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THE

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THE TASK AHEAD

The libertarian movement stands on the threshold of a notable future. In the past year, the movement was launched into the "take-off" stage of its hoped-for future growth. In the past year, libertarianism has changed from a congeries of local small "circles" into an emergent mass movement, largely among the nation's youth. The strong and militant libertarian minority broke off, or was broken off, from the conservative-statist Young Americans for Freedom, including virtually the entire YAF body from California, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Virginia. The large and growing California movement is moving toward its own organization, and is organizing its own Left/Right conference in Los Angeles at the end of February. The Pennsylvania and other ex-YAF elements have merged with the Society for Rational Individualism to form the new, many-thousand strong Society for Individual Liberty. The Student Libertarian Action Movement, several "Libertarian Alliances" and numerous organs and journals of opinion have emerged during the past year. Articles expressing or commenting on this new and vibrant trend have appeared in such mass-circulation magazines as *Playboy*, *Ramparts*, *Newsweek*, and--the latest-- *Cavalier* (March, 1970), and the accession of Karl Hess to the pure libertarian cause has had an enormous impact.

The burning question before us is: where do we go from here? How do we accelerate our growth and build upon, rather than lose, our momentum? This is a problem which all of us must think about and discuss, especially since strategy and tactics are an art rather than anything like an exact science.

It seems to me that the prime consideration is to develop the libertarian movement--the "cadre"--as such. Many libertarians spend too much of their time and energy worrying about alliances: should they ally themselves with Right or Left or whatever? A far more important task is to build our own movement, especially now that we are strong enough to do so. Only by building our own movement, after all, can we spread and develop our own notably important and striking body of ideas. Strategic and tactical alliances with other groups are all very well, but they should flow from our own strength, with the idea always uppermost that we are "using" our allies as leverage to make our own ideas more effective.

Unfortunately what has happened all too often is that libertarians have forged alliances out of weakness, and then have begun to abase themselves before those allies, whether of Right or Left, so that soon the means becomes an end in itself, and preserving the alliance, or keeping our allies happy, comes to take on more importance than the spread of our own doctrines. Let us always remember that we

should be using our allies, rather than the other way round. This means that it is fatal to stop criticizing our allies from our own principled point of view; for once we stop doing that, we begin to abase ourselves before tactical allies, and to lose sight of the point of the whole proceeding: the advancement of libertarianism. We should stop worrying about alienating our allies, and let them worry more about alienating *us*.

Furthermore, we have reached a point in history where there is little room for fruitful alliances with other *organizations*. YAF is of course impossible; but so now is SDS, which has become either orthodox Stalinist, or, as in the case of the Weathermen, politically psychotic. What has happened is that the Weathermen, finding no mass base of support anywhere, has decided that the entire American population, that is those who are not Weathermen members, are The Enemy, and therefore must be wiped out--in a despairing and crazed attempt thereby to help the liberation movements overseas. Therefore, the Weatherman leadership now exalts indiscriminate violence against any Americans, including even the abominable and psychotic murder of Sharon Tate. As a result, the Weathermen chanted "Charlie Manson power", and hailed the murder of "the pig" Sharon Tate, since in their lexicon, everyone, not simply the police, have become "pigs" who are to be "offed" (gotten rid of). There is little or nothing to be gained, at this point, from organizational alliances; what we must do, then, is to attract the myriad of unorganized individuals, on the Left or the Right, who are instinctively libertarian, and who are groping for libertarian guidance and fellowship. This, as I understand it, is part of what the February California conference is designed to do.

But if we are to concentrate on developing our own organization, then we must be able to deal with divisions among ourselves, for right now we encompass a very wide spectrum from "extreme right" to "extreme left". Unless we can find a way to "peacefully coexist" among ourselves, there is little we can do to advance our cause in the "outside" world. But this means that the width of our spectrum has to be reduced, for if our differences are too wide, we become inherently more antagonistic than harmonious, and any attempts at unity will be a phony papering-over of differences that will fail just as readily as an alliance with YAF or SDS.

What I would like to see, then, is for both the extreme right and the extreme left of our movement to move sharply toward the center--to use an odious term, toward our "mainstream". For our "anarcho-rightists": for our ex-YAFers, ex-Randians, etc. this means largely abandoning

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Phony Libertarianism

Shortly after the YAF convention last August that organization was stripped of its libertarian veneer when several hundred libertarian radicals and anarchists split away to form their own society. Now it is apparent, judging by the YAF magazine *The New Guard*, that subtle attempts at co-optation are being made to seduce the dissidents back to YAF.

Co-optation is a rare practice for the Right Wing. The Right has always preferred to bludgeon its opponents out of existence than to corrupt them with favors. After all, it is ungentlemanly for any self-righteous protector of Christian civilization to sully his reputation by flirting with the Devil.

But the latest editor of *The New Guard*, Ken Grubbs, is a decent fellow in many ways. He really thinks of himself as a libertarian and he would rather sit down and reason with the occupiers of People's Park before unleashing Ronnie Reagan to chew them up. I suspect that if it comes to a final showdown Ken Grubbs will turn his head sadly rather than stay and enjoy the massacre. And that is more than one can say about your run-of-the-mill Buckleyite.

Understanding this, we can now flip through the January, 1970 issue of *The New Guard* until we come to an editorial entitled, "YAF: a Philosophical and Political Profile". The editorial deals with the results of a "survey" designed to ascertain the philosophical/political makeup of the YAF membership. For the first time to my knowledge Objectivism has now been admitted into the "mainstream" of YAF thought. According to this mythical "survey" ten percent of the YAF membership subscribe to the Objectivism of Ayn Rand while another twelve percent adhere to the libertarianism of Ludwig von Mises. How does the rest of YAF break down? Nine percent apparently like Frank Meyer's "fusionism"; forty-eight percent thrill to the tune of Bill Buckley's "conservatism"; another fifteen percent dance to the beat of Russell Kirk's "traditionalism"; and the final six percent march in goose-like step to L. Brent Bozell's "radical traditionalism".

Even if we were to accept these figures as the results of a genuine survey it would still mean that seventy-eight percent of the YAF membership subscribe to a pro-administration, pro-status quo position ranging the Right Wing gamut from Frank Meyer to Brent Bozell (Bozell, by the way, recommends a church-state reverence for a Christian past with Roman Catholicism offered as the "path to our salvation" while Russell Kirk relies upon "moral prescriptions from our ancestors" and an "aristocracy based upon vocational, artistic and intellectual excellence.").

But even Objectivism these days is no guarantee of libertarian principles. Jeffrey St. John is an Objectivist and he continually makes the rounds tooting his horn for the destruction of "international communism" and the suppression of dissidents at home. In short he is a conservative, as Ayn Rand herself has become a *selfish* conservative, adding a dash of atheism to the Right Wing brew which is only now becoming fully assimilated into it.

All this is nothing more than a prelude to the *piece de resistance* of the January issue, an article entitled "The Theatre of the 'Conspiracy'", authored by the Hippie Hatcher Man of the New Right, Phillip Abbott Luce.

What is one to make of Luce?

What is one to make of anyone who exchanges one brand of fascism for another and, hypocritically enough, tries to label his new position *libertarianism*? The very word, *libertarian*, is shortened to four letters in the mouth of someone like Luce. It is easier to respect the raw, open, undisguised hatred of Strom Thurmond than the same Right Wing line when it is deliberately concealed by long hair, aromatic weed, and New Left cultural jargon.

Luce begins his article by describing the Conspiracy Trial in Chicago as a "legal happening". He then goes on to excoriate the defendants for their "overt refusal... to cater to the generally accepted etiquette of courtroom procedure."

He continues:

"The defendants have made it abundantly clear from the time of their indictments that they consider the trial a crock. One of the defendants, Tom Hayden of SDS infamy, has written, 'Since the trial has sparked widespread international concern, the Conspiracy hopes to turn it into a political showdown.'"

"From the outset, the eight defendants have attempted to make a mockery of the trial."

". . . Judge Hoffman is in a most unenviable position of having to attempt to act as a responsible and reasonable judge over a group of incorrigible media-oriented inditees. What indeed is a judge, conditioned to sane trials, to do when a defendant keeps shouting 'You fascist dog! You fascist pig!'"

". . . to the Conspiracy the whole thing is a revolutionary game to be played on their terms or not at all."

"The defendants have done everything possible to turn their trial into a stage show."

"Bobby Seale had the dubious distinction of being the most outrageous of the defendants . . . He was aiming for publicity and possible martyrdom. His outbursts gained him both when the judge was forced to bind and gag him lest he continue to disrupt the trial."

"Judge Hoffman was ultimately forced to sentence Seale to four years in prison for contempt of court."

In the course of his despicable diatribe Luce refers to himself as a "civil libertarian" and even hints that he is a "radical".

He is, of course, nothing of the sort. It would be too easy to dissect his analysis of the trial (part of which was originally published in *National Review*) and show him up for what he really is, but his own words condemn him more effectively than anyone else's possible could.

Can any libertarian doubt that the Chicago trial is a political act staged by the federal government to make an example of some of the leading dissidents in the country?

How can any libertarian condemn the defendants for refusing to play according to the rules established by their executioners?

If the trial is not a mockery of justice, then what is it? And if it is a mockery, how can a libertarian fault the victims for treating it as such?

How can any judge be forced to sentence anyone to four years for contempt of court--unless by the political authorities?

How can any libertarian criticize Seale for demanding his moral right to defend himself? And how can any libertarian regard such a demand as contempt of court deserving of punishment?

How can anyone of even the slightest libertarian persuasion portray Judge Hoffman in the role of a reluctant victim of circumstances--a man who has shown nothing but contempt for the defendants and their attorneys from the start, mispronouncing their names and upholding every objection raised to every point they have tried to make in their own behalf?

No, Phillip Abbott Luce is not a libertarian. Nor is he a radical. With his long hair and hippie demeanor he is an effective weapon for the New Right in its attempts to co-opt the libertarian Right and in its desire to cloak its authoritarian nature with a facade of superficial libertarianism.

Whatever the reasons, he has allowed himself to be used as bait by the Buckley establishment. When they tire of his services they will cut him off. Perhaps, then, he can head up the Libertarian Wing of the American Nazi Party or go

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OUR TASK — (Continued from page 1)

totally their vestigial devotion to the American State: toward our Constitution, our foreign policy, our army, and our police. We must hold as our foremost objective the abolition of that State. For our anarcho-leftists this means abandoning the capricious urge for immediate "action" against that State, regardless of its certain failure, and the tendency to abandon free-market and individualist principles for the sake of unity with a powerless and trivial handful of communist-anarchists. Both extreme groups should prepare themselves to settle down, calmly and soberly but with cool and passionate dedication, to a thoughtful and protracted lifelong struggle for liberty and against the State. But this means that we must try to build a permanent movement, and that we try to develop lifetime careers that would enable each one of us to maximize our influence on behalf of liberty. And this means abandoning the "now generation's" heedless and hedonic emphasis on the immediate present moment, and instead returning to the old-fashioned "Protestant ethic" emphasis on building steadily and rationally toward the longer future. We must try our best to become, as much as possible, "professional libertarians", that is, people with lifelong careers in the service of libertarianism.

One important form of struggle which tends to be scorned by both of our extremes is simple, orthodox political action. This kind of working for political candidates is surely unglamorous, but it is often important for itself--in keeping a far "greater evil" out of office on behalf of a decidedly "lesser evil"--and also in reaching vast numbers of middle-class citizens who cannot be reached in any other way. We would like to abolish these various political offices, but so long as these offices exist, and the State offers us a choice, however puny, we often can influence our fate in an important way by deciding between them. And while, in the ultimate sense, we oppose both candidates, there are often times when one is far worse than the other; if, for example, we were faced with a choice between Richard Cobden or Genghis Khan for President, we would surely plunge into the Cobdenite movement with enthusiasm, despite Cobden's falling a bit short of the pure anarchist position. But what we should then do would not be to bury our own identify within that movement, but rather continually propagandize within it for a more pure and consistent libertarian viewpoint. Such is the proper role of an ideological alliance.

What the movement needs more of, in short, is what the country as a whole needs more of nowadays: the tempering of the immediate, hot-headed, irrational passions of the moment into a sober, rational, farseeing, dedicated, protracted struggle toward a libertarian future.

PHONY LIBERTARIANISM — (Continued from page 2)

scuttling back to Progressive Labor.

What genuine libertarianism has to offer is *consistent* and *persistent* opposition to the policies of the U. S. government. Anything less gives libertarianism a bad name.

— Jerome Tuccille

Recommended Reading

- James M. Buchanan, *Cost and Choice* (Chicago: Markham Pub. Co., 1969). A prominent Chicago School economist goes a long way toward adopting the Austrian theory of individualist, subjective value economics. Brief and non-mathematical, the book adopts the Mises-Hayek theory of costs.
- Jane Jacobs, *The Economy of Cities* (New York: Random House, \$5.95). Brilliant, scintillating work celebrating the primacy for economic development, past and present, of free-market cities. Also see the appreciative review by Richard Sennett, "The Anarchism of Jane Jacobs", *New York Review of Books* (January 1, 1970).
- James O'Connor, "The Fiscal Crisis of the State: Part I", *Socialist Revolution* (January-February, 1970), 42 pp. (Available for \$1.50 from Agenda Publishing Co., 1445 Stockton St., San Francisco, Calif. 94133). Analysis of current statism by a young Marxist economist who understands that the struggle to control and use the State is the current form of the "class struggle".
- Joseph Pechman, "The Rich, the Poor, and the Taxes They Pay", *The Public Interest* (Fall, 1969), 22 pp. (Available for \$1.50 at 404 Park Ave. So., New York, N. Y. 10016.) How the poor, rather than the rich, pay the taxes for the modern American welfare state.
- John M. Peterson and Charles T. Stewart, Jr., *Employment Effects of Minimum Wage Rates* (Washington, D. C.: American Enterprise Institute, August, 1969), 165 pp. (Available for \$2.00 from the American Enterprise Institute, 1200 17th St. N. W., Washington, D. C. 20036.) The most thorough, up-to-date study on the extent to which minimum wage rates have caused unemployment.

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