

## A Monthly Newsletter

THE

# Libertarian Forum

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## Ten Years Old!

That's right, your own dear **Libertarian Forum** now celebrates its tenth (10th!) anniversary. In a movement of short-lived flashes in the pan, in a period where libertarian — or other ideological — publications don't even last as long as the average marriage, the **Lib. Forum** continues to survive and flourish.

The idea of the **Lib. Forum** was conceived in the winter of 1968 on a rainy trip down the New Jersey Turnpike by our soon-to-be publisher, Joe Peden. It was announced at the first of a series of Libertarian Dinners in New York City in January. The dinners were launched because we perceived that the movement seemed, oddly enough, to be growing a bit larger than could continue to be housed in our living room. As I remember it, we thought that about thirty friends and acquaintances would attend the first dinner; we got about eighty, most of whom we didn't know, and many from far out of town.

Although the libertarian movement was then teeny and clearly, to any rational person, no threat to anyone, we were subject to intensive police surveillance from the very first dinner. A friend of ours who was then big in New York State YAF and a friend of certain police elements, would tell us on Sunday mornings virtually word for word what our speaker had said at the previous night's dinner and who had attended. We hope that the members of the Red Squad who attended were edified by the often arcane disquisitions on political theory that they heard at these dinners.

Presumably this — at the very least — egregious waste of the taxpayers' money was a spillover from the growing police and intelligence agency confrontation with the New Left during that period. Undaunted, we decided that the growth of the movement warranted a general libertarian meeting, to which we issued a call to all and sundry in the **Lib. Forum**, to take place at the Hotel Diplomat over Columbus Day weekend in 1969.

Let's face it, the meeting was pretty much of a shambles. Expecting about a hundred, we had once more underestimated the turnout, which was several hundred. But what a melange! An inchoate mixture had poured in from the Midwest, the South, seemingly from everywhere, containing every movement tendency from Randian silver-coin dealers with dollar signs to revolutionary anarchists from Michigan sporting black leather gloves (?) By the third day, the meeting had virtually dissolved under the impetus of about half the attendees, who quixotically persuaded themselves to abandon discussions of libertarian theory and strategy in order to launch immediate physical struggle against Fort Dix, New Jersey. Needless to say, Fort Dix managed to stand the test. The task of disruption, begun by these left-adventurists, was completed by the **polizei**, who had moved from quiet surveillance to evident and swaggering harassment.

So it was back to the old drawing board, and in a sense back to the living room. It seemed clear that a general call to one and all could only lead to a shambles that would be counterproductive in building any sort of viable

libertarian movement. A corollary problem during 1969-70 was the burgeoning of Left Deviationism, within the New York movement, tending not only toward adventurist armed struggle but also toward **becoming** leftists, that is socialists, themselves. The problem with Left Deviationism in that era was that even though the idea of a coalition with the New Left against the draft and the Vietnam War was **strategically** correct, **tactically** libertarians proved too weak, unorganized, and miniscule themselves to survive such alliance without becoming absorbed. So the spring of 1970 was largely spent in the **Lib. Forum** denouncing the flaws and dangers of Left Deviationism. We were also among the first to announce the death of the New Left in the early summer of that year, a death which was generally acknowledged by the fall term on campus.

But meanwhile, during the summer of 1969, an event had occurred which marked the first organizational stirrings of the modern libertarian movement. In the spring of 1969, we found that a strong Libertarian Caucus had developed within the bowels of the Young Americans for Freedom, managing to control the California, Pennsylvania, and Virginia chapters. The draft was the big issue on campus in those days, and the libertarians within YAF fought not only against the draft but in favor of draft resistance, a stance which was of course anathema to the dominant forces in YAF. Partially inspired by our special **Lib. Forum** anti-YAF issue, "Listen, YAF", the Libertarian Caucus, spurred on by the more radical Anarchist Caucus, broke dramatically from YAF at its biennial August, 1969 convention at St. Louis. The dramatic issue that brought the split to a head was the public burning by one of the Libertarians of his draft card.

The expelled Libertarian Caucus combined with the small, Maryland-based Society of Rational Individualists to form the Society for Individual Liberty, based in Philadelphia, which for years was the only libertarian presence on campus; while the California Libertarian Caucus members formed the California Libertarian Alliance, which put on several meetings for a couple of years in Los Angeles.

These organizational and developments of the 1969-70 period were indispensable to the later creation of a healthy, viable, consistent and self-subsistent libertarian movement. For the danger of the Left Deviationism of 1969-70 was that libertarians would remain a miniscule group tied to, and eventually absorbed by, the Left. The danger of continuing as part of YAF was that libertarians, as they had done for fifteen years before, would remain a miniscule group tied to, and eventually absorbed by, the Right. But the death of the New Left and the dramatic break from YAF meant that libertarians, small though they still were, would remain **on their own**, cleaving to their own consistent and well-thought-out principles, subordinate neither to conservatives nor leftists, making only **ad hoc** alliances on specific libertarian issues with

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# Abraham Lincoln

by Lance Lamberton

From time to time American historians are polled by newspapers to give their judgment as to whom they regard as the greatest of American presidents. Invariably the presidents who rate the highest are those who are alleged to have accomplished the most in the service of their country; men such as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Teddy and Franklin Roosevelt and of course Abraham Lincoln. In most of these polls Lincoln is found to be the most popular and thus the greatest of all the presidents. Yet with the possible exception of Jefferson what these alleged "great" presidents had in common was either their ability or the amount of effort they put into expanding the power of the executive- and not merely at the expense of the legislative and judiciary- but at the expense of the liberties of the American people.

The very conducting of these polls, and the results that accrue from the, are indicative of a collectivist and statist mind-set that permeates the thinking of the American public and the historical profession. Collectivist in that the newspapers who conduct these polls hope their readers will judge their findings as a definitive determination of truth. That by deferring to the consensus of historians- men and women who should after all "know" these things- the reader of these polls will also come to know who were the greatest American presidents. The reason this whole process of evaluating greatness is erroneous is because although an historian has more knowledge of historical facts than the layman, he by no means necessarily has a better set of values; and if one is to critically judge the choices most historians have made in these polls, one can readily claim that their values are inferior to that of the layman. Yet the layman often allows himself to be sucked into presuming that consensus among scholars can be equated with truth, without even knowing the political biases of the resulting consensus. By a process of deference the layman accepts the view of the majority and relinquishes his independent judgment. That is why I call the conducting of these polls as dependent upon a collectivist mind set.

Be that as it may, the results of these polls are most interesting in showing how deeply our interpreters of the American past are imbued with statist ideals. By their choices they have equated greatness with the expansion of state power. And being consistent in their statism they have chosen the most virulent of statist presidents to be considered the greatest.

It is a sad and depressing commentary on the American people and the ideals that most Americans espouse that they have chosen to venerate that American who was most successful in oppressing them. A quick review of the actions and policies of this pragmatic politician will show that the rosy portrait drawn of him by such slavish admirers as Carl Sandburg have little basis in fact.

A libertarian critique of Lincoln must start from the assumption that secession is an inviolate right of any people, and any government which attempts to impose its authority on those who have voluntarily chosen to no longer sanction that governments' authority, is initiating force. This Lincoln did, and in a cunning manner which was to become the hallmark of this "practical politician." He was determined to bring the South back into the Union and was convinced by April of 1861 that force would be necessary to accomplish this. Not wanting to alienate the wavering border states, he had to make it appear that the South was the aggressor. Lincoln was a genius in the use of ambiguous language, so on April 6, 1861 he had a note sent by messenger to Governor Francis W. Pickens of South Carolina which read, "I am directed by the president of the United States to notify you to expect an attempt will be made to supply Fort Sumter with provisions only; and that, if such attempt be not resisted, no effort to throw in men, arms, or ammunition will be made without further notice, or in case of an attack upon the fort."

To southerners this note carried the threat that Sumter was going to be provisioned so it could hold out and, if resistance was even attempted, arms, men, and ammunition were going to be supplied. To northerners he could claim (and did) that he was trying to save gallant men from

starvation, and that he was giving the South fair warning of his benevolent but nonetheless firm intentions to hold Fort Sumter against Confederate assaults. So by the art of ambiguous language Lincoln succeeded in throwing upon the South the seeming blame of firing the first gun. But in the words of Confederate Vice-President Alexander H. Stephens, "The aggressor in a war is not the first who uses force but the first who renders force necessary."

Lincoln's abrogations of human rights during the Civil War were in many cases first precedents. He did more to remove America from our libertarian heritage than any president before or since. He enforced conscription of soldiers for the first time in American history; he suspended the writ of habeas corpus; he refused Confederate offers of prisoner exchanges despite the horrendous conditions of the war prisons on both sides; he sanctioned the wanton destruction of civilian lives and property by Sherman's army in its notorious march through Georgia and other parts of the nearly defenseless South; He stifled freedom of speech and press throughout the North. He closed down anti-administration papers and had a certain Congressman Vandaligham arrested and then exiled to the South for making a speech critical of the Administration. Lincoln's cold blooded and ruthless execution of the war was exemplary of the philosophy which he lived by but seldom preached- that unjust means justify allegedly desirable ends. If the ends were justified Lincoln might be conditionally forgiven his excesses; but that clearly was not the case. Like any tyrant Lincoln used brute military force to subjugate a weaker foe.

In today's context, the most unpalatable aspect of the Lincoln legacy, aside from the dangerous precedents he established, is that he is held up as an example of American greatness. Ignorance as well as deliberate distortion for the Lincoln myth. School children are fed a Carl Sandburgian version of Lincoln as the great emancipator; as one who wanted only peaceful reconciliation with the South; as the great man who held our country together; as a loving husband and father; as a man of enormous compassion who wrote touching letters to bereaved parents; and of course the most absurd distortion of all- the honesty of Abe. Yet even in his role as emancipator the underlying motivations were to keep England out of the war, to encourage the development of a 5th column resistance force within the Confederacy, and to give the war a moral purpose since anti-war sentiment was growing rapidly in the North by 1863. With the exception of perhaps being a loving father and husband there is little to recommend Lincoln for admiration.

It is not surprising that Lincoln is hero-worshipped as much as he is considering the amount of propaganda used to promote his image. The question to be asked is: why so much propaganda on his behalf? What is to be gained in deifying him? A terse answer would be "For Reasons of State." It serves the interests of those who seek to enlarge the powers of the state to deify a man who was so instrumental towards that end.

In the process of attempting to de-mythologize Lincoln, we should recognize that people have a profound need to be proud of at least some aspects of their national or cultural heritage, and the accomplishments of the United States in the realm of political science is impressive by any standard. There are a number of men whose words and actions are worthy of high praise, and as libertarians we should in the process of debunking the Roosevelts and Lincolns of our past, point to worthy substitutes who sought to circumscribe state power. We have men such as Paine, Jefferson, Calhoun, John Taylor of Caroline, John Randolph of Roanoke whom we can offer as true examples of American greatness. It is timely and no less than imperative that we resurrect the anti-statists of our past and bury those who for too long have been regarded as the opposite of what they in fact were. □

<sup>1</sup> In his book, *The Late War*.

# The Thatcher Myth

by David Ramsay Steele

It now seems overwhelmingly likely that by the time you read this, Margaret Thatcher will be Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.

Until a couple of months ago her chances appeared slim. Opinion polls showed Labour and Conservative alternating with very slender majorities — not auspicious for the Conservatives in view of the common tendency for support to swing towards the government just before an election. Furthermore, Callaghan's personal popularity with voters was consistently much greater than Thatcher's.

## Race — simmering

A year ago Thatcher made a "tough" speech about immigration, which immediately boosted her support, but the boost lasted no more than a few days. It probably dawned on voters that Thatcher was not prepared to spell out any really severe measures against immigrants, especially as she found it necessary to backtrack almost immediately with a speech assuring blacks that the Conservative Party meant them well.

Britain's racial heterogeneity is a product almost entirely of the post-war period. There is a strong undercurrent of resentment against blacks, especially among blue-collar workers, and since the black influx is comparatively recent and sudden, it is not fantastic to contemplate sending blacks back where they came from (the West Indies, Pakistan and Bangladesh), either by compulsory repatriation (advocated by the minor racist party, the National Front) or by irresistibly generous cash inducements (proposed by maverick ex-Conservative Enoch Powell).

However, the major leaders of opinion, Conservative, Labour and Liberal, have expelled any such proposals from the realm of decent discussion. Any major party which committed itself to them would find it had bought the loyalty of a substantial anti-black opinion at the price of furious opposition from most "decent" (respectable and articulate) people, including, for example, virtually all the Christian churches. An astute politician like Thatcher is well aware that such a course would probably spell the end of the Conservative Party as a contender for power, for decades to come.

Thus, despite widespread strong feelings about race (and in some districts, daily physical attacks on Asians by gangs of young white thugs), it cannot be a serious electoral issue between Labour and Conservative parties under present conditions. After an alarmingly rapid growth, the National Front has recently declined. Only a very great increase in the severity of the economic crisis could change this situation in the near future. Thatcher's attempt to play the race card was no more than an opportunistic peace of speculative vote-catching. The public support it received from none other than F.A. Hayek was as ill-informed and maladroit as it was unprincipled. Her remarks did, however, serve to confirm her image among the progressive-minded as an ugly throwback to pre-Neanderthal days.

Nostrils filled with the heady scent of power, Thatcher went through all the shrill and undignified capers of the vote-grubbing politician, but it seemed fruitless. It began to look as though the Labourites had firm possession of the mantle of "natural party of government", that they had acquired the enviable reputation held by the Conservatives in the fifties, of being, however bad, so much safer than the dangerous crackpots in the other party.

## The strike wave

Screaming abuse at the Conservatives for being monetarist doctrinaires who would bring back the unemployment levels of the thirties, the Labour government has been quietly practising gradual but firm "monetary restraint", i.e. reducing the rate of growth of the money stock from its spectacular magnitude under the previous Conservative administration. Partly in order to disguise the significance of this fact from their socialist supporters, and partly out of mere confusion and ignorance, Labour has accompanied it with an "incomes policy". Not a

"statutory" policy, in which the mailed fist of the state is used to compel wage settlements below a specified percentage per annum, but a supposedly "voluntary" policy, based on agreement with the trade unions, and (it was thought) to be enforced by the threat of "sanctions": those firms granting "excessive" pay rises would be penalized by cancellation of government contracts.

Last year the percentage "norm" for wage rises was 10 per cent, largely window-dressing since many workers wouldn't have obtained 10 per cent even without a norm. But all those who settled for less than 10 per cent could be claimed as a "success" for the government's policy, rather as a witch-doctor might claim that his technique of skull-rattling and wailing incantations had "succeeded" because the sun did rise next morning. Those workers who obtained more than 10 per cent could be averaged with the others, and since the average rate of increase wasn't much above 10 per cent, this showed the government's policy had been broadly successful.

The policy was not wholly decorative, as there is among trade unionists a fear of the "union-bashing" Conservatives, and the unions will go to some lengths to co-operate with Labour on the grounds that Tory rule would be worse. But insofar as the unions held back their wage demands through loyalty to Labour and the "national interest", they expected that before long they would be able to recoup these losses. Why should they be penalized for their patriotic self-sacrifice? They could be heard muttering that a genuine socialist incomes policy, in which all wages were centrally controlled and all prices fixed at will by the state, would of course be paradise on earth, and they would be only too pleased to go along with it. But as long as the capitalist law of the jungle prevailed, why should they suffer more than others?

The 10 per cent norm expired and the government had to decide what to do next. Some Conservatives, and many trade unionists, urged an immediate return to "free collective bargaining". More timid souls spoke of "an orderly return to free and responsible collective bargaining". A few Conservative MPs pointed out that the Conservative Party now had the same wages policy as the Trades Union Congress — no state interference!

At this point, Callaghan's crew made the fateful decision which may have doomed them. Our 10 per cent policy, they said, has been very largely successful. The rate of inflation (they meant price rises) has fallen. Now we must make further progress. For the coming year, the norm is **five per cent**! Meanwhile the money supply and price index were still rising at around 10 per cent, the unions were deciding it was time to recoup their losses, and workers were being rapidly dragged into higher tax categories where their nominal (and much quoted) rises were being whittled down to almost nothing.

There was a big strike at the Ford car plant. Ford's gave in and granted a wage rise considerably in excess of five per cent. The government tried to impose sanctions against Ford's but none of the smaller parties in the House of Commons would support the government in this, so the sanctions could not be implemented. The government's much-vaunted pay policy was in ruins.

None of this in itself would have seriously injured the government's electoral chances. There is a widespread sentiment in Britain that the unions have far too much power, but that nothing should be done about it. The Conservative government of Edward Heath (1970-74) tried to tame the unions in the only way which people could understand: government licensing and regulations, followed by a head-on collision. In 1974 during the big miners' strike, Heath spitefully imposed a three-day week on industry, and shortly afterwards called an election. Instead of the voters' anger at the unions giving Heath a bigger majority, the hostility was

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(justly) directed at Heath, who lost power to Labour.

Since then the Conservatives have been associated with strife, confrontation and class war. Many people would dearly love to see the unions' power reduced, if this could be done painlessly, at the touch of a switch. But they do not want the serenity of their day-to-day lives to be rudely interrupted by strikes, power cuts, three-day weeks and the like.

The Labour government has played on this fear, and told the people: "We have a special understanding with the unions. The Tories want to get tough with them, but this will only cause trouble and upset. **We can keep the unions quiet.**" And the people believed it. They grumbled every day about the over-powerful unions, but preferred to go on grumbling rather than have their daily routine violently disturbed.

When it became clear that Callaghan's five per cent was finished, that did not automatically lead to the government's being discredited. There were even signs that the government could turn the collapse of their pay policy into a positive advantage. Was it not the Conservatives who favoured free collective bargaining, non-interference by the state, and therefore objectively supported the rising wave of union militancy? The Labour Party consisted of civilized, reasonable people who hoped to bring some order into industry. The Conservatives had wrecked Labour's well-intentioned scheme, and favoured a tooth-and-claw struggle of each against all.

Now all this has changed. A deluge of strikes descended, which might have been calculated to lose Labour the election. There was a national lorry (truck) drivers' strike accompanied by "secondary picketing" on a vast scale. Trade union committees became a sort of second Customs and Excise service, solemnly deliberating which goods they would magnanimously allow to be transported from any one place to another.

Then, there were strikes by "public service workers", low-paid government employees of all sorts, their living standards severely eroded by inflation. The dustmen (garbage collectors) struck, so bags of rubbish piled up in the streets, and there were rumours of rats. (Why, if this continued much longer, the streets would be almost as disgusting as New York City's.)

The British passion for grumbling ineffectually about the unions has always been eagerly fanned by the press, which gives an enormously exaggerated account of the impact of strikes. But now they certainly had material to work on. Almost every hour brought a fresh atrocity more hateful than the last. In some areas, we were told to boil our water because of the threat of typhoid. Hospital workers and ambulance drivers struck, permitting only what they considered life-and-death services. Their criteria of life-and-death were in all cases less rigorous than those of medically qualified people. Angry arguments were conducted in public between physicians and strikers, with one doctor allegedly retaliating by refusing to treat trade union members. A hospitalized woman, knowing she had at most a few weeks more to live, pleaded publicly to be allowed to die with some remaining dignity, which was impossible because of the closing-down of "inessential" hospital services, such as laundries. Ambulance drivers "working to rule" discovered that an injured man was just outside the border of their territory, and returned to base leaving him to die in the street. The gravediggers went on strike, so corpses piled up in the freezers. It was planned to dump them in the sea, and some irate bereaved announced they would go and dig the graves themselves.

The public reaction was decisive: a furious lurch to the Conservatives. For the first time, the personal popularity of prim and posh Mrs. Thatcher exceeded that of jovial farmer Jim Callaghan. The voters were prepared to forgive a Labour government a lot, but they were witnessing exactly what a Labour government was supposed to avoid. People had voted Labour to placate the robber unions, in exchange for peace and quiet. Now, it appeared, Callaghan had grovelled to the unions, the unions had walked all over him, yet still peace and quiet had fled.

Taken aback, Labour politicians tried to play down what was happening, but as one strike followed another, they appeared ridiculous. They retreated from five per cent to the magically discovered figure of

8.8 (eight point eight) per cent, but the unions smashed through this equally brusquely, with well-publicized rises of up to 35 per cent.

The Conservatives were as confused in their propaganda triumph as the Labourites were in humiliation. Conservative MPs swore loudly that none of them had ever breathed so much as a word in his sleep about free collective bargaining, or keeping the state out of industry. They had always been in favour of "responsible" collective bargaining, not (perish the thought) "free" collective bargaining. They evaded the question of exactly what they would do if the unions simply failed to be responsible, but although Labour tried to blame the Tories, this cut little ice. The current disaster could only be blamed on the party in power, and everyone knew the Conservatives were union-bashers at heart.

Most people in Britain see the situation in crude terms. Rising prices are due to union militancy; union militancy is due to grasping avarice. The solution is for unions to be less selfish, more responsible. Failing that, the government has to get tough with them.

The idea that a complicated latticework of privileges and entrenched attitudes has given the trade unions their awesome power, buttressed by the rigidity of a largely statified industry, and further encouraged by government incomes policies, is far too subtle for most people to grasp quickly.

One of Thatcher's specific proposals illustrates this perfectly. She has suggested that trade unions be compelled to hold a secret ballot of all members before calling a strike. (The usual practice is for unions to decide on strikes by public show of hands at a mass meeting). This proposal, if implemented, will do nothing to reduce industrial strife. The idea, fondly cherished by many Tories, that union members are all terrorized into going on strike by a few Communists is sheer fantasy. Those who ballot and then strike will have been given an additional political weapon. The unions will, however, rightly feel persecuted by the state, which feeling, if it does anything, will put them in more of a fighting mood.

It would be idle to tell Conservatives that unions should be voluntary associations, left free to conduct their internal affairs as democratically or undemocratically as they please, and that compulsory secret ballots are merely another small step on the road to a totalitarian dictatorship. Most Tory politicians would be quite unable to understand such an argument, but even if they could, they would be unable to sell it to the voters. Either there is unbridled greed, free-for-all, anarchy, law of the jungle — or the government must regulate, curb, control, suppress. This is the way most people view the alternatives. Thus Thatcher's proposal is seen as salutary, because it is a symbolic gesture that the government can take a big stick to the unions.

### The government falls

In the British system, there is a maximum of five years between general elections, but an election may occur at any time. This is normally decided by the Prime Minister, with a view to his party's electoral chances. An election must also be called if the government fails to command a majority in the House of Commons on a vote of confidence, usually unlikely if the governing party has a majority. But the Labour government was a minority government, dependent for every measure on attracting support from one of the smaller parties: Liberals, Scottish Nationalists, Welsh Nationalists or Ulster Unionists.

Callaghan clung to office for as long as possible, first by means of a "Liberal-Labour Pact", then by the support of the Ulster Unionists, bought with increased representation for Northern Ireland in the House of Commons.

The government also bought support from the Scottish and Welsh Nationalist Parties, by dangling the carrot of "devolution", i.e. home rule for Wales and Scotland. Scottish and Welsh Nationalism are both nine-days' wonders, like bra-burning or skateboarding. Only a minuscule proportion of Scots or Welsh want either complete national separation or a federal Britain. Both Welsh and Scottish Nationalists built up their strength rapidly in recent elections, but it is certain that they will be slaughtered next month. Conservative and Labour parties have both moved to buy off Nationalist support by offering "devolution", but it has gradually occurred to everyone that in the absence of national separation or federation, devolution is a lot of nonsense. The fad for devolution

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lasted only so long as no one was sure what it meant. Now everyone knows it means a "national assembly", i.e. an **additional** army of bureaucrats and petty politicians superimposed on the existing structure. This is still supported by the **leaders** of the Scottish and Welsh Nationalists, who see it as a first step to separation, but those who voted for them have no wish to leave Britain, so the bubble has burst.

The Labour government gave the Welsh and Scots referenda on devolution, pledging itself to introduce national assemblies if the results were affirmative. The Welsh voted overwhelmingly against their own national assembly. The Scots voted very narrowly in favour — but this did not mean that Scotland wanted devolution. Afraid that devolution might be introduced because of a low turn-out in the referenda, the government had made a stipulation that, as well as an absolute majority for a national assembly, there had to be 40 per cent of the electorate voting in favour. Some time before the vote it became clear that, whichever way it went, there would be no 40 per cent in favour, and this fact was known to all potential voters. The "Yes" campaigners all insisted loudly that abstention was tantamount to a vote against. On the day, there was an enormous abstention, and the 40 per cent was missed by a wide margin. The Scottish Nationalists immediately changed their tune: abstentions were irrelevant. (Doubtless they will assiduously cultivate for years to come the myth that Scotland voted for independence and was swindled by the English.) Furthermore, Scottish Nationalism, like Welsh Nationalism, reached a peak, and then rapidly plunged. The Scots were only a little behind the Welsh: if the Scottish referendum had been held a few weeks later, the result would have been negative.

Callaghan still hoped to push Scottish devolution through Parliament, but it soon became clear that Labour MPs had had enough. Callaghan could now offer the Scottish Nationalists nothing, and they announced that they would support the Conservatives to kick the government out. The Ulster Unionists had extracted from Callaghan all he could give them, and their traditional Conservative connections re-asserted themselves. On March 28th, the government was defeated in the House by a single vote. (By last-minute political trading, Callaghan had made his numbers up, but one Labour MP was sick and could not be there to vote.) The general election will be held on May 3rd.

### The real Thatcher

It is widely expected that a Thatcher government will abruptly change the whole course of political evolution in Britain since the war, that it will introduce something fearsome called "monetarism", withdraw state handouts to ailing companies, foster self-reliance and (as Conservative politicians are wont to put it) the bracing winds of competition. During the election campaign, Labourites will certainly contend that Thatcher is the most reactionary Tory politician since Attila the Hun, that she wants to send little children up the chimneys and starve the old-age pensioners. Some Conservative MPs will employ a sprinkling of libertarian rhetoric, and gut libertarians up and down the country will find themselves tempted not only to vote Conservative, but to do so nursing the wild hope that something is about to be done to get the state off their backs. In the U.S., both **Libertarian Review** and **Reason** have suggested that there may be a substantial benefit from a Conservative government.

It is as well to put it on record at the outset: a Thatcher government will continue to maintain and operate the corporate state, very much as it would be operated by Labour. The only important qualification is that Thatcher may provoke a ruinous general strike.

It is true that Thatcher has come under the influence of Sir Keith Joseph, who has come under the influence of Hayek. It is true that there is an articulate "monetarist" and broadly free market wing of the Conservative Party. But like all major parties, the Conservatives are a coalition of factions and interest groups, and most of them are far from even the dubious and diluted libertarianism of Joseph.

When Edward Heath was elected in 1970, his rhetoric was more resolutely laissez-faire than Thatcher's today. We heard all about the bracing winds of competition. Heath said he would stop giving handouts to "lame duck" industries, never introduce a compulsory incomes policy, and cure inflation "at a stroke". The Heath government nationalized

Rolls-Royce (when it was found to be bankrupt), introduced by far the most draconian peacetime incomes policy since the seventeenth century, and did more to debauch the currency than any Labour government before or since.

The annual increase in the money stock was three per cent in 1969 (under a Labour government). It had risen to 27 per cent by 1973. Britain's inflationary problems are still largely the responsibility of the last Conservative government, though the Keynesian Labour politicians have been incapable of pointing this out. It has been pointed out by Enoch Powell, the most charismatic and popular of British politicians. He has strongly urged Britons to vote Labour in the last two elections, and will probably do so again. Powell, who is intimately acquainted with the Conservative Party, has also predicted that a Thatcher government will introduce a compulsory incomes policy.

There is certainly more intellectual substances behind Thatcher's present policies than there was behind Heath's in 1970. But there has been a "monetarist" shift right across the political spectrum, and this has affected the Labour Party too. The Labour government has made cuts in state spending which would have been unthinkable for any government a few years ago. On the other hand most Conservatives are still committed to state planning. They interpret the Heath years by saying that the free market was "tried", then the government was forced to take account of the realities of the modern world, etc. They are only waiting for the first few difficulties facing a Thatcher administration, to start howling that we must learn to live in the modern world, i.e. enthusiastically operate the fascist-style corporate state.

Many of Thatcher's speeches, prepared for her by Joseph's think tank, the Centre for Policy Studies, contain excellent libertarian analysis, in very general terms. The mere suspicion that a Tory leader could reveal some sort of worked-out ideology has startled many people, used to the Conservatives' inane anti-intellectualism. What has generally escaped notice is the modesty of her concrete commitments. In 1970 Heath made it clear that he ruled out compulsory wage and price controls. Thatcher has gone out her way **not** to rule them out, and has volunteered the opinion that they are necessary in certain emergency situations. In 1970 Heath made it clear that in his view unprofitable companies should be allowed to die, without state aid. Thatcher has gone to great pains to emphasize that this is **not** her policy, that instead "the lame ducks should be given a chance to fly", i.e. that she fully supports government subsidies to "save jobs", and merely upbraids Labour for continuing to give transfusions of cash for too long to hopeless cases. All the leading Conservatives have carefully avoided saying that they will abolish the National Enterprise Board (which "invests" the taxpayers' money in unprofitable firms). Thatcher has evaded the question of where her promised cuts in state spending will occur, but has shown no reluctance in saying where she promises considerable increases (mainly the police and armed forces).

This is not to deny that the growth of Hayekian thought in Britain will have immense political repercussions, and may transform the Conservative Party, but we should look ahead 20 years for that. Nor is it to deny that a Thatcher government will make some small improvements. They will make it easier for council tenants to buy their homes. (More than a third of the population live in subsidized public housing, called "council housing"). They will slightly loosen the crippling nation-wide rent control. They may cut off some of the funds to Labour's pet industrial money-losing projects. They may cut taxes a bit — though they cannot do this without increasing inflation, or making cuts more painful than they have shown any stomach for. (Probably they will not reduce the tax burden at all, but shift from direct to indirect taxation, in the belief that the latter permits more "incentive").

Against these little improvements we must set the negative features. They are more deeply committed than Labour to the European Common Market. They are pledged to make substantial increases in spending on "defence". They are tougher on immigrants. After a year or two of "monetarism", they will probably swing into a massive confrontation with the unions.

It would be as foolish to blame a Thatcher government for being corporatist as it would be to blame the distilleries for drunkenness. They respond to the demand. Thatcher is a wily and ruthless politician, or if you prefer it, a highly competent entrepreneur in the political market. The state of opinion in Britain, and in the Conservative Party does not permit much progress towards liberty at present. □

# In Defense of Free Immigration

by Richard Ebeling

Right at this moment hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Vietnamese are in the South China Sea. Some of them are heading for Hong Kong, others are heading for the Philippines or Malaysia or Singapore. But regardless of their destination, everyone of those Vietnamese has made a choice. They have chosen to leave the land of their birth, their culture, their heritage and make a new start. They have decided that their homeland has become intolerable for themselves and their children. They hope and pray for a better life than the one they leave behind under the choking hand of socialist statism.

It is estimated that hundreds of these Vietnamese will never see land again. Faulty navigation, lack of food and fresh water or disease will bring them to their death. Many probably could be saved. Ships will pass them by that could have taken them aboard and landed them in safety, but will not. The ship captains and owners are reluctant to give shelter and assistance because they know that at whatever port at which they land they will be quarantined, inspected and detained, for none of the Asian countries are willing to give free entrance to these new citizens of the world.

But even those Vietnamese who languish in detention camps in Malaysia or the Philippines are still better off than those countless people in Cambodia who had no chance of escape and were consumed in that human bonfire that served the ends of collectivist purity and so-called people's justice.

The Vietnamese refugees are not unique in their experience, either in facing oppression at home or in their decision to emigrate. Countless millions of others in the last two hundred years faced similar despotisms and chose to make a new life in a freer land.

What is different is that for most of those two hundred years there was at least one country that was open to those escaping from economic destitution, political oppression or social rigidity. Today there no longer exists any nation whose gates are spread wide welcoming newcomers. Today the gates are closed and only political pressure or public shock and indignation can push them ajar for a fortunate handful.

The inscription on the Statue of Liberty may still read: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free . . . I lift my lamp beside the golden door," but it stands there as a cruel joke to those who see the "golden door" barred to their entrance.

Almost no other country on the face of the earth has had its history so closely tied with and dependent upon the free movement of men and women as has the United States.

In the Declaration of Independence, one of the stated grievances against the British Crown was governmental barriers to freedom of movement. The King "has endeavored to prevent the population of these States," charged the signers of the Declaration. They accused the British government of "obstructing the Laws of Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass (laws) to encourage their migration hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands."

Not long after the Declaration was signed, the principle was generalized when Thomas Jefferson wrote of "... the natural right which all men have of relinquishing the country in which birth or other accident may have thrown them, and seeking subsistence and happiness wheresoever they may be able, or hope to find them."

Since the first English settlers reached America in 1607, almost 50 million people have migrated to the United States.

A good many of those 50 million came to America to escape from persecution, oppression and the control of the State. In the 19th century, four million Irish came across the Atlantic, leaving behind potato famines and British imperialism. Between 1850 and 1900, five million Germans found a new home in America, many of them escaping from the convulsions and high conscription rates caused by Bismarck's wars of the 1860's and early 1870's. Well over one million Poles arrived before World

War I, leaving behind acute poverty in territory controlled by Russia and the suppression of Polish culture and nationality in the portions of Poland under German domination. The same story can be repeated in the case of almost every other national group that contributed an ingredient to the American melting pot.

For every immigrant, America offered a new beginning, a second chance without the oppressive air of privilege and power. A Swedish immigrant wrote home in the 1880's that his "cap (is not) worn out from lifting it in the presence of gentlemen. There is no class distinction between high and low, rich and poor, no make-believe, no 'title-sickness' or artificial ceremonies . . . Everybody lives in peace and prosperity."

In the 19th century, it was mostly young men who would first arrive from another country, attempt to make a living and send money back home. For example, of the Italians who came to the United States 78 percent were male and in the case of the Greeks, 95 percent of the immigrants were male. In the 1850's Irish immigrants were sending over one million dollars a year to friends and relatives in Ireland, with half of that amount being sent in the form of prepaid tickets to assist others in coming to America. In the late 19th century and early 20th century, the estimate is that 25 to 75 percent of all immigrants coming to America did so with money sent from compatriots already in the United States. Almost every one of these immigrant groups tended to start at the bottom of the economic ladder, taking the jobs considered undignified or undesirable by others. And almost every immigrant usually began his start in America by settling in that section of the city predominantly occupied by members of the same nationality, culture and language.

Those who wish to immigrate to the United States today are fundamentally no different from those who came to America a hundred years ago. The Mexican who slips into the United States and resides here as an "illegal alien" tends to be a young adult male looking for work; when he finds a job he sends a good portion of his earnings back to his family in Mexico. He usually has had no more than five years of schooling and probably speaks little or no English. The "aliens" tend to gravitate to the lowest paying occupations that others prefer to turn down, and it's estimated that twenty percent of them make below the minimum wage. They live in various Mexican-American communities around the country and except for work come into very little contact with "Anglo" Americans.

But there is a unique difference between the 19th century immigrant and the 20th century "illegal" immigrant. The earlier immigrants worked in a relatively free and open society and could expect in a generation or two to advance themselves economically and socially compared to the living standards in the "old country" as well as to when they first began to live and work in America.

The 20th century illegal immigrants have no similar future to look forward to. They have only the present, and it is a present that yields nothing but fear and uncertainty; uncertainty that at any moment they may be discovered by the immigration authorities and deported, and the fear that any resistance or refusal to accept the terms set for them by their employers may result in their being turned in to the authorities.

However, the really fundamental difference between the 19th century and 20th century immigrants concerns the ideological undercurrents present then and now. In the 19th century, freedom of movement was generally seen as an integral part of a philosophy and policy of free trade. Just as the free movement of goods across frontiers was seen as the method by which individuals of the respective countries of the world could benefit from their comparative productive advantages, free movement of people was seen as the method by which individuals—each pursuing their own personal interests—could assure that labor would come to be distributed among the various geographical areas in the pattern that was most conducive to private and social prosperity.

The same economic influences that enticed owners of capital to shift  
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## Free Immigration —

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their factors of production from one use to another, tended to operate on those who supplied labor services as well. Those countries that suffered from low productivity and low wages would "export" workers to other parts of the globe where wages were relatively higher and productive prospects were likely to raise the income positions of those who moved into the higher wage areas.

The advantages from the transfer of workers would tend to benefit everyone. In the case of the workers who immigrated, it offered the opportunity to compete in an alternative labor market where their relative income share could be larger. Free immigration benefited those who remained in the home country; the shrinkage of the domestic labor force due to the emigration of others, made labor a relatively more scarce resource in the market and tended to raise the level of wages in the home country.

The country into which the immigrants flowed benefited from the move, as well. The increase in the work force diminished the scarcity of labor services in various lines of production. The lowering of costs and the availability of more hands for production activities meant an intensification of the division of labor, a general increase in productivity and the opportunity for the production of totally new goods and services that had been beyond the reach of consumers in the past because of the lack of manpower to provide them.

The economic and social principles of *laissez faire* and *laissez passer* were intertwined and inseparable. The advantage that necessarily followed from the unhampered exchange of goods across the borders of different countries, could not attain their maximum potential unless the free movement of goods was matched by the free movement of labor and capital to where the greatest economic advantage was anticipated.

The advantages of *laissez faire* and *laissez passer*, however, require not only freedom of movement, but flexibility of wages and prices that enables an adjustment to change and progress. Need for adjustment can arise either from the demand side or the supply side.

If the pattern of relative consumer demand were to change, some industries would find their profitability enhanced, while other firms and industries would see their profitability diminished. A successful adaptation to the new circumstances would require a shifting of resources—including labor—from those areas where profitability had declined to those areas where it had increased. Resistance to lower wages, or reluctance to change occupations when the relative demand for a product declines, can only result in unemployment, a decline in output and income, and a general fall in the economic well-being of the country as a whole. The unwillingness of a few to adapt to new market circumstances rebounds to the disadvantage of all.

An increase in the availability of scarce resources necessitates shifts in the relative distribution of labor among industries as well. Labor is not a homogeneous glob; there are different types and degrees of labor skills, just as there are different types of capital goods and consumer goods. The arrival of new workers through the process of immigration means that in particular lines of employment, the increased labor supply will put downward pressure on some wages. To remain employed in their present occupation established workers would have to accept a lower rate of remuneration. If they find this unacceptable, then they may have to shift into other lines of work. While this job shift takes place, wages in the industries into which the older workers move may be lowered as well. This, in turn, may mean that existing workers in these other industries have to accept lower wages.

But regardless of the particular types of changes and ramifications an increase in the labor force brings about, the general long-run outcome will reflect itself in greater output and, through an intensification of the division of labor, a widening of choices and opportunities for all individuals, both as consumers and producers.

The expansion of rigidities through government-bestowed privilege and monopoly conflicts by its very nature with the free flow of men and material. To the extent that the protection of particular groups becomes the goal of the state, restriction on the potential competition of

newcomers must be imposed and enforced.

In the libertarian society, national borders—to the extent that governments may still exist—would merely be administrative boundaries designating areas of responsibility for the protection of life and property. In the Interventionist State, boundaries become lines of demarcation designating respective areas of privilege and power. As Wilhelm Ropke vividly expressed it, in the present era of nationalism and interventionism, "national frontiers have been changed into barbed wire fences."

When the welfare and employment of specially privileged groups becomes the duty of the State, protectionist quotas and tariff walls are soon joined by barriers to immigration. The arguments often used to support immigration controls easily bear this out. It is often said that if there were unrestricted immigration, welfare rolls would climb, neighborhoods would no longer maintain their present identities and qualities, and jobs would be stolen from American labor.

The fear of a swarm of immigrant welfare addicts is the logical terror of those who either operate or live off the dole. A crushing load of additional welfare recipients could easily arouse the wrath of the taxpayers and bring about the end of the welfare system. This is the logical fear of those who envisage the collapse of an economic privilege if too many other people should clamor for the same benefits. In fact, historically, the immigrant has usually been a young, hard working individual who has requested nothing more than a chance to make his own way. For example, in a recent investigation of 9132 welfare cases in San Diego County, only ten illegal immigrants were found on the rolls.

Neither neighborhoods nor their qualities can be eternally preserved. Values, preferences and personalities all change over time. Some land and property values grow and others decline, but regardless of which it is, this is the natural result of the free choices of acting individuals. It is as illusory to think that cities and neighborhoods can be frozen and maintained in their present form as it would have been to try to prevent natural forces from turning bustling western boom towns into decaying ghost towns. Those who attempt to use immigration barriers and other methods to resist change are not only fighting against the future, but the present, as well.

The fears of labor unions that a flood of immigrants will cause economic misery and mass unemployment is totally illusory as well. In a country such as the United States, more hands will almost always tend to mean more production and prosperity. Unemployment follows in the wake of an increased labor force only if rigidity and privilege prevents the changes in relative prices, wages, and employment that must occur if the benefits of immigration are to be reaped.

The most detrimental consequence of immigration barriers, it should always be remembered, is the personal tragedy, the economic misery and political despair, of those who find themselves locked into oppressive societies with no chance of escape. Wilhelm Ropke has suggested that "modern nationalism and collectivism have, by the restriction of migration, perhaps come nearest to the 'servile state' . . . Man can hardly be reduced more to a mere wheel in the clockwork of the national collectivist state than by being deprived of his freedom to move . . . Feeling that he belongs now to his nation, body and soul, he will be more easily subdued to the obedient state serf which nationalist and collectivist governments demand."

We can only hope the Ropke's deep pessimism is ill-founded, that the spirit of freedom will never be extinguished no matter how confining and all encompassing the power of the nation state. But how much more glorious if the motto on the Statue of Liberty once again embodied truth rather than hypocrisy—if America once again said to every nation: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free."

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## Ten Years Old —

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any or all other groups. The libertarian movement was now on its own, ready for whatever growth might accrue to its ranks.

The movement was still very small, and had had no recognition in the mass media. The big media breakthrough came in early 1971. Just before the Senatorial election of 1970, the *New York Times* went looking for some political action to the campus of Columbia University, not long before the site of notorious and extensive riots and sit-ins by the New Left. But now there was nothing; the New Left was dead. Not only that, but lo and behold! the only active political group on campus was an odd outfit called "The Freedom Conspiracy," consisting of clearly hippieish and radical types, but arguing in favor of Jim Buckley for Senate. This odd phenomenon led to a news article, and then, early next year, to a front-cover article in the prestigious *New York Sunday Times Magazine* by the two leaders of that libertarian campus group, Stan Lehr and Lou Rossetto.

The *New York Times* article led to the first wave of national media interest in libertarianism and the libertarian movement, in organs ranging from the *New York Times Daily Op-Ed* page to *Newsweek* to the *Lib. Forum* articles as "Takeoff" and "Takeoff II". In a sense, of course, the media created as well as observed the new movement, as the publicity sparked new adherents throughout the country.

There is no doubt that the organizational vehicle largely responsible for the enormous growth of libertarianism and of the libertarian movement in recent years was the emergence of the Libertarian Party. This imaginative effort was begun by a literal handful of people in Dave Nolan's living room in Colorado, with meetings during the latter part of 1971, culminating in the first national convention in Denver in June 1972 and a Presidential race that year. Perhaps stung by the abortive attempt at a mass movement at the Hotel Diplomat, the idea of an LP and such an early Presidential race seemed quixotic to us at first. Happily, we were wrong, and Nolan was right, and the LP began to take off in every respect.

For soon it became clear that the Libertarian Party performed several vital functions at once. It provided hope and a means of activity to numerous veteran libertarians who had abandoned all hope of ever doing anything to advance the cause of liberty in the United States, in the real world. The forum of election campaigns provided vital education in libertarian principles to the public, and brought more libertarians into our organized ranks. And it provided a way, in fact the only possible way, to actually roll back the Leviathan State.

We are not going to bore our readers by reciting once again the great story of the triumphal and accelerating growth of the Libertarian Party and of other ancillary scholarly and educational and political groups in the libertarian movement. Libertarianism is now a powerful force, and it is clear that the Libertarian Presidential candidate will garner **many millions** of votes in 1980. Despite inevitable disagreements and faction fights, and quarrels over ideology and tactics, the Libertarian Party platform has gotten purer and more consistent each year along with its phenomenal growth, and has suffered none of the schisms and splits that have plagued other ideological parties. There are still problems, of course, and undoubtedly always will be. The L.P. has a very high turnover, and we will have to try to find ways to reduce the number of people leaving or "burned out." With new members constantly filling our ranks, we will have to find better ways of internal education in libertarian principles and issues, more than can possibly be done every four years in debates on the platform. We have to guard always against that inevitable parasite on growth and success: right-wing opportunism, the siren temptation of watering down or hiding our principles in order to gain votes and electoral victory. We have to guard against the view that libertarianism is only a form of "extreme" conservatism, or that we are merely, in the words of one ex-libertarian-turned-conservative, "conservatives who have fun." But these are problems we should be able to surmount. We can face the future with high hopes and a high heart.

That libertarianism is now a powerful movement can be seen in the June 8 issue of *National Review*. Virtually the entire issue, from the cover to two articles totalling 12 pages, is devoted to an hysterical smear of libertarianism and the libertarian movement, prominently featuring your editor.

Having been read out of the conservative movement (with my consent) by *National Review* twenty years ago, it is amusing to be read out, with considerably more fanfare and bluster, yet again. Not only is every knock by the enemy a boost, not only does this bluster demonstrate the power of the libertarian movement, but also the *National Review* anathema will have the useful effect of once again dramatizing and emphasizing our basic separation from conservatism, and of insuring against our being swamped by conservative adherents who don't understand this vital and basic difference.

The *National Review* hatchet-job only emphasizes the growing coalition between the liberal and the conservative wings of the establishment on behalf of the State. Only shortly before, libertarianism and *Inquiry* magazine were attacked by both *Commonweal* and the *Nation* for its dangerous anti-governmental tendencies. Now, *National Review*, supposedly at opposite poles, has openly joined the pro-government pack. But that's all right, Messrs. Left and Right. Because the people are turning against Big Government in all its forms, left, right, and center. The people are rising up angry, and they are rising up libertarian. ☐

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