that are destined to repeat the injury.

As the timber at lower elevations and in easily accessible valleys is harvested, the Forest Service builds its roads farther into the backcountry, which means at higher altitudes and on steeper slopes. As a general rule, the steeper the slope, the greater the danger of land slides, slumps, sloughs, and earth flows from logging and road building activities.

This increased road access to the backcountry effectively displaces many wildlife species. Although the Forest Service claims to close roads except when used for management or logging, they do so by placing a green steel gate across the road. Often this is a symbolic action offering a challenge to four-wheel drive enthusiasts and provides no significant impediment to

The Forest Service sells timber in Alaska, the Rocky Mountains, the Appalachian and Ozark Mountains, the Midwest, and New England for far less than the cost of simply arranging the sales.

motorcycles, snowmobiles, and all-terrain vehicles. Thus, areas of backcountry solitude originally intended for hikers, photographers, and hunters are converted into recreational areas for motor vehicles. The wildlife dependent upon solitude is effectively pushed from these areas.

The roads and logging activities have also displaced trails. For example, in the 1940s, the U.S. National Forest had 144,000 miles of trails. By 1984, there were only 98,500 miles of trails.

During that same period, the number of backpackers and other recreationists increased tenfold. Not coincidentally, backpackers contribute little to Forest Service budgets.

Bureaucratic Coffers

Unlike other federal agencies, the Forest Service is not entirely dependent upon Congressional appropriations for its budget. One-fourth of its budget comes from user fees, primarily from timber sales.

The Knutson-Vandenberg Act, passed in 1930, allows forest managers funds for reforestation. Subsequent amendments authorize managers to spend timber receipts on wildlife, recreation, watershed, and other forest "improvements." As a result, every branch of the agency depends on timber sales for a share of its budget.

What is unique about this arrangement is that while forest managers are allowed to spend a portion of revenues as they please, they are *not* accountable for the expenses used to obtain that revenue. The timber sales themselves are still funded through Congressional appropriations to the tune of about half a billion dollars per year.

When the Knutson-Vandenberg Act was passed the cost to taxpayers of arranging national forest timber sales averaged 50¢ per thousand board feet. At that time the Forest Service wrote rules requiring managers to return at least that amount to the U.S. Treasury.

Since then, inflation has driven the cost of timber sales up to \$50 per thousand board feet. But managers are still required to return only 50¢ per thousand to the Treasury. In certain circumstances, they don't even have to return that much.

The pseudo-profits from Knutson-Vandenberg — the K-V fund — added well over \$250 million to the Forest Service budget in 1991. But it is only the largest of four similar funds created over a period of 60 years. The first, known as the brush disposal fund, was created in 1916 and is expected to contribute over \$65 million to the Forest Service's 1991 budget, mostly for prescribed burning.

Under a law passed in 1964, managers can also charge timber purchasers for road maintenance. This fund is expected to add over \$30 million to the

1991 Forest Service budget. Finally, under a 1976 law, the Forest Service can keep receipts from the sale of dead and dying timber in a salvage sale fund. This revolving fund started with

Over the next 50 years, the Forest Service plans to construct 262,000 miles of new roads and to rebuild 319,000 miles of existing roads. The total mileage would go to the moon and back and then circle the earth four times.

\$6 million but now adds well over \$100 million to the annual national forest budget.

Together, these four funds contribute nearly half a billion dollars to the national forests' \$2 billion budget.

Candid remarks from forest managers reveal that they regard timber sales as a fund-raising tool. "Any money that we don't keep in the K-V fund is lost," says an Oregon timber sale official. "It goes to the U.S. Treasury." (Imagine a CEO admitting that he regards dividends paid to shareholders as "losses.")

"If we don't spend the money," says an Idaho manager, "Congress is likely to waste it on B-2 bombers." A manager on the Caribou Forest is more specific: "If we return money to the Treasury, we are forgoing opportunities to do work that Congress will probably not fund."

Use of timber sales funds is highly discretionary and is subject to little Congressional oversight. While most of the funds are spent on timber-related activities, about 9 percent are spent on wildlife and smaller percentages on recreation, watershed, and range. Thus, bureaucrats involved with aspect of every national forest management stand to gain from timber sales.

Indeed, as the system is set up, *every* level of the Forest Service bureaucracy benefits from timber sales, thereby providing powerful incentives not just to sell timber, but to *lose money* selling timber. While most national forests

return some funds to the Treasury, after deducting K-V and similar funds and payments to counties in lieu of property taxes, total 1990 timber returns were only \$372 million. This is \$177 million less than the \$549 million that the Forest Service spent out of tax dollars on timber sales and timber management.

Forest managers who want a large budget can essentially appropriate more money to their unit by selling timber: their agency keeps a share of the receipts, while Congress pays the cost of arranging sales and building roads.

What does the Forest Service do with all of the money it keeps in the K-V fund? Here are a few items:

- The Sequoia National Forest typically spends nearly \$2,000 per acre on planting trees and other reforestation activities. This is over ten times the amount that private landowners spend for similar activity. Given the low inherent productivity of Sequoia Forest land, it is particularly extravagant.

- National forests in the Rocky Mountains hire cowboys to keep sheep and cows (which are themselves subsidized by taxpayers) out of clearcuts so they won't trample seedlings.

- The Helena National Forest settled a timber sale appeal brought by environmentalists by promising to spend over \$70,000 of the receipts from the timber sale on wildlife and watershed mitigation measures.

- The Caribou National Forest spent \$10,000 to hire a "recreation interpreter," no doubt to explain to recreationists why their forests were clear-cut at a monetary loss.

- The Hoosier National Forest planned to spend over \$150,000 building a 10-acre fishing pond.

- The Gallatin National Forest uses K-V funds to close the logging roads so that grizzly bear and other wildlife will remain undisturbed by motor vehicles.

If the bulk of Forest Service expen-

ditures served a great national economic interest, this activity might be defensible. But when the economic costs of securing the timber far exceeds any commercial value of the timber, there is no sensible public purpose served. In many cases, roads funded at taxpayer expense allowed access to timber that was too sparse, too marginal, or too slow-growing to justify the high price of the roads and other development costs. In essence, taxpayers are subsidizing environmentally destructive behavior that no private timber company or private landowner could afford.

The Politics of the Forest Service

The political logic of below-cost timber sales is straightforward. National Forests provide jobs and income to communities in all but ten states. To enhance its budget, the Forest Service provides a timber program in virtually every national forest, regardless of efficiency considerations. Consequently, the vast majority of members of the Senate and House of Representatives find it in their interest to vote for expanding Forest Service road building, logging and timber management.

So communities have become dependent upon subsidized logging. The politician benefits, the constituent who has a job benefits, the timber company that is subsidized benefits. The taxpayer ends up subsidizing the reduction in quality of an environment he increasingly values. Further, these subsidies reduce incentives for private investments in good timber growing sites and they help create an environment hostile to the forest products industry.

Politicians use "community stability" to justify subsidies. Whether the communities involved actually benefit is moot. In many parts of the West, recreation contributes more to the local economy than timber sales, and clearcuts contribute little to environmental recreational amenities.

In the Gallatin National Forest, for example, recreation (which involves a significant area of backcountry) provides more than 16 jobs for every job produced by the timber industry. Yet the Forest Service plans a massive road-building project to save seven timber-related jobs. Little attention is

given to the impact upon 1,171 workers in the recreation industry whose jobs are partially dependent upon a relatively pristine environment.*

The slight attention given to the recreation industry is also a predictable consequence of the institutional arrangements and incentives faced by the Forest Service. Forest Service managers are rewarded for selling timber, even when the timber they sell loses money. Their discretionary budget is largely dependent upon volume of timber sold, not the profitability of the sale. Forest managers who want a large budget can essentially appropriate more money to their unit by selling timber: their agency keeps a share of the receipts, while Congress pays the cost of arranging sales and building roads. From the perspective of the district ranger, sales ap-

The managers of the National Forests have overlooked the first principle of silviculture: Trees like to grow, where it's wet, warm and low. Unhappily for the Forest Service, many of the National Forests are located where it's dry, cold or high.

pear to generate profits, not losses, regardless of the true economics of the sale.

On the other hand, most recreational activities produce no budgetary reward for managers because Congress permits fee collection only for developed campgrounds. Also, Congress is less generous in funding recreation activities than in funding timber-related ones. The result is that even if managers are more interested in recreation than in timber, the only way to fund many of their recreation programs is by selling timber.

Subverting Private Forestry

Below-cost sales, especially those in the northern Rockies and Alaska, influ-

* Randal O'Toole, *Reforming the Forest Service*, Island Press, 1988, p. 61.

ence people's perception of the entire forestry products industry. They have a negative political impact upon the political environment within which the industry operates. In the same way that the Exxon Valdez spill hurt nearly all domestic oil producers, below-cost timber sales in areas such as the Greater Yellowstone portray the industry as environmentally insensitive and dependent upon government largesse. Over the long run, the timber industry has a stake in eliminating below-cost sales.

Inciting public indignation and generating funds, environmental groups portray the timber industry as a wanton destroyer of wilderness and wildlife. However, this characterization should be understood in its institutional context. Unlike the U.S. Forest Service, private firms cannot force taxpayers to subsidize their operations. Those that lose money on sales go bankrupt. However, the U.S. Forest Service has no such constraint. Like a firm in a communist nation, a national forest cannot go bankrupt. Under existing institutions, political payoffs trump ecology, equity and efficiency combined. Institutional reform is in order.

Private companies manage their land for marketable products. They do not build extensive road systems into poor quality timber sites or systematically lose money on timber sales as the National Forest Service does. If a private company owns marginal timber land that is *de facto* wilderness, it is normally in their interest to leave it alone, to transfer it to a conservation group, or to manage it for its most highly valued use, for wildlife habitat or recreation from which they can capture benefits.

However, if they own a high quality timber site, it will be logged and managed in such a way as to maximize discounted returns. Private timber companies do not act primarily to placate Congress. They are more interested in generating profits via market exchange. Self interest leads private timber companies to behave in a more economically responsible manner than does the Forest Service. This generally results in far less environmental damage, for they rarely remove timber that will not pay its way out of the woods. □

Exposé

No Accounting for Waste

by Randal O'Toole

In 1984, when Congressional hearings were held on money-losing timber sales, the agency told Congress that it could not tell whether its sales lost money because its accounting system wasn't good enough. Congress responded by giving the Forest Service \$400,000 to develop an accounting system, which is sort of like giving a fox access to the chicken coop to find out who is stealing the chickens.

In 1987, the Forest Service came out with its accounting system. They called it "Timber Sale Program Information Reporting System" or TSPIRS. This system enables the Forest Service to justify below-cost timber sales by counting payments by timber purchasers as receipts even though most of those receipts are not retained by the U.S. Treasury.

Many of the costs, whether paid out of the Treasury or timber receipts, are under-reported. Some costs are ignored altogether. Others, such as road construction, are amortized using a bizarre formula that spreads the costs out over hundreds of years — in some cases, over 2,000 years or more.

Of course, there is nothing wrong with amortizing road costs over several years, since roads are likely to be used for some time. But no road will last even 100, much less 2,000, years, without major maintenance and reconstruction costs. And road maintenance (which costs the Treasury \$96 million per year) is left out of the equation altogether.

Embarrassed by the reports of 2,000-year amortization periods, the Forest Service is changing its formula

for amortizing roads. But the new formula isn't much of an improvement. It divides road construction costs into four categories: subsurface, surface, culverts, and bridges. The surface will be amortized for 10 years, the culverts for 30, and the bridges for 50. The subsurface costs, which just happen to be two-thirds of all road construction expenses, are "added to the capitalized value of the forest" — that is, not counted at all. Not one cent of the \$4.5 billion of taxpayer money spent on

Top agency officials clearly emphasize timber targets because of their relationship to funding. As the Chief of the Forest Service says, "the Forest Service is energized by its budget." Congress gives the agency money and expects it to bring home the pork.

subsurface work would be counted under the TSPIRS system.

Most new road construction shouldn't even be considered to be capital improvements. To do so, they must add to the revenue-generating ability of the forest. But timber sales lose money, and building new roads doesn't make them profitable. And there is already a surplus of roads for recreation. Treating new road construction as a capital expense makes as much sense as would my filling in my

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The Forest Service will continue to amortize reforestation and other costs over hundreds to thousands of years. The net effect of changing the road amortization formula is to actually reduce the total claimed costs of the annual timber program.

Despite these subterfuges, TSPIRS still shows that a majority — about 65 out of 120 — of national forests lose money. Virtually all observers agree that about 20 forests operate at a profit, leaving just 35 in dispute. Yet the Forest Service has promised to take action reducing timber sales in only 22 or 23 forests — those that lose the most money. And under the agency's proposal, these forests will reduce their planned timber sales, but salvage and firewood sales will be exempt. Not surprisingly, most of the 22 forests sell timber mainly in salvage and firewood sales.

The Continuing Commitment to Pork

Although top agency officials appear committed to the timber program, those on the bottom are not so sure.

To maintain funding, the agency places a huge emphasis on Soviet-style targets, the most important of which is the timber target, or the "allowable sale quantity." This "ASQ" is supposed to be a maximum level that the forest can sustain, but Congress and the Washington, D.C. office of the Forest Service increasingly see it as the minimum level that forest managers will be allowed to cut.

In 1988, the supervisors of the Pacific Coast national forests sent the Chief of the Forest Service a video tape saying that they felt current timber targets were incompatible with other environmental values. Unless the targets were reduced, said one, "I can't be the steward of the public lands that you depend on me to be."

Inspired by the video, the supervisors of the Rocky Mountain national forests sent a letter to the Chief echoing this problem. The memo noted that "our timber program has

been 35 percent of the National Forest System budget for the last 20 years while recreation, fish and wildlife, and soil and water have been 2 to 3 percent." Partly as a result of this imbalance, the supervisors said, "the allowable sale quantity [ASQ] issue will continue to be a problem for us and some supervisors feel our ASQs are unrealistic even with full funding."

The USFS amortizes the costs of its road construction using a bizarre formula that spreads the costs out over hundreds of years — in some cases, over 2,000 years or more.

In response to these communications, the Chief created a "New Perspectives" program that was supposed to give local people more say in how their forests were managed. But it is now apparent that New Perspectives was really nothing more than a way to identify and dispose of dissenters. In the past few months, one regional forester and several forest supervisors have been forced to retire or transfer because they failed to meet their ASQs.

Meanwhile, the supervisor of the Lewis & Clark Forest, a Montana forest whose timber program cost taxpayers \$1.25 million in 1990, was given a pay raise and a cash bonus for meeting his timber target. His superior was quoted as saying "I just wish I had twelve other supervisors like him," an obvious reference to the fact that the other supervisors in the region failed to meet their targets.

Top agency officials clearly emphasize timber targets because of their relationship to funding. As the Chief of the Forest Service says, "the Forest Service is energized by its budget." Congress gives the agency money and expects it to bring home the pork. Local forest officials who won't bring it home will be replaced lest they threaten the entire agency's funding base.

America's Soviet-style bureaucracy rumbles along. □

Origins

Albert Jay Nock: Prophet of Libertarianism?

by Stephen Cox

*What matters is that, for life to be truly fruitful, life must be felt as a joy; and that where freedom is not, there can be no joy. — Albert Jay Nock*¹

Albert Jay Nock (1870–1945) was a writer, famous in the time of his flourishing — the 1920s and 1930s — who is still revered by a devoted following. “Writer” in this case is not just a generic term. Nock was a writer in the firmest, most intransigent sense of the word. He made himself known by the armies of words he commanded, while he kept himself, the general behind the words, as elusive as any other personality in twentieth-century American literature.

Nock wrote for the *American Magazine*, a “muckraking” journal. He wrote for the liberal journal *The Nation*. He edited the radical journal *The Freeman*. He wrote volumes of essays. He wrote a book about Jefferson, two books about Rabelais, a book about education, a book about political theory (*Our Enemy, The State*, 1935), a book about Henry George, the radical economist, and finally a book about himself (*Memoirs of a Superfluous Man*, 1943) which is famous for its richness and diversity of opinions and for its reluctance to expose the personal experience out of which those opinions grew. A lifelong advocate of individualism, Nock paradoxically insisted that the biographer should ignore the individual “subject’s private activities, his character, and his relations of whatever kind,” except insofar as they are directly relevant to the subject’s public role and profession.²

Among the details of his private life that Nock preferred to leave in the shade, and that remain in the shade even after the publication of an autobiography and two intellectual biographies,³ are his reasons for becoming an Episcopal priest, his reasons for leaving the ministry, his reasons for marrying, his reasons for leaving his wife,⁴ his relations with other members of his family, any romantic involvements he may have had after he left his wife, the nature and extent of some of his sources of income, and the purpose of much of his restless travelling in America and Europe. Apparently, no one knows why Nock travelled to Eastern Europe in 1911, or just what he meant when he said that he journeyed to various American cities doing “little job[s] . . . in regard to taxation,” or just what happened on his “frequent Washington visits,” or any details of his visit to “the German High Command” during the period before the U.S. entered World War I.⁵

Commenting on the great individ-

ualist’s remarkable skill at keeping the facts of his “private activities” out of the hands of biographers, Charles H. Hamilton, the editor of a new and substantial collection of Nock’s essays, observes that we don’t even know if Nock was once, as has been claimed, a minor-league baseball player.⁶ In a late “Autobiographical Sketch,” Nock blandly avouched that “like Prince von Bismarck in diplomacy, I have no secrets. There is nothing in my history that for precautionary reasons I should have any wish to cover up.”⁷ Notwithstanding this disingenuous assertion, the private Nock may never be adequately known.

Clearly, however, the most important question is the one that Nock himself would ask: What was this man’s significance in his major public role and profession, his career as a writer?

To many people, the obvious answer has seemed to be that Nock is significant as a writer of the libertarian tradition. During the 1930s, his outspoken advocacy of individualism ad-

vertised the fact that alternatives to the collectivist mentality were still available within the republic of American letters. He revived and intensified the distinction between state and society that had been important in the American revolutionary period but that had slipped the memory of many twentieth-century intellectuals. "Every assumption of State power," he said, "whether by gift or seizure, leaves society" — and therefore the individuals on whom society's life depends — "with so much less power; there is never, nor can be, any strengthening of State power without a corresponding and roughly equivalent depletion of social power."⁸

A lifelong advocate of individualism, Nock paradoxically insisted that the biographer should ignore the individual "subject's private activities, his character, and his relations of whatever kind."

Nock's frequent use of the term "libertarian" to denote a radical ideological position helped to popularize this sense of the word. His works, which were admired by conservative as well as classical-liberal opponents of the modern state, were an important medium through which American conservatism absorbed specifically libertarian ideas.⁹ In large part, Nock's writing survives because his readers see him as a libertarian and, indeed, as a major figure in the libertarian intellectual movement of the twentieth century. Hamilton's collection of Nock's essays — well-introduced, well-edited, and remarkably well-chosen to represent both the force and the variety of Nock's ideas — provides a welcome occasion to consider some of the things that "libertarianism" may mean, in its historical context and in its reference to such highly individual thinkers as Nock.

Dissecting Some Isms

To discuss this topic, I will need to try dividing several pairs of related

and intersecting "isms." I'll begin by making a basic distinction between philosophical libertarianism and psychological libertarianism. This sort of distinction has probably been made before, but if it has, it is worth remaking.

By philosophical libertarianism I mean a system of moral and political ideas grounded in a conscious belief in the right of all individuals to do as they please so long as they refrain from coercing any other individuals. The particular ideas associated with this belief may be wise or foolish. They may be influenced by values and attitudes as diverse as those of Henry David Thoreau, Ludwig von Mises, and Milton Friedman; they may even represent (as in the case of Ayn Rand, who roundly denied that she was a "libertarian") a political love that dares not speak its name.

Of course, every reader of this journal will find some reason to quarrel with the terms of my definition of libertarianism. It is intended to be suggestive, not scientific; and I reserve the right to revise it whenever I want. Its only purpose is to identify the kind of libertarianism that takes as a very high priority the systematic application of a far-reaching principle. The "movement" libertarianism of the current era is just that kind of libertarianism, the kind that easily provokes quarrels among its adherents about its own proper definition.

Psychological libertarianism, on the other hand, may never rise (or sink) to the level of philosophical dispute. System is not its first priority. Psychological libertarianism is an instinctual revulsion against the coercion of individuals. It may or may not be related to any definite or coherent political philosophy. When associated with political positions, it often appears, not as their basis, but as one of their attributes, and not necessarily as a logically appropriate attribute. People sometimes speak, in this way, of a "libertarian socialism."

The libertarian impulse may, perhaps, have lurked in human minds as long as there have been human minds. Probably some Hittites and Sumerians became furious at the oppression of local laws and customs and ended up wondering if anyone should be forced

to do anything that he or she didn't want to do. As Nock saw it, libertarianism transcends specific historical conditions. That is the assumption behind his declaration that Rabelais, the sixteenth-century satirist, "was one of the world's great libertarians." That is why Nock could say that he himself "could not possibly have got through without" Rabelais.¹⁰ The spirit of liberty in one era speaks freely to the spirit of liberty in another. Such is the nature and persistence of psychological libertarianism.

This idea allows me to notice another distinction between isms. There is a libertarianism of doctrine, and a libertarianism of inspiration. One may or may not agree with the teaching of Rabelais, Nock, or any other historical figure; one may or may not recover from their works any coherent libertarian doctrines, or believe that any such doctrines, once recovered, amount to philosophy; but one may nevertheless be inspired by their libertarian impulse. A libertarianism that is very poor in doctrine can be very rich in the spirit that calls its audience to thought and action; and the spirit can be found, as Nock found it, in many places and times.

But philosophical libertarianism is, in a fundamental sense, an historical phenomenon: there have been times when it existed and times when it did not. The libertarian attempt to construct a consistent ideological opposition to all economic and political coercion is a response to — the Marxists would say a rationalization of — the growth of a capitalist social order. It appeared only when there was some considerable evidence that society might be more orderly and productive if no central authority decreed its shape. This was once a counterintuitive idea, an idea that needed the support of clear practical evidence if it were ever to be taken seriously.

The evidence appeared at a particular place and time: the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in northwestern Europe and America, where a long series of unplanned and often unwelcome events had produced conditions favorable to liberty. Philosophers of the Enlightenment were enabled to construct systematic defenses of politi-

cal and economic freedom — of liberalism, in the classical meaning of that term — and their ideas, once institutionalized in European and especially in American society, promoted further expansions of liberty.

But this does not mean that “Thomas Jefferson was a libertarian” or that “the United States Constitution is a libertarian document,” in quite the sense that libertarian activists usually intend when they say these things. Libertarianism is only one branch of the great tree of liberalism planted by the Enlightenment. The branch grew slowly and unevenly; it is still growing — and, unlike most other organic growths, it reacts well to severe adversity. It often grows best when its parent tree is threatened with destruction. When the tree basks in the sunlight of power, the results are not uniformly inspiring.

Thomas Jefferson, the idol of Nock and many another libertarian, was capable of employing coercion in ways that would have knocked the breath out of Lyndon Johnson. In a peculiarly costly attempt to protect America from war, President Jefferson convinced Congress to embargo all shipping to or from foreign countries. Many other methods and institutions of the early Republic would wring the heart of a modern movement libertarian. But this is merely a sign that the liberal tradition varies with its responses to historical conditions and with the higher or lower priorities that individuals assign, at various times, to the various principles associated with it.

The doctrinal libertarianism of modern America descends, indeed, from only one of many lines of reasoning engendered by Enlightenment principles. From the Enlightenment belief in the natural rights of individuals one can easily derive the libertarian idea that government should always be jealously and severely limited. But from the utilitarian attitudes of the Enlightenment one can derive a very different idea — the idea that natural rights need to be protected by strong republican institutions, institutions active in promoting what the Constitution calls the “general welfare.”

These two lines of thought, which

seem so inconsistent to contemporary libertarians, might not seem inconsistent to people born a few generations before us. Their inconsistency might begin to seem remarkable only when the state’s interventions in pursuit of the general welfare became extensive enough to make limited government

A libertarianism that is very poor in doctrine can be very rich in the spirit that calls its audience to thought and action; and the spirit can be found, as Nock found it, in many places and times.

appear almost a thing of the past. At that point, intellectuals who valued the American tradition of liberty had urgent reasons for sharpening their theories about the relationship of the state to the individual, for inventing forms of libertarianism more radical than anything that could simply be appropriated from the founding fathers.

This happened in the 1930s and 1940s, the period to which today’s philosophical libertarianism can most confidently be dated. Two major subspecies of libertarianism arose and eventually intersected. One was the classical liberalism of such Continental émigrés as Ludwig von Mises and Friedrich Hayek. Theirs was a liberalism that derived its greatest persuasive power from utilitarian analysis of the economic effects of modern unlimited government. The other subspecies of libertarianism appeared in the individualist philosophies of such writers as Isabel Paterson, Ayn Rand, and Rose Wilder Lane, a systematic but often primarily moral individualism that articulated itself in reaction to the New Deal at home and bolshevism and fascism abroad.

One can follow these two streams of modern libertarianism down the intellectual canyons of the 1940s and 1950s, noting their effects on “conservatism” and “libertarianism” as we know them now in America, and marking the influence of that other crisis-period of the state’s expansion, the

1960s, on the different political identities of the people who call themselves “conservatives” and “libertarians.” But this is not the time to map every feature of the ideological landscape. I need to return to the libertarian who prompted my attempt to separate various kinds of libertarianism. What Albert Jay Nock contributed to the libertarian movement was a powerful *impulse* and *inspiration*, not a seminal *doctrine* or a systematic *philosophy*. His contribution was nonetheless distinguished.

The Progressive Libertarian

Nock had been writing for more than thirty years as an impassioned psychological libertarian when he praised Rose Wilder Lane’s *The Discovery of Freedom* and Isabel Paterson’s *The God of the Machine* (both published in 1943, along with Rand’s *The Fountainhead* and Nock’s own *Memoirs*) as “the only intelligible books on the philosophy of individualism that have been written in America this century.” He declared that “Rose and old Isabel [Nock was nearly 73, Paterson only 57] have shown the male world of this period how to think *fundamentally*. They make all of us male writers look like Confederate money.”¹¹

But why wasn’t it Nock who made a *fundamental* addition to libertarian ideas?

One reason was the peculiar pressures of the era in which he came to full political awareness. Intellectually, he was a product not of the New Deal era but of the preceding Progressive era. He began writing when the greatest threat to individualism seemed, to most intellectuals, to arise more from the unprecedented growth of corporate economic power than from any new growth of state restrictions on the economy.

When Nock started writing about politics, around 1910, he wrote as a modern liberal much concerned with the “obstinate inequalities” of industrial society.¹² He developed excellent working relationships with Progressive journalists and politicians; although he was apparently not prepared to go all the way with their projects for the redemption of society, he was enthusiastic about going part

of the way. His opposition to the state was therefore by no means simple and straightforward. He suggested that every boy and girl be drafted to serve in an agricultural army devoted to the fight against insects, droughts, and floods. He called for "the labouring

Thomas Jefferson, the idol of Nock and many another libertarian, was capable of employing coercion in ways that would have knocked the breath out of Lyndon Johnson.

class" to "revolt" and to "outgrow governments," but he wanted to replace "the old idea of government" with "the new idea of administration."¹³ As Michael Wreszin has observed, Nock was far from the only Progressive who nursed such illusions.¹⁴

Nock would gradually perfect a principled suspicion of reformism. He observed the way in which sincere pleas for reform, when coupled with "faith in political action," encourage the growth of a restrictive state and thus play into the hands of collectivists: "Every governmental measure of 'social reform' meant more laws, more boards and bureaux, more coercions, controls, supervisions, surveillances, more taxes, and less freedom for the individual."¹⁵ In this respect, the later Nock is clearly in the mainstream of modern libertarian thought.

But however suspicious of social reform movements he may have become, Nock never abandoned his Progressive-era suspicions of business. Late in life, he remarked, with fair accuracy, that "our business men do not want a government that will let business alone. They want a government that they can use."¹⁶ It is interesting that in this respect, too, his feelings coincide with those of many libertarians of later generations. Even in Rand's *Atlas Shrugged*, that apotheosis of commerce, corporate leaders are almost without exception portrayed as exploiters, in league with corrupt politicians. Some libertarians of the future would also coincide with Progressives

in their affection for popular initiatives as means of advancing liberty; ironically, they would use campaigns for tax limitations, legislative term limitations, and school vouchers as means of undoing social programs for which the Progressives campaigned. And libertarians who abandoned faith in such measures would often turn to anarchism, as did Nock, the erstwhile Progressive liberal, around 1914.

But none of this means that Nock, in his opposition to the state, ever arrived at consistent, or consistently libertarian, political principles. He retained his devotion to one of the most ingenious good-government theories of the Progressive era, the "single tax" idea of Henry George, author of *Progress and Poverty* (1879), who claimed to have shown "that *laissez faire* (in its full true meaning) opens the way to a realization of the noble dreams of socialism." The idea, as Nock explained it, is that the rental value of natural resources is property created by law, not by labor, and should therefore not be the subject of private "monopoly." Government should finance itself solely by local confiscation of this "economic rent."¹⁷

One might think that George's theory could seem formidable only in the toy republics of conceptually innocent, single-issue activists. Yet it was the kind of theory capable of exerting a strong appeal to sophisticated but essentially self-educated people. Nock, who lived as a boy in a small town in northern Michigan and studied at a small Episcopal college in which no modern subjects were taught, had to put contemporary issues together pretty much by himself. In such circumstances, the tendency is either to create one's own grand theory (as would the even more literally self-educated Isabel Paterson), or to attach oneself to a collection of little theories with large pretensions — like the theory of Henry George, of which Nock was intensely fond. Georgite phrases like "monopoly-interest in natural resources" (a synonym for the conventional system of private land ownership) came easily to his pen, and he liked to utter mysterious Georgite oracles, declaring, for instance, that "monopoly-values will as inevitably devour socialized industry

as they now devour what the liberals call capitalistic industry."¹⁸

Although Nock's indebtedness to the liberal tradition made him a fervent proponent of free trade, his indebtedness to his favorite Progressivism left him confused about the notion of property rights, the first principle of traditional liberalism. Georgite ideas are very prominent in Nock's salient work of libertarian theory, *Our Enemy, The State*, which suggests that "confiscation of economic rent" is essential to a free society. Nock believed that if all the value of land were confiscated except the value "accruing from the application of labour," everyone would have access to land, and "obviously the reason for the State's existence would disappear, and the State itself would disappear with it."¹⁹

For some reason, Nock was unable to see the inconsistency between his idea of confiscating economic rent (a project that would, as one may imagine, require a strong and continuously active government) and his other idea of maintaining a government "which should make no positive interventions of any kind upon the individual." At one point in his book on Henry George, he recognizes the strangeness of George's proposal to let "the monstrously evil" national state confiscate "economic rent" and administer it "for social purposes." But "this advocacy of a national, rather than a local, confiscation of rent . . . was not close enough" to collectivism "to be disturbing."²⁰

In his *Jefferson*, Nock depicts "economic causes" and "the economic exploitation of one class by another" as the engine of American history; and the "exploitation" is largely that of "speculation" and the "monopoly" of economic rents. He remarks elsewhere that "there is actually no such thing as a tariff-problem, any more than there is actually such a thing as a labour-problem; the only actual problem is the land-problem, and if that were solved, these two apparent problems would immediately disappear." Nock was capable of enumerating, among "various delegations of the taxing power, which have no vestige of support in natural right," both "tariffs" and "private land-ownership."²¹ This sort of thing

makes one wonder exactly what he had in mind when he paid tribute to "the magnificent tradition of economic freedom," or when he declared that "without economic freedom no other freedom is significant or lasting."²² Nock sounds like a modern doctrinal libertarian. . . . but just what does he mean by "economic freedom"?

In the last phase of his intellectual life, Nock added another theory to his stock, the notion of Ralph Adams Cram, an important architect, that the majority of people are not "psychically human"; evolution has left them mentally "neolithic." Nock claimed that this idea eased his mind and made him more tolerant. Why be disappointed by the human failings of people who are not quite people?²³ But the new addition to his collection of theories seems not to have jostled the others very far out of their niches. He still regarded himself as a proponent of human rights for everyone, despite the fact that his idea of the "human" had undergone a curious readjustment.

Nock's easy tolerance of his own contradictions becomes less surprising when one sees him as a psychological

Nock began writing when the greatest threat to individualism seemed, to most intellectuals, to arise from the unprecedented growth of corporate economic power.

rather than a philosophical libertarian. True, his libertarianism always expresses itself in ideas and arguments; he enjoys using the word "fundamental"; he insists on the importance of "theory" and complains about the tendency of Americans to do without it. But this does not imply that systematic argument and coherent philosophy stand higher among his priorities than does his impulse to revolt against conditions that he regards as purely, simply, and "obviously" repellent to individualism, and to do so without caring how ideologically ungainly his revolt may seem. It was doubtless his

disgust with his fellow-citizens' state-worship that made him wonder if they were not somehow lacking in humanity, but his philosophical skepticism on this score never stopped him from protesting the state's insults to their individual rights.

As it turned out, Nock's protests were capable of inspiring a good many people, in both the conservative and the libertarian camp, who agreed very halfheartedly with his specific doctrines. Nock resembles, in this way, his friend H. L. Mencken. Mencken called himself "an extreme libertarian," but few of his libertarian or conservative (or modern liberal) admirers could list the articles of his political creed, much less signify their agreement to them. Nock, like Mencken, offered not a coherent ideology but a gift of individual style, insight, and culture. He offered gifts more appropriate to the eye and heart than to the calculating brain; he offered the gift of joy in a special type of vision, a vision that endured and scorned the intellectual deformations of George and Cram and all the rest of his specific influences.

The Quality of Vision

In one of the essays in the new collection, some remarks on the American humorist Artemus Ward, Nock refers to the kind of vision that he himself possessed. Here he is concerned not so much with analyzing Ward as with evoking the spirit that responds to works like Ward's, and with identifying the possessors of that spirit. This "order" of people, he explains, are living among us

singly or nearly so, and more or less as aliens, in all classes of our society — an order which I have characterized by using the term *intelligence*. If I may substitute the German word *Intelligenz*, it will be seen at once that I have no idea of drawing any supercilious discrimination as between, say, the clever and the stupid, or the educated and the uneducated. *Intelligenz* is the power invariably, in Plato's phrase, to see things as they are. . . . Those who have this power are everywhere; everywhere they are not so much resisting as quietly eluding and disregarding all social pressure which tends to mechanize their processes of observation and thought.²⁴

This, as I take it, is both a precise

and an inspiring statement of a characteristic libertarian idea — the idea of the good person, the free individual distinguished not by membership in an economic class but by personal at-

Although Nock's indebtedness to the liberal tradition made him a fervent proponent of free trade, his indebtedness to his favorite Progressivism left him confused about the notion of property rights, the first principle of traditional liberalism.

tributes, not by wealth or power or even education but by the quality of clear perception from which all of a society's wealth or power or education must ultimately be derived.

Consistent with Nock's idea of the good person is his idea of good art. Art, for him, was inseparably associated with a directness and transparency of character and intention. That was why he was happy to think that he wrote good, plain, idiomatic American English, and why he declared that "when art becomes self-conscious it isn't art any longer."²⁵

One must concede that Nock often violates this rule. In his defects, as in his strengths, he is a true American. Every nation has its characteristic forms of literary affectation, and the affectation to which Americans take most easily is a false innocence, a pretense that complex issues are in fact childishly simple. Like Mark Twain, Henry Adams, and other very complex personalities, Nock is most gratefully self-conscious when he pretends to be struck by the simplicity of everything he is thinking about.

In his essay "Anarchist's Progress," for instance, Nock claims to have stumbled upon "a very odd fact. All the current popular assumptions about the origin of the State rest upon sheer guesswork; none of them upon actual investigation." No one, he has found to his surprise, has "taken the plain course of going back upon the record

as far as possible to ascertain how [the state] actually had been formed." Odd indeed — until one reflects that states were first formed before "records" existed, or until one reflects that even conscientious "investigation" of a problem like this may have to include a certain amount of "guesswork."

But Nock leaves himself in his affected puzzlement no longer than one

In the last phase of his intellectual life, Nock added another theory to his stock, the notion that the majority of people are not "psychically human"; evolution has left them mentally "neolithic." But he still regarded himself as a proponent of human rights for everyone, despite the fact that his idea of the "human" had undergone a curious readjustment.

paragraph. He soon "discover[s]" that, notwithstanding the absence of early records, "all the scholars of the Continent" (by which he means "Professor Franz Oppenheimer, of the University of Frankfurt") have now agreed on a "scientific" explanation of the origin of the state:

The State did not originate in any form of social agreement [so much, in one phrase, for the social-contract liberalism of the Enlightenment]. . . . The State originated in conquest and confiscation, as a device for maintaining the stratification of society permanently into two classes — an owning and exploiting class, relatively small, and a propertyless dependent class. . . . No State known to history originated in any other manner, or for any other purpose than to enable the continuous economic exploitation of one class by another.

But how, one might ask, does Nock, or Professor Oppenheimer himself, know any of this? No historical facts are marshalled, no counterarguments assessed; Nock, perplexed no longer, merely declares himself convinced: "This at once cleared up all the anoma-

lies which I had found so troublesome." ²⁶ Of Nock's argument for anarchism, one can say pretty much what Jefferson said about Plato's argument for the immortality of the soul: "were there no better arguments than his in proof of it, not a man in the world would believe it."²⁷

In *Our Enemy, The State*, Nock argues that the state, which is merely the agent of "continuous economic exploitation," is entirely different from "government," which provides justice and protection of rights. But don't bother to look around for governments; in Nock's view, no society that has passed the hunter-gatherer stage has a government; they are all attached to states. Still: What about those state officials who, from time to time, have appeared to be interested in "government" rather than simple exploitation? Perhaps the functions of "the state" and the functions of "government" are sometimes exercised by the same people, thus blurring Nock's distinction between the two political forms.

To preempt such plausible objections, Nock (who has been quoting such state officials as Madison, Jay, and Jefferson whenever he finds their support useful) simply declares, as if recalling a self-evident fact:

Taking the State wherever found, striking into its history at any point, one sees *no way* to differentiate the activities of its founders, administrators and beneficiaries from those of a professional-criminal class [emphasis added].²⁸

There is a certain charm in Nock's delight in discovering that complicated issues are astoundingly simple. It's fun — but it's not philosophy. Nockian theory will take one only a short way toward understanding the operations of the state.

But Nock very often achieves a truer and more charming simplicity, especially when he is not writing directly about political theory (a subject that, perhaps, anarchists would do better to avoid, if only for the sake of their style). In his letters, he engagingly concedes that he was astonished at the commercial success of *Memoirs of a Superfluous Man* — "astonished and a little uneasy, for I suspected there must be a screw loose in it somewhere."²⁹ Nock is far from the only author who has harbored

this suspicion about his own works, but Nock is the only author that I can recall expressing it honestly. He enjoys his ability to be honest in that way. He is equally capable of *seeing things as they are* in the curious moments when he anticipates his death:

The reflection that one is doing something, — anything, — for the last time gives one an odd sensation. The other day, for instance, when I was looking over a lot of shirts it struck me that in all probability I shall never have to buy another shirt.³⁰

In his discussions of other people's histories, Nock often delights one with the appearance of an unselfconscious vision. He does this, for example, in his portrait of General Kutusov, victor over Napoleon in the Russian campaign and himself a distinguished exemplar of unselfconscious understanding:

He attended to routine, watching everything, putting everything in its place, holding everything up to the mark; but beyond that he kept his mind as far off the actual course of the campaign as he could. He read French novels, corresponded with his lady-friends, meditated on all sorts of non-military matters; and, most effective and rewarding of all conceivable relaxations, he snored. Like nearly all old persons, he dropped off to sleep easily, almost at will; and being big and fat, he snored; and when a person is snoring he is about as inaccessible and unsuggestible and selfless as a living human being can become. . . . Possibly, under certain circumstances, snoring should be regarded as a fine art and respected accordingly.³¹

"Being big and fat, he snored": this is true simplicity.

But Nock's simplicity always has an undercurrent of earnestness, and sometimes it is in deadly earnest. His coldly impassioned essay on the lynching at Coatesville deserves to be better known:

On Sunday evening, August 13, 1911, at the hour when churches dismiss their congregations, a human being named Zack Walker was taken by violence out of the hospital at Coatesville, Pennsylvania, where he lay chained to an iron bedstead, in the custody of the law, suffering from a shot-wound, apparently self-inflicted.

The bedstead was broken in half, and the man, still chained to the lower half,

was dragged half a mile along the ground, thrown upon a pile of wood, drenched with oil, and burned alive.

Other human beings to the number of several hundred looked on in approval.

Zack Walker was a black man who had killed a white man, perhaps in self-defense. But Nock finds his murder a proof that towns like Coatesville shelter something even more repellent than race-hatred: social conditions in which civilization is impossible, which prevent people from seeing such acts as the lynching of Zack Walker as "wholly alien, unnatural, and frightful."³²

At this distance, it matters little if Nock's theories about anarchism or the single tax or the effects of social conditions in Coatesville, Pennsylvania, were accurate or not. The things that really matter are (to borrow Joseph Conrad's phrase) the "vibrating note of revolt" beneath Nock's level journalistic tone, and the passion that he thereby displayed for the type of civilization without which human life may seem nearly worthless. And what gives life to Nock's writing is, again, his ability to see something simply *as it is*.

Often this ability makes Nock an outsider even among his partisan friends. A person of strong pacifist inclinations, he nevertheless rebelled

What gives life to Nock's writing is his ability to see something simply as it is.

against the tepid rationalism and moralism of his fellow pacifists and urged them to see, for once, that many "common" people greet warfare as "the first glad sense of great definite purpose dawning into stagnant and unilluminated lives," as the opportunity to do something that might shed an "interpretative light" upon existences otherwise apparently without significance.³³ One wonders how many of Nock's pacifist friends welcomed this insight into psychological phenomena so alien to their own way of thinking.

Nock was probably correct in the impression, which grew on him with

age, that he could not be of much help to specific political causes. Partial responsibility for this, unfortunately, must be assigned to inconsistencies and futilities in his own ideas, and to his sometimes haughty aversion to people who might actually have been able to do something in politics.³⁴ But it wasn't all his fault. He rightly felt that he had been born at the wrong time, that he was an individualist in a cultural milieu that was veering further and further away from individualism, and that his real job was to keep up the spirits of the "remnant" of unknown people in every walk of life who were trying to preserve their individual ability to see things as they are.

Nock called it Isaiah's job. God, as Nock told the Biblical story, informed the prophet Isaiah that he should keep preaching despite the fact that

the official class and their intelligent-sia will turn up their noses at you, and the masses will not even listen. . . . [But] there is a Remnant there that you know nothing about. They are obscure, unorganized, inarticulate, each one rubbing along as best he can. They need to be encouraged and braced up, because when everything has gone completely to the dogs, they are the ones who will come back and build up a new society.

Nock said that Isaiah's job was the best one around, because the only thing such prophets need to do is to "keep forking out [their] very best," knowing it will be appreciated by those for whose sake it was produced. Charles Hamilton, Nock's perceptive editor, is correct in remarking that the sadness of Nock's later writing can be overemphasized.³⁵ Nock sees Isaiah's job as free and joyful and inspiring to both the prophet and his audience.

Nock did not prove to be a prophet in the most literal sense. He couldn't predict the future. Everything didn't have to go completely to the dogs before a large-scale revival of individualist thought could begin. The individualist libertarianism of the present time derived comparatively few of its formative ideas from Nock. Nevertheless, Nock was a prophet. He was a seer; he saw things, and he often saw them as, indeed, they are. He sketched, as clearly as any of the alienated and marginalized individu-

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alists of his time, something like the "class analysis" that has become instinctive with modern libertarians. He saw the world in terms of intellectual and, if you will, spiritual classes, which are of more importance for the way the world actually runs than

mere economic, gender, or racial classes. He saw the potential of the obscure, unorganized, inarticulate "remnant," and he prophesied to them, helping them to see themselves as significant and potentially powerful. That was a good job. □

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Hong Kong After Tiananmen

by Kin-ming Liu

The world's only surviving classical liberal polity is being given "back" to a tyranny. Can the polity — or the people — survive?

The bloody crackdown of the 1989 uprising in Peking by the Chinese Communist Party not only pushed mainland China over the edge of an abyss, but threatens to send Hong Kong reeling. What happened in Peking on June 4, 1989, emasculated the Joint Declaration signed by Britain and

the People's Republic of China on December 19, 1984, which promised to hand Hong Kong over to China in 1997. After the blood flowed in Tiananmen Square, all those beautiful slogans such as "a high degree of autonomy," "one country, two systems," and "Hong Kong ruled by Hong Kong people" seem nonsensical.

The Tiananmen Massacre hastened the exodus from Hong Kong, leaving it a city of panic and despair. The British Government, which had kowtowed to Peking during negotiations over Hong Kong, tried to restore confidence in post-Tiananmen Hong Kong by launching a four-prong package:

- 1) the British nationality program;
- 2) a bill of rights;
- 3) direct election in the Legislative Council; and
- 4) an airport project.

This rescue package provoked a swift and angry response from Hong Kong's future sovereign. Peking demanded the British Government grant it the power to veto measures prior to 1997 so that all pre-1997 measures would be consistent with Chinese poli-

cies. The British Government once again bowed to Peking without a fight.

With abandonment on one side and brutality on the other, Hong Kong is doomed.

Peking's Trump Card

In the early 1980s, Britain and the People's Republic of China started negotiations on the future of Hong Kong. According to the Joint Declaration of 1984, Hong Kong will become a Chinese Special Administration Region (SAR) in 1997, with the Basic Law serving as a mini-constitution for Hong Kong. Peking had firm control of the Basic Law Drafting Committee which was established on April 10, 1985. The first draft of the Basic Law was released in April 1988 and the final form was endorsed by the Chinese legislature in Peking in March 1990.

The Drafting Committee consisted of 59 members appointed by the People's Republic — only 23 of them from Hong Kong. Most, if not all, of the Hong Kong members were conser-

vative businessmen or professionals anxious to avoid offending Communist China. They might represent the elite establishment in Hong Kong, but definitely not the masses.

The people of Hong Kong vigorously supported the 1989 uprising in mainland China. Consequently, the Chinese Communist Party condemned Hong Kong as the base of "counter-revolutionary activities" and increased its control of the Drafting Committee. Peking controlled the Drafting Committee and thus the Basic Law was built to the specifications of the Communist Party. No one had really believed that the Basic Law could offer genuine, long-term constitutional protections for Hong Kong. Even so, the final form of the future mini-constitution gave Hong Kong people a big chill.

Peking had broken its promise of "one country, two systems" in a number of ways in the Basic Law:

- a) The power to declare a state of emergency in Hong Kong would rest

with Peking, not with the Chief Executive of the SAR. The presence of the Army and the power to declare martial law would no doubt guarantee the absolute control of post-1997 Hong Kong by Peking.

b) The Hong Kong government would enact laws to prohibit activities that subvert the central government. Since Peking can interpret freely what kind of activities are "subversive," it can outlaw virtually any activity in Hong Kong that it does not like.

c) Hong Kong political organizations are prohibited from having any links with foreign groups. Peking wanted to make sure that no "counter-revolutionary activities" would be or-

The people of Hong Kong vigorously supported the 1989 uprising in mainland China. Consequently, the Party condemned Hong Kong as the base of "counter-revolutionary activities."

ganized in Hong Kong.

d) The most crucial blow was that the final interpretation of the Basic Law would rest with the Chinese National People's Congress Standing Committee, not with the final court of appeal in Hong Kong. This is clearly a violation of the Joint Declaration, which stated that the final power of adjudication shall be vested in Hong Kong. No matter how nicely the Basic Law was put together, it would become totally irrelevant through Peking's interpretation.

All these elements in the Basic Law undermine the Joint Declaration's promises to keep Hong Kong "unchanged for 50 years," to exercise "one country, two systems," and to grant Hong Kong "a high degree of autonomy."

When absolute power lies in the hands of the Peking government, and not with the Hong Kong people, there is no guarantee whatsoever that Hong Kong will not share the fate of Shanghai, i.e., become another dull and uncolorful city, absorbed into the vast totalitarian system of mainland China.

Since the Joint Declaration was an international agreement and the Basic Law grossly violated it, the British Government could have invited the opinion of international jurists on the issue. But the British Government did not stand up and fight for one of its last colonies.

Even if the Basic Law were well conceived, there would not have been much confidence in Hong Kong. With the Basic Law in its current form, confidence in Hong Kong is practically nil.

The British Nationality Package

Emigration from Hong Kong has been rising ever since Britain decided to turn Hong Kong over to China. According to the Hong Kong Government Secretariat, the number of emigrants were 30,000 in 1987, 45,800 in 1988, 42,000 in 1989. The Tiananmen Massacre in June 1989 triggered a bigger wave of exodus from Hong Kong. In 1990, 62,000 people left. 1991 figures are not yet available, but the government projected a rate of more than 1,200 people per week.

In hopes of slowing emigration and restoring confidence in Hong Kong in the aftermath of the Tiananmen Massacre, the British Government introduced the British Nationality Package, granting the right of abode in Britain to 50,000 key Hong Kong people and their families (adding up to a rough total of 225,000 people). If these 50,000 people were given this right, the British Government thought they would stay in Hong Kong. British passports would be their insurance.

The main attraction of the British Nationality Package was that, unlike other countries' schemes that require emigrants to satisfy residence requirements, successful applicants to the British scheme would get nationality for themselves and their families without having to leave Hong Kong at all. Ironically, the rights it conferred to the select group of "key" people were held by all Hong Kong British passport holders until the British Government passed the British Nationality Act, by which the British government prevented a potential influx of Hong Kong residents. The British Nationality Package was asking Hong Kong people to apply for something that should have already

been theirs.

Most people in Hong Kong thought the number allowed was far too few to do much good. The authority, however, expected to receive a lot of applications. One million application forms were printed and 400,000 people were expected to apply. When the deadline for application came at the end of February 1991, only 65,674 people had applied, sending an embarrassing signal to Britain: few people wanted to settle in Britain.

The main reason, however, was intimidation from Peking, which had denounced the Package as a ploy aimed at perpetuating colonial rule beyond 1997 and as an unacceptable attempt to internationalize the Hong Kong issue. In addition, Peking stated it would not recognize the British Nationality conferred by the measure. Only Hong Kong Chinese who have settled abroad and have successfully applied to renounce their Chinese citizenship will be regarded as foreign nationals. Those who remain in Hong Kong after 1997 will be treated as Chinese nationals whether or not they hold foreign citizenship.

This did more than uproot the original intention of the British Nationality Package. It had a devastating impact on those Hong Kong people who had already secured or were in the process of securing passports from Australia, Canada, the United States, or other countries. They feared that, whatever the right of access to their adopted country overseas, they would still be denied permission to leave Hong Kong — just as mainland Chinese are presently compelled to seek clearance before travelling abroad. All of a sudden, foreign passports were no longer insurance.

Then Peking added another punch. Using its power in the Drafting Committee, Peking reformed the Basic Law to require that all senior Hong Kong government officials be Chinese nationals, with no right of abode elsewhere. This requirement went beyond the Joint Declaration which only stipulated that the Hong Kong chief executive and heads of major governmental departments be Chinese nationals. This was a serious blow to those senior civil servants who would like to stay in Hong Kong but also want to secure an

"exit route" should things go bad after 1997. Peking's position forces those Hong Kong people who have the ability to move to face the dilemma: to leave now or lose the right to leave. There is no middle way.

A Bill Of Rights

The British government tried another way to restore confidence in Hong Kong: it attempted to enact a bill of rights based on international human rights covenants.

According to the Joint Declaration, Hong Kong's current system will be kept unchanged for 50 years. The Declaration also states that the relevant provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights will also be maintained. By establishing a bill of rights, the British government sought to guarantee the bulk of those rights into the laws of Hong Kong, thereby insuring they would also remain the law of Hong Kong for the next 50 years.

Peking's reaction, as expected, was hostile. Peking said that the bill of rights could not have a superior status

No one had really believed that the Basic Law could offer genuine, long-term constitutional protections for Hong Kong. Even so, the final form of the future mini-constitution gave Hong Kong people a big chill.

to other laws since there was no such provision in the Basic Law. It also warned that Hong Kong laws that contravened the Basic Law would be repealed after 1997.

The bill of rights was passed in the Hong Kong Legislative Council and came into operation in June 1991. Peking announced that the measure would adversely affect the Basic Law and reserved the right to examine (after 1997) all the laws currently in force in Hong Kong, including the bill of rights, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Basic law.

The bill of rights may uphold

human rights in Hong Kong before 1997. But after that, there is no guarantee.

Direct Election In The Legislative Council

According to the Joint Declaration, when the British leave Hong Kong in 1997, they are to hand the power to the people of Hong Kong. As a result, after the signing of the Declaration, the British government planned the first direct elections to Hong Kong's law making body, the Legislative Council (Legco). The present Legco consists of 57 members — 31 government appointees, 14 from functional constituencies, and 12 from an electoral college. The latter two groups are indirectly elected.

The original plan of the British government was to launch direct elections in 1988, but it dropped this plan in the face of strong opposition from Peking. After considerable negotiation between liberal groups in Hong Kong and the government in Peking, a compromise was reached. Legco would have 10 seats for direct election in 1991.

The Tiananmen Massacre shocked even those conservatives in Hong Kong who usually side with Peking against any democratization attempt. They joined the broad movement to increase the pace of democratization. Omelco, a body comprising members from Legco and Hong Kong's policy making Executive Council (Exco), decided to push for a legislature of 60 seats: 20 chosen by voters, 20 chosen by functional constituencies, and 20 appointed by the government. It would start in 1991, and would gradually increase the percentage of directly elected members until 2003 in which all members would be selected by direct elections.

In the aftermath of the "turmoil" at Tiananmen, Peking voiced strong disapproval of the Omelco model and manipulated the Drafting Committee to form a model more to its liking, keeping directly elected members in the minority until 2003 when they would increase to 30 of 60 seats. In order to further tighten the control of Legco, the Basic Law stated that a maximum of 15% of the Legco members can hold foreign passports.

With this makeup Peking can be assured that the Hong Kong Legco would not pass any law contrary to

Peking's interests.

The New Airport Project

The final and most important step the British government took in their hope of restoring confidence in Hong

Since the Joint Declaration was an international agreement and the Basic Law grossly violated it, the British Government could have invited the opinion of international jurists on the issue. But the British Government did not stand up and fight for one of its last colonies.

Kong was to launch an ambitious multi-billion dollar airport and port project. The current Kai Tak Airport has long been overloaded; proposals to build a new airport have been discussed for years. The British government decided to construct a new international airport at Chek Lap Kok on Lantau Island. The project was named the "Rose Garden" project.

The new project was intended to stimulate Hong Kong's confidence in its economy. At first, it appeared more promising and straightforward than the other programs intended to restore confidence in Hong Kong. Peking gave words of approval at the beginning, but quickly changed its tune, announcing that it was infuriated that the British government had not "consulted" it concerning the airport project.

One factor in the conflict over the airport project was money. Peking was worried that the British government, by launching such an expensive project, would empty Hong Kong's financial reserves by 1997. Peking demanded that as much as US\$ 6.4 billion (HK\$ 50 billion) should be set aside from the reserves for the new SAR government. It seemed that this was one of the conditions the British government had to meet if it wanted to have Peking's blessing on the project.

In addition, a Hong Kong businessman, Gordon Wu, claimed that he

could build the new airport with only half the money the British Government said was needed. Wu's suggestion added weight to Peking's bargaining position with the British Government. Wu is one of the conservatives in Hong Kong who believe that they can continue their big business after 1997 if they do not offend Peking.

British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd visited Peking in early April 1991, hoping to receive Peking's approval of the project. Hurd was the most senior minister from an EC nation to visit China since the Tiananmen Massacre and he expected that Peking would show some appreciation for his helping end their diplomatic isolation. Nevertheless, Hurd left Peking without any blessing from the Communist Party on the airport project.

On July 4, 1991, the British Government and Peking reached an agreement to build the airport. The key phrase in the agreement was, "Any decision will give full weight to the Chinese Government's views." In other words, Peking would officially enjoy a form of veto power over all major issues in Hong Kong. Peking has already started its rule, well ahead of the offi-

cial turnover date. This is, once again, a clear violation of the Joint Declaration. As a matter of fact, the memorandum of understanding could be seen as the second Joint Declaration between Britain and Peking. The second Declaration declares that Peking becomes the *de facto* ruler of Hong Kong before 1997.

Before and Beyond 1997

Trapped between Chinese recalcitrance and British spinelessness, the people of Hong Kong face a difficult future. The threat from Peking, of course, is the ultimate source of hopelessness in Hong Kong. However, several developments suggest that the British colony may face turbulence before 1997 as a result of the cowardice and shortsightedness of Hong Kong residents.

Many Hong Kong people seem not to mind the British government's ongoing subservience to Peking. Of course, it would be good if Britain did stand up for them. But why should Britain do anything but seek a "glorious retreat" from Hong Kong? Better not to do anything to irritate or offend Peking. Doing whatever Peking demands is the best course of action to safeguard them-

selves. Most Hong Kong people naively believe that if they do not offend Peking, Peking will let them continue business as usual in the future. Peking may let them have enough room to make money though some of their freedom would be gone. In other words, as long as they can still make money, Hong Kong people would not mind too much if they cannot speak freely or have to change their current ways of living. However, this is only wishful thinking.

With such an attitude, it is no surprise that many Hong Kong people are neither fighting for their own rights nor urging the British government to stand up for them, and even stand on the side of Peking whenever any conflict arises between London and Peking.

How can Hong Kong people continue to have business as usual if they let Peking take away the present key elements of a capitalistic society? How can Hong Kong people have business as usual if Peking replaces Britain's *laissez-faire* policy with tremendous restrictions? By letting Peking erode the Joint Declaration and create a repressive Basic Law without voicing a strong protest, Hong Kong people hasten the death of their own society. □

Letters, continued from page 6

that it would "cost" him less not to have it than it would "cost" the owner to give it up.

Coase also evades subjectivity of cost and posits a world where property rights are constantly floating and re-assigned based on judicial decisions about "least cost avoiders" in the pursuit of the chimera of "zero transaction costs." I was surprised to see the cheering of such ideas in *Liberty*.

J. Mark Hardy
Ft. Still, Okla.

Sheltering the Libertarians

I always argue that libertarians don't need to be sheltered from the rantings of our opponents — or of our friends. We can decide for ourselves, and if new information turns us away from our principles, so be it. That's why I react so strongly to the letter from R. Michael Borland, M.D., Ph.D. ("That's Not Libertarian, That's Sick," January 1992).

Dr Borland concluded that articles in *Liberty* are "hurting libertarianism," and

that those trying to learn about the philosophy shouldn't see it. He even wants to make sure they never see it by telling you to "close up shop."

Perhaps Dr Borland needs to learn how to discriminate. I recommend some *Liberty* articles to friends, and refrain from recommending others. I applaud some articles, and seriously question others. But I never presupposed (as the good doctor does) that I could tell you "Your magazine should be a professional forum of ideas that will make the reader want to learn more about the philosophy." I don't remember being given such a vote, and I don't recall seeing the good doctor's name on your editorial board. Keep up the good work.

Steve Buckstein
Portland, Ore.

The Word Out

I wholly agree with the letter from Dr Borland. This letter puts you on notice: just one more snide remark about libertarians who, with all our faults, are

actually trying to get the word out to the voters, and *Liberty* will be off my bookshelf. Meanwhile, here is \$19.50 for a further, single year.

A. J. Davies
Ridgefield, Conn.

A Question of Balance

After I read the January letters from Mr Hickman and Dr Borland I went back and reread C. A. Arthur's article on the Libertarian Party's National Convention ("My Kind of Town," November 1991). I have come to the conclusion that there is some truth on all sides.

I know that *Liberty* magazine was originally conceived as a forum in which libertarians could hash out the finer points of our ideology. In short, it was intended to be written by libertarians for libertarians, not as an outreach periodical. However, I can now find *Liberty* in a local bookstore. This means that outsiders can now read it. While I don't wish to read puff pieces, I also

continued on page 67

The Ghost in the Little House Books

by William Holtz

Rose Wilder Lane was more than pioneer of libertarian thinking. She was the novelist who turned her mother's stories into the hugely successful *Little House* novels. And along the way, she infused them with libertarian thinking . . .

The "Little House" books by Laura Ingalls Wilder have earned the admiration of many readers, parents as well as children, for their moving portraits of pioneer life. And some thoughtful readers have paused to acknowledge the extraordinary artistry that lies beneath their apparently simple surface. It is, of course, the art that makes them moving, that engages us

in the life of the child Laura and her family. It is the art that carries us from the evocations of hearth and home, parental love and family security, in *Little House in the Big Woods*, through Laura's growth toward adolescence and the family's trials in their successive homes in the later books, to her hope-filled entry into mature married life in *These Happy Golden Years*. Embedded in her life are fundamental lessons in courage, honesty, loyalty, hard work, optimism, and self-reliance — all, we would like to say, essentially American values. And the books stand on an autobiographical presumption: the heroine carries the author's name, the Laura Ingalls Wilder whose life story was published only when she was in her sixties. She stands fixed in her readers' minds as a literary Grandma Moses, writing to the world out of the obscurity of her Ozark country home.

Only a few readers, and those only in recent years, have taken particular note that Laura Ingalls Wilder had a daughter, Rose Wilder Lane, whose ca-

reer as a journalist and free-lance writer carried her around the world in the years 1915–1968. And fewer still have thought to inquire into the connection between mother and daughter as authors. The story is a complex one, to be filtered out of Lane's diaries, journals, and letters, and out of several surviving manuscripts in her mother's hand; but its essence can be simply told. Rose Wilder Lane was the ghost-writer behind her mother's books. The books unfold the story of Laura Ingalls Wilder, but the art that makes them move us comes from Rose Wilder Lane.

Lane was an accomplished popular biographer before her mother's books ever appeared. She wrote early biographies for newspaper and magazine readers of Henry Ford, Jack London, Charlie Chaplin, and Herbert Hoover. She was also an accomplished ghost-writer, well respected for her ability to make the manuscripts of less gifted writers publishable. She began this kind of work early in her newspaper

days. Her skill also lay behind the best-selling *White Shadows on the South Seas* by Frederick O'Brien, and she later ghosted material for Lowell Thomas. In the 1920s she also rewrote several articles for women's magazines that appeared under her mother's name. So that when in the 1930s Laura Ingalls Wilder began a project of writing down her earliest memories of life in the woods of Wisconsin, it was entirely natural that she would turn her efforts over to her daughter for the revisions that would make a manuscript into a book. The result was *Little House in the Big Woods*, and what followed was more of the same.

We can trace Lane's hand in her mother's work in three veins. First, Lane's diaries record the weeks and months she spent over her mother's manuscripts during a decade filled with her own writing: "have to finish my mother's goddam juvenile," she wrote of *On the Banks of Plum Creek*, "which has me stopped flat." Second, a number of letters between mother and

daughter discuss in detail some of their disagreements over the final shape of the stories, in which Lane generally had her way: "Change the beginning of story if you want," her mother conceded in one instance. "Do anything you please with damn stuff if you will fix it up." And finally, we have manuscripts: an early composite story, "Pioneer Girl," out of which several of the later stories were quarried; and fair-copy manuscripts in Wilder's own hand of several of the later novels, which we can compare line-by-line with the published versions containing her daughter's final ones. Out of this comparison comes an appreciation of Lane's artful hand in converting her mother's rudi-

Few have thought to inquire into the connection between Laura Ingalls Wilder and her daughter, Rose Wilder Lane, as authors. The story can be simply told: Rose Wilder Lane was the ghost-writer behind her mother's books.

mentary manuscripts into compelling tales.

What Lane accomplished was nothing less than a complete rewriting of labored and under-developed narratives. Her mother would deliver her own best efforts, elementary in grammar and punctuation and uncertain in spelling, in full expectation that her daughter would work her own magic on it. The manuscripts are replete with parenthetical asides and relentlessly factual directives. "The shumac (I don't know how it is spelled and my dictionary don't tell) . . ." "Ellen [the cow] was bred the first of September, before the October blizzard. It takes 9 months. The calf would come the last of May or first of June. We didn't get this straightened out in Hard Winter." From the manuscripts Lane would retain the story-line and many of the incidents, but little of her mother's original language. She rearranged material freely to achieve foreshadowing and thematic clarity. She added much exposition, dialogue, and description, often inventing inci-

dents as well. She suppressed much that was tedious or irrelevant or inconsistent. Almost everything we admire about the Little House books — the deceptively simple style, the carefully nuanced flow of feeling, the muted drama of daily life — are Lane's contribution, fiction made from her mother's tangle of fact. Laura Ingalls Wilder remained a determined but hopelessly amateurish writer to the end.

The curious reader can get some sense of Lane's work on her mother's books simply by turning to the opening chapter of *Little Town on the Prairie*. In the manuscript, this is what Laura Ingalls Wilder wrote:

It was springtime and the Dakota prairie lay so warm and bright under the shining sun, it did not seem possible it ever was swept by the winds and snows of the long, hard winter just past.

Laura was glad to be on the homestead. She liked the spring wind and the sunshine. It seemed as though she could never get sunshine enough soaked into her bones.

However, in the published version, these words do not appear until the middle of the second chapter. Assessing the potential of the manuscript, Lane saw the need for a preliminary chapter to foreshadow Laura's introduction to town society and the world of work and to prepare the thematic conflict between home and society, country and town. Further needed was a retrospective summary of the previous book to justify Laura's delight in springtime on the homestead. Three carefully worked pages lead finally into a few lines from her mother's original version, and these too are subtly improved:

Now it was springtime. The Dakota prairie lay so warm and bright under the shining sun that it did not seem possible that it had ever been swept by the winds and snows of that hard winter. How wonderful it was to be on the claim again! Laura wanted nothing more than just being outdoors. She felt she could never get enough sunshine soaked into her bones.

The Ideas of the Ideal Ghost

It would be simple enough to multiply examples of this kind. What is more interesting, however, is to trace through the manuscripts the changes Lane made to incorporate into her mother's stories a version of her own

emerging political ideology. It is worth noting at this point that Rose Wilder Lane is an important link in the preservation and transmission of the persis-

Lane made her mother not merely a romantic but also an ideological heroine. Not that her mother minded: she shared her daughter's political sentiments, and she was content to have the work that bore her name shaped ideologically as well as artistically by her daughter's hand.

tent strain of radical individualism in American political culture that has most recently been called libertarian. Her *Discovery of Freedom* is an admired handbook of libertarian thought, and her novel *Free Land* dramatizes many of the principles she worked out more abstractly in *Discovery of Freedom*. Thus it is not surprising to find that she also took the opportunity to dramatize these same principles as she worked through her mother's manuscripts. Such themes began to emerge incidentally as early as *Little House on the Prairie*, as the resentful Ingalls family is moved off their homestead by an intruding government, as the later settlers on the Dakota prairie routinely flout absurd homesteading restrictions, and as Laura is schooled by her family in independence and self-sufficiency. "I hope you don't expect to depend on anybody else, Laura," her mother says at one crucial point in *The Long Winter*. "A body can't do that."

Other changes were more deliberately ideological. Always hewing close to biographical fact, Laura Ingalls Wilder had written truthfully that her blind sister Mary was eligible for a state subsidy for her education, and that it would be accepted:

Dakota Territory still had no school where the blind could be educated, but the territory would pay tuition, to the state of Iowa, for all Dakota blind children. And Mary could go to the Iowa College for the Blind at Vinton.

Tuition included board and room and books.

This passage was excised from the published version, which shifted the whole burden of Mary's college costs to the family, primarily to Laura. A similar change was made in the incident in which Laura accidentally finds a book intended for her Christmas present. Originally, in the "Pioneer Girl" manuscript, this book had been identified as the poems of Sir Walter Scott. But in *Little Town on the Prairie*, this book becomes a volume of Tennyson's poems, and Laura gets just a glimpse of some heroic lines that tantalize her as she waits for Christmas:

"Courage!" he said, and pointed to the land,

"This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon."

A disappointing Christmas comes, but she gets her book, and is able finally to read the whole of Tennyson's "The Lotos-Eaters," in which Ulysses' sailors loll in a drugged euphoria, lost to all sense of responsibility:

Even that poem was a disappointment, for in the land that seemed al-

ways to be afternoon the sailors turned out to be no good. They seemed to think they were entitled to live in that magic land and lie around complaining. When they thought about bestirring themselves, they only whined, "Why should we ever labor up the laboring wave?" Why, indeed! Laura thought indignantly. Wasn't that a sailor's job, to ever labor up the laboring wave? But no, they wanted dreamful ease. Laura slammed the book shut.

Finally, we might look at Lane's reworking of one of her mother's chapters that will let us appreciate both the craft that makes a scene vivid in the imagination and the political consciousness that moved Lane to seize a remarkable opportunity to move her young heroine to her own dawning political awareness. In *Little Town on the Prairie*, in a chapter called "Fourth of July," Laura Ingalls Wilder had written this:

Laura was wakened in the morning by the "Boom! Boom! Boom!" from the anvil at the blacksmith shop in town. It sounded like a great gun.

"Come girls!" Ma called. "Time to get

up. Don't you hear the cannon?"

Breakfast was soon over, because everyone was in a hurry to go to the celebration.

While Laura and Carrie washed the dishes and Mary made the beds, Ma packed the picnic basket.

"I wish" she said, "that I had some of our chickens from Plum Creek."

This brief introduction Lane converted to the following:

BOOM!

Laura was jerked out of sleep. The bedroom was dark. Carrie asked in a thin, scared whisper, "What was that?"

"Don't be scared," Laura answered. They listened. The window was hardly gray in the dark, but Laura could feel that the middle of the night was past. BOOM! The air seemed to shake.

"Great guns!" Pa exclaimed sleepily.

"Why? Why?" Grace demanded. "Pa, Ma, why?"

Carrie asked, "Who is it? What are they shooting?"

"What time is it?" Ma wanted to know.

Through the partition Pa answered, "It's Fourth of July, Carrie." The air shook again. BOOM!

It was not great guns. It was gunpow-



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der exploded under the blacksmith's anvil, in town. The noise was like the noise of battles that American's fought for independence. Fourth of July was the day when the first Americans declared that all men are born free and equal. BOOM!

"Come, girls, we might as well get up!" Ma called.

Pa sang, "Oh, say, can you see, by the dawn's early light?"

"Charles!" Ma protested, but she was laughing, because it really was too dark to see.

"It's nothing to be solemn about!" Pa jumped out of bed. "Hurray! We're Americans!" He sang,

Hurray! Hurray! We'll sing the jubilee!
Hurray! Hurray! The flag that sets men free!

Even the sun, as it rose shining into the clearest of skies, seemed to know this day was the glorious Fourth. At breakfast, Ma said, "This would be a perfect day for a Fourth of July picnic."

"Maybe the town'll be far enough along to have one, come next July," said Pa.

"We couldn't hardly have a picnic this year, anyway," Ma admitted. "It wouldn't seem like a picnic, without fried chicken."

Once the Ingalls family reaches the Fourth of July celebration, the manuscript furnishes just a hint that Lane seized upon to raise Laura to her moment of political illumination. Laura Ingalls Wilder wrote:

... the speakers were coming onto the platform.

They were all strangers to Laura. She listened carefully while one read the Declaration of Independence. He was a tall man with a grand manner, and his voice boomed out strongly as he read—

"When in the course of human events [it] becomes necessary for one people to

dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another"—

Then another speaker talked about "our glorious country" and how our ancestors fought, bled and died that we might be free as the Declaration said we should be. How they, a mere handful of ragged patriots, had beaten the whole British army and won our independence.

Lane took this passage in hand and created a scene in which Laura listens to a speaker give a short history of the nation's wars and recite the Declaration of Independence — most of which appears in the text. In a clearly sacred moment, Laura, with "a solemn, glorious feeling," listens to the words she knows already by heart. At the end, "No one cheered. It was more like a moment to say, 'Amen.' But no one quite knew what to do."

Then Pa began to sing. All at once everyone was singing.

My country, 'tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty,
Of thee I sing.
Long may our land be bright
With Freedom's holy light.
Protect us by Thy might,
Great God, our King!

The crowd was scattering away then, but Laura stood stock still. Suddenly she had a completely new thought. The Declaration and the song came together in her mind, and she thought: God is America's king.

She thought: Americans won't obey any king on earth. Americans are free. That means they have to obey their own consciences. No king bosses Pa; he has to boss himself. Why (she thought), when I am a little older, Pa and Ma will stop telling me what to do, and there isn't anyone else who has a right to give me orders. I will have to make my-

self be good.

Her whole mind seemed to be lighted up by that thought. This is what it means to be free. It means, you have to be good. "Our father's God, author of liberty —" The laws of Nature and of Nature's God endow you with a right to life and liberty. Then you have to keep the laws of God, for God's law is the only thing that gives you a right to be free.

The passage is wholly Lane's creation, and in it she has made her mother not merely a romantic but also an ideological heroine. Not that her mother minded: she shared her daughter's political sentiments, and she was content to have the work that bore her name shaped ideologically as well as artistically by her daughter's hand.

Neither woman ever acknowledged publicly the ghost that lurked in the Little House books. Lane even worked out elaborate strategies to preserve the appearance of her mother's autonomy, writing letters to her mother's agent and publisher that her mother re-copied and sent on in her own hand. In later years, after the death of Laura Ingalls Wilder, Lane carefully supported the idea that her mother had simply written the facts of her life; and she protested vigorously any suggestion that any impulse toward fictional artifice, even on her mother's part, had shaped the narratives. For Lane's ultimate commitment was to the moral truth that lay behind the stories; and to doubt the simple autonomy of the author, or to doubt the literal truth of the "autobiography" thus told, would be to cast doubt on the deeper truth that the life of Laura Ingalls Wilder was intended to unfold. □

Arthur, "Inside Pat Buchanan," *continued from page 28*

movement) may support Buchanan on the theory that he will drive libertarians from conservatism, rather in the way many Republicans supported Wallace in 1972 in hopes of driving Democrats to the Republican party. But I doubt it: such Machiavellian machinations are foreign to most libertarians' thinking.

In the end, I doubt that libertarians want to be led by a man who considers Nixon his mentor and Franco a hero,

who supported the War in Vietnam and supports the War on Drugs, who questions freedom of speech and waxes nostalgically about the draft.

In his interview with Jim Robbins (see pp. 17-20), Buchanan concluded his pitch for libertarian support with these words: "My friends, there are only two trains, and neither of them is going exactly to your destination, but mine is closer. So get aboard."

I am not really sure what the two

trains Buchanan talked about are. One is plainly his candidacy, but what is the other? George Bush? The Democrats? David Duke? I don't know for certain, but I doubt he was thinking about the Libertarian Party's nominee, Andre Marrou. I have never been crazy about Marrou, but if I have to hop onto a presidential train, his is the one I shall get aboard. It may not have the biggest locomotive, but at least it's on the right track. □

Critique

Economics vs. Bionomics?

by Ross Overbeek

Michael Rothschild's "Bionomics" has been widely hailed as a brilliant new approach to economics. Ross Overbeek explains why he doesn't share that opinion.

As a computer scientist, currently doing research in biology and genetics, but with a background in economics, the relation between coded information, genetics and economics has always fascinated me. So naturally I was intrigued by Michael Rothschild's "Beyond Austrian Economics" (*Liberty*, January 1992). Wanting to investigate his thinking further, I read his book *Bionomics*.

As I make it out, Rothschild's basic approach can be summarized as follows:

1. An economy is a complex, hierarchically organized system. As such, it is analogous to biological systems. The processes of natural selection, mutation, recombination, specialization, and competition that are observed in nature carry lessons that should be studied if one is to come to an accurate understanding of a functioning economy.

2. The focus of conventional economics on equilibrium is a mistake. Life is made up of constant change. Increases in learning and technological innovation lead to rapidly changing environments. Any understanding of economic life must focus on adaptation to change, not on equilibrium.

3. Spontaneous evolutionary processes in the marketplace have direct analogies to evolutionary processes:

Evolution	Market
organism	organization
genes	technological data
mutations	modest improvements
recombination	major inventions

These analogies can provide insights

into economic processes. Insights gained by observing biological communities should be explored when trying to understand how the market functions.

The similarity between Rothschild's theory and Austrian economics is striking. Indeed, it seems to me that virtually all of value in Rothschild's theory can be found in Austrian economics. And most of what remains of Rothschild is either misleading or irrelevant.

That is not to say that *Bionomics* is without value. It is certainly provocative (else I would not write this essay). And its analogy between biology and economics is at the very least a useful device for coming to understand and appreciate Austrian economics.

Rothschild vs Economics

Rothschild admits that he wrote *Bionomics* without ever studying Austrian economics. That someone overlooked Austrian economics in the intellectual environment of modern America is certainly comprehensible, but it is strange that anyone seeking to understand the intellectual underpinnings of capitalism would overlook such a body of work. One who argues

that a coherent defense of the market process is needed but has not been provided might reasonably be expected to search for such a defense. It is hard to believe that anyone could search very hard without running into the works of Mises, Hayek, and Rothbard.

Having encountered Austrian economics, thereby discovering that many of his conclusions concerning the body of economic literature were simply wrong, one might expect Rothschild to examine carefully the corpus of Austrian thinking. Rothschild, however, seems to be more intent on maintaining the significance of his own work than coming to grips with the rich tradition of Austrian economics. Rothschild quotes, and then criticizes, Hayek:

Interestingly, in his famous essay "The Use of Knowledge in Society," Friedrich Hayek describes the workings of price signals by relying on an "economy as machine" analogy.

It is more than a metaphor to describe the price system as a kind of machinery for registering change, or a system of telecommunications which enables individual producers to watch merely the movement of a few pointers, as an engineer might watch the hands of a few dials, in order to adjust their activi-

ties to changes of which they may never know more than is reflected in the price movement.

Two decades later, however, in "The Theory of Complex Phenomena," Hayek begins to shift his position when he describes organic and economic phenomena as examples of the kind of complex systems that do not operate by simple mechanical rules.

Rothschild criticizes Hayek for using a mechanistic metaphor. Had Hayek instead chosen neural systems that integrate a variety of complex

Rothschild blithely condemns economists past and present, apparently because they fail to employ his choice of terminology.

phenomena into a single variable as his analogy, the intellectual content of his point would have been identical, and I expect Rothschild would grasp his point immediately. It is plain that Hayek chose a mechanistic metaphor only because it was most familiar to his readers and that his choice of metaphor is irrelevant to the validity of his point. Rothschild's pre-occupation with rooting out mechanistic thinking has led him away from understanding and appreciating Hayek's insights.

This sort of superficiality leads Rothschild to miss what other authors were saying. Consider the following passage from *Bionomics*:

The sad truth is that two centuries after Adam Smith launched the study of economics, we still cannot explain how markets work. Trading and exchange — the most persistent features of the human economy — remain an enigma. Perhaps this is why Smith's celebrated phrase, "invisible hand," retains its broad appeal. Frustrated by our profound ignorance, we find such an expression soothing, even though it sheds no light.

This passage typifies not only Rothschild's condescending attitude but his wondrous ability to miss the point. Rothschild blithely condemns economists past and present, apparently because they fail to employ his choice of terminology. He does not see that the

"invisible hand" metaphor was merely a way of calling the readers' attention to an important aspect of market interaction: that is, how human beings with limited knowledge and concern can adapt to changing circumstances and serve each others' needs, forming orderly arrangements despite their obvious lack of omniscience or universal benevolence. The "invisible hand" terminology, whether used by classical economists or the Austrians, was a literary way of stating the very kind of idea that Rothschild himself insists upon: the "unintended" order arising from the evolutionary, adaptive processes of capitalism. Of course Smith's use of the term was not fully satisfactory, but to interpret it as a sign of evasion is uncalled for: the "biological," evolutionary standpoint of economic science in the first half of the 19th century is widely recognized, at least among most historians of evolutionary theory. Contrary to Rothschild, Darwin and Russell were more influenced by economics than the economists of the Austrian school learned from the evolutionists (Menger's evolutionary approach merely carried on the Smithian insight into the marginalist revolution).

To Rothschild, technical information is of fundamental significance. In his view, a society is fundamentally shaped "by its accumulated technical knowledge." This raises the question: why is it that one society is prosperous while another is poverty-stricken, despite having essentially identical technical knowledge available. Why, for example, doesn't India do just as well as Japan? Indians have excellent libraries, they have access to most of the "linear sequences of symbols that encode knowledge" (Rothschild's notion of "information"), and their students include some of the brightest in the world. Yet Japan is prosperous while India is poor.

Rothschild's overemphasis on technical knowledge leads to him to fail to appreciate the importance of other factors, like capital accumulation, the organization of production, and the destructive nature of intervention. Indeed, the biological systems that Rothschild goes to for guidance are characterized by coer-

cion, violence, and parasitism. He seems to be on no surer ground than the Social Darwinists, whom he unfairly maligns (simply by oversimplification).

To What Extent are the Analogies to Biology Helpful?

The most intriguing aspect of Rothschild's approach is his use of analogy between economic and biological systems. The analogies he draws must be examined carefully, since he derives so many of his insights from them.

Biological adaptation is driven by evolution. The central characteristics of this process are natural selection and replication. Natural selection in the biological world clearly has an analogy in the economic arena. But, as Rothschild is fully aware, the notion of replication does not. That is, a biological organism derives the fundamental aspects of its makeup from its genes, which are determined by its parents. The technological data available to an organization is not the product of its parentage. As Rothschild states:

a firm's future "corporate genes" are, at least in part, a result of conscious choice.

What does this mean? The assertion that a corporation's "unique technical know-how" constitutes its genes, coupled with Rothschild's later insistence

Why is it that one society is prosperous while another is poverty-stricken, despite having essentially identical technical knowledge available. Why, for example, doesn't India do just as well as Japan?

that technical information should be thought of as "a linear string of symbols," and not as knowledge about the state of the world, is at best confusing.

The notion that one should view an economy as made up of organisms (called organizations) that can alter their genetic makeup at will strikes me as bizarre. It has no analogy in the biological world. Surely, whatever insights are to be gained by comparison

to ecosystems must be examined very carefully given such a fundamental discrepancy between the analogous objects.

To illustrate the level of confusion these analogies can produce, let us consider the following argument from *Bionomics*:

For the past 60 years, economic historians have pummeled each other with arguments about the inherent pattern of economic change. Joseph Schumpeter, a prominent twentieth-century economist, claimed that innovation was discontinuous, causing massive and sudden destruction of old industries by the new. Schumpeter saw this "creative destruction of capital" as the central process of capitalism. Others, led by A.P. Usher, pointed out that old industries usually prosper alongside new competitors for long periods of time. Usher stressed that when the great inventions are studied in detail, sudden "breakthroughs" are revealed to be little more than the final steps in a long chain of gradual technical refinements stretching over decades.

Today, the experts are still choosing up sides in this debate between technologic catastrophists and gradualists. Never having studied biology, they remain unaware that punctuated equilibrium has resolved the 200-year-old debate over the pace of evolution by showing that sudden and gradual change coexist.

This follows a fairly lengthy chapter which covers the work of Niles Eldredge (see "Time Frames: the Evolution of Punctuated Equilibria" for the popular account) and Stephen Jay Gould relating to the evolution of trilobites. Rothschild summarizes these ideas thusly:

Essentially, punctuated equilibrium says that evolutionary change happens neither overnight nor over millions of years, but rather in bursts that stretch for a few hundred or a few thousand years. It is pulsating evolution, a surge of relatively rapid change followed by a long period of stability or equilibrium. Punctuated equilibrium contends that once established, a species does not change. As long as it fits its ecological niche, there is no reason to change. If the environment changes, the species will migrate in an attempt to regain the ecological setting it needs. If the environmental shift is too extreme and migration fails, the species becomes extinct.

But well before a species dies off in the normal course of events, small

groups will drift away from the main population, either by getting lost during an annual migration or by simply wandering off in search of less crowded, greener pastures. If such a group is fortunate enough to find an acceptable place to live, it will survive in reproductive isolation. Over several generations, mutations will modify the physical characteristics of the group transforming the parent species into a new daughter species.

This is an accurate summary of Eldredge's views, and the trilobite investigation certainly did generate a fair amount of interest for those interested in evolutionary biology. But, what does it mean for an organization to "live in reproductive isolation"? What insights would a study of reproduction of organizations bring to our analysis of biological systems? None at all, so far as I can fathom. Rothschild's recounting of the development of the theory of punctuated equilibrium is interesting to biologists, but I find the analogy strained, and at best merely suggestive.

Rothschild and Capitalism

Rothschild argues for capitalism on the basis of a vague correspondence between the spontaneous organization evident in biological systems and within a free market. To say the least, this is not a completely solid foundation. So it is not surprising that in *Bionomics* the sort of capitalism that Rothschild envisions is far less consistent than that of the Austrians. Here are a few specimens of Rothschild's inability to understand the logic of the free market:

Of course, to recognize the hidden costs of income redistribution is not to argue against the need for a safety net. It is painfully obvious that many people cannot possibly support themselves. Basic human decency demands that we assist the needy. No rational person disputes this. . . .

Providing every American child access to a high-quality education would be the single most powerful antipoverty program ever launched. If this were supplemented with a comprehensive, lifelong system of government-backed loans for higher education, vocational training, and job retraining, America's weakening competitive position surely would be resurrected. . . .

Financially, if for no other reason, this logic supports federally backed

loans to private Soviet businesses. . . .

These arguments for the welfare state show not only a lack of appreciation of the many arguments against such institutions (they are not limited to "the hidden costs of income redistribution"), but also show the irrelevance of Rothschild's biological analogies. However you may argue for welfare state provisions, you must do so in completely economic terms: as mentioned earlier, adaptation in the biological world occurs in contexts of predation and parasitism as well as symbiosis and commensalism, thereby rendering fundamental criticisms based on a parallelism between biology and economics vacuous.

In these brief comments, I have been more harshly critical than I had expected I would be. There are serious shortcomings in Rothschild's thinking, but there is also considerable value. Rothschild is a stimulating writer, his writing is occasionally insightful, often provocative and sometimes outrageous.

But do not forget that he is a man who defines profits as "the savings achieved through learning" and capitalism as "simply the process by which coded technological information evolves." Don't expect precision, accuracy, or consistency; just enjoy the sparks from an unusual mind. □

Response

Contra Overbeek

by Michael Rothschild

Anyone who proposes a worldview that departs from the received wisdom had better be ready for a good jolt of criticism. But along with the ego bruises, thoughtful, well-reasoned criticism offers its own intellectual rewards. Knowing the sophistication of *Liberty's* readership, I had thought Ross Overbeek would offer a stimulating response. But sadly, he failed to deliver the goods.

Upon careful reading, his remarks don't really amount to a serious critical essay, one that challenges the fundamental argument of *Bionomics*. Instead,

his piece is more a disjointed series of hit and run attacks. For the *Liberty* reader, this is complicated by the fact that Dr Overbeek chose to critique my book rather than the *Liberty* article. Unless you have read *Bionomics* itself, you cannot know the full depth and power of the argument on which Overbeek launches his puny raids.

Again and again, Overbeek uses the same disingenuous technique. He abstracts one or two sentences — those bearing the surprising conclusions drawn after several pages of well-supported argument — and holds them up as if they were bald assertions.

Another technique is to rely on a reader's tendency to regard as sacred every phrase a great economist ever wrote. In one instance, he attacks me for pointing out that Hayek, in his earlier writing, had relied on the machine metaphor. As any reader of my article can see, I made no criticism of Hayek's larger argument in "The Use of Knowledge in Society." In fact, I wrote that Hayek's basic point was "entirely correct," merely showing that even Hayek could fall into the neoclassical trap of machine thinking.

In a time when we still hear endlessly about "pump-priming," "jump-starting" and "revving up" the "economic engine," I think it is absolutely crucial that thoughtful people expunge such powerful but misleading metaphors from their economic vocabulary. Like it or not, reliance on the "economy as machine" metaphor leads inexorably to "command-and-control" politics. My "preoccupation with rooting out mechanistic thinking" is essential for anyone genuinely committed to dismantling the ideology of state economic control and rebuilding a free society. For far too long, lovers of liberty have unwittingly put themselves at a massive rhetorical disadvantage by failing to recognize the inescapable political implications of the "economy as machine" analogy.

Overbeek blended his two techniques — taking a few lines out of their larger argumentative context and ridiculing any questioning of a great economist's words — when he rebuked me for finding fault with Adam's Smith's most famous phrase "invisible hand." But again, I stand by my point. "Invisible hand" simply doesn't tell us anything, and it certainly hasn't wielded much persuasive

power with market skeptics.

Though I have immense admiration for Adam Smith, and make that fact abundantly clear in Chapter 2, even he didn't get it all right. Smith wrote at the very dawn of the Industrial Revolution; James Watt, inventor of the steam engine, was a personal friend. And yet, Smith never imagined that the economy was about to be transformed from agricultural to industrial. As great as he was, Smith didn't have all the answers. No one who treats economics as a science ever will pretend that he does.

It's only in religions and political ideologies that the sacred texts must remain forever unchanged. Science, by contrast, is an endless process of testing old ideas against newly discovered facts. I, for one, think that modern evolutionary biology has inadvertently given us enough new facts and concepts to make a far more compelling explanation of market action than the phrase "invisible hand." Chapter 23 in *Bionomics* makes that case, and I believe makes it convincingly. But Overbeek never even attempts to directly challenge this or any other link in the bionomic argument. Apparently, he thinks it more prudent to hide behind the names of the giants of economics.

Toward the end of his remarks, Overbeek begins to lose touch altogether and drifts away into outright misrepresentation. Yes, it is true that I believe that an economy's potential is determined by the current state of "its accumulated technical knowledge." But Overbeek's claim that I must therefore conclude that India and Japan should have equally robust economies is absurd. As I take extreme pains to point out in Chapter 28 — Soviet Capitalism — a society, to achieve the prosperity latent in a given state of technology, must first create a political environment of private property and free prices. India still has a socialist economy. Japan, in case Overbeek hasn't noticed, is an awesomely competitive capitalist society. If, all by itself, technology drove everything, economic thinkers wouldn't have to worry about politics. In part, *Bionomics* makes its contribution by showing why a political environment that guarantees private property and free prices is so crucial to robust technological evolution and the

prosperity it brings.

Breaking his normal pattern, Overbeek tries to level one serious charge at the basic bionomic argument. He claims that the economy/ecosystem analogy fails because organisms replicate and pass on to their offspring the genetic information that they themselves inherited, while organizations consciously change their technological code. The way Overbeek puts my argument, the reader would believe that I hadn't myself elaborated on the differences between organisms and organizations, between genetic and technological information. But again and again, *Bionomics* makes the point that although the analogy is incredibly illuminating, it is not (and does not need to be) perfect. As the Postscript argues, just because a road map isn't perfectly analogous to the configuration of a city's streets does not mean that we should throw the map away. Like any other tool, you must use it intelligently. It is simply irresponsible, if not downright intellectually dishonest, to make it appear that the author claimed something he never claimed and then attack him for doing so.

With his last wild punch, Overbeek tells us "that in *Bionomics* the sort of capitalism that Rothschild envisions is far less consistent than that of the Austrians." He then cites as evidence of such inconsistency my support for a social safety net for the helpless, tax-supported public education (with school choice), and partial federal guarantees to reduce the risk of *private* investment in *private* businesses in Russia. Well, I do support these government activities. And *Bionomics* explains why the appropriate use of a limited government for specific community purposes (as intended by America's founding fathers) is not inconsistent with bionomic thinking. (See especially pp. 113–14.)

And this, in the end, seems to be what really bothers Overbeek. *Bionomics* is a serious effort to shift the fundamental paradigm of economic thought. The consequence of its success will be to move economics from the realm of ideology — with its eternal absolutes — to the domain of scientific inquiry — where every answer generates more fascinating questions. What is an ideologue to do when someone threatens to take away his plaything? □

Reviews

JFK, Warner Bros. Written by Oliver Stone and Zachary Sklar, directed by Oliver Stone. Actors include: Kevin Costner, Sissy Spacek, Joe Pesci, Tommy Lee Jones, Kevin Bacon, Donald Sutherland, and others.

JFK, Conspiracies, and Me

Sheldon L. Richman

Damn Oliver Stone!

I remember exactly where I was when I first learned that John F. Kennedy had been shot in Dallas. Big deal. I don't remember where I was when I resolved to ignore the controversy that grew out of the assassination. I did not read the Warren Commission Report. I did not read the growing library of books alleging a conspiracy. My feeling was that unless I had lots of time to devote to the mass of facts and allegations, it wasn't worth getting into it at all. I had lunch with Mark Lane once and did not even bring up the subject. (Amazingly, neither did he.)

Damn Oliver Stone! Thanks to him I have been sucked into the morass of conspirology. It started when I read the newspaper articles and op-ed columns about *JFK*, most of them accusing Stone of distorting history and undermining confidence in the government. (One out of two ain't bad.) Then I went to see the movie.

JFK is great cinema but lousy history. The story is gripping and the three hours fly by. The acting is mostly superb. (The exception, for me, is Kevin Costner as prosecutor Jim Garrison. I am *not* a Costner fan. He has the passion and excitement of lentil soup.) Stone effectively portrays what he believes happened in Dealey Plaza on

November 22, 1963. Unfortunately, he also plays loose with the facts to make his case more persuasive. He interweaves real footage and photos (including the famous 8mm Zapruder film) with his own creations; it is hard to know which is which. What's more, he shamelessly concocts events, such as the placement (presumably by the CIA) of stories about Lee Harvey Oswald in foreign newspapers within hours of the assassination. I would not object to Stone's showing his (weak) theory in the best possible light. Fabrication is something else entirely. Nevertheless, the movie is worth seeing.

At any rate, after seeing it, I read some more articles and pulled out my old copy of Carl Oglesby's *Yankee and Cowboy War*. (Okay, technically I had read a book on the assassination. But Oglesby's thesis is larger than that, so it doesn't count.) Finally, I did what I said I'd never do: I bought a book specifically about the Kennedy assassination. My defense is that it was written by a lifelong conspiracy buff and investigator who has changed his mind and concluded that Oswald acted alone. (*Conspiracy of One*, by Jim Moore; highly recommended.)

Luckily, I am fickle enough that within a short time I will move on to something else (perhaps the explosion on the *Maine*) and it will be impossible to get me to talk about the assassination. But until then, I, admittedly a non-

expert, have a few things to get off my chest.

Unlike Clarence Thomas and *Roe v. Wade*, over the years I did think about the controversy and I even had a few casual discussions about it. As a libertarian, I was never appalled by suggestions that high reaches of the U.S. government might have been in on the assassination and coverup. But my enduring hunch, based on no research, was that the Warren Commission probably was right that Oswald was a "lone nut." (That hunch has been strengthened by subsequent reading.) My feeling was never that the government *wouldn't* do it. Rather, it was that the government *couldn't* do it. Let's face it, some CIA types couldn't pull off a "third-rate burglary" at the Watergate without getting caught. (Of course, as Oglesby thinks, burglar James McCord might have been a double agent out to get Nixon.) The Iran-Contra story was broken by a little newspaper in Lebanon. The government is not efficient. And a conspiracy of this sort, including coverup, would require a high degree of efficiency and many people. Why has no one talked — on his deathbed or after signing a million-dollar publishing contract including plastic surgery and a new identity? Where are the leaks? The documents? Something! And yet, while there is this presumed high efficiency, the Warren critics kept "finding" physical evidence that indicate conspiratorial incompetence: a dented shell casing, "obviously" doctored photos of Oswald, a grassy-knoll assassin who would have been easily spotted.

My suspicion of the conspirologists was also based on misgivings about their methods. (I had heard enough about those methods to be uneasy.) First, some of the writers rely heavily on purported eyewitness accounts. As a reporter, I covered criminal courts for three years, long enough to learn that eyewitness testimony can be the weakest form of evidence. It is notoriously

unreliable. Circumstantial evidence, despite its bad reputation with the lay public, can be the strongest kind of evidence.

Second, it is obvious to me that if one searches for indications of a conspiracy in an event as big as a presidential assassination one is bound to find some. As sure as the vice president succeeds the president on his death, a conspiracy

My feeling was never that the government wouldn't do it. Rather, it was that the government couldn't do it. Let's face it, some CIA types couldn't pull off a "third-rate burglary" at the Watergate without getting caught.

investigation will beckon all kinds of nuts and attention-seekers claiming to have seen this or heard that. Besides, coincidences do happen.

Third, there is the problem of falsifiability. A theory that can explain everything explains nothing. If every conceivable state of affairs neatly fits into the conspiracy picture something is wrong. Are there three shell casings lying neatly at the window sill where Oswald (or whoever) shot? Ah ha! Evidence of a conspiracy. Are there no casings on the grassy knoll where a co-conspirator allegedly shot? Ah ha! More evidence of a conspiracy. Notice also that the conspiracy must grow ever bigger. If the Kennedy x-rays and autopsy photos support the lone-gunman theory, someone will claim they were doctored or switched. Or that the body was. Next time you talk to a conspiracy advocate, ask him what piece of evidence would change his mind. If you get an answer, let me know.

Fourth, I sense a serious procedural problem in at least some conspiracy theorists. They work bass ackward. Here's an example. From Oswald's six-floor vantage in the Texas School Book Depository, he could have shot either while the motorcade approached him or while it moved away from him. (He did the latter, of course.) Some people

have argued that the first option would have been preferable because it was easier. But, they continue, Dealey Plaza, which the motorcade turned into, was perfect for stationing three shooters. This so-called triangulation set-up increased the odds of a successful hit and made things so confusing for witnesses that it facilitated the cover-up. Ergo, the fact that Kennedy was shot while moving away from the book depository supports if not proves the conspiracy theory.

Note the reverse logic. Decision X would be useful in a conspiracy. Therefore, Decision X shows that there was a conspiracy. Nonsense. What if Decision X also made sense without a conspiracy? Oswald could have chosen to shoot while the car moved away because if he shot while it was moving toward him, he could have been spotted more easily. Everyone in the motorcade and along that part of the route would have been looking in his general direction; they would only have had to look up. If the car was moving away, most people would have had their backs to his position. Or maybe he intended to shoot at the approaching car, but dust blew into his eye.

Even if we can't think of a reason for the decision, that cannot be used to support a conspiracy theory. People can have all sorts of reasons for things that don't readily occur to someone examining a decision after the fact. A void is not proof. While independent, direct evidence of a conspiracy (bullets from different guns and different directions; such were never found) could shed light on a decision such as waiting until the car turned the corner, the reasoning cannot go in the opposite direction. Purported pieces of indirect evidence are bootstraps; the theory cannot pull itself up by them.

Implicit in the above is a plea for application of good old Occam's razor. Whenever two theories can explain the same phenomenon, taking into account the material facts, one should favor the simpler. Many conspiriologists seem unfamiliar with William of Occam. If you strip away the obfuscation and extraneous matter and apply the razor, the assassination ends up looking like the act of the solitary Oswald.

Fifth, many conspiriologists display

the attitude that when Kennedy was killed, our last chance for radical reform of American society was cruelly snatched from us. This seems to account for their anger and their persistence in the face of a paucity of evidence for their theories. Central to many of those theories is a romanticizing of John F. Kennedy as a peacenik ready to withdraw from Vietnam and call off the Cold War. That is ridiculous, and the recently released Cuban Missile Crisis documents show how ridiculous it is. At least the Mafia-centered theories don't depend on such absurd romanticizing. They have their own problems.

I resist the temptation of going into specifics. Suffice it to say there are perfectly reasonable explanations for the single-bullet theory, the backward motion of Kennedy's head, and other supposed mysteries. And contrary to what the Warren Commission members and the conspiriologists think, Oswald had more than 5.5 seconds to fire his three shots. (On all of this, see *Conspiracy of One*.) I know, I know. Oswald was a

Next time you talk to a conspiracy advocate, ask him what piece of evidence would change his mind. If you get an answer, let me know.

Marine at a U-2 base in Japan. He (apparently) defected to the Soviet Union and while he was there Gary Powers' U-2 was shot down. The State Department lent Oswald money to return to the United States. He was the only member of a pro-Castro organization that shared a New Orleans address with an anti-Castro organization. He had connections with the Mafia, the FBI, and the CIA. (I'll assume these things are true.) And on and on. In an event such as this, there are likely to be strange, inexplicable details and coincidences. In themselves, they no more prove a conspiracy than the remarkable parallels between Kennedy and Abraham Lincoln prove a mystical connection between the two assassinations.

I am open to evidence that I am

wrong. Whether Kennedy was the victim of a conspiracy is a purely factual matter. I have nothing at stake in this, and I am not wedded to my conclusion beyond its seeming fit with the facts. On the other hand, the conspirologists

have had nearly 30 years to produce some hard evidence. Where is it? I certainly do not deny there are loose ends. They are all at the margin. And I for one will not be losing any sleep over them. □

Public Choice and Constitutional Economics, edited by James D. Gwartney and Richard E. Wagner. JAI Press, Inc., 1988, 422 pp., \$56.50.

A Paradigm Shifts Gears

Jane S. Shaw

In effect, this book launches constitutional economics (or constitutional political economy), a discipline that has emerged from public choice theory. Constitutional economics deals with the rules that govern politics, the "rules of the game" that are established before political exchange occurs. This subject matter was introduced in the 1962 book, *The Calculus of Consent*, by James Buchanan and Gordon Tullock, one of the landmarks of public choice.

But *Public Choice and Constitutional Economics* isn't the result of a deliberate application of constitutional economics. Rather, it's a precursor, a collection of essays that deal with constitutional issues written by authors who perceive that key protections of the U.S. Constitution have eroded. It offers such a dizzying array of perspectives and ways of looking at constitutional issues that it defeats easy summary.

In his foreword, William Niskanen says that the book brings to bear three new perspectives: public choice, constitutional economics, and law and economics. He could have included at least two others: property rights and the new institutional economics. All five are included by James Buchanan in his description of the "new political economy" in *The New Palgrave Dictionary of Economics*, and all apply to this book.

But even that list of perspectives understates the difficulty of getting a

handle on the volume. Although all writers reflect conservative or libertarian views, the scope of a single essay in this book can encompass history, philosophy, economics, and law. Even essays that address similar issues draw on vastly different bodies of knowledge (they may include ethics, economic history, and legal history, to name a few). Roger Pilon's admission that he will step into some "fairly abstract and even arid regions, into the province of the philosopher, the better to get a picture of the larger issues before us" (p. 153) is not atypical. Each author establishes his or her own intellectual framework, so the reader is continually shifting focus. Although the same themes recur (such as substantive versus procedural restraints, the role of Lockean rights theory in the founding of the nation, and public taking of private property), they pop up unexpectedly. The eclecticism of the book may explain why I have taken a year and a half to review this book and perhaps why it has not been widely commented on; even *Public Choice* has yet to review it.

That said, there is much that is worthwhile in this volume. The first two essays, written by the editors, James Gwartney and Richard Wagner, lay out the theme and scope of the book and are probably worthy of a review in themselves. The first essay is a readable introduction to public choice. It begins with the underlying assumption of public choice, the self-interested individual, then summarizes the interests of the key

political players (politicians and voters), and then identifies some of the results of their interaction in the political process. These include the ignorance of the voter about most issues and thus the poor monitoring of government; the shortsighted pressures inherent in political institutions; and bureaucratic waste.

The essay identifies what the authors believe to be the fundamental problem with democracy—the ability of "a winning majority to enrich itself at the expense of a losing minority" (17). In American history this has meant the growth of fiscal discrimination, that is, taxation and regulation of some people to benefit others.

The second chapter picks up on the constitutional theme, pointing out that the U.S. Constitution did, in fact, have such restraints when it was written, but those restraints have eroded. The authors indicate that many substantive

The fundamental problem with democracy is the ability of "a winning majority to enrich itself at the expense of a losing minority." In American history this has meant the growth of taxation and regulation of some people to benefit others.

protections of the Constitution, such as the requirement that taxes were to be uniform and used for "common defense" and "general welfare," have been removed by political forces (such as the inability of the Supreme Court to act independently of the legislative branch).

Procedural restraints, such as requirements that laws be passed by two quite dissimilar legislative chambers (a correct description of the House and Senate in the early days of the Republic), have eroded as well, though sometimes through technological changes, the authors say, rather than deliberate action. Wagner and Gwartney think that changes in procedural rules (such as requiring "supramajority" decisions instead of majority rule) are the best hope for restoring constraints on Congress.

The editors have consciously made the current volume a historical document. The book includes James Buchanan's speech upon his acceptance of the Nobel Prize. This contains a historical nugget that should please inveterate library browsers: "One of the most excit-

ing intellectual moments of my career was my 1948 discovery of Wickseil's unknown and untranslated dissertation, *Finanztheoretische Untersuchungen* (1896), buried in the dusty stacks of Chicago's old Harper Library." In this essay, Knut Wickseil introduced the idea that for tax-

ation to be just, its goal and design should be unanimously supported by voters. This discovery, which corresponded with Buchanan's own thinking, set him on the road to public choice.

The editors include an abridged version of that essay (which Buchanan

The Paradigm Shift: A User's Guide

Public choice, which emerged in the late 1950s from public finance economics, offers a very far-reaching revision of our understanding of government activity. Thomas Kuhn's 1962 book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (University of Chicago Press, 2nd ed., 1970), may help illustrate its current status.

Kuhn shattered the traditional concept of scientific progress by arguing that a shared understanding of reality shapes the insights, investigations, and discoveries of any scientific field. He argued that every once in a while this "paradigm" falters and a new one takes its place. When the new paradigm takes hold, a scientific revolution has occurred.

Kuhn's book is about physical sciences, not social sciences, and he casts doubt on the ability of social sciences to accept paradigms. Economics, for example, would be a pre-paradigmatic field in Kuhn's view because it has so many competing schools. Nevertheless, each economic school does offer a view of the world that, rightly or wrongly, guides a body of research. The adoption of Keynesianism in the late 1940s and the disillusionment with it in the 1970s illustrate the course of a major but relatively short-lived economic paradigm.

Public choice is one of these paradigms, but it is still in the early stages of acceptance. It is certainly farther along than it was when James Buchanan stumbled across Knut Wickseil's book in the stacks of Harper Library, confirming Kuhn's view of pre-paradigmatic research: "[E]arly fact-gathering is a far more nearly random activity than the one that subsequent scientific development makes familiar . . . early fact-gathering is usually restricted to the wealth of data that lie ready to hand" (15).

It's farther along than it was when

the paradigm was first offered in books such as *The Calculus of Consent* and *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. Only in a pre-paradigmatic era, says Kuhn, are books rather than specialized articles a chief source of knowledge, and only at that time is it possible for a layperson to easily follow the progress of a discipline. As the paradigm takes hold, says Kuhn, "specialized journals" and "specialists' societies" form (19). Public choice already has such a society and

Kuhn shattered the traditional concept of scientific progress by arguing that a shared understanding of reality shapes the insights, investigations, and discoveries of any scientific field. He argued that every once in a while this "paradigm" falters and a new one takes its place. When the new paradigm takes hold, a scientific revolution has occurred.

such a journal (*Public Choice*), and a narrower journal, *Constitutional Political Economy*, has begun publication.

But there is still much debate within public choice itself, as indicated by Charles Rowley and Richard Wagner, who began an essay in *Liberty* (January 1990) with: "Public choice scholars are a more diverse lot than the recent debate in *Liberty* . . . would seem to suggest." Not all public choice scholars even advocate limited government. Some of the leading early theorists, e.g. Kenneth Arrow and Anthony Downs, are quite comfortable with a large state role.

Downs introduced the basic precepts in *An Economic Theory of Democracy*; in 1960 he wrote an article entitled, "Why the Government Budget is Too Small in a Democracy." Others, more interested in the application of game theory to politics, don't seem to have any ideology at all.

In Kuhn's view, once a paradigm is accepted, it becomes the guide for what he calls "normal science," the steady, unidirectional problem-solving that we usually think of as scientific progress. Public choice principles may not be comprehensive enough yet to offer that research guidance, except in narrow areas. One sign is the fact that some important issues simply haven't been addressed. While public choice theory can explain "capture" of regulatory agencies, for example, it hasn't so far explained why industry fails to capture others such as public service commissions. It seems to explain the role of special interests in a system with a variety of checks and balances (like the U.S.'s) but doesn't explain them so well in a parliamentary system (like the United Kingdom's). And it nearly always focuses on narrow self-interest as the only motivator of public officials; only recently has it begun to include ideology in its analysis.

Over time I believe that these *lacunae* will be filled. Public choice theory will expand its explanatory power and gain adherents (perhaps more from political science, which has been languishing without a paradigm, than from economics). It will eventually achieve the goal Kuhn establishes for a governing paradigm: "a reconstruction of the field from new fundamentals, a reconstruction that changes some of the field's most elementary theoretical generalizations as well as many of its paradigm methods and applications" (85). —Jane S. Shaw

first translated into English). And they include Gordon Tullock's comments twenty-five years after the publication of *Calculus*, in which he observes that since its publication there has been "substantially no work on constitutions per se" (140), in spite of much work on post-constitutional rules and processes. This may well be true, but it is a bit ironic; with the 1990 introduction of his new journal, *Constitutional Political Economy*, James Buchanan indicates that he believes such research can and will be done.

In his "Postscript" on *Calculus*, Tullock goes on to address one of the unanswered questions of the book: Why did the economic protections of the U.S. Constitution last for more than 100 years and then weaken? Earlier, Wagner and Gwartney argued that the cause was the advent of activist judges and willful legislators. But Tullock suggests that a key cause may be the expansion of civil service rules throughout the federal government (replacing patronage). He terms this expansion a "quasi-constitutional revision in the terms of employment of the federal bureaucracy" (144). Job protection for federal employees increased federal government power and reduced the power of the states.

Tullock's proposal is an example of the kind of interesting idea that gets somewhat buried in this book, which contains so much that is disparate. Another example is the observation by Terry Anderson and P. J. Hill that the 19th century evolution of corporations (generally viewed by economic historians as a major achievement) occurred because the stability of property rights guaranteed by the Constitution allowed entrepreneurial innovation in contracts. Today that stability is gone; the federal government and state legislatures routinely interfere with the innovative contracting that entrepreneurs have attempted in recent years through takeovers and mergers.

Many gems of this sort are buried in the book. Some have been or will be published elsewhere, so that they are not really lost; but I'm completely sure that the merit of collecting and thus preserving such a wealth of thoughts about constitutional issues outweighs the disadvantage that some will be ignored. □

The Myth of Scientific Public Policy, by Robert Formaini.
Transaction Publishers, 1990, ix + 129 pp., \$14.95 (paper).

The Illusions of a Technique

Lawrence H. White

The pretensions of policy experts are worthy targets, and readers of *Liberty* will find it easy to agree with many of the conclusions of Robert Formaini's *The Myth of Scientific Public Policy*. Formaini, a veteran of the public policy arena through stints at the Cato Institute and the National Center for Policy Analysis, targets the techniques by which experts claim to evaluate government policies scientifically — namely the techniques of comparative risk assessment and cost-benefit analysis. The book's style of argumentation falls somewhere between being colorful enough to interest the educated layman and being detailed enough to satisfy the academic economist. Unfortunately, the arguments vary in strength and are occasionally hard to follow.

Formaini begins the book oddly. Though he treats cost-benefit analysis only after devoting a chapter to the economics of the Austrian School, his "overview" of risk assessment and probability theory precedes both discussions. One would have thought that Austrian ideas could be used to evaluate risk assessment techniques as well.

Having arranged the chapters as he did, he is unable to examine explicitly the relationship between Austrian subjectivism and subjective probability theory, which could have been both interesting and instructive. Instead, he devotes much of his first chapter to a rather unclear discussion of the theoretical differences between two schools of thought in probability theory, classical frequentists versus Bayesians. He notes in passing that "counter-intuitive outcomes . . . sometimes occur when the most obvious course of action is undertaken in order to make something safer" (11). Attempts to regulate obvious

risks (requiring new drugs to pass FDA-approval tests; requiring infants to fly in protective seats rather than on parents' laps) can backfire by increasing less obvious risks (people die for lack of the drugs awaiting FDA approval; infants die on the highways when parents faced with buying additional airplane tickets take the family to grandma's house by car). This insight reflects the emphasis of Austrian economists on the unintended consequences of interventionary policies.

In the last section of the chapter Formaini seems to advocate deliberately biasing probability judgments so as to overstate the likelihood of "bad" events and to understate the probability of "good" events. Curiously, in light of Formaini's emphasis on the distinction between fact and value, he fails to note that your "bad" event may be my "good" event. The biasing adjustment he proposes is completely ad hoc, and the figure (2-1) he uses for illustration is neither appropriate nor necessary. (The figure does not show a true normal distribution, because a normal distribution is not truncated at its tails. Though trivial, this is just one of the minor inaccuracies that will bother an academic reader.) It is hard to take the proposal seriously. Perhaps Formaini thinks that it would raise the burden of proof on advocates for new government programs. But environmentalists, to name just one advocacy group, are already prone to justify government programs by overstating the risks of bad events if government does *not* intervene.

The second chapter, staking out the subjectivist position, spends half its space retelling the history of the Austrian School of economics. His account is sprinkled with details that seem irrelevant. Austrian economists are subjectivists in matters of economic method:

they believe that important social institutions (like money, language, and law) and social patterns (like market-clearing prices, positive interest rates, and the business cycle) are best explained in terms of individuals' subjective perspectives (preferences, information sets, and expectations). Austrians are not *epistemological* subjectivists, as Formaini suggests (24). That is, they do not characteristically deny that there is an objective reality "out there."

It is a long way from Austrian subjectivism to the tools of cost-benefit analysis, as the third chapter shows. Cost-benefit analysts attempt, usually on behalf of a government, to tote up an aggregate present-dollar measure of the costs and benefits of a project. (Confusingly, the summation formulas Formaini gives on pp. 45 and 50 lack any explicit variable for costs.) The analysts try to gauge how many dollars you and I and others would each be willing to pay to have the project instituted, or would lose from having it in-

stituted. They simply assume that these dollar figures can be added up to arrive at a measure of net social benefits.

Formaini rightly insists that such totting-up is invalid because benefits are subjective. Analysts have neither any valid way to gauge willingness-to-pay apart from preferences voluntarily demonstrated in a market, nor any basis in economic theory for using dollars as a unit for comparing or summing benefits across individuals. There is no basis for assuming that worth-one-dollar-to-me is equivalent to worth-one-dollar-to-you. Costs are also subjective, because the cost of an action is the sacrifice of the next-most-(subjectively)-preferred alternative, so that costs too are not interpersonally summable. Alas, before Formaini reaches these key points, he detours through a broad-brush critique of neoclassical economics, and through a long discussion of the difficulties of choosing the correct discount rate to be applied to future costs and benefits.

At the end of chapter 3, as at the end of chapter 1, Formaini regrettably proposes ad hoc ways of adjusting the numbers that policy analysts produce. As before, the proposal is difficult to take seriously. (For one thing, it makes no apparent sense to adjust the intertemporal discount rate according to how "public" a project's benefits are.)

Even as it became obvious that the swine flu vaccinations were killing more people than the flu itself, the federal government was slow to back off from its program.

That Formaini offers such a band-aid proposal undercuts his important message that the problems with cost-benefit analysis are deep-rooted.

The book's fourth chapter is its most entertaining: it reviews the federal government decisions made during the Swine Flu episode of 1976. In that episode, the personal hunches of federal health officials were dressed up as scientific estimates to justify a crash program for vaccinating nearly all Americans against a rare strain of influenza. Even as it became obvious that swine flu vaccinations were killing more people than the flu itself, the federal government was slow to back off from its program. The lesson, Formaini hints, is that citizens need to be very skeptical of the (possibly self-serving) advocacy of programs by federal bureaucrats.

Having attacked the legitimacy of the "science" of public policy, in his concluding postscript Formaini ponders the obvious question of how policy is to be decided, if not on scientific grounds. Unfortunately, this discussion is a somewhat platitudinous endorsement of the American system of constitutionally constrained democracy. Formaini is surely correct when he insists that central planning by experts can never successfully replace free markets, but not when he steers close to identifying a free society with democratic rule: "Our final appeal, then, is not to the judgments of risk authorities

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or those who claim to speak for the public interest, but to the public itself operating through its cherished political traditions" (97).

My overall judgment of the book is similar to the well-considered judgment I heard Formaini express concerning a paper at an Austrian economics conference at Hillsdale College in April 1990. (His commentary is now published in Richard M. Ebeling, ed., *Austrian Economics: Perspectives on the Past and Pros-*

pects for the Future.) To paraphrase: the important topic of this book deserves meticulous criticism, both to enlighten non-Austrians about our approach, and to educate fellow Austrians about the defects of cost-benefit analysis. Formaini succeeds to some extent in both tasks, though without great originality. The book would have been strengthened by a closer attention to detail, and by a deeper and more focused development of its main themes. □

Booknotes

I Am a Survivor of the Punic Wars — The pun is the most over-used form of humor. Perhaps that is granting the pun too high a status. The pun is the most overused form of pseudo-humor. Yeah, that's more like it. The problem is that most puns are not very clever. In fact, most puns are just plain dumb. That's why I usually wince when I hear a pun.

Somehow, I got a copy of Don Hauptman's *Cruel and Unusual Puns* (Dell, 1991, 137 pp., \$5.95). Maybe it was a Christmas gift. From someone who doesn't like me. I dunno. In a masochistic mood, I picked it up. What a strange joke book! It's clever. The punch lines aren't telegraphed. And it's funny. Don't ask me how Don Hauptman performed this miracle.

If you are in a mood to groan, to slap your knee, to laugh out loud, this is the book for you. More importantly, if a friend, spouse or co-worker tortures you with elaborate and moronic puns, this is the book for them, and not because it has lots of puns for them to memorize and spring on you at appropriate moments, either. It's a good book for them because it tells the difference between a good pun and a bad pun. It presents a general theory of puns. If you are lucky, they will read it, learn from it, and stop telling you their stupid puns.

There, I have done the impossible: I have reviewed a joke book without telling you my favorite jokes from it.

—R.W. Bradford

A Useless Edition — There's a new edition of *Stranger in a Strange Land*, by Robert A. Heinlein, expanded with material originally cut by its editor (Ace/Putnam, 1991, 525 pp., \$24.95). As if the original version weren't long, boring and pretentious enough.

—Timothy Virkkala

Less is more, more or less — When *National Review* raised the price of a subscription and reduced the number of issues published each year, it sent out a letter to subscribers explaining, "You may be getting less, but remember, you're paying more!" That would be an appropriate advertising slogan for the new edition of *Freedom, Feminism and the State*, edited by Wendy McElroy (Independent Institute, 1991).

Not only has the price risen to \$19.95 from \$7.95, but about 30% of the earlier edition (published in 1982 by the Cato Institute) has been cut. Alas, the advertising that I have seen (Roy Childs' "review" in *Laissez Faire Books'* catalog) describes the elimination of "a few of the more marginal essays from the first edition"* has only partially revealed the extent of the cuts. In all, eight of the original 30 essays (totalling 110 pages) were eliminated, and a single 6-page essay added.

I recently read that 60% of American households did not purchase a single

* "More marginal"? One wonders how many of the surviving essays are marginal in Childs' view.

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book last year. I wonder whether part of the reason might lie in the escalation of book prices. The Cato Institute edition cost 2.3¢ per page, versus 8.2¢ per page for the Independent Institute edition. That's an increase of 266%, during a period when inflation has totalled something like 40%.

Nevertheless, it is nice to see *Freedom, Feminism and the State* back in print. This anthology is virtually the only collection of writing on libertarian feminism. This is certainly peculiar, given that both had their origins in attempts to free individuals from the state.

And even in its new, abbreviated form, this is a fine anthology. Although its entries from modern libertarian feminists are first rate, its particular strength is its wealth of early feminist thinking, including very stimulating writing from well-known anarcho-feminists like Voltairine de Cleyre and Emma Goldman, as well as lesser-knowns like Angelina Grimké and Lillian Harman. This material is hard to find, even in a first-rate library. Unfortunately, all but one of the essays eliminated from this new edition are from early feminist thinkers.

The single essay added (is it possible that only one worthwhile piece of feminist libertarian writing has appeared in the past nine years?) is a discussion of

abortion by editor McElroy herself. It starts out very strong: "When I was eighteen, I chose to have an abortion. Accordingly, the question I am addressing here is nothing less than whether I have committed murder." Having put herself in the docket charged with murder, McElroy defends herself by claiming that the basic principle of libertarianism is "self-ownership," (without this principle, "there is no foundation for individual rights or for libertarianism.") She proceeds to argue that while she is a "self," a fetus isn't, so while it's wrong to kill her, it's okay to kill her fetus. Personally, I find this neither convincing nor challenging. For one thing, it is a very narrow argument, addressed only to libertarians of the natural rights school. Personally, I can think of lots of bases for libertarianism other than self-ownership. Even if one accepts the logic of self-ownership, her argument quickly degenerates into the well-known wrangle over when a zygote becomes a person. Despite her best efforts, I think the anti-abortionist argument that conception is the appropriate beginning of human life to be as convincing (and as unconvincing) as her argument for birth as the point at which a human gets self-ownership. It's amazing just how long and boring this de-

bate can be.

Anyway, this new edition is better than no edition at all, but the individual seriously interested in the development of feminist individualism, or feminism, or individualism, should scour used-book stores for the first edition.

—R. W. Bradford

Witness for the Prosecution

— Publishers send some unusual books to *Liberty*, hoping we'll review them. When we received a copy of *Wilkes: His Life and Crimes* (Ballantine Books, 1990/1991, 292 pp., \$4.95), we figured it to be of no particular interest to our readers. But I like mystery books and this was billed as a thriller, so I decided to read it for my own amusement.

A thriller it is not. It is a collection of witty and clever stories about the professional trials and travails of a New York City lawyer, ostensibly written by his "Dr Watson," Winston Schoonover. This lawyer, John Wilkes, continually battles with judges who are only interested in convicting anyone appearing in their courts, and with lawyers who hang around the courtrooms hoping to be assigned cases that they can plea bargain for a quick buck. He calls them "V-6s" for Violators of the Sixth Amendment.

Wilkes has a large bag of tricks. For instance, when during one trial he is unable to get a continuance on the basis of the merits of the case, his physician, Dr Simon Comfort, prescribes for him bedrest for an extended period. The ailment? *Litigious meticulous*.

Many of the characters have strange names such as Dr Y. Knott, Miles Landish, Dr Salvador Tostado. I assumed they were figments of the author's imagination — that is, until I came to a very interesting case.

In defending a client accused of murder, Wilkes plans to argue that the man suffered from a dual personality and was not himself when he committed the crime. He knows the prosecution will call an expert witness to attack the credibility of his claim, so he decides on a pre-emptive strike: he consults every psychiatrist that the prosecution customarily uses to refute defense claims of mental illness, so that none will be available for the prosecution.



In desperation, the prosecution calls in Dr Skuz. "Dr Skuz was an impressive, convincing witness . . . (He) said there was no such thing as a multiple personality. In fact, he said all mental illness was a myth created by elitist doctors anxious to establish a new psychiatric priesthood with an impenetrable jargon. They do it, he said, to lord it over us and make a fortune doing it."

Wait a minute! I know this man. It's that well-known debunker of psychiatric gobbledy-gook and an editor of *Liberty*, Dr Thomas Szasz. Which explains, I guess, why we got that review copy. This made me wonder: whom are these other characters based on?

— Kathleen Bradford

Totalitarian Sports Machine

— Wolfgang Schmidt, East Germany's world record holder in the discus throw, spots a dark red Volkswagen tailing him on his way to the gym. He floors the accelerator and careens around several corners, tires squealing. Just when he thinks he's lost the mysterious Volkswagen, an even more ominous apparition materializes: A motorcyclist, clad head-to-toe in black leather and wearing a black helmet and dark goggles, roars up from behind and hangs at his side, glaring at him furiously.

Unable to shake him, Schmidt welcomes the sight of an approaching police car and slows down. The police car pulls around in front of Schmidt and screeches to a halt, cutting him off. The Volkswagen pulls up from behind with two more cars in tow. Two other cars move out of a cross street and block off incoming traffic. After a brief fusillade of slamming car doors, Schmidt emerges from his own vehicle to find himself surrounded by no less than thirteen Stasi agents and uniformed policemen. One of the policemen approaches the six foot six inch, two hundred and fifty pound blond giant. "You will come with us!"

So begins *Thrown Free* (which has the long, long subtitle: *How the East German Sports Machine Molded, Trained, and Broke an Olympic Hero and How He Won His Fight for Freedom*) by William Oscar Johnson and Anita Verschoth with Wolfgang Schmidt (Simon & Schuster, 1991, 310 pp., \$19.95).

Schmidt spent nearly sixteen months in prison, including several weeks in solitary confinement. He lost nearly forty pounds of muscular bodyweight, and at one point was beaten with rubber truncheons for balking at entering the solitary confinement cell. His crime? After having been barred

from competition because of his rambunctiousness and fraternization with Western athletes, he opined that just maybe he would leave his country for one where he *could* compete.

After his release from prison, Schmidt still dreamed of getting out of the country and competing again. Co-author Anita Verschoth, a New York and Zurich based associate editor of *Sports Illustrated*, was actually involved in several cloak and dagger operations designed to get Schmidt out of East Germany via Hungary and Austria. After the last attempt was foiled because of a bug planted in the Schmidt family home, Verschoth took Schmidt's case to some powerful people who carried clout with the East German authorities. Tired of all the bad press their treatment of Schmidt was generating, the authorities finally relented and allowed him to leave.

The Wall has since come tumbling down, the Stasi have been disbanded, and Wolfgang Schmidt—in spite of having been robbed of the prime years of his athletic career—has re-emerged at age 37 as the world's best discus thrower. Living well is the best revenge!

— George M. Hollenback

Letters, continued from page 50

don't wish to read needlessly critical articles in it.

I assume that the editors want to do more than simply talk about liberty, that they actually wish to live in a libertarian society. Therefore, I question the editorial judgment of publishing Mr Arthur's article, as written. It did nothing to advance the cause of liberty. The Libertarian Party, just like any other human institution, is made up of fallible human beings. Articles that highlight that fact don't help. So, give the LP a break. If an author must criticize, then let's attempt a little constructive criticism. Also, when selecting articles, please consider the average Joe who is looking for an alternative to the traditional parties.

James J. Odle
Glendale, Ariz.

In Defense of Teddy Kennedy

You can well imagine my horror at reading Chester A. Arthur's reflection

("David Duke and Teddy Kennedy, separated at birth?") on the recent Louisiana Governor's race in your January 1992 issue. To say that Duke is better than his corrupt opponent — or similar to Teddy Kennedy — is a gross inaccuracy. No American politician that I am aware of has hands bloodied with the deaths of more than 6 million Jews and Gypsies. The only exception that comes to mind would be if the HIV/AIDS virus were genetically engineered by the U.S. government to depopulate "undesirables" from the world. Yet there is no evidence of Teddy's culpability in this affair; the evidence seems to point to Nixon.

Kevin Bjornson
Seattle, Wash.

Taking Exceptions

Please allow me to carry on with the discussion of Jim McClarin's views on natural rights, in light of his latest observations and claims (Letters, January

1992).

McClarin's main point is that natural rights theorists are stubborn if they fail to take his "exceptional cases" seriously.

Yet, McClarin's cases are not exceptional but fantastic. They are imaginary cases at best, assuming a great deal that is entirely speculative. Most natural rights theorists I know are perfectly willing to address actual cases that appear on first inspection not to be handled by their views. For example, cases involving *in vitro* fertilization, surrogate mothering, test tube babies, comatose human lives, mentally retarded persons, the criminally insane, adopted children, fetuses, etc. are important for natural rights theorists and they have managed to deal with them successfully. There is a lot of this that natural rights theorists actually discuss — e.g., I discuss some of these very issues in

continued on next page

my several books — and McClarin shows no awareness of that fact. That is what I lamented in my November 1991 letter.

But there is another matter to consider — are ethical and political theories the same as those scientific theories that are in need of periodic alteration? And is there such an area as “the field of science”? Is it not the case that there are different sciences, some with certain characteristics that require periodic alteration, others without such characteristics — e.g., biology and mathematics, respectively? In any case, not all sciences would seem to be equal and, more importantly, not all disciplines of human inquiry need to conform to those McClarin is thinking of when he talks about test cases.

Tibor Machan
Auburn, Ala.

Tools of the Trade

Michael Rothschild (“Beyond Austrian Economics,” January 1992) implies that Austrian economists repudiate altogether the notion of equilibrium. Not so. They repudiate it as any part of a description of reality, but certainly not as a tool of analyzing it.

Rothschild requires empirical proof of everything, so he proposes “bionomics” — analogy between ecosystems and the market economy — as an empirical and therefore “scientific” reinforcement of aprioristic and therefore merely “religious” economic theory. No doubt he would also propose biomath for what is otherwise the mere religion of mathematics — some kind of ecologically based empirical proof that two plus two is four. While that might thrill Milton Friedman, I don’t think it would have done much for Ludwig von Mises or Albert Einstein.

D. G. Lesvic
Pacoima, Calif.

Testing the Untestable

Rothschild argues that, “as long as Austrian economics relies exclusively upon fundamental concepts that are inherently unfalsifiable, it cannot expect to be regarded as more than a marginal movement. Without a paradigm that generates testable hypotheses, Austrian thinking will never overthrow the reigning orthodoxy.”

What pray are the testable hypotheses yielded by evolutionary science? Are they falsifiable in the Popperian sense?

Since the fundamental “data” in economics are in principle unobservable, how is a “testable” hypothesis to be constructed? What is to constitute evidence? What is to constitute proof?

Orthodox economists who offer this criticism, including Chicagoites, follow a methodological practice that violates many of the basic principles laid down by Popper. They follow the maxim “If you can’t measure, measure anyway,” adopt a multitude of stratagems for insulating their “hypotheses” from refutation, and successively narrow the “hypotheses” under investigation so as to render them operationally meaningless and irrelevant (though they maintain the appearance of doing serious “science”). This is what Hayek has called scientism.

The dichotomy between the social and natural sciences is not fundamental to the Austrians. Their paramount concern is to practice good, honest science. In economics, this involves acknowledging that some things we know not by observing statistics but by introspection and logic. The things we know from observing statistics and other social phenomena fall into the realm of history and are subject to interpretation. We can and do learn from history, biological as well as social, but not by falsifying unambiguous hypotheses.

Peter Lewin
Irving, Tex.

The ABC's of Information

Although Michael Rothschild’s *Bionomics* is a marvelous achievement, it doesn’t do justice to the development of the most important invention in the transmission of human knowledge — the alphabet.

Rothschild credits the Sumerians with being the first to make writing and copying “relatively easy” with their cuneiform writing on clay tablets. From there, he jumps ahead to the invention of better writing materials (papyrus, parchment, paper) as the next important step in the dissemination of knowledge, and then to Gutenberg’s invention of movable type.

The Sumerian-Akkadian cuneiform writing that Rothschild loosely refers to as an “alphabet” is actually a hodgepodge of *several hundred* characters, many of which retain their earlier ideographic function of denoting an object or an abstract idea. Others are unpro-

nounced “determinatives” that tell the reader that an adjacent word falls into a particular category. The remainder are consonant-vowel and vowel-consonant syllabic combinations along with sets of different characters that represent single vowel sounds. It was a cumbersome system that took years to learn.

Sometime in the first part of the second millennium B.C., an unknown Semitic genius somewhere in the Palestine-Sinai area hit upon the idea of a writing system in which each character stood for a different phoneme. This first real alphabet consisted of twenty-some consonants — a quantum leap in elegance and economy from the Sumerian-Akkadian system that preceded it. (Although an alphabet consisting solely of consonants seems strange to us, it lent itself well to Semitic word structure; the reader knew from context which vowels to pronounce with the written consonants.) The Canaanite dialects, including Hebrew and Phoenician, and other northwest Semitic languages such as Ugaritic and Aramaic, soon adopted this alphabet.

Rothschild is absolutely correct in his assertion that economic development and sophisticated information systems are interdependent. This relationship between commerce and communication was exemplified by two of the earliest users of the alphabet, the Aramaeans and the Phoenicians.

The Aramaeans were the great inland traders of Mesopotamia. Their language, Aramaic, written in its own distinctive fluid script of the same name, became the international medium of diplomacy as well as commerce among the Assyrians, Babylonians, and Persians.

The Phoenicians were the great maritime traders of the Mediterranean basin and beyond, who spread their alphabet along their trade routes from outpost to outpost. Legend has it that they brought the alphabet to the Greeks.

Once the Greeks got the alphabet, they found that some of the letters stood for consonant sounds they didn’t use — and began using those letters to represent vowels instead. The Greek alphabet therefore has the distinction of being the world’s first complete alphabet with letters representing both consonants and vowels. Alexander the Great later spread the Greek language across the known world with his conquests, mak-

ing it that era's international language.

In this role, Greek was replaced by Latin, at least in the western part of the Roman Empire, a language written in its own distinctive Roman alphabet. (The Roman script was based on Etruscan, which was based on Greek.) Our own English, also written in the Roman alphabet, has since become the international language.

It was the alphabet that simplified Gutenberg's task of inventing movable type. (What if poor old Johann had to mess with several hundred characters instead of two or three dozen?) It is an eloquent tribute to the alphabet that the first book Gutenberg printed was the Bible, a book originally written in three of the oldest alphabetic languages — Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic.

George M. Hollenback
Houston, Tex.

The Culture of Progress

I believe Michael Rothschild's restriction of economic information only to "accumulated technical knowledge" is unnecessary and omits other information that *motivates* technical development and provides market incentives to make such development "economic."

While it is undoubtedly true that technical knowledge is the medium that permits scientific and technological development, they neglect the role of *cultural* knowledge in the motivation of technical progress and in the creation of markets for technical goods. Examples are legion, but here are some to consider: It is widely appreciated that the seminal figures in the development of rocketry (Tsiolkovsky, Goddard, von Braun) were inspired by the fiction of Jules Verne; without that inspiration on their part (and of others), it is at least questionable if rocketry would have developed at all or as rapidly as it has — leading to the economic boon of communication and weather satellites, and the radical expansion of our knowledge of the earth and solar system. In a much different context, it was fear of a political ideology — Nazism — that prompted the free world's Jewish physicists to unite in the creation of the atomic bomb — thereby making available a source of energy beyond all previous calculation, with yet unknown economic significance mingled with its influence on the political environment within which the market can perform its function. In both cases, it was not techni-

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"*Baloo*" is the *nom de plume* of *Rex F. May*, a cartoonist whose works frequently appear in *The Wall Street Journal* and elsewhere.

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cal knowledge that spurred developments, it was *cultural* knowledge . . . in the form of literature and political doctrine.

Nor must we neglect the human needs that give rise to vast markets. We do not need the telephone to lecture each other on principles of science; we need the telephone to communicate family emergencies, arrange appointments, and a host of other *nontechnical* messages essential to our social survival. We do not watch the television primarily to absorb scientific lectures, but mainly to appreciate a new form of *art*: the simulation of life experience thorough acting and the technique of broadcasting moving pictures and sound. The great advance of printing, itself, was not to broaden the understanding of how to manufacture printing presses, but to disseminate the Word of God . . . at least originally. Recording on magnetic tape and optical disk is in

service to rap musicians and classical composers. The list is endless, and serves to illustrate that it is *cultural* information that largely creates the economic *demand* for technological innovation. If the bionomic economists fail to reckon with this phenomenon, they will have divorced human action from its *motives* and thereby may lose the most fundamental of insights into the market economy and its development.

After all, the most fundamental phenomenon in biology is the association between stimulus and response — and the awareness that pleasure and pain elicit diametrically opposed paths of action. The analogy of biology cannot work if we suppose at the outset that the subject (the economy and its actors) are anesthetized.

Michael J. Dunn
Auburn, Wash.

Terra Incognita

Omaha

The thin blue line that separates civilized society from anarchy, as reported by the *Associated Press*:

Tipped off that James Stennis, 48, might be armed, suicidal and dangerous, police surrounded his home and telephoned him, but he did not answer, so they ordered him to surrender with a bullhorn. The siege ended six hours later when Stennis, apparently a deep sleeper, woke from a nap and discovered his home was surrounded.

Boston

Fiscal prudence of legislators in the Bay State, as reported by the *Associated Press*:

The General Assembly of Massachusetts has appropriated \$75,000 for restoration of the town of Ripton. It is the first appropriation for Ripton since 1985, when the town received \$85,000.

The money for Ripton, which does not exist, was apparently added to the state's budget by pranksters. The budget also appropriated \$300,000 to study "the precarious activities of the endangered howame antalyst."

Singapore

Environmental development in this progressive city-state, as reported by *The Asian Wall Street Journal*:

The Environmental Ministry has ordered a ban on the manufacture, sale and import of chewing gum, citing an incident last year when pranksters smeared wads of gum on the doors of subway cars, preventing the doors from closing properly. Importers face fines up to \$10,000 and traffickers \$2,000.

A government official explained: "I personally consider it rather obnoxious, seeing very good-looking young boys and girls wandering about with their jaws moving like cows chewing cud. If those who chew gum did only that, it is all right. But when they start sticking gum under chairs, on walls, or dropping it on the floor, then it becomes a social problem."

Indiana

Advance in jurisprudence in the Hoosier State, as reported in the *Washington Post*:

The Supreme Court of Indiana conceded that forcing the inmates of mental hospitals to work was "coercive" because they "were not free to refuse work," but ruled nevertheless that the forced labor does not constitute "involuntary servitude," which is prohibited by the 13th Amendment, but "instead a 'civic duty' like jury duty or being drafted into the Army." The Court also ruled that even if the forced labor were a violation of the 13th Amendment, its victims would not be entitled to any damages, and that the workers need not be paid any wage for their labor.

Sacramento, Calif.

Commentary on legislative deliberation, from the Hon Dick Floyd, member of the California Assembly, as reported by the *Sacramento Union*:

"I don't care what the figures are," Floyd said when asked to comment on a newspaper report that he had cited fraudulent data in support of a bill that he had sponsored. He had published a report claiming a bill forcing motorcycle drivers to wear helmets would save taxpayers \$65 to \$100 million annually for medical cost, citing the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the San Francisco Injury Center as sources of the figures. Both organizations denied having provided such statistics.

New Jersey

Culinary note from the Nutmeg State, as reported in the *Bergen (N.J.) Record*:

New Jersey has banned the sale of soft-cooked eggs. Violators face fines up to \$100. The ban was the first in the country, made in response to a directive from the Food and Drug Administration.

Detroit

Cultural note from the Motor City, as reported by the *Detroit News*:

Four men were arrested and charged with the murder of a Domino's pizza delivery man. Police apprehended them at the address of the telephone number they had given when ordering the pizza. "We were just plain hungry," one of those arrested explained. They did not rob the deliveryman of his cash.

Roanoke, Va.

Dispatch from the War on Drugs, from the *Roanoke Times & World-News*:

Police searched a room at a local motel after being tipped off that the tenants were suspected drug dealers. The room was occupied by "Rocken," a group of professional anti-drug crusaders, on the road between appearances at high school assemblies.

Lahore, Pakistan

Support for traditional values in the Third World, as reported by the *Associated Press*:

Sohaid Roomi has sued a Moslem cleric who allowed Princess Diana of the United Kingdom to enter a mosque with her knees uncovered.

China

Latest social advances in the last great bastion of Marxism, as reported by the *Associated Press*:

Chinese authorities have arrested an average of 7 people per day for violation of a new rule prohibiting public "show of affection" at Beijing University. In addition, new rules outlaw booing at official speeches, the "unauthorized gathering of a crowd" (which is defined as more than five people), and the breaking of bottles because *xiao ping*, the Chinese word for "small bottle" sounds like the name of the Communist Chinese leader, Deng Xiaoping.

San Jose, Calif

Interesting observation of the mating habits of *Americanus environmentalis*, as reported in the *San Jose Metro*:

The Sierra Club has scheduled a hearing to determine whether Richard Bennett should be banned from Sierra Club functions. He is accused of being "very overt" in asking women for phone numbers while on an outing of the club's "singles chapter."

Middletown, N.Y.

Sexism and mandatory safety create a hopeless problem, as reported in the *Middletown Times-Record*:

Janice DeYoung was convicted of failing to wear a seat belt. According to testimony from the arresting officer, she refused to put on her seat belt because "her breasts were too large to wear the shoulder strap . . . car manufacturers are sexist and they don't design belts to fit women."

(Readers are invited to forward newsclippings or other items for publication in *Terra Incognita*.)

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continued from previous page

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