

# — Double Issue —

THE

# Libertarian Forum

Murray N. Rothbard, Editor

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## frontlines, RIP

*frontlines* is dead, "murdered" in part by the economic "movement depression" we discussed in our April issue. The loss of this thorough and courageous monthly newsletter leaves an irreparable gap in the libertarian movement. "How will we know what is *really* going on?" will be the cry of all movement activists, regardless what faction they may belong to. For *frontlines* was our *New York Times*: careful, diligent, objective, apart from all the factions. *frontlines* had the resources—the money, the time, the personnel—and the willingness, to do scintillating investigative reporting, as well as to check and double-check all the facts. Hence, the enormous moral authority that *frontlines* properly commanded in the movement, because we all knew that if something was in *frontlines*, it was important, and it was true. It brought us all the real movement news, and not just pap and press releases. It also enlivened and enriched the movement with articles and letters debating issues and strategy from various alternative perspectives. I did not always agree with *frontlines*, especially in its earliest days, but the measure of its importance and its excellence is that it is literally impossible to conceive of the movement without it.

We all owe a great debt of gratitude to the *frontlines* staff, performing these vital functions, and keeping up their standards even while trying to stay afloat. In particular to editor Bob Poole, and to indefatigable investigative reporter Patrick Cox.

Even though the loss of *frontlines* will be permanently mourned by the movement, we can at least be grateful for the fact that it lasted long enough to perform its most vital task: The unrelenting exposure of the malignant Crane Machine which had dominated the Libertarian Party and much of the movement for so many years. Precisely because of its thoroughness and its well-deserved moral authority,

the exposures by *frontlines* were vital and indispensable to the great work of Bringing Down the Crane Machine, a task which I hope and trust will be completed at the Armageddon PresCon this Labor Day weekend. We can all be thankful that *frontlines* survived long enough to complete that task.

The death of *frontlines* should also be placed in a wider perspective. It is part and parcel of the unfortunate trend of the last few years, of ignoring movement concerns, movement news and issues, principles and applications, in order to whore after "outreach". And so we have had the death, in the last few years, of *Libertarian Review* and of *frontlines*, both movement publications, while the "sexier", bigger circulation, "outreach" magazines such as *Reason* and *Inquiry* keep rolling on. In the name of "let's stop talking to ourselves" we have gradually cut out all talking, discussing, etc. *within* the movement itself, and thereby we are more and more failing to nourish, educate, and reinforce the people who count the most: our own libertarians. Libertarians have been isolated enough by the culture and by world conditions over the years; it is a crying shame that libertarians themselves are abandoning our own people, our own movement, in a vain quest for an outreach that is pointless, vapid and self-defeating without the solid base of an "inreach", a nourishing of precious cadre. If the movement should ever collapse, it will come, not from oppression by the State, but by a moral and strategic failure from within the movement itself, by its leaders and moneybags.

In the meantime, except for the various LP newsletters, movement journalism is now down to a small number of monthly newsletters: the *Lib. Forum*, our sister publication *Libertarian Vanguard*, the increasingly aberrant *Voluntaryist*, and the Craniac smearsheet *Update*. It is not, to say the least, a very healthy situation. ‡

## Leonard Read, RIP

Leonard E. Read died as I'm sure he always wanted, in harness, active to the very end of more than eight decades of a rich and active life. More than any other single person, Leonard was the founder of the modern libertarian movement. During World War II, this elegant, charismatic, eloquent man was executive director of the Los Angeles

Chamber of Commerce. He paid a visit one day to Bill Mullendore, crusty head of Commonwealth Edison of Southern California, to find out why Mullendore opposed the structure of economic controls that all "enlightened" businessmen were supporting. Mullendore changed Read's life, and converted him on the spot, to what he came to call

"the freedom philosophy". Toward the end of World War II, in an era when literally no one, anywhere, believed in the free market, let alone liberty, Read and Mullendore organized Pamphleteers, Inc. and began to change American culture by publishing unknown, totally neglected libertarian authors: Rose Wilder Lane's scintillating *Give Me Liberty*; Ayn Rand's *Anthem*, a marvelously individualist short story; and the most important works of the French *laissez-faire* economist Frederic Bastiat.

After the war, Read came to New York to work at the National Industrial Conference Board, but the idea of dedicating his life to liberty, to becoming, in effect, a professional libertarian, consumed him. And so, in 1946, in a beautiful setting at Irvington-on-Hudson, New York, Read launched the Foundation for Economic Education, the oldest libertarian institution in the world.

We must realize that becoming a professional libertarian, founding a libertarian institute and think-tank, was far more foolhardy a project then than it is now. Intellectuals were all socialists, economists were Keynesians, businessmen were statist; there seemed to be no constituency for freedom. But Read was undaunted, and he gathered in Irvington the best libertarian and free-market scholars of the day.

Nowadays, quasi-free-market think tanks are all the rage, but God forbid they should ever discuss *ideas*, or moral principles, or even go beyond arguments for alleged economic efficiency or narrow reformist (allegedly "practical") projects on how to fix up the FTC or Social Security. Early on, and throughout the life of FEE, Leonard Read realized that while economics is important, the crucial questions were moral, and that liberty must be grounded firmly in natural rights and moral principles. Paradoxically, this made the FEE people better economists, because they stuck to *laissez-faire* principles without allowing themselves to get bogged down in reformist traps, traps which are the very opposite of "practical" because they accomplish nothing and only divert attention from fundamental principles.

As a result, Leonard Read was squarely an "abolitionist", a principled strategy made clear in his hard-hitting pamphlet, *I'd Push the Button*, a speech made before a business group in 1946. At that time, business favored gradual, phased relaxation of the crippling network of wage-price controls that we had inherited from World War II and that many Americans wanted to make permanent. Read startled the business leaders by calling for immediate and total abolition of price and wage controls. If I had a button on this podium that would permit me to do away with all controls at this moment, he proclaimed, I would push that button!

During the Korean War, Read courageously and openly opposed both conscription and the Korean War. His beautifully written pamphlets, *Conscience on the Battlefield* and *On That Day Began Lies*, in which he came close to Tolstoyan anarchism, are some of the best libertarian products of the 1950's.

At FEE, Leonard Read provided that critically indispensable feature of any movement: an Open Center, a place where people can go to find libertarian publications

and meet other libertarians. In those days of total libertarian isolation, of the absence of any real movement, the bringing together of libertarians was extraordinarily important. If in the 1960's It Usually Began with Ayn Rand, in the 1940's and 1950's It Usually Began with Leonard Read and FEE. Indeed, FEE, to this day, continues to serve as an Open Center and as a channel for conversion of new people, especially young people, to the libertarian philosophy.

In addition, more than anyone else Read coined the name "libertarian" for the current movement. Before that, we had no single name, awkwardly going back and forth between "individualists" and "true liberals". The problem with the latter phrase is that the quasi-socialists had already succeeded in appropriating the term "liberal", and calling ourselves "true" anything was confusing and hardly persuasive. And the term "individualist" tended to confuse political philosophy with possessing a spirit of individual autonomy. Read and a few others launched the term "libertarian for the freedom philosophy, and it stuck—the only case I know of when we were able to appropriate a word from others. For before that, communist-anarchists had often referred to themselves as "libertarian." The first time when we were referred to publicly as "libertarians" was in an odious book, published in the 1950's, by a certain Ralph Lord Roy, entitled *Apostles of Discord*. There was a repellent literature in those days of works written by aggressive centrists and "moderates" who pilloried all "extremists" as *per se* evil. Roy, a Social Gospel Protestant, wrote this book to attack both Communist and ultra-rightist "extremists" in the Protestant church. That was par for the course in those days, but lo and behold! he included a chapter called "God and the 'Libertarians' ", spotting quasi-anarchistic extremists then centered around a libertarian publication for Protestant ministers called *Faith and Freedom*. Libertarianism had arrived on the American ideological scene.

In later years, Leonard Read drew away from the libertarian movement which he had named and founded. He drew away sharply from anarcho-capitalism, and denounced it vigorously; he was also strongly opposed to any form of libertarian political action, or indeed to active proselytizing in general. (Even though in the early months of FEE, he had written a surging pamphlet, *Pattern for Revolt*, in which he presented the speeches he would have written if he had been a Presidential candidate.) Increasingly, Read took the view that any refutation of error was pointless, and that we should confine ourselves to quiet reiteration of fundamental truths. As a result, in a way somewhat similar to the case of Ayn Rand, the movement passed Leonard by. But Leonard Read stuck to his guns. He was, as always, his own man, and all libertarians owe him an enormous debt as our founder and the creator of our first and most enduring Open Center. In any case, I am sure that Leonard is now with the angels, indulging in his favorite aristocratic sports of croquet and curling (of which he was for many years a champion.) As a lad from the streets of New York, croquet and curling are about as familiar to me as lambing or Ming pottery; but one great thing about liberty is that it can encompass people from a huge variety of climes and cultures. Leonard Read was one of the Immortals, and he must never be forgotten.

# The New Menace of Gandhism: A Comment

by Wendy McElroy

In *Libertarian Forum* (March, 1983), Murray Rothbard warns the movement of a new menace, a fad which is draining the best minds from the Libertarian Party—Gandhism. The specific inaccuracies of this article are the subject of a response by George Smith to be published in the next issue of *The Voluntarist* (June). As a founder of the Voluntarists and editor of its newsletter, I wish to address instead a prominent implication of Rothbard's critique; namely, that Voluntarists are neo-Gandhians bent on martyrdom as a strategy. This is absurd. If anything in Voluntarist literature called for pacifist martyrdom, if any of our activities remotely reflected this approach, you could be sure it would have been cited in evidence. Moreover, both George Smith and I have attempted repeatedly to inform critics, including Rothbard, that we advocate the moral right to use defensive force and that non-violent resistance is merely one of several strategies we are exploring.

Equally absurd is the idea that George Smith, Carl Watner or I have become disciples of Gandhi. We do not share his religious, economic, cultural or lifestyle views. But Gandhi as a political theorist, Gandhi as one of the foremost strategists of this century, makes for fascinating study. We do not worship anyone, but there are people from whom we can learn.

In expressing and expanding the theory of anti-political anarchism, the Voluntarists are exploring various non-political strategies of fighting the State. One of these is non violent resistance as advocated by such Nineteenth Century libertarians as William Lloyd Garrison, Ezra Heywood, Henry David Thoreau and Benjamin Tucker; that is, a withdrawal of the cooperation and consent upon which so much of the State depends. Non violence involves saying "no" to the State. Not a passive, meek "no", but a determined and active refusal to participate in injustice by lending support to it. As a strategy, non violent resistance subsumes dozens of activities, including letters-to-the-editor, tax resistance, boycotts, bumperstickers, personal statements, picketing, petitioning and demonstrations. Thus far, the Voluntarists' main expression of non violence has been a fund established to support the efforts of the libertarian, Paul Jacob, who was indicted for his refusal to register for the draft and who has been balancing precariously the need to live underground with his anti-draft agitation (eg. giving interviews to numerous periodicals). Rather than rushing to the martyrdom so vehemently predicted for us by those committed to the political means, our first priority is to set up a financial base for those libertarians who have currently, by *living* their principles, incurred the wrath of Leviathan. This is in contrast to the Libertarian Party which seems content virtually to ignore such law breakers as Paul Jacob, leaving them to dangle on whatever limb the State hangs them.

Although pacifists often champion non-violence, there is

no necessary connection between the two positions and, in investigating non violence as a strategy, the Voluntarists in no way reject the moral right of self defense. Against the criminal in a dark alley or a rapist climbing through the window, defensive force is not only moral but, perhaps, the most effective method of achieving your goal—personal safety. Defensive force against the State is moral but may be the least effective method of achieving the goal of libertarianism—a peaceful society. This is not simply because force tends to breed force. Non violence is based on a particular analysis of the U.S. government as requiring legitimacy; the delineation of this analysis has been the first priority of *The Voluntarist*. The strength of the U.S. government lies not only in its ability to use force, but in the legitimacy people grant to it. The taxman can steal with an impunity unknown to the common criminal because people accept the authority of the government to tax. To attack the State, it is first necessary to tear off this veil of legitimacy. This cannot be accomplished through political action which sanctions the system or through force which lends credence to the State's claim to guardianship of law and order. Terrorists and others who use force give the State the moral justification to enact more and stricter legislation. Non violent resistance is one promising alternative to force and politics as strategies. Whether or not it lives up to this promise is an empirical matter—that is, are there theoretical flaws? What is its history? Is it compatible with libertarianism/anarchism? What is the cost compared to the benefit?

If the Voluntarists can be said to stress any strategy, it would be education, perhaps reflecting the background of its founders. George Smith is a philosopher; Carl Watner and I are historians. Having written and lectured on libertarianism for years, we consider education to be the necessary basis on which to build any other strategy. Within this context, the two most exciting strategies are non violence and the establishment of parallel institutions; that is, the withdrawal of consent from the State and the creation of private alternatives to government services (schools, court systems, police). These are by no means the only strategies we are or will be considering. Nor do we have any emotional or moral commitment to a particular strategy, with the possible exception of education. Any strategy consistent with libertarianism will be examined empirically. It is with this spirit that the Voluntarists approach Gandhi and other strategists. And it is for this spirit, this willingness to consider the strategies of Gandhi and Thoreau (one of Gandhi's mentors), that we have been called all manner of exotic names from "mystic" to "martyr." Even George Smith, author of *Atheism, the Case Against God*, has not escaped accusations of spiritualism. Perhaps it is a tribute to the strength of our ideas that critics prefer to critique the people rather than the theory.

One of the challenges of non violence vis-a-vis

libertarianism will be fitting it into a specifically anarchist framework. The left has used non violence to good advantage (the anti-war, anti-nuclear movements), but their goal was to reform rather than to abolish the State. A critique of non violence pointing to holes in the theory or problems with its application would be welcome. A critique attacking the Voluntarists for positions they do not hold and distorting the ones they do has no value. ‡

\* \* \*

#### The Editor Replies:

In her article, Wendy McElroy adopts what might be called the "official" line of the Voluntarists: that they are not Gandhi cultists or proto-martyrs, but are simply and reasonably exploring the empirical benefits of a strategy of non-violent resistance in bringing down the State. Why am I not convinced? Not because I believe that she or other Voluntarists are lying, but because I perceive an inner dynamic at work of which they are perhaps not aware: a dynamic that is pushing them rapidly in the direction of cultism. For example: After their sober investigation of

Gandhite strategy is over, do they propose to explore the empirical possibilities of *other* successful historical strategies for social change: such as the American Revolution, Lenin, the Zionist movement, etc.? Somehow, I bet not. Moreover, if Ms. McElroy were right, and they are not cultists, then George Smith would have written a very different response to my "Menace of Gandhism" than he is in fact publishing in *Update*. He would have said, in effect: "Rothbard is right: Gandhi was a statist charlatan and a terrible man, but so what? We are only studying the possible empirical benefits of a strategy of non-violent resistance." It would have been great if Smith had written in that vein, but unfortunately he did not. He acted as if I had traduced his best friend, and he leaped in to defend the undefendable Mahatma virtually root and branch. So what does that tell us about the infection of Gandhite cultism among the Voluntarists? Of course it is possible that an unrecognized schism is developing in Voluntarist ranks, and that Smith has become a cultist while the others have not. But I will have to leave it to the Voluntarists themselves to sort that one out.

And leave them I will: For I hope and expect that this issue of *The Lib. Forum* closes the books on my side of the Great Debate over Gandhism. The Voluntarists may or may not choose to spend the rest of their lives poring over the life and works of this little Hindu charlatan; I for one do not. ‡

## Gandhism Once More

In a sense, the current Great Debate in the libertarian movement over Gandhism/Voluntarism is one of the most bizarre ideological disputes ever recorded. For even though there are only four or five protagonists, they are waging the battle in no less than five different channels of opinion: the *Lib. Forum*, the *Lib. Vanguard*, the *Voluntaryist*, *Update*, and a *samizdat* Open Letter. Since there are probably only three or four *other* libertarians in the country who are on all the above mailing lists and who are fascinated enough to pore over all these articles, this means that point-by-point refutations become mere beatings of the air.

We will try, then, to be mercifully brief. George Smith, leader of the Voluntarists, has curiously chosen to make his initial reply to our "The New Menace of Gandhism" (*Lib. Forum*, March, 1983), not in our publication but in the pages of the Craniac smearsheet *Update*. His draft, "Rothbard on Gandhi: A Reply", has fallen into our hands. Writing in scarcely controlled fury, Smith adopts the standard polemical trick of asserting (1) that there were errors in my article, and (2) that what was accurate was already known by everyone, so why write it? The answer, of course, is that the article did not pretend to be the definitive biography of the Mahatma, but was intended to bring basic and unpleasant facts about Gandhi to the attention of the libertarian movement.

Yet despite Smith's vague trumpeting about my alleged

errors, he says not a word about the most important points in my article: Gandhi's medical hypocrisy, his odious advice to the Jews of Europe to commit mass suicide and to the British to invite the Nazis to occupy their island, his advice to meet the atomic menace by sending love-vibrations to the pilots carrying the bomb, or his hatred of the "sin" of Western technology or industrialism. Indeed, the only point that Smith disputes is my contention that Gandhi opposed education per se, to which he retorts that the Mahatma was only against compulsory schooling. Here we have an abiding difference in interpretation.

For the rest, Smith triumphantly discovers "contradictions" that don't exist. Dredging up a forgotten tempest-in-a-teapot of four years ago, he wonders why I then attacked the high-tech "space cadets" in the Libertarian Party and am now attacking the "low tech" Gandhi. The two situations, however, are very different. It seemed to me that the "space cadets" were in favor of abandoning political action (within a political party!) in behalf of futuristic projections, and furthermore there were disquieting implications in their statements that high-tech should be coercive, and that those who wanted to bask in a low-tech community would have to be dragooned out of it. In any case, that dispute only lasted a couple of months, the space cadets abandoned some of these implications, and a happy compromise was reached by all. Gandhi, on the contrary, was not only low-tech, but *compulsorily* low-tech,

denouncing industry as sinful, and leading the burning of machine-made textiles.

In both cases, coercion was the major problem. As for my own personal values, yes, I plead guilty to Smith's charge of "embracing American middle-class culture", that is, I favor the advance of technology, industrialization, and higher standards of living. If this be "American middle-class values", then yes, I uphold them, and Smith and his cohorts can make the most of it. There is a mighty equivocation in Smith's charge that "Presumably Gandhi does not meet the Rothbardian imperative that the entire world should embrace American middle-class culture." "Should" yes, "must" no. In other words, I think that Third World countries *should* adopt the values of the free market, increased productivity, higher living standards, etc., but I am of course opposed to *forcing* them to do so. This is a strange slip for our bright young libertarian philosopher to make.

The other alleged contradiction is that I maintain that Gandhi did and yet did *not* advance the cause of Indian independence. What I actually wrote is that some historians maintain that his deeds *delayed* the advent of Indian independence (I don't take a stand on this one way or the other), but that even so, independence bore the stamp of Gandhism, a stamp which led, as I pointed out, to the slaughter of millions of Hindus and Muslims. In short, Gandhite independence may have been delayed, but it also bore his stigmata of mass murder—with Gandhi throwing over his alleged principles of non-violence to justify the slaughter of Muslims and the Hindu invasion of Muslim Kashmir.

There are other *curiosa* in Smith's article. Why, he wonders, did I bring in the allegedly irrelevant views of Gandhi on sex and food? I thought I made it clear in my article that I did so because Gandhi did not think them irrelevant; to the Mahatma, his entire social philosophy was an integrated and seamless web, and the article was about that philosophy and how it was expressed in action. Smith also charges that I left out various flaws of the Mahatma, e.g. that he favored prohibition of liquor. Indeed. As I said earlier, I did not claim that my article was an exhaustive discussion of Gandhi. For example, everyone is urged to read a devastating and scintillating critique of Gandhi, the man and the movie, by Richard Grenier, "The Gandhi Nobody Knows", in *Commentary* (March 1983), pp. 59-72. Grenier adds a great many more horror stories about the Mahatma, including his joining in the suppression of black Africans in South Africa, and his abiding obsession with excrement, in his life and his writings. Particularly hideous is the fact that while Gandhi himself, when ill, invariably abandoned his anti-Western-medicine principles, that he allowed his own wife to die of pneumonia rather than receive injections of "sinful" penicillin. Surely this one act alone should make the Mahatma unacceptable even as a quasi-guru.

A final oddity is Smith's wondering why I did not press on to echo Churchill's attack on Gandhi's clothing habits (Churchill denounced him as a "half-naked fakir.") Well, I'm sorry, George, I just don't give a damn *how* the man dressed.

One unfortunate point is all too clear from Smith's

enraged article. The Voluntarists *claim* that they are not Gandhite cultists, that they are simply studying the man and his life to extract tactical and strategic lessons for our time. Fair enough. Except then: *Why* does Smith have the *chutzpah* to write that the "fundamental Gandhi" "devoted his life to the cause of liberty"? And also: *Why* does Smith act as if an attack on the Mahatma is tantamount to a personal attack on himself? Why did my article touch a raw nerve? I am afraid that these are *not* the reactions of a sober analyst trying to extract lessons from all examples of successful social change. These are the reactions of a cultist who has found his guru. I hope that I am wrong, but it looks very much as if the nascent Voluntarist movement has rapidly degenerated into a Gandhite cult.

Another unpleasant aspect of the Smith article is that he chose to submit it to *Update*, and also that that Craniac smear-sheet chose to publish it. At first blush this alliance between the Voluntarists and the Crane Machine seems a strange one indeed. For what could George Smith, the White Knight of Purity, the man who holds all political action to be immoral, have in common with the Prince of Darkness, the master opportunist, Ed Crane? There is, of course, the fact that the Crane Machine would be happy to publish almost *any* attack on Yours Truly. But there is a far deeper bond between the two groups. For *both* groupings are bitterly hostile to the existence of a principled Libertarian Party. Smith, erroneously convinced that *any* Libertarian Party is immoral, has apparently gotten to the point where he would like to see the LP as *unprincipled* as possible, so as to make more converts to his own cause, and to see more good libertarians leave the LP. The Crane Machine, steeped in opportunism and sellout, are also bitter about the recent emergence of a principled Libertarian Party which they, in consequence, cannot control. Hence, the Unholy Alliance between both groups, both trying to wreck the growth of a principled Libertarian Party.

But that Unholy Alliance shall not succeed.

One turns with relief from Smith's intemperate assault to Carl Watner's unpublished "Open Letter to Murray Rothbard." Not only does Watner—the other major Voluntarist leader—eschew Gandhite cultism (either because he doesn't believe in it or because he is content to let Smith carry the ball), but his article is characteristically sober and courteous. Unfortunately, Watner's argumentation is scarcely compelling. He writes off the American Revolution as a failure, since oppression eventually resulted, and Benjamin Tucker's non-activism as a failure because the Tuckerite movement dissolved after a generation. Well, since the anarcho-capitalist Utopia has never been established, in a sense Watner could write off *all* of history, and all people and movements, as "failures" by definition—which is essentially what he does. And yet, of course, there are relative degrees of failure and success. The American Revolution, which was violent, despite Watner's protestations, was relatively successful—in fact the most successful example of libertarian social change in history. Benjamin Tucker might not have destroyed the State, but he fashioned a scintillating intellectual movement of libertarians that lasted a long time—far longer, I ween, than if they had adopted a Voluntarist stance and this handful of intellectuals had rushed to put their bodies on the line to try to destroy the State. Watner denounces Tucker's lack of

direct activism as "cowardice"—I would rather call it good sense instead of an inane rush to embrace martyrdom and self-destruction.

In contrast, Watner upholds the example of the English Levellers, who "all risked their lives for their ideas." No doubt. But Watner neglects to add that while the Levellers may have been heroes, they were scarcely *Voluntaryist* heroes. Instead, they (a) engaged in violent rather than non-violent revolution, and (b) they believed strongly in political action. Indeed, they constituted a political party advocating universal suffrage. And they unfortunately wound up being jailed by Cromwell.

The most revealing part of Carl Watner's article is when he explains in more detail than before the essence of the Voluntaryist strategy for non-violent revolution against the State. Non-violent resistance against the State serves, for the Voluntaryists, as the basic means by which the resisters dramatically "educate" the public on the evil and brutal nature of the State. Here is Watner: "If we can provoke the State into initiating unwarranted aggressions, then it proves itself not only the attacker but loses public support." The cat is now out of the bag: The Voluntaryists hope that by lying down in front of State tanks, or whatever, that they will then "provoke" the State into aggression, presumably preferring the State to be as brutal as possible. They hope that this will swing public support dramatically against the State. But there are two great problems here. First, that despite Voluntaryist protestations, they are clearly courting martyrdom, and as brutal and vicious a one as possible. Second, that this martyrdom won't work. I clearly remember the night when Mayor Daley's police ran riot at the 1968 Chicago Democratic convention. On nationwide TV, the cops ran amok, dragging innocent citizens out of

their cars and viciously beating them up. In my naivete, I believed that that would be it, and that the public, watching this evident brutality and aggression, would turn against the State and demand that the Vietnam War be brought to an immediate halt. But the public reaction was precisely the opposite. The mass of the public sided with the cops, and hailed their beating up of groups of people whom the public felt to be provocateurs and loonies, and who eminently deserved whatever they got.

The public reaction to the Chicago convention should be a lesson to all libertarians. The point is that seeing the cops beat up demonstrators won't educate *anyone* in the viciousness of the State unless they had *already* become libertarians. The mass of the public, not being libertarians, think of the police as good guys, as the protectors of the rights of the citizens. Hence, if they see the cops beating up annoying demonstrators, they will automatically side with the cops and vent their anger against the demonstrators, whom they accurately guess had been trying, in Watner's own words, to "provoke the State." In short, "education" by non-violent resistance will be counter-productive, unless the mass of the public is libertarian already, in which case there is no need for such resistance.

Finally, Watner upholds Voluntaryism as a kind of "free-market" competition among strategies, and wonders why I do not encourage his movement even if I cannot be "on the frontlines" with them. The answer is that competition in the free-market of ideas does *not* mean that everyone is supposed to be namby-pamby about strategies that they wholeheartedly believe to be disastrous and self-defeating. The competition in the marketplace of ideas must include candid and unsparing criticism of such strategies. Then, after reading and weighing such criticisms, the libertarian "consumer" can make up his or her own mind. ‡

## The Real Conventioneers' Guide to New City

by The Old Curmudgeon

This is the summer when the Libertarian Party will have its mighty Presidential nominating convention (PRESCON) in New York City, the Big Apple itself, for the first time since its first major Presidential convention in 1975. While there will be events before and after, the heart of the convention—the voting on platform, officers, nominees, etc.—will take place on September 1-4 at the Sheraton Center. It is an event not to be missed, for it will be Armageddon Time—the apocalyptic climax of the several years-long battle to overthrow the once-dominant, now cornered Crane Machine.

For those delegates, alternates, friendly observers, and sociologists of ideological *flora* and *fauna* flocking to the convention who have not been in New York City before, the following is a Conventioneers' Guide. I'm leaving out the pap—true as far as it will go—that you will undoubtedly find in the official PRESCON literature: where the restaurants, sights, shops etc. will be. The following guide is

the *real stuff* about the big, brawling city where I have been born, bred and lived all my life.

In the first place, it is *not* really true—contrary to Johnny Carson and other jibesters about New York—that you are likely to be mugged. Provided that you follow the elementary rules of survival listed below (what New Yorkers call "street smarts"), you will probably be safe enough. The real problem of New York is not mugging but *hassle*, for life in New York is simply one continuing and permanent hassle.

First, on *Mugging*. There really should be published a mosaic-type map of the safe and unsafe streets, and even the corners, in New York. But the following broad rule of thumb should keep you out of trouble: *Don't* go above (north of) 116th St. on Broadway, or 96th St. on the rest of the West Side, and don't go above 96th St. on the East Side. Given that injunction, the main thoroughfares should be

fine at any time of the day and night.

Warning: almost every out-of-town visitor gets caught on this one: Trying to go north, on Broadway, to Columbia University (116th St.), he or she takes not the Broadway subway, but the Lenox Ave., which forks northeast off the Broadway line at 96th St. If you find yourself at the Lenox Ave. station at 116th St., *don't*, whatever the circumstances or whatever the hour, get off the station and decide to walk west to Broadway through Morningside Park. Get the hell out of there and go back down the Lenox Ave. line to 96th St., and then take the Broadway line uptown. And never, *ever* stroll through Morningside Park.

Speaking of parks, Central Park is lovely, but should only be entered in the daytime, and even then the stroll should be confined below 100th St. Exercise great care at night; best not to go there at all, for it is then Mugger's Paradise where even (!) the cops dare not enter.

As to the "outer boroughs": the Bronx, Brooklyn, or Queens, there is no point listing the unsafe areas because there is *no reason to go there*. Ever. The Staten Island ferry is fine if you like that sort of thing, but there is simply no reason to hang around on Staten Island. All this is denounced by outer boroughniks as arrogant Manhattan chauvinism, but what the hell, it's *true*. Note that outer boroughniks implicitly acknowledge the superiority of Manhattan by habitually referring to Manhattan as "New York" or "The City", thereby granting that *they're* really not part of the city. One amusing evidence of this you will see when you land at Kennedy airport (in Queens, and therefore technically in New York City), where you will see buses labelled "To New York City." If you are a literalist, you will wonder what in hell that means, since you are at that point *in* New York City. Forget it: Queens ain't "the city".

Again, as to mugging: sticking to main thoroughfares is best. Also, for women: *don't* wear visible gold chains, they might well be ripped off your neck, and keep your purses closed and tight against your body. And for men and women: best not to wear and flash expensive gold watches, because they could be ripped off your arm. Also, for men, especially when riding on subways and buses, *don't* flash your wallet, and particularly don't let anyone know in which pocket you keep it. Actually, it's best to have loose cash in one pocket and your wallet in another, so you won't lose your credit cards in case of theft. And also it's best to have lots of other things in the same pocket you keep your wallet, so pickpockets won't be able to slip it out easily: i.e. stuff in handkerchiefs, pens, pencils, etc. Also, when riding in a bus, watch out for the coin-dropping trick, when, as you're getting off the bus in the back, a guy in front of you, in the process of getting out, drops a coin *in back of him*. For while *you* are concentrating with irritation on the guy's backing up, picking up his coin, and blocking your path to the exit, his confederate behind you could be slipping his evil hand into your pocket and extracting your wallet.

As for the famous New York City subways, you may, like many out-of-towners, be fascinated by the action. Actually, their only advantage is speed; they are dirty, decrepit, incredibly noisy, and filled with potential muggers and thieves (people who in New York are generally euphemistically referred to as "the community.") That potential, however, is not likely to be actualized so long as you avoid northern Manhattan and the outer boroughs, and stick to the *middle* cars, particularly avoiding rear cars at night. Aside from speed, buses are better, you can see the city, and you can get out easily in case the vehicle gets stuck.

But, as I said earlier, the *real* problem with New York is not mugging but continual hassle. How hassle? In the first place, "consumer sovereignty", that delight of the free market, does not exist in New York (you know, that's when store clerks are happy for your custom.) Forget it. The attitude of store clerks in New York is that you, the customer, are an imposition on their valuable leisure time. What's more, if you ask for a product and they don't have it (very likely) they claim that you're crazy because the product *doesn't exist*. If you're suggestible, they'll have you half believing it.

Note: this does not apply to a happy exception, a raft of Korean-owned fruit stores that have popped up all over Manhattan, which tend to stay open late (sometimes all night), sell great fruit, and are courteous and polite. They still have the work ethic.

Also, hassle exists everywhere in New York if you ever *stop* on the street. Don't stop and look around, or enjoy the sights. For if you do, you won't get mugged, but you *will* get hassled: by guys looking for a touch, by crazies, by religious fanatics, by people pressing leaflets on you, or whatever. To avoid street hassle, do the following: Always keep walking purposefully, avoiding more than fleeting eye contact with your fellow strollers. Look ahead. If you see a guy on the next block, standing (or weaving) in the middle of the sidewalk, talking briefly to first one person and then the next, *avoid* him. He's up to no good; he's a hassler. Walk to the right or left of him. Above all: *pay no attention* if anyone talks to you or accosts you on the street. *Don't* stop politely to find out what he wants as you would in your own home town. It doesn't matter *what* he wants; chances are 100:1 he's up to no good. If anyone talks to you on the street, pay no attention and *accelerate* your pace rather than slow down; he will then forget about you and hassle the next sucker behind you. If he's *really* in distress, he can accost a cop or go into the nearest store.

In general, the cardinal rule of New York street smarts is to Trust No One, or rather Trust No Strangers. If you find New Yorkers brusque and unfriendly on the street, remember that most of them are not *really* unfriendly if you catch them in a legitimate social situation. They are simply obeying the rules of street survival, rules they have learned in New York street life, often the Hard Way.

There is also the justly famed New York taxi driver. The classic cab driver is unfortunately a dying breed: tough, street-smart, wise-cracking, gabby, deeply contemptuous in a kind of village-libertarian manner of any and all politicians. They also tend to be deeply racist and make no bones about it. These classic cabbies tend to be elderly; the younger ones are very often just off the boat from some foreign clime and don't know where *anything* is, even Broadway. So it is best to carry a street map with you at all times, so *you* can instruct *them*. Once in a blue moon you will get a charming taxi driver who is a college student or out-of-work actor who will be an opera buff, and that will be a real treat.

Why, you may ask, do New Yorkers put up with this permanent hassle that marks their city? The answer, universal to New Yorkers of whatever class or stripe, is: "this is where the action is." The *action* is the key, for whatever kind of action one seeks is here, from the toniest theatre and opera down to the local street corner mugging. Whatever New York is, it is never boring. It is where things happen. Once I lived in California for two years. I loved it. The people were so friendly it took me six months to decompress, and to realize that when the bank clerk or the

supermarket checker said, "Have a nice day, sir", or "Good morning, sir", they *weren't* out to rip me off in some way, they had no ulterior motive, they were just being friendly. The people in California were all handsome and beautiful, and the ambience was lovely, a great contrast to the grotesques that populate New York. The streets were clean, and there were no potholes, in contrast to the wreck of the

Big Apple. It was great, except for one thing. No matter how hard I worked, I felt that I was on permanent vacation, that I was in exile, 3000 miles away from where the action really was, from the great big throbbing pulsating densely packed "cross-section of democracy" that is New York City.

So come on, folks, live it up and come to the Big Apple. Be prepared, trust no one, and then enjoy, enjoy! ‡

## FDR: the True Legacy

by Jimmy Harris

Franklin D. Roosevelt's 100th birthday has come and gone. For several days the media was filled with testimonies to his wisdom and achievements, and paeons to his greatness and warmth as a leader. Aged New Dealers tearily recalled personal experiences, and former presidents of various political spectrums spoke admiringly of his influence in their careers.

Behind all this hoopla and sentiment, though, lies concealed the actual truth of Roosevelt and the New Deal. Roosevelt was, in reality, one of the worse presidents this country has ever endured—no mean achievement, considering the competition. In the three great areas of presidential concern—economics, civil liberties, and international affairs—his record is utterly disastrous. Furthermore, most of the serious problems that now threaten this country took strong root during Roosevelt's term. That he is remembered otherwise by the great majority is due to his personal charisma, the bias of many mainstream historians and newspeople, and perhaps the fact that we as a nation have yet to pay the full price for Roosevelt's action.

### Economics: A Platform of Lies

Roosevelt took office on January 15th, 1932, on a platform of lies. His predecessor Herbert Hoover's wrong-headed attempts to legislate the country out of the Great Depression had failed miserably—not surprisingly, since government intervention in the economy was largely responsible for the depression in the first place. An increasingly desperate public elected Roosevelt to office on campaign pledges to balance the budget, slash the size of government, adhere to a gold standard, and remove government interference from the marketplace—the only policies that would have effectively restored a sound economy. He did none of this, of course. Instead, within weeks he embarked upon a spree of government spending and meddling in the economy the likes of which had never been remotely approached in this nation's history.

Roosevelt was an economic illiterate who actually bragged that he had never read a book on economics. "We

must lay hold of the fact that economic laws are not made by nature," he once said. "They are made by men." (The Boston Transcript astutely observed that "Two more glaring misstatements of truth could hardly have been packed into so little space.") This attitude made his administration easy prey for any variety of economic snake oil; and it is hardly surprising that they shortly embraced the then-new vogue of Keynesian economics, which gave academic sanction to their wholesale inflation and economic tinkering.

Roosevelt created a dizzying procession of alphabetically named agencies empowered to "create jobs" by spending tax dollars, and he saddled the economy with a plethora of senseless and destructive regulations. Never before had the federal government dared to expand into so many areas of American life as it did under this new flood of legislation. The Roosevelt administration regarded its word as law, and considered constitutional restraints on the power of the executive branch as merely a nuisance. Typical of the administration's attitude was this quote from Harry Hopkins, Roosevelt's right-hand man, speaking to the Advisory Committee of the National Youth Administration: "I want to assure you that we are not afraid of exploring anything within the law, and we have a lawyer who will declare anything you want to do legal."

This unparalleled meddling led inevitably to a grossly distorted economy far removed from the actual needs and demands of the marketplace. Ill-considered and destructive federal loans, subsidies, wage and price controls, public works programs, taxation, pro-union legislation and the like wreaked havoc upon society. Needy Americans watched in mystery and horror as dairymen dumped milk out into the streets and the federal government paid farmers millions of dollars to destroy livestock and plow under crops—actions somehow designed to produce prosperity by destroying goods. As much of the country's productive power was confiscated or restrained by the government, millions of jobs were destroyed and more and more businesses closed. The government's desperate, lurching actions often bordered on the comic—or rather the tragi-comic. The poorly named National Recovery Administration attempted to prohibit newspaper boys from selling papers, and declared that, somehow in the interest of the economy, no burlesque

production could feature more than four strips. In its infinite wisdom, the Supreme Court, in the case of *Wickard vs. Filburn*, upheld the government's contention that a man growing grain solely for his own use was unlawfully interfering with interstate commerce and therefore subject to penalties and regulation.

The millions who received relief assistance or make-work jobs (and one may judge the usefulness of many of these jobs by the fact that they are responsible for introducing the word "boondoggle" into the public vocabulary) were thankful for this concrete evidence of government concern. What they could not see, and failed to perceive, were the millions of needed and productive jobs that were destroyed by these same governments programs, the lower prices that failed to materialize of goods and services whose prices were artificially inflated by government policies, and the many businesses that failed or never came to existence because of government actions. This was the real, unseen cost of the various Roosevelt emergency programs, and it was a cost no society could bear and still prosper. Thus the relief roles continued to swell and the unemployment lines grew, despite one frantic Roosevelt effort after another.

Among the most shameful of the many shameful and foolish economic acts of the Roosevelt administration was its seizing of the nation's privately held gold and its subsequent repudiation of the gold redemption clause in all government and private debts. Not only was this dishonest (as Senator Gore of Oklahoma noted at the time, "Why, that's just plain stealing, isn't it, Mr. President?"), it also gave the Federal government almost complete control of the nation's money supply, setting the stage for the devaluation of the dollar and the massive inflationary policies the administration was to pursue.

All of this economic meddling and financial flim-flam may be justified in the minds of some by one of the most fallacious, yet often-heard, claims about Roosevelt: that "he got us out of the Depression." Actually, nothing could be further from the truth. Despite all the "pump-priming," the endless government programs, the currency manipulation, there were still twelve million unemployed at the end of 1937. Between 1937 and 1938, industrial production declined by over a third—the fastest decline in American history. The policies of the Roosevelt administration were a colossal, abject failure. What actually brought the American economy out of its doldrums was the huge boost given to manufacturing by the outbreak of hostilities in Europe, and the subsequent U. S. entry into World War II. This artificial growth in the economy was funded in large part by inflated dollars and huge federal deficits—debt that, in the main, has yet to be paid, and still burdens the U.S. economy.

Thus we have the true economic legacy of the Roosevelt administration: sanction for massive government interference in the economy, acceptance of foolish and destructive economic nostrums as standard policy, a private sector distorted for decades from the true needs of the marketplace, and a huge debt that still weighs heavily upon the backs of American taxpayers. And no discussion of Roosevelt's economic fiascos would be complete without at

least a brief mention of Social Insecurity, that great government ponzi scheme which Roosevelt signed into effect in 1935, and which has since mushroomed into a monstrous fraud that has drained capital for decades and become ever more oppressive. For this, too, we must thank FDR.

As terrible and foolish as the above-mentioned actions of the Roosevelt administration were—in this limited space I have only touched on a few highlights—we can only be thankful that not all of Roosevelt's proposed legislation passed. Among his failures were attempts to place a ceiling on salaries at \$25,000 and a bill to limit top income to \$12,000 and tax the upper brackets at 99%! It is frightening to even imagine what any of this would have done to the United States.

### International Affairs

"... I shall say it again, and again, and again. Your boys are not going to be sent into any foreign wars."

Roosevelt made this pledge while campaigning for reelection in October, 1940. Needless to say, he was no more faithful to this promise than he was to his earlier economic platform. In fact, shortly after a campaign filled with statements similar to the above, he embarked upon a program of deliberate harassment of the German and Japanese governments. He engineered intentional military confrontations with the German navy in September and October of 1941, and then lied to the American public about the nature of these confrontations—at a time when the vast majority of Americans favored a policy of strict neutrality. Through a series of crippling trade restrictions, unreasonable diplomatic demands, threats, and hostile speeches, Roosevelt baited and goaded the Japanese government into a fiercely anti-United States position that led inexorably to war. And if some of the more radical revisionist historians' claims are true—and these claims are becoming increasingly well documented—Roosevelt not only deliberately led the United States into World War II, he actually had advance knowledge of the planned Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, yet refused to notify U. S. naval forces, realizing that the attack would inevitably cause the United States to enter the war. Whether one accepts such extreme claims or not, there can be no doubt that Roosevelt was fully aware that many of the aggressively anti-German and anti-Japanese acts he took in the months before Pearl Harbor carried a serious risk of provoking a declaration of war against the United States—a war that as much as 85% of Americans wished desperately to avoid.

Roosevelt must share, along with the other combatants in World War II, blame for extending the horrors of warfare to civilian populations. Roosevelt joined with Churchill in the sanction of deliberate indiscriminate bombing of enemy civilian areas (a tactic, incidentally, first adopted by the British, in 1940; not the Germans, as commonly supposed.) This practice led to hundreds of thousands of utterly innocent, helpless, and uninvolved women, children, and civilian men on both sides being slaughtered in gruesome manner. The casualties incurred in these raids are virtually

inconceivable. In Dresden, a single firebombing raid turned that city into a blazing hell where 100,000 to 150,000 civilians burned to death. In Tokyo, 185,000 were killed or injured as a result of one firebombing raid. The apotheosis of all this, of course, was Hiroshima and Nagasaki. As a result of the general acceptance of this tactic, mass slaughter of innocent non-combatants in now considered standard policy for future wars. To criticize these bombings is not, of course, to deny the terrible atrocities committed by the Axis forces; but brutality on one side, or by one's allies, do not give sanction to such acts by the other. There can be no excuse for the deliberate, planned murder of innocent non-combatant adults and children as a way of combatting the actions of an aggressive state, especially when one considers how little effective say such people have in the actions of their governments.

Roosevelt might well have been able to avoid much of the vast carnage and destruction of the war had he been willing to negotiate a truce with the Axis powers. It is quite possible that Germany and Japan would have been willing to accept peace terms as early as middle or late 1943. Had such efforts been pursued, millions of lives might have been saved and much of the waste and destruction of the war averted. However, Roosevelt never wavered from his insistence on unconditional surrender, thus removing any chance for such a settlement.

Roosevelt's fondness for the Russian dictator, Stalin, led to some of the very worst consequences of World War II. During the war, Roosevelt deliberately allowed Russian spies to steal American uranium samples and atomic bomb research documents, ordering that nothing be done to prevent this. There is no way of calculating how much this aided the Soviets in their own attempts to create a nuclear bomb, but its effect was surely enormous. And after the war, Roosevelt made a series of concessions to Stalin that resulted in Russia acquiring dominance over 16 European and Asian nations with a combined population of over 725 million people. Thus, millions in Soviet slavery, and the thousands who have died in these areas since World War II at the hands of the Soviets, can thank Roosevelt for much of their predicament. Roosevelt also approved Stalin's insistence that all persons displaced by the war be forced to return to their home countries—a policy that all too obviously meant death camps and firing squads for thousands. For this horror, too, Roosevelt must share blame.

These post-war concessions to Stalin were greatly responsible for the creation of the monstrous Soviet Union that we know today. The end result of Roosevelt's conduct of World War II, then was simply to replace the horror of Nazism with the horror of international state communism—at an unimaginable cost of life and property.

### Civil Liberties

Finally, an examination of Roosevelt's actions in the area of civil liberties shows that in this, too, his record is dismal.

Roosevelt can take credit, at least, for ridding the country of the scourge of Prohibition. However, a few years later he introduced a new kind of prohibition: the use of marijuana was made illegal in 1937. The devastation that this nation has suffered as a result of this single act is incalculable. Roosevelt also greatly increased the power and jurisdiction of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, helping to create a national police force that routinely spied upon citizens engaged in peaceful, non-illegal activities.

As it inevitably does, the outbreak of war, and these accompanying increase in rabid nationalism, brought with it numerous violations of basic civil liberties—and as always, once the state assumes a power during wartime, it rarely retreats fully when peace resumes. Thus World War II was, as many have noted, a period of massive growth of state power in all areas of life.

One of the most outrageous and well documented domestic actions of the Roosevelt administration was the imprisonment of 112,000 Americans of Japanese ancestry in prison camps at the outbreak of U. S. entry into the war. This was truly a black page in the history of this country. Roosevelt can also take credit for instituting the first peacetime draft in this nation's history, and for supporting the 1940 Smith Act, which, among other things, specified fines and imprisonment for written or oral "treasonous" arguments and persuasions. The Smith Act was so broad in scope that, as *The New York Times* observed at its passing, "If strictly construed, several of the leading speakers at last week's Republican National Convention might be in danger."

Mention must also be made of Roosevelt's refusal, along with other Allied countries, to loosen immigration restrictions in order to allow refugee European Jews to enter this country. This left hundreds of thousands of Jews without refuge and doomed to fall into the hands of the Nazis.

### Gone But Not Forgotten

These few examples of the ignorance and perfidy of the Roosevelt administration barely scratch the surface, but they give at least some idea of the true legacy of Franklin D. Roosevelt. And make no mistake about it, his influence is still very much with us today. Roosevelt bears much of the responsibility for the creation of today's political boundaries and centers of power; and his influence is apparent in the approach of this nation's leaders to foreign policy, economics, and social concerns—much to our misfortune.

Even more aggravating, the hand of his ghost is still reaching into our pockets. Not only are Americans still struggling under the burden of the enormous national debt he saddled us with, we are also being faced, now that his centennial is upon us, with pleas from politicians and assorted blind worshippers of Roosevelt for millions of tax dollars to be spent to create a memorial to the former president. A fine reply to this sort of nonsense was made by

Inquiry in their January 11 and 25, 1982, issues:

Our own suggestion (for FDR memorial) would be to bronze the \$1 trillion national debt. Surely it would never have been possible without FDR.

John Flynn, in the final pages of his brilliant, caustic book, *The Roosevelt Myth*, summarizes the truth about the Roosevelt administration in a few biting sentences:

"But go back through the years, read the speeches and platforms and judgements he made and consider them in the light of what he did. Look up the promises of thrift in public office, of balanced budgets and lower taxes, of disbanded bureaucrats, of honesty in government and of security for all. Read again the warnings he uttered to his own people against those wicked men who would seize upon a war in Europe to entangle them upon specious visions of false war abundance. Read the speeches he made never, never again to send our sons to fight in foreign wars. Look up the promises he made, not to our own people, but to the Chinese, to Poland, to Czechoslovakia, to the Baltic peoples in Lithuania and Latvia and Estonia, to the Jews out of one side of his mouth and to the Arabs out of the other side. He broke every promise. He betrayed all who trusted him . . .

The figure of Roosevelt exhibited before the eyes of our people is a fiction. There was no such being as that noble, selfless, hard-headed, wise and farseeing combination of philosopher, philanthropist and warrior which has been fabricated out of pure propaganda and which a small collection of dangerous cliques in this country are using to advance their own evil ends."

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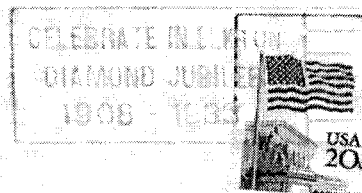
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