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AHA CONVENTION

By Leonard P. Liggio

I. Anarchism on the Agenda

Libertarianism has become academically respectable. Just as the respectability of isolationism emerged five years ago, here is another debt that we probably owe to the New Left. Within a month, a symposium on anarchism was held at a major university with Murray Rothbard and Karl Hess as the principal speakers, and a session of the American Historical Association was devoted to Anarchism. The historical significance of a filled-to-capacity AHA session on anarchism was noted in his introductory remarks by Richard Drinnon of Bucknell University, the chairman. Paul Avrich, Queens College, who gave the first paper, is the author of a recently published book on Russian anarchists; his book was the subject some months ago of an intensive oral commentary by Murray Rothbard. As in almost everything concerned with the growth of libertarian perspectives, Murray Rothbard has been the preeminent pioneer; his open and world-ranging inquiry into libertarian thought and action is the exemplary standard toward which all others' achievements in libertarian analysis has been directed.

Avrich's discussion indicated that the monumental conflict between the respective world-views of Marx and Bakunin remain as significant today as a century ago; yet, despite Avrich's depth of scholarship, a resolution of Bakunin's own contradictory positions appears as distant as ever. Marx's call for regimented industrial and agricultural armies had no appeal for the peasant who might be already oppressed by just such a feudal organization of agriculture. Anarchists historically have had a strong interest in peasant farmers and agricultural land as anarchism has flourished in opposition to the feudal landholding systems.

Gabriel Jackson, U. of California-San Diego, discussed the very controversial question of the institutions of Spanish Civil War Anarchism. The participation of an expert such as James J. Martin would have been invaluable. In the anarchist regions of civil war Spain, the free peasants' land ownership was recognized and tenants turned their lands into freeholds. But, serfs in completely feudal situations were generally transformed into workers on a collective, with occasional liberation into cooperatives. Anarchist ideologists in Spain, after a year, called for a reexamination of the collectivist organization, as it was not productive and was simply living off earlier capital accumulation. Similarly, they had intense criticism of the anarchist military columns for their sectarianism. When their campaigns took them into a district they sought to impose their

rationalism by church burnings; peasants were forced to transfer their private farms into collectives; money was outlawed on pain of execution. This anarchist sectarianism of the military columns contributed to the famous popularity of the Spanish Communist Party--as the defender of private property and money, the peasants and townsmen sought protection in C.P. membership. (Noam Chomsky's "Objectivity and Liberal Scholarship", in his *American Power and the New Mandarins*, presents a libertarian critique of Jackson's liberal treatment of the Spanish Civil War.)

Paul Goodman, the concluding speaker at the session, began with a critical examination of the radical proposals presented at the convention (see Part II). He said that the radical appeal to the historians should have been on the basis of their competence and professional independence, which are being oppressed by political and academic authorities. Anarchists historically found their support among the skilled workers whose competence excluded external management or control, as well as among workers in potentially dangerous work where success was based not on authority but on mutual trust and self-control. The migrants from rural areas who were the main source of unskilled labor were not familiar with self-managing modes in industry and sought solutions in the collectivism of the Marxist unions.

Goodman explained the Marxist rhetoric among student protestors as originating in a similar distinction. The majority of American students are not interested in attending school; they are inmates of school-jails because of the compulsory attendance laws, conscription, etc. They should be permitted to gain their education in appealing work situations; collectivism appears as a reasonable solution only to those in an unnatural situation. Those students who benefit from liberal arts education have sought an improvement in the educational method by transforming the authoritarian classroom situation necessitated by the school-jail institutions into situations permitting more and better study. Five years of intensive investigation have shown that the main student dissatisfaction and support for transformation of universities comes from the upper half of the student body' the lower half is satisfied since the educational system is aimed at their level.

Adam Smith's free market economics was noted by Goodman as the epitome of anarchism. The attempt to establish private property against its negation in the state made *laissez-faire* a revolutionary ideology before its adherents came to compromise with, rather than destroy, feudalism and accepted state monopoly economies. The independence of the competent, the innovator, the entrepreneur, the

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From Libertine To Libertarian

When left-wing critics of the 1930's attacked him for not embracing doctrinaire Marxism, Ernest Hemingway replied:

"... I cannot be a communist now because I believe in only one thing: liberty. First I would look after myself and do my work. Then I would care for my family. Then I would help my neighbor. But the state I care nothing for. All the state has ever meant to me is unjust taxation... I believe in the absolute minimum of government.

"A writer is an outlier like a gypsy... If he is a good writer he will never like the government he lives under. His hand should be against it..." (*Ernest Hemingway: A Life Story* by Carlos Baker, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969).

In the foreword to his own book, Baker writes:

"[Hemingway] was the fierce individualist who resisted fad and fashion like the plague... who believed that that government is best which governs least, who hated tyranny, bureaucracy, taxation, propaganda..."

It is clear to anyone who has read Hemingway's work that the novelist, while never an advanced political thinker--and never pretending to be one--, was writing from the viewpoint of a man obsessed with the raw concept of individual freedom. He was the ultimate artist, the essential loner, the recalcitrant individualist who gave substance to William Hazlitt's theory of "living unto oneself", of being "a part of the world and yet apart from it at the same time." Hemingway was the libertarian in embryo, the undeveloped philosopher with a mania for personal liberty, with a hunger for life and the pleasures of life, who gave full reign to his drives and desires without regard for those who would squeeze him into a neat ideological compartment. His only cause was his art, his writing, the perfection of his language, and a search for truth as reflected through his novels.

Hemingway operated within the framework of a basic *libertinism*, a kind of humanized but non-intellectualized hedonism. The tragedy of his life is that he never advanced beyond this embryonic stage philosophically. While he pursued liberty and spent his life learning how to "live free", he neglected to construct an ethic to discipline his actions. Consequently, the "spiritual" aspect of his life--the part that is concerned with basic questions of morality, with right and wrong, with good and evil--suffered beyond repair. Peace of mind eluded him; an elemental happiness was denied him to the end. He took his life with his own hand less than a month before his sixty-second birthday.

Frank Meyer notwithstanding, the *philosophy of libertarianism* and the *attitude of libertinism* are not to be confused by any except the ignorant. If the libertine is the libertarian in embryo, the true libertarian is the libertine developed to the highest level of ideational morality. He is the libertine strung out to the limits of his potentiality. While the libertine is concerned solely with liberty, the libertarian turns his attention to *liberty and justice* as an inseparable concept. The libertine operates from the basic premise: I have a right to be free; the libertarian from the premise: I have a right to be free--and so does everyone else.

We can only speculate as to what Hemingway might have become psychologically and emotionally had he been exposed to the writings of Mises, Bastiat, Spooner, Hayek, Rothbard, etc. Perhaps he would have dismissed philosophical libertarianism in the same manner he dismissed doctrinaire Marxism, without realizing that an artist's morality is evident in his product and affects its final quality. Then again, having rejected Marxism as incompatible with his own notion of freedom, he might have rejoiced at the discovery of a philosophy more attuned to his own native urges.

Today it is possible to look back on Hemingway's life with some degree of objectivity. The art he produced, if it is good, will long outlive the memory of the man. In

reviewing his career nine years after his death, it is possible to appreciate an individual who was a lifelong friend of liberty, though sadly enough, never its master--a libertarian in embryo who failed to idealize his basic attitude toward life.

— Jerome Tuccille

What's Your Excuse Now?

Last spring, the big revolutionary event in America was the Columbia Revolution. Most "libertarians" condemned this particularly successful New Left venture on the grounds of injury to "private property rights", putting forth the quaint theory that Columbia University is private property.

This winter, the big revolutionary event is the strike at San Francisco State, a strike which, even more successfully than at Columbia, managed to induce black and white students and the nearby black community to join forces against the administration, and also to enlist essentially conservative and guild-minded faculty. Surely no one could possibly call San Francisco State College a wholly government-owned institution, any kind of "private property". It is government property, and therefore an institution which all self-proclaimed libertarians are supposed to be against. And yet, despite this most successful disruptive strike against SF State, rumblings and gripings are emerging from the California libertarian movement, including petty peevishness about classes being obstructed. So what's your excuse now, comrades, for being counter-revolutionary?

Against Taxation

One of the most hopeful recent developments has been the rise of opposition to taxation. Taxation is the vital fuel on which the State runs and has its being. Cut off its funds, its supply, and the State Leviathan will wither and die. Furthermore, a movement in opposition to taxation is bound to strike a responsive chord with the entire tax-exploited middle class. There has recently been formed a National Taxpayers Union, which is dedicated to lancing the State at its vital core: its swollen and unchallenged power of taxation. The energetic libertarian James D. Davidson is the executive director, and Murray Rothbard is one of the four members of the executive committee. For information, write to the National Taxpayers Union, Suite 100, 415 Second Street, N. E., Washington, D. C. 20002.

USIA Network

One of the most repellent aspects of statism is that we the taxpayers are forced to pay for our own brainwashing--for the propaganda which the government beams in our direction. One of our ministries of propaganda, the United States Information Agency, is beamed at hapless people overseas. It was to be expected that when our right-wing Administration took over, the thrust of conservatives in power would not be to dismantle the USIA, but rather to boot out subsidies for liberal books and replace them with well-stocked libraries filled with the works of deserving conservatives.

This, indeed, is exactly what has happened. Frank Shakespeare, new head of USIA, is an ultra-conservative, and a friend of conservatism's pre-eminent TV personality, William F. Buckley, Jr. Buckley was promptly appointed as a member of the USIA's Advisory Commission. Buckley began to push for more conservative books in USIA libraries, and induced Shakespeare to hire Jim Burnham, Buckley's co-editor on *National Review*, to compile a list of deserving books. For nearly \$1000, Burnham came up with a five-page list, which--surprise of surprises!--included prominently the works of both Burnham and Buckley, to which

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creator, said Goodman, is at the root of anarchism. Technological progress, Goodman pointed out, has been achieved by the independent innovator and entrepreneur outside of the authoritarian universities and monopoly institutions. The struggle to affirm private property, the absolute ownership of the fruit of one's free innovation or competence, and to abolish the present negation of private property ownership, is central to anarchist action. Since modern society prepares people more completely for competent independence, the flowering of anarchist thought and action is a reasonable expectation.

II. Long March Made Longer

A major aspect of the AHA convention was the business meetings. In the last couple of years the major scholarly associations in America have been placed on record by their members as opposed to United States aggression against the Vietnamese people. Last year, at the AHA convention which was moved to New York from Chicago to protest the police riot by Mayor Daley's 'finest' during the Democratic National Convention, the major debate concerned the boycott of Chicago. The right-wing liberals proposed that the convention should have been held in Chicago to bring the benefits of the liberals' "superior enlightenment" to Chicago. The caucus of younger members was totally ineffectual last year. The main speeches were a series of Marxist circumlocutions which drove the majority from the hall in search of freedom from boredom. A minor theme was the attack on the movement of student protests at universities by the leading academic Marxist, Eugene D. Genovese, who since has been appointed chairman of the history department at the University of Rochester.

After almost a year of inaction, a revived committee of younger historians popped-up under the ubiquitous Arthur Waskow. Waskow had acted during the early years of the Anti-Vietnam war movement as a retarding influence seeking dialogue rather than confrontation with Rusk, Bundy, Rostow et al., and as late as last spring spoke at a major conference at the New York Hilton against political organization around anti-militarist issues, proposing instead the liberal issues of environment and ecology. Now he appeared at the convention in the colors of a militant. In the early years of this decade a Conference on Peace Research in History (in which several of the contributors to the Libertarian Forum participated) was organized in the AHA by William L. Neumann--revisionist historian, anti-imperialist spokesman and a leading student of Harry Elmer Barnes. This Conference's December 1965 meeting in San Francisco occurred after almost a year of U. S. bombardment and invasion of Vietnam. But the program of which Waskow was chairman avoided historical analysis of U. S. policy in the Pacific upon which the Vietnam intervention was premised. On the eve of the 1965 convention the press had announced that the leading radical historian, Staughton Lynd, then at Yale, had arrived in Hanoi to study the effects of U. S. bombing as a representative of *Viet-Report*. Waskow criticized Lynd for his efforts opposing the Vietnam war by confronting the U. S. government.

The proposals at the 1969 convention which issued forth from Waskow could only have been composed in Bedlam. In essence, they were an attack on the concept of competence. Instead of appealing to historians on the basis of their alienation due to the authoritarian denial of their professionalism in the universities and the AHA, their expertise was equally attacked by the Waskow group. This explicit denial of the historian's role could not seriously have been proposed, as a means of radically educating historians--and, needless to say, it did not. In contrast, at the Modern Languages Association convention, the radicals led by the

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Burnham gave high praise. Buckley, wrote Burnham, is "one of the best-known writers of his generation", and, what is more, "James Burnham's books have been translated and debated in every major country." Pretty near all around. As lagniappe, Burnham also recommended the works of several other editors and contributors of *National Review*: M. Stanton Evans, John Chamberlain, Russell Kirk, Henry Hazlitt, Stefan T. Possony, and the late Whittaker Chambers.

And so, the result of the Buckley-Burnham shuffle is that *National Review* has reaped its reward for loyalty to the Nixon campaign and to the Administration. The loser, as usual, is the American taxpayer.

New University Conference were able to organize their colleagues on the basis of the general denial of their professionalism, to reform the association and to elect as president for the following year, Louis Kampf, MIT humanities chairman. Despite this problematic AHA situation, Staughton Lynd received about thirty per cent of the votes cast for the AHA presidency.

The final business meeting was devoted to a discussion of resolutions, especially concerning Vietnam. A lengthy resolution emanated from the Waskow group; it began with an opposition to the Vietnam war but mainly dealt with a number of domestic issues such as the police murders of the Black Panthers. Perhaps it was believed that the wider opposition to the Vietnam war would carry a resolution containing issues for which there would be less support. Such a scheme has about it much of the odor of the Old Left rather than the honesty of the New Left which faces issues directly no matter how unpleasant the answers. Additionally, the resolution was burdened with having Waskow as floor leader; as he appeared to be speaking half the time through a dozen interventions, many neutral participants drew negative conclusions about the anti-Vietnam positions.

A substitute motion was offered by William L. Neumann as chairman of the Conference on Peace Research in History. It stated: "We, historians and citizens in this meeting of the American Historical Association, deplore and condemn the war in Vietnam as ill-advised and immoral; we urge immediate withdrawal of all military involvement; and we further pledge ourselves to a fundamental reevaluation of the assumptions of American foreign policy." Staughton Lynd called on the meeting to support this resolution. Neumann's anti-war resolution was narrowly defeated by a vote of 610 to 645 in a meeting attended by ten times the number of members who had attended any previous business meeting.

The most outspoken critic was Eugene Genovese, who during the convention was described as having become the Sidney Hook of the younger generation of scholars. For several years Genovese has conducted a personal vendetta against Staughton Lynd because Lynd is not a Marxist and thus bases his politics upon universal moral concepts. Although one might wish Lynd were more rigorous in some historical analyses, he has made the greatest contribution during the 1960's to post-American Revolution historical scholarship. Genovese's Marxism causes him to adopt positions of traditionalist, official historians against revisionist radicalism. The logic of Marxism led Genovese to become the leading contemporary spokesman for southern slaveholding, and Karl Marx's humane opposition to the crime of slaveholding is condemned because this was inconsistent with Marxism. During the past year Genovese opened a wide-front attack on the student movement because he views the New Left as the major impediment to Marxism. At the AHA convention Genovese demanded that the executive council "put down the New Left, put it down now, and put it down hard." Genovese is becoming the heir-presumptive to the repression propounded by the ex-communists of *National Review* and the *New Leader*.

ORGANIZED CRIME

It is a commonplace of history that laws drafted to harass or suppress one socially deviant group will at some future time be used to attack groups or individuals other than those originally persecuted. Thus the emergency powers granted the German Chancellor by the Weimar Republic were used by Hitler to destroy the Weimar regime and plunge Germany into the horrors of the Nazi dictatorship. It is with this in mind that libertarians should examine more closely the Nixon administration's new legislative war against "organized crime".

In the President's message to Congress last April, "organized crime" was identified as the *Cosa Nostra*--or the *Mafia*--an "alien" organization said to number some 5,000 individuals working regionally in 24 "families". (New York Congressman Mario Biaggi, a much-decorated police hero, considers this a gratuitous insult to the Italian-American community.) In the eyes of the Feds, the *Mafia's* most heinous crime seems to be that it successfully serves a profitable and expanding market with goods and services which the State has either outlawed or monopolized for itself.

According to Nixon, the *Cosa Nostra* has a virtual monopoly on illegal gambling--by which he means that the government's licensed gambling operations are its only real competition; they also are responsible for supplying the American public with illegal drugs like heroin--which is needed by those who become addicted in much the same way a diabetic needs insulin, or like marijuana, whose effects have been described by responsible physicians as less harmful than alcohol or tobacco. (That alcohol and tobacco remain legal may be due to their being a major source of State revenue.) To complete the picture, "organized crime" is accused of underwriting the loan-shark business and actively participating in fraudulent bankruptcies. In other words, the *Mafia* lends money to high-risk debtors at interest rates commensurate with the probability of default, rates forbidden by law despite the obvious needs of the market; and as for fraudulent bankruptcy, the whole concept of bankruptcy is *itself* a fraud and a theft by which the State cancels the legitimate indebtedness of the debtor at the expense of the creditor. Indeed the principal criminal actions of the *Mafia* used to justify the Nixon war on crime are crimes only because they are defined as such by the tyrannical statist who rule America. The *Cosa Nostra*--serving well its vast American market with profits estimated at \$50 billion from gambling alone--is no more sinister than Dow Chemical Company--probably less so.

What then is the real purpose of this new Crusade? Let us look at the weapons which the Feds are demanding from the Congress. Already authorized to use wiretapping, Nixon wants Congress to legalize the granting of personal immunity from prosecution for witnesses called before federal juries; the result will be to compel witnesses to testify against their will--to become informers or rot in prison. In New York where such a law is already in effect, a professor from the State University has twice been sent to jail for a term of 30 days for refusing to tell a grand jury which of his students is smoking pot.

A second weapon will be to make it a federal crime for a local policeman or public official to accept a bribe from gamblers; also, any gambling operation which involves 5 or more persons or lasts for 30 days or whose daily take exceeds \$2,000 will be a federal crime. The clear effect of these laws is to create the skeleton of a national police force reaching into every city and hamlet, every home, factory and shop in America. The ubiquitous football pool will now become a potential federal criminal conspiracy!

But even more ominous is the proposal to create a panoply of weapons to attack the property of "organized crime" through the injunctive powers of contempt and seizure (shades of Truman and the steel mills!), through "monetary fines and treble damage suits" and "the powers of a forfeiture of property". Let it be noted that none of these extraordinary powers can be limited to the *Cosa Nostra*--since no such entity exists in law. These "weapons" will apply to the persons and properties of individual citizens who will be convicted of crimes against the State. Or will anyone be safe from sudden disruption or seizure of his wealth on the ground that it is tainted as having been derived from some *Mafioso*? The President specifically cites his desire to strike "a critical blow at the organized crime conspiracy" by levying fines on their real estate corporations, treble damages against their trucking firms and banks, and seizing the liquor in their warehouses.

In case you still doubt the broader implications of the Nixon war, the President promises that if the Federal Racket Squads successfully enforce the new laws--squads composed of agents of the FBI, SEC, IRS, Post Office, Narcotics and Customs Bureaus and the Secret Service among others--"building on this experience" the Attorney General "will determine" whether "this concept of governmental partnership should be expanded (to other major problem areas) through the formation of additional squads."

We wonder who will succeed the *Mafia* as public enemy Number One? Mr. Kleindienst's "ideological criminals"?

— J. R. P.

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