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THE Libertarian Forum

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Two Tiers Crumble

In March, 1968, the august authorities of the international monetary Establishment undertook a reform that would copper-rivet their rule and banish gold forevermore. Since World War II, the basis of the international monetary order had been the Bretton Woods system, in which every national currency was fixed in terms of the almighty dollar, and the dollar in turn was fixed in price at \$35 an ounce of gold. The capstone of the system was the \$35 an ounce gold system, which all the leading economists and bankers and bureaucrats assured us was written in tablets of stone. Never, never would an alteration of the magical \$35 figure take place. The problem was that as American inflation continued and grew, the free markets of the world evaluated the dollar as ever less and less valuable in relation to the hard money, gold. Hence, the free gold markets of the world — notably London and Zurich — felt enormous pressure upward on the gold price from \$35 an ounce. In order to maintain the price at \$35, the United States Treasury kept dumping gold on the free market. But inflation and the subsequent acceleration of upward pressure, meant that the U. S. Treasury lost even more gold than continued to flow abroad from the ever-weakening dollar. Finally, a dollar panic on the free gold market in the spring of 1968 led the world Establishment to reconstitute the international monetary system: to end the pesky gold problem and eject it from the monetary order.

The countries decided to ignore the free gold market by sundering the gold market in two: from March, 1968 on, the monetary authorities would simply ignore the free gold market, would have nothing further, ever to do with it. Let it go to blazes! Instead, the Federal Reserve System would continue to redeem the dollar at the rate of \$35 per ounce in gold, to any Central Banks that wished such redemption; and the Central Banks would continue to evaluate gold at this ordained price. There would now be "two-tiers" in the gold market, or rather, two "markets"; and the world Central Banks would simply go about their business, insulated from the free market. Gold would be cut off from the real business of the monetary authorities, and would remain as only an accounting device between governmental central banks. To maintain this, all the Central Banks pledged themselves never, ever to buy or sell gold again in the free market, or in any way outside their own cozy cabal.

It is instructive to remember how the whole raft of anti-gold economists, from Milton Friedman and Fritz Machlup on the right to the Samuelsons on the left, greeted this development. They all solemnly assured us that it was not gold that propped up, or gave backing to, the dollar. The truth was the other way round! Now cut off from its dollar moorings, they opined, gold would soon fall to its "proper", non-monetary price on the free gold markets: in short, to-somewhere around \$10 an ounce. The wicked gold speculators and the evil South Africans (the largest suppliers of new gold) would at last get their comeuppance.

The rest is history. In the years since, not once did the free-market gold price fall below \$35 an ounce; on the contrary, it has generally been considerably above that, and as accelerating inflation has weakened public confidence in the dollar and other fiat currencies (a process intensified by the U. S. abandoning all gold redemption in August, 1971),

the price of gold has risen ever more sharply. Proposals of pro-gold economists to double the price of gold to \$70 an ounce were, until very recently, greeted with ridicule by the anti-gold economic Establishment. A price of \$70 was considered absurdly high and out of the question by almost all of the "experts." And yet, at last reading, the price of gold on the free market had risen to no less than \$150 an ounce, and the end is scarcely in sight. Once again, it is us "gold bugs" who have had the last laugh; gold has once again buried its would-be undertakers.

Now, at last, in November, 1973, in a little-heralded move, the U. S. and its allies in the monetary Establishment have thrown in the towel. The two-tier gold system, the lofty isolation of the Central Banks from the free gold market, is no more. The U. S. and the other nations announced that no longer would there be the two-tier isolation; from now on, any Central Bank would be free to buy or sell its gold at will.

Incredibly, the United States was able to save face on making the announcement by conning the media into claiming that here, once more, was the coup de grace to gold and to all the wicked speculators and "gold hoarders." Fed Chairman Arthur Burns loftily announced that now Central Banks would be able to sell gold on the free market and thereby bring the price down. What Dr. Burns neglected to mention, of course, is that Central Banks would also be free to buy gold and dump some of their supply of excess and unwanted dollars. Whether gold was to be the winner or the loser from the liquidation of the two-tier system became obvious when no Central Bank was observed rushing to sell any of its precious stock of gold. And, indeed, they would have to be unusually dim-witted to do so. If you were a central banker, would you sell gold at \$150 an ounce when all indications were that gold would keep rising in the future?

Another result of the crumbling of the two tiers is to render obviously and strikingly idiotic the "official" U. S. definition of the dollar as weighing 1/42 of a gold ounce (i.e. the official U. S. gold price of \$42 an ounce). So long as the two tier system remained, we could preserve the fiction of \$42 (embodying two tiny devaluations over the last few years from \$35), because the Central Bank "market" was to be kept insulated from the unclean doings on the free gold market. But now that Central Bank isolation has been ended, the \$42 an ounce price becomes so much hot air. In fact, every Central Bank, including even the fanatically anti-gold Federal Reserve Bank, will be increasingly and irresistibly tempted to upvalue their gold stocks from the phony \$42 to the realistic free gold price. Any country that does so will find that, as if by magic, it will have nearly four times as much precious gold as it did before (i.e. their stock of gold ounces will be worth four times as much.) Why should the U. S., for example, struggle along with a dwindling and puny gold stock of \$11 billion when, by simply recognizing the facts of reality, it could jump instantaneously to something like \$40 billion?

No, gold is alive and flourishing throughout the world. Its health, and its role, is better than it has been in decades, and its prognosis is terrific. Natural law is once again winning the fight against the schemes of economic dictators. □

Relevance?

The strictures of your editor and of James Davidson against irrelevance among libertarians (October and November issues of the *Lib. Forum*) have drawn more and louder comment than any articles in years. To the many readers who commented favorably, I can only say "God and/or Reason bless you", and thank you for your sentiments. But particularly interesting here are the host of unfavorable critics, whose comments have ranged from dignified restraint to scarcely controlled hysteria, on behalf of their respective "irrelevant" causes, from science fiction to "humanistic" psychology to vitamin pills. Basically their arguments are twofold. First, that their hobby-horses are "really" relevant (science fiction often presents models of a free or unfree society, vitamin pills "extend life" and libertarians surely favor the extension of life, etc.) And after all, liberty narrowly defined is certainly not the only concern of a libertarian! Second, is the *tu quoque* argument that even we ourselves are "inconsistent" with our own position by publishing movie reviews and occasional cultural articles.

Of course, if one is anxious to stretch the point, almost everything can be dragged in as in some remote way "relevant" to libertarian concerns. All truth, after all, is one and interconnected. Columns on chess could be justified as "training the mind", and libertarians must use their minds, etc. A defense of Old Culture movies and a rational esthetic is part of the general theory of rational individualism of which libertarianism is a subset. But in a profound sense, it is the very vehemence of the reaction against our articles that most proves our point: i.e. the increasing emphasis away from liberty and in favor of all the other special hobby horses that pervade the movement. Clearly, it is scarcely a matter of high principle — comparable to the Non-Aggression Axiom — that no space whatever be accorded to these peripheral issues. The problem is one of proportion, of balance. Our argument is directed against the growing amount of energy and space that have been devoted to these peripheral matters, in contrast to the central issues and principles of libertarianism. What has been happening in all too many cases is that

various groups and journals of libertarianism begin to stress not just liberty but liberty-cum-science fiction or liberty-cum-"humanism" or whatever. Then, in a short while, like a creeping cancer, the science fiction or the "humanistic psychology" begins to take over, as the groups involved begin to feel that it is these special matters that are really important, while liberty itself becomes relegated to the edge of their concerns. New *Libertarian Notes* is now increasingly infected with the science-fiction bacillus. In its current, January 1974 issue, of the 20 pages of text, 14 are devoted to science fiction, 3 to neo-Tolkien fiction, 1 to a poem, and 2 to an attack on us for criticizing science fiction: A perfect score! And on the West Coast, "humanist psychology", from "open relationships" to "touchie-feelie" encounter groups, is increasingly the major focus of many groups of libertarians. It's as if the *Lib. Forum* were to devote its entire space to a defense of John Wayne over Antonioni (a far more relevant cause!)

In the current *Libertarian Connection* (Jan. 24), Miss Natalee Hall, Mr. Skye D'Aureous, and Mr. Ron Chusid make the point that, after all, liberty is not all of life, that libertarians must surely favor the extension of their lives, and that therefore information on vitamin pills, or, indeed, the filling of cavities, is a legitimate concern for a libertarian publication. The problem is that the last term of the syllogism does not really follow from the first two. What we have in this kind of argument is a flouting of the vital concept of the division of labor. There are, after all, an enormous number of available sources of information about vitamin pills, cavities, medicine, or, for that matter, science fiction or humanistic psychology. There are incomparably more sources of information about these topics than there are about libertarianism. Unless we are to assume — God forbid — that our readers get all of their information about life and reality from our little magazines, it becomes a tragic waste of space to allocate so much of it to these tangential or irrelevant matters.

So, won't you come home, Libertarians? □

What Kind Of 'Purity'?

Now that the Libertarian Party has grown more successful and has become the major organizational form for libertarians throughout the country, internal discussions have inevitably emerged about the Party's future course.

At one extreme, the "pragmatists" argue that when, as, and if we elect anyone to public office, that official should be prepared to make the compromises required by his august position. A Libertarian Congressman, for example, should be able to logroll, and vote statism on some issues in return for cadging the votes of his colleagues on more vital concerns. I am not aware of any Libertarian who actually defends the Symms voting record in Congress, but it is clearly the "Symms model", in a modified form, that attracts the pragmatist camp. If a Congressman comes for example, from a potato growing area, then the claim is that he should be allowed or encouraged to vote for potato subsidies for his constituents so that he can remain in office and fight for liberty on grander issues.

The pragmatist view, however, not only violates libertarian principle; it defeats the whole purpose of a Libertarian Party in the first place. The purpose of the Party is to advance the libertarian cause in the political and public arena; and any votes for statism whatsoever undercuts the pushing of the libertarian cause. Libertarianism is a seamless web; and pragmatic voting destroys that web and permanently prevents the voting public from grasping the theory and its ineluctable applications. If, moreover, our object is to get "from here to there" from the current mixed system to a world of pure liberty, then any violation by a libertarian of his own credo undercuts the goal itself, and virtually destroys any prospect of ever achieving it. The purpose of libertarians in general, and the Libertarian Party in particular, is, in the old motto, to uphold a standard to which the wise and honest will repair. Flouting our

own principles destroys the standard itself. If the Libertarian Party is to be pragmatic in this sense, then it would be far better for the cause to scrap the Party altogether and confine our political activity to pressuring Republicans and Democrats; let these infidels do the logrolling and potato-mongering. Praise the Lord, then, that Steve Symms is a Republican and not a Libertarian Party Congressman. As a Republican he is tolerable; as a Libertarian he would be an unmitigated disaster.

Fortunately, there is no present prospect of the pragmatists being strong enough to take over, or even have much influence within, the Libertarian Party; and let us hope and make sure that the Party will remain that way.

At the other extreme, there are some Libertarians, now roughly confined within and around the "radical caucus" of the Free Libertarian Party of New York, who maintain that anarchist purity requires the virtual absence of any structure within the Party. Any move toward centralization of funds, toward any sort of efficient structure, indeed any move away from pure participatory democracy, is attacked by this faction as a violation of anarchist purity. It is necessary to remind this group that there is nothing whatever in anarchism or libertarianism that denies the value of organization, or structure, or even (voluntary!) centralization. There is no need whatever to conjoin liberty with any sort of "democracy", participatory or otherwise.

Presumably (one hopes!) the "decentralist" faction does not oppose the existence of corporations or of the wage system. Yet corporations, or indeed any sort of employer-employee relationship, are *ipso facto* "hierarchical" and exclude participatory democracy. In return for a wage payment, the employer tells the employee the tasks he is expected to perform, and the employee agrees to these tasks in return for

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An Open Letter To Irving Kristol

Ed. Note: In September, 1972, at the biennial meeting of the Mont Pelerin Society at Montreux, Switzerland, Professor Irving Kristol of the City University of New York delivered a thoughtful and hard-hitting critique of the free-market, libertarian position. Since Professor Kristol delivered his sally at a meeting of an international group of allegedly free-market economists, I have been awaiting some response from a member of this august group in defense of their supposed position. But I have waited in vain. As their next biennial conference approaches, not only have there been no criticisms of Professor Kristol, but instead, his speech was universally hailed by the members as brilliant, seminal, and definitive, and was similarly greeted with hosannahs by conservative-"libertarian" John Chamberlain. As the conservative co-editor of *The Public Interest*, and as a powerful leader of the "New York intellectuals" who in a sense determine public consciousness, Professor Kristol had won what is by now the dubious distinction of being Richard Nixon's favorite intellectual. Since no one has replied to Professor Kristol's challenge, your editor has leaped into the breach. The following is slightly modified from an unanswered letter to Mr. Kristol (Kristol's speech later appeared in his *Public Interest*.)

Dear Irving:

Your speech was the best presentation of the conservative, anti-libertarian case I have seen in a long time. Since no libertarian seems to have replied, I thought that I might enter the lists.

I agree that, in their presentation of the case for the libertarian, free society, free-market economists have generally been gravely deficient in ignoring the entire sphere of the moral order. But where I disagree with you is in your view that this defect is inherent in the libertarian position. Unfortunately what happened is that economics grew up at the same time, and conjoined with, utilitarianism. Hence economists — whether free-market oriented or not — have generally been utilitarians. Hence the idea that in order to be happy, all one has to do is to be free to pursue one's own utility schedules — an idea that ignores the existence of an objective moral order and what the Thomists call the existence of a "science of happiness."

But there is another tradition in economics, even in free-market economics. As we have learned in the last two decades, the scholastic philosophers were largely free-market oriented (Karl Marx was not, contra Tawney, the "last of the Schoolmen"), and Aristotelian philosophy always heavily influenced French and Italian economics, and later even the Austrian School, as Emil Kauder has demonstrated. In the present-day, Wilhelm Ropke has cleaved (roughly) to the free market and to objective moral principles. Outside the realm of professional economics, some conservative-libertarian thinkers have integrated a libertarian position with a firm belief in an objective moral order which is disobeyed at one's peril. In the nineteenth century, I might cite Herbert Spencer, and in the present day, the late Frank Meyer.

Let me put it this way: I agree with you that utilitarians are wrong in believing that every person knows automatically what will make him happy. I have two basic comments on this — one as an economist and another as a Libertarian. As an economist, I don't agree that economics assumes this (only the utilitarian excrescence on economics.) The free-market economist, as economist, only assumes that utility scales have been adopted in some way by each individual; all he need assume to pursue the science of economics is that every person has a set of utility scales. How he has arrived at them or whether or not they are morally valid is not the concern of the economist. It should, however, be the concern of the social philosopher, or the economist-as-social philosopher, and unfortunately economists-as-social philosophers have not recognized this. Also, as an economist I emphatically don't agree that ascetic or quasi-ascetic or deeply religious communities can dispense with economics. There is nothing flouting of economics to contemplate a world that does not pursue material gain. As Mises and Hayek have shown, furthermore, an elite, including a religious elite, cannot calculate economically to rationally produce those goods they

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Political Kidnapping

It would seem to be belaboring the obvious to denounce the monstrous and unconscionable kidnapping of Miss Patricia Hearst; that is not only the libertarian position, it is the position of every decent human being. But denunciation is necessary, since many elements of the Left seem to be taking a position that is at least ambivalent, and even friendly, toward the kidnapping.

Thus, in a New York Post interview with leading leftists in California (Feb. 13), one leading Berkeley radical described the rationale of the "Symbionese Libertarian Army" for the kidnapping as "very beautiful"; another stated that "you've got to admire them. They made some brilliant maneuvers." Even leftists who opposed the move did so, not on the grounds of criminal immorality, but of strategy and tactics. One left-wing physician commented that: "personally, I don't agree with what they did, since there was no mass base. But this is the most attention the movement has gotten in a long time." The clear implication, of course, is that if the SLA had a "mass base", then kidnapping of innocent people would be justifiable. As for "attention", let us hope that the SLA will get the kind of "attention" it won't like very much, such as being pulverized by the police. Less ambivalent but still amoral in their criticisms were Angela Davis of the Communist Party and Huey Newton of the Black Panthers, who attacked the SLA action as "adventuristic" and "delusionary". True enough, but hardly addressed to the critical moral issue involved.

Even apart from the Left, there seems to be an unfortunate tendency to excuse or mitigate this crime by citing its political or ideological rationale. Even Miss Hearst — although she is clearly under coercion and hardly responsible for her statements — stated that "these people have been very honest with me. . . . They are perfectly willing to die for what they do." It should be affirmed, loud and clear, that the motives for a crime in no way mitigate the crime itself; kidnapping is kidnapping and evil, whatever the motivation. It makes no difference whether the kidnappers are bandits out for money, psychos out for "kicks", or ideologues pushing some political cause, whether left, right, or center. They are monsters, and should be treated accordingly. ■

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payment. There is no room here for "democracy" or, indeed, any sort of voting. If, as presumably even the decentralists and the "radical caucus" would agree, there is nothing inimical to liberty in corporations or wage contracts, then why the hysterical denunciations of any sort of structure — or division of labor — within the Libertarian Party itself?

In a sense, this entire issue has been obscured by the fact that the Party has so far been a strictly volunteer (i.e. unpaid) organization. But if the Party is to grow and expand, it will have to begin hiring professional, full-time organizers. And when that happens, it will be clear that there will be no room for "voting" by the paid organizers, let alone a need for "participatory democracy" by the paid staff. But once that reality principle occurs, once the necessarily hierarchical and "undemocratic" nature of this relationship becomes clear, then one hopes that the strident calls for participatory democracy within the Party as a whole will begin to wither away.

As the Marxists have long since informed us, what any ideological group or movement needs is rigidity in principle, but flexibility in tactics. How one votes in Congress, or what the content of Party platforms or resolutions may be, is a matter of high principle where no violations may be tolerated. What the form or structure of our organizations may be, however, is purely a matter of tactics, and hence of efficiency and practicality. In short, the proper realm of "pragmatism" is that realm where principle does not apply. Since there is nothing in libertarian principle which prescribes "democracy" or prohibits structure or hierarchy, it is precisely here where considerations of efficiency must prevail. Let us not cry "wolf" where no wolf does or can exist. ■

Rothbardiana

We have not been able to report on Rothbardiana since our June, 1973 issue, but since then, matters have proceeded apace. For *A New Liberty* was the recipient of two thoughtful, though wrong-headed critiques: in *The Civil Liberties Review* (Fall, 1973) by the eminent, quasi-Marxist political philosopher Christian Bay; and in *The Christian Century* (Nov. 7, 1973), by Professor James W. Woelfel of the University of Kansas. As might be expected, Professor Bay attacked FNL as too "bourgeois", while Professor Woelfel attacked it as ignoring original sin (!). Plus ça change . . . or, as the saying goes, so what else is new?

Rampart College has just published (January, 1974), a second, revised, and updated edition of the long-selling *What Has Government Done to our Money?* (Available from Rampart College, Box 11407, Santa Ana, Calif. 92711, for \$2.00). The new edition adds a twelve-page chapter on "The Monetary Breakdown of the West", summarizing the breakdown of the international monetary system over the last century, and updating the advance of this decay until mid-1973.

Rothbard returns to praxeology! in a lengthy article summarizing the praxeological method in economics and outlining the embryonic use of this method by various classical economists of the nineteenth century. In "Praxeology as the Method of Economics", in M. Natanson, ed., *Phenomenology and the Social Sciences* (Northwestern University Press, 1973), Volume II.

Rothbard reviews Samuelson! In a review-article of the ninth Edition (Ye Gods!) of Samuelson's infamous text. In the *Wall Street Review of Books* (December, 1973).

Also the following articles have appeared by Rothbard: "Interview: Rothbard Discusses Libertarianism," *Stanford Daily*, June 5; "The Original Machine-Haters: Review of M. I. Thomis' *The Luddites*," *Business and Society Review* (Spring, 1973); Letter on the "Deschooling of Society," *Journal of Forum for Contemporary History*, June 4; "Foreword to W. Block's *Economic Scapegoats*," *New Libertarian Notes* (October, 1973); "Revisionism and Libertarianism," *NLN* (December, 1973); two columns in *Reason*: "Watergate, and the Argument from Knowledge," (October, 1973), and "Privacy or the 'Right to Know'?" (January, 1974). The following book reviews have appeared in *Books for Libertarians*: of Benjamin Tucker's magazine *Liberty* (October, 1973); *Days of H. L. Mencken* (November, 1973); P. T. Bauer's *Dissent on Development* (December, 1973); W. H. Hutt's *The Strike-Threat System* (January, 1974); and the *Collected Works of Lysander Spooner* (February, 1974).

Finally, a slashing attack on egalitarianism, "Egalitarianism as a Revolt Against Nature," originally delivered at a Conference on Human Differentiation in Gstaad, Switzerland, held by the Institute for Humane Studies, appeared in *Modern Age* (Fall, 1973). And, hot news!, this will be the leadoff essay in a collection of Rothbard essays now in press in book form, some unpublished and others appearing in obscure and now defunct periodicals. The title will be *Egalitarianism as a Revolt Against Nature, and Other Essays*, forthcoming soon from Books for Libertarians Press. Rothbard will have a new introduction to the essays, with a foreword by R. A. Childs. □

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must have to survive; even the fiddlers on the roof need a price system to know what to produce and how to do so with any sort of efficiency. Otherwise, how are their fiddles going to be produced?

As a libertarian, I agree, as I've said, that we cannot assume that every individual knows a priori what will make him happy. I also agree that he must learn these principles from a set of elite "ethicists", be they ministers or whatever, and then must apply these principles. But my position is that every individual has the right to be free to try to find his happiness, or even, as I think Spencer once wrote, to go to hell in his own way. (Of course, empirically I think you would agree that very often the elite know only the broad principles, and that each individual is a better expert over the specifics of his concrete circumstances, but my position does not rest on this.)

I would agree that the world is in dire need of moral instruction. But there are at least two grave flaws, it seems to me, in what I take to be your reliance on the State to provide such moral guardianship. One is the anomaly of relying on the organized coercion-wielders for such service. Sorokin once perceptively wrote of the high percentage of criminality (even as defined by non-libertarians) among State rulers (Sorokin and Lunden, *Power and Morality*), and this is readily explained in one of Hayek's great chapters in the *Road to Serfdom*, "Why the Worst Get to the Top." Placing the State in charge of moral principles is equivalent to putting the proverbial fox in charge of the chicken coop.

Secondly, by coercing the moral act, which I take it you wish to do, you are paradoxically depriving the person of the chance of being moral. It seems to me that moral choices make no sense in the absence of freedom to choose, a freedom which is precisely the glory of the species man. If an individual is faced with alternatives A, B and C; and if we can agree that A is the moral alternative, then the individual is deprived of the chance to choose morally if alternatives B and C are made illegal.

I maintain, then, that every person has the right to be free to choose his moral principles, whether they be from the Church, his own whim, or, the Lord forbid, Marcuse or Charles Reich. But what, you ask, if he uses his freedom, as he has been doing increasingly, to choose "hippie nihilism", which I agree contravenes the workings of any modern society, free or not?

In the first place, I would maintain — in contrast to many other libertarians — that every family has not only the right but the moral duty

to instruct its children in the proper bourgeois virtues and the "Protestant ethic." It is the failure of such instruction, under a misapplication of libertarian theory, that is responsible for much of the current madness. (For magnificently "conservative" educational pronouncements by libertarian thinkers, see the writings of Isabel Paterson and Albert Jay Nock.) But, in any case, what are we to do with the increasing number of nihilists that we suffer from?

There are two libertarian answers to this. One is that it is precisely when we have Big Government that the danger from hippie nihilists is the greatest; for once nihilists gain control of the governmental machinery, we have all had it. But, if government were minimal or non-existent, there would no channel of destructiveness open to nihilistic takeover. Secondly, in a free society, the objective moral order would be free to do its work, and the hippie nihilists would swiftly learn the law of cause and effect. This basic knowledge — what used to be called "Social Darwinism" — has unfortunately been forgotten by many current libertarians, but we find it beautifully spelled out in the writings of Spencer and Sumner. Let me put it this way: we know that hippie nihilism is dysfunctional for the individual and for society; in a free, libertarian society, without State and welfare palliatives, the hippie nihilists would find this out soon enough. Some years ago, when hippie communes were first sprouting and I was worried about them, one of my libertarian colleagues cheerfully set me straight: "Don't worry, one hard winter will take care of them." And he was right. Without the patina and cushion of welfare statism, one hard winter would work its constructive lessons. Already, the hippie phenomenon has receded considerably since its flood tide in the late 60's, as the need for jobs and careers has become increasingly evident among the youth. Furthermore, even amidst the horrors of the drug culture, I understand that "Social Darwinism" has caused a considerable dropoff in the use of LSD — its destructiveness became all too clear and evident, even for the hippies.

In the free society, finally, where neighborhoods would be privately owned, the "straight" bourgeois residents could simply exclude hippies and other undesirables by not allowing them onto their privately-owned streets. It is because, I might point out, the streets are all State-owned that we of the West Side of Manhattan have to put up with the monsters that infest us. In a free, privately owned society, the hippie nihilists would have to go into their own self-isolated areas, where they would not bother or wreak their ill effects on the rest of us, and where Social Darwinism would work all the more rapidly and correctively.

Libertarianism, in short, does not have to be morally mushy. It can be the hardest of hard-nosed. □

Arts And Movies

By Mr. First Nighter

Mel Brooks: An Appreciation

The appearance of what is unquestionably the funniest movie of the last several years (*Blazing Saddles*, dir. by and with Mel Brooks, and with Gene Wilder, Cleavon Little and Madeline Kahn), offers a welcome occasion for an appreciation of a man of prodigious and exhilarating comedic talent. Beginning — as did so many other leading humorists — as a writer for Sid Caesar's "Your Show of Shows" in the 1950's, Brooks burst on the entertainment scene with his justly famous hit record which he wrote and narrated, "The Two Thousand Year Old Man". In that record, Brooks presented the trivial side of world history (In Yiddish accent, as nearly as I can remember: "Napoleon? Sure I remember him. Short fella, bad stomach.")

Since then, Brooks has made all too few movies, but they have been outstanding. One, *The Producers*, made in 1968, still stands as the funniest movie of the last two decades. In that picture, the fabulous Zero Mostel, playing a sleazy, down-on-his luck New York Jewish theatrical producer, decides to fleece a group of backers by drastically over-selling shares in a new production: if it is a sure flop, then Mostel and Gene Wilder, a young accountant whom he inducts into the swindle, could skip town with the proceeds and no questions asked. Trying to insure a flop, Mostel and Wilder put on a pro-Nazi musical, "Springtime for Hitler", written by an ex-Nazi soldier, marvellously played by Kenneth Mars. An inspired and hilarious movie, from first moment to last.

Blazing Saddles, while no *Producers*, also provides an occasion for a contrast and comparison of Brooks with Woody Allen, whose hilarious *Sleeper* also opened recently, and was reviewed in these pages. For both Brooks and Allen embody the best of two variants of what might be called "New York Jewish humor." Allen's has essentially been Jewish humor of the 1950's: cerebral, quasi-intellectual, left-liberal, the Allen persona a worried, bumbling shnook obviously "in" and around psychoanalysis. The fact that *Sleeper* blends these long-standing features of Allen's humor with the marvellously visual, cinematic Keaton-Lloyd tradition of 1920's movie comedy doesn't change Allen's essential stance as a Man of the Fifties. Brooks, on the other hand, hearkens back to an older, healthier, and — as far as I am concerned — a far funnier tradition: Jewish humor of the 1930's. The humor is absurdist, linguistic-cultural rather than political, emphasizing — particularly in *Blazing Saddles* — a series of dazzling and explosive "one-line" situations and gags rather than plot continuity. The Brooks persona, which appears far less often than Allen but of course shines through the material at all times — is far different from Allen's: it is brash, self-confident, constantly on top of the situation rather than buffeted by life. In a profound sense, Brooks harks back to the great, superb tradition of the Marx Brothers pictures of the 1930's: with the possible exceptions of the W. C. Fields canon, the funniest pictures ever made. With the Marx Brothers, too and even more so, not a moment was wasted: every millimeter of film was one of a series of dazzling and absurdist gags and situations. Of course, *Blazing Saddles* doesn't compare to such great Marx Brothers' epics as *Duck Soup* and *Night at the Opera* — but after all, what can? The Marx Brothers provided a harmonious and wondrous blend of visual and dialogue comedy, with Harpo basically providing the former and Groucho the latter. It is no accident that these great comedies were written by perhaps the finest humorist of the twentieth century, S. J. Perelman, whose essays provide us with a truly remarkable erudition in language and culture in the service of hilarious comedy. But it is not a small boon to have a film which at least harks back noticeably to the great Marx Brothers tradition.

Blazing Saddles, as did the *Producers*, also delights the viewer by bringing back one of the finest traditions of American comedy: ethnic and racial humor. Under the repressive hammer blows of *serioso* left-liberalism, ethnic humor has virtually died out in America in this generation (pace the driving of Amos and Andy off the air). But Brooks realizes that, precisely because of this suppression, and now that hardcore pornography can be seen everywhere, ethnic humor has become the last taboo in our culture, and therefore the best subject for comedic genius. *Blazing Saddles* brings ethnic humor back with a bang.

This movie is the definitive spoof of the movie Western; every cliché scene and set is taken and put through the wringer of the inimitable Brooksonian humor. Seeing *Blazing Saddles* is enough to reveal the inadequacy and feebleness of previous attempts at spoofing the Western (e.g. *Cat Ballou* or the older *Buttons and Bows*.) The movie opens with a typical scene of the Old West: workin' on the railroad, the workers this time being Chinese (wearing coolie hats) and blacks. The white foremen ride up and demand that the Negroes "sing your nigger folk-songs . . . you know, your nigger work-songs." The blacks look at each other in confusion ("nigger folk songs?"), and finally break into a rendition of Cole Porter's "I Get A Kick Out of You". The white cowboys are confused in their turn, and say: "No, No; you know, songs like 'Camptown Races'", after which, to illustrate, they break into a rendition of "Camptown Races" strongly reminiscent of the exaggerated writhing of the singing in the Marx Brothers' films.

The movie continues in this vein of hilarity. There is, for example, a remarkable spoof of Marlene Dietrich Westerns (e.g. *Destry Rides Again*) as dumpy Madeline Kahn sings her way with a Germanic lisp, in a Western bar and dance hall, through a takeoff of "Falling in Love Again" ("Tired"), as the songstress "Lilli Von Shtupp". To defeat the bad guys and save the town, the black sheriff, the protagonist of the film, builds an exact replica of the town overnight in order to confuse the bad guys and induce them to shoot up the replica instead of the town itself. Mel Brooks himself plays the brash, dopey looking, and crooked governor of the state.

Probably the funniest moment of the film comes as the black (and Ivy League-type) sheriff reminisces about his family's move to the West. As they were bringing up the rear of a long and racially segregated wagon train, we see the train set upon and massacred by the mighty forces of the Sioux nation. The Sioux then gather round the wagon with the black family, and gaze at it in puzzlement. After a moment (and bearing in mind that there had been no Yiddish humor yet in the film), the Indian chief, Mel Brooks, dressed in Indian costume and looking solemn, bewildered, and even dopier than as the governor, exclaims: (in thick Yiddish accent): "Schwartzes!!" And then: "luz em geh ('let them go'), they're darker then we are."

Mel Brooks is possibly the funniest man around, and long may he wave. That he is personally hilarious was demonstrated a few years ago, when David Susskind put on a panel of six or eight Jewish comedians to discuss *The Jewish Mother*. In this impromptu program, Brooks, a constant stream of hilarious wit, simply walked off with the show. But he virtually said it all when, early in the program, Susskind asked Brooks to describe his own Jewish Mother: "Fierce she was. Fierce . . . and short."

The Paper Chase, dir. and written by James Bridges. With Timothy Bottoms, Lindsay Wagner, and John Houseman.

An interesting picture, with a new twist on academe; instead of hippies or rebels in college, this movie deals with the joys and terrors of law school (Harvard, to be precise.) The pressures of school, the love of learning, the problems of discipleship to a martinet teacher, the pure terror at exam time, all these are caught and portrayed well and sensitively. Unfortunately, the entire picture suffers from diffusion, meandering, lack of organization. Tight editing and the imposition of a firm directorial hand are almost desperately needed. As a consequence, the ending is weak and confused, as the movie, like so many other films these days, just dribbles to a halt, instead of having its problems or themes satisfactorily resolved. Particularly weak is the love interest, as Lindsay Wagner, the female lead, is given virtually no lines and leads a shadowy and unmotivated existence.

The picture is not helped by Timothy Bottoms, as the central character, who wanders through the film with his gentle hippie air and distracting mannerisms beying his supposed sense of purpose. A shining light in the picture is the superb performance of John Houseman as the professor whose silky surface hardly conceals his iron and subtly sadistic character.

(Continued On Page 7)

Background Of Middle East Conflict*

By Bill Evers

Suppose a war breaks out between Ruritania and Walldavia, two hypothetical states which we shall use for purposes of analysis. In determining war guilt, it is not enough to know merely who fired the first shot or who crossed what line first.

Instead an in-depth historical inquiry is necessary. If the Ruritaniens have in the past conquered and subdued or dispossessed half of the Walldavian people, that does make a difference when one is trying to determine war guilt.

The political roots of the present-day conflict in the Middle East go back to the World War I era. At that time, officials of the British Empire promised in somewhat vague terms a homeland in Palestine for organized Zionism and promised national independence in the Middle East to Arab nationalist leaders.

Without in any way acknowledging the rightfulness of British imperialist meddling, we can distinguish between these promises by noting that the Arabs were struggling to throw off the foreign rule of the Ottoman Turks and to achieve national self-determination, whereas the Zionists were foreigners laying claim to the land the Arabs were living on.

Promises Never Kept

In any case, the British never fulfilled either promise. Britain and her allies divided up the land of the old Ottoman Empire, and Britain took control of Palestine.

Several surveys covering land tenure in British Palestine in the late 1940s just before the formation of the State of Israel show that Arabs owned 49 percent of the land in Palestine; Jews, six percent; government land and land owned in common by Arab and Jewish villages, six percent. The rest was desert, some of which was the regular pasturage of Bedouin tribes. Included in the category of government land by these surveys was territory claimed by Ottoman sultans and their successors, but occupied for generations by thousands of Arab peasants who claimed the equivalent of freehold tenure.

Of further importance is the fact that the Zionist Jews bought most of their land from feudal landlords, whose claims to the land originated in conquest, not in cultivation.

Large Landowners

A. Granott, an Israeli land expert whose writings are quoted by both Palestinians and Zionists, notes that "no less than 90.6 percent of all (Jewish) acquisitions were of land which formerly belonged to large landowners, while from fellaheen (Arab farmers) only 9.4 percent was purchased."

The study "Land Ownership in Palestine, 1880-1948," published by the Office of the Premier of the State of Israel, also states that "most of the Jewish land purchases involved large tracts belonging to absentee-owners."

Thus, an additional question of justice arises because of the feudal system in early twentieth-century Palestine. According to the libertarian theory of justice, a feudal landlord is not the legitimate owner of land; instead, the land belongs to his bondsman who has been homesteading it. Thus the Zionist settlers obtained a clear and just title only in cases in which previously unowned land was homesteaded or in which land was bought from native Palestinians.

Justifications

One of the justifications often given for Israeli seizure of Arab houses and farmlands after the formation of the State of Israel is that the Arabs fled after having been ordered to leave by the radio broadcasts of the Arab political leadership.

However, subsequent scholarly examination of the monitoring transcripts kept by the British Broadcasting Corporation and the U. S.

Central Intelligence Agency shows no evidence that orders to leave were broadcast and shows that some exhortations not to evacuate were broadcast.

Apparently the confusion of battle and fear of the terrorism of some Zionist military organizations like the Irgun group prompted departures. Nonetheless, even if it could be shown beyond a shadow of a doubt that the Arab people of Palestine had been ordered to leave, this does not alter the legitimacy of their title to the land.

There is now some increased consciousness among Israeli intellectuals of the fact that they live on stolen land. During the summer of 1972, members of the literary intelligentsia argued that the Israeli government should permit the Arab inhabitants of the villages of Ikrit and Berem to return to the homes from which 25 years before they had been expelled, in a supposedly temporary evacuation.

Israeli Premier Golda Meir told these intellectuals that restoring the rights of these pro-Israeli Arabs would set a dangerous precedent. The *New York Times* said the Israeli press reported her fearing that all sorts of claims might be put forward, by hundreds of thousands of refugees of the 1948 war.

Although the territory controlled by the Israeli government has expanded considerably over the years, Israel's might does not make her right. One can only hope that eventually justice will prevail and that the Palestinian Arab refugees will once again be masters in their own homes.

*Reprinted From The Stanford Daily, Oct. 10, 1973. □

Save The Oil Industry!

Not even at the height of the left-wing climate of the 1930's has there been such a savage anti-business assault by politicians and by the media as is now being levelled at the oil industry. An economically insane proposal to rollback crude oil prices, "excess" profits taxes on the oil industry, destructive compulsory allocations by the Federal Energy Office, a proposal for a "yardstick" oil company owned and operated by the federal government, and even the AFL-CIO proposal for nationalization of the oil industry. Two men for some curious reason beloved by the nation's "conservatives" are at the center of this furore: George Meany, and Mr. State himself, Scoop Jackson. Energy fascism proceeds on the path of its grisly logic, pushing from one frenetic piece of government botch to another, with the government frantically attempting to add new interventions to rectify the miseries brought about by its previous aggressions. Full collectivism is around the corner unless these proposals are fought and fought hard. The fact that some of the oil majors have courted government subsidy and privilege in the past does not excuse the current social-fascist drive by one iota. Unless we all rally round to save the oil industry now we will go the path of Britain and, eventually, Russia. □

New Associates

We wish to acknowledge with gratitude the advent of three new Libertarian Forum Associates. They are:

Dr. Walter Block
Mr. Hal Jindrich
Mr. Donald McKowen

The Home Front

Geoffrey Perrett, *Days of Sadness, Years of Triumph: The American People, 1939-1945* (New York: Coard, McCann, and Geoghegan). \$10.00. 512 pp.

Reviewed By Justus D. Doenecke


Good social history is always difficult to write. Few efforts by non-professionals have been successful. Most soon become "source books," from which the trained scholar can find the telling example or the revealing anecdote which supposedly "illuminates" an entire period. To what degree, for example, does our picture of the "lost generation" derive from Frederick Lewis Allen's *Only Yesterday* (1931) or our image of Harding's leadership come from Mark Sullivan's *Our Times* (5 vols., 1926-1935)?

The author, himself born during World War II, combines graduate work in law with a varied career as a journalist, laborer, and even paratrooper. Readers who lived through the period will relish Perrett's treatment of "Mairzy Doats," *Forever Amber*, zoot suits, the Sinatra craze, the Jane Russell movie *The Outlaw*, Dr. Friedrich Hayek, Victory Girls, the Tanaka Memorial, Professor Sorokin, and the Curtiss-Wright scandal. One learns of the uncertainty of the 1940 defense boom, the panic among Americans after the fall of France, popular hostility towards European refugees, and the patronizing treatment offered American blacks. Telling points are made — sometimes almost in passing — concerning Roosevelt's exploitation of the Kearny incident, increasing callousness towards the bombing of civilians, the strident nationalism behind supposedly "internationalist" rhetoric, and the wartime turn to the political right.

Amid this potpourri of wartime fads and foibles, some important demythologizing takes place. Perrett correctly takes the American Civil Liberties Union to task for boasting in 1943 that America possessed an almost flawless civil liberties record. He refuses to see the Nesei internments as an isolated case; rather it was characteristic of a hysteria that claimed over ten times as many victims as World War I and gave the United States the worst civil liberties record among English-speaking democracies. It should be an eye-opener to learn that conscientious objectors were often beaten; that the top pay for Japanese-American physicians was \$19 a month; that black newspapers were harassed by the FBI; that bloody racial clashes at military bases were almost a daily occurrence; and that the arrests of such "subversives" as aviatrix Laura Ingalls and German-American propagandist George Sylvester Viereck were clearly ex post facto prosecutions.

American liberals were far more Jeffersonian in theory than in practice. Columnist Dorothy Thompson said that freedom of speech and assembly had doomed the Weimar Republic. Professor Carl Friedrich wanted people to monitor the political beliefs of their neighbors. Lewis Mumford called for compulsory labor service for all children. Walter Lippmann endorsed Roosevelt's "concentration camps" (a word FDR liked to use) both for Japanese-Americans and for the Dies Committee. The very journals so self-consciously militant in propounding the ideology of democracy — such as *The New Republic* — fired isolationist columnists, called for the drafting of striking miners, and wanted the America First Committee investigated. Essayist Clifton Fadiman remarked, "The only way to make a German understand is to kill him," while Senator J. William Fulbright boasted that the American way of life was "the only way worthy of a free man." Even Hollywood got into the act, reviling actor Lew Ayres for registering as a conscientious objector. Roosevelt's Supreme Court turned persecutor of the Jehovah's Witnesses, declaring that local government could curb religious freedom.

This book has many of the flaws of popular history. Footnoting is treated in a cavalier fashion. The bibliography lacks crucial items. Like the Civil War history of Bruce Catton, it is far better at capturing a mood than asking significant questions. Loaded and emotive language becloud many an issue (e.g. "From beginning to end (isolationism) was clogged by stodginess, silliness and faintheartedness"). Some writing is hackneyed (e.g. "Pepper enthused"), some is meaningless (e.g. "America triumphed over itself and its history"). Much of Perrett's material is better covered elsewhere.

Yet, despite such obvious limitations, the book deserves a wide reading and a paperback edition. Despite columnist John Roche's references to "the good war," World War II can never again be seen through Star Spangled glasses. 

Arts And Movies —

(Continued From Page 5)

The Incomparable Perelman. Writing about Mel Brooks gives me the opportunity to celebrate the work of the incomparable S. J. Perelman, unquestionably the master wit and humorist of our time. Perelman as screen writer for the classic Marx Bros. movies is but an example of his output. In a sense, Perelman is the thinking man's Groucho or Mel Brooks. An unequalled master of the English language, Perelman is the past-master of the inverted cliché; with dazzling virtuosity, he twists and bends one cliché after another into an amalgam of continuous hilarity.

The best work of Perelman was published in what we might call his "Middle Period", in the 1930's and 40's. (His brief earlier period was simply feeling his oats). Since then, Perelman's dazzling performance and consistent hilarity has unfortunately declined, beginning with his nostalgia series "Cloudland Revisited"; the cultural and linguistic erudition is still there, but a certain flat sobriety has taken over. But now, in paperback, Dell has emerged with the best of Perelman's Middle Period, *Crazy Like a Fox* (published in 1947 Modern Library hardcover as *The Best of S. J. Perelman*).

Perelman was particularly master of the parody, and in this collection he combines his triumph over the cliché with a series of stunning literary parodies. The temptation to quote the whole book is almost irresistible. Particularly outstanding are his parodies of: science fiction ("Captain Future. Block that Kick!"); tough-guy detectives ("Somewhere a Roscoe" and "Farewell My Lovely Appetizer"); Maugham on Gauguin ("Beat Me, Post-Impressionist Daddy"); stream-of-consciousness ("Pale Hands I Loathe"); Dostoevsky ("A Farewell to Omsk"); Dunsany ("The Idol's Eye"); and Odets ("Waiting for Santy"); also his profiles of Arthur Kober and Vincente Minelli, and his own marvellous introduction under the name of Sidney Namlerap."

Take, for example, Perelman's parody of the left-wing New Yorkese blather of Clifford Odets. The scene of the playlet is the workshop of Santa Claus, an evil capitalist sweatshop employer, who exploits his seven gnomes "Rankin, Panken, Rivkin, Riskin, Ruskin, Briskin, and Praskin." Rivkin, a young gnome, is in love with Stella Claus, Santa's daughter.

Rivkin (to Stella): "I can't sleep, I can't eat, that's how I love you. You're a double malted with two scoops of whipped cream; you're the moon rising over Moshulu Parkway; you're a two weeks' vacation at Camp Nitgedaiget! I'd pull down the Chrysler Building to make a bobby pin for your hair!"

Stella: I've got a stomach full of anguish. Oh, Rivvy, what'll we do?

Panken (sympathetically): Here, try a piece fruit.

Rivkin (fiercely): Wax fruit — that's been my whole life! Imitations! Substitutes!"

One more almost incredibly dazzling example of Perelmanian wit and I must reluctantly conclude. The following is the first paragraph, in its entirety, of Perelman's profile of the playwright Arthur Kober:

"Picture to yourself a ruddy-cheeked, stocky sort of chap, dressed in loose but smelly tweeds, a stubby briar between his teeth (it has resisted the efforts of the best surgeons to extract it), with a firm yet humorous mouth, generous to a fault, ever-ready for a flagon of nut-brown ale with his cronies, possessing the courage of a lion, the tenderness of a Florence Nightingale, and the conceit of a diva, an intellectual vagabond, a connoisseur of first editions, fine vintages, and beautiful women, well above six feet in height and distinguished for his pallor, a dweller in the world of books, his gray eye belying the sensual lip beneath, equally at

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Arts And Movies —

(Continued From Page 7)


home browsing through the bookstalls along Fourth Avenue and rubbing elbows (his own elbows) in the smart literary salons of 57th Street, a rigid abstainer and non-smoker who lives entirely on dehydrated fruits, cereals, and nuts, rarely leaving his monastic cell nowadays except to dine at the Salmagundi; an intimate of Cocteau, Picasso, Joyce and Lincoln Kerstein, a dead shot, a past master of the foils and the International Woodmen of the World, dictating his novels, plays, poems, short stories, *comedias dell'arte*, aphorisms and ripostes at lighting speed to a staff of underpaid secretaries, an expert judge of horseflesh, the owner of a model farm equipped with the most slovenly dairy devices — a man as sharp as a razor, as dull as a hoe, as clean as a whistle, as tough as nails, as white as snow, as black as the raven's wing, as poor as Job, a man up with the lark, down on your toes, and gone with the wind. A man kind and captious, sweet and sour, fat and thin, tall and short, racked with fever, plagued by the locust, beset by witches, hagridden, cross-grained, fancy-free, a funloving, addle-pated dreamer, visionary, and slippered pantaloons. Picture to yourself such a man, I say, and you won't have the faintest conception of Arthur Kober."

The Way We Were. Dir. by Sydney Pollack from screenplay and novel by Arthur Laurents. With Barbra Streisand and Robert Redford.


This has been touted as an old-fashioned and romantic "movie movie", and to a certain extent it is. With this and nostalgia too, how could they go wrong? But the trouble is that old-fashioned is not always good, and what we have here is a throwback to the left-wing "message" movies of the 1940's. That kind of old-fashioned we could do without. Furthermore, the potentially rich background drops away, often to the point of being incomprehensible, in order to focus on the banally overstated and repetitious confrontation of character and attitudes between the two leads.

As to the confrontation, the cards are outrageously stacked for the left-wing message. Barbra Streisand is a loud, pushy, aggressive, serious-about-her-values, caring, socially conscious, Communist New York Jewess — and therefore, so Messrs. Pollack and Laurents insist, lovable and great. The stereotypes proliferate. Robert Redford is a handsome, talented, socially unconscious, opportunistic, easygoing, smiling, and therefore at bottom unlovable wealthy WASP. Treated particularly outrageously by the film are the WASP girls: every one dumb, inarticulate, shallow, uncaring. The WASPS spend all their time telling silly jokes while *serioso* Barbra tells them off and fights for world peace, world war, civil liberties, you name it. If there were a WASP Anti-Defamation League, they would be justified in making an angry, caring, articulate, socially conscious protest. The entire picture is a blatant piece of ethnic chauvinism. As for the Communist Party, it is treated as

101 Ways To Promote Libertarian Ideas

30. Hold a Libertarian Festival — a "teach-in on libertarian views on a dozen subjects.
31. Is your university giving an honorary degree to a prominent politician, soldier, or corporation executive? Prepare a research profile on his career from a libertarian perspective. To what extent has he contributed to the preservation and extension of liberty? Or has he used political power to restrict, destroy or subvert freedom? Has he plundered the taxpayers to enhance the profits of his corporation? Has he used state-power to avoid the risks of the free market? Has he supported violations of international laws on human rights? Publish your report. Petition for an alternate to be honored with a degree.
32. Libertarianism is not a cult in which one person or book has all the answers to one's personal or the world's problems. It is essentially a philosophic commitment to the ideas that voluntarism is the only legitimate ethical basis for human action. Beyond that, libertarians hold a variety of viewpoints on almost every subject. Some are atheists, others Christians; some are pacifists, others will defend their liberty to the death; some are Austrians, others Friedmanites; some anarchists, others liberal limited government advocates; some uphold natural law theory, others deny its validity. Libertarianism is a house with "many mansions" and this should always be made clear to those unfamiliar with the variety of libertarian thought.
33. Interested in radio? Use the college radio station for libertarian propaganda. Start an interview show, a telephone listener response program. Or offer to broadcast one of the taped series of lectures by Murray Rothbard and others available from *Books for Libertarians*, 422 First St., Washington, D. C. 20003.
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basically right as rain, though perhaps a wee bit strident. Twists and turns of the party line? Mass murders by Stalin? You won't find any of them in *The Way We Were*.

Redford does well as usual; as for Streisand, she is, as usual, Streisand. The next person who insists that "you know, she's really beautiful", deserves a punch in the nose. Fortunately, we were spared her caterwauling of the great pop songs. Let us count our blessings. 

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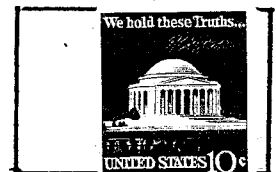
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