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Perot and Perotphobia

by Murray N. Rothbard

There has not been such a phenomenon in America in my lifetime: the tremendous outpouring, across the country, across ideologies and parties, and across the occupational spectrum; an outpouring of enthusiasm, of clamor, for H. Ross Perot for President. Of course the ground was prepared by the accelerating disgust and hatred of Washington and of the major party establishments: of George Bush and the Republicans, of the Democratic Congress, and of the sneering and biased media elites that have for decades cynically manipulated public opinion on behalf of the bipartisan Establishment.

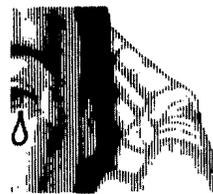
During the nineteenth century, the political parties functioned as ideological vehicles as well as routes to power and patronage; parties stood for firm core ideologies, and they both educated their members and were kept in line by those members if their leaders were tempted to waffle for short-term advantage. And it was precisely because the political parties stood for principles and ideologies that they commanded the seemingly blind loyalty of families of voters. Since 1896, parties have been in precipitate decline as ideological vehicles; so that while in the nineteenth century, the idea of "yellow dog Democrats" voting Democrat (or Republican) regardless of who's on the ticket, of voting for the "party of my granddaddy,"

made a great deal of sense, it can only seem ludicrous in our own day. Ludicrous precisely because parties increasingly stand for nothing. This deplorable fact has been all the more true since the McGovern-era "reforms" that gutted the very existence of the party entity, and since the TV age brought personalities to the fore. In recent years, as a result, party "loyalty" has been virtually non-existent.

In this climate, the average voter, not being able to rely on ideological parties, can only fall back on one judgment: his or her assessment of the character, of the values, the ethics, the strength of will, of the candidate, especially for the most important office of President.

Disgust and anger at Washington, at the gridlock, the mounting taxes, the enormous deficit, the steadily declining standard of living, the fact that the entire mess obviously *doesn't work*, has been compounded by the two turkeys leading the major parties: the weak, fumbling President, unable to construct

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THE EAR

by Sarah Barton

Roy Childs, RIP

Ever since I started my column, people have asked me: How in the world do you know so very much—about the Kochtopus, the Crane Machine, and all other parts of the libertarian movement? Who the Hell is your mole? Who is your Deep Throat?

Woodward & Bernstein say that they will reveal their Deep Throat when he dies; before that, they are pledged to keep mum. Death releases all bonds. So I too am now free to reveal my Big Source, my own Deep Throat: the late, great Roy A. Childs, Jr.

Roy has just died, at the age of 44, weight 477 pounds, in a hospital, after spending six weeks at the Pritikin Center at

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(Perot . . . cont. from P.1)

a coherent sentence, changing his mind on almost everything by the hour as he anxiously searches for political reactions; and his slick, evasive, babbling opponent, yoked in an evidently political "contract" (rather than marriage) to a sinister ultra-feminist Lady Macbeth. For both candidates, the "negatives" pile up every time they make an appearance or open their mouths.

This odious miasma formed the necessary conditions for the Perot phenomenon. But it also needed a spark to light the prairie fire: the appearance of Ross Perot himself. A self-made billionaire, Perot shines forth on television, and even more in person, as a highly able, can-do, honest, authentic, *real* person, who can talk sense rather than parrot poll-driven euphemisms. What a pleasure! And so the very real charisma of Ross Perot, a shining light in the bog of the American political scene.

The Perot phenomenon has terrified not only the political elites in both parties, but the intellectual and media elites as well. And for good reason: because when and if Perot becomes President, this whole parasitic crew of Beltway pundits, like vast chunks of the swollen Washington bureaucracy, may well find themselves out of a job, with no role to play in a Perot America.

The big attack on Perot is that he has not "been specific on the issues"—that is, that he has not set forth lengthy position papers on all the accepted "issues." Perot's reply to that charge was

magnificent and to the point: "The American people don't care about the candidate's stands on every issue. They care about his principles." Yes! And that's not simply because, as the smug elites would have it, the average person hasn't the patience or the brains to wade through all the policy papers. For the critical fact is that the instincts of the average person are absolutely correct.

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For two reasons: (1) because the various position papers, which only Beltway policy wonks care about, don't mean a damn anyway. They are all trivial nuanced changes in a quintessentially rotten system: tinkering with marginal 2 percent increases here, and 1 percent cuts there, simply shifting deck chairs on the *Titanic*, interesting only to those chair sitters who get to improve or lessen their positioning in the hierarchy on the *Titanic* deck.

What is needed is not marginal adjustments but radical change in the system, and such radical change cannot come from 85-page position papers, but out of the principles and purposes of the leader—the President (if he is, indeed, a leader.) And (2) the people's instincts are right because they have seen that all politicians repudiate their position papers anyway ("Read my lips!"), especially because their positions are not heartfelt but only driven by the poll of the moment. And, if so, there is no assurance that the President's position next month will be in any way similar to his view today. So that: the only thing for the public to rely on is their intuition about the basic character, principles, ethics, of the candidate. And for that perception (in contrast to judging 40-point nuanced position papers) the general public is probably better qualified than the pundit or policy wonk inside the Beltway.

And so, the American public, in particular the vast middle class, they who have been ripped off by the existing system that benefits the elites and the underclass at their expense, appalled at the state of America and the rotten state of its political "leadership", have clasped Ross Perot to their bosom. Hungry for leadership, they sense in Ross Perot an authentic person and a leader equipped to bring us out of the wilderness.

And speaking of leadership, there is a neglected point about Ross Perot's phenomenal ascent in the polls: that while he was doing extraordinarily well

before that, his unprecedented skyrocket to the lead coincided with the LA race riots and their aftermath. Addled by decades of induced guilt and left-media brainwashing, the voting masses had no clear response to the horror of the May Days. But one thing they did know: it was up to the President to provide some kind of clear, decisive leadership. But what did they get from Bush? Inarticulate fumbling. What did they get from Slick Willie? Ditto. How did Perot respond? Brilliantly. All Perot said was: "If I had been President, I wouldn't have sat around doing nothing like Bush. I would have gone straight to LA., straight to the scene of the riots, and seen, heard, and felt myself what was going on. Then I could know what to do." This response rings true; for it is the same as that of several businessmen I know—the true response of the entrepreneur: who insists on immersing himself in any situation, so he can figure out what to do. We cannot know if Ross Perot as President will make the right decisions in the crises he will face; but we do know that these decisions will be authentically his own, not packaged and processed for him by pollsters and handlers. We know he will be an authentic president. What more can we hope for?

A good friend of mine, interested in Perot but skeptical, recently attended a mighty rally for the little Texan in Washington, D.C. That rally was his conversion experience; he is now for Perot all the way. He notes that true qualities of leadership emanated from Perot: his

walk, his style, his delivery. He marveled at the ideological cross-section in the audience: from Right to Left. But there was one common ground among all the people in that enthusiastic gathering. All these Washingtonians were *real* people, real Americans, middle class, small business people, entrepreneurial types, and not one blow-dried, yuppie, policy wonk in the lot. "Murray," he said excitedly, "it's like the John Doe Clubs in *Meet John Doe*, the great Frank Capra movie with Gary Cooper." This was the old America, the Old Republic, which still survives, which still persists amidst the rubble that the dominant culture and the dominant political system have foisted upon us.

Consider the contrast of Ross Perot, as exemplar of the Old America, to the cynical and rotten elites in their moral and esthetic views. Perot's denunciation of his Navy colleagues as immoral brawlers, his insistence on moral behavior among his close colleagues and employees have all brought down unbelieving denunciations of "prude" from the shocked elites. Liberal elites sneer because Norman Rockwell is Perot's favorite painter. Well, tough. Norman Rockwell was not Velasquez; but he was a sturdy American in the great classical realist tradition, the only tradition of art that both makes sense and ennoble mankind. Better Rockwell than Picasso or Pollock or Mapplethorpe: any day in the week! Norman Rockwell embodied the Old America, and Perot's

audience are truly "Rockwellian." Perhaps this is the last stand of the old Rockwellian America: the last chance to take the country back—one of the key slogans, not coincidentally, of the Perot campaign.

Perotphobia

In was inevitable that the Establishment elites, they who always prattle about "democracy" but hate any real political participation by the public, would react with horror and hatred to the Perot phenomenon. For their very rule is threatened. And it was also inevitable that they would bring

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out their arsenal of smear, of "defining," of hysterical attacks. And sure enough: leading the parade were the usual suspects, the same Social Democrat smearbund that defiled Pat Buchanan, and, interestingly enough, in much the same terms. As in the case

of anyone emerging as a popular leader who threatens to mount an assault upon the corrupt and entrenched Establishment, Perot has been hit—and by the same people—with the usual Social Democrat charges: dark references to Hitler, Mussolini, the 1930's et al. "Hitler" was mentioned by neocon George Will, by the malignant neocon shrink Charles Krauthammer, and strongly hinted at by the *New Republic* smear artist Sidney Blumenthal. Once again, in the Social Democrat manner, any populist with mass support who is not a Marxist (such as Lenin or Castro), is automatically dubbed a fascist or a Nazi. One would hope that after the 200th time such nonsense has been slung, that the smears would cease having any effect. After all: how many non-existent Mussolinis, Francos, or Hitlers can be uncovered by these clowns within a year and have anyone listen seriously? Fortunately, it seems that the public has been immunized to the smears, precisely because of their deep and healthy distrust of the viciously biased liberal media; the more they smear Ross Perot in their hysteria and desperation, the more the voting American public will embrace him.

It is surely no coincidence that the June 15 issues of both the *Nation*, the organ of Left Social Democracy, and the *New Republic*, the voice of Right Social Democracy (i.e. neocons), are almost exclusively devoted to heaping mud on Perot, a sort of anti-Perot festival.

In the *Nation*, unreconstructed

Brit Stalinist Alexander Cockburn denounces Perot as having a "militarist-corporatist" ideological outlook, "reminiscent of Italian Fascism in the interwar period." But Cockburn's evidence for this grave charge rests on only two points; first, is the "heavy presence of former military officers in his senior echelons" of Perot's corporations. Well, Perot himself graduated from the naval Academy, and what's wrong with former officers? Presumably, they are hard-working and self-disciplined, admirable qualities in a corporate environment. Apparently the Leninist Cockburn is deliberately confusing "military" with "militarist."

The other alleged evidence is also the only support for the conservative complaint that Perot favors "gun control." Perot's view of how to conduct the war on drugs: for the police to cordon off inner city neighborhoods (in his home town of Dallas, and presumably elsewhere), and sweep through them, confiscating drugs and guns, the idea being that criminals should not be allowed to possess guns. Well, it's true that Perot does not have the proper libertarian view of the war on drugs (i.e., shut it down), but then again, who does? Once again, Perot is not running against Mr. Perfect in November; his two real opponents, Bush and Clinton, are all for that war, too. And why *should* criminals own guns?

Cockburn raises another fascinating charge against Perot, a charge that also forms the centerpiece of Sidney Blumenthal's smear in the *New*

Republic: That Perot is "paranoid", believing in "conspiracy theories" of history. We have already detailed in these pages how "paranoia" is the preferred smear charge by the Establishment against those who would expose its machinations and concerted actions against the persons and pocketbooks of the rest of society. The fact that Perot is willing at least to listen to "conspiracy" analyses by both the "extreme Right" and the "extreme Left"—i.e. two groups that are not blinded by worship of the current "consensus"—marks Perot as admirably reality-based, as any genuine entrepreneur has to be.

Another great thing about Perot's "militarism" is that it is private, i.e. admirably paleo-libertarian. Let's never forget the heroic private rescue operation of Perot's employee-hostages in Iran, and its stark contrast to the expensive and ludicrous failure of Carter's governmental rescue mission.

Cockburn's attack on Perot's "conspiracy" analyses reflects his bitter-end attacks on leftists who support Kennedy Assassination Revisionism. From Cockburn's Stalinist point of view, the Oliver Stone-type left assassination theories are gravely politically incorrect, because they imply that *some* parts of America (CIA, LBJ, etc.) are considerably more evil than other parts (e.g. Kennedy)—whereas, in Cockburn's outlook, *all* political factions, groups, and leaders are *equally* evil, because they are all allegedly reflections of "late capitalism."

Ronnie Dugger's attack on Perot in the *Nation* is more

revealing of himself than of his target. A long-time Texas leftist and alleged "populist," Dugger waxes hysterical on the alleged dangers of Perot's marvelous and radically innovative idea of direct democracy and "electronic town meetings," such as allowing people to vote on issues through "interactive" TV. It is truly remarkable that an alleged populist should complain that "Perot's electronic town hall could replace American representative democracy with the rule by the The Leader, and a series of momentary mobs." The point is that, in our age of high-tech, there is no excuse whatever to continue "representative democracy," now that direct democracy has become feasible. President Perot could present alternatives to the TV public, they could vote, and then Congress could pass the detailed legislation—and woe be unto them if they would defy the basic popular will!

Dugger grudgingly admits that he likes some of Perot's positions: that elections be held on weekends; that bureaucrats' privileges be pared down; that former government officials be prohibited from lobbying for foreign governments; that public school teachers be tested for competence. But he reacts in horror to Perot's magnificent proposal for a constitutional amendment that Congress not be able to raise taxes unless that increase is approved in a national public referendum. Magnificent; wondrously paleo-libertarian; and, above all, a lot better than the phony balanced budget amendment that is now the darling of both parties in Congress.

Dugger is also horrified that all of Perot's businesses have been non-union. Great! Of course, what this means under our current system is that the working conditions in Perot's companies have been such that the workers don't want unions to come in and muck things up. This is supposed to be a *problem*?

Dugger's main charge is the standard reaction by all Perot's opponents, especially the two major parties: that he is "buying the Presidency." This complaint will be dealt with below.

Veteran leftist Robert Fitch weighs in, in the *Nation*, with the gripe that Perot made his billions from government contracts. But this means that he saved the taxpayers money by efficiently privatizing the computerization of state Medicare and Medicaid claims. What's wrong with *that*?

The centerpiece of the *New Republic* issue is the lengthy smear by Sidney Blumenthal, "Perotnoia." The "paranoia," conspiracy theorist, "paramilitary" themes are lovingly parsed, Perot's high moral standards are sneered at, and the Fitch "welfare billionaire" theme is repeated. As in the case of Pat Buchanan, Blumenthal provides a virtual compendium of smears of his target. Blumenthal goes so far as to justify the Ayatollah's seizure of Perot's employees on the bizarre grounds that "EDS (Electronic Data Services) had refused to fulfill its obligations to the Iranian social security administration, and the hostages were held for a ransom equal to the amount stipulated in the broken contract." Blumenthal

even echoes the claim of the Ayatollah's forces that "the escape was arranged by the simple bribery of jail guards." Well, gee Sidney, if you're ever held hostage by a fanatical regime, we'll make sure not to bribe any guards to get *you* free.

And of course, Sidney is incensed by the "populist demagoguery" and big money of Perot and innovation of direct democracy. The electronic town halls would "in effect supplant Congress as the deliberative body." Well, tough, Sidney; it is the spectacle of that very "deliberative body," its petty despotism and its gridlock, that has driven Americans to consider this radical populist solution. It is almost obscene, furthermore, for Social Democrat Blumenthal to grouse about the abolition of "the Madisonian system" and "the concentration of power the Framers warned against." Imagine invoking the Framers, all of whom, even the scalawag Madison and the evil nationalist Hamilton, are spinning in their graves at the despotic, Social Democratic mess their system has degenerated into! And, of course, the anti-Federalists, and the Jeffersonians and Calhounians, are only saying "I told you so." No, the "Madisonian system" hasn't worked, was indeed fatally flawed from the very beginning, and needs to be tossed aside and replaced. Radically replaced, not tinkered with.

Blumenthal winds up, of course, with the hint of Hitler; he likens Perot to "another tradition, that of the eccentric self-made millionaire... Henry Ford." "Like Ford," Sidney

goes on, Perot "is a crusader with a confusion of conspiracies swirling around in his head." Well, Ford was definitely a self-made business genius, and he was an anti-war crusader, but he was not an

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"authoritarian corporatist". Ford did believe in funny-money schemes and he did sponsor a series critical of *The International Jew*. In a grotesque form of guilt-by-association, in other words, Blumenthal is implying that Perot is anti-Semitic simply because he, like Ford, is a self-made businessman and because he believes in *some* forms of "conspiracy analysis."

Grounding himself on this jerry-built structure, Blumenthal concludes that Perot "is really an archetype from the 1920's, playing on Coolidge-era values to advance his authoritarian corporatism, which evokes the 1930s." Thus, "Coolidge-era values"—presumably hard

work, thrift, respect for private property—are not-too-subtly transmuted by the alchemist Blumenthal into "authoritarian corporatism" and the "1930s," i.e. fascism. What: no mention of Hitler?

It is too bad that we live in an America so corrupt that Blumenthal and the *New Republic* are allowed to get away with this swill, with this systematic bearing of false witness against their political opponents. No: as a libertarian, I am *not* calling for government censorship, but for a social climate in which this sort of malicious mud-slinging would not be permitted. My old friend Frank Meyer used to call for the public horsewhipping of this sort of people; at the time, I thought he was being quixotically aristocratic. Now, I'm not so sure.

In contrast to Blumenthal's exercise in character assassination, John B. Judis's "The Executive" in the *New Republic* is almost favorable. Judis has long been one of the most intelligent and certainly the fairest of left-liberal social critics; and his fair shake to Perot is also enhanced by his agreeing with Perot's seeming friendliness toward tariffs or industrial policy. But in contrast to Blumenthal, who puts down Perot's differences with GM as grouching about not getting his own way, Judis points out that Perot's main complaint against GM and American industry is not the evils of Japan but the top-heavy bureaucratic torpor and arrogance of American corporate managerial class. He notes Perot's indictment: "Right now, when I look at my coun-

try, I feel like I'm looking at General Motors" during the mid-1980's. Perot charges that American CEO's are captured by process, not results: "You don't get to be chairman of the board by building the best car, the best television set, or the best stereo," charges Perot perceptively. "You get to be chairman of the board by being good at running overhead projectors and making staff reports." Judis discerningly concludes that Americans are enchanted with Perot, not so much for his heroic rescue, but because they see in him "an industrial genius, who, in his words, will 'have that car jacked up, the engine out of it, and be working on it and get it back on the road!'" In short: Problem-solving, action, leadership.

We need not be kept in suspense to figure out the *New Republic's* own stance: its editorial, "The Tempter," makes all too clear that this rag takes its stand with Blumenthal's Perot-phobia rather than with the balanced view of John Judis. As the Social Democrats did with Buchanan, NR links Perot's alleged "neo-protectionism," with, oh so terrible, his alleged "instinctive, and largely extemporized, isolationism," which "would gravely harm this country's interests." It would be nice if, some time, the isolationophobes would tell us exactly *whose* interests they mean when they use the camouflage collective term "country." Certainly, *my* interests would not be harmed by an isolationist foreign policy, and I dare say this would be true of most Americans. There are some

special interests, of course, who would be hurt by the abandonment of the interventionist foreign policy that has been conducted for nearly a century at our expense: e.g. the interests of export firms, of the bankers who finance them, and of the bankers who invest in foreign government bonds.

The *New Republic* then rings the changes: attacking the electronic town hall, and accusing Perot of being "personally vicious, self-obsessed and verging on a paranoid," a man whose "conspiratorial zeal reminds us of a cross between Oliver North and Oliver Stone." Oliverism! Sounds better and better! The *New Republic* reveals its true complaint when it charges that Perot believes that what he thinks is true ("certainty about his own rightness")—that's in contrast to the humble folk at the *New Republic*? The problem, says the *NR*, is that a president must not only *act*, he must also engage "in a dialogue with a plurality of interests, voices, and impulses." The terrible thing, wails the *NR*, is that Perot doesn't seem to understand this "context," which is *political*. But this "pluralist dialogue," this sort of *politics*, is precisely what has brought us to the present gridlock, the present statist mess. The entire Perot mass movement is a reaction against our "political context," and precisely a call for a leader, for a President who will refuse to be a creature of the plurality of special interests and pressure groups that are destroying our country. The *New Republic*, and the neocon pressure group that it represents,

embody the very problem that we are suffering from; it is part of the problem, not part of the solution. Only a charismatic President can break the gridlock, can act, can sweep away the parasitic elites and special interest groups that are crippling America and bringing it down. A Perotian America is not an America in which the *New Republic* and its ilk would flourish. hence the hatred and the desperation.

And this brings us to the common charge that Ross Perot is "trying to buy the Presidency." The charge is not going to work, because to the mass of Perotvians, *that* is Ross Perot's glory: as a self-made billionaire,

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as the creator of a new third-ticket, H. Ross Perot *is not beholden*. He is his own man. Americans do not complain; they are happy about the fact that Perot is spending his own money. He is not beholden to

the money of the special interest groups, the PACs, or Hollywood. As an independent, he is not beholden to the political machines of either major party. In contrast to all other politicians, he is his own man, and he is free: free to make his own decisions, to appoint whomever he believes are the best advisers and officials, to make his own way and his own mistakes. To use a Hegelian phrase, his vast wealth, and his independent campaign, allows Perot to transcend the realm of necessity and to enter the realm of freedom. And regardless of the mistakes he may make, Americans can only be the gainers.

And a point of particular interest to libertarians: in contrast to Democrats and Republicans, he is using all of his own money, and none of ours. Left-liberals glorify the pernicious system of matching funds, in which taxpayers are forced to contribute to political parties and candidates they may abhor. The Libertarian Party has long had an internal debate about matching funds: should a party devoted to libertarian principle accept matching funds? The tactical problem is complex, but I always stood with the "purists," that whatever monetary advantage would accrue would be more than offset by the LP's blatant violation of its own principles. This year, the Marrou campaign decided to go after matching funds, but it was too incompetent to qualify. But think of it: Ross Perot, by spending his own money, is fulfilling the libertarian principle of not relying on the taxpayers, a principle

that the LP itself has abandoned. Ross Perot is not only not beholden to special interest groups; he is financing his campaign without imposing upon the taxpayers.

A final word about the LP, now rapidly self-destructing. Apart from its various peccadilloes and craziness, which we have detailed in these pages, the entire LP can now be seen as founded on a strategic flaw: that, when, at some point, the people get fed up with politics or with Washington, they will turn to the LP. In 1980, the first wave of anti-government sentiment, they didn't do so; instead, the anti-government sentiment was siphoned off by the rhetoric of Ronald Reagan and by the existence of the Anderson third ticket. The handlers of the Clark campaign in 1980 grouched that "if not for Anderson," the LP would have gotten millions of votes. And now, in the current, even stronger wave of anti-government sentiment, the people are turning, not to the LP, but to other, better known populist instruments: in turn, David Duke, Pat Buchanan, Jerry Brown, and most of all, Ross Perot. So, instead of knocking Perot, et al., the more thoughtful LPers should ask themselves: why should it ever be different? Why should America *ever* turn to a crazy little party with weird positions on a multitude of subjects? It is high time for thoughtful Libertarians to rethink their basic strategy, to leave or scrap the LP, and to become part of real-world coalitions for meaningful, populist social change. ■

Anarchists in Poland

by M.N.R.

Received in the mail: a mimeographed "News from Poland," the "world bulletin" of the Anarchist Federation [FA]. FA is apparently a coalition of "libertarians" or anarcho-capitalists, anarcho-syndicalists, and "eco-anarchists." What could such seemingly clashing groups possibly unite on? Apparently, many Polish libertarians are at least as mixed up and Left-oriented as Libertarians here at home. What do they unite on? Apart from a few such sensible causes as anti-tax, and anti-coerced social insurance, the litany is all too familiar: counter-culture, "freedom of drugs," "freedom of sex/perversions/pornography," "the philosophy, fantasy/science fiction," "punk/hard core music," "punk/hard core zine," animal rights, feminism, vegetarianism, pacifism, mysticism, "transvanguard," "anarcho-artistic activities," and "psychic release and alternative ways of life."

The one hopeful note in this Libertarians from Hell movement is that the major enemy of the FA is the heroic and flamboyant leader of genuine libertarianism, shall we say paleo-libertarianism? in Poland, Janusz Korwin-Mikke. Korwin-Mikke, the head of the UPR, which the FA refers to variously as the "liberal-conservative" and the "conservative" party, took two actions that enraged the Left-libertarians. First, he called for the dismissal of the Environmental Minister, Stefan

Koslowski, because the latter asked the court to grant amnesty for violence committed by the FA in its campaign to stop a dam from being built in southern Poland. Second, and even more charmingly, Korwin-Mikke reacted strongly against an "ecological" campaign to picket fur shops, so as to persuade people not to use "natural animal furs." This "ecological movement" is dubbed the "Community of All Beings." Korwin-Mikke's response: to launch a "competitive" pro-fur campaign. Hooray: let's hear it for the Polish UPR! ■

Mr. First Nighter

by M.N.R.

Hear My Song

A wondrous, exuberant, very funny, and heartwarming movie by the best new director in many a moon, Peter Chelsom, who also co-wrote the screenplay. A richly-textured show-business film set among Irish immigrants in England (presumably in Liverpool) and in Ireland, *Hear My Song* is the story, based in fact, of the return to England of the legendary Irish tenor, Josef Locke, who had had to flee the tax collectors twenty-five years before. Marvelously directed with a light and sure touch, the movie provides the best-ever portrayal of Irish rural life and hi-jinks. The sound-track too, is filled with wonderful Irish jazz. Ned Beatty displays surprising ability