

THE

Libertarian Forum

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A BUNCH OF LOSERS

Perhaps we are being what the Marxists call "impressionistic" (or what the Randians call "journalistic" rather than "metaphysical"), but it is very hard to escape the impression from the early Democratic primaries that the contenders are all a bunch of losers, every one. Let us ponder our gaggle of aspirants in turn.

Lindsay. Certainly the most heartwarming result of the Florida primary was the evisceration of John V. Lindsay. Striding arrogantly through the state as he does through New York City, assuming the mantle of God's gift to the American public, Big John was the recipient of almost universal adoration by the media, and of spectacularly lavish financing. Coming out of a record of administrative disaster coupled with corruption and centralized statism, Lindsay was able to pre-empt the Left with a frankly despotic position on compulsory busing. The upshot of the charisma, the media acclaim, and the billboards plastering the state of Florida was a measly 7% of the Democratic vote, at a phenomenal cost of \$6 per vote. (Generally, \$1 per vote is considered the outsize figure in politics; John Ashbrook emerged from the Republican primary at about 25 cents a vote.) Surely we have now heard the last of John Vliet, and it couldn't have happened to a more deserving guy.

Muskie. After a disappointing victory in New Hampshire, Muskie's 9% in Florida should, by rights and by logic, put the quietus to his chances for the nomination. After all, his appeal was that of a Lincolnesque frontrunner, but what kind of a frontrunner amasses 9%? Unfortunately - unfortunately because he has clearly been repudiated by the American public - the Democrats might still turn to Muskie in the end. Muskie has all the qualities that commend themselves to centrist Democrats anxious to unify the party: a Lincolnesque air, a colorless, "sincere" personality, and very tepidly liberal on the issues. The only trouble with that strategy is that he can't seem to get any votes - but given the factionalism and the genius for self-destruction of the Democracy, they might still wind up with Muskie. Note, for example, the desperate clinging to Muskie in the New York *Times* editorial of March 16, as the good grey *Times* surveyed the Florida debacle. But Muskie is a loser, and he would surely go down to a craggy, Lincolnesque defeat in November.

The Muskie defeat has been attributed by his own aides to an interesting factor: he spoke too much. They now claim that he should have kept his mouth shut, and victory would have been his. An ironic commentary on the quality of our leaders! Then there was Muskie's sobbing on coast-to-coast television. Liberal columnist Harriet van Horne (for whom the term "bleeding heart" would have to be invented if it didn't exist) gushed that Muskie's breakdown showed him to

be a gentle man, and not hung up on "masculine role playing". Fine and dandy, but this was clearly not the reaction of the American voter, who wondered, not without some justice, how Muskie would react to really important emotional stress in a national crisis.

McGovern. It is true that McGovern did not campaign in Florida, but still he was on the ballot, and a whopping 6% hardly brands McGovern as the emerging choice of the American people. McGovern and Lindsay both claim to be the new "populists", but there were precious few of "the people" to cheer them on. McGovern's good showing in New Hampshire could have been largely due to a negative interest in Muskie, as well as the intense concentration of left-wing college youth, which will not be duplicated elsewhere.

Finally, McGovern is just too far left for the American people, and he would be clobbered handily should he gain the nomination. There is one aspect of the Florida returns that has not been noted: the right-of-center candidates in the Democratic primary got a huge 75% of the votes, leaving only 25% for the left. Say what you will about the conservatism of Florida, but the figures remain eloquent on the repudiation of the left by the mass of the voters.

Wallace. The real winner in Florida, of course, was George Wallace, and this was not an unwelcome sight. Let us ponder the issues on which Wallace pounded hard in the campaign: opposition to compulsory busing, opposition to high taxes, to bureaucracy, and to foreign aid. There has a lot of loose talk about the importance of a "new populism", of a populist campaign against the ruling classes. But George Wallace was the only true populist in the race, the only true champion of the average American against the ruling elite. It is not a coincidence that each one of these populist issues were libertarian issues as well. The New Left, for all its obeisances to "populism", for all its talk about someday appealing to the Goldwater and Wallace voters, has never been able to make the grade: largely because it has never been able to bring itself to call for a lowering of taxes (they merely want to shift the "priorities" of government spending). And secondly, because the New Left, for all its bowing to black nationalism, has never been able to abandon the civil rights ideal of compulsory integration, which, in busing, involves the transporting of children to outlying areas for alleged "social gains." George Wallace has been able to denounce high taxes and busing without flinching, and so he captured the votes. A further irony is that the National Black Political Convention, meeting in Gary, Indiana, itself denounced compulsory

(Continued on page 4)

Ashlosky For President

By Edwin G. Dolan

With the field already so crowded a rumor - not even confirmed - of another congressman about to enter the race for president runs the danger of being greeted by a yawn. But to ignore congressman John Paul Ashlosky, representative from an obscure district in one of our midwestern states, would be a serious mistake - he is definitely a candidate with a difference.

His possible entry into the Republican primaries is especially significant in view of the two opposition candidates who had been running in New Hampshire.

On the one hand, we have John Ashbrook of Ohio, who offers voters an opportunity to express their outrage at Richard Nixon's sellout of everything he personally and the Republican Party generally have ever stood for in the area of economic policy. But many who would like a chance to register their dismay at Phase I and Phase II and inflationary recession are held back by the fear that a vote for Ashbrook would be interpreted as an endorsement of that candidate's stance on foreign policy, which sustains a degree of militarism, interventionism, and crusading anti-Communism which they would just as soon see left behind as we head into the fourth quarter of the century.

On the other hand, there is the late candidacy of Paul McCloskey of California, who gave the voter a chance to tell the Administration that he hasn't been fooled by the troop withdrawals and other cosmetics of Vietnamization - that Nixon's stance during the Bangla Desh crisis shows him as willing as ever to prop up sagging military dictatorships everywhere, and to stand four-square for reaction in the four corners of the earth. Yet a vote for McCloskey might have been taken as a vote for Republican me-too-ism on that whole range of policies, domestic as well as foreign, on which the left-wing of the Democratic party is basing its presidential drive.

So in this situation, the hoped-for candidacy of Ashlosky will combine the best elements of both opposition candidates (Nixon himself already combines the worst) and give the voters a chance to express themselves unambiguously on the issues. A few remarks from a recent speech by the congressman will show the form his platform is taking:


"What we have witnessed in recent decades is a convergence of Conservatives and Liberals, Republicans and Democrats, on one fundamental tenet of ideology - that whatever the problems we face, the solution is to be sought through ever more high-handed use of the power of the federal government.

"When political realignments seem imminent in any part of the world, the response is the power of bombs, fleets, and military aid. When the bankrupt economic policies of three administrations face us with runaway inflation and history's largest budget deficits, the answer is more power - the power to abrogate contracts, stifle the market, and impose a totalitarian-style system of comprehensive controls. And when our public school system reveals its failure either to educate our sons and daughters, or to do anything but exacerbate tensions between races and economic classes, the answer is still more power - power which can't lift us up but can force us down to a uniform level of mediocrity.

"In my view, the runaway growth of government power is not the solution to our problems - it is the problem. To this policy based on power, I oppose

a policy based on freedom. Freedom for the people of the world to struggle with their own problems and if need be, to fight their own wars with their own weapons. Freedom for the individual to enter the market place to buy and sell, to bargain and negotiate without the crushing burden of economic controls, confiscatory taxation, and inflationary spending and monetary policy. And freedom for people to seek local solutions to local problems, solutions based on decentralization and community control, on diversity and individual initiative.

"I believe that American politics in coming years will witness the rise of a united opposition, based on the principles of anti-imperialism abroad and individual sovereignty at home, which will defy the outmoded labels of left and right. If you feel that my candidacy for president would hasten the emergence of this movement, I will be your candidate."

John Paul, where are you? America needs you! We have not yet begun to fight! 

ROTHBARD

(in print and on tapes)

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Philosophy And Immortality

By Jerome Tuccille
(an excerpt from a forthcoming book)

Are philosophical principles absolute? Or will philosophy and political ideology, like our legal codes, have to evolve with new developments in technology and social structure in order to keep from growing obsolete?

Several writers of science fact and fiction have claimed that present struggles between "capitalism" and "socialism," "fascism" and "communism," "individualism" and "collectivism" will have no place in the world of the near future. Novelist F. M. Esfandiary talks not only about the coming New Technology, but about New Economic principles as well in his first non-fiction book, *Optimism One*. In *Future Shock*, Alvin Toffler states that present-day economic and political ideologies are already obsolete, and the notion of total individual freedom is a romantic pipedream. B. F. Skinner, in his 1971 best-seller, *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*, claims that man is so totally conditioned by his environment that the concepts of personal liberty and free will are nothing more than utopian myths. He argues that people must be conditioned from birth to live in peace with their neighbors if the human race is to survive - although, exactly who will do the conditioning is never fully explained. Arthur C. Clarke and Buckminster Fuller take the position that property, both communal and private, will be an archaic concept in an age of transience and universal mobility. Toffler also thinks that ownership and property are losing their meaning with built-in obsolescence, mass-produced throw-away items, rental rather than purchase of automobiles and housing, and the corresponding decline in materialistic permanence.

These are intriguing assertions, especially since they come from writers who have been imaginative visionaries in the field of technology and science. Fuller and Clarke, particularly, have been remarkably prescient in writing about such varied concepts as weather prediction, space travel, global communication satellites, fusion power, moving sidewalks, recycling, domed cities, etc. . . ., years before anyone else decided they were practical. At this writing, New Jersey is looking into the feasibility of building a domed city according to Fuller's specifications - approximately thirty-five years after Fuller discussed this possibility in connection with New York City. When a few strong-willed individuals have been right so many times while virtually everyone else was dismissing them as incorrigible utopians, there is a tendency to take everything they say on faith once their ideas have been vindicated. In reality, however, their individualism and tenacity in the face of criticism puts the lie to their own statements concerning the obsolescence of choice, free will and individual determination.

It seems to me that we do someone, as well as ourselves, a disservice whenever we institutionalize him as an omniscient seer, oracle or harbinger of the future. Every new proposal, regardless of who is presenting it, deserves to be scrutinized on its own merits. The fully infallible man has not been invented yet, and chances are good that infallibility will continue to elude us long after immortality has become routine. The problem, when it comes to analyzing predictions, is to strike a happy balance between our natural tendency to demolish everyone who sounds original and creative, and to deify those who turn out to be right more frequently than not. We have to develop the ability to distinguish between the Jeanne Dixons and the Buckminster Fullers of the world - even the element of Jeanne Dixon residing within a Buckminster Fuller.

Although the various circumstances of life already men-

tioned - law, technology, social structure, political institutions - continue to change with increasing momentum, there are certain universal truths which remain constant through the ages. Our visionaries, for the most part, have developed an expertise at speculating on the variables of life while at the same time ignoring completely the abstract principles which *ought to govern* human affairs. There are few exceptions - Heinlein and Robert Silverberg come immediately to mind - who have tackled moral and social problems while fictionalizing the concrete world of tomorrow, but they remain a small minority. Some futurists have even been known to bend their avowed philosophical precepts when it comes to securing funds for a pet scientific project of their own. While the human race can save itself some time and agony by listening more carefully to technological projections which may seem quixotic for the moment, we should also understand that philosophy is a separate discipline with little or no connection to the hard sciences.

Certain principles are so fundamental to the entire human condition that no serious person, regardless of his politics, will take exception to them. For example, it is hard to visualize anyone in his right mind maintaining that non-aggressive people do not have a right to basic human freedoms: freedom of speech, of assembly, of picketing and dissent, of association, of economic trade. Anyone who openly advocated that some men have the moral right to enslave others would be roundly denounced as a "fascist," a "communist," a "racist," a "sexist," and a no good SOB. Anyone maintaining that some individuals have a right to dictate reading matter, sexual habits and general lifestyle to others invariably means that he would be among those doing the dictating. Many of us may harbor these ambitions secretly, but hardly anyone stands up at a public podium expressing these secret desires in abstract terms.

As we look at the world around us, we see that most political regimes are based on singularly *non-libertarian* principles, though whenever political leaders are interviewed they always claim that their prime interests are the "freedom and prosperity" of their constituents. The Greek colonels, Generalissimo Franco, Mao, Brezhnev, and Spiro Agnew are all in power to further the principles of human liberty, even as they do everything in their power to suppress the civil liberties mentioned above.

So, it seems, the human race does not practice what it preaches. We have a unique way of translating universal truths - always based on the axiom that man has a right to his freedom - into the most grotesque political forms imaginable. There appears to be a bit of the dictator in too many of us - the urge to be in a position to tell others how to live, what books to read, what flags to salute, ad nauseam. Otherwise we would not tolerate the authoritarian regimes now governing most of the world. If man truly desired his freedom, he would rise up *en masse* and seize it from those who withhold it from him. Revolution would be a spontaneous outcry heard around the globe. Instead, sadly enough, our rulers rule with the tacit approval of the masses while the human race continues to delude itself with verbal devotion to the abstract principles of liberty. We get, apparently, the kind of society that the majority secretly desires.

Yet all this does not alter the fact that the principles themselves are still valid. Man *does* have a natural right to conduct his affairs without interference from others so

(Continued on page 5)

PHILOSOPHY AND IMMORTALITY —

(Continued from page 3)

long as he does so in a non-aggressive fashion. We may differ on what exactly constitutes an act of aggression. Some maintain that private ownership of a parcel of real estate is a "rip-off" which ought to be suppressed; others think pornography is an attack on the "moral climate" of the nation and ought not be available to the public. Between these extremes, however, most people can agree on a long host of issues which clearly fall into one category or another. Murder, assault, robbery, fraud, destruction of property, pollution are all obviously aggressive activities; gambling, the voluntary exchange of goods, the various forms of self-abuse and victimless acts are just as clearly non-aggressive. Even though honorable people may disagree over concrete issues, the abstract principles behind them remain constant nonetheless.

Consequently, when Alvin Toffler states that individual freedom is a pipedream — when B. F. Skinner claims that free will and liberty is nonexistent because of environmental conditioning — what they are doing is speculating subjectively about certain conditions of contemporary life. It may well be (although neither author has succeeded in proving his theory) that man's actions and decisions are predetermined by his conditioning and he is unable to exercise individual freedom in any real sense. It may also be true that built-in obsolescence and rental of commodities will change our ideas about property and ownership. But these are all descriptions of real or imagined social conditions, and have nothing whatsoever to do with the abstract principles of natural human rights. The axiom that man has a right to his freedom has not been called into question; whether or not he is capable of exercising that freedom is another story.

Both Toffler and Skinner go a step further, however, when they turn from speculation to advocacy journalism. Toffler talks about the obsolescence of present-day economic principles and political ideology. Since economics and politics are nothing more or less than the result of philosophical principles applied to concrete issues, Toffler is saying in effect that we need to develop a new metaphysics to help us deal with the world of the future. Where Toffler is somewhat circumspect, Skinner goes all the way and calls for the politicization of his behavioristic psychological theories. Not only does he speculate about man's inability to function freely, he evidently wants a board of behavioristic bureaucrats appointed to plan the kind of conditioning man will be subjected to. (With Ehrlich's panel of experts determining the size of our population, a board of rabbis, priests and ministers telling us who will be frozen and who will die, and now Skinner's corps of behavior determinists, the New Great Fair Society of today will look like a *laissez faire* paradise in comparison.)

While new scientific discoveries add to the body of knowledge available to man, it is difficult to foresee any developments requiring that we re-evaluate our natural rights as human beings. More specifically, no matter how many people we freeze and bring back to life, how many clones and ectogenes we create in the laboratory, how many cyborgs we manufacture, how many space ships we send toward the stars, how many diseases we learn to cure through biofeedback, and how many immortalists are walking the earth five hundred years from today, it will not alter the philosophical fact that aggression is immoral and people have the right (even if not the ability) to go to heaven or hell in their own way. This principle is unchanging and will remain so until all intelligent life, whether it is flesh and blood or mostly machine, becomes extinct.

It may be that struggles between "capitalism" and "socialism," "individualism" and "collectivism" will die out as the years roll by; but this will be due to a change in terminology more than anything else. The distinctions between totali-

tarianism and freedom, between coercion and voluntarism, between repression and spontaneity will be with us for as long as some people try to exercise power over others. It makes little difference whether we call a free society socialist or capitalist, collectivist or individualist. Language is flexible while reality is not. Labels are unimportant, but concrete conditions are vital to everyone.

Looking at *Future Shock* merely as a speculative work, we find that Toffler's predictions concerning free choice and liberty are refuted by some of his own technological projections. While he is telling us that freedom of choice is a "meaningless concept," romantic rhetoric to the contrary, he goes on to state there will be more diversity in the near future through a proliferation of consumer goods and lifestyles and, consequently, more flexibility and options for everyone. He is telling us, simultaneously, that there will be more choices available in all areas of life, and that our ability to choose will be increasingly limited. Does he mean that Madison Avenue will become more adroit at molding public opinion and controlling consumer demands? Or that we will be paralyzed with indecision when faced with more than a small variety of alternatives? He does not tell us, unfortunately.

Logically, it would seem that man's ability to use his power of choice assumes an added dimension with every increase in available alternatives. "Freedom," "free will," and "self-determination" had a strictly limited meaning when most people labored twelve and fourteen hours a day merely to feed and house themselves. A "free" man was still a slave to economic hardship. Even today, many people are required to spend half their waking hours at boring, dissatisfying jobs just to buy necessities. In this respect we are more "free" than we were forty years ago, but it is a relative factor. In the kind of world Toffler is speaking of, however, where machines do all man's drudgery for him, where today's luxuries are mass-produced inexpensively for everyone, where moral codes, family structure and lifestyles are flexible and dynamic, *total freedom* becomes possible for the first time in history. Yet this is the world in which Toffler says individual freedom and choice will be a meaningless concept. If there is one way to free man from his present "conditioning" by hardship, drudgery and puritanical traditions it is through the technological advances and mobility which Toffler anticipates.

It is also difficult to understand how contemporary economic principles can ever become obsolete.

An advanced economy depends upon the availability and exchange of goods. Since no society however affluent is totally self-sufficient, worldwide prosperity depends upon the mobility and transfer of goods as they are required from one society to the next. This will always be so unless we reach a day when each individual is capable of manufacturing all goods and services for himself, an unlikely if not impossible situation.

The economic options available in the future will be basically the same as they are today. Societies can either own goods in common, produce them collectively and closely manage their distribution and exchange, or ownership, production and trade can be carried out privately in a free and fluid marketplace. There are, of course, many variations on these alternatives: nationalization; management without nationalization; domestic management with international *laissez faire*; national *laissez faire* and international management; one-world nationalization or management; one-world *laissez faire*; etc. . . Even the colonization of other planets will not alter these conditions, for the same principles will apply to extraterrestrial societies as they develop. While honorable men can (and probably will) disagree among themselves as to what type of arrangement will produce the

(Continued on page 6)

A BUNCH OF LOSERS — (Continued from page 1)

busing, and called for black control of black education. This is not only a stand that harmonizes with the anti-busing whites (one faction at the Balck Convention actually called for a Presidential ticket of Wallace-Chisholm!) but approaches the libertarian position as well.

This is not to say that the libertarian could endorse Wallace for the presidency; there are two major stumbling-blocks — his ultra-hawkish attitude on Vietnam, and his questionable devotion to civil liberties. But Wallace, as many of the liberal Democrats have acknowledged, has raised the issues that touch the hearts of the American voter, and he has raised them correctly; and no Democrat who ignores this challenge and continues to talk in terms of the tired, old, statist and centralizing liberalism can hope to win the Presidency.

But Wallace, in his own way, is a loser too, for he could scarcely hope to be nominated by the national Democratic party. We are back to Square One.

Mills. No observer has mentioned the fact, but the Florida primary has also put the boots to the candidacy of Wilbur Mills. In New Hampshire, he was a write-in candidate, but in Florida he was on the ballot in a sympathetic, fellow-Southern state. Mills amassed close to zero votes. Let us hear no more of Wilbur Mills, and let us be thankful.

Humphrey. The egregious gasbag, the old retread of the Fair Deal — undoubtedly he is the second winner in Florida, coming in after Wallace with 18% of the vote. The really dismal feature of the voting is the recrudescence of Hubert. No, no, not that! To top everything, Humphrey has lately shucked off his dovish clothing and returned to the Vietnam hawk he truly is. It is too much; another choice between Humphrey and Nixon is too much for the human soul to stomach. Furthermore, even if Hubert should win the nomination, which he might well do, the Democrat Left would, and properly so, react in horror and mobilize a vengeance-fourth party — and all the more power to them. And so Hubert, in November, would be a hopeless loser too.

Jackson. Scoop also did fairly well in Florida, although 13% of the vote hardly reflects a public clamor. Ideologically, though, Scoop is even worse than Humphrey; he would be the "McBrook" Mr. Hyde to Professor Dolan's "Ashlosky". Scoop, furthermore, would be even more likely to face an angry fourth party uprising — and so he too would lose in November.

Chisholm. Shirley Chisholm, after campaigning long and in Florida, and after claiming to be the living embodiment of every black, Chicano, and female, got 4% of the vote. Enough said.

McCarthy. It is true, again, that McCarthy did not campaign in Florida. But he was on the ballot, after all, and his nearly zero vote should be enough to end any possibility of a McCarthy boomlet.

Yorty. Sam Yorty, with close to a zero vote dropped out.

Hartke. Vance Hartke supplied the comic relief of the campaign. He had one billboard up in the state of Florida, a billboard that will go down in the history of American politics. It read "WALLACE SUPPORTS HARTKE"; it was only in tiny letters that the reader was informed that this was not George, but Milton Wallace, Hartke's campaign director in Florida. Milton brought Hartke, however, close to a zero vote. If anyone in the country exists who happened to be worried about a "Hartke threat", he need worry no longer.

And so there we have it, as sorry a lot as it has been our misfortune to see in many a day. Where is our shining knight to lead us to the dethronement of the Monster Milhous? Where, indeed, for he is surely not on our list. It begins to look as if there is one man, and one only, who has the charisma, the magnetism, and the broad support in all wings of the party and in all classes and ethnic groups

Recommended Reading

Rothbardian a.

Murray Rothbard has a dissection of the Value-Added Tax in the conservative weekly *Human Events* ("The Value-Added Tax is Not the Answer", March 11.) He also has a review of the *Festschrift* for F. A. Hayek, *Roads to Freedom*, sketching the Austrian philosophical position, and praising the contributions of Lachmann, Bauer, and Popper. (In the *Political Science Quarterly*, March 1972). There is also a free-swinging and lengthy interview with Rothbard in the Feb. 25 issue of the new anarcho-objectivist fortnightly tabloid, *The New Banner* (available in a special reprint for 10¢, and for a year for \$7.00, from *The New Banner*, Box 1972, Columbia, S. C. 29202). Here Rothbard comments on Ayn Rand, anarchism, political parties, the New Left, strategy for libertarians, the movement, the Friedmans — father-and-son, price controls, and many other topics.

Banfield. One of the most brilliant books of the last couple of years is Edward C. Banfield's *The Unheavenly City*, now out in paperback (Little, Brown.) Banfield details the destructive influence of government on urban economics and urban society, and turns the Marxists neatly on their head by pointing out that the major problem with the poor is their "lower class" values and "lower class" culture that most of them have adopted. The book is a fine, ringing defense of the importance of what have been much derided as "bourgeois values": thrift, hard work, low time preference, foresight, rational purpose, etc. No book in years has infuriated the Left as has Banfield.

Ecology and all That. The libertarian answer has now been provided for us on the ecology question, and by our own Edwin G. Dolan, in his paperback: *TANSTAAFL: Economic Strategy for the Environmental Crisis* (Holt, Rinehart, and Winston). Here is a handy and brief reply to the ecological Left — and written by someone who is obviously personally fond of conservation and the great outdoors! As a special lagniappe, also, this is the first book to mention the *Lib. Forum* — specifically, Frank Bubb's fine article on property rights and pollution.

Retreatism. Before our perfervid retreatists rush off to a coral reef or an ocean platform, they might well stop and consider a less quixotic solution — to live in one of the *Safe Places* outlined by David and Holly Franke in their best-selling book (Arlington House, 932 pp., \$13.95). The Frankes unearthed 46 towns in the U. S. which enjoy low crime rates, low pollution, and low taxes — and they describe them all in detail. Moreover, the book is very handsomely produced, with hundreds of charts, maps, and photographs.

"The freest form of government is only the least objectionable form." --- Herbert Spencer.

in the country to do the job. And he isn't running . . . or is he?

An ironic sidelight to the affair is the spectacular counter-productivity of *Lib. Forum* endorsements. First we endorsed Senator Hatfield, and he didn't run. Then, we endorsed Senator Proxmire (who, incidentally, was the only "liberal" Democrat to vote strongly against busing), and he promptly dropped out. Then we began to sidle up a bit to Ed Muskie, and we see what has happened to him. Is there Somebody Out There Who Doesn't Like Us? ■

PHILOSOPHY AND IMMORTALITY —

(Continued from page 5)

best results (the same as with political institutions), the abstract principles underlying these issues remain constant: should man be free or controlled? should economic trade be free or managed?

Even concepts like ownership and property, which will grow obsolete according to Fuller and Clarke, will be subject to the same analysis. It seems to be true that we rent many goods today that were purchased yesterday, and the life-expectancy of most consumer items is far less than it used to be, but this doesn't change the nature of property and ownership *per se*. It only means there are fewer owners and more renters today than existed thirty years ago, and there are likely to be even fewer owners and more renters by the year 2000, present trends continuing. This may be what Clarke and Fuller mean to say, but in their enthusiasm for forecasting scientific developments they seem to be advocating a change in economic principles as well.

As for the kind of economic order we are heading toward? Latest indications are that, on the international level at least, we are evolving toward a freer market in trade and co-operation. It is becoming more and more difficult for a single nation to place restrictions on the free movement of goods across national boundaries. When that avowed "free trader," Richard Nixon, imposed a 10 percent surcharge on U. S. imports in 1971, it was the first serious attempt by a major country in a decade to derail the movement toward freer global trade that has been building since World War II. And it met with failure. The age when a superpower, however super it may be, can dictate self-protective economic policies to the rest of the world is now over. The new age is characterized by a more even balance of economic power distributed among the United States, the European Common Market, the Communist bloc, Japan, and the developing African and "Third World" nations.

In the closing days of 1971, twelve leading economists from various countries met in Washington, D. C. and unanimously recommended major changes in world economic policies. While each proposal was not pure *laissez faire*, the general tone was certainly in favor of freer trade among nations. Among the list of recommendations to avoid "further economic and political crises" were: elimination of all remaining tariffs on industrial goods over a ten-year period; negotiations to limit high-price domestic policies which create food surpluses and lead to import barriers (ironically enough, while the United States was allegedly fighting inflation in 1971, Nixon was promising the farmers that the government would do all it could to keep food prices from falling too low); a gradual phasing out of agreements limiting free trade in steel, textiles and similar products; a reduced role for the U. S. dollar as a world reserve currency, and adoption of some form of fixed standard — possibly gold — to determine exchange rates. These proposals, coming as they did from the Brookings Institute and other liberal organizations rather than from *laissez faire* economic associations, indicate a broader acceptance of free market systems. Even more pertinent is the fact that these economists acknowledged the relationship between restrictive trade policies and political turmoil, including war.

"What is involved," said a spokesman for the group, "is the wider question of how the international community should order relationships. If economic differences drive countries apart, world order will be notably prejudiced."

The relationship between economic warfare and nationalistic militarism has been well catalogued by both revisionist historians and libertarian scholars during the past twenty years. Now this kinship is more generally accepted, and with this new awareness will come a broad-based movement toward a free global marketplace. What we are witnessing in the world today is *not* the adoption of

The Conservation Question

By Gerald P. O'Driscoll, Jr.

During a fight over "saving" a cluster of redwoods, Ronald Reagan is reported to have remarked that "If you've seen one, you've seen them all." Needless to say, the good governor was roundly berated for his callousness. Yet there was some truth in what the governor had to say. One wonders whether the more extreme (consistent?) members of the conservation lobby would have us save every last tree, plant, and repulsive reptile from extinction, no matter what the cost. There is some question whether the early American colonists would have ever gotten off the boats if there had been an incipient Sierra Club in the 17th century. After all, to have felled a tree, or killed a turkey would have been to upset the ecology of the continent. All the other species and creatures of the earth are supposed to be permitted to run loose, preying on their natural enemies, consuming natural resources, etc., but man is supposed to recriminate about what he does in order to survive, and sometimes, advance his standard of living. Nature, too, destroys, but this is often overlooked in all the blather from conservationists. In fact, man is, in one important respect, at a disadvantage *vis à vis* other animals; he does not possess instincts to insure his survival. Man must rely on his reason, and his ability to conquer natural forces in order to survive. There is no question that in the process man destroys forests, fouls streams, and, yes, exterminates whole species of other animals. So what? Species have disappeared quite independently of any action by man, as have forests. We are constantly reminded by ecologists that man is part of nature, yet when he does what every other species does — grow and expand at the expense of other species — his actions are condemned as unharmonic with, and destructive of nature. In fact, the truth is precisely the opposite. It is in man's nature to control and subdue what are termed "natural forces," to build "artificial" dwelling places, precisely because, if he does not, man will not survive. Like it or not, there is a struggle in nature for the world's scarce resources, and if men do not use their unique talents, these resources will go to the ants and elephants. Then, surely, there will be a return to pristine nature; no man, however, will be there to appreciate it. Let us forget, the business of man is man, and this does not necessarily imply that either the number or the comfort of seals and alligators should be maximized.

Of course, my quip about the early colonists was silly. There were no conservationists among the colonists for a very good reason. People who have to confront nature on a day to day basis are not given to waxing eloquent about the joys of same. The sunrise on a desert may be beautiful to the middle class urban dweller, but it spells frost and ruin to the citrus grower. A winter scene in the Rockies makes for a beautiful Christmas card, but it means starving cattle for the rancher. Nature is beautiful to those who can choose the conditions in which they wish to confront it, and who have a place to retreat to after they have dabbled in pioneer life.

It should also be noted that the original motive of conservation was to preserve natural resources for future growth of the economy. It was feared that too fast a depletion of the nation's resources would lead to economic stagnation and decline, and that for a variety of reasons, it was doubted

(Continued on page 7)

a new metaphysics and new economic principles but, instead, the vindication of basic libertarian principles as they apply to all areas of human intercourse. These principles are emerging by default as authoritarian institutions decay and fall along the wayside on our march toward a civilized world community. ■

THE CONSERVATION QUESTION —

(Continued from page 6)

that the market could effectively allocate these resources over time. Most conservationists would agree that this is not the problem anymore. The demonstrated ability of technology to advance faster than resources are depleted has obviated any need for guardianship over the earth's resources in order to prevent economic stagnation. Indeed, today's conservationists seem to desire economic stagnation! And there in lies the difference between the "old" and "new" conservationism. Today, conservation is seen as providing for the present and future amenities associated with unspoiled natural environments, for which the market (again) is alleged to fail to make adequate provision.¹

But "amenities" associated with contact with the natural environment are hardly to be compared with the need to conserve natural resources in order to insure the continued growth of a complex economy. Nor does what is known as the "irreproducibility" argument stand up to scrutiny. There are some wonders, such as the Grand Canyon, which must be kept, or be lost forever (though, again, this fact does not, of and by itself, prove that they should be preserved). But such is the exception. For most, contact with nature means a visit to a state park, a drive through the country, or a picnic on a scenic overlook. But such assets are reproducible, and, in fact, have been growing steadily as state parks and other public and private facilities have grown to meet increasing demand.²

Some economists have argued that such amenities are so-called "collective consumption goods", and must, therefore, be provided by the government. Besides the fact that the conclusion doesn't even follow given the collective good assumption, the assumption is wrong. We do not see much private investment in the saving of threatened scenic wonders (though the fact we see any should at least give pause to the conservationists), because as long as there is a reasonable hope of governmental action to supply desired services, the consumer-conservationist will be well-advised to put his money into lobbying aimed at obtaining the desired services "free," or at well below cost, rather than into purchasing a private supply. To take Professor Robinson's example, suppose a group of wealthy individuals started a "Cadillac for the people" organization, and contributed \$1,000 each to lobby to get the government to supply Cadillacs at \$2,000 each. If the lobbying were successful, it would have proved a bargain. If the supply of Cadillacs dried up as a result, it would not prove that Cadillacs are a common consumption good which cannot be supplied by the market. It would only serve to prove anew that when something is sold at a price below the market-clearing price, demand will exceed supply.³

The old conservationism did not stand on solid grounds, either. The allocation of natural resources over time is one with any other capital problem. To conserve means to postpone use of a resource — to consume less today in order to consume more tomorrow. It is a matter of less now, more later. To follow the famous dictum of Gifford Pinchot that "conservation means the greatest good of the greatest number, and that for the longest time," would be to never use resources at all. What we can do, however, is to maximize the value of our natural resources. But, this the free market does as it does in maximizing the value of any asset over time.⁴

Moreover, it must be emphasized that to conserve or postpone the use of one resource usually involves depleting or accelerating the use of another resource. Resources are substitutes for one another. If coal, for instance, is conserved for heating purposes, more oil will have to be used. Conserving *all* resources would be literally impossible, without a drastic lowering of the standard of living, if not the extinction, of the human race. Again, we get back to what seems to be the logical end of conservationism, old or new.

the impoverishment or destruction of the human species.

To say that the market doesn't save enough resources for the future is to express an unsupported value judgment about how well people should be off now relative to those who live in the future. Why should people in the future have a special claim on the people who live now? Either the conservationist is saying that the future does have a claim on the present, or that the market does not allocate properly over time. Neither has ever been successfully argued.

All This is not to say that there is no truth in what "ecologists" have to say. However, the observed "pollution" problem stems from the government's laxity in enforcing the ordinary law of torts against industrial polluters. By lowering the cost of "pollution-intensive" production, the government has, in effect, encouraged pollution, and the growth of pollution-producing industries at the expense of non-polluting industries. Air and water pollution involve poisoning people.

There is an elementary property rights problem involved — the right of people to their lives and property. As usual, the government isn't doing what a policing agency should be doing, and is doing what it shouldn't. There are hopeful signs that pollution law will take a new turn, recognizing a principle that would be the cornerstone of any libertarian legal code: that people shall not be deprived of their persons or property without due process. ■

¹On the differences between the old and new conservationism, see Warren C. Robinson, "A Critical Note on the New Conservationism," *Land Economics*, XLV, No. 4 (November, 1969), 45-56.

²For a statistical mathematical argument that at least one state government (California) has actually supplied *fewer* parks and campgrounds than would be supplied on the free market, see Gordon Brown, Jr., "Pricing Seasonal Recreation Services," *Western Economic Journal*, IX, No. 2 (June, 1971), 218-25.

³It is often assumed that the federally operated recreation network is redistributive. Lower income groups by and large receive no benefit from such services. The 1959 study of Wilderness Areas in California found that the average income of wilderness campers was over \$10,000 compared to a U. S. average annual income of about \$6,000 (think of all the expensive, specific capital required for camping). To the extent that taxes from lower income groups support the National Parks and Forests, it is these groups who are subsidizing upper middle class consumers of "amenities."

⁴For an excellent article on this problem, see Scott Gordon, "Economics and the Conservation Question," *Journal of Law and Economics*, I (October, 1958), 110-21.

THE STATE

The harpies attack
Snitching from blind masses' plates,
Screeching platitudes.

--Jack Wright

"This was the American Dream: a sanctuary on earth for individual man: a condition in which he could be free not only of the old established closed-corporation hierarchies of arbitrary power which had oppressed him as a mass, but free of that mass into which the hierarchies of church and state had compressed and held him individually thrall and individually impotent." --- William Faulkner.

Short People, Arise!

Surely, one of the most imbecilic movements of our time is the drive to secure *pro rata* quotas everywhere for various "minority groups." Academic departments in universities are being assaulted, by the government as well by propaganda, for not assuring their quotal "rights" to "minorities", now illogically defined as: women, blacks, Chicanos, and youth. And every state delegation to the Democratic convention is supposed to have its assigned women-black-Chicano-youth quota, or the gods will descend in their wrath. The full absurdity of this hoopla has gone undetected because not fully and totally applied. Why aren't Irish, Italians, Albanians, Poles, Mormons, etc., assured *their* quotas in the Pantheon? Are we to have endless legal challenges, for example, because the Alabama delegation doesn't have enough one-legged Swedes, or because Harvard University doesn't employ enough Polish Catholics? And, of course, no one seems to mention which ethnic or whatever groups will have to be dumped and lose their jobs to accommodate the rising minorities. Which groups are *over* their assigned quotas?

All this was highlighted some months ago when J. K. Galbraith called on all corporations to hire blacks as top executives, in proportion to their number in the total population, and, to go further, to hire them in proportion to the surrounding population in their immediate geographic area. Father Andrew Greeley, the highly intelligent conservative sociologist, countered to ask whether Galbraith is prepared to give up his post at Harvard, and to call upon Harvard to hire Irish Catholic academics in proportion to their share of the population in the Boston area. *Touché!*

As long as all the various "oppressed minority" groups are getting into the act, I would like to put in a plea for another, unsung, oppressed minority: short people. We "shorts", I have long believed, are the first to be fired and the last to be hired; our median income is far below the income of the "talls"; and where in blazes are the short people in the top management posts? Where are the short corporation leaders, the short bankers, the short Senators and Presidents? There is surely no genetic evidence to prove that short people are inferior to talls (look at Napoleon!) Short people: end oppression by the talls! Develop short pride! Call for short institutes, short history courses, stop internalizing the age-old propaganda by the talls that you must be consigned to inferior roles in our society! Demand short quotas everywhere!

It is good to see that scholarship is now bolstering our

perceptive instincts about short oppression. Professor Saul D. Feldman, a sociologist at Case-Western Reserve, and himself a distinguished short, has now brought science to bear on our problem (Arthur J. Snider, "Society Favors Tall Men: Prof." New York Post, Feb. 19). Feldman reports that of recent University of Pittsburgh graduating seniors, those 6-2 and taller received an average starting salary 12.4% higher than graduates under 6 feet. Aha! Furthermore, a marketing professor at Eastern Michigan University quizzed 140 business recruiters about their preferences between two hypothetical, equally qualified applicants for the job of salesman. One of the hypothetical salesmen was to be 6-1, the other 5-5. The recruiters answered as follows: 27% expressed no preference (Hooray!), 1% would hire the short man, but 72% said that they would hire the tall man!! For shame!

Professor Feldman went on to point out that scorn of the short pervades our entire American culture (a "sick" culture, surely.) Women discriminate notoriously in favor of the talls over the shorts, and in movies how many shorts have played romantic leads? (Some, like Alan Ladd, *were* short, but his shortness was always cunningly disguised by the bigoted movie moguls, e.g. Ladd stood on a box in the love scenes.) Feldman also pointed out the subtle corruption of our language (presumably as engineered by the tall-conspiracy) Look how "shorts" are treated: people are "short-sighted, short-changed, short-circuited, and short in cash". Feldman also declared that when two people run for President, the taller is almost invariably elected.

OK, short people: we now have the ineluctable findings of statistical science to bolster out qualitative folk-wisdom. Short people of the world, arise! Demand your rights! You have nothing to lose but your elevator shoes!

Oh, one final note: short liberation, we must all realize, does not in *any* way mean an anti-tall movement. Despite the age-old tyranny of the talls, we are out to liberate all people, short and tall alike. Consciousness-raising groups for guilt-ridden tall sympathizers with our movement are now in order. ■

"The word state is identical with the word war. Each state tries to weaken and ruin another in order to force upon that other its laws, its policies and its commerce, and to enrich itself thereby."

--P. A. Kropotkin

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