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WHEN REVOLUTION?

To the anarcho-rightist, to say nothing of rightists generally, I am a veritable Mephisto, inciting my young and unformed charges to bloody riot, violence, and rapine. To the anarcho-leftist, on the other hand, I am a reactionary cop-out, weakening the revolutionary will and doing the State's work by calling for study, scholarship, and passivity. To others, it seems that I careen wildly from month to month, calling for bloody revolution in one issue and denouncing it in the next. In the meanwhile, the fixed principles which I attempt to apply to the changing flux of events, tend to disappear amidst the hubbub.

Let us then hammer out the libertarian principles step by step. First, it is axiom of libertarian thought that the State is a criminal gang, living off the robbery of tax-coercion and using these funds to murder, pillage, enslave, and endow favored groups with special privilege. The State is founded and has its very being in the use of aggressive violence. Therefore, any violence used against the State is *moral*, for it is the moral equivalent of using violence to protect one's person and property from armed marauders. The act of revolution is, therefore, always moral. For similar reasons, any revolutionary act against any State is aesthetically pleasing, for at least some State is being weakened, or some State official is getting his deserved comeuppance.

Having said this, however, we must bring other vectors of principle into our final judgment: into our final decision on whether to "support" (which means at least to *cheer for*) any given concrete revolution. Let us detach principle from emotion for the moment, and postulate the hypothetical government of Ruritania. We read that a revolutionary movement has been formed in Ruritania and has just blown up a government post office. Since revolution *per se* is both moral and aesthetically pleasing, our initial judgment is to cheer: Hooray, a monopoly post office has been destroyed, part of the criminal Ruritanian apparatus has been whittled away.

But having made this judgment, we must inquire further into the specific context. What, for example, are the principles of this revolutionary movement? What political ends does it have in mind? Suppose we find that the Ruritanian Revolution has one guiding principle: the destruction of all redheads, under the theory that all redheads are agents of the Devil. We must now weigh two principles in making our judgment on the Revolution: one, the joy in seeing a criminal State weakened and overthrown; and two, the consideration of what might replace this State. We must then consider: how bad is the existing State (perhaps it is dedicated to murdering all blondes for the same reason), and then weigh this against the probable badness of the new Anti-

Redhead State once it achieves power. The point here is that our final judgment is complex, and that different libertarians, no matter how similar and pure in their libertarian principle, can and will make different judgments on whether or not to support the Revolution. Thus, Libertarian A may say: The existing Ruritanian State is bad, of course, but at least it doesn't wantonly murder redheads; holding my nose, I denounce the Revolution and support the existing State as the lesser evil. But Libertarian B may say: Of course, I deplore the prospective murder of redheads. But the Revolutionary regime will probably impose far lower taxes, and will be less harsh on brunettes than the current regime; so I will hold my nose and support the Revolution. And Libertarian C can have an entirely different kind of judgment. *He* may say: I agree with A that if the Revolution actually ever seized and held power, their murdering of redheads would make them *more* evil than the existing State. *However* my judgment of the situation tells me that the Revolution can never hope to achieve power. They might well, however, be able so to weaken the existing State that *neither* will be able to rule, and Ruritania will be transformed, despite the desires of both parties, into a decentralized, almost stateless society, with small pockets of local rulers, and even local anarchies. Therefore, I support the Revolution.

The point is that, once we pass the first step: the first vector of cheering for any armed self-defense against the State, we can no longer be guided by pure theory alone. We must then use our strategic and tactical judgment; we then have to employ libertarian principle as a complex "art" rather than as strict application of pure science. And, on these judgments, equally good libertarians will necessarily differ. Or, to put it this way: we live, to use the Randian terminology, in a mixed-premise world. In a sense different from the way they mean it, the villains in Randian novels are right: governments, political parties, and most people, are neither "black" nor "white"; they are bundles of varying shades of mixed-premise "gray." And therefore, libertarian judgments on varying States, political leaders, revolutions or whatnot are always difficult and never carry the guarantee of absolute truth. To crib from one of my own examples, if Richard Cobden were leading a political or a revolutionary movement against Genghis Khan, our moral choice between them would be easy indeed; but in the real world, we are usually not confronted with such clear-cut polar choices, and hence we must make our difficult judgments between mixed-premise people, institutions and movements; we must always make complex choices of "lesser evils."

(Continued on page 4)

Bits And Pieces

By Jerome Tuccille

ON SEXISM

The effort this time around is an unpleasant one for I find myself obliged to comment on Murray Rothbard's women's liberation article in the Spring-Summer issue of *The Individualist*, a former monthly publication which now seems to be coming out semi-annually.

A topic as controversial and as much in the news as women's lib is these days requires a strong, uncompromising stand on one side of the issue or the other. Clearly, Dr. Rothbard's moderate, middle-of-the-road approach to the subject is not a fair one for either side. People have a right to know the facts. They expect to read an article and come away with a clear understanding of the ethical and psycho-epistomer . . . mer . . . mer, the abstract questions around which the whole issue revolves. Dr. Rothbard, eager as always to please both factions, the pros and cons, the Lefts and Rights, has written a vacillating, bleeding-heart type article which can only please whim-worshipping concrete-bound second-handers and muscle-mystics.

As anyone who has been following the current struggle for women's liberation knows, there is a tight bond uniting the rational fringes of Left and Right in their common sisterhood. One is quick to detect a touching parallel between Dolly Tanner decked out in her superman shirt, Lucy Komisar in her purple jumpsuit, and Rand's Galt-like heroine, Dagny Taggart, dashing off in a billowing evening gown to save the railroads. Only the cynical would see this as a shrill undertone, an element of just-barely-controlled hysteria uniting the fringes in their sisterhood. The gentle Rand would no more welcome Ti-Grace Atkinson into her living room than Ti-Grace would send Miss Rand a Mother's Day card, and yet their jaws are clenched, though separately, in a common struggle to liberate their species.

One of Rand's earliest ideals was the image of the liberated female who never cooked her own meals (or anyone else's), who did little or no housework, who rose to the top of the business world through competitive efforts and won the admiration of men who previously resented her presence among them. The parallels between the ideals listed above and the current cry of "No more diapers, no more dishes, no more housework!" are obvious enough.

On the question of sex, the Randian heroine is invariably a free agent, judging her partners according to a merit system, selecting the highest ranking in her own hierarchy of values, discarding a present lover as soon as she meets another who is more rational. Sexism, although it goes by a different name, has no place in the Objectivist Ethic. It is the height of immorality for a man and woman to hop in bed simply because they like the shape of each other's buttocks. There is no toleration of *sex object-ism* in Objectivism. Disciples are permitted carnal bliss only if they are intellectually compatible and share the same values, the same sense-of-life, the same moral code.

But Rand puts a curious twist on her analysis of how people are supposed to know when and if they are intellectually compatible. Obviously, lengthy philosophical discussions are time-consuming and extremely distracting, especially if one has an itch to satisfy his sexual needs. Upcoming students of Objectivism will be happy to know that Rand has provided them with a shortcut. It is not necessary for would-be bedmates to probe each other's psyches at length to determine whether they can make it together or not. Truly rational people have the capacity of recognizing each other *on sight*. This is not the same as regarding each other as sex objects. Of course not.

Intellectual compatibility can be seen in the set of someone's jaw and the direct, confident glare of his or her eyes. Rational men and women are invariably tall, beautiful and lean, with thick wavy hair, drilling eyes and strong jutting jaws something like Barry Goldwater's. This poses a problem for short dumpy individualists who can practice eye exercises *ad infinitum*, but can never alter their stature and bone structure no matter how hard they try.

So, when rational human beings recognize each other on sight they are permitted to ravish each other at once in a violent, all-consuming act of love. The crowning height of ecstasy, of course, is to be raped on the steps of the New York Stock Exchange by a philosophical heir of William Graham Sumner.

Another infectious group on the fringes is the "Stick-It-In-The-Wall-Mother-***** Collective" of Boston, Massachusetts. According to a leading commissar for this outfit, all talk about oppressed blacks, chicanos, Indians, etc. . . is nothing but "irrelevant crap" promoted by "the mainstream pig media." (She and Spiro Agnew are apparently intellectually *simpatico*). Women are the most oppressed of all, of course, and "lesbianism is a new way of relating now that women have rejected bullshit traditional heterosexuality."

(By the way. Has anyone ever noticed what a great set of knockers Gloria Steinem has?)

Just for the record, it might be worthwhile to comment on this business of "sex objects." One can sympathize with the cry against the "thingification" of women--the psychological phenomenon of regarding them as brainless mannequins and receptacles for consumer goods (the "you've come a long way, baby" syndrome)--but this ought to be separated from the issue of sex objectification. This is largely an involuntary reaction to begin with. Most strongly-sexed heterosexual men automatically begin to melt a little at the sight of a shapely, partially exposed leg, a soft heaving bosom, a glimpse of flesh along the midriff. This is purely a physiological reaction based on one's personal aesthetics.

Women also view men as sex objects and, fortunately, they have been doing it from time immemorial. Those little eye games you see played by strangers on subways and buses are proof enough of that. Certainly, the sexes are not responding to one another's sense-of-life, Ayn Rand notwithstanding.

And since it is impossible to recognize a philosophical bedfellow on sight, people are initially attracted to one another's physical attributes. This is what draws them together first. Later on, after they have had a chance to know each other better, they can make a more balanced assessment of the other's overall qualities and decide if there is any basis for a lasting relationship.

(Steinem's legs aren't bad either).

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The Case For Elites

In an attempt to sidle up to the Left, many libertarians have been given to denouncing "elitism". The cornerstone of the individualist-libertarian insight, however, is that all people are different. Every individual is unique. Every man differs in his character, personality, intelligence, and range of interests. Given a free society, then, every individual will find his own level of ability and interest. Libertarians, then, are the reverse of egalitarians; we do not subscribe to the impossible Left-ideal of compulsory egalitarianism, of an antheap world in which every person will be identical, uniform, and equal. As individualists, we know and glory in the fact that a free society will release the energies of every individual to develop his capacity and his interests to their full extent.

In that free society, then, "natural" or voluntary elites will arise in every form of human endeavor. There will be a division of labor, and therefore voluntarily accepted leaders, or elites, in every activity, whether in scholarship, corporations, lodge meetings, or the local bridge club. As Jefferson pointed out, we oppose not "aristocracies" or elites *per se*, but "artificial", coercive elites, men who achieve and wield power by means of aggressive violence and exploitation. We are "egalitarian" only to the extent that we oppose a ruling class that extracts its revenue by violence and uses violence to push people around; we are opposed to such a ruling class or to the special privileges which such rulers inevitably dispense. But we do not believe that a free society will result in equality of income or condition; instead, people will then be free to rise to whatever natural elite status their abilities can bring them, and which they will earn as leaders or producers in various fields of endeavor. We recognize, and delight in the fact, that Edison was a better inventor than the tinkerer next door, or that Ludwig von Mises is a greater economist than the instructor around the corner. We simply do not believe (as neither did they) that this natural superiority gives them the right to rule coercively over the local instructor or tinkerer.

In our proper indignation against the ruling class, let us not throw out the elitist baby with the statist bathwater.

From The "Old Curmudgeon"

Highly recommended Movie: "Joe". Setting aside the rather melodramatic plot, the film brilliantly and fairly contrasts three distinctive New York cultures: Upper Class-WASP, hippie-youth, and working-class Queens Irish (Joe himself). See it and find out which of the three cultures *you* identify with, an identification which is no problem at all for Old Curmudgeons everywhere.

Note that the Women's Libbers are now "demanding" *not* abortion-freedom, but "free" (that is costless) abortions, a notable example of the absurdity of the movement and of the Left generally these days. *Who* do they think are going to supply these free abortions?

Perceptive recent cartoon by the brilliant Left-cartoonist Jules Feiffer:

He: Have you ever been in love?
 She: Yes, I love the people.
 He: I mean something smaller than the people.
 She: I love the kids. I think they're great.
 He: But a person--have you ever been in love with a person?
 She: *One* person?
 He: Like a man.
 She: I've loved men . . . Dylan. Che. Mao.
 He: Can you ever love *me*?
 She: (eyes narrowing). Sexist!

ANARCHY

Ever reviled, accursed, ne'er understood
 Thou art the grisly terror of our age.
 "Wreck of all order," cry the multitude,
 "Art thou, and war and murder's endless rage."
 O, let them cry. To them that ne'er have striven
 The truth that lies behind a word to find,
 To them the word's right meaning was not given.
 They shall continue blind among the blind.
 But thou, O word, so clear, so strong, so pure,
 Thou sayest all which I for goal have taken.
 I give thee to the future! Thine secure
 When each at least unto himself shall waken.
 Comes it in sunshine? In the tempest's thrill?
 I cannot tell--but it the earth shall see!
 I am an Anarchist! Wherefore I will
 Not rule, and also ruled I will not be!

--John Henry Mackay

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WHEN REVOLUTION? — (Continued from page 1)

And here we have a vital clue into the inner totalitarian nature of the Randian Cult. For Randians firmly believe, not only that their group must agree on the same basic principles, but that they also must agree on every single specific application: down to such remote cases as who to vote for in the New York mayoralty election. But since even those who agree completely on the science of liberty will inevitably differ on its application to our mixed-premise world, the Randian movement had to face the choice between allowing its members to take many different positions on concrete applications, or enforcing a total "line" on its membership; and unfortunately it chose the latter.

At this point, many libertarians will cry out: but why must we choose at all? Why can't we take a neutral position on all these choices, and support no one except pure libertarians wherever they emerge? The answer is that we can't because we live in a real world, a world of different grades of mixed-premises, a world where not everyone is equally bad. And in this world, events continue to happen whether we approve or not; elections take place, wars are fought, revolutions are waged. If we are to be aware people in a real world, we must take sides in these events, if only to favor one or the other outcome. Richard Cobden was not only better than Genghis Khan but also better than the Tories of his day; Robert A. Taft was better than Franklin Roosevelt; Mark Hatfield is better than Hubert Humphrey or Richard Nixon. How can we live in the world and not choose between outcomes of events whenever there are any gradations of value that we can place upon such outcome? We live, to be sure, in a mixed-premise world, but some mixes are better, and some worse, than others. Furthermore, to "choose", or to "support", does not necessarily mean voting or active participation; it can mean simply: whom do we cheer for on election night? Or, whom do we cheer against? Not to make even this kind of choice is to surrender hopelessly to ignorance and obscurantism.

Suppose now that we do not face mixed-premise choices; suppose that we have a flourishing revolutionary movement consisting only of certified 100% pure libertarians. Given such a pure libertarian movement, we then know that the world ushered in by such a revolution will be far superior to the present. Do we then call for immediate armed insurrection against the State? Not necessarily, for now we must exercise the highly difficult--and again unscientific--art of strategic and tactical judgment. For while we have the absolute moral right to use force to repel armed marauders, we do not have the moral duty to do so. We may often find ourselves in situations where

we are hopelessly outnumbered by the armed burglars, and therefore our strategically wise course is to give in. Man has no moral duty to seek martyrdom. Therefore, even where a revolution would be unimpeachably and unequivocally moral, it would not necessarily be strategically or tactically correct; when to launch a moral revolution, if at all, depends on one's concrete judgment of the relative strength of forces, of the probabilities of success, etc. And, again, in this necessary but difficult judgment, opinions among pure libertarians will differ, and differ markedly.

As for the current situation in the United States, it seems to me that we can be as close to scientific as any strategic judgment can ever get: there is no hope whatever, now or in the foreseeable future, for a successful libertarian revolution in America. Such a revolution must then remain in the realm of moral theory for any foreseeable time to come; and surely no sober person, acquainted at all with American reality, can disagree with this judgment. In that case, the libertarian movement, whatever its tactical alliance with right or left on this or that concrete issue, must concentrate its energies, now and in the future, on the indispensable educational work of expanding its theory and spreading it to as many "converts" as possible. Our major areas of concentration must be the study, the library, the press, the living-room, the seminar, the lecture-hall. We are primarily an educational movement or we are nothing.

Gems Of Statism

1. From William F. Buckley's column of September 10: "Mr. Lindbergh's journals will revive a debate which almost tore America apart, from the ultimate business of which we were saved by the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, which annealed the whole nation. What experience could do such a thing for America today?" Hoping for another Pearl Harbor to "anneal" the nation, Chairman Bill?

2. Monsignor John Sheridan, asked in his column for *Our Sunday Visitor* (August 30), why there is an absence of priests and signorini in peace marches, replied: "We must remember that we have delegated certain community responsibilities to our elected government and we must cooperate with that government in its broad strategy; otherwise, we shall have chaos."

3. Humanist Quote of the Month: "Senator Long (D-La.) told his colleagues that Mideast terrorists should be 'killed and strung up by their heels until the flies eat their flesh'." *Los Angeles Times* (September 21).

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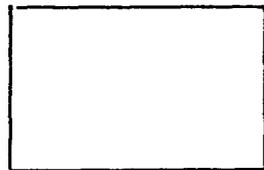
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