

Freedom, Inequality, Primitivism, and the Division of Labor

di Murray N. Rothbard

Introduction

In the two decades since this essay was written, the major social trends I analyzed have accelerated, seemingly at an exponential rate. The flight away from socialism and central planning begun in Yugoslavia has stunningly succeeded over the entire “socialist bloc” of Eastern Europe, and there is now at least rhetorical allegiance to the idea of privatization and a free-market economy. More and more, Marxism has become confined to the academics of the United States and Western Europe, comfortably ensconced as parasites upon their capitalist economies. But even among academics, there is almost nothing left of the triumphalist Marxism of the 1930s and 40s, with their boasts of the economic efficiency and superiority of socialist central planning. Instead, even the most dedicated Marxists now pay lip-service to the necessity of some sort of “market,” however restricted by government.

I. New areas of Inequality and Oppression

But this does not mean that the struggle over egalitarianism is over. Far from it. On the contrary, after the New Left of the late 1960s and early 70s had been discredited by its bizarre turn to violence, it took the advice of its liberal elders and “joined the system.” New Leftists launched a successful Gramscian “long march through the institutions,” and by becoming lawyers and academics?particularly in the humanities, philosophy, and the “soft” social sciences?they have managed to acquire hegemony over our culture. Seeing themselves defeated and routed on the strictly economic front (in contrast to the Old Left of the 1930s, Marxian economics and the labor theory of value was never the New Left’s strong suit), the Left turned to the allegedly moral high ground of egalitarianism. And, as they did so, they turned increasingly to what was suggested in the last paragraph of my essay: de-emphasizing old-fashioned economic egalitarianism in favor of stamping out broader aspects of human variety. Older egalitarianism stressed making income or wealth equal; but, as Helmut Schoeck brilliantly realized, the logic of their argument was to stamp out in the name of “fairness,” all instances of human diversity and therefore implicit or explicit superiority of some persons over others. In short, envy of the superiority of others is to be institutionalized, and all possible sources of such envy eradicated. In his book on *Envy*, Helmut Schoeck analyzed a chilling dystopian novel by the British writer, L.P. Hartley. In his work, *Facial Justice*, published in 1960, Hartley, extrapolating from the attitudes he saw in British life after World War II, opens by noting that after the Third World War, “Justice had made great strides.” Economic Justice, Social Justice and other forms of justice had been achieved, but there were still areas of life to conquer. In particular, *Facial Justice* had not yet been attained, since pretty girls had an unfair advantage over ugly ones. Hence, under the direction of the Ministry of Face Equality, all Alpha (pretty) girls and all Gamma (ugly) girls were forced to undergo operations at the “Equalization (Faces) Centre” so as all to attain Beta (pleasantly average) faces. [1]

Coincidentally, in 1961, Kurt Vonnegut published a pithy and even more bitterly satirical short story depicting a comprehensively egalitarian society, even more thoroughgoing than Hartley’s. Vonnegut’s “Harrison Bergeron” begins:

The year was 2081, and everybody was finally equal. They weren't only equal before God and the law. They were equal every which way. Nobody was smarter than anybody else. Nobody was better looking than anybody else. Nobody was stronger or quicker than anybody else. All this equality was due to the 211th, 212th, and 213th Amendments to the Constitution, and to the unceasing vigilance of agents of the United States Handicapper General.

The “handicapping” worked partly as follows:

Hazel had a perfectly average intelligence, which meant she couldn't think about anything except in short bursts. And George, while his intelligence was way above normal, had a little mental handicap radio in his ear. He was required by law to wear it at all times. It was tuned to a government transmitter. Every twenty minutes or so, the transmitter would send out some sharp noise to keep people like George from taking unfair advantage of their brains.

[\[2\]](#)

This sort of egalitarian emphasis on non-economic inequalities has proliferated and intensified in the decades since these men penned their seemingly exaggerated Orwellian dystopias. In academic and literary circles “Political Correctness” is now enforced with an increasingly iron hand; and the key to being Politically Correct is never, ever, in any area, to make judgments of difference or superiority. Thus, we find that a Smith College handout from the Office of Student Affairs lists ten different kinds of “oppression” allegedly inflicted by making judgments about people. They include: “heterosexism,” defined as “oppression” of those with non-heterosexual orientations, which include “not acknowledging their existence”; and “ableism,” defined as oppression of the “differently abled” [known in less enlightened days as “disabled” or “handicapped”], by the “temporarily able.” Particularly relevant to our two dystopian writers is “ageism,” oppression of the young and the old by youngish and middle-aged adults, and “lookism” (or “looksism”), defined as the “construction of a standard of beauty/attractiveness.” “Oppression” is also supposed to consist, not only of discriminating in some way against the unattractive, but even in noticing the difference. Perhaps the most chilling recently created category is “logism” or “logo-centric,” the tyranny of the knowledgeable and articulate. A set of “feminist scholarship guidelines” sponsored by the state of New Jersey for its college campuses attacks knowledge and scientific inquiry *per se* as a male “rape of nature.” It charges: “mind was male. Nature was female, and knowledge was created as an act of aggression? a passive nature had to be interrogated, unclothed, penetrated, and compelled by man to reveal her secrets.” [\[3\]](#)

“Oppression” is of course broadly defined so as to indict the very existence of possible superiority?and therefore an occasion for envy?in any realm. The dominant literary theory of deconstructionism fiercely argues that there can be no standards to judge one literary “text” superior to another. At a recent conference, when one political science professor referred correctly to Czeslaw Milosz’s book *The Captive Mind* as a “classic,” another female professor declared that the very word classic “makes me feel oppressed.” [\[4\]](#) The clear implication is that any reference to someone else’s superior product may engender resentment and envy in the rank-and-file, and that catering to these “feelings of oppression” must be the central focus of scholarship and criticism.

The whole point of academia and other research institutions has always been an untrammelled search for truth. This ideal has now been challenged and superseded by catering to the “sensitive” feelings of the politically correct. This emphasis on subjective feelings rather than truth is evident in the current furor over the teaching of the distinguished Berkeley anthropologist, Vincent Sarich.

Sarich's examination of genetic influences on racial differences in achievement was denounced by a fellow faculty member as "attempting to destroy the self-esteem of black students in the class." [5]

II. Group Quotas

Indeed, one radical change since the writing of this essay has been the rapid and accelerating transformation of old-fashioned egalitarianism, which wanted to make every individual equal, into group-egalitarianism on behalf of groups that are officially designated as "oppressed." In employment, positions, and status generally, oppressed groups are supposed to be guaranteed their quota share of the well-paid or prestigious positions. (No one seems to be agitating for quota representation in the ranks of ditch-diggers.) I first noticed this trend in a paper written one year after the present essay at a symposium on The Nature and Consequences of Egalitarian Ideology. There I reacted strongly to the quota representation for designated groups insisted upon by the McGovern movement at the 1972 Democratic Convention. These victorious Democrats insisted that groups such as women, youth, blacks and Chicanos had fallen below their quota proportion of the population as elected delegates to previous conventions; this had to be rectified by the Democratic Party overriding the choices of their members and insisting upon due quota representation of these allegedly oppressed groups. I noted the particular idiocy of the claim that youths aged 18-25 had been grievously "under-represented" in the past, and indulged in what would now be called a "politically inappropriate" *reductio ad absurdum* by suggesting an immediate correction to the heinous and chronic under-representation of five-year-old "men and women." [6]

And yet, only two years before that convention, another form of quota appeal had met with proper scorn and ridicule from left-liberals. When one of President Nixon's failed Supreme Court nominees was derided as being "mediocre," Senator Roman Hruska (R., Neb.) wondered why the mediocre folk of America did not deserve "representation" on the highest Court. Liberal critics mockingly charged the Senator with engaging in special pleading. The self-same charge, levelled against denouncers of "logism" would drive such critics from public life. But times, and standards of Political Correctness, have changed.

It is difficult, indeed, to parody or satirize a movement which seems to be a living self-parody, and which can bring about such deplorable results. Thus, two eminent American historians, Bernard Bailyn and Stephan Thernstrom, were literally forced to abandon their course at Harvard on the history of American race relations, because of absurd charges of "racism" levelled by a few students, charges that were treated with utmost seriousness by everyone concerned. Of particular interest here was the charge against Bailyn's course on race relations in the colonial era. The student "grievance" against Bailyn is that he had read from the diary of a southern planter without giving "equal time" to the memoirs of a slave. To the complainants, this practice clearly amounted to a "covert defense of slavery." Bailyn had patiently explained during the offending lecture that no diaries, journals or letters by slaves in that era had ever been found. But to these students, Bailyn had clearly failed to understand the problem: "Since it was impossible to give equal representation to the slaves, Bailyn ought to have dispensed with the planter's diary altogether." [7]

Spokesmen for group quotas in behalf of the "oppressed" (labelled for public relations purposes with the positive-sounding phrase "affirmative action") generally claim that a quota system is the furthest thing from their minds: that all they want is positive action to increase representation of the favored groups. They are either being flagrantly disingenuous or else fail to understand elementary arithmetic. If Oppressed Group X is to have its "representation" increased from, say, 8 to 20 percent, then *some* group or combination of groups is going to have their total representation reduced by 12 percent. The hidden, or sometimes not-so-hidden, agenda, of course, is that the

quotal declines are supposed to occur in the ranks of designated Oppressor Groups, who presumably deserve their fate.

III. Who Are the “Oppressed”?

In this regime of group egalitarianism, it becomes particularly important to take one’s place in the ranks of the Oppressed rather than the Oppressors. Who, then, *are* the Oppressed? It is difficult to determine, since new groups of oppressed are being discovered all the time. One almost longs for the good old days of classic Marxism, when there was only one “oppressed class”?the proletariat?and one or at most a very few classes of oppressors: the capitalists or bourgeois, plus sometimes the “feudal landlords” or perhaps the petit bourgeoisie. But now, as the ranks of the oppressed and therefore the groups specially privileged by society and the State keep multiplying, and the ranks of the oppressors keep dwindling, the problem of income and wealth egalitarianism reappears and is redoubled. For more and greater varieties of groups are continually being added to the parasitic burden weighing upon an ever-dwindling supply of oppressors. And since it is obviously worth everyone’s while to leave the ranks of the oppressors and move over to the oppressed, pressure groups will increasingly succeed in doing so?so long as this dysfunctional ideology continues to flourish. Specifically, achieving the label of Officially Oppressed entitles one to share in an endless flow of benefits?in money, status, and prestige?from the hapless Oppressors, who are made to feel guilty forevermore, even as they are forced to sustain and expand the endless flow. It is not surprising that attaining oppressed status takes a great deal of pressure and organization. As Joseph Sobran wittily puts it: “it takes a lot of clout to be a victim.” Eventually, if trends continue the result must be the twin death of parasite and host alike, and an end to any flourishing economy or civilization.

There are virtually an infinite number of groups or “classes” in society: the class of people named Smith, the class of men over 6 feet tall, the class of bald people, and so on. Which of these groups may find themselves among the “oppressed”? Who knows? It is easy to invent a new oppressed group. I might come up with a study, for example, demonstrating that the class of people named “Doe” have an average income or wealth or status lower than that of other names. I could then coin a hypothesis that people named Doe have been discriminated against because their names “John Doe” and “Jane Doe” have been “stereotyped” as associated with faceless anonymity, and Presto, we have one more group who is able to leave the burdened ranks of the oppressors and join the happy ranks of the oppressed.

A political theorist friend of mine thought he could coin a satiric Oppressed Group: short people, who suffer from heightism. I informed him that he was seriously anticipated two decades ago, again demonstrating the impossibility of parodying the current ideology. I noted in an article almost twenty years ago, written shortly after this essay, that Professor Saul D. Feldman, a sociologist at Case-Western Reserve, and himself a distinguished short, had at last brought science to bear on the age-old oppression of the shorts by the talls. Feldman reported that out of recent University of Pittsburgh graduating seniors, those 6’2” and taller received an average starting salary 12.4 percent higher than graduates under 6 feet, and that a marketing professor at Eastern Michigan University had quizzed 140 business recruiters about their preferences between two hypothetical, equally qualified applicants for the job of salesman. One of the hypothetical salesmen was to be 6’1”, the other 5’5”. The recruiters answered as follows: 27 percent expressed the politically correct no preference; one percent would hire the short man; and no less than 72 percent would hire the tallie.

In addition to this clear-cut oppression of talls over shorts, Feldman pointed out that women notoriously prefer tall over short men. He might have pointed out, too, that Alan Ladd could only play the romantic lead in movies produced by bigoted Hollywood moguls by standing on a hidden

box, and that even the great character actor Sydney Greenstreet was invariably shot upward from a low-placed camera to make him appear much taller than he was. [The Hollywood studio heads were generally short themselves, but were betraying their short comrades by pandering to the pro-tall culture.] Feldman also perceptively pointed to the anti-short prejudice that pervades our language: in such phrases as people being “short-sighted, short-changed, short-circuited, and short in cash.” He added that among the two major party candidates for President, the taller is almost invariably elected. [\[8\]](#)

I went on in my article to call for a short liberation movement to end short oppression, and asked: where are the short corporation leaders, the short bankers, the short Senators and Presidents? [\[9\]](#), [\[10\]](#) I asked for short pride, short institutes, short history courses, short quotas everywhere, and for shorts to stop internalizing the age-old propaganda of our tall culture that shorts are genetically or culturally inferior. (Look at Napoleon!) Short people, arise! You have nothing to lose but your elevator shoes. I ended by assuring the tallies that we were *not* anti-tall, and that we welcome progressive, guilt-ridden talls as pro-short sympathizers and auxiliaries in our movement. If my own consciousness had been sufficiently raised at the time, I would have of course added a demand that the talls compensate the shorts for umpteen thousand years of tall tyranny.

IV. The Romantics and Primitivism

Turning from the topic of the oppressed, my own view of the Romantics, certainly jaundiced twenty years ago, is far more hostile today. For I have learned from such sources as Leszek Kolakowski and particularly the great literary critic M. H. Abrams, of the devotion of the Romantics, Hegelians, and of Marxism to what might be called “reabsorption theology.” This view stemmed from the third-century Egyptian Platonist, Plotinus, seeping into Christian Platonism and from then on constituting a heretical and mystical underground in Western thought. Briefly, these thinkers saw Creation not as a wonderfully benevolent overflow of God’s goodness, but as an essentially evil act that sundered the blessed pre-Creation unity of the collective entities God, Man and Nature, bringing about tragic and inevitable “alienation” in Man. However, Creation, the outgrowth of God’s deficiencies, is redeemable in one sense: History is an inevitable “dialectical” process by which pre-Creation gives rise to its opposite, the current world. But eventually history is destined to end in a mighty “reabsorption” of these three collective entities, though at a much higher level of development for both God and Man. In addition to other problems with this view, the contrast with orthodox Christianity should be clear. Whereas in Christianity, the individual person is made in God’s image and the salvation of each individual is of supreme importance, the allegedly benevolent reabsorptionist escape from metaphysical alienation occurs only at the end of history and only for the collective species Man, each individual disappearing into the species-organism. [\[11\]](#)

As for primitivism, later anthropological research has strengthened the view of this essay that primitive tribes, and pre-modern cultures generally, were marked, not by communism ?? la Engels and Polanyi, but by private property rights, markets, and monetary exchange. The work of the economist Bruce Benson has particularly highlighted this point. [\[12\]](#)

V. The Division of Labor

I have come to realize, since writing this essay, that I overweighted the contributions and importance of Adam Smith on the division of labor. And to my surprise, I did not sufficiently appreciate the contributions of Ludwig von Mises.

Despite the enormous emphasis on specialization and the division of labor in the *Wealth of Nations*, much of Smith's discussion was misplaced and misleading. In the first place, he placed undue importance on the division of labor *within* a factory (the famous pin-factory example), and scarcely considered the far more important division of labor among various industries and occupations. Secondly, there is the mischievous contradiction between the discussions in Book I and Book V in the *Wealth of Nations*. In Book I, the division of labor is hailed as responsible for civilization as well as economic growth, and is also praised as expanding the alertness and intelligence of the population. But in Book V the division of labor is condemned as leading to the intellectual and moral degeneration of the same population, and to the loss of their "intellectual, social, and martial virtues." These complaints about the division of labor as well as similar themes in Smith's close friend Adam Ferguson, strongly influenced the griping about "alienation" in Marx and later socialist writers. [\[13\]](#)

But of greater fundamental importance was Smith's abandonment of the tradition since Jean Buridan and the Scholastics that emphasized that two parties always undertook an exchange because each expected to gain from the transaction. In contrast to this emphasis on specialization and exchange as a result of conscious human decision, Smith shifted the focus from mutual benefit to an alleged irrational and innate "propensity to truck, barter, and exchange," as if human beings were lemmings determined by forces external to their own chosen purposes. As Edwin Cannan pointed out long ago, Smith took this tack because he rejected the idea of innate differences in human talents and abilities, differences which would naturally lead people to seek out different specialized occupations. [\[14\]](#) Smith instead took an egalitarian-environmentalist position, still dominant today in neo-classical economics, holding that all men are uniform and equal, and therefore that differences in labor or occupations can only be the *result* rather than a cause of the system of division of labor. Moreover, Smith inaugurated the corollary tradition that differences in wage rates among this uniform population can only reflect differences in the cost of training. [\[15\]](#) , [\[16\]](#)

In contrast, the recent work of Professor Joseph Salerno has illuminated the profound contributions of Ludwig von Mises's emphasis on the division of labor as the "essence of society" and the "fundamental social phenomenon." For Mises, as I wrote in the essay, the division of labor stems from the diversity and inequality of human beings and of nature. Salerno, in addition, brings out with unparalleled clarity that for Mises the division of labor is a conscious choice of mutual gain and economic development. The process of social evolution therefore becomes "the development of the division of labor," and this allows Mises to refer to the world-wide division of labor as a vital "social organism" or "*oecumene*." Mises also points out that division of labor is at the heart of biological organisms, and "the fundamental principle of all forms of life." The difference of the "social organism" is that, in contrast to biological organisms, "reason and will are the originating and sustaining form of the organic coalescence." Therefore, for Mises "human society is thus spiritual and teleological," the "product of thought and will." It therefore becomes of the utmost importance for people to understand the significance of maintaining and expanding the *oecumene* that consists of the free market and voluntary human exchanges, and to realize that breaching and crippling that market and *oecumene* can only have disastrous consequences for the human race. [\[17\]](#)

In the standard account, writers and social theorists are supposed to mellow and moderate their views as they get older. (Two glorious exceptions to this rule are such very different libertarian figures as Lysander Spooner and Lord Acton.) Looking back over the two decades since writing this essay, it is clear that my views, on the contrary, have radicalized and polarized even further. As unlikely as it would have seemed twenty years ago, I am even more hostile to socialism, egalitarianism, and Romanticism, far more critical of the British classical and modern neo-classical

tradition, and even more appreciative of Mises's great insights than ever before. Indeed, for someone who thought that he had absorbed all of Mises's work many years ago, it is a constant source of surprise how rereading Mises continues to provide a source of fresh insights and of new ways of looking at seemingly trite situations. This phenomenon, in which many of us have experience, bears testimony to the remarkable quality and richness of Mises's thought. Although he died almost two decades ago, Ludwig von Mises remains more truly alive than most of our conventionally wise contemporaries.

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Las Vegas, Nevada
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Notes

- [1] See the discussion in Helmut Schoeck, *Envy: A Theory of Social Behavior* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1970), pp. 149-55. Schoeck's work was originally published in German in 1966 under the title *Der Neid*, and the English translation was first published in 1969.
- [2] Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., "Harrison Bergeron" (1961), in *Welcome to the Monkey House* (New York: Dell, 1970), p.7.
- [3] John Taylor, "Are you Politically Correct?" *New York* (January 21, 1991, p.38. Also see ibid., pp. 32-40: "Taking Offense," *Newsweek* (December 24, 1990), pp. 48-54.
- [4] *Newsweek*, loc. cit., p. 53.
- [5] Paul Selvin, "The Raging Bull of Berkeley," *Science* 251 (January 25, 1991): 369.
- [6] Murray N. Rothbard, "Egalitarianism as a Revolt Against Nature," in *Egalitarianism as a Revolt Against Nature and Other Essays* (Washington, D.C.: Libertarian Review Press, 1974), pp. 7-8.
- [7] Taylor, "Are You Politically Correct?", p. 33.
- [8] Feldman's case would have been strengthened had he written after the 1988 campaign: not only did Bush tower over Dukakis, but Representative Charles Wilson, (D., Texas) was able to express the tallest bigotry of his region: "No Greek dwarf can carry East Texas," without calling forth protests and marches by organized short-dom. On the Feldman study, see Arthur J. Snider, "Society Favors Tall Men: Prof," *New York Post* (February 19, 1972). On all of this, see Murray N. Rothbard, "Short People, Arise!" *The Libertarian Forum* IV (April 1972): p. 8.
- [9] It might be instructive to study whether the savage treatment accorded to Senator John Tower in his confirmation hearings for Secretary of Defense was due to discrimination against his short size.
- [10] A possible project for American historians: most of the big business tycoons of the late-nineteenth century (e.g., Jay Gould and John D. Rockefeller, Sr.) were very short. By what process did the tallies quietly seize power in the corporate world?
- [11] See Leszek Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*, vol. I, *The Founders* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 9-39; M.H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and*

Revolution in Romantic Literature (New York: Norton, 1971); M.H. Abrams, “Apocalypse: Theme and Variations” in C.A. Patrides and Joseph Wittreich, eds., *The Apocalypse in English Renaissance Thought and Literature* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1984), pp.342-68; Ernest L. Tuveson, “The Millenarian Structure of the Communist Manifesto,” in *ibid.*, pp. 323-41; and Murray N. Rothbard “Karl Marx: Communist as Religious Eschatologist,” *The Review of Austrian Economics* 4 (1990): 123-179.

[12] Bruce L. Benson, “Enforcement of Private Property Rights in Primitive Societies: Law Without Government,” *Journal of Libertarian Studies* 9 (Winter 1989): 1-26; and Benson, *The Enterprise of Law: Justice Without the State* (San Francisco: Pacific Research Institute for Public Policy, 1990), pp. 11-41. Also see Joseph R. Peden, “Property Rights in Celtic Irish Law,” *Journal of Libertarian Studies* 1 (1977): 81-95; and David Friedman, “Private Creation and Enforcement of Law: A Historical Case,” *Journal of Legal Studies* 8 (March 1979): 399-415.

[13] On Ferguson’s influence, see Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism*, pp, 220-21, 508.

[14] Edwin Cannan, *A History of the Theories of Production and Distribution in English Political Economy from 1776 to 1848*, 3rd ed (London: Staples Press, 1917), p. 35

[15] Contrast Smith’s egalitarianism with the great early-fifteenth-century Italian Scholastic, San Bernardino of Siena (1380-1444). In his *On Contracts and Usury*, written in 1431-33, Bernardino pointed out that wage inequality on the market is a function of differences of ability and skill as well as training. An architect is paid more than a ditch-digger, Bernardino explained, because the former’s job requires more intelligence and ability as well as training, so that fewer men will qualify for the task. See Raymond de Roover, *San Bernardino of Siena and Sant’Antonino of Florence: The Two Great Thinkers of the Middle Ages* (Boston: Baker Library, 1967), and Alejandro Chafuen, *Christians for Freedom: Late Scholastic Economics* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), pp. 123-31.

[16] Modern neo-classical labor economics fits in this tradition by defining “discrimination” as any wage inequalities greater than differences in the cost of training. Thus, see the standard work by Gary Becker, *The Economics of Discrimination* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957).

[17] Joseph T. Salerno, “Ludwig von Mises as Social Rationalist,” *The Review of Austrian Economics* 4 (1990): 26-54. See also Salerno’s critique of Eamonn Butler’s uncomprehending reaction to Mises’s insights, charging Mises with the “organic fallacy,” and “difficulty with English.” *Ibid.*, p. 29n. The implicit contrast of Mises’s view with Hayek’s emphasis on unconscious action and blind adherence to traditional rules is made explicit by Salerno in the latter part of this article dealing with the socialist calculation debate, and in Salerno, “Postscript,” in Ludwig von Mises, *Economic Calculation in the Socialist Commonwealth* (Auburn, Al.: Ludwig von Mises Institute, 1990), pp. 51-71.

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I.

If men were like ants, there would be no interest in human freedom. If individual men, like ants, were uniform, interchangeable, devoid of specific personality traits of their own, then who would care whether they were free or not? Who, indeed, would care if they lived or died? The glory of the human race is the uniqueness of each individual, the fact that every person, though similar in many ways to others, possesses a completely individuated personality of his own. It is the fact of each person's uniqueness—the fact that no two people can be wholly interchangeable—that makes each and every man irreplaceable and that makes us care whether he lives or dies, whether he is happy or oppressed. And, finally, it is the fact that these unique personalities need freedom for their full development that constitutes one of the major arguments for a free society.

Perhaps a world exists somewhere where intelligent beings are fully formed in some sort of externally determined cages, with no need for internal learning or choices by the individual beings themselves. But man is necessarily in a different situation. Individual human beings are not born or fashioned with fully formed knowledge, values, goals, or personalities; they must each form their own values and goals, develop their personalities, and learn about themselves and the world around them. Every man must have freedom, must have the scope to form, test, and act upon his own choices, for any sort of development of his own personality to take place. He must, in short, be free in order that he may be fully human. In a sense, even the most frozen and totalitarian civilizations and societies have allowed at least a modicum of scope for individual choice and development. Even the most monolithic of despotisms have had to allow at least a bit of “space” for freedom of choice, if only within the interstices of societal rules. The freer the society, of course, the less has been the interference with individual actions, and the greater the scope for the development of each individual. The freer the society, then, the greater will be the variety and the diversity among men, for the more fully developed will be every man’s uniquely individual personality. On the other hand, the more despotic the society, the more restrictions on the freedom of the individual, the more uniformity there will be among men and the less the diversity, and the less developed will be the unique personality of each and every man. In a profound sense, then, a despotic society prevents its members from being fully human. [1]

If freedom is a necessary condition for the full development of the individual, it is by no means the only requirement. Society itself must be sufficiently developed. No one, for example, can become a creative physicist on a desert island or in a primitive society. For, as an economy grows, the range of choice open to the producer and to the consumer proceeds to multiply greatly. [2] Furthermore, only a society with a standard of living considerably higher than subsistence can afford to devote much of its resources to improving knowledge and to developing a myriad of goods and services above the level of brute subsistence. But there is another reason that full development of the creative powers of each individual cannot occur in a primitive or undeveloped society, and that is the necessity for a wide-ranging division of labor.

No one can fully develop his powers in any direction without engaging in *specialization*. The primitive tribesman or peasant, bound to an endless round of different tasks in order to maintain himself, could have no time or resources available to pursue any particular interest to the full. He had no room to specialize, to develop whatever field he was best at or in which he was most interested. Two hundred years ago, Adam Smith pointed out that the developing division of labor is a key to the advance of any economy above the most primitive level. A necessary condition for any sort of developed economy, the division of labor is also requisite to the development of any sort of civilized society. The philosopher, the scientist, the builder, the merchant?none could develop these skills or functions if he had had no scope for specialization. Furthermore, no individual who does not live in a society enjoying a wide range of division of labor can possibly employ his powers to the fullest. He cannot concentrate his powers in a field or discipline and advance that discipline and

his own mental faculties. Without the opportunity to specialize in whatever he can do best, no person can develop his powers to the full; no man, then, could be fully human.

While a continuing and advancing division of labor is needed for a developed economy and society, the extent of such development at any given time limits the degree of specialization that any given economy can have. There is, therefore, no room for a physicist or a computer engineer on a primitive island; these skills would be premature within the context of that existing economy. As Adam Smith put it, "the division of labor is limited by the extent of the market." Economic and social development is therefore a mutually reinforcing process: the development of the market permits a wider division of labor, which in turn enables further extension of the market. [3]

If the scope of the market and the extent of the division of labor are mutually reinforcing, so too are the division of labor and the diversity of individual interests and abilities among men. For just as an ever greater division of labor is needed to give full scope to the abilities and powers of each individual, so does the existence of that very division depend upon the innate diversity of men. For there would be no scope at all for a division of labor if every person were uniform and interchangeable. (A further condition of the emergence of a division of labor is the variety of natural resources; specific land areas on the earth are also not interchangeable.) Furthermore, it soon became evident in the history of man that the market economy based on a division of labor was profoundly *cooperative*, and that such division enormously multiplied the productivity and hence the wealth of every person participating in the society. The economist Ludwig von Mises put the matter very clearly:

Historically division of labor originates in two facts of nature: the inequality of human abilities and the variety of the external conditions of human life on the earth. These two facts are really one: the diversity of Nature, which does not repeat itself but creates the universe in infinite, inexhaustible variety....

These two conditions ... are indeed such as almost to force the division of labor on mankind. Old and young, men and women cooperate by making appropriate use of their various abilities. Here also is the germ of the geographical division of labor; man goes to the hunt and woman to the spring to fetch water. Had the strength and abilities of all individuals and the external conditions of production been everywhere equal the idea of division of labor could never have arisen ... No social life could have arisen among men of equal natural capacity in a world which was geographically uniform....

Once labor has been divided, the division itself exercises a differentiating influence. The fact that labor is divided makes possible further cultivation of individual talent and thus cooperation becomes more and more productive. Through cooperation men are able to achieve what would have been beyond them as individuals....

The greater productivity of work under the division of labor is a unifying influence. It leads men to regard each other as comrades in a joint struggle for welfare, rather than as competitors in a struggle for existence. [4]

Freedom, then, is needed for the development of the individual, and such development also depends upon the extent of the division of labor and the height of the standard of living. The developed economy makes room for, and encourages, an enormously greater specialization and flowering of the powers of the individual than can a primitive economy, and the greater the degree of such development, the greater the scope for each individual.

If freedom and the growth of the market are each important for the development of each individual and, therefore, to the flowering of diversity and individual differences, then so is there a causal connection between freedom and economic growth. For it is precisely freedom, the absence or

limitation of interpersonal restrictions or interference, that sets the stage for economic growth and hence of the market economy and the developed division of labor. The Industrial Revolution and the corollary and consequent economic growth of the West were a product of its relative freedom for enterprise, for invention and innovation, for mobility and the advancement of labor. Compared to societies in other times and places, eighteenth and nineteenth century Western Europe and the United States were marked by a far greater social and economic freedom?a freedom to move, invest, work, and produce?secure from much harassment and interference by government. Compared to the role of government elsewhere, its role in these centuries in the West was remarkably minimal. [5]

By allowing full scope for investment, mobility, the division of labor, creativity, and entrepreneurship, the free economy thereby creates the conditions for rapid economic development. It is freedom and the free market, as Adam Smith well pointed out, that develop the “wealth of nations.” Thus, freedom leads to economic development, and both of these conditions in turn multiply individual development and the unfolding of the powers of the individual man. In two crucial ways, then, freedom is the root; only the free man can be fully individuated and, therefore, can be fully human.

If freedom leads to a widening division of labor, and the full scope of individual development, it leads also to a growing population. For just as the division of labor is limited by the extent of the market, so is total population limited by total production. One of the striking facts about the Industrial Revolution has been not only a great rise in the standard of living for everyone, but also the viability of such ample living standards for an enormously larger population. The land area of North America was able to support only a million or so Indians five hundred years ago, and that at a barely subsistence level. Even if we wished to eliminate the division of labor, we could not do so without literally wiping out the vast majority of the current world population.

II.

We conclude that freedom and its concomitant, the widening division of labor, are vital for the flowering of each individual, as well as the literal survival of the vast bulk of the world’s population. It must give us great concern, then, that over the past two centuries mighty social movements have sprung up which have been dedicated, at their heart, to the stamping out of all human differences, of all individuality.

It has become apparent in recent years, for example, that the heart of the complex social philosophy of Marxism does not lie, as it seemed to in the 1930s and 40s, in Marxian economic doctrines: in the labor theory of value, in the familiar proposal for socialist state ownership of the means of production, and in the central planning of the economy and society. The economic theories and programs of Marxism are, to use a Marxian term, merely the elaborate “super-structure” erected on the inner core of Marxian aspiration. Consequently, many Marxists have, in recent decades, been willing to abandon the labor theory of value and even centralized socialist planning, as the Marxian economic theory has been increasingly abandoned and the practice of socialist planning shown to be unworkable. Similarly, the Marxists of the “New Left” in the United States and abroad have been willing to jettison socialist economic theory and practice. What they have *not* been willing to abandon is the philosophic heart of the Marxian ideal?not socialism or socialist planning, concerned anyway with what is supposed to be a temporary “stage” of development, but *communism* itself. It is the communist ideal, the ultimate goal of Marxism, that excites the contemporary Marxist, that engages his most fervent passions. The New Left Marxist has no use for Soviet Russia because the Soviets have clearly relegated the communist ideal to the remotest possible future. The New Leftist admires Che Guevara, Fidel Castro, Mao Tse-Tung not simply because of their role as

revolutionaries and guerrilla leaders, but more because of their repeated attempts to leap into communism as rapidly as possible. [6]

Karl Marx was vague and cloudy in describing the communist ideal, let alone the specific path for attaining it. But one essential feature is the eradication of the division of labor. Contrary to current belief, Marx's now popular concept of "alienation" had little to do with a psychological sense of apartness or discontent. The heart of the concept was the individual's "alienation" from the product of labor. A worker, for example, works in a steel mill. Obviously, he himself will consume little or none of the steel he produces; he earns the value of his product in the shape of a money-commodity, and then he happily uses that money to buy whatever he chooses from the products of other people. Thus, A produces steel, B eggs, C shoes, etc., and then each exchanges them for products of the others through the use of money. To Marx this phenomenon of the market and the division of labor was a radical evil, for it meant that no one consumed any of *his own* product. The steelworker thus became "alienated" from his steel, the shoemaker from his shoes, etc.

The proper response to this "problem," it seems to me, is: "So what?" Why should anyone care about this sort of "alienation?" Surely the farmer, shoemaker, and steelworker are very happy to sell their product and exchange it for whatever products they desire; deprive them of this "alienation" and they would be most unhappy, as well as dying from starvation. For if the farmer were not allowed to produce more wheat or eggs than he himself consumes, or the shoemaker more shoes than he can wear, or the steelworker more steel than he can use, it is clear that the great bulk of the population would rapidly starve and the rest be reduced to a primitive subsistence, with life "nasty, brutish, and short." [7] But to Marx this condition was the evil result of individualism and capitalism and had to be eradicated.

Furthermore, Marx was completely ignorant of the fact that each participant in the division of labor cooperates through the market economy, exchanging for each other's products and increasing the productivity and living standards of everyone. To Marx, and *differences* between men and, therefore, any specialization in the division of labor, is a "contradiction," and the communist goal is to replace that "contradiction" with harmony among all. This means that to the Marxist any individual differences, any diversity among men, are "contradictions" to be stamped out and replaced by the uniformity of the antheap. Friedrich Engels maintained that the emergence of the division of labor shattered the alleged classless harmony and uniformity of primitive society, and was responsible for the cleavage of society into separate and conflicting classes. Hence, for Marx and Engels, the division of labor must be eradicated in order to abolish class conflict and to usher in the ideal harmony of the "classless society," the society of total uniformity. [8]

Thus, Marx foresees his communist deal only "after the enslaving subordination of individuals under division of labor, and therewith also the antithesis between mental and physical labor, has vanished." [9] To Marx the ideal communist society is one where, as Professor Gray puts it, "everyone must do everything." According to Marx in *The German Ideology*,

In communist society, where nobody has one exclusive sphere of activity but each can become accomplished in any branch he wishes, society regulates the general production and thus makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticize after dinner, just as I have a mind, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, shepherd or critic. [10]

And the Marxist, August Bebel, consistently applied this dilettantish notion to the role of women:

At one moment a practical worker in some industry she is in the next hour educator, teacher, nurse; in the third part of the day she exercises some art or cultivates a science; and in the fourth part she fulfills some administrative function. [\[11\]](#)

The concept of the *commune* in socialist thought takes on its central importance precisely as a means of eradicating individual differences. It is not just that the commune owns all the means of production among its members. Crucial to the communal ideal is that every man takes on every function, either all at once or in rapid rotation. Obviously, the commune has to subsist on no more than a primitive level, with only a few common tasks, for this ideal to be achieved. Hence the New Left commune, where every person is supposed to take turns equally at every task; again, specialization is eradicated, and no one can develop his powers to the full. Hence the current admiration for Cuba, which has attempted to stress “moral” rather than economic incentives in production, and which has established communes on the Isle of Pines. Hence the admiration of Mao, who has attempted to establish uniform urban and rural communes, and who recently sent several million students into permanent exile into the frontier agricultural areas, in order to eliminate the “contradiction between intellectual and physical labor.” [\[12\]](#) Indeed, at the heart of the split between Russia and China is Russia’s virtual abandonment of the communist ideal in the face of China’s “fundamentalist” devotion to the original creed. The shared devotion to the commune also accounts for the similarities between the New Left, the Utopian socialists of the nineteenth century, [\[13\]](#) and the communist anarchists, a wing of anarchism that has always shared the communal ideal with the Marxists. [\[14\]](#)

The communist would deny that his ideal society would suppress the personality of every man. On the contrary, freed from the confines of the division of labor, each person would fully develop *all* of his powers in every direction. Every man would be fully rounded in all spheres of life and work. As Engels put it in his *Anti-D?hring*, communism would give “each individual the opportunity to develop and exercise all his faculties, physical and mental, in all direction ...” [\[15\]](#) And Lenin wrote in 1920 of the “abolition of the division of labor among people ... the education, schooling and training of people with *an all-round development* and *an all-round training*, people *able to do everything*. Communism is marching and must march toward this goal, and *will reach it....*” [\[16\]](#)

This absurd ideal of the man “able to do everything” is only viable if (a) everyone does everything very badly, or (b) there are only a very few things to do, or (c) everyone is miraculously transformed into a superman. Professor Mises aptly notes that the ideal communist man is the dilettante, the man who knows a little of everything and does nothing well. For how can he develop *any* of his powers and faculties if he is prevented from developing any one of them to any sustained extent? As Mises says of Bebel’s Utopia,

Art and science are relegated to leisure hours. In this way, thinks Bebel, the society of the future “will possess scientists and artists of all kinds in countless numbers.” These, according to their several inclinations, will pursue their studies and their arts in their spare time.... All mental work he regards as mere dilettantism.... But nevertheless we must inquire whether under these conditions the mind would be able to create that freedom without which it cannot exist.

Obviously all artistic and scientific work which demands time, travel, technical education and great material expenditure, would be quite out of the question. [\[17\]](#)

Every person’s time and energy on the earth are necessarily limited; hence, in order to develop *any* of his faculties to the full, he must specialize and concentrate on some rather than others. As Gray writes,

That each individual should have the opportunity of developing *all* his faculties, physical and mental, in *all* directions, is a dream which will cheer the vision only of the simple-minded, oblivious of the restrictions imposed by the narrow limits of human life. For life is a series of acts of choice, and each choice is at the same time a renunciation....

Even the inhabitant of Engels' future fairyland will have to decide sooner or later whether he wishes to be Archbishop of Canterbury or First Sea Lord, whether he should seek to excel as a violinist or as a pugilist, whether he should elect to know all about Chinese literature or about the hidden pages in the life of the mackerel. [18]

Of course, only way to resolve this dilemma is to fantasize that the New Communist Man will be a superman. The Marxist, Karl Kautsky, asserted that in the future society "a new type of man will arise ... a superman ... an exalted man." Leon Trotsky prophesied that under communism.

... man will become incomparably stronger, wiser, finer. His body more harmonious, his movements more rhythmical, his voice more musical ... The human average will rise to the level of an Aristotle, a Goethe, a Marx. Above these other heights new peaks will arise. [19]

In recent years, communists have intensified their efforts to end the division of labor and reduce all individuals to uniformity. Fidel Castro's attempts to "build Communism" in the Isle of Pines, and Mao Tse-Tung's Cultural Revolution, have been echoed in miniature by the American New Left in numerous attempts to form hippies communes and to create organizational "collectives" in which everyone does everything without benefit of specialization. [20] In contrast, Yugoslavia has been the quiet despair of the communist movement by moving rapidly in the opposite direction?toward every-increasing freedom, individuality, and free-market operations?and has proved influential in leading the other "communist" countries of Eastern Europe (notably, Hungary and Czechoslovakia) in the same direction. [21]

III.

One way of gauging the extent of "harmonious" development of all of the individual's powers in the absence of specialization is to consider what actually happened during primitive or preindustrial eras. And, indeed, many socialists and other opponents of the Industrial Revolution exalt the primitive and preindustrial periods as a golden age of harmony, community, and social belonging?a peaceful and happy society destroyed by the development of individualism, the Industrial Revolution, and the market economy. In their exaltation of the primitive and the preindustrial, the socialists were perfectly anticipated by the reactionaries of the Romantic movement, those men who longed to roll back the tide of progress, individualism, and industry, and return to the supposed golden age of the preindustrial era. The New Left, in particular, also emphasizes a condemnation of technology and the division of labor, as well as a desire to "return to the earth" and an exaltation of the commune and the "tribe." As John W. Aldridge perceptively points out, the current New Left virtually constitutes a generational tribe that exhibits all the characteristics of a uniform and interchangeable herd, with little or no individuality among its members. [22]

Similarly, the early nineteenth century German reactionary, Adam M?ller, denounced the

... vicious tendency to divide labor in all branches of private industry...[The] division of labor in large cities or industrial or mining provinces cuts up man, the completely free man, into wheels, rollers, spokes, shafts, etc., forces on him an utterly one-sided scope in the already one-sided field of the provisioning of one single want... [23]

The leading French conservatives of the early nineteenth century, Bonald and de Maistre, who idealized the feudal order, denounced the disruption by individualism of the pre-existing social order and social cohesion. [24] The contemporary French reactionary, Jacques Ellul, in *The Technological Society*, a book much in favor on the New Left, condemns “our dehumanized factories, our unsatisfied senses ... our estrangement from nature.” In the Middle Ages, in contrast, claims Ellul, “Man sought open spaces ... the possibility of moving about ... of not constantly colliding with other people.” [25] In the meanwhile, on the socialist side, the economic historian Karl Polanyi’s influential *The Great Transformation* makes this thesis of the disruption of a previous social harmony by individualism, the market economy, and the division of labor the central theme of the book.

For its part, the worship of the primitive is a logical extension of the worship of the preindustrial. This worship by modern sophisticated intellectuals ranges from Rousseau’s “noble savage” and the lionizing of that creature by the Romantic movement, all the way to the adoration of the Black Panthers by white intellectuals. [26] Whatever other pathology the worship of the primitive reflects, a basic part of it is a deep-seated hatred of individual diversity. Obviously, the more primitive and the less civilized a society, the less diverse and individuated it can be[27] Also part of this primitivism reflects a hatred for the intellect and its works, since the flowering of reason and intellection leads to diversity and inequality of individual achievement.

For the individual to advance and develop, reason and the intellect must be *active*, it must embody the individual’s mind working upon and transforming the materials of reality. From the time of Aristotle, the classical philosophy presented man as only fulfilling himself, his nature, and his personality through purposive action upon the world. It is from such rational and purposive action that the works of civilization have developed. In contrast, the Romantic movement has always exalted the passivity of the child who, necessarily ignorant and immature, only reacts passively to his environment rather than acts to change it. This tendency to exalt passivity and the young, and to denigrate intellect, has reached its present embodiment in the New Left, which worships both youth *per se* and a passive attitude of ignorant and purposeless spontaneity. The passivity of the New Left, its wish to live simply and in “harmony” with “the earth” and the alleged rhythms of nature, harks back completely to the Rousseauist Romantic movement. Like the Romantic movement, it is a conscious rejection of civilization and differentiated men on behalf of the primitive, the ignorant, the herd-like “tribe.” [28]

If reason, purpose, and action are to be spurned, then what replace them in the Romantic pantheon are unanalyzed, spontaneous “feelings.” And since the range of feelings is relatively small compared to intellectual achievements, and in any case is not objectively known to another person, the emphasis on feelings is another way to iron out diversity and inequality among individuals.

Irving Babbitt, a keen critic of Romanticism, wrote about the Romantic movement:

The whole movement is filled with the praise of ignorance and of those who still enjoy its inappreciable advantages - the savage, the peasant and above all the child. The Rousseauist may indeed be said to have discovered the poetry of childhood... but at what would seem at times a rather heavy sacrifice of rationality. Rather than consent to have the bloom taken off things by analysis one should, as Coleridge tells us, *sink back* to the devout state of childlike wonder. However, to grow ethically is not to sink back but to struggle painfully forward. To affirm the contrary is to proclaim one’s inability to mature ... [The Romantic] is ready to assert that what comes to the child spontaneously is superior to the deliberate moral effort of the mature man. The speeches of all the sages are, according to Maeterlinck, outweighed by the unconscious wisdom of the passing child. [29]

Another perceptive critique of Romanticism and primitivism was written by Ludwig von Mises. He notes that “the whole tribe of romantics” have denounced specialization and the division of labor. “For them the man of the past who developed his powers ‘harmoniously’ is the ideal: an ideal which alas no longer inspires our degenerate age. They recommend retrogression in the division of labor...” with the socialists surpassing their fellow Romantics in this regard. [30] But are primitives or preindustrial men privileged to develop themselves freely and harmoniously? Mises answers:

It is futile to look for the harmoniously developed man at the outset of economic evolution. The almost self-sufficient economic subject as we know him in the solitary peasant of remote valleys shows none of that noble, harmonious development of body, mind, and feeling which the romantics ascribe to him. Civilization is a product of leisure and the peace of mind that only the division of labor can make possible. Nothing is more false than to assume that man first appeared in history with an independent individuality and that only during the evolution [of society]... did he lose ... his spiritual independence. All history, evidence and observation of the lives of primitive peoples is directly contrary to this view. Primitive man lacks all individuality in our sense. Two South Sea Islanders resemble each other far more closely than two twentieth-century Londoners. Personality was not bestowed upon man at the outset. It has been acquired in the course of evolution of society. [31]

Or we may note Charles Silberman’s critique of Jacques Ellul’s rhapsodies on the “traditional rhythms of life and nature” lived by preindustrial man, as compared to “dehumanized factories ... our estrangement from nature.” Silberman asks:

But with what shall we contrast this dehumanized world? The beautiful, harmonious life being lived by, say, the Chinese or Vietnamese peasant woman, who works in the fields close to nature, for twelve hours a day?roughly the conditions under which the great bulk women (and men) have worked ... through all of human history? For this is the condition that Ellul idealizes.

And, as for Ellul’s paean to the Middle Ages as being mobile, spacious, and uncrowded:

This would have been startling news to the medieval peasant, who lived with his wife and children, other relatives, and probably animals as well in a one-room thatched cottage. And even for the nobility, was there really more possibility of “moving about” in the Middle Ages, when travel was by foot or hoof, than today, when steelworkers spend sabbaticals in Europe? [32]

The savage is supposed not only to be “noble” but also supremely happy. From the Rousseauans to what Erich Fromm has called “the infantile Paradise” of Norman O. Brown and Herbert Marcuse, the Romantics have extolled the happiness yielded by the spontaneous and the childlike. To Aristotle and the classic philosophers, happiness was *acting* in accordance with man’s unique and rational nature. To Marcuse, any purposive, rational action is by definition “repressive,” to which he contrasts the “liberated” state of spontaneous play. Aside from the universal destitution that the proposed abolition of work would bring, the result would be a profound *unhappiness*, for no individual would be able to fulfill himself, his individuality would largely disappear, for in a world of “polymorphous” play everyone would be virtually alike.

If we consider the supposed happiness of primitive man, we must also consider that his life was, in the famous phrase of Hobbes, “nasty, brutish, and short.” There were few medical aids against disease; there were none against famine, for in a world cut off from interregional markets and barely above subsistence any check to the local food supply will decimate the population. Fulfilling

the dreams of Romantics, the primitive tribe is a passive creature of its given environment and has no means for acting to overcome and transform it. Hence, when the local food supply within an area is depleted, the “happy-go-lucky” tribe dies *en masse*.

Furthermore, we must realize that the primitive faces a world which he cannot understand, since he has not engaged in much of a rational, scientific inquiry into its workings. We know what a thunderstorm is, and therefore take rational measures against it; but the savage does not know, and therefore surmises that the God of Thunder is displeased with him and must be propitiated with sacrifices and votive offerings. Since the savage has only a limited concept of a world knit together by natural law (a concept which employs reason and science), he believes that the world is governed by a host of capricious spirits and demons, each of which can only be propitiated by ritual or magic, and by a priest-craft of witch doctors who specialize in their propitiation. [33] The renaissance of astrology and similar mystic creeds on the New Left marks a reversion to such primitive forms of magic. So fearful is the savage, so bound is he by irrational taboo and by the custom of his tribe, that he cannot develop his individuality.

If tribal custom crippled and repressed the development of each individual, then so too did the various caste systems and networks of restriction and coercion in preindustrial societies that forced everyone to follow the hereditary footsteps of his father’s occupation. Each child knew from birth that he was doomed to tread where his ancestors had gone before him, regardless of ability or inclination to the contrary. The “social harmony,” the “sense of belonging,” supplied by mercantilism, by the guilds, or by the caste system, provided such contentment that its members left the throes of the system when given an opportunity. Given the freedom to choose, the tribesmen abandon the bosom of their tribe to come to the freer, “atomistic” cities looking for jobs and opportunity. It is curious, in fact, that those Romantics who yearn to restore the mythical golden age of caste and status refuse to allow each individual the freedom to choose between market on the one hand, or caste and tribal commune on the other. Invariably, the new golden age has to be imposed by coercion.

Is it, indeed, a coincidence that the natives of undeveloped countries, when given a chance, invariably abandon their “folk culture” on behalf of Western ways, living standards, and “Coca-Colaization?” Within a few years, for example, the people of Japan were delighted to abandon their centuries-old traditional culture and folkways, and turn to the material achievements and market economy of the West. Primitive tribes, too, given a chance, are eager to differentiate and develop a market economy, to shed their stagnant “harmony” and replace their magic by knowledge of discovered law. The eminent anthropologist, Branislav Malinowski, pointed out that primitives are magic only to cover those areas of nature of which they are ignorant; in those areas where they have come to understand the natural processes at work, magic is, quite sensibly, not employed. [34]

A particularly striking example of the eager development of a pervasive market economy among primitive tribesmen is the largely unheralded case of West Africa. [35] And Bernard Siegel has pointed out that when, as among the Penajachel of Guatemala, a primitive society becomes large and technologically and societally complex, a market economy inevitably accompanies this growth, replete with specialization, competition, cash purchases, demand and supply, prices and costs, etc. [36]

There is thus ample evidence that even primitive tribesmen themselves are not fond of their primitivism and take the earliest opportunity to escape from it; the main stronghold of love for primitivism seems to rest among the decidedly non-primitive Romantic intellectuals.

Another primitivistic institution that has been hailed by many social scientists is the system of the “extended family,” a harmony and status supposedly ruptured by the individualistic “nuclear family” of the modern West. Yet the extended family system has been responsible for crippling the creative and productive individual as well as repressing economic development. Thus, West African development has been impeded by the extended family concept that, if one man prospers, he is duty bound to share this bounty with a host of relatives, thus draining off the reward for his productivity and crippling his incentive to succeed, while encouraging the relatives to live idly on the family dole. And neither do the productive members of the tribe seem very happy about this supposedly harmonious societal bond. Professor Bauer points out that

... many admit in private discussion that they dread these extensive obligations ... The fear of the obligations of the family system is partly responsible for the widespread use of textiles and trinkets as outlets for savings, in preference to more productive forms of investment which are more likely to attract the attention of relatives.

And many Africans distrust banks, “fearing that they may disclose the size of their accounts to members of their families. They, therefore, prefer to keep their savings under the fireplace or buried in the ground.” [\[37\]](#)

In fact, the primitive community, far from being happy, harmonious, and idyllic, is much more likely to be ridden by mutual suspicion and envy of the more successful or better-favored, an envy so pervasive as to cripple, by the fear of its presence, all personal or general economic development. The German sociologist Helmut Schoeck, in his important recent work on *Envy*, cites numerous studies of this pervasive crippling effect. Thus the anthropologist Clyde Kluckhohn found among the Navaho the absence of any concept of “personal success” or “personal achievement”; and such success was automatically attributed to exploitation of others, and, therefore, the more prosperous Navaho Indian feels himself under constant social pressure to give his money away. Allan Holmberg found that the Siriono Indian of Bolivia eats alone at night because, if he eats by day, a crowd gathers around him to stare in envious hatred. The result among the Siriono is that, in reaction to this pervasive pressure, no one will voluntarily share food with anybody. Sol Tax found that envy and fear of envy in “a small community where all neighbors watch and where all are neighbors” accounted for the unprogressiveness, the slowness of change toward a productive economy among the Indians of Guatemala. And when a tribe of Pueblo Indians showed the beginnings of specialization and the division of labor, the envy of their fellow tribesmen impelled them to take measures to end this process, including physical destruction of the property of those who seemed in any way better off than their fellows.

Oscar Lewis discovered an extremely pervasive fear of the envy of others in a Mexican Indian village, a fear producing intense secretiveness. Wrote Lews:

The man who speaks little, keeps his affairs to himself, and maintains some distance between himself and others has less chance of creating enemies or of being criticized or envied. A man does not generally discuss his plans to buy or sell or take a trip. [\[38\]](#)

Professor Schoeck comments:

... it is difficult to envisage what it means for the economic and technical development of a community when, almost automatically and as a matter of principle, the future dimension is banned from human intercourse and conversation, when it cannot even be discussed. Ubiquitous envy, fear of it and those who harbor it, cuts off such people from any kind of

communal action directed towards the future ... All striving, all preparation and planning for the future can be undertaken only by socially fragmented, secretive beings. [\[39\]](#)

Furthermore, in this Mexican village no one will warn or tell anyone else of imminent danger to the other's property; there is no sense of human social solidarity whatsoever.

Among the Indians of Aritama in Colombia, the Reichel-Dolmatoffs reported:

Every individual lives in constant fear of the magical aggression of others, and the general social atmosphere in the village is one of mutual suspicion, of latent danger, and hidden hostility, which pervade every aspect of life. The most immediate reason for magical aggression is envy. Anything that might be interpreted as a personal advantage over others is envied: good health, economic assets, good physical appearance, popularity, a harmonious family life, a new dress. All these and other aspects imply prestige, and with it power and authority over others. Aggressive magic is, therefore, intended to prevent or to destroy this power and to act as a leveling force. [\[40\]](#)

The Reichel-Dolmatoffs also noted that if one member of a group in Aritama should work faster or better than his fellows, his place of work is marked with a cross before he arrives the next morning, and his envious colleagues pray to God to make this more able worker slow and tired.

Finally, Watson and Samora found that the major reason for the failure of a group of lower-class Spanish-speaking citizens of a mountain township in southern Colorado to rise into parity with the upper-class Anglo community, was the bitter envy of the Spanish group toward any of their number who managed to rise upward. Anyone who works his way upward is regarded as a man "who has sold himself to the Anglos," "who has climbed on the backs of his people." [\[41\]](#)

The anthropologist Eric Wolf has even coined the term "institutionalized envy" to describe such pervasive institutions, including the practice and fear of black magic in these primitive societies. [\[42\]](#) Schoeck notes:

Institutionalized envy... or the ubiquitous fear of it, means that there is little possibility of individual economic advancement and no contact with the outside world through which the community might hope to progress. No one dares to show anything that might lead people to think he was better off. Innovations are unlikely. Agricultural methods remain traditional and primitive, to the detriment of the whole village, because every deviation from previous practice comes up against the limitations set by envy. [\[43\]](#)

And Schoeck aptly concludes:

There is nothing to be seen here of the close community which allegedly exists among primitive peoples in pre-affluent times?the poorer, it is held, the greater the sense of community. Sociological theory would have avoided many errors if those phenomena had been properly observed and evaluated a century ago. The myth of a golden age, when social harmony prevailed because each man had about as little as the next one, the warm and generous community spirit of simple societies, was indeed for the most part just a myth, and social scientists should have known better than to fashion out of it a set of utopian standards with which to criticize their own societies. [\[44\]](#)

In sum, Ludwig von Mises's strictures against Romanticism do not seem to be overdrawn:

Romanticism is man's revolt against reason, as well as against the condition under which nature has compelled him to live. The romantic is a daydreamer; he easily manages in imagination to disregard the laws of logic and nature. The thinking and rationally acting man tries to rid himself of the discomfort of unsatisfied wants by economic action and work; he produces in order to improve his position. The romantic ... imagines the pleasures of success but he does nothing to achieve them he does not remove the obstacles; he merely removes them in imagination ... He hates work, economy, and reason.

The romantic takes all the gifts of a social civilization for granted and desires, in addition, everything fine and beautiful that, as he thinks, distant times and creatures had or have to offer. Surrounded by the comforts of European town life he longs to be an Indian rajah, bedouin, corsair, or troubadour. But he sees only that portion of these people's lives which seems pleasant to him ... The perilous nature of their existence, the comparative poverty of their circumstances, their miseries and their toil - these things his imagination tactfully overlooks: all is transfigured by a rosy gleam. Compared with this dream ideal, reality appears arid and shallow. There are obstacles to overcome which do not exist in the dream... Here there is work to do, ceaselessly, assiduously... Here one must plough and sow if one wishes to reap. The romantic does not choose to admit all this. Obstinate as a child, he refuses to recognize it. He mocks and jeers; he despises and loathes the bourgeois. [\[45\]](#)

The Romantic, or primitivist, attitude was also brilliantly criticized by the Spanish philosopher, Ortega y Gasset:

... it is possible to have peoples who are perennially primitive ... those who have remained in the motionless, frozen twilight, which never progresses towards midday.

This is what happens in the world which is mere Nature. But it does not happen in the world of civilization which is ours. Civilization is not "just there," it is not self-supporting. It is artificial.... If you want to make use of the advantages of civilization, but are not prepared to concern yourself with the upholding of civilization?you are done. In a trice you find yourself left without civilization ... The primitive forest appears in its native state ... The jungle is always primitive and, vice versa, everything primitive is mere jungle. [\[46\]](#)

Ortega adds that the type of man he sees rising to the fore, the modern "mass-man," "believes that the civilization into which he was born and which he makes use of, is as spontaneous and self-producing as Nature...." But the mass-man, the herd-man, is also characterized by his desire to stamp out those individuals who differ from the mass: "The mass ... does not wish to share life with those who are not of it. It has a deadly hatred of all that is not itself. [\[47\]](#)

IV.

The Left, of course, does not couch its demands in terms of stamping out diversity; what it seeks to achieve sounds semantically far more pleasant: *equality*. It is in the name of equality that the Left seeks all manner of measures, from progressive taxation to the ultimate stage of communism.

But what, philosophically, is "equality?" The term must not be left unanalyzed and accepted at face value. Let us take three entities: *A*, *B*, and *C*. *A*, *B*, and *C* are said to be "equal" to each other (i.e., $A=B=C$) if a particular characteristic is found in which the three entities are uniform or identical. In short, here are three individual men: *A*, *B*, and *C*. Each may be similar in some respects but different in others. If each of them is precisely 5'10" in height, they are then *equal* to each other *in height*. It follows from our discussion of the concept of equality that *A*, *B*, and *C* can be *completely* "equal" to each other only if they are identical or uniform in *all* characteristics?in short, if all of them are, like

the same size of nut or bolt, completely interchangeable. We see, then, that the ideal of human equality *can only* imply total uniformity and the utter stamping out of individuality.

It is high time, then, for those who cherish freedom, individuality, the division of labor, and economic prosperity and survival, to stop conceding the supposed nobility of the ideal of equality. Too often have “conservatives” conceded the ideal of equality only to cavil at its “impracticality.” Philosophically, there can be no divorce between theory and practice. Egalitarian measures do not “work” because they violate the basic nature of man, of what it means for the individual man to be truly human. The call of “equality” is a siren song that can only mean the destruction of all that we cherish as being human.

It is ironic that the term, “equality,” brings its favorable connotation to us from a past usage that was radically different. For the concept of “equality” achieved its widespread popularity during the classical liberal movements of the eighteenth century, when it meant, *not* uniformity of status or income, but freedom for each and every man, without exception. In short, “equality” in those days meant the liberation and individualist concept of full liberty for all persons. Thus, the biochemist Roger Williams correctly points out that the “‘free and equal’ phrase in the Declaration of Independence was an unfortunate paraphrase of a better statement contained in the Virginia Bill of Rights...`all men are by nature equally free and independent.’ In other words, men can be *equally free* without being *uniform*.⁴⁸

This libertarian credo was formulated with particular cogency by Herbert Spencer in his “Law of Equal Liberty” as the suggested fundamental core of his social philosophy:

....man’s happiness can be obtained only by the exercise of his faculties....But the fulfillment of this duty necessarily presupposes freedom of action. Man cannot exercise his faculties without certain scope. He must have liberty to go and to come, to see, to feel, to speak, to work; to get food, raiment, shelter, and to provide for each and all the needs of his nature...To exercise his faculties he must have liberty to do all that his faculties actually impel him to do....Therefore, he has a *right* to that liberty. This, however, is not the right of one but all. All are endowed with faculties. All are bound to ... [exercise] them. All, therefore, must be free to do those things in which the exercise of them consists. That is, all must have rights to liberty of action.

And hence there necessarily arises a limitation. For if men have like claims to that freedom which is needful for the exercise of their faculties, then must the freedom of each be bounded by the similar freedom of all....Wherefore we arrive at the general proposition, that every man may claim the fullest liberty to exercise his faculties compatible with the possession of like liberty by every other man.⁴⁹

Thus, only the specific of equality of *liberty* - the older view of human equality - is compatible with the basic nature of man. Equality of *condition* would reduce humanity to an anheap existence. Fortunately, the individuated nature of man, allied to the geographical diversity on the earth, makes the ideal of total equality unattainable. But an enormous amount of damage - the crippling of individuality, as well as economic and social destruction - could be generated in the attempt.

Let us turn from equality to the concept of inequality, the condition that exists when every man is *not* identical to every other in all characteristics. It is evident that inequality flows inevitably out of specialization and the division of labor. Therefore, a free economy will lead not only to diversity of occupation, with one man a baker, another an actor, a third a civil engineer, etc., but specific *inequalities* will also emerge in monetary income and in status and scope of control within each occupation. Each person will, in the free-market economy, tend to earn a monetary income equal to

the value placed upon his productive contribution in satisfying the desires and demands of the consumers. In economic terminology each man will tend to earn an income equal to his "marginal productivity," to his particular productivity in satisfying consumer demands. Clearly, in a world of developed individual diversity, some men will be more intelligent, others more alert and farsighted, than the remainder of the population. Still others, meanwhile, will be more interested in those areas reaping greater monetary gain; those who succeed at wildcatting of crude oil will reap greater monetary rewards than those who remain in secretarial jobs.

Many intellectuals are wont to denounce the "unfairness" of the market in granting a far higher monetary income to a movie star than, say, a social worker, in that way rewarding "material" far more than "spiritual" and "material," it strikes one that if the social worker's alleged "goodness" indeed resides in her "spirituality," then it is surely inappropriate and inconsistent to demand that she receive more of the "material" amenities (money) *vis a vis* the movie star. In the free society, those who are capable of providing goods and services that the consumers value and are willing to purchase, will receive precisely what the consumers are willing to spend. Those who persist in entering lower-priced occupations, either because they prefer the work or because they are not sufficiently capable in the higher-paid fields, can scarcely complain when they earn a lower salary.

If, then, *inequality* of income is the inevitable corollary of freedom, then so too is inequality of control. In *any* organization, whether it be a business firm, a lodge, or a bridge club, there will always be a minority of people who will rise to the position of leaders and others who will remain as followers in the rank and file. Robert Michels discovered this as one of the great laws of sociology, "The Iron Law of Oligarchy." In every organized activity, no matter the sphere, a small number will become the "oligarchical" leaders and the others will follow.

In the market economy, the leaders, being more productive in satisfying the consumers, will inevitably earn more money than the rank and file. Within other organizations, the difference will only be that of control. But, in either case, ability and interest will select those who rise to the top. The best and most dedicated steel producer will rise to the leadership of the steel corporation; the ablest and most energetic will tend to rise to leadership in the local bridge club; and so on.

This process of ability and dedication finding its own level works best and most smoothly, it is true, in institutions such as business firms in the market economy. For here every firm places itself under the discipline of monetary profits and income earned by selling a suitable product to the consumers. If managers or workers fall down on the job, a loss of profits provides a very rapid signal that something is wrong and that these producers must mend their ways. In non-market organizations, where profit does not provide a test of efficiency, it is far easier for other qualities extraneous to the actual activity to play a role in selecting the members of the oligarchy. Thus, a local bridge club may select its leaders, not only for ability and dedication to the activities of the club, but also for extraneous racial or physical characteristics preferred by the membership. This situation is far less likely where monetary losses will be incurred by yielding to such external factors.

We need only look around us at every human activity or organization, large or small, political, economic, philanthropic, or recreational, to see the universality of the Iron Law of Oligarchy. Take a bridge club of fifty members and, regardless of legal formalities, half-a-dozen or so will really be running the show. Michels, in fact, discovered the Iron Law by observing the rigid, bureaucratic, oligarchic rule that pervaded the Social Democratic parties in Europe in the late nineteenth century, even though these parties were supposedly dedicated in equality and the abolition of the division of labor. [50] And it is precisely the obviously frozen inequality of income and power, and the rule by oligarchy, that has totally disillusioned the equality-seeking New Left in the Soviet Union. No one lionizes Brezhnev or Kosygin.

It is the egalitarian attempt by the New Left to escape the Iron Law of inequality and oligarchy that accounts for its desperate efforts to end elite leadership within its own organizations. (Certainly there has been no indication of any disappearance of the power elite in oft-heralded Cuba or China.) The early drive toward egalitarianism in the New Left emerged in the concept of “participatory democracy.” Instead of the members of an organization electing an elite leadership, so the theory ran, each person would participate equally in all of the organization’s decision-making. It was, by the way, probably this *sense* of direct and intense participation by each individual that accounted for the heady enthusiasm of the masses in the very early stages of the revolutionary regimes in Soviet Russia and Cuba?an enthusiasm that quickly waned as the inevitable oligarchy began to take control and mass participation to die.

While the would-be participatory democrats have made keen criticisms of bureaucratic rule in our society, the concept itself, when applied, runs rapidly against the Iron Law. Thus, anyone who has sat through sessions of any organization engaged in participatory democracy knows the intense boredom and inefficiency that develop rapidly. For if each person must participate equally in all decisions, the time devoted to decision-making must become almost endless, and the processes of the organization *become* life itself for the participants. This is one of the reasons why many New Left organizations quickly begin to insist that their members live in communes and dedicate their entire lives to the organization?in effect, to merge their lives with the organization. For if they truly live and pursue participatory democracy, they can hardly do anything else. But despite this attempt to salvage the concept, the inevitable gross inefficiency and aggravated boredom ensure that all but the most intensely dedicated will abandon the organization. In short, if it can work at all, participatory democracy can work only in groups so tiny that they are, in effect, the “leaders” shorn of their following.

We conclude that, to succeed, any organization must eventually fall into the hands of specialized “professionals,” of a minority of persons dedicated to its tasks and able to carry them out. Oddly enough, it was Lenin who, despite his lip service to the ultimate ideal of egalitarian communism, recognized that a revolution, too, in order to succeed, must be led by a minority, a “vanguard,” of dedicated professionals.

It is the intense egalitarian drive of the New Left that accounts, furthermore, for its curious theory of education?a theory that has made such an enormous impact on the contemporary student movement in American universities in recent years. The theory holds that, in contrast to “old-fashioned” concepts of education, the teacher knows *no more* than any of his students. All, then, are “equal” in condition; one is no better in any sense than any other. Since only an imbecile would actually proclaim that the student knows as much about the content of any given discipline as his professor, this claim of equality is sustained by arguing for the abolition of content in the classroom. This content, asserts the New Left, is “irrelevant” to the student and hence not a proper part of the educational process. The only proper subject for the classroom is not a body of truths, not assigned readings or topics, but open-ended, free-floating participatory discussion of the student’s feelings, since only his feelings are truly “relevant” to the student. And since the lecture method implies, of course, that the lecturing professor knows more than the students to whom he imparts knowledge, the lecture too must go. Such is the caricature of “education” propounded by the New Left.

One question that this doctrine calls to mind, and one that the New Left has never really answered, of course, is *why* the students should then be in college to begin with. Why couldn’t they just as well achieve these open-ended discussions of their feelings at home or at the neighborhood candy store? Indeed, on this educational theory, the school as such has no particular function; it *becomes*, in effect, the local candy store, and it, too, merges with life itself. But then, again, why have a

school at all? And why, in fact, should the students pay tuition and the faculty receive a salary for their nonexistent services? If all are truly equal, why is the faculty alone paid?

In any case, the emphasis on feelings rather than rational content in courses again insures an egalitarian school; or rather, the school as such may disappear, but the “courses” would surely be egalitarian, for if only “feelings” are to be discussed, then surely everyone’s feelings are approximately “equal” to everyone else’s. Once allow reason, intellect, and achievement full sway, and the demon of inequality will quickly raise its ugly head.

If, then, the natural inequality of ability and of interest among men must make elites inevitable, the only sensible course is to abandon the chimera of equality and accept the universal necessity of leaders and followers. The task of the libertarian, the person dedicated to the idea of the free society, is not to inveigh against elites which, like the need for freedom, flow directly from the nature of man. The goal of the libertarian is rather to establish a free society, a society in which each man is free to find his best level. In such a free society, everyone will be “equal” only in liberty, while diverse and unequal in all other respects. In this society the elites, like everyone else, will be free to rise to their best level. In Jeffersonian terminology, we will discover “natural aristocracies” who will rise to prominence and leadership in every field. The point is to allow the rise of these natural aristocracies, but not the rule of “artificial aristocracies”?those who rule by means of coercion. The artificial aristocrats, the *coercive oligarchs*, are the men who rise to power by invading the liberties of their fellowmen, by denying them their freedom. On the contrary, the natural aristocrats live in freedom and harmony with their fellows, and rise by exercising their individuality and their highest abilities in the service of their fellows, either in an organization or by producing efficiently for the consumers. In fact, the coercive oligarchs invariably rise to power by suppressing the natural elites, along with other men; the two kinds of leadership are antithetical.

Let us take a hypothetical example of a possible case of such conflict between different kinds of elites. A large group of people voluntarily engage in professional football, selling their services to an eager consuming public. Quickly rising to the top is a natural elite of the best?the most able and dedicated?football players, coaches, and organizers of the game. Here we have an example of the rise of a natural elite in a free society. Then, the power elite in control of the government decides in its wisdom that all professional athletics, and especially football, are evil. The government then decrees that pro football is outlawed and orders everyone to take part instead in a local eurythmics club as a mass-participatory substitute. Here the rulers of the government are clearly a coercive oligarchy, an “artificial elite,” using force to repress a voluntary or natural elite (as well as the rest of the population).

The libertarian view of freedom, government, individuality, envy, and coercive *versus* natural elites has never been put more concisely or with greater verve than by H. L. Mencken:

All government, in its essence, is a conspiracy against the superior man: its one permanent object is to oppress him and cripple him. If it be aristocratic in organization, then it seeks to protect the man who is superior only in law against the man who is superior in fact; if it be democratic, then it seeks to protect the man who is inferior in every way against both. One of its primary functions is to regiment men by force, to make them as much alike as possible and as dependent upon one another as possible, to search out and combat originality among men. All it can see in an original idea is potential change, and hence an invasion of its prerogatives. The most dangerous man to any government is the man who is able to think things out for himself, without regard to the prevailing superstitions and taboos. [51]

Similarly, the libertarian writer Albert Jay Nock saw in the political conflicts between Left and Right “simply a tussle between two groups of mass-men, one large and poor, the other small and rich ... The object of the tussle was the material gains accruing from control of the State’s machinery. It is easier to seize wealth (from the producers) than to produce it; and as long as the State makes the seizure of wealth a matter of legalized privilege, so long will the squabble for that privilege go on.” [\[52\]](#)

Helmut Schoeck’s *Envy* makes a powerful case for the view that the modern egalitarian drive for socialism and similar doctrines is a pandering to envy of the different and the unequal, but the socialist attempt to eliminate envy through egalitarianism can never hope to succeed. For there will always be personal differences, such as looks, ability, health, and good or bad fortune, which no egalitarian program, however rigorous, can stamp out, and on which envy will be able to fasten its concerns.

Notes

[1] On the interrelations between freedom, diversity, and the development of each individual, see the classic work of Wilhelm von Humboldt, *The Limits of State Action* (Cambridge University Press, 1969). On freedom as necessary for the development of individuality, see also Josiah Warren, *Equitable Commerce* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1965) and Stephen Pearl Andrews, *The Science of Society* (London: C. W. Daniel, 1913).

[2] The economists Bauer and Yamey cogently define economic development as “the widening of the range of alternatives open to people as consumers and as producers.” Peter T. Bauer and Basil S. Yamey, *The Economics of Underdeveloped Countries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957), p. 151.

[3] See George J. Stigler, “The Division of Labor is Limited by the Extent of the Market,” *Journal of Political Economy* (June, 1951), p. 193.

[4] Ludwig von Mises, *Socialism: An Economic and Sociological Analysis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1951), pp. 292-95, p. 303.

[5] Historians have been reminding us in recent decades that neither in England nor in the United States did government confine itself strictly to the ideal of *laissez faire*. True enough; but we must compare this era to the role of government in earlier?and later?days to see the significance of the difference. Thus, cf. Karl Wittfogel, *Oriental Despotism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957).

[6] The New Left, for example, ignores and scorns Marshall Tito despite his equally prominent role as Marxian revolutionary, guerrilla leader, and rebel against Soviet Russian dictation. The reason, as will be seen further below, is because Tito has pioneered in shifting from Marxism toward an individualistic philosophy and a market economy.

[7] It is difficult, of course, to see how intangible *services* could be produced at all without “alienation.” How can a teacher teach, for example, if he is not allowed to “alienate” his teaching services by providing them to his students?

[8] Thus, see Alexander Gray, *The Socialist Tradition* (London: Longmans, Green, 1947), pp. 306, 328.

[9] Karl Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme* (New York: International Publishers, 1938), p. 10.

[10] Quoted in Gray, *The Socialist Tradition*, p. 328. Gray amusingly adds: “A short weekend on a farm might have convinced Marx that the cattle themselves might have some objection to being reared in this casual manner, in the evening.”

[11] August Bebel, in *Women and Socialism*. Quoted in Mises, *Socialism*, p. 190n.

[12] A recent news report disclosed that China has now softened its assault on intellectual labor. The policy of interchanging students and workers seems to have worked badly, and it has been found that “a lack of teachers and of technical training has hampered industrial development and production in recent years.” Furthermore, “workers appear often to have been not tempered but softened by their exposure to a more sedentary life as many students, rather than finding life on the farm rewarding, fled China or killed themselves.” Lee Lescase, “China Softens Attitude on Profs. School Policy,” *The Washington Post* (July 23, 1970), p. A12.

[13] On the Utopian socialists, see Mises, *Socialism*, p. 168.

[14] It is probably that Mao’s particular devotion to the communist ideal was influenced by his having been an anarchist before becoming a Marxist.

[15] Quoted in Gray, *The Socialist Tradition*, p. 328.

[16] Italics as Lenin’s. V.I. Lenin, *Left-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder* (New York: International Publishers, 1940), p. 34.

[17] Mises, *Socialism*, p. 190.

[18] Gray, *The Socialist Tradition*, p. 328.

[19] Quoted in Mises, *Socialism*, p. 164.

[20] Thus, one of the major criticisms of the New Left journal, *The Guardian*, by its rebellious split-off, *The Liberated Guardian*, was that the former functioned in the same way as any “bourgeois” magazine, with specialized editors, typists, copyreaders, business staff, etc. The latter is run by a “collective” in which, assertedly, everyone does every task without specialization. The same criticism, along with the same solution, was applied by the women’s caucus which confiscated the New Left weekly, *Rat*. Some of the “Women’s Liberation” groups have been so extreme in the drive to extirpate individuality as to refuse to identify the names of individual members, writers, or spokesmen.

[21] Thus, a shock to orthodox communists throughout the world was the 1958 Program of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, which declared that the individual’s “personal interest ... is the moving force of our social development ... The objectivity of the category of personal interest lies in the fact that [Yugoslavia] socialism ... cannot subject the personal happiness of man to any ulterior ‘goals’ or ‘higher aims,’ for the highest aims of socialism is the personal happiness of man.” From *Kommunist* (Belgrade), August 8, 1963. Quoted in R. V. Burks, “Yugoslavia: Has Tito Gone Bourgeois?” *East Europe* (August, 1965), pp. 2-14. Also see T. Peter Svennevig, “The Ideology of

the Yugoslav Heretics,” *Social Research* (Spring, 1960), pp. 39-48. For attacks by orthodox communists, see Shih Tung-Hsiang, “The Degeneration of the Yugoslav Economy Owned by the Whole People,” *Peking Review* (June 12, 1964), pp. 11-16; and “Peaceful Transition from Socialism to Capitalism?” *Monthly Review* (March, 1964), pp. 569-590.

[22] John W. Aldridge, *In the Country of the Young* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970).

[23] Quoted in Mises, *Socialism*, p. 304.

[24] On the strong influence of these reactionary thinkers on the anti-individualism of nineteenth century Marxists and socialists, see in particular Leon Bramson, *The Political Context of Sociology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), pp. 12-16 and *passim*.

[25] See the critique of Ellul in Charles Silberman, *The Myths of Automation* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), pp. 104-105.

[26] Thus, see the perceptively satiric article by Tom Wolfe, “Radical Chic: That Party at Lenny’s,” *New York* (June 8, 1970).

[27] This worship of the primitive permeates Polanyi’s book, which at one point seriously applies the term “noble savage” to the Kaffirs of South Africa. Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957), p. 157.

[28] Both the passive and the tribal aspects of New Left culture were embodied in its ideal of the “Woodstock Nation,” in which hundreds of thousands of herd-like, undifferentiated youth wallowed passively in the mud listening to their tribal ritual music.

[29] Irving Babbitt, *Rousseau and Romanticism* (New York: Meridian Books, 1955), pp. 53-54. The New Left’s emphasis on passivity, primitivism, the irrational, and the dissolution of individuality may account for the current popularity of Taoist and Buddhist philosophy. See *ibid.*, pp. 297ff.

[30] Mises, *Socialism*, p. 304.

[31] Mises, *Socialism*, p. 305.

[32] Silberman, *The Myths of Automation*, pp. 104-105.

[33] Neither is the magic used by primitive tribes any evidence of superior, “idealistic,” as opposed to this worldly, “materialistic,” ends. On the contrary, the magic rites were unsound and erroneous means *by which* the tribes hoped to attain such materialistic ends as a good harvest, rainfall, etc. Thus, the Cargo Cult of New Guinea, on observing Europeans obtaining food from overseas by sending away scraps of paper, imitated the Europeans by writing ritualistic phrases on slips of paper and sending them out to sea, after which they waited for cargoes from overseas. Cf. Ludwig von Mises, *Epistemological Problems of Economics* (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand, 1960), pp. 62-66, 102-105.

[34] Bronislaw Malinowski, *Magic, Science, Religion and Other Essays* (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1955), pp. 27-31. Also see Mises, *Epistemological Problems of Economics*.

[35] See the inspiring discussion in Peter T. Bauer, *West African Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954).

[36] Bernard J. Siegel, "Review of Melville J. Herskovits, *Economic Anthropology*," *American Economic Review* (June, 1953), p. 402. On developing individualism among the Pondo of South Africa, see Bauer and Yamey, *The Economics of Underdeveloped Countries*, p. 67n. Also see Raymond Firth, *Human Types* (New York: Mentor Books, 1958), p. 122; Sol Tax, *Penny Capitalism: A Guatemalan Indian Economy* (Washington, D.C., 1953); and Raymond Firth and Basil S. Yamey, eds., *Capital, Saving and Credit in Peasant Societies* (Chicago: Aldine, 1963).

[37] Bauer, *West African Trade*, p. 8. Also see Bauer and Yamey, *The Economics of Underdeveloped Countries*, pp. 64-67. Similarly, Professor S. Herbert Frankel reports on how West Africans habitually wait at entrances of banks to fall upon their relatives to demand money as they leave. Any man who accumulates money must go to great lengths to deceive his relatives on his actual status. Cited in Helmut Schoeck, *Envy: A Theory of Social Behaviour* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1970), pp. 59-60. On the responsiveness of African natives to market economic incentives, see (in addition to Bauer, (*West African Trade*) Peter Kilby, "African Labour Productivity Reconsidered," *Economic Journal* (June, 1961), pp. 273-291.

[38] The works cited are Clyde Kluckhohn, *The Navaho* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1946) and *Navaho Witchcraft* (1944; Boston: Beacon Press, 1967); Allan R. Holmberg, *Nomads of the Lon Bow: The Siriono of Eastern Bolivia* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1950); Sol Tax, "Changing Consumption in Indian Guatemala," *Economic Development and Cultural Change* (1957); and Oscar Lewis, *Life in a Mexican Village: Tepoztlán Restudied* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1951). See Schoeck, *Envy*, pp. 26-61.

[39] Clyde Kluckhohn, *The Navaho and Navaho Witchcraft*, p. 50.

[40] From Gerardo and Alicia Reichel-Dolmatoff, *The People of Aritama-The Cultural Personality of a Colombian Mestizo Village* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 396. Quoted in Schoeck, *Envy*, pp. 51-52.

[41] Watson and Samora " , " *American Sociological Review* (1954), pp.

[42] Eric Wolf " , " *American Anthropologist* (1955), pp.

[43] Reichel-Dolmatoff, *The People of Aritama*, Quoted in Schoeck, *Envy*, p. 47.

[44] Reichel-Dolmatoff, *The People of Aritama*, Quoted in Schoeck, *Envy*, pp. 31.

[45] Mises, *Socialism*, pp. 463-464. See also Jos? Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1932), pp. 63-65.

[46] Jos? Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1932), pp. 97.

[47] Jos? Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1932), pp. 98, 84. For Ortega, the great looming danger is that the mass-man will increasingly use the State "to crush beneath it any creative minority which disturbs it?disturbs it in any order of things: in politics, in industry." Ibid., p. 133.

[48] Roger J. Williams, *Free and Unequal: The Biological Basis of Individual Liberty* (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1953), pp. 4-5. Williams adds: "Does not our love of liberty, which seems to be inherent in all of us, rest squarely upon our inequalities? If at birth we all possessed the same potential tastes ... would we care about being free to pursue them as we

individually desire? ... It seems to me clear that the idea of freedom arose directly out of this human variability. If we were all alike there would seem to be no reason for wanting freedom; `living my own life' would be an empty, meaningless expression." *Ibid.*, pp. 5, 12.

[49]Herbert Spencer, *Social Statics* (London: John Chapman, 1851), pp. 76-78. In the remainder of the book, Spencer spins out the concrete implications of his basic principle. For a critique of the Law of Equal Liberty, see Murray N. Rothbard, *Power and Market* (Menlo Park, Calif.: Institute for Humane Studies, 1970), pp. 159-160.

[50]Robert Michels, *Political Parties* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1949). See also the brilliant work by Gaetano Mosca, *The Ruling Class* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1939), which focuses on the inevitability of a minority "ruling class" wielding power in government.

[51]H. L. Mencken, *A Mencken Crestomathy* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949), p. 145.

[52]Albert Jay Nock, *Memoirs of a Superfluous Man* (New York: Harper, 1943), p. 121.