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## THE ELECTIONS

We live in a time of increasingly intense and unpredictable changes in attitudes and values, a time when a valid analysis of existing social and ideological trends may be completely outmoded a few months later. Who, for example, could have predicted last spring that the flourishing anti-war movement would now be dead as a dodo? Dead...or dormant? Any analysis of the November elections has to keep this humbling fact in mind.

Be that as it may, the press has underestimated the crushing defeat suffered by the Nixon Administration. Despite an ardent nation-wide galvanizing effort by Nixon and Agnew, despite their continual hammering at the seemingly popular issue of polarization against the Left, despite enormously greater financing and a demoralized Democratic opposition, the Democratic Party has emerged from the 1970 elections as the secure majority of the country. The Democrats gained nine Congressmen and no less than eleven governors, and their victories were scored throughout the country, South, West and Middle West. The famous Nixonian "Southern strategy" totally collapsed, and governorship races were lost throughout the South; only in Tennessee did the strategy succeed. In fact, only in Tennessee, New York, and Connecticut did the Republicans do very well at all. The common argument that the Republicans lost far fewer House races than the Administration usually loses in off-year elections overlooks a crucially important fact: that President Nixon, in contrast to all previous Presidents, did *not* bring a Republican House into office with him.

Furthermore, the fact that the Democrats lost a few seats in the Senate takes on proper perspective only when we realize that an unusually large number of Democratic senators were up for re-election this year—the products of the Democratic sweeps in the 1958 recession year and in the 1964 Goldwater debacle. It is all too easily forgotten that the Republicans began 1970 with the expectation of capturing the Senate.

It is about time that political commentators face the fact that the Republicans have not organized either house of Congress since 1954, and that, apart from the Presidency, we are drifting close to a one-party Democratic nation. Furthermore, there is no hope for Republican control of Congress in the foreseeable future.

The Nixon-Agnew failure seems to be due to several factors. One is the offsetting of the anti-Left "social issue" by the mess that the Nixon Administration has made of the economy; a second is the fact that the peace issue, despite its dormancy, still remains (the peace candidates in Congress did fairly well). Another reason is the fact that Nixon-Agnew overplayed their hand. While Middle Americans revile the Left, hippies, students, bom-

bers, etc., they also have a great need to *revere* their President, to consider him as a wise authority figure a bit above the battle. And so the brawling nature of the Nixon-Agnew campaign put the Middle American voters off, discomfited them, made their wise authority images seem too much like local wardheelers for comfort. Furthermore, the Democrats were able to draw the teeth of Agnewism by shifting notably rightward, by stressing their own devotion to "law and order". Thus, the clumsy attempt by the Republicans to turn such a generally revered and moderate figure as Adlai Stevenson into a crypto-Weatherman backfired badly by making the Republicans rather ridiculous, a backfiring that also beset Agnew's attempts at rhetorical alliteration.

The failure to polarize the country against the Left was also considerably helped by the fact that the Left seems to have suddenly disappeared. The campuses are always quieter in the fall than in the spring, but even so the extent of campus relapse into apolitical passivity this fall has been truly remarkable. The Yale students have turned dramatically from the Panthers to football and Boola-Boola, and on campus after campus the story is the same.

The larger meaning of the election, then, is that the prospect of civil war that seemed to be looming on the horizon, a war in which fascist repression would have crushed a vociferous Left, seems now but a ghost of the past. The Center still holds, and more strongly than it has for several years.

## Retreat From Freedom

Leonard E. Read seems to be worried; apparently he is having considerable difficulty in defending the thesis that everyone must obey all laws, no matter how noxious they may be. And so in the current *Notes from FEE* ("Defiance of Law", November), Mr. Read returns to the dialogue (see "On Civil Obedience," *Lib. Forum*, July). Except that it is a curious form of dialogue indeed, for Mr. Read cleaves to his lofty principle that no critic or emitter of fallacy may be mentioned in his work. At first glance, this principle seems to have a monkish, almost saintly air, an air of discussing only ideas and never people; until we realize that this attitude stifles any sort of intellectual dialogue whatever, for it means that one need never comes to grips with anyone else's views. If philosophers or scholars upheld this view, any sort of intellectual advance would be stifled; there would be no book reviews, no critique of the unsound or advance of the sound in anyone's work. If, for example, Henry

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## STIRRINGS, RIGHT AND LEFT

In these changing times, it becomes increasingly difficult to tell "left", "right" or in between without a detailed scorecard. There are new stirrings throughout the left-right spectrum, and all through that spectrum authoritarian and libertarian elements appear and vie for support. The November Festival of Liberation in Los Angeles, for example, was addressed not only by such veteran anarcho-capitalists as Robert LeFevre and the editor of the *Lib. Forum*, but also by the confused and inconsistent but definitely anarchistic "leftist" Paul Goodman, and also by the great one-man crusader for liberty in the psychiatric profession, Dr. Thomas Szasz, who while now embraced by the New Left, himself looks upon Hayek and Mises as his philosophical mentors. And over at the bastion of Conservatism, *National Review*, a recent reviewer, while hailing Soviet Democrat Irving Howe's recent edited work attacking the New Left, also praised the New Leftist journalist Nicholas von Hoffman for his critiques of Liberal Social Democracy.

On the Left, increasing support for the libertarian and anarchist positions has appeared recently in several forms. The liberal weekly *The Nation* has recently acquired the veteran left-anarchoid Emile Capouya as its literary editor, a move which is perhaps reflected in the recent favorable lead review of several anarchist books. (Kingsley Widmer, "Anarchism Revived: Left, Right, and All Around," *The Nation*, November 16). Professor Widmer, himself an anarchist (probably of the anarcho-syndicalist variety), reviews the Tuccille book, *Radical Libertarianism*, Daniel Guerin's *Anarchism* (both recently reviewed in the *Lib. Forum*), and Professor Robert Paul Wolff's (a recent convert to anarchism) *In Defense of Anarchism*. (Harper & Row, 86 pp. \$4.50, Paper \$1.00). Even though he disagrees with Tuccille's *laissez-faire* capitalism, Widmer's treatment of Jerry's book is the most favorable of the three. Widmer sees that our kind of anarchism is the expression of a native American libertarianism which "may be one of our finest and most redeeming heritages." Widmer calls our position "anarcho-rightism", which "takes *laissez-faire* economics and open competition seriously—not just as a rhetorical cover for corporate merger with the state—and rigorously holds to liberal notions of the absolute autonomy of the individual." Again, accurately, Widmer adds that "Anarcho-rightism can be related to many avowed 19th-century anarchists, such as Lysander Spooner and Benjamin Tucker, and . . . to a long line of right-wing iconoclasts, such as H. L. Mencken, and to elements in the thought of our contradictory agrarians and Populists." He then mentions the role of myself and Karl Hess, and gives an accurate account of Tuccille's positions on police, neighborhood and voluntary associations, removal or drastic limitation on the State, etc. While friendly to Tuccille, Widmer shows lack of understanding of the free market in speaking of Tuccille's "mad faith in the harmonious morality of the market place". It is, of course, not at all a matter of "faith" but of rational understanding of economic law, an understanding of which most anarchists, past and present, have been lamentably ignorant. There is also the usual left contention that even free-market corporations are somehow private "states", which Widmer wishes to see replaced by "workers' control". However, Widmer concedes the sincerity of the anarcho-capitalist position, and declares that "it's a pleasure to hear from a rightism which is not merely a cover for snobbery and greed." He ends the review of Tuccille by noting Carl Oglesby's call of a few years ago for "the fusion of libertarian Right and Left in America", and he brands Tuccille superior to Noam Chomsky's introduction to the Guerin book in recognizing the need of the American movement to "break out of leftist clichés", and not, like Chomsky, identifying

anarchism with socialism.

In his review of Guerin, Widmer criticizes the French follower of Proudhon and Bakunin for still being tied to the mystique of the "working class" and ignoring the individualist aspects of anarchism, while Chomsky is criticized for "his narrow insistence on following somewhat doctrinaire European historians and seeing anarchism as purely integral to socialism. . . . He does not recognize that much of what can, and has been, reasonably called anarchism, from William Godwin through Paul Goodman, has been non-Socialist in any usual leftist sense. The anarcho-Marxism of the New Left, now often subordinated to neo-Leninism, linguistically misleads him."

Widmer concludes his review-article on a hopeful and ecumenical note. "Whether by way of traditional European Left-libertarianism, native American individualistic rightism, or philosophical anarchism, we arrive at the necessity for transforming our institutions. Why are we anarchists now almost in fashion in America? Because, in fact, the state's illegitimacy is becoming widely, if fragmentarily, manifest to many."

In the meanwhile, left-liberal Margot Hentoff has a perceptive review of Bill Buckley's *The Governor Listeth* in the *New York Review of Books* (December 3). (Worth the price of admission is the cartoon of Chairman Bill by the marvelous political caricaturist David Levine, making Buckley look something like an evil chipmunk). Essentially, Mrs. Hentoff is nostalgic about Buckley's former libertarianism and attacks him for abandoning his previous quasi-libertarianism principles to sit at the feet of Power and the Establishment. Mrs. Hentoff observes the fact that in his recent essays, "we come upon him in the middle of a journey toward a rather awful kind of moderation," a moderation that has come upon Bill as he "moves away from the absence of power, that condition which was his abiding charm." Hear, hear! Buckley, she notes, "is beginning to take on the weight of middle-aged responsibility, sounding more often like a resilient prince of the Church than like a purifying spirit."

For example, Mrs. Hentoff notes that Buckley comes out in favor of the government having the "responsibility to declare hopelessly irresponsible parents unqualified to bring up children, who could then be turned over to charitable organizations to bring up"; at this point, she adds, "one realizes that Mr. Buckley is very far from either the radical right or the conservative libertarians." She then notes that Bill Buckley has read the free-market economist Milton Friedman out of his movement (on much the same grounds as he read me out years ago—for the supposed intellectual frivolity of advocating denationalization of lighthouses). Arguing about legalization of narcotics, Buckley reports that Friedman came out against the licensing and compulsory inspection of prostitutes, noting that "after all, if the customer contracts a venereal disease, the prostitute having warranted that she was clean, he has available a tort action against her."

What Professor Friedman was adumbrating here was simply the libertarian common law, and the availability of tort actions at that law for fraud, a method for more moral than, and superior to, any government inspection. And what, Mrs. Hentoff asks, is Buckley's comment on this? "The articulation of libertarian theory to such lengths as Mr. Friedman is able to take it ought to be understood as a form of intellectual sport. . . . But it is terribly important not to take this kind of thing seriously."

As Bill Buckley moves toward the seats of Power, confers with the President in the Bahamas, and becomes a kind of intellectual Clown Prince of the Administration, any kind of serious devotion to liberty can seem only like

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sport and frivolity in his eyes. It seems that "seriousness" is only warranted by the imprimatur of the State. From the master of the arch and recondite quip, from a man who once claimed to be a libertarian, all this is high irony indeed.

Mrs. Hentoff perceptively sees that "what happened to Mr. Buckley, along with the rest of us, was the breaking down of traditional ideological compartments, the blurring of traditional alliances and enmities. Not only did the old New Deal and New Frontier politics lose credence with the left, but the left then walked off with the conservative banners of nonintervention, freedom from government coercion, rugged individualism, decentralization, and, in some cases, racial separatism." At the same time, Bill Buckley was abandoning these very causes and becoming an effete and impudent servitor of Power.

While Bill Buckley is attacked for abandoning libertarianism by a left-liberal, an olive branch has been held out to libertarians from a most unexpected quarter. Young ultra-traditionalist Brad Evans, in a fascinating article, "The Young Conservatives: Coming Unglued", *Triumph* (November), virtually calls for an alliance with the libertarians at the opposite pole, as against the Power-loving statist Buckleyites in the "fusionist" Center. Coming from a leading follower of Brent Bozell and his pro-Carlist Spanish Catholics, men who revile Generalissimo Franco as a liberal sellout, this is wondrous news indeed. But it makes a considerable amount of sense. For Mr. Evans sees that, unlike the fusionists and their steady march toward apologetics for the American State and the *status quo*, the libertarians, like his own Triumphantists, totally reject the American Leviathan. Both groups cleave to principle and both eschew the opportunism of Power.

But, furthermore, Mr. Evans displays a genuine admiration for the libertarian position, for he understands that like the Catholic libertarian Lord Acton, the clinging to an absolute moral position provides a solid groundwork for a radical attack on the *status quo*. In contrast, Brad Evans has nothing but scorn for Buckleyite fusionists, at whose hands fusionism "provides a haven for those who theoretically espouse maximum individual freedom, but recognize that cause to be outside the conventional American political configuration, and so quake at the consequences of carrying through the logic of their position." Furthermore, fusionism is "a convenient tool for those who see the currents and would make their damndest for political paydirt." Similarly, the yen for power leads the fusionists to take a Burkean stand for the American Constitution; as Evans perceptively sees, the trouble with this Burkean mentality "is its compatibility to *any* regime, whatever its virtues or lack of them, so long as it is the established regime. For opportunistic fusionists it thus affords a rational for conformity to, even apologetics for, a going order that is the object of the critique of both of the constituent theses, libertarian or traditionalist, of the fusionist synthesis. Because of the Burkean reverence for *what is*, that is to say, the aspiring fusionist politician can identify himself with the order while at the same time maintaining fundamental *theoretical* opposition to its characteristics."

Turning from the despised fusionists to the libertarians, particularly the ex-YAF libertarians, Mr. Evans describes their various schools of thought, and tries, gently but firmly, to point us on the "road to Rome." Recognition of an objective moral order, such as is provided in Roman Catholic thought, would provide the libertarian, as in the case of Acton, with a firm and comprehensive philosophical groundwork from which to oppose State power. Mr. Evans declares that "the good life is the life lived in accordance with the natural order of man's being—the life that flows from a well-ordered soul"; and a

society possessing a state "which cuts itself off from moral authority has at its command only naked power, without the justification of any authority."

Mr. Evans concludes his interesting article by stating that "The fact that libertarians and traditionalists have chosen to eschew the pursuit of pluralistic contentment and have cast off the shackles of political power-mongering is perhaps a sign of the inauguration of a higher, fuller commitment. It raises the encouraging prospect that the two may soon rise from their seats at the Piraeus and make their way, together, back to the city—and then to The City."

I am willing to engage in a philosophical dialogue with Mr. Evans; it may surprise him that I, at least, believe firmly in the existence of an objective moral order, one discoverable by man's reason. Furthermore, I see nothing at all wrong with any religious tradition, among which Roman Catholicism is out-standing, which endorses this rational moral order and attempts to encase it in a theistic framework. Some of the best libertarians I know are devoted Roman Catholics. Even Carlist Catholic-Triumphantists had their Carlist State, one which they believed to have sufficient moral and theological "authority", their alliance with libertarianism might come to an abrupt end. Thus, Mr. Evans does disquietingly say that "the laws of the American state which they (the libertarians) properly recognize as evil are not evil because they issue from a *state*, but rather because they lack any grounding in legitimate authority." Perhaps if Mr. Evans delved more deeply into the rational (and even theological) moral order, he might find that the State, *any state per se*, is morally evil because it is founded and has its very being in permanent aggression against the life and property of its subjects. Then Mr. Evans and the libertarians could indeed return together to the city, and some of us even to The City.

Among all the fusionists, I have always had a particular fondness for Frank S. Meyer, the founder of fusionism, and despite his numerous ideological sins: his fondness for Voegelinian traditionalism, for the American Constitution, for war and militarism, and for a global crusade for the slaughter of Communists, at home and abroad. For despite these sins, Frank Meyer has always been the one Buckleyite who has been visibly uneasy at the toadying to Nixonism that the Conservative Movement has become; he has been by far the most libertarian, as well as the most rationalistic, of the *National Review* crew, as his numerous debates within that movement—e.g. with Bozell, Burnham, and Donald Zoll—can well attest. Of all the Buckleyites, he has been virtually the only writer willing to make waves, willing to stand up for principle even when it becomes embarrassing. Thus, only Meyer had the courage to oppose the disastrous and statist Nixon-Friedman guaranteed income program from the very start. Take, also several of Meyer's recent writings. There is his slashing review of Garry Wills' new book, *Nixon Agonistes* (*National Review*, October 20). Now it is true that one would expect Meyer to read Wills out of the conservative movement for having become a New Leftist. But the brunt of Meyer's hard-hitting critique is that Garry Wills, now as before when he was a conservative, has been throughout largely animated by a deep-seated hatred of nineteenth-century liberalism. The step from a pro-Ruskin anti-free-market Catholic Conservative to an anti-free market New Left communalist is not so very great, after all.

Another fine reaffirmation of his libertarianish position is Meyer's recent "Richard M. Weaver: An Appreciation", *Modern Age* (Summer-Fall, 1970), in which Meyer pays tribute to the late Professor Weaver's blend of the traditionalist and libertarian (though of course still archist) position. And then, Frank Meyer has become the only *National Review*-fusionist with the guts to take out completely after the "counter-culture"; for the rest of the

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fusionists, with their fine eye to the main chance, have clearly been reluctant to alienate their youth constituency. Meyer's recent "Counterculture or Anticulture?" (*National Review*, November 3) is a slashing rationalistic attack on the new nihilism. Meyer calls the counterculture, "that amalgam of dope, rock, scruff, amorality and superstition which thrives on the campuses and in the pseudointellectual enclaves of our great cities." But it is not a counterculture, but an "anticulture", "for culture is and always has been dependent for its very existence on civility, on a widespread acceptance of standards which make civilized order possible."

In contrast, charges Meyer, "the hallmark of the counterculture . . . is precisely its principled hatred of civility, its violent opposition at all levels to ordered freedom, to the tradition of rational discourse, to the very structure of civilized life. Above all, it hates the prime characteristic of the civilized man, that internalized discipline which looks with suspicion upon these spontaneous, unexamined emotional reactions we have inherited from our barbarian and animal past. The unexamined life which Socrates found unworthy of civilized man is to the devotees of the counterculture their be-all and end-all . . . The constant target of their attack is "middle-class values", a phrase that inquiring analysis reveals to denote the entire gamut of the values upon which Western civilization is founded . . . Whatever one may think of the specific components of the counterculture, considered severally each of them has an anticivilizational aspect; taken together . . . these aspects reinforce each other to make of the counterculture as a whole a formidable attack on civilized values."

Specifically: "The styles in hair and dress are the least dangerous of these phenomena, except insofar as they are consciously directed toward antagonizing the rest of society and insofar as the predilection for dirt and scruff breaks down self-discipline. Rock, with its incessant and insistent sensual destruction of an ordered universe, with the nihilistic impact of so much of its verbal content, 'provides the kids', as John Coyne writes in his new book *The Kumquat Statement*, 'with their phraseology, their philosophy, their life-style, the ideas and attitudes that motivate them. . . ' Marijuana . . . is celebrated as a mode of escape from conceptual thinking, from the pressures of self-discipline without which civilization is impossible. Add to this stew the sort of beliefs and myths that pervade the counterculture—the hatred of 'the ethic of achievement', the attack upon the nuclear family and heterosexual monogamy in the name of "polymorphous sexuality"; stir in the superstitions that proliferate within it—astrology, phony Eastern mysticism, Satanism. Corrosive of reason and tradition alike, this devil's brew", concludes Meyer, constitutes a great danger to civilization.

To turn from the libertarian and rationalistic stirrings of Evans and Meyer to the recent work of Leonard Read's youth leader, Dr. George C. Roche III, is a dizzying plunge into banality. Roche's article "On Anarcho-Libertarianism: What's In a Name?", (*New Guard*, November) is only interesting as an indication that Mr. Read has been hurting from our exposure of his retreat from freedom, and young Roche has apparently been assigned to make the rebuttal. Mr. Roche does not quite violate the Readian tenet of never mentioning the name of an opponent, but he does quote the editor of the *Lib. Forum* at some length without mentioning my name. (Under its new management, the *New Guard* has obviously jettisoned any and all pretense at libertarianism, as can be seen from its recent gutter-review of the book by its former valued contributor, Jerry Tuccille, by one Jared Lobdell). Mr. Roche, whom FEE has absurdly billed as having completed Lord Acton's history of freedom, repeats the discredited Widener smear

about my appearance at a Socialist Scholars Conference, and points with horror to Kent State having been described by me as the murder of peacefully demonstrating students, and the Chicago Conspiracy trial as having also been described as a repression of free speech. (What else were they?) After Roche somehow tries to mesh me with Russian Nihilists, Herbert Marcuse, and Mark Rudd, we can mercifully leave this great "historian of freedom" to his invincible ignorance; except that I am also attacked for daring to praise the French Revolution as being fought for property rights; our historian avers that "the French Revolution was totally unconcerned with property rights or personal rights for anyone." Apparently this eminent historian of freedom has never heard of Sieyès, or Condorcet, or the Declaration of the Rights of Man or the enormous influence that the American Revolution had upon the French. But it suffices here to inform Mr. Roche that there is on the staff of the Foundation for Economic Education one Ludwig von Mises, and Mr. Roche might find it illuminating and disturbing to ask Professor Mises sometimes about the French Revolution. Perhaps that will shake him out of the Burkean quagmire into which he has sunk.

## POWER AND MARKET

Power and Market: Government and the Economy, by Murray N. Rothbard. Menlo Park, Calif.: Institute for Humane Studies. Hard Cover, \$6.00; paperback, \$3.00. 225 pp. Also available from Society for Individual Liberty, 400 Bonifant Road, Silver Spring, Maryland 20904. by R. A. Childs, Jr.

Nearly nineteen years ago, a young man in his mid-twenties, not yet having received his Ph.D., set out on the task of boiling down the *magnum opus* of Ludwig von Mises—Human Action—into a concise volume suitable for use as a college text in economics. Over the years, the plan was changed; the task snowballed until it was finished in 1959. No longer a "boiled down" version of HUMAN ACTION, the work had become a masterpiece in its own right, more comprehensive in purely economic issues than HUMAN ACTION itself, more carefully systematic, encompassing more issues in the subject than any work before or since. The work, however, was pronounced "too long" and "too anarchistic" by its financier-publisher; most of the last third was thrown out altogether; the rest was severely condensed into the last chapter of the published work.

The book was poorly promoted. Instead of being advanced as *the* work to supplement or even replace Mises, as a purely economic treatise (and as being much easier to read and understand), it was publicized by the Foundation for Economic Education as merely "a graduate-level comprehensive development of the economic principles of the free market by one of the outstanding young students of von Mises". It has since gone out of print.

The work was MAN, ECONOMY, AND STATE: A Treatise on Economic Principles (2 vols., Van Nostrand, 1962). The author is Murray N. Rothbard.

Now, at last, what was to have been the third volume of that work, the literal culmination of an entire school of economic thought (Austrianism), has been published, revised and updated, by the Institute for Humane Studies. It is entitled POWER AND MARKET: Government and the Economy. In 225 closely-packed pages, it presents a comprehensive critique of the role of the state in the economic system. It now can be said of POWER AND MARKET, when taken together with MAN, ECONOMY AND STATE, which is still independent of it. What Henry Hazlitt correctly said of HUMAN ACTION when it appeared in 1949: it extends the logical unity and precision of economics beyond any other work. As Mises went beyond

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his teacher, Eugen von Bohm-Bawerk, so Murray Rothbard has gone beyond Mises.

It is important at the outset to point out precisely how and where Rothbard has gone beyond Mises, with the publication of this work. It is undeniable that Mises' contributions to the science of economics have been immense, but his philosophical framework is unfortunately Kantian. Rothbard is, on the other hand, an unblemished Aristotelian, taking note of many of the contributions to philosophy made by the Thomists.

Mises believes in the subjectivity of values, that all ethical standards are arbitrary, that concerns with justice are idle; he is a frank ethical nihilist. Rothbard, on the other hand, believes in the necessity of establishing principles to guide men's choices and actions—in a rational ethic. With such differences in philosophical frameworks, it is to be expected that Rothbard and Mises will have some differences.

In particular, Mises' value-subjectivism and anti-justice positions lead him to simply dismiss ethical questions out of hand. It also leads him to adopt many starkly anti-libertarian positions. In *HUMAN ACTION*, he states that "he who in our age opposes armaments and conscription is . . . an abettor of those aiming at the enslavement of all. The maintenance of a government apparatus of courts, police officers, prisons and of armed forces requires considerable expenditure. To levy taxes for these purposes is fully compatible with the freedom the individual enjoys in a free market economy." Thus, Mises does not even consider taxation and the draft to be violations of freedom! How, with positions like these, can Mises objectively analyze these and other statist measures? The answer is that he only skims over them.

Murray N. Rothbard thus becomes the first major economist to be a ruthlessly consistent adherent to free-market principles. Mises' statist positions blinded him to many things which Rothbard treats as interventions—simply because Mises thought them "necessary." The position which Rothbard takes in *POWER AND MARKET* is a position which Mises *should have taken* more than twenty years ago. If he had, he would have saved all of us a lot of trouble arriving where we have at last arrived without him.

*POWER AND MARKET* is Rothbard's departure from the mistaken path Mises has taken. It consists of seven tightly integrated chapters taking up government intervention in the dealings of men, and refuting the rationalizations so often used to justify the initiation of force by the state against individuals.

In chapter one, and in the last part of his chapter on taxation (the section on "Voluntary Contributions to Government"), Rothbard takes up a great many arguments against a purely free, *stateless*, market, and gives summary answers to the questions of how a free market can enforce the rights of person and property against aggressors without a government. Unfortunately, he doesn't go into this practical problem enough, but his work here can easily be supplemented by such works as Morris and Linda Tannehill's *THE MARKET FOR LIBERTY*, and Jarret Wollstein's *SOCIETY WITHOUT COERCION* (especially the 2nd edition, now in preparation). He shows brilliantly, however, why a government cannot conform to the libertarian rule of non-initiation of force; in this respect, Rothbard takes a radical turn away from even traditional laissez-faire economists, by repudiating the state in its entirety. Answering the charge that a government is a necessary *pre-condition* for the freemarket, Rothbard says that "It was the fallacy of the classical economists to consider goods and services in terms of large *classes*; instead, modern economics demonstrated that services must be considered in terms of *marginal units*. . . . If we begin to treat whole classes instead of marginal units, we can discover a

great myriad of necessary, indispensable goods and services, all of which might be considered as 'preconditions' of market activity. Is not land room vital, or food, . . . or clothing, or shelter? Can a market long exist without them? . . . Must all these goods and services therefore be supplied by the State and the State only?" Especially interesting is his integration of ethical and economic arguments. Discussing the hotly debated question of whether or not a State can exist without initiating force, Rothbard rebuts the "limited governmentists" in a crucial ethical-economic argument which no archist has yet succeeded in refuting.

Chapter two is a presentation of the fundamentals of intervention into peaceful social relations. Unlike Mises, who treats only a relatively small class of coercive actions as "interventions" into the free market, Rothbard takes up the issue systematically, classifying as "intervention" *any* initiation of force in social relations. Thus it is important to note that this is not merely a work on economics; in a much wider and important sense, it is an analysis of the indirect effects of the initiation of force in society. It fills in the skeleton, so to speak, of the fundamental libertarian principle of non-initiation of force, with complex theoretical analysis—showing both its *direct* consequences, and its complex *indirect* consequences.

Three broad categories are treated: autistic, binary and triangular intervention. "Autistic intervention" is when the intervener commands "an individual subject to do or not to do certain things when these actions directly involve the individual's person or property *alone*." It occurs when the aggressor coerces a person (or many persons) but does not receive any good or service in exchange. "Binary intervention" occurs when the aggressor enforces "a exchange between the individual subject and himself, or a coerced 'gift' to himself from the subject," such as highway robbery, taxes, enslavement, and conscription. Thirdly, there is "triangular intervention," in which the aggressor compels or prohibits an exchange between a *pair* of subjects. Rothbard analyses the relations between intervention and conflict, the nature of democracy and voluntary actions, the relationship between individual "utility" and resistance to invasion, and several other issues.

Chapter three treats a host of interventions under the general heading of "triangular intervention". Price control, product control, licenses, standards of quality & safety, immigration laws, child labor laws, conscription, antitrust laws, conservation laws, eminent domain, and a host of other things fall before Rothbard's logic. Rothbard is here, as elsewhere, a master of the "reductio ad absurdum". Thus, for example, he reduces the principle behind tariffs to smithereens, just by extending it to its logical outcome—to show that it is an attack on trade *itself* and thus leads inevitably to economic solipsism. If we cannot legitimately trade freely with people outside the *state*? or *city*? or, finally and absurdly, Jones' farm? Where does it suddenly become absurd to keep on extending the principle and halting trade for the benefit of incompetents? His arguments are clean, concise and ruthless.

Chapter four and five are a back-to-back treatment of two major forms of "binary interventionism": Taxation and government expenditures. He shows the distortions wrought on the free market by all forms of both. In the Chapter on government expenditures, he offers an analysis of subsidies and government ownership, showing how they distort the market, and undertakes very incisive critiques of both public ownership and democracy. He lays bare the fallacies of ever trying to conduct government on a so-called "business basis."

Murray Rothbard's chapter on taxation is the most incisive analysis in existence. While Mises, in *HUMAN ACTION*, devoted only six pages to the intervention of

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**POWER AND MARKET** — (Continued from page 5)

taxation, and even claims that there can be such a thing as a "neutral tax," Rothbard devotes over 65 pages to ruthlessly dissecting all economic and moral arguments for taxation. Rothbard considers the market effects of virtually every form of taxation, and virtually demolishes the notion of neutral taxation, a mythical beast which, Mises says, "would not divert the operation of the market from the lines in which it would develop in the absence of any taxation." Especially interesting is his section on the so-called "canons of justice in taxation," offering a criticism of all the traditional notions of this absurd concept. As in the rest of **POWER AND MARKET**, Rothbard is not content merely to refute the trivial arguments usually brought forth in all sorts of economic issues, and turns his guns on the fundamentals, such as stopping to consider why the economists consider the canons of "justice" in taxation in the first place. In this case, the quest arose from the earlier philosophical quest for the "just price" of goods in general. Eventually, in economic thought, the "just price" was simply dropped, or considered coextensive with the free market price. But why then do economists still harp on a "just tax"? Obviously because while the just price would be equated with the market price, there is simply no "market tax" for taxation to be linked with, since it cannot be voluntary. The quest for a "just tax," then, has its roots in statist apologetics—in the minds of those economists who will simply not carefully and objectively consider the nature of the state itself. As for the commonly considered notions of the "just tax," says Rothbard, all merely smuggle a fundamental presupposition in through the back door—the notion that taxation *itself* is somehow "just". The "justice" of a particular *form* of a treatment, after all, is derived from the justice of the fundamental treatment *itself*. And nobody has ever succeeded in justifying taxation itself. Rothbard, in point after point, succeeds in reducing taxation on economic and ethical grounds to oblivion.

Chapter six is perhaps the most innovative in the book. It is the introduction of a new task for praxeology in philosophy: the title is "Antimarket Ethics: A Praxeological Critique." It consists of a critique of over 16 different ethical positions in their objections to a free market—everything from the position of altruism to the position of the Aristotelian-Thomistic school of philosophical thought, ranging over such diverse issues as the morality of human nature, the impossibility of equality, the problem of security, the problem of "luck", charity, poverty, human rights and property rights, over-and under-development and the natures of power and coercion. This last is especially exciting. Rothbard takes up the difference between power over nature and power over man; he reduces the bogey of "economic power" to dust, showing that it is simply "the right under freedom to refuse to make an exchange." Every case of "economic power," he shows, rests solely on someone's right to refuse to make, or to continue to make, a certain exchange on the market. And more: he shows that there are only two options open to us, and that we *must* choose between them. This is a marvelous dissection of what he calls the "middle of the road statist." Suppose, says Rothbard, that "A refuses to make an exchange with B. What are we to say, or what is the government to do, if B brandishes a gun and orders A to make the exchange? This is the crucial question. There are only two positions we may take on the matter: *either* that B is committing violence and should be stopped at once, *or* that B is perfectly justified in taking this step because he is simply 'counteracting the subtle coercion' of economic power wielded by A." Whether we like it or not, in other words, we must *either* defend, in moral principle, A's person & property against invasion

by B, or we defend B's alleged "right" to enforce an exchange. "If we choose the 'economic power' concept," says Rothbard, "we must employ violence to combat any refusal of exchange; if we reject it we employ violence to prevent any violent imposition of exchange. There is no way to escape this either-or choice." And: "What would be the consequence of adopting the 'economic-power' premise? It would be a society of slavery: for what else is prohibiting the refusal to work?"

The final chapter treats crucial questions of the nature of economics and its uses, the nature of the *implicit* moralizing of most economists, economics and social ethics, and the differences between the market principle and the principle of coercion. His notion of the relation between economics and ethics is especially vital: economics, he says, cannot *by itself* establish ethical positions, "but it does furnish existential laws which cannot be ignored by anyone framing ethical conclusions—just as no one can rationally decide whether product X is a good or bad food until its

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# Bits And Pieces

By Jerome Tuccille

## Optimism One

Libertarians who have not yet discovered the writings of F. M. Esfandiary are in for an electrifying experience as they come across this author for the first time. Esfandiary is an Iranian-born novelist, essayist and social critic, now living in this country, who has recently published his fourth book. I have had the pleasure of reading two of his novels—*Identity Card* and *Day of Sacrifice*—both of them dealing with the incredible stagnation of governmental bureaucracy and cultural reactionism in the middle east. Now this author has come out with his first book of nonfiction, *Optimism One*, published by W. W. Norton & Co., New York City.

*Optimism One* is the product of one of the most original and revolutionary thinkers of our time. In a crystal-clear prose style, carefully trimmed of all verbal fat, Esfandiary sets forth a philosophy that runs counter, on every level, to the prevailing intellectual pessimism espoused by most current writers. Esfandiary is in love with life, in love with being on earth and the prospect of reaching across the universe, in love with the modern technology that has brought the human race the highest standard of living it has ever known. There are times when he sounds a bit like an open-ended Ayn Rand might sound today had she developed her vision and expanded it, instead of choking it off with personal biases.

Esfandiary sees a day, not too far off, when man will have shucked off all his old gods: religion; cultural stagnation; fear of his own potential; guilt reactions to feats of accomplishment; the myth that "things are worse now than they have ever been" (according to the author, there is more freedom and less violence in the world today than ever before and the trend is continuing); the notion that the ego and the self is somehow evil; the idea that man needs the institution of government to survive; and ultimately, the myth that death is inevitable. As the author puts it: "If it is natural to die then the hell with nature. Why submit to its tyranny? We must rise above nature. We must refuse to die."

Esfandiary is not the first to talk about suspended animation (cryonics), the implantation of the human brain in more durable synthetic bodies (cyborgs), controlled mutation and anti-gravity centers as a means of creating physical immortality. But he is the first non-science fiction writer, to my knowledge, to speak of these developments as inevitable and as beneficial for the human race. The reaction of most people to the concept of cryonics (freezing a dying body until a day when science can reverse the process) has been: "But there are too many people on earth already! What will we do if nobody dies anymore?"

Space travel and the distribution of the human race on other planets is usually the first solution offered by advocates of cryonics. But Esfandiary's vision is more far-ranging than that. He regards the act of in-body conception as primitive and reactionary. Civilized people of the near-future will refuse to procreate in the old way but will, instead, generate life outside the body (this has already been accomplished in Italy and elsewhere although, as far as I know, the fetuses were destroyed within a week or two after conception). Women's liberationists will be happy to know that they may soon be liberated from the "tyranny of childbirth." With more and more people living indefinitely, the need for procreation will diminish. The quality of life will come under the direct control of science; more durable life-forms will be generated outside the human body and

the birthrate will fall to a level now undreamed of.

Current concepts of education, housing, entertainment and commercial enterprise will also be radically altered in the rapidly-approaching age of communications satellites, lasers, magnetic tapes, telepsychic communication, individual cartridges for television, transportable dwelling units (Buckminster Fuller, Safdi and others already have working plans for apartment units that can be detached from apartment complexes and navigated over land and water).

Esfandiary also considers government to be an archaic institution, and he is optimistic that more people will come to realize this and do away with it just as they are doing away with their immature psychological dependence on religion and other forms of superstition. At the same time he recognizes the need for political action to reduce the misery and enslavement many people are suffering at the hands of government today.

Esfandiary is a radical in the purest sense of the word. He accepts nothing on faith, nothing as an absolute merely because most others happen to accept it as a given truth. His vision transcends the present and speaks of the future in its historical perspective, as a logical development to what has already taken place. He does have idiosyncracies which sometimes get in the way of his logic (he is moralistic about not eating meat and fish for example), but most of his ideas are solid. Buy *Optimism One* and read it. Then go back and read his fiction. He is a writer whose voice, I am reasonably sure, will rise high above the usual babble that passes for serious thought today.

\*The subject of cryonics and life extension in general is one that will become more important as time goes on. Readers with any information on the subject are invited to write me % P.O. Box 41, East White Plains, N.Y. 10604. No hate mail please.

## POWER AND MARKET — (Continued from page 6).

consequences on the human body are ascertained and taken into account."

POWER AND MARKET is replete with intellectual ammunition for the libertarian. In fact, no other book provides so much information which can be readily digested and used in debating crucial issues of our day, when they involve the free market. It is original and comprehensive in scope: its systematic critiques of statism are devastating on every level. This is not merely a book on economics—it is a book on the nature and forms of coercion on every level. It shows the fallacies of everything from taxation, to democracy, to government spending, and deviates such arguments as those of "economic power" and the bogey of "production vs. distribution"—merely by pointing out, in this last case, that it is the existence of *taxation* and government itself which creates for the first time a separation of "distribution" from production, bringing the whole pseudo-problem into being. In case after case, Rothbard squashes the arguments of statists of every breed, by reducing them to absurdities, by pointing out their unadmitted premises, smuggled-in ethical positions, and plain logical fallacies.

With POWER AND MARKET, libertarianism and Austrian economics move into the intellectual vanguard of economic thought. It is the best work in economics since Rothbard's own MAN, ECONOMY AND STATE, which was in turn the best work since Mises' HUMAN ACTION.

Saying that reading POWER AND MARKET is a must for any libertarian interested in presenting an intellectual case for liberty is an understatement. With works of this caliber in every field of intellectual endeavor, the foundations for a comprehensive and fully integrated libertarian ideology would be firmly established.

POWER AND MARKET does not, as some might think, belong on a shelf besides MAN, ECONOMY AND STATE, nor next to HUMAN ACTION. In more than one way, it belongs on a shelf by itself.

## RETREAT FROM FREEDOM — (Continued from page 1)

Hazlitt, a valued contributor to Fee, had cleaved to this principle, he would never have been able to come to grips with and refute the views of Lord Keynes, for Keynes cannot be refuted without his name being mentioned enroute.

At any rate: Mr. Read seems to be worried about the anarchist critique of his worship of unjust law, and so he now returns to a further defense, a defense in which he can only sink into a quagmire of ever deeper statism. In the first place, taking up our example of Prohibition, Mr. Read advances the curious argument that if one persisted in drinking in violation of the law, no one would be interested in repealing it, since the liquor would then be readily obtained. Here, Read ignores the fact that liquor was indeed obtained during the 1920's, but only at the high cost of decline in quality, rise in price, deprivation of access, and occasional arrest. Historically, Prohibition was repealed precisely because law enforcement broke down in the face of massive civil disobedience, *not* because the law was piously heeded and then people turned to legal channels of repeal. But perhaps it is also a lofty principle of Mr. Read's to ignore inconvenient historical fact as well the names of his Opposition.

There is no point in going over Mr. Read's latest lucubrations in fine detail, except to indicate that in his desperate attempt to salvage his apotheosis of The Law he falls into two statist fallacies so grievous as to cause the late Frank Chodorov, great individualist and former staff member of FEE, to revolve in anguish in his grave. First, Read asserts that man in *not only* an individual, he is also, in addition, a "social being", and that therefore he must adopt not only self-responsibility but *also*, "social responsibility". In declaring that "society" exists as a sort of super-entity more than, and clearly higher than, each individual member, Read is flying against the great principle of methodological individualism held by FEE staffer Ludwig von Mises and against the truth noted by Chodorov that "society are people." Second, and still worse for a presumed libertarian, Mr. Read makes a second mighty leap to imply that "society" is somehow embodied in whatever structure of positive law happens to exist, and that therefore the very fact of being human and living in society requires that one obey all the laws, because one is necessarily stuck in the existing society; "Law breaking," declares Read, is therefore "no more rational than resigning from the human race." In thus presuming to identify the individual with society and then society with the State, Mr. Read completes his steady path away from liberty and toward despotism, for he has thereby repeated the essence of every statist apologia in modern history. Even though

one of his FEE staff members is head of the Nockian Society, Mr. Read has tragically forgotten Albert Jay Nock's great demonstration of the inherent disparity and conflict between society and the State.

Nock; Chodorov; Mises; Tolstoy; Thoreau; wherever we look, we find that in recent years Leonard E. Read has beat a steady and increasingly rapid retreat from freedom. It is a sad tale, but one not uncommon in the history of thought.

## The Shaffer Dictionary

By Butler Shaffer

The following definitions comprise a part of my view of reality, in all its humorous—and often frustrating—manner.

EDUCATION: the method I use to promote my ideas.

PROPAGANDA: the method you use to promote your ideas.

DO-GOODER: one who has demonstrated total incompetence at handling his own affairs, and who seeks to make this talent available to others.

PUBLIC EDUCATION: the recognition that, in an egalitarian society even the ignorance should be shared.

DICTATORSHIP: the kind of government under which other men live.

CIVIC-MINDED: that quality exemplified by those who work unselfishly for the realization of government projects which will provide them with government contracts.

POLITICIAN: one who, recognizing the value of truth and reason, seeks to preserve the same by economizing their use.

STATEMANSHIP: the distinction between "statesmanship" and "tyranny" is the distinction between "seduction" and "rape": a brief sales pitch.

CONSPIRACY: anything done by two or more persons of which I disapprove or do not understand.

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