

and conflicting tribes. The rule by the hated American Negro minority was kept in place by the United States and by the Firestone Rubber Company. Only in the early 1980s did the black African tribes finally overthrow the hated rule of the American Negro elite, and Liberia has been a chaotic mess ever since.

The other possible plan was proposed by the Communist Party during its militantly radical period of the 1920s, before the Communist line got permanently corrupted into left-liberalism by the Popular Front era of the mid-1930s. This was the idea of the Black Nation, a separate black republic to be carved out of U.S. territory. The plan was to turn over the original slave plantations—the “Black Belt”—to the slaves or their descendants. Even by the 1920s, however, it was too late and too long after slavery for that plan to have any viability, or for the slaves and their old plantations to have any hope of being correctly matched. A modern, updated version of the Black Nation idea, however, has more plausibility. This plan would be to turn over to a new black nation all areas within the U.S. that now have a black majority: Harlem, Watts, East St. Louis, Detroit, Washington D.C., etc. Washington would be my preferred capital for the new black nation—to be called AfroAmerica?

This plan would have several supreme virtues. In the first place, it would set the American blacks free at last, free from what they see as white racism and what many whites see as parasitism over the white populace (through crime or welfare payments). Independent at long last, liberated from what they see as the institutional-

ized legacy of slavery, the blacks would finally be free to find their own level. It would indeed be a pleasure to see President Jesse Jackson holding forth from the Black (?) House. And secondly, the plan would have the even greater virtue of busting up the swollen U.S. imperium from within. Radical decentralization, the promise of the Tenth Amendment, genuine multiculturalism, would at last be secured. A precedent would then be set for another, Hispanic devolution, in which all the Spanish-speaking areas would at last achieve their own nation. *La Raza* liberated at last! Instead of desperately trying to expand the census counts of blacks or Hispanics, instead of gerrymandering districts to try to force-feed more Hispanic representatives, all could be represented in their own *Nueva Espana*. Yes! if Latvia deserves its own nation, if Slovenia should at long last be free of external conquerors, why not San Antonio or the South Bronx? What a vision! And Poppy can then preside over what's left of the American imperium from his redoubt at Kennebunkport. ●

“Tolerance,” Or Manners?

by M.N.R.

Like ladies' hemlines, there are changing fashions in libertarian writing. Libertarians, who pride themselves as individualists, are all too often lemmings following the latest trend. The very latest trend among libertarians is to write vehemently, indeed “intolerantly,” about the importance of tolerance, and how much they grrr, *hate* “intolerant people.” Every manjack

and his brother is denouncing “intolerance” these days, along with a lot of gaseous pseudo-philosophic hokum about the relationship between one's ideas and one's “tolerance” toward the ideas of others.

There is a curious anomaly here that has gone unnoticed. One of the things that strikes a person who first encounters Modal Libertarians is their surpassing rudeness, their overwhelming boorishness, their total lack of manners. It is libertarians, and only libertarians, who will call you up, as a perfect stranger, and proceed to denounce you for various deviations, or for alleged contradictions on page 851. It is only libertarians who, learning a few syllogisms about liberty, and having read next to nothing, consider themselves perfectly qualified to harangue learned men on their alleged errors. It is only libertarians who conclude, simply by virtue of announcing themselves as libertarians, that your house is their house and your possessions their possessions: an implicit assumption of communism of libertarian possessions. And oddly enough, or maybe not so oddly, the very people who are bleating most loudly against “intolerance” are some of the worst offenders. The “philosophy” is really a smoke-screen, for the real problem is decent manners and their lack of them; and when some of us react against those boors, we are of course denounced for being “intolerant.” The ill-mannered wish to ride roughshod over the rest of us, and then howl about “intolerance” whenever we decide to resist. Note the typical Modal ploy: shifting the focus of attention from manners and behavior to abstruse discussions of philosophy. This

move enables them to focus on the charge that we are intolerant of their "ideas," that we are betraying our responsibility of engaging in continuing dialogue or "conversation" about ideas, when the real problem is them; their boorish "aggression" and lack of manners.

Manners are vital to the quality of life; civility is a crucial requirement of civilization. It softens edges, and makes social life worth living. Note that I am not calling for the punctilio of a seventeenth-century Spanish grandee: just ordinary decent behavior. But that is what is so sorely lacking. Much of the current wave of Political Correctness is a crazed attempt to continue and to justify swinish behavior, while trying to substitute a host of formal rules for decent politeness. But these formal rules are the reverse of manners, for they are used as clubs to impose one's will on others, all in the name of "sensitivity."

Thus, suppose that someone is talking or speaking, either at a gathering or a formal lecture, and happens to refer to Ms. X as a "distinguished actress." The feminist language police are then apt to appear, shouting out that "actress" is an "insensitive" and sexist word and that the speaker must use the gender-neutral term "actor" (or who knows, maybe next it will be "actperson."). Here is a typical case where, in the name of imposing "sensitivity," the thought police are deliberately taking over in a power play, cowing the speaker through smears when everyone knows he was simply using standard terminology, and being unbearably rude and barbaric in the course of that takeover.

The thought police have only one virtue; clarity. At least you know

what side they are on. But how about our "anti-intolerance" Modals? What would they have to say here? Would they condemn the feminists for being "intolerant"? Or would they condemn us for being "intolerant" of the thought police? Or maybe both? All is confusion. On the other hand, focus on decent manners and the answer becomes clear. The rude boors in this example are the feminist thought police. The philosophic tail-chasing that says, as one recent Modal writer put it, "we must be tolerant even of the intolerant" would be simply irrelevant here. For there is no obligation of any sort to be polite to rude people. On the contrary, those who have breached civility are "the aggressors," and should be tossed out on their ear. To absorb and agree with this point, one does not need any high-flown philosophic theory: just plain common sense and a sense of decency.

It strikes me too that since Modal libertarianism is lifelong adolescent rebellion against one's parents, one's neighbors, and the bourgeoisie generally, that this revolt against good manners, and its displacement into bleating about the "philosophy of tolerance," is characteristic Modal behavior. The Modal rebels against what used to be standard parental teaching about manners, and challenges such teachings with pseudo-profound blatherings about tolerance, metaphysics, and the theory of knowledge.

A final point about the private telling of jokes, which can be one of the great charms of social intercourse. Jokes, of course, almost always have *some* group or other as the butt of the joke: whether

it be gender, age, religion, occupation, or ethnic group. The Politically Correct grinch, having no sense of humor whatever, are trying in effect to outlaw every joke as "insensitive" to some group or other, and therefore not politically correct. But hyper-sensitivity is one of the great barriers to civilized discourse and social relations, and can make such relations virtually impossible. Every such group, instead of being encouraged to bellyache, should get off its high horse. Modal Libertarians, of course, are up there with the anti-joke grinch, in the name of "tolerance" rather than "sensitivity." The Modals are just as despotic and just as crippling of joy through rotten manners.

Suppose, for example, someone, Mr. A, is telling a joke of which the butt is Group G. Simple politeness and good manners would lead Mr. A not to tell the joke if one of his listeners, say Mr. B, is obviously a member of Group G. On the other hand, if A doesn't realize it, or if turns out that one of B's friends or relatives happens to be a G, it would be incredibly boorish for B to denounce A as bigoted, insensitive, and all the rest. Modals should be stuck here; for they would have to figure who to denounce: A, for being "bigoted" against Group G; B for being "intolerant" of A's jokes; or both for being intolerant of the other. In practice, of course, we know how Modals come down, and it is invariably with the "sensitive" and the Politically Correct. The emphasis on manners, in contrast, would, in effect, tell B to pipe down, stop being boorish, and lighten up: humor is one of the great joys of the world. ●