

THE Libertarian Forum

Murray N. Rothbard, Editor

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER Vol XVIII, No. 3-4

MARCH-APRIL, 1984

Box 341, Madison Square Station, New York, New York 10010

US-ISSN0047-4517

CAMPAIGN FEVER '84

1. The Pits: *Here's The Beef!*

In the course of a sparkling confrontation with the evil liberal and conservative Braden & Buchanan on *Crossfire*, Dave Bergland was asked, in their usual nasty fashion: "What makes *you* think you're qualified to be President?" Dave shot back: "Well, I'm an attorney and former law professor. I think I'm at least as qualified as an old actor and a peanut farmer."

And how! Comparing notes the other day with my old friend and libertarian comrade Professor Ralph Raico (and it is *he*, it should be noted for present and future historians, who came up with the magnificent motto, "This is the Movement You have Chosen"), we both agreed that this Presidential campaign—the "real world" one, that is—is the scurviest and most repellent in our memory, perhaps even in all of American history. Can you imagine, for example, a debate between, say Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton, or even, on an infinitely lower level, between Lincoln and Douglas, and can you imagine the crucial, telling phrase in such a debate being "Where's the beef?" It is almost incomprehensible to me that the Hart-Mondale contest should have turned on Mondale, in his flat, nasal, Minnesota twang, intoning this idiotic slogan. Presumably, poor Hart, still burdened with a modicum of intelligence and dignity, was so taken aback by the aggressive thrust of the Minnesota Moron, that he was reduced to nerd-like dithering for the rest of the campaign. And so Fritz the Pits joins the *basso profundo* of the octogenerian lady in the fast-food commercial, going arm in arm down the Memory Lane of history. Never has mainstream American politics been so dumb, odious, and . . . creepy.

As Ralph Raico points out, the American voter now chooses his or her President solely on the basis of symbolism. Is he an aggressive Leader? Does he score idiotic points in what might be called sardonically the "guerrilla theater" of American politics? Mondale's turning on the poor, bemused Gary Hart was one big ploy. And then of course we could reminisce about the two guerrilla-theater ploys that won the election—and probably eight years of absolute rule over us all—for the Monster Cretin Ronnie Reagan: "I paid for this microphone" (crushing George Bush), and "there you go again," disposing of poor, Uptight Jimmy Carter. One can fantasize: It's October, 1984, and the climactic debate between Cretin Reagan and Minnesota Fats Mondale is underway. Mondale suddenly wheels on

Ronnie: "I say: Where's the beef?", to which Ronnie retorts: "There you go again!" One is tempted to surrender completely to mirth at the total idiocy of American politics, when one stops short at the incredible but overriding fact that the fate of the human race may rest in the hands of one of these two egregious turkeys.

2. Do We Gotta Have Hart?

Don Ernsberger, in *SIL's Individual Liberty*, cynically disposes of the entire Hart Phenomenon as a pure media creation, with Hart's "New ideas" signifying only nothing. Long cynical about the Libertarian Party, Don unsurprisingly deduces from the Hart experience that Americans are all hopeless puppets of the media, and that therefore the Libertarian Party can never hope to get to first base.

But, first, Hart was not a deliberate media creation. It is true that the media, like the rest of us, prefer excitement to boredom, but they had pretty much adjusted to the idea of a Mondale sweep until—genuine surprise!—Gary Hart came in second in the Iowa caucus vote. It was only *after* this astonishing showing that the media—quite properly—concentrated on Hart; and that he then went on to win the New Hampshire primary.

Second, it is blindly insensitive for Don Ernsberger to miss the fascinating nature of the Hart Phenomenon. It is true that Hart's "new ideas" hardly amount to a well-thought out political philosophy that we could stack up against Locke or Hobbes. But there *are* new ideas, and certainly a new style, about Gary Hart that will loom large in years to come. In a deep sense, Hart is at least part of a wave of the future, whereas Fritz the Pits Mondale is marching steadily into the dustbin of history.

Mondale and Hart differ sharply in their ideas, their style, and their *personae*. Mondale, as Hart has pointed out, is the living embodiment of "the old arrangements", of the New Deal-Fair Deal-Great Society Establishment that has been ruling over us since the 1930's. This Establishment is quintessentially statist, the essence of the Welfare-Warfare State, symbolized in the fact that Fritz Mondale is the heir and shadow of one of the most repellent and odious politicians in 20th century America, the loudmouth Hubert Horatio Humphrey. Fritz Mondale is the monotonic leavings, the detritus of HHH. His boring *persona* is the living incarnation of his boring, old-hat ideas.

More than that: the Mondale coalition is a bunch of turkeys marching into oblivion. Studies have shown that the

modal Mondale voter is: an elderly, male, doggedly regular Democrat, low-income, Jewish or Catholic union member from the smokestack industries of the Northeast quadrant of the U.S. A dying demographic from a dying region. It is only people such as these who could, at this late date in history, be impressed by endorsements from Al Shanker and the AFL-CIO Teachers' Union. On the other hand, Gary Hart managed to mobilize groups who are in many ways the wave of the future, people who have been called the Yuppies (young, upscale, urban professionals—although it should be Yuppies, since most of them live in the suburbs). Yuppies are young, upwardly mobile, professionals in high tech industries, strongest in the West and Southwest.

But "where's the beef?" Is there any substance in Hartism apart from the Kennedyish hair and gestures, and the cowboy boots? Yes, there is. In contrast to the good, grey New Dealer Mondale, the Yuppie Generation, including Hartpence, came of age during the late 1960's and early 1970's, imbibing innate skepticism about the power of Big Government to achieve much of anything, in domestic or foreign affairs. The legacy of Vietnam (and Watergate) accounts for the far harder-core anti-interventionism of Gary Hart—a policy that drove Mondale to reveal his cloven Humphreyite hoof in joining the Monster Reagan in accusing Hart of aiming to turn Central America over to the eager arms of the Russkies. On domestic policy, Hart is also noticeably less statist, especially attacking protectionism and other subsidies to old, decaying smokestack industries. As a Coloradan, Hart is also—or at least was until his confrontation with Fritz—opposed to gun control.

Hart met his doom by rolling over and turning wimpy under the blows of Mondale's vicious personal attacks. Presumably, he fell for the fatal temptation of turning stuffily "Presidential" before the presidential nomination was wrapped up. For some reason, Hart failed to pay tit for tat, failed to desanctify Mondale with a "negative" campaign of his own.

But whatever the fate of Gary Hart, the underlying demographics remain clear. 1984 is the Mondale constituency's Last Hurrah, and in 1988 and afterward, the Yuppies will take on ever more power and clout.

3. LP Constituencies?

From the Hart phenomenon, we can dimly discern the outlines of the voting coalition that present and future LP campaigns can appeal to. Apart from hard-core Libertarians, our potential constituency consists of two broad and very different groups: on the one hand, disaffected "extreme" Reaganites: tax rebels, gun toters, opponents of the inflationist Federal Reserve; and, on the other, anti-war and high-tech Yuppies, disenchanting at the savage way that Mondale and the media, barracuda-like, went for Gary's jugular. A Yuppie-redneck coalition, forged on an anti-war, pro-civil liberties, anti-tax, pro-free market perspective!

And now John Anderson, the quintessential Yuppie—quiche and white wine—candidate in 1980, has dropped out of the 1984 race. The Anderson defection and the Hart mugging should drive a substantial number of Yuppies into the Bergland-Lewis LP camp. That, plus the increasing statism of Ronnie, should form a substantial con-

stituency among which libertarianism can do its vital spadework.

4. Ridgeway on Hart as Libertarian

In the left-liberal *Village Voice* (May 1, 1984), the astute political analyst James Ridgeway, covering the Hart campaign in Ohio, identifies Hart and his supporters as quasi-Libertarian. Thus, Ridgeway points out that it is clear why Hart opposes the Chrysler bailout—and has the guts to do so in a smokestack state like Ohio. That bailout, he points out, is "a remnant of New Deal government, and Hart is a neoliberal who thinks the New Deal is dead. He believes organized labor is a special interest. He is for free enterprise. He ought to be running in the right wing of the Republican Party, or more aptly in the Libertarian Party, where there is an economic and historic context for his views." Well! Ridgeway is going overboard, or course, but it is fascinating that libertarianism and the LP is embedded in his consciousness as the logical framework for genuinely free market views.

Even more fascinating is an interview Ridgeway conducts with one John Turk, owner of Grabowski's food market in Cleveland's Slavic Village, precisely the sort of Democratic voter one would expect to be a Mondale diehard. It turns out that Turk, a lifelong registered Democrat, broke ranks in 1980 to vote for Ed Clark! He is now for Gary Hart in the primary. Turk dismisses Mondale as someone who would "say anything, do anything to get elected." He opposes Jackson because Jesse would mean higher taxes. On the other hand, Turk is against Reagan because of his fanatical anti-Soviet and interventionist foreign policy. "Reagan is so intense in his McCarthyism. He hates Russia so bad he can't see clear. That's no solution because the Russians are going to be there after Reagan is gone. Hart would be more realistic about it."

On Central America, John Turk takes a charming Old Right-isolationist—to hell with them all—position:

These problems didn't happen yesterday. They've been there for a long, long time. Even if you occupy the territory, what have you accomplished? The problem will still be there. You might kill a few troublemakers, but you're not going to help the situation. I think that where these dictatorships are entrenched, and everybody is in the underclass, we should let them fall. Let what will happen happen. They don't deserve anything else. The answer is not to throw billions of dollars to those bastards. They are going to squander it.

Wow! Bless you, John Turk. Maybe, in addition to the tax rebels, the ultra-Reaganites, and the Yuppies, we can also snare a good chunk of Catholic ethnics. What an LP coalition that would be!

4. The Rev. Jesse: Report from Hymietown

"The Reverend Jesse Jackson," as he is always referred to in full regalia (sort of like the German "Herr Professor Doktor . . ."), has provided by far the most spice and interest in this otherwise appalling Democrat campaign. The media speak in wonder at Jackson's presence, articulation, charisma, and unique ability to mobilize the black masses—and all this is true. As someone with no hope to win the nomination, and yet in command of a formidable bloc of

voter support (carrying Philadelphia, and winning one-third of New York City votes), Jackson necessarily sails above the fray, since his two rivals dare not indulge in negative campaigning against him. He can therefore afford to be candid, and candid he is. In a sense, although he lacks the brilliance of Malcolm X, Jesse is Malcolm's natural successor, and being a Christian rather than a Muslim minister, he is far more in a position to influence and lead the black masses. Like Malcolm, Jesse Jackson carries the message of the "Protestant ethic"—hard work, thrift, self-discipline—to the black ghetto.

In his candor, furthermore, Jackson has been bringing a radical political perspective to the Democrat Party for the first time in a decade: Everything from a consistent anti-imperialist, anti-war position to raising the hitherto taboo stance of revisionism on the Martin Luther King assassination. (It's OK to make a compulsory national holiday out of King's birthday, but not to raise questions about the alleged sole responsibility for King's murder of James Earl Ray.) In contrast to Gary Hart's ritualistic obeisance to the gods of military expansion, furthermore, Jackson even favors a substantial cut—a cut-cut—in the military budget.

But, as a Hymie from Hymietown, am I not deeply aggrieved, shocked and saddened, etc. by Jackson's Hymie references? The answer is No. In this genuinely rotten campaign, where "Where's the beef?" becomes the font of political wisdom, and where, on the other side, Ronnie Baby is revving up more of his lying anecdotes and his war schemes, Jesse at least provides some much-needed fun in the campaign, from "Hymietown" to his habitual speech in rhyming couplets: (e.g., "Lebanon is only the text, for without the context of the Middle East, it's only a pretext");

or, "we must move from the outhouse to the White House")

Never fear, however; this does not mean that I have become a Jackson enthusiast. The man is, after all, a socialist, which is the *real* and unsung problem with his campaign.

The Hymietown material provides a fascinating example of a clash of political cultures. As Jackson soberly went on at length to the press, detailing why "Hymietown" was not meant as a slur, the effect was hilarious, since Jackson was presumably unwitting that every single phrase rubbed raw the hypersensitivities of his Jewish listeners: "You see, when I was growing up in Chicago, we called 'Hymietown' or 'Jewtown' the area where we could buy cheap clothing. 'Where's Jewtown?' we'd say. Now, if I had said 'kike' that would have been derogatory." To speak in Jacksonian rhyme: Every word was true, but none of it flew.

As the Jewish-black clash escalated, neocon and right-wing columnists, who are now spread all over the media, hammered away at the theme that an evil double standard rules in American life, because if a *white* candidate had said these same allegedly anti-Semitic slurs, he would have been driven rapidly from political life and by now would have had to resign. True enough, but the rightists seem not to understand that this argument, like the left-liberal wailing about the "gender gap", is a doubled-edged sword. For, *how is it* that white Christians, for fear of their political lives, exist in mortal fear of saying anything that might in any sense be interpreted as anti-Semitic? (The double-edged aspect of the gender gap, of course, is: if Republicans should worry about their lack of female support, why shouldn't the Democrats equally worry about their dearth of *male* voters?) ‡

Arts And Movies

By Mr. First Nighter

Swing Shift, directed by Jonathan Demme, with Goldie Hawn.

In the "real world," we are used to the idea of an integrated, useful, and pleasing product emerging out of organizational chaos. But in the world of drama, we expect production chaos to result in a tangled, chaotic movie or play. Well, no film in recent years has suffered the problems of *Swing Shift*, which went through three movie companies before completion, and has been repudiated by the three main principals: the director, the screenwriter, and the star. And yet, it emerges onto the screen, a lovely, charming, and beautifully integrated film. Go figure it! Despite their unhappiness, director Jonathan Demme, assisted by main screenwriter Nancy Dowd, deserve the lion's share of credit.

First of all, for those, like me, who *don't* like Goldie Hawn, with her generally infantile mugging and clowning, have no fears, because Miss Hawn has been tamed and caged for this picture—and as a result, for once she gives a fine performance. *Swing Shift* is an exercise in nostalgia,

specifically for the home front during World War II. It ranks up at the top, with *Summer of '42*, and *that* picture was far more a timeless story about adolescent love than about America during the war. The lovely thing about *Swing Shift* is that it captures the mood of the era perfectly by *not* talking down to it. It achieves total empathy by adopting the values and styles of the era and working within them, and not trying to score points from the superior vantage point of 1984.

Swing Shift is the story of two women home front workers at an aircraft plant in southern California, "Rosie the Riveters", who responded to the call of patriotism and of good jobs not previously open to females. It is a story of great sweetness, sensitivity and charm, although it does not underplay the tension coming from affairs on the home front while the hubby is off to war. There are marvelous performances from the nonstar players, especially Christine Lahti as the second female lead.

See *Swing Shift*, the picture of the year—a lovely valentine to a lost world. ‡

This Is The Movement You Have Chosen

By The Old Curmudgeon

1. Post Pres-Con Notes:

More on media astuteness on the issues involved in the climactic Bergland vs. Ravenal race. T. R. Reid, in a long *Washington Post* (Sept. 4, 1983) article called Dave Bergland "an outspoken antigovernment activist who is considered a hard-liner even by the Libertarians' stern standards." (Whoopie!) "In choosing Bergland", the *Post's* Reid added, "the Libertarian delegates chose ideological purity and turned away from the more pragmatic approach of their 1980 Presidential nominee, Ed Clark." Earl Ravenal, he went on, was backed by "the party's pragmatic wing." He astutely noted that "the distinction between them was clearly drawn when the voting was interrupted to let both address the delegates." Bergland, Reid pointed out, spoke of "the ideal of liberty" and the "ugliness" of government; while Ravenal talked of making the LP "relevant" to the "broad sweep of the American people." In contrast to the Clark campaign of 1980, Bergland declared that Social Security should be "terminated forthwith". Reid went on to detail the Libertarian programs and principles.

Philip Lentz, in the *Chicago Tribune* (Sept. 6, 1983), while breezier and less perceptive, also pointed out the crucial differences, with Bergland representing the forces devoted to principle and ideology, and Ravenal backed by the pragmatic "Washington-New York connection". Many purists, Lentz noted, "were afraid he might deviate from the party line in a long campaign." "Some recalled," Lentz noted, that Ravenal "once wrote in a magazine article that there were circumstances where the draft might be necessary."

But perhaps the most illuminating post-Prescon press note came from Earl Ravenal himself. Interviewed by his hometown newspaper, the *Easton (Md.) Star-Democrat* (Sept. 20, 1983), Ravenal held forth at some length in decidedly ungracious fashion, denouncing the winners. In contrast to his own "larger (sellout?) vision" of the party with projected "mass appeal", Earl the Pearl denounced the rest of us as fighting to maintain the LP "like a tightly cloistered church", "just guarding the flame of dogma." OK, that tears it, because, you see, one man's principle is *always* another man's "church dogma". And if principle equals "dogma", what does that make the person who bitterly denounces "dogma"? The answer is "unprincipled, opportunist—not a libertarian—" in short, all the things many of us were worried that Earl Ravenal really was down deep. But now it's not so deep. It all came out in the wash, and it didn't take very long.

Meanwhile, speaking of coming out in the wash, Professor John Hospers, hero of the LP's small ultra-right wing, has slithered *his* way out of the Libertarian Party and into the ranks of the Republicans. Hospers now supports Ronnie

Reagan for re-election, and laments that the LP has been taken over by backers of unilateral disarmament. (See the *USC Daily Trojan*, Oct. 21, 1983). Since the LP's platform is still solidly pro-multilateral disarmament, and hasn't changed on the issue in many years, and since the unilateral disarmamentists have always been in a minority, one wonders what world John Hospers has been inhabiting in recent years.

2. Crane Machine Notes:

And what of our old friends the Crane Machine, once so scary, now a figure only fit for raucous mirth? In addition to refusing to support the Bergland ticket and sulking loudly and angrily in their tent, so filled with *angst* were these turkeys that they actually contemplated for a while joining John Anderson's National Unity Party ticket, and then "taking it over" from Anderson! What a gas that would have been: the Machine extending their Unity Scam from the LP, after its failure there, to a bigger failure for the entire country! To finally get their hands on another source of funds than The Donor, i.e., matching funds from the taxpayers! Truly, the Crane Machine has now become, in the great phrase of Nietzsche, only a "laughingstock, a thing of shame."

And speaking of laughingstocks, the intellectual collapse of the CM's once-puffed up theoretician and would-be demagogue, Roy Childs, the no-show "foreign policy analyst" for the Cato Institute, is proceeding apace. The one-time champion of anarchism has become an archist, the one-time inspiring speaker against war now defends the U.S. invasion of Grenada, the one-time anti-imperialist has become pro-Zionist. And the one-time atheist is now seriously considering "converting to Judaism." And, of course, the one-time out-and-out champion of lying ("if lying helps . . .") now spends his time accusing the rest of us of lies. He also has the historiographical sleaze to laud his paymaster, Ed Crane, as the modern embodiment of Cobden and Bright.

On Childs's projected conversion to Judaism: May he get a *mohel* with a rusty knife!

Send in the clowns? Don't bother, they're here.

3. Exit Upchuck?

Our farflung intelligence network reports the impending demise of *Update*. Apparently, The Donor has pulled the plug on this old Craniac smearsheet, long since become toothless and unread. Let me ask you, dear Reader, how long has it been since you have seen, much less read and pondered *Update*? If *Update* is truly leaving us, it will depart unwept, unhonored and unsung. ‡

NEW YORK POLITICS

For political buffs, there is nothing more amusing or fascinating than politics in New York. (Or, to put it another way, if politics can't be principled, it may as well be fun.) For one thing, New York, especially "the City", still luxuriates in old-fashioned "ethnic" politics. To wit:

1. Mayor Ed Koch

Ed Koch enjoys enormous popularity among the New York City masses: for two basic reasons, (a) his personality, and (b) because he is perceived, by both white and black voters, as anti-black. The anti-black image is not of course attained by rabid demagoguery, but by various subtle blends of rhetoric and reality. Since, almost alone among Northeastern inner cities, New York City still has a large majority of white voters, the result is a generally satisfied conclusion that "he has put 'them' in their place." But Koch, as was shown by his disastrous race for Governor in 1982, cannot parlay that great popularity anywhere outside the boundaries of the city. His loss "upstate" (defined as anywhere in New York outside "the City") has, of course, nothing to do with his anti-black image. The problem is Koch's flamboyantly "ethnic" personality, a trait that hardly goes down well in soberly WASP-dominated upstate.

But they love him in "the City." For one thing, Koch, in contrast with most politicians, even ethnic ones, who generally cultivate an image of unbearable *serioso* sobriety, Koch lets it all hang out. Candid, funny, abrasive, he tells it like he sees it—including the dressing-down of fellow politicians and pressure groups. As he puts it in his newly published and scandalous memoir (see below), he *gives* ulcers rather than gets them. As one top New York official put it recently, Koch's popularity "reconfirms the notion that he is a unique type, irascible, sometimes charming, sometimes petulant—the embodiment of a typical New Yorker." Yeah! But how, you might ask, can he be a "typical New Yorker" and yet unique? Because he is unique among *politicians*, and hence his great support among a public, as one reporter put it, that "admires candor and has little regard for most politicians."

Recently, Koch shocked and stunned the political world by publishing his memoirs, "Mayor", *while still in office*. This is a political first, since invariably memoirs are written after the statesman in question has safely retired and doesn't have to cultivate political allies. And Koch even for a memoirist, is unusually candid and self-glorifying, spending his time in the book patting himself on the back and, in particular, getting back at his numerous enemies. Koch spares no one: the former Mayor, Abe Beame, tried to delay getting out of the mayoral mansion; a Koch employee, proven incompetent, broke into tears when Koch fired him, etc. Getting back at his enemies; as Koch might say, why else write a political memoir?

But, Koch was asked, why write the book while still in office, when the impact is bound to be divisive, and not follow the custom of waiting until he retired? Koch's answer was not only candid, it was definitive:

I believe that no matter how interesting books on public life are, if they are published long after the events occurred and when the individual who was in the eye of the hurricane is no longer in office and gone from the scene, those books are purchased and placed on coffee tables and read by very few and have no major impact.

But won't the book prove divisive in New York City and make it more difficult for Koch to govern? Sure, but Koch doesn't care, because the people, the voting public, who are not themselves under attack and who love the Kochian style, won't care tuppence. As Queens Democrat leader Donald Manes, who was bitterly mocked in the book, said: "The book is Ed Koch—he is open and outspoken. People already know what he is, so I don't think the book will hurt him."

Among all the sputtering responses by politicians, only two displayed the wit and verve worthy of the occasion. Public relations bigwig Howard Rubenstein, a Koch friend, griped about not being mentioned in the book at all, but then: "I expected to at least be in a footnote, but I'm not terribly upset because from the tone of some of the attacks on some of the other people, I come out ahead." And the always witty Governor Mario Cuomo, strongly attacked in the book: "One should never write a book immediately after losing an election."

Sometimes, of course, Koch's ethnic *persona* gets to be too much. This fall, he overate in some restaurant, and, a few hours later there he was on radio, treating us all to a blow-by-blow account of the dishes he ate, of how an ambulance was rushed to his side (clearly needlessly), etc. Hypochondria on one's own time is one thing; to inflict it on the rest of us is something else.

2. Mario Cuomo

Constant readers of the *Lib. Forum* will remember my enthusiasm for Mario Cuomo—the man not the political philosopher—in his successful race for governor of New York against the rightist Lew Lehrman in 1982. Cuomo's style as governor continues in the same charming vein as Cuomo the candidate. Eloquent, bright, witty, worried about becoming a "Governor" rather than a person, Cuomo has been criticized by Albany mavens on two grounds. One is that, a hard worker, Cuomo delegates no power to his staff and does almost everything himself. Not unusual in government—or in business—but the charm is in Cuomo's reason for this practice. True to the Italian-American values inherited from the *Mezzogiorno*, Cuomo doesn't delegate work because he Trusts No One, except his own immediate family. As his son

Andrew, his informal second-in-command, commented when asked about some of Cuomo's early political allies who felt they were being ignored in the new administration: "Mario Cuomo has two political allies, Matilda Cuomo (his wife) and Andrew Cuomo." And who is to say that he is wrong?

The second criticism is that Cuomo is often indecisive, postponing important decisions. Mario Cuomo often speaks in parables, and his reply was to tell the story of the Czar, the rabbi, and the dog. The Czar, wishing to show up the Jewish community, called in the revered and elderly rabbi. "If you are so wise," taunted the Czar, "how about teaching my dog to talk?" Politically, the rabbi could not afford to refuse the Czar's challenge directly, and so he replied: "I accept your challenge on condition that you give me a year." When the rabbi later told his wife and students about his decision, they were astounded: "How could you say you could teach the dog to talk?"

The rabbi's answer was definitive: "In a year the Czar could die. In a year, the dog could die. In a year I could teach the dog to talk."

An Italian politician who tells rabbi stories: Only in New York!

3. Meade Esposito

And this brings me to the third ethnic politico of the month, the great Meade Esposito, long-time head of the Brooklyn Democrat Party, and the last of the old-time ("my word is my bond") bosses.

Meade has the grand old Brando-*Godfather*-Mafioso croak (How do they get those croaky voices? Do they go to school?) He was asked last year by the ultra-reform, ultra-liberal *Village Voice* why he so often selected inferior candidates (for judgeships, city council jobs, etc.) over better ones who were

running. Meade was too honest to sputter any denials. He simply "croaked" one word in reply: "Respect!" Respect—isn't that what everyone wants, in the last analysis? (Remember one of the great lines in the *Godfather* when several Mafia biggies were discussing whether or not to talk to a newcomer? Brando assented: "I hear he's a serious man, worthy of respect.") Or, if Meade had studied philosophy, he might have retorted with the Kantian: "I want to be treated as an end, and not just as a means."

A year or so ago, all the major Democratic leaders staged an unusual event, an open discussion forum. In the course of the evening, Meade spoke proudly about his balanced ticket in Brooklyn. It was something like: "We have two Jews, two women, an Italian, two blacks, two Irish, an Hispanic . . ." And, wonders of wonders, not a soul, either in attendance, or in the widely reported press accounts, took Meade to task one iota, much less drove him out of office as had been done shortly before to James Watt. Why the double standard? At any rate, in the case of Esposito, everyone knew full well that the balanced ethnic ticket had always been the case in New York, and always will be, and no one—even the reformers—saw anything wrong with it.

In January, 1984, Meade, in his mid-70's, retired from his long-time post, proud that "they've never laid a glove on me", and explaining that politics had become a "menagerie." And besides, "I'm tired." He recommended long-time aide Howard Golden to succeed him as party leader. At this point, Ed Koch intervened, and pressed hard for his own ally, Tony Genovesi, while the blacks put up Assemblyman Fortune. The press touted the fight for the Brooklyn party leadership as nip-and-truck, a dead heat. But when the vote came, it was a landslide for Golden, and Koch's man Genovesi came in a distant third, beaten by nearly three-to-one. It was a grand Last Hurrah for the last of the old-time bosses. ‡

Still Keeping Low Tech

By The Old Curmudgeon

In our famed double convention issue on the PresCon (September-October 1983), we had an article on computerism ("Keeping Low Tech") which in its way drew as much attention (amused rather than agitated) as our lead article ("Total Victory: How Sweet it Is!"). Here are some reactions.

1. The Revolution Has Come and Gone.

My brother-in-law the printer, a computer maven long before everyone else, read my article with considerable amusement. He pointed out to me that the Revolution I am waiting for—being able to type hard copy on a regular electric typewriter and have it register automatically on a computer at the same time—has already come and gone. He has been using such a machine in typesetting for over a decade. You type on a seemingly regular electric typewriter, with hard copy coming out of the typewriter as usual. But, *at the same time*, punched tape emerges like magic out of a hole in the

typewriter (it's called, I believe, a Justewriter or Flexewriter), and then one feeds the punched tape into a computer, corrects it there, and, voila, it's printed out. Of course, it's true that it's not quite automatic, and you have to know the codes, etc. to be able to feed the tape in, but still and all, it's *almost* my desired revolution.

In fact, my brother-in-law wryly pointed out, if I used this gadget I would *still* be my desired decade or two behind current tech. There is, however, an unfortunate hitch. The machine is already obsolete, and if I managed to get one, the parts for repair have probably vanished. The idea is so old-tech that I missed the entire Revolution.

2. The Hands-Off Maven.

I have found a wonderful new way to keep up with the latest computer tech, to be able to hold my own at cocktail

parties, and yet *still* not acutally have to touch a computer. My role model is an old friend of mine who has done this in many areas of endeavor for many years. He is virtually a Universal Maven, who can discourse learnedly on almost all topics, but without actually doing anything about them. For years, he has been a learned Maven on all aspects of consumer electronics. He subscribes to endless consumer electronic magazines, knows the plusses and minuses of every model of every hi-fi set, VCR, and advanced techno-gizmo imaginable. But he actually *has* almost nothing.

My friend the Universal Maven took to the personal computer age as a duck takes to water. It's his meat. He subscribes to all the computer magazines, uses all the lingo, advises everyone else on what computer to get, engages in critiques of instruction manuals, but he himself has never touched a computer *and has no intention of ever doing so*.

At first I was puzzled: What can I call this paragon? You can't call him a "theoretician", since he doesn't actually *know* any physics, engineering, or whatever. I finally figured that the perfect name for him is the Hands-Off Maven—the man steeped in hands-off experience in the often bewildering world of computers.

And so I find that I have become an apprentice Hands-Off Maven. I will never match my *cher Maitre*, but what the hell! I now understand the lingo, and can discourse upon the advantages and disadvantages of different kinds of computers. And, further, I have recently discovered the magnificent Macintosh, which, at the very least, has the best

ad copy I have seen for any product in a long time. It goes straight to our hearts. (E.g.: "In this country there are 250,000,000 people, of whom only a small fraction know anything about computers. The Macintosh. For the rest of us.") With the Macintosh you don't have to learn complicated computer codes and signals. You "point" and move the cursor around the screen by shuffling the pointer (the "mouse"). Of course I haven't touched a Macintosh yet, but I have become, in my own way, a Hands-Off Macintosh specialist, carving out my own little though growing niche in the mad, mad world of computers. I have read articles and learned journals on the Macintosh. It has a sparkling black on white screen instead of the dull green stuff. Etc. Why don't I get one? Well, aside from the fact that it doesn't fulfill my Revolutionary requirements, it will take at least a year (a lifetime in the computer world) to develop enough software, to get a letter-quality printer produced for it, etc. And hell, like I said, I can wait.

3. Lower Tech than I.

I received a touching and heart-warming note from a young lad in response to my original article. In a cry from the heart, he wrote that he is even lower tech than I, and that he is deeply convinced that *all* high-tech is a creature of the State, and that, in a purely free market and free society, none of it would be used. Well, I can't really subscribe to this young chap's position, but I find it quintessentially charming. First, for its own sake, and second because I am always delighted when someone makes *me* look like a middle-of-the-roader. ‡

Fifteen Years Old!

With this March-April issue, the *Lib. Forum* is now fifteen years old. Apart from *Reason*, we are the longest-lived libertarian magazine, and, if you don't consider *Reason* libertarian . . . Unlike the fifth and tenth anniversary issues, we'll spare our readers the saga of the ups and downs of the movement over the years, and the legendary start of the *Forum* on a suggestion of Joe Peden's while driving down a cold and rainy New Jersey Turnpike. The point is that for fifteen years we have called the shots as we've seen them, a plumb line voice for truth and justice both in the libertarian movement and in the "real world." We have seen the movement through its takeoff stage, and have combatted

deviations from right, left, and all over the compass. We began the *Forum* in an epoch when many libertarians were hailing the new Nixon Administration as the advent of liberty in our time; and as we celebrate our fifteenth anniversary, there are still a few benighted comrades who are claiming the same thing for Ronnie Reagan. *Plus ca change . . .*

And as for why we spend so much of our time denouncing deviations, errors, and follies in the movement, the answer is short and sweet: it is a task that needs to be done, and nobody else is doing it. And if we have to do it, we may as well do it with *panache*.

HOW TO SUBSCRIBE TO THE LIBERTARIAN FORUM

Box 341, Madison Square Station, New York, NY 10010

- 2 year (24 issues) subscription \$27.00 (save \$3.00)
 1 year (12 issues) subscription \$15.00

All foreign subscriptions, payment in U.S. dollars only. Overseas subscriptions, please add \$10.00 for extra postage (per year).

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

The Journal of Libertarian Studies

AN INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW

Murray N. Rothbard, Editor

The *Journal of Libertarian Studies* publishes intellectually stimulating papers relating to all aspects of human liberty. Its purpose is to seek a deeper understanding of human action, and the institutions and ethical foundations of a free society. Work published thus includes economics, political and ethical philosophy, sociology, psychology and the history of ideas.

Of special note in Volume Five . . .

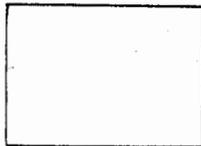
- **"An Economic Critique of Socialism."** A full issue devoted to developing and updating the insights of Ludwig von Mises and Friedrich A. Hayek on the impossibility of rational economic calculation under socialism. Collected and edited by Don Lavoie, George Mason University.
- **"Gustave de Molinari and the Anti-statist Liberal Tradition"** (Parts I and II), by David M. Hart, Macquarie University. The first study in English on the radical free-market, 19th-century French economist Molinari.
- **"Herbert Spencer as an Anthropologist,"** by distinguished Spencerian scholar Robert L. Carneiro. A major study on Spencer as an unacknowledged father of modern anthropology as a social science.

"Herbert Spencer's Theory of Causation," by philosopher George H. Smith. On Spencer's view of causality as the essence of any science, with special emphasis on its role in his "scientific system of ethics."

(Both papers originally presented at the CLS/Liberty Fund sponsored conference on "Herbert Spencer: His Ideas and Influence," August 1980.)

JLS is published quarterly and subscriptions are accepted on a per-volume basis only. Annual subscription rates are \$10 for students, \$22 for institutions, \$14 for all other individuals. Please add \$4 for foreign delivery or \$10 for airmail.

Address inquiries to: Center for Libertarian Studies
200 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10003



THE Libertarian Forum

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Box 341, Madison Square Station, New York, NY 10010

First Class
Mail

Address Correction Requested