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The New End of Ideology?

Back in the complacent 1950's, many ex-radical intellectuals were busily and happily proclaiming the "end of ideology" in America. Led by such right-wing Social Democrats as Daniel Bell, Seymour Martin Lipset, and Nathan Glazer, the "consensus intellectuals" were sure that hard-edged ideology, whether of right or left, would no longer appear in America, and that we would all move forward in a new consensus of piecemeal, ad hoc, pragmatists, all accepting the current Welfare-Welfare State consensus. Since the End of Ideology theory immediately preceded the remarkable eruption of the New Left and a decade of stormy ideology, the End of Ideology theorists had to quietly dump their wishful prophecies into the well-known dustbin of history.

Now, in the peaceful 1970's however, a new form of the end of ideology—in practice this time—has emerged, both on the Right and the Left, and few analysts have described or examined this new trend. To sum up our analysis, both Right and Left are experiencing a scuttling of their ideologies, and a reversion to the Establishment Center.

On the Right, a process is being completed which began when Bill Buckley and National Review seized control of the Right-wing in the late 1950's, and accelerated since the Goldwater defeat in 1964. In brief, from the mid-fifties to the mid-sixties, Buckley and N.R. ran a conservative movement that was militant and hard-edged: in favor of war and imperialism abroad, militarism and the repression of "subversives" at home, but also inconsistently combined with adherence to the free-market and to a limited libertarian rhetoric in social philosophy. Since the failure of Goldwaterism, however, Buckley and NR have accelerated their drive toward Establishment respectability, being more and more willing to jettison any trace of libertarian rhetoric, and to accept grave compromises on the question of a free-market economy.

While the Viguierie-Rusher-Phillips "New Majority" movement did not succeed last year in taking over the American Independent Party, and remain conservative Reaganite Republicans, the New Majority begins to appear more and more as point men for the direction that the conservative movement is going to take. Put briefly, it involves abandoning the free market and liberty completely, in order to put together a "right-wing populist" (read "neo-fascist") coalition of Southern racists and urban Catholic "ethnics", a coalition devoted to the following programs: militarism at home and war abroad, repression of dissent in the name of "anti-Communism" and "national security", moderate repression of racial minorities, especially blacks, and State enforcement of "morality" in the form of the outlawry of drugs, prostitution, pornography, and abortion, and the support of prayer in the public schools. Inherent in the coalition is the frank acceptance of a permanent Welfare State, except that it be "moderate" and "efficient" (read: "the cutting of welfare aid to blacks.")

That the New Majority may be the wave of the future for conservatism is indicated by the fact that, since the defeat of the Reagan movement, former Senator Buckley has already called publicly for the permanent acceptance of the New Deal welfare state. Already, in fact, there seems to be very little difference between the Buckleyites and the Right-wing social democrats who now call themselves "Neo-conservatives"—the

Kristol, Glazers, Moynihan, et al.

In the meanwhile, a similar process of adaptation and self-emasculation has been occurring on the remnants of the old New Left. One of the best things about the New Left was its angry critique of the policies and strategies of the Old Left (symbolized by the Communist Party): namely, to function as the loyal left-wing of the Democratic Party, of modern liberalism—to push for ever more government spending, welfare measures, health insurance, minimum wages, etc. The New Left had presumably broken with all that; they levelled trenchant critiques of the Welfare State as State Capitalism oppressing the dependent masses, they attacked centralized bureaucracy, and called for radical opposition to the Welfare and Warfare States. They scorned coalition with Establishment Democrats as a "coalition with the Marines" (in Staughton Lynd's felicitous phrase.) But now, after over a decade in the wilderness, the New Left "revolution" dead and gone, the remnants of the New Left have sheepishly found their way back into the Left-wing of the Democrat Party, calling once more for more government spending, welfare payments, health insurance, minimum wages, etc. The New Left, now physically older, has, to all intents and purposes, rejoined the Old Left. Former New Left firebrands are running for office in the Democratic Party, or have joined the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee, which is frankly in that party formerly scorned as hopelessly State Capitalist. The New Leftists assure us that they have not sold out, that times have changed, that their old opponents have now abandoned the Cold War, but it's still the Old Left coalition with the Marines.

And so there is no distinguishable Right and Left anymore, no hard-edged ideology for either side; they now form the right and left wings of the Establishment, differing still, to be sure, on foreign policy and militarism, but really part of one overall, mish-mash consensus.

If the Right and Left are disappearing as ideological forces, what about the liberals, who still dominate academia, the media, and opinion-moulding groups? The liberals are, as they have been for a long time, in a state of total intellectual confusion. There have been no new liberal answers for a long time, and more and more liberals realize that their old ideologies have broken down, that they are not working. More and more liberals—as well as members of the public in general—are realizing that the system of statism has been breaking down. But, human nature being what it is, they will not give up their crumbling paradigm until a better one comes along to replace it. They have to see an attractive alternative.

All this provides an unusually favorable opportunity for libertarians. For we are functioning in an intellectual climate where there is no longer any real, determined, militant ideological competition. Ideological decay and confusion are everywhere. But, in this miasma, we libertarians have that alternative; we have a new and intellectually stimulating and fascinating ideological paradigm, and one that explains the collapse of modern statism better than anyone else. We have a new and systematic creed, and we are just about the only ones who still believe in our ideology. In contrast to the Left, Right, and Center, our ideology hasn't ended; it is just beginning. □

In Defense of Gradualism

by Robert Poole, Jr.

My REASON editorial, "Libertarian Realpolitick," has generated controversy, most recently an article by Tom Palmer (*Libertarian Forum*, Nov. 1976). In what follows I would like to respond to my critics, especially Mr. Palmer, and in so doing perhaps make clearer what the original editorial was attempting to convey.

The argument concerns means, not ends. Both Palmer and I seek to achieve a libertarian society. The question is: how best to achieve this goal. Palmer appears to be arguing that the way to do it is to create a large-scale libertarian movement, "capable of pointing out the general nature of state intervention," and that this can best or only be done by publicizing a radical, theoretical position. Palmer appears to believe that the "masses" will then rally around a world view "which articulates general rules of human action," if presented to them by such a movement.

I totally disagree. Palmer's view assumes a great deal more about people than appears warranted. Most people (probably even most academics) care very little for theory and don't view the world in terms of general principles or integrated world views. They think in terms of here-and-now specifics and concrete, practical examples. It is for this reason that I think a gradualistic, empirical approach is essential. We need to give people case after case of actual instances in which freedom, decontrol, deregulation work, i.e., produce observable, positive results. Once such a set of empirical demonstrations exists, then we can tie them together and begin to teach people that it's not just coincidence that freedom is the common element in each case.

Palmer takes me to task for urging that viable replacements for such institutions as income taxes, welfare, and the FDA must be "researched, developed, and popularized" before we can responsibly urge their abolition. He asks if I have "neglected the important point, enunciated as a major defense of the market by such a long line of libertarians, that the market provides a framework . . . and that the specific institutions which will arise . . . cannot be predicted?" I am not neglecting the point; on the contrary, I am taking it into account as a dangerously misleading cop-out, one that is responsible for the relative lack of success of much libertarian efforts to date.

A case in point: For about 25 years Paul Poirot of the Foundation for Economic Education, an adherent of Palmer's view, has been writing articles attacking the Social Security system. Not once (to the best of my knowledge) has he suggested any kind of transition program for dealing humanely with the millions of people now dependent on Social Security and the millions who have paid into it for decades, expecting to receive benefits. His articles simply say that Social Security is morally wrong, economically inefficient, potentially bankrupt, and ought to be abolished. The market, "somehow," will provide. But unless the "somehow" is dealt with seriously, people will not even consider abolition. And of course, over the past 25 years, they haven't.

The same applies to taxation, welfare, the FDA, and a variety of other State institutions. Merely saying "The market will provide" is akin, for most of the public, to saying "Take it on faith." The public will be swayed far more readily by specifics. It violates no principles of praxeology to do careful, detailed thinking about how the market could provide solutions to the problems of paying for and providing defense services, dealing with poverty, and protecting people against unsafe food and drugs. In doing so, one does not prescribe what must or will happen; one merely helps people to see what could happen, so they can accept the prospect of change without fear of chaos.

We simply cannot presuppose that the bulk of our listeners begin where we do, with a basic commitment to freedom and the principles of the market. They don't, and giving them theory or "take it on faith" prescriptions is not going to change that. The only way I can see to give them a lasting appreciation of freedom is to (1) demonstrate it in action by accomplishing step-by-step reforms, (2) tie these together to illustrate general principles, and (3) work out extrapolations to new areas in terms of specific, practical illustrations of the probable market mechanisms that will develop.

It will take a strong libertarian movement to do all this, one with an appreciation of long-term, strategic thinking. Attracting and motivating the leaders of this movement requires, as Palmer, Rothbard, and others suggest, the fostering of radical libertarian principles and the ongoing development and refinement of theory. But I still maintain that developing this leadership is primarily a job for educational organizations—such as the Cato Institute, the Center for Libertarian Studies, Institute for Humane Studies, Society for Individual Liberty, etc.—and small, hard-core publications such as *Libertarian Forum*. Our broad-based political action arm, the Libertarian Party, must deal with "the masses" as they are. And for this task, I can see no viable alternative to the kind of gradualism I've outlined above. □

The Fallacy of Gradualism: A Reply

by Tom G. Palmer

"By the street of by and by, one arrives at the house of never."
—Cervantes

While I find the points raised in Poole's rebuttal to my rebuttal more reasonable than those in his original editorial, I still believe them to be off the mark. Poole defends the use of examples of competitive free enterprise vs. State management as tools of persuasion for libertarians. I see nothing wrong with this, though I believe it ineffectual to give this tactic center stage in our arsenal of arguments, as Poole seems to want to do. If the "masses" won't rally around a movement of principles, then Poolean opportunism certainly won't rally them around anything.

It's true that we can't sell people simply on "theory" - we can't ask someone to take it on faith that they should desire freedom. A reasonable man demands arguments, and we should be prepared to give them. Poole's arguments, however, would convince few people of the morality of freedom and would hardly motivate anyone to join a movement to end infringements upon freedom. It is absolutely necessary, when approaching the public, to keep one's principles flying high, for therein lies our strength. If the efforts of movement activists and cadre were to be devoted to carrying out Poole's game plan, then we could forget about exercising any kind of long term influence. After all, one of the most important steps toward our goal is to "Create" more libertarians. We must expand our ranks or be doomed to failure. How would this be brought about if our broad-based political arm, the Libertarian Party, were to be emasculated and reduced to proposing crank schemes for enlarging the diameter of government fire hoses (thereby saving taxpayer's dollars) and turning government enterprises over to Bell Telephone via statist grants of monopoly? Not only does this have no relation to the market, but it will never get off the ground. How far did the cranky Friedmanite voucher plan, backed by forces considerably more powerful than the Libertarian Party, ever go? It was swiftly laid to rest, and justly so. Also, I would like to ask an embarrassing question. When has this scheme of creeping conservatism ever worked? Did the American revolutionaries demand private collection of English taxes? No. In fact, such tax collectors were the objects of intense popular hatred. Their homes were pulled down by patriots inflamed by a passion for liberty and a desire to escape the depredations of the English monarchy.

Poole contents himself with leaving development of leadership to such organizations as the Cato Institute and the Center for Libertarian Studies. Yet, from what field will they reap if the Libertarian Party is restrained from proselytizing and attempting to expand the ranks of libertarians?

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Gradualism: Reply —

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Further, what are these leaders to do if they have no movement to lead?

In a criticism of left-wing sectarianism aimed at the Bolsheviks of Europe, Lenin claimed that the political differences between the "Lloyd Georges and the Winston Churchills of the world" was immaterial during the developing stages of a movement (where we are now) and that these differences became important only after a movement had developed popular political muscle and a public constituency. At that point, differences and conflicts within the ruling political establishment become ripe for exploitation. Poole, on the other hand, wants to climb in the sack with the ruling class and the State before we have any power whatsoever to change its actions. To be successful, we must expand our influence with the public and "create" from the masses a constituency of "fellow travelers". From these we draw out membership, and from our membership we draw the cadre. Poole seems to think we can increase the cadre without sowing and reaping among the public. His lack of understanding of the political process and the nature of "politicking" is monumental. Even "gradualistic" lobbying would meet with little success if it utilized Poole's strategy, for the lobbyist who is neither rich nor the leader of a motivated public constituency will be swept into the dustbin of history. His influence, regardless of his intentions, will be zero.

As to Poole's specific proposals, I refer the reader to my review of his *Cut Local Taxes* booklet (*Libertarian Review*, January 1977) for a view of what he has actually proposed. Coercive grants of monopoly and tips on how to run an efficient State comprise the bulk of Poole's literally worthless opus. The last section is an uninspired chapter from an NTU organizer's manual which is hardly worth the time to read. Poole seems to look upon the State as a benevolent institution which has "our" interests at heart. "We" really are the government. Show a politician or a bureaucrat how to run his "business" better and he will lower his "fee" for the service. In reality, his fee is coerced extortion and his "service" is to hound us from cradle to grave with one arbitrary edict after another.

Poole challenges me to come up with a "plan" to help those who have been bamboozled by the statist sleight of hand known as social security. Despite the fact that Poole himself offers no such plan, I accept his challenge. Roger MacBride's campaign book, *A New Dawn for America*, proposed that government assets be sold off to compensate claim holders who have been robbed of their earnings (note that this is not financed through further State plunder) and that, as an immediate and ("non-negotiable") minimal step, all persons 60 years of age or older be exempted from all taxes. If Poole can come up with another idea, I'd like to hear about it. As is typical of Poole's shoddy and superficial research in other areas (e.g., tax rates in local communities) he has no understanding of the enormity of present social security liabilities. At the present time they stand at well over 3 trillion dollars. No plan, no matter how humanitarian we may be, there is nothing that can save the social security system (by this I mean fully compensate those who have been cheated and robbed). It is bankrupt financially as well as morally. If Poole thinks that a private company will want to take over a program with no assets and over \$3 trillion in liabilities, I suggest that he read David Hume and J. S. Mill on miracles.

Poole's rebuttal is a significantly more "soft core" defense of gradualism than his Reason editorial or his *Cut Local Taxes*. It is no less incorrect, however. If we follow Poole, we will go the route of the classical liberals, though with one important difference. For many years the best of the liberals kept their principles at the fore, and achieved remarkable success. It was when the gradualists gained ascendancy within liberalism that the liberal movement faltered and collapsed. Poole going further, would rob us of our principles before we had a chance to exert any appreciable influence at all. We would then become an insignificant oddity in the history of political movements. At best, our example would serve to warn libertarians of the distant future of the dangers of compromise.

I have not mentioned another difficulty inherent in Poole's strategy. If we reduce our public platform to a series of "short term" cost-cutting programs and left our principles at home, what would halt the corruption

Human Rights at Home: the Flynt Case

While the Carter administration prates hypocritically, and conservative and Social Democrats point the finger, about human rights in lands where they can't do anything about it, human rights here in the United States continue to dwindle, with none of these gentlemen raising a voice in protest. In particular, the First Amendment rights of freedom of speech and of the press are endangered in a new wave of repression of pornographic freedom. While Mayor Beame of New York City tries to revive his happily sagging political fortunes in this election year by grandstanding and unconstitutional closing down of porno shops and massage parlors, Harry Reems is convicted for appearing in an obscene movie, and—in a direct attack on the freedom of the press—Larry Flynt, publisher of *Hustler* magazine, is convicted in Cincinnati of pandering obscenely and "conspiring" to do so. For this crime, Flynt was—in a truly obscene sentence—sentenced to a total of 7 to 25 years in prison. In contrast to muggers, rapists, and thieves, no one was apparently worried about Mr. Flynt's possible broken-home upbringing or his lack of playgrounds as a youth. In a superb full-page ad in the *New York Times* (Feb. 20), the Americans for a Free Press (40 West Gay St., Columbia, Ohio 43215) protested the Flynt conviction as an "infringement of Mr. Flynt's rights under the First Amendment" and as a "threat to the right of all Americans." The ad urged President Carter "to take a closer look at the restrictions of freedom of expression in America itself." The writers who signed this ad constitute an honor roll on this issue, despite our disagreement with many of them on other ideological questions. Some of their names Follow:

Woody Allen, Michael Arlen, Noel Behn, Vincent Canby, Robert Christgau, Ramsey Clark, Harry Crews, Judith Crist, John Dean, Joan Didion, Daniel Ellsburg, Bruce Jay Friedman, Allen Ginsberg, Ralph Ginzburg, Herb Gold, Al Goldstein, Jim Goode, Gerald Green, Dan Greenburg, David Halberstam, Pete Hamill, Hugh Hefner, Joseph Heller, Warren Hinckle, A.E. Hotchner, Arthur Knight, Paul Krassner, Arthur Kretchmer, John Leonard, J. Anthony Lukas, Peter Maas, Norman Mailer, Rudy Maxa, Federic Morton, Phillip Nobile, Eric Norden, Gerald Piel, Nicholas Pileggi, Dotson Rader, Rex Reed, Harold Robbins, Ned Rorem, Barney Rosset, Robert Sherrill, Geoffrey Stokes, Gay Talese, Gore Vidal, Nicholas Von Hoffman, Irving Wallace, Jann Wenner, Clark Whelton, Bruce Williamson, Sol Yurick.

These writers, at least, did not fall for the line snapped up by many others—that the First Amendment is all very well, but that *Hustler* was too much. □

and "take over" of the libertarian movement, specifically the Libertarian Party? If the LP becomes simply a short-term tool, and we welcome those who want to "go part way" as comrades, what will stop us from becoming simply a wing of another political ideology? After all, our stand against censorship is palatable to liberals, except that we go "too far." If we just watered our stands down a bit, why, we could coopt them too. And so on with the conservatives, the anti-war (except for brave little Israel) crowd, etc. In fact, our greatest danger would come from the conservatives, for the liberals are already ensconced in power and need no political alliances.

In short, Poole has presented nothing new. It is warmed over Ford Republicanism and McGovern liberalism. If he can motivate people to support and work for such a compromising platform, then I might reconsider what he has to say. As it stands, his schemes have never worked, and I doubt that they ever will. Principled and radical in content - reasonable and palatable in form. This is the key to triumph over the State. □

The New L.R.

Libertarian Review, the esteemed libertarian bimonthly, has been floundering for a long time. Beset by financial troubles, it has been on the point of closing its doors for quite a while. Its basic problem has been its original Books for Libertarians format, which was based on the idea of emulating the highly successful *New York Review of Books*. There were several grave flaws in such an admittedly noble attempt from the very outset. In the first place, the *New York Review of Books* was able to draw on several hundred of the finest left-liberal scholars in every conceivable field of expertise; secondly, it operated within a climate of dozens of left-liberal general magazines to instruct their readers in the political and intellectual issues of the day. Drawing on such a large resource and appealing to a readership made knowledgeable by other publications, NYRB could and did flourish. But the libertarian movement has been in a very different situation. For we have very few scholars to tap for articles, very few worthwhile books, and a readership which is not being instructed on the political issues by general-purpose magazines. That was and has been the basic problem with the "Books for Libertarians" concept. A second problem was that for many years BFL was tied to a book-selling operation, so that the reviews necessarily began to concentrate on the favorable aspects of what libertarians might like, rather than, as in the case of NYRB, on free-swinging critiques of all important books, good and bad. Attempts to shift out of the book-review format since the divesting of the book-selling service—the L.R. format—have been unsuccessful. As witness the current Jan.-Feb. issue of LR, which is almost completely a book-review issue. Thirdly, there has been the incongruity of the ads; NYRB, as befits a book-review publication, has all of its ads taken by book publishers; in the current issue of LR, by contrast, there is not a single ad by a book publisher. Finally, there has been a certain lack of strength and clarity of focus in LR, a lack of strong focus on what precisely the magazine is trying to accomplish.

We are happy to report, however, that these problems are in the process of being solved. *Libertarian Review* has now been purchased, and has received a considerable inflow of new funding. Its offices are being shifted from Washington to New York City. Its new editor, in charge of content, is Roy A. Childs, Jr., once an editor of the old *Books for Libertarians*. The new LR will not be a book-review publication but a regular general-purpose magazine, with book reviews and other arts material confined where they should be: in the "back of the book." There will be editorials, general articles, the continuing "Libertarian Cross-Currents" column by Walter Grinder, and a regular column by the editor of the Lib. Forum. The focus of the new LR will be twofold: on ideas and activities within the libertarian movement, but, even more, on applying libertarian principles to the important events of the outside world: to vitally important domestic and foreign issues. In this way, the new LR will be instructing the libertarian movement, which tends to be relatively strong on libertarian theory but weak in its knowledge and insights into the facts of the real world, upon those real world events. There will be articles on such important issues as Angola, the Carter administration, and the defense budget, and, I venture to predict, precious few articles on how many John Galt's can dance on the head of a pin, or on how many packages of dried beans one would need to hole up in a retreatist cave. Articles on libertarianism will be focussed more on such questions as the proper strategy for the movement rather than on such burning issues as whether or not Objectivism implies the Trinity.

The format of the new LR, I am glad to say, will be magazine-magazine rather than either newsletter or the current tabloid quasi-newspaper size.

And, perhaps best of all, the new LR will be able to pay a decent sum for articles and reviews, which automatically makes it a rare gem among libertarian publications.

Roy Childs is uniquely qualified to be the editor of a general-purpose libertarian magazine. At a very young age, Childs established a deserved reputation as a brilliant theoretician of the movement. His famous "Open Letter to Ayn Rand" did more to convert objectivists to anarcho-capitalism than any other single cause; a former instructor at Robert LeFevre's Freedom School, Childs has converted more people out of LeFevrian ultra-pacifism than anyone else by forcing LeFevre to admit that he considers it immoral for a kidnapping victim to break the chains

that bind him because it "violates the private property of the kidnapper." Steeped in philosophy, Childs was almost unique among neo-Randian philosophers in coming early to the conclusion that, to achieve the victory of liberty and the dismantling of the State, such philosophic precepts as "A is A", the reality of existence and consciousness, and even the libertarian non-aggression axiom are not enough: that it is necessary to learn about the historical and contemporary facts of the real world, to find out what the State has been doing and who has been doing it. Hence, Child's passionate interest in history and in contemporary social and political issues. Well-versed in both theory and the facts of reality, and experienced in magazine editing, Roy Childs comes to his new and important post armed with all the qualifications for success; and, furthermore, he comes to his new post armed with a clear and determined focus and vision of what such a magazine needs to accomplish. But, in addition to all that, Childs, in his own writing as well as in the writing he seeks for the magazine, believes in articles that are clear, hard-hitting, and high-spirited. If it is anything, the struggle for liberty against the State should be dramatic and exciting, and never boring; a Childs magazine will never fall into the pitfall that other libertarian publications have slipped into: of being plonky and boring. In the Childs LR we can look forward to an excellent and exciting magazine.

A personal note may be in order here. Ours is a movement where the word "sacrifice" is often in bad odor. But it needs to be said that of all the libertarians I know, Roy Childs has, up to now, sacrificed more than anyone else, in income and status foregone, in his absolute determination to make a lifelong career as a professional libertarian. Until now, all that he has reaped for his pains has been a smear campaign of calumny and deceit unprecedented in our young movement, in which the anti-party sectarians have continually ripped a few words of his totally out of

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Errata

The following are the footnotes that were inadvertently omitted from David Osterfeld's article, "Anarcho-capitalism and the Defense of the Non-State", in the February, 1977 issue.

FOOTNOTES

¹Jarret Wollstein, "Society Without Coercion," *Society Without Government* (New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1972), pp. 24-27.

²David Friedman, *The Machinery of Freedom* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973, p. 192.

³Morris Tannehill and Linda Tannehill, *The Market for Liberty* (Lansing, Mich: Private Publisher, 1970), p. 128.

⁴Friedman, p. 192.

⁵In *Ibid.*, pp. 191-192.

⁶Tannehill and Tannehill, pp. 132-33.

⁷Murray Rothbard, "War, Peace and the State," *Egalitarianism, As a Revolt Against Nature, and Other Essays* (Washington, D.C.: Libertarian Review Press, 1974), p. 73.

⁸Gene Sharp, "National Defense Without Armaments," *Peace and War*, eds. Charles Beitz and Theodore Herman (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman and Co., 1973), p. 352.

⁹Gene Sharp, quoted in American Friends Service Committee, *In Place of War* (New York: Grossman, 1967), p. 44.

¹⁰Sharp, p. 352; also see Gene Sharp, *Exploring Nonviolent Alternatives* (Boston: Porter Sargent, 1971), p. 64.

¹¹Sharp, "National Defense Without Armaments," pp. 354-55.

¹²See the excellent article by Andrew Mack, "How Big Nations Lose Small Wars: The Politics of Asymmetric Conflict," *World Politics* (January, 1975), pp. 175-200.

¹³In *Ibid.*, p. 185.

A Black Writer's View of 'Roots' *

by Anne Wortham

In a newspaper interview, Alex Haley recalls a moving incident at an autograph session in a Harlem church. An elderly woman was purchasing several copies of "Roots" but obviously needed the money to buy shoes. When Haley glanced at her shoes, she looked him in the eye and said: "Son, don't mind. I'm not just buying books, I'm buying our history."

Alex Haley is a historical novelist, a popularizer of history. He may qualify as a genealogist, perhaps, but he is not a social and political historian - no more than is James Michener, whose historical sagas, "Hawaii," "The Source," and "Centennial," have all been best-sellers. And I think Haley was less than responsible when he failed to point this out to the woman. He owed her a disclaimer: that "Roots" is not HER personal history, but the history of HIS ancestors seen through his eyes. He should have told her that if she wants her history, she'll have to write it herself. And if she wants a history of Negroes, she should read John Hope Franklin's "From Slavery to Freedom," or Herbert G. Gutman's "The Negro Family in Slavery and Freedom," or Eugene D. Genovese's "Roll Jordan Roll," or Ira Berlin's "Slaves Without Masters," and many more.

But no, Mr. Haley goes from one media interview and college lecture to another leaving the impression that he has given Negroes a great gift of history and racial identity. Americans of all races seem to have gulped down the dramatization of the novel as history as carelessly as they take "Final Days" as the factual account of the Watergate crisis, or "The Adams Chronicles" as the history of the young American nation. But the worst cases of the "Roots" fever are among those Negroes who have accepted the collective racial identity presented in "Roots" as a substitute for their own self-identity and those whites who feel compelled to apologize for the sins of their ancestors.

A black psychologist appearing on a panel analyzing "Roots" said: "Roots' gave blacks roots from which to make a personal evaluation (of their identity)." To which I say: NOT THIS BLACK. Eric Sevareid said the audience for "Roots" had been waiting for it for 300 years. To which I say: NOT THIS BLACK. Haley has himself called the "rootlessness" of Americans an "affliction," and his philosophy is expressed with conviction by the character Kizzy when she tells her son, Chicken George, why she would not marry the slave Sam: "Sam ain't like us. Nobody ever told him where he come from so he didn't have no idea about where he ought to be going." To which I say: NOT SO FOR THIS ROOTLESS BLACK.

Apparently Alex Haley has a compelling need to base his self-identity on his cultural and racial ancestors. Thus, for this and other reasons, he has written an account of his family's history and of the social times during which they lived. It is a singular, autonomous, unattached individual and so far it covers only 35 years. It is not my mother's story which ended when I was 9; it isn't even my sister's story, who is only 3 years younger than me. I share certain aspects of my story with members of my family, peers and others, but its sum total belongs to me alone.

Unlike Alex Haley and other nationally-racially-or ethically-determined people, I stand not at the end of a tradition but in the midst of an exciting life-process that is my own. The social history of my ancestors does not flow through my psyche as a domesticated animal carrying the instincts of its ancestors in its genes. I am a person, and persons are self-determined individuals - even when they deny the fact and behave contrary to it. I am not some sociological construct that has stepped out of the last chapter of Alex Haley's novel. I am me - myself - and I. There has been no one like me in existence before and there will be no one like me in the future. I am the sculptor of my soul's spirit; I am the carpenter of my self-esteem; and that is my pride.

I accept that wretched chapter of American history smeared, most likely, by the blood, sweat and tears of my ancestors, but it cannot teach me how to deal with the present. I am not a slave, but a free individual. My white friends and associates are not my oppressors but also free and independent individuals. When we face each other we do not confront the souls of our ancestors. When we share our lives and times we do not

consult the life and times of our forefathers. We are ourselves and it is ourselves that we present to one another - the selves each of us has created. Our love and comradeship are not a contrived vignette of "race relations" in microcosm. We are involved in friendship - that precious commodity of interpersonal relations that can be achieved only between individuals of like minds, values and purposes.

Entailed in man's identity is the natural imperative that he shape his identity. And when he doesn't, he goes against his nature. Slavery is immoral because it is unnatural; and collective identity is irrational because it is unnatural. Both defile man's natural identity and negate the laws of reality. The only answer to slavery and discrimination is

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A Great Day For Freedom

Usually the Lib. Forum does not believe in expending its energy agreeing with most of world opinion on a given ideological issue. But the recent smashing defeat to the evil Indira Gandhi dictatorship in India is such a red-letter day for world freedom that we must add our small voice to all the others. Obviously, Mrs. Gandhi had gravely miscalculated; confident that the submerged Indian masses did not care a hoot for free speech or free assembly, Mrs. Gandhi was sure that she could gain a large plebiscitary vote to perpetuate her monstrous regime. There were two leading motifs in the stunning electoral defeat for Mrs. Gandhi's Congress Party, which had ruled India as a virtual one-party regime ever since Indian independence. One was the fact, as the New York Times correspondent put it, that the average Indian "likes to talk", and didn't like the government's taking away that right. And second, was the truly monstrous compulsory sterilization program that the regime was beginning to implement, spearheaded by her son and heir-apparent, Sanjay Gandhi. Again, this invasion of the fundamental right to have children was deeply resented by Indians throughout the country.

But we should be clear about the major significance of the ouster of the Gandhis. The important fact is not that the new Desai government will be "pro-Western", or even that the vote was a "vindication of democracy." The important point is that human freedom against dictatorial statism has taken a mighty step forward.

We refuse to temper our joy about the ouster of the Gandhi regime by the knowledge that there will be a number of sectarian nitwits in the libertarian movement who will accuse us of "compromising libertarian principle" by our "endorsing" the new Desai regime. As the great Congreve once wrote, "I hear a great many of the fools are angry at me, and I am glad of it, for I write at them, not to them." □

New L.R. — (Continued From Page 4)

context as a stick with which to belabor the Libertarian Party. Childs' new post as editor of an expanded Libertarian Review comes as a welcome vindication to one who deserves the gratitude, instead of the vilification, of every libertarian.

While we are celebrating the new L.R., we are happy and honored to pay tribute to Bob Kephart, the founder and publisher of Books for Libertarians and L.R., who has for years struggled valiantly, and against great odds, to keep the magazine afloat. Kephart has given unstintingly of time, money, energy, and his great entrepreneurial ability, to launch the magazine and to keep it going. Bob has paid a great price in ease and comfort for his intellectual conversion from conservative to libertarian; he has been a splendid and much-needed addition to our ranks. May he prosper and flourish! □

From the Old Curmudgeon

The "Libertarian" Church

The latest fad in the Movement is the "Libertarian Church", which originated and mainly flourishes in (guess where?) California. It started, I suppose, as a legal tax-avoidance gimmick, since church income and property are exempt from taxation. Taken strictly as a means of tax-avoidance, the scheme is unexceptionable, and it poses intriguing constitutional questions for the government. (How, for example, does the government go about proving that Religion A is a "false" or "pseudo" religion, which, in contrast to "real" religions, is not exempt from taxation? And how does it do so without violating the First Amendment?) All this granted, however, the "Libertarian" Church strikes me as a peculiarly silly way of going about tax-avoidance. If one really wishes to use a church as a tax-avoidance device, then the thing to do is to join a church with a neutral-sounding name (some of my best friends are ministers of the "Universal Life Church") and then to shut up about the tax-gimmick. Using a political-ideological name, and then going around proclaiming the gimmick to one and all is precisely the way to ruin one's proposed tax-exemption.

And so the Libertarian Church as a tax-gimmick is silly enough. Far worse is the fact that the California communicants are beginning to take the whole nonsense seriously, and are beginning to blather about libertarianism as "really" a "religion". LC members are beginning to talk in hushed tones of reverence about "the church", and are seriously intoning whatever "church" ritual has been cooked up. The human mind, as we all know, has an infinite capacity for insanity and folly, but the

libertarian movement seems to have far more than its duly allotted share.

Reason magazine, has recently published an article from a "libertarian church" founder. (Richard Wood, "Why Not A Libertarian Church?" Reason (December, 1976). The Rev. Wood's basic defense of the libertarian church concept is that libertarianism is more than a political or economic idea, "it is fundamentally an ethical concept." Granted. But whatever the legal niceties, an ethical concept is scarcely enough to qualify philosophically as a "religion" and therefore as leading to a "church" organization. "Religion" requires an ontological affirmation of the existence of a certain type of supernatural Creator. Whatever ethical concepts may flow from such ontology, it is the ontological concept—the affirmation of the existence of a certain type of God—which must be dominant and axiomatic in the religious system. Since the libertarian ethic is not necessarily grounded in ontological supernaturalism, it is not a religion; furthermore, the "Libertarian Church" is silent on the ontological issue.

Apart from the invalidity of libertarianism-as-religion, the Libertarian Church is bound to be offensive to two broad groups of people, and to alienate them from the libertarian cause. These are, first, the atheists, who feel contaminated by any sort of inclusion in a "church" or "religion"; and, second, religious believers—whether Jews, Christians, Moslems, or whatever—who will be deeply offended by elevating an ethical concept into a competitive alternative to their own religious beliefs. Since most people are either theists or atheists, this means that the Libertarian Church starts out as needlessly alienating almost the entire population, and as reading out of the libertarian movement theists and atheists alike. Come on, gang, back to the old drawing board! □

Kidnappers at Large

There are kidnappers at large, roaming throughout the land, and the government of the United States, or rather of the several states, has taken a very ambivalent position on their dastardly deeds—in some cases even aiding and abetting them! We are not talking about the despicable deeds of terrorists seizing hostages, for they are generally reviled, and the government generally proceeds against them as best it can (despite repeated nonsense about how these gangsters are "gentle people" who are only trying to gain attention for their assorted grievances.) No, what we are talking about are professional kidnappers employed by parents who seize their children in order to "deprogram" them from a religious faith which they have adopted; since these religious cults are abhorrent to the parents, who are often repudiated by their offspring, and since the parents cannot persuade their children out of such religions, the parents have been turning to force and violence to kidnap and brainwash their children back into the "true" faith.

Sometimes, these despised cults are Christian sects; in other cases, they are Asian-inspired cults such as Hare Krishna or the Rev. Sun Myung Moon. Whichever, the parents—often Christian—seem to have conveniently forgotten that Jesus called on his early followers to leave infidel friends and families in order to follow Him.

In any case, if children who leave their parents to make their own way in the world and to adopt their own values, are all to be kidnapped by force and coercively brainwashed back to their parents' arms, we will have a lot of kidnapping and a lot of home-prisons for American youth. The path of personal independence and freedom for all men will be wiped out by a theocracy that has no place in a land founded in a dedication to religious freedom. Parents do not own their children, and this return to the idea of divine right of parents must be combatted by all Americans, let alone those of us who are dedicated libertarians.

Neither has the excuse been used that these errant children are underage, and therefore—in the eyes of the State—below the age of volition and consent. The kidnapped children are generally over the age of 18, sometimes even over 21, and therefore have full legal rights in this

country—except, apparently, to join a religious group of which their parents disapprove.

At first the black Christian conservative, Ted Patrick, was hired by many parents for the task of kidnapping and coercive "deprogramming." When Patrick ran into difficulties with the law, the parents formed the Freedom of Thought Foundation (grisly ironic title!) to use the courts to force their children back under their coercive control. While efforts in New York have not been successful, the Foundation has now succeeded in California, where a Superior Court judge ordered five adult members of Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church into the "conservatorship" custody of their parents, to have them coercively "deprogrammed" for a full month. (New York Times, March 25, 1977).

The parental argument is that their offspring have been "brainwashed" by the Church into becoming "robots" believing in the Church authority.

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Roots — (Continued From Page 5)

individualism, not Kunta Kinte's tribalism, not Alex Haley's familism.

In the end, it was not the tribalism of Kunta Kinte that enabled Haley's family to triumph over slavery but the ingenuity, skill, tenacity, courage and sense of humor of Chicken George - an individual. And this is how it has always been. Individuals have kept man civilized - not races, tribes, nations, or families. But in their rush to stalk the graveyards of their genealogical past, Americans take flight from the present and from themselves, abandoning this hard-won moment in modern times to the primitivism of whatever ethnic gang manages to impose its will on the rest of us. It happens today when individuals are sacrificed to quotas and thus shaming everything the slaves - AND white abolitionists - struggled so hard for. □

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America and 'Human Rights' — East Timor Division

The Carter administration's widely trumpeted devotion to "human rights" may be gauged by its support for the conquest and oppression of the country of East Timor by the brutal "pro-American" dictatorship of Indonesia. After Portugal abandoned its former colony, it was invaded by Indonesia (read Java, which in the late 1940's had coercively invaded and conquered the outlying islands). Since Indonesia's invasion of East Timor in December, 1975, the Indonesians—in the course of suppressing the East Timorese desire for independence—have murdered 100,000 civilians, amounting to no less than 15% of the East Timor population. It is as if an external military force had invaded the United States and slaughtered 32 million Americans! A recent (Feb. 11) report on the East Timor situation, prepared for the Australian parliament by the former Australian consul in East Timor, calls Indonesia's actions there "the most serious case of contravention of human rights facing the world at this time."

The report points out that Indonesian soldiers have indiscriminately murdered civilians in the major towns, wiped out entire mountain villages, engaged in systematic raping and looting, regularly used torture to gain information, and bombed villages with napalm. This report, prepared by James Dunn, confirms a similar account gathered by the Indonesian Catholic Relief Agency operating in East Timor and smuggled into Australia last December.

In a shocked reaction to the Dunn report, Australian members of Parliament urged the U. S. Congress to hold hearings on these abominable actions by America's ally and client state. Hearings have been held during March by Rep. Donald Fraser (D., Minn.)

subcommittee on International Organizations and by Rep. Lester Wolff's (D., N.Y.) subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, including testimony by Dunn himself.

Particularly interesting is the testimony of Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Robert Oakley before the Wolff subcommittee in mid-March. Oakley revealed that the Ford administration had indeed suspended U.S. military aid to Indonesia after its invasion of East Timor (an invasion denounced by the UN, a vote on which the U.S. abstained), because its use of U.S. weapons contravened U.S. law. But, added Oakley, "in May or June, we reviewed the situation on the ground and found it was stable so we decided to resume military shipments to Indonesia." Besides, said Oakley, East Timor "has effectively become part of Indonesia." So, as long as the aggressor and butcher has become "effective" and "stable", everything is OK; what price "human rights" now?

But, even on his facts, Oakley is wrong, for while Indonesia formally annexed East Timor last July, it still controls less than one-fifth of the land, and only half the population, the rest being controlled by Fretelin, the East Timor independence movement. And yet, as Oakley stated, the tacit support by the Ford administration for Indonesia's conquests "is not being contested by this administration." On the contrary, the Carter administration is asking for an increase in annual U.S. military aid to Indonesia from last year's \$40 million to over \$58 million, along with another \$148 million in economic aid. Oakley maintained that if Indonesia should now use U.S. military aid in East Timor it would be merely defending its "own" territory.

(See *International Bulletin*, March 28, 1977. An excellent bi-weekly newsletter on international affairs, available for \$8 a year from P.O. Box 4400, Berkeley, Calif. 94704). □

Kidnappers — (Continued From Page 6)

Yet in no case has any parent proven that his children have been coerced by the religious cult; the admission and training in the cult has in all cases been strictly voluntary. To apply the term "brainwashing"—as the parents have done—to this process is highly dangerous; for then, any conversion to any set of beliefs, whether Sun Moon or Randian, distasteful to one's parents, could also be called "brainwashing". If individuals have free will, as at least the Christians among the parents must believe, how dare any voluntary process be labelled as "brainwashing", and the free convictions of the children dehumanized in this repellent manner?

But while the procedures of the various cults are all admittedly free and voluntary, the "deprogramming" procedures of the parents are all admittedly dependent on kidnapping, on force and violence. Hence it is the parents and their hirelings who are the "brainwashers", and not the religious cults.

In the California case, the lawyers for the young adult Moonies argued that conservatorship is an infringement on their freedom of speech and religion and denounced the procedure for what it is: legalized kidnapping and browbeating. The young Moonies also read poetry and performed music in an attempt to convince the court that their creativity had not been diminished by membership in the Church (as if judges are proper determiners of creativity!).

Yet, in a truly outrageous and monstrous decision handing the Moonies over to the violence of their parents, Judge S. Lee Vavuris ruled: "We are talking about the essence of civilization—mother, father and children. There's nothing like it. I know of no greater love than parents for their children, and I am sure they would not admit their children to harm." Vavuris added that "The child is the child even though a parent may be 90 and the child 60."

And so we are back to the absolute rule of the parent—backed by the State—in a decision which even old Filmer (the theorist of the State-as-parent) might have balked at. Is everyone to be subjected to the absolute ownership of their parents, in the name of "love", even unto the age of 60? We hold no belief for any of these cults; but the issues at stake are no less than the First Amendment, and personal liberty for every American.

Arts and Movies

by Mr. First Nighter

The Oscars. About the TV show, the less said the better. It was dull, grim, boring, ugly, the least cinematic of the Oscar award programs. One longed for good old Bob Hope and his repetitious one-liners. As to the awards themselves, they were a titanic struggle between *Rocky* and *Network*, so close that even the knowledgeable Sidney Skolsky flubbed on three of his six major predictions on the winners. If justice had triumphed, *All the President's Men*—by far the best movie of 1976—would have won in a walk, and Alan J. Pakula would have won for his excellent direction. But the producers of *APM* had made the grave tactical error of opening the film at the beginning, instead of toward the end, of the year, and Hollywood forgets. As it is, we should be thankful that Jason Robards won the Best Supporting Actor award for his role as Ben Bradlee in *APB*, the most subtle acting performance of the year.

Given the freeze-out of *APM*, the victory for *Rocky* was something to be cheered, not only for the film's own substantial merits, but also because a victory for the disorganized and unfocussed *Network*, would have been a disgrace. While Paddy Chayevsky's dialogue was crisp and often funny, deserving of his Best Original Screenplay award, the picture was inchoate and disorganized—to the extent that the mad rantings of the Peter Finch character alternated between acknowledged lunacy and the supposed searing "truths" hurled at the audience by Chayevsky. Basically, *Network* was Old Liberal Chayevsky turned indiscriminate ranter against the contemporary world. Faye Dunaway, on the other hand, deserved the Best Actress award for a role that was cartoonish and one-dimensional but still funny and abrasive, although Beatrice Straight's victory as Best Supporting Actress for a nothing role in *Network* was only the triumph of a big propaganda campaign in the Hollywood trade journals. John Avildsen's Director award for *Rocky* over Sidney Lumet for *Network* was certainly well-deserved, but the brief clips from some of Pandro Berman's glorious films of a "Hollywood long gone" only highlighted the enormity of Hollywood's decline in recent years.

Fun With Dick and Jane, dir. by Ted Kotcheff. With George Segal and
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Zaire — Katanga Rises Again!

According to the American press, it's another "Commie" invasion of a friendly "pro-Western" African country, Zaire, based in pro-Communist Angola, and led by Cuban "advisors", making for Zaire's southernmost, "copper-rich" province of Shaba, once called Katanga. True to the traditions of contemporary American imperialism, the Carter administration flew in \$2 million of unauthorized "emergency" military aid—a rather odd request, considering that the U.S. has been giving the Mobutu dictatorship in Zaire \$30 million per year aid for the last several years.

But the story is, in truth, far more ironic. For these very "Commie" Katangese troops are the last holdouts of a great secessionist rebellion that was the darling of the American right-wing all during the 1960's. How men forget!

In the first place, as in all of Africa, Zaire, formerly the Congo (Leopoldville), and formerly still the Belgian Congo, is not really a country in any sense, but a vast geographical region carved out as an administrative creation of Belgian imperialism in the late 19th Century. When Belgium was forced to vacate the Congo in 1960, various conflicting political forces stepped into the breach, both centralizing and secessionist. Most heroic was the Katanga secession movement, which carved out a tribal-based republic in that indeed "copper-rich" nation, headed by Moise Tshombe. The American right-wing, not usually prone to aiding secessionist movements (to say the least) latched on to Tshombe because the Tshombe regime was one of the very few authentic black nationalist movements in Africa that was pro-capitalist, being allied to the Belgian capitalists of Union Miniere, largest owners of Katangan copper. The Communists and their allies latched on to the centralizer Patrice Lumumba, while the United States, the CIA, and its allies in the U.S. capitalist-Rockefeller ambit put its money, aid, and support on the centralizing forces of Joseph Kasavubu and particularly on the Congolese army commander, General Joseph Mobutu. It took many years of maneuver and heartache, but, finally, with the aid of the U.S.-run United Nations army, and—as has recently been revealed—putting General Mobutu on a long-term CIA payroll, United States imperialism finally won out, succeeding in murdering both Lumumba and Tshombe, crushing Katangan independence, and uniting the Congo (now called Zaire) under President Mobutu.

The heroic remnants of the Katangese legion, headed by their general M'Bumba, fled to Portuguese Angola, where they first fought—as rightists naturally would—against the left-wing rebels and alongside the Portuguese. But the Katangese, as is even more natural, were less interested in the murky regions of ideology, or in the U.S.-Russian Cold War, than they were in their continuing long-range goal: the redemption of Katanga. Their main enemy was and is always Mobutu's "Angolan" brother-in-law Holden Roberto, also a long-term CIA agent, and head of what, in the 1975-76 civil war in Angola, became the "pro-American",

"free-world" National Front for the Liberation of Angola. The crushing defeat of Roberto was, for the Kantangese as well as the "Communist" Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, a great victory. The several-thousand man Kantangese army then proceeded on their next step—their goal of the last decade: the re-entry into "Shaba", where they were, inevitably, greeted by the Katangese as liberators, and where they hoisted the old Katanga flag. Katanga has risen again!

But oh how men forget! Read the conservative press, and you will find not a peep of recognition, much less of justification of why the heroic Katangan "conservatives" are now supposed to be lackeys of Cuban communism. And we find that even Belgium—whose capitalists have long since integrated into the Rockefeller ambit—has rushed military aid to the corrupt dictator Mobutu, sitting a thousand miles away in the Zaire capital of Kinshasa.

And the Carter administration, so hypocritically vociferous about "human rights", when they happen to be violated by Russia, where does it stand on the admitted systematic invasions of those same rights by the CIA stooge, the dictator Mobutu? Silence, or rather, mumbling about U.S. "national interests". And so the Cold War heats up once more, as the old Katanga cause goes down the right-wing Orwellian memory hole. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, who admitted before Congress on March 16 that there was "no hard evidence" of Angolan or Cuban involvement in the Kantangese incursion, called the fighting "dangerous" because loss of the Katangan copper mines "would be a very serious blow to the government of Zaire." No doubt; but the State Department spelled out the U.S. concern the next day by complaining that the Katangan fighting would "jeopardize nearly \$1 billion in American mining investments." Who said that there is no economic groundwork to contemporary U.S. imperialism? □

Arts — (Continued From Page 7)

Jane Fonda. The critics have been billing this as a comedy in the grand old Grant-Lombard-Hepburn tradition. The very idea is a desecration. This is witless rubbish, crude and unfunny, apparently redeemed in the eyes of left-liberal critics because it is yet another ham-handed attempt at satirizing bourgeois American values of thrift, success, and affluence. It starts as a sort of mildly funny Jack Lemmon comedy about an upper-middle class couple trapped by a sudden dismissal from employment, but it then deteriorates into a boring crime caper movie, with Segal & Fonda obtaining money through holdups. I guess the point is supposed to be that business and crime are really identical. Segal is kept under wraps by the director, which is all to the good, but Miss Fonda walks through the role with no distinction or flair—a long come-down from her excellent acting in *Barbarella* and *Klute*. □

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