We are now entering a daffy, exciting, exuberant season of Presidential politics. Perhaps come the fall of ’72, with all the hoopla over, we shall be faced with the grim, cold, sobering choice of fourth parties make noises in the wings. At this point, the seemingly limitless possibilities, as dozens of Democratic candidates jostle each other, black, female, Third Sex, and Lord knows how many other caucuses abound, and third and fourth parties make noises in the wings. At this point, the great quadrennial American extravaganza looms as the most exciting in decades.

Let us begin with a few clear guidelines. For the libertarian, other things being equal, the first desideratum is to punish the incumbent. If we cannot yet abolish the office of President, we can at least make a start toward redressing our grievances by ousting the existing tenant for his numerous high and low crimes and misdemeanors. If we cannot punish the President to the full extent of the natural law, we can at least retire him to the private life he so richly deserves. We can establish a new and glorious tradition of the one-term President.

That’s if other things are equal, and that at least provides us with our first guideline. But other things, of course, are never equal. When we come further to consider the record in office of Richard Milhous Nixon, it is hard to find one redeeming feature, one splotch of white in the black record of the Nixon regime.

Let us summarize:

The shameful genocidal war in Vietnam and Southeast Asia continues, and Nixon has fiercely resisted every attempt by the Congress, no matter how feeble, to put an end to the war. The latest Hanoi-NLF offer totally exposes the Nixon mendacity on the phony prisoner-of-war issue, but still the Administration refuses to accept the offer, and the genocide continues.

The draft continues in full force, despite anarcho-Nixonite assurance that at least Nixon would remove conscription-slavery. Instead, Nixon simply adopted the old Kennedy lottery scheme, which conservatives and libertarians had scourned for years.

"Conservative", neo-Friedmanite economic manipulation by the Nixon Administration has brought us the new and glorious phenomenon of the inflationary recession. The recession is still with us, while inflation proceeds merrily on its way.

"Conservative" Nixon economics has brought us the largest peacetime federal deficit in our history, which now looms as something like $27 billion, with another $50 billion promised for next year.

"Conservative" Nixon economics is eagerly attempting to foist on us probably the single most disastrous plan ever proposed in America: the neo-Friedmanite Family Assistance Program, which will lock an increasing number of Americans into a parasitic automatic dole.

Nixon has accelerated the system of what has aptly been called "Big Business socialism" or "corporate communism", in which the government comes ever more nakedly to the support and rescue of inefficient large corporations: e.g. the SST, Lockheed, passenger railroad service boondoggles.

With Justice Douglas and the magnificent Hugo Black nearing retirement, our personal and civil liberties are truly in peril unless Richard Nixon is removed from office.

When we add the unparalleled horror of the Nixon record to the original guideline against incumbents, we conclude with one great injunction that every libertarian should be able to support with enthusiasm for 1972: DUMP NIXON!

Here is a goal which all shades of the varied libertarian spectrum should find exhilarating, and indeed the signs are that a broad coalition of left, right, and center libertarians are banding together to work with other anti-Nixon forces in this crusade of cleansing and retribution. It is particularly significant that many of the current anti-Nixon libertarians were high in the Nixon-youth forces in the 1968 campaign.

Clearly, the first place to try to dump Nixon is the Republican primaries. Unfortunately, Senator Mark Hatfield (R., Ore.) has resisted all efforts urging him to run for President, and Nixon’s only Republican opponent is Rep. Paul McCloskey (Calif.), whose only libertarian asset, aside from a dogged and sincere manner, is his staunch opposition to the war in Vietnam. But still this is the major single issue.
DUMPING NIXON — (Continued from page 1)

and the more votes racked up for McCloskey the more the embarrassment and discomfiture for King Richard. At best, there is always the possibility that McCloskey might be able to emulate Gene McCarthy in being so successful as to force the President to withdraw; and at worst, the embarrassing support for the relatively unknown Congressman will clearly be a vote of non-confidence in the President, and will soften him up for the election in November.

Some YAFers and other honest conservatives, in despair at the Family Assistance Plan and especially at Nixon's grandstand visit to China, which is a deep affront to their most cherished rhetoric if not really significant in itself, are turning in despair to a Draft Reagan movement. But honesty has never been a strong conservative suit, and indications are that the Buckleyite realpolitik will triumph, and that Republican conservatives, including of course Mr. Reagan, will dutifully if painfully keep their counsel and support the President. Is there no indignity which conservatives are not prepared to swallow?

Let us assume then that, after as much trouble as can be made for him, Mr. Nixon will sweep into the renomination. What then? The Democratic field is a crowded and ebullient one. In order to make some sense of the large lineup, let us first divide the hopefuls into a rough left-center-right grouping, depending on the intensity of their opposition to the abomination in Southeast Asia.

On the Right, we have those Democrats who are roughly Johnson-Nixon hawks on Vietnam. There is, first, that egregious gas-guzzling one, the darling of New Deal liberalism, Hubert Horatio Humphrey. Humphrey's record of toadying to LBJ marked a new low even for American politics, and the thought of a Nixon-Humphrey replay is almost too much for the human soul to contemplate. No, no, not that! Then there is the man who represents the antithesis of libertarianism in American politics, the man who is wrong on every conceivable question, the "Senator from Boeing", Henry "Scoop" Jackson (Wash.) Bad on the war, bad on the military-industrial complex, bad on the draft, bad on economics, bad, bad, bad, Mr. Statism. Another right-wing hopeful is Rep. Wilbur Mills (D., Ark.), bad on the war and draft, "conservative" fiscal expert and advocate of wage-price controls. Never. And finally, Mayor Sam Yorty of Los Angeles, rightist, clone, crusader of civil liberties, and happily a poor candidate for New Dealer, left, in the center, demarkations between center and left become rather fuzzy. The epitome of the Center is Ed Muskie (Me.), cool, grey, colorless, fairly good on the war at this point, fairly bad on the draft. Probably the eventual candidate when the party hacks have had their day, Ed Muskie is the futherest right candidate who could be acceptable as an alternative to Nixon, and then of course only barely and without enthusiasm. Teddy Kennedy, possessed of lots of family charisma, is under the twin clouds of Chappaquiddick and his one political issue seems to be support for the Berrigan brothers.

Of course, the big dramatic race is now expected to be made by one candidate possessing authentic charisma: Mayor John Lindsay of New York, expected to make a melodramatic switch of parties and then run for the Presidency. Lindsay has charisma, that is, everywhere except in New York City, and it would be hard to find any New Yorker, regardless of political persuasion, who will not predictably spit fire and curses at the very mention of Lindsay's name. And with good reason. If it is unfair to blame the entire visible deterioration of New York City in recent years on Lindsay's stewardship, it is also evidently true that he has hardly succeeded in stemming the tide. In fact, Lindsay is a man who has recently had a continuing掉 head for the administration of the entire country without a grimace of horror. Only one good thing has John Lindsay done as Mayor: he has evinced a genuine concern for civil liberties. He has kept the hops more or less under leash; and his concern for civil liberties has led him to place New York City in the forefront of freedom for pornography and prostitution. Until recently, that is; for in recent weeks, the onset of Presidential fever has apparently led Lindsay to a drastic shift rightward on the matter, and he has supported, not merely the idea, but the practice of civil liberties - thus cancelling the only good deed of the Lindsay regime.

The Democrats' chances in 1972 are excellent; predictably, therefore, in view of their long-standing genius for self-destruction, we can count on them trying desperately to kick those chances away. The latest manifestation is the new Women's Caucus, almost completely left-Democratic, which might well bolt the standard ticket if it is not nominated. Already, Rep. Shirley Chisholm (N.Y.) has decided to run for President, her major qualification being that she is both black and female, and thereby can run as (Continued on page 3)
LIBERTY: FROM RAND TO CHRIST
by Joseph R. Peden

In the midst of what appears to be a renaissance of libertarian thought, and a period of rapid increase in the numbers of its adherents — especially among the young college activists — it might be well for us to devote some attention to a remarkable personal testament entitled "Road to Freedom — Or to Nowhere?" published in Rough Beast #4 (1522 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, D. C. 20036). The author, Warren Carroll, formerly publisher of Freedom's Way, a pioneer libertarian publication, has produced a rare document — an analytic repudiation of libertarianism by a onetime true believer.

Although Carroll is familiar with several schools of libertarian thought — that of the individualist anarchists such as Albert Jay Nock, Frank Chodorov and the Rampart College group, and the limited-government classical libertarians of The Foundation for Economic Education, he tends to identify libertarianism with Objectivism. As a former Randian Carroll knows the strengths and weaknesses of Objectivism intimately and his detailed and often perceptive critical analysis and disillusionment is colored by this personal experience.

Carroll begins his analysis by pinpointing a basic dilemma representative of two "oppressed" caucuses. If only Mrs. Chisholm had been a Chicana, a student, a Young Old Person and a Welfare Mother, she could be the living embodiment of every "oppressed" and un-liberated group in the country. But even as it is, we are unfortunately living in a world where the candidacy of Mrs. Chisholm is not automatically laughed into the oblivion it so richly deserves.

A third and even a fourth party also loom as possibilities. In 1972, about George Corley Wallace one can only have mixed feelings. In contrast to Fred Harris, an authentic populist, Wallace makes many sound and trenchant criticisms of the existing system: of its corporate statism, its unholy alliance between Establishment rich and welfare recipients to exploit the bulk of the working and middle classes of its compulsory integration and school bussing. But, alas! The Wallacian policies hardly sustain the promise of his sound critiques; a superhawk on Vietnam and the Cold War, Wallace is also scarcely known for devotion to civil liberties; on the contrary, we can expect the ultimate unleashing of the police and of repression under a Wallace as President.

There remains the possibility of a New Left fourth party, as yet unnamed. In theory, a fourth party could do an effective job in helping the Democrats to the Left and in a pro-peace direction, by using the time-honored device of the carried-and-the-stick, promising (a) that if the Democrats nominate a Proxmire or a McGovern, the New Party would run him on its line as well; but (b) that if the Democrats nominate a Hubert Humphrey, the New Party would run its own man in opposition. This seems to be a simple and effective strategy, but for some reason few third parties — among whom New York's Liberal and Conservative Parties are notable exceptions — have the wisdom and maturity to pursue such a course. Going on past record, we can predict that either the New Party will collapse and not be heard from again, or that it will stubbornly insist on running its own candidate no matter what the Democrats do, and thereby threaten a dangerous split in the anti-war forces. If the black and female caucuses do not succeed in wrecking the Democrats' chances, then perhaps the New Party will finish the job.

which besets Objectivists: how can they most effectively create an objectivist social order? If they plunge into the political cauldron they are known to contribute intellectual consistency — the hallmark of Objectivist morality, if they refrain from political action, they remain intellectually chaste, but doom their movement to "perpetual ineffectiveness". To Carroll this dilemma is a "fatal shortcoming" of libertarianism. Moreover, faced with this inner conflict, the libertarian is likely to be assaulted by a sense of despair that mankind in general will ever have the same "wetness for change" that mankind in general will ever have the same "wetness for change"

"By definition, the existing pattern of government everywhere prevents the realization of the libertarian dream, and the trend of current history sets steadily toward more and more concentration of power in government. Participation on any significant scale in either the political or economic system now existing entails compromises of principle that most libertarians find it increasingly they find themselves hemmed and blocked on every side by their own philosophy. What was to have been a road to freedom becomes, in the real world, a cage."

"As the realization grows... that he is caught in a trap, ..., increasingly his thought turns either to violence or to flight. Those who succumb to violence "are quickly absorbed in the New Left and cease to be libertarians"; those who turn to flight — to desert isles or nomadism or hermitage — thereby affirm the utopian character of libertarian philosophy. "In these two swamps of failure the libertarian movement in all its forms is being swallowed up."

Clearly Carroll knows whereof he speaks. He seems to have undergone the great intellectual crisis he so accurately describes. The sordid public disputes between Ayn Rand and Nathaniel Branden seem to have precipitated a decision by Carroll to flee to the uninhabited waste of Tasmania. There he was further traumatized by finding the few isolated inhabitants gathered around a TV set watching the Ed Sullivan Show and the Australian government firmly in control of all uninhabited lands. His faith in libertarianism as a workable moral philosophy was finally shattered.

From this disillusionment, Carroll now sees three fundamental errors and a "still more fundamental failure of vision which taken together are fatal to the libertarian dream".

First of all, says Carroll, there is a "drastic misapprehension of the nature of man": Libertarians view man as naturally good and rational but corrupted by institutions — the State, the schools, the family, etc. But equally, libertarians know that institutions are merely individuals acting in concert in accordance with their interests, instincts or traditional ways. Therefore, the responsibility for the evils in society cannot be placed upon institutions but upon the individuals acting within the collective behavioral framework we call an institution. "But if men increasingly find their present state through their own corruption, how then do libertarians expect to bring them out of it? The failure of all their specific programs gives the answer to that question: they cannot".

Here one should note that Carroll raises the very crucial question of the nature of evil in man — a subject of the greatest philosophical and practical importance which deserves serious analysis by libertarians. But he also asserts that because of their inadequate theory as to the true nature of man, the specific programs of libertarians have, historically, failed and in fact cannot succeed. Since he does not give further detail or example to illustrate what he has in
LIBERTY: FROM CHRIST TO RAND

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mind, one hesitates to comment further than to say that as no fully libertarian society has existed in European civilization since libertarian philosophy first emerged in the age of the Enlightenment, one can hardly prove or disprove Carroll’s sweeping judgement as to its pragmatic effectiveness. One can only point empirically and historically to the fact that since the 18th century there has been a continual expansion of individual liberty as an ideal and social reality in a host of areas of human thought and action. I would give Carroll’s indictment a Scottish verdict of “Not Proven.”

A second error, according to Carroll, is the libertarian’s “optimistic misreading of history”, his assumption that “his system has never failed because it has never been tried, while in fact it has never been tried because it would certainly fail! The failure of the approaches to a libertarian society which were made in the past, particularly in the 19th century, is the proof we have that a fully libertarian society would be even shorter-lived and less successful.”

I have already stated my belief that Carroll’s historical verdict on libertarian efforts in previous centuries is not proven. But his accusation of misplaced optimism is central to the condition of despair which permeates his entire exposition of the Enlightenment, one can hardly prove or disprove the plausibility of the libertarian philosophy. 

Carroll shows a surprisingly crude appreciation of the complexity of human society and of the process by which societies undergo change. Libertarian philosophy is largely the product of the 19th century drawing inspiration from the intellectual legacy of the enlightenment. Does he really think that scarcely two centuries would see the triumph of so radical a moral, social and economic philosophy? Christianity as a wholly integrated moral and practical philosophy has been with us for two thousand years and its failures are at least as glaring as those of libertarianism. Does the failure of Christians and their society to conform to the ideals of the philosophy of Christ mean that their “system” would totally fail if ever tried? Are both Christians and libertarians hopeless Utopians? I think not. They may well have been the only true realists. Only a person of the narrowest historical perception could dismiss libertarians as guilty of “optimistic misjudgement of history”. They are simply not historical determinists and they recognize that a century is but a minute in the history of the human race, They do have faith in the ultimate value of and vindication of their philosophical insights – as do believing Christians.

I think that Carroll is so frustrated by the collapse of his own utopian libertarianism that he has lost historical perspective. As Paul Goodman has pointed out, the libertarian revolution is not the work of a day or a decade – or a lifetime. It is a continuous process through the ages. The focus of the struggle changes from time to time and place to place. Once it involved the abolition of slavery; now it may be women’s liberation; here it may be a struggle for national independence; there it may center on civil liberties; at one moment it may require electioneering and party politics; at another armed self-defense and revolution, Carroll expected too much too soon. There is a tendency among many libertarians to look for an apocalyptic moment when the State will be smashed forever and anarchy prevail. When they realize that the great moment isn’t about to come in their time, if ever, they lose faith in the integrity and plausibility of the libertarian philosophy and then await the Second Coming of Christ when the reign of Justice shall be established and evil men receive their just punishment, the libertarian awaits the coming of the rational and anarchic age. But to lose one’s faith in the validity of Christianity because evil continues to thrive in the world makes as much sense as losing one’s faith in libertarianism because evil has not yet been unchallenged by the Old.

Such attitudes are naive and not be excused from mature, sophisticated men of learning. Carroll’s experience should warn us that libertarianism can quite easily become merely an adolescent fantasy in minds that are immature and unseasoned by a broad humanistic understanding. It should not be an ideal fix or magic formula, but a moral imperative with which one approaches the complexities of social reality. In his discussion of what he considers to be a third fatal error, Carroll gives further clues to what ultimately repelled him in libertarianism – the “fundamental inadequacy of the materialistic value system which, in essence, they all accept”. Crediting Ayn Rand with at least attempting to transcend the obvious limitation of materialism by setting up life itself as the source of value, Carroll accurately perceives that “objectivism in practice measures the value of life in material terms, by the financial profit or the personal satisfaction that can be realized from it”. It is one of the great ironies that Leftists who philosophically are materialists are psychologically quite ready to sacrifice life, liberty and personal comfort for the Cause; yet Objectivists who are rhetorically preoccupied with morals, concepts, dialectic and reason are notoriously adverse to anything that smacks of idealistic altruism. Wealth and the bitch goddess success are the household deities of the Randians. Who else could have made the sign of a personal fetish or totem? If they were not so narrowly chauvinistic the Randians might have chosen the more universal symbol of their cult – the golden calf. Worshippers of wealth and success, and hedonists, are seldom very attractive people. They are incapable of either love or true friendship for both are founded upon disinterested loyalty and self-sacrifice to the needs of another. It is not surprising that at a West coast convention should wildly applaud a young man who openly bragged that he had betrayed his fellow students to the police and his only regret was that he had not done it for money! Or as an ex-Randian once put it, the only poetry that will ever come from the Randians will be an Ode to Greed.

Under the circumstances, it is not surprising that Mr. Carroll has abandoned libertarianism (which he tends to identify with Objectivism) and sought elsewhere for a new certitude and a new basis for his moral values. Indeed, it is to his credit that he did so. He has found a new faith; he has become a Christian. The great tragedy here is that he fails to perceive that libertarianism is not incompatible with a Christian world view. Libertarianism is not the atheism, materialism and unrestrained egoism of Objectivism or of Stirnerism or other variant schools. It is essentially the belief in voluntarism as a basis for social relationships; that man is a creature whose inherent worth and dignity is beyond price; that man should live in conformity to his nature as perceived through the light of reason; that you should do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Is this at all incompatible with Christianity? The Christian is, I would argue, a natural anarchist by faith. He has a profound respect for life and human dignity; he governs himself by the inner law of conscience illumined by the teachings of Christ; he denies the State as a source of good or truth – at best it is a punishment placed upon men for their evil deeds; and he accepts moral responsibility for the consequences of his acts. The Christian finds true liberty by living his life in conformity to the will of God as manifested in the law of nature and the revealed word of the great poets, prophets and sages of all ages. If Tolstoy, Dorothy Day, the Anabaptists, and Jehovah’s Witnesses are not libertarians and Christians, the words are meaningless.

Carroll has done us a great service in underscoring the ultimate inadequacy of Objectivism as a social and personal philosophy, and the danger of equating libertarianism as a social philosophy with objectivism’s often perverse and anti-human values. The Randian value system is a bitch goddess success are the household deities of the Randians. Who else could have made the sign of a personal fetish or totem? If they were not so narrowly chauvinistic the Randians might have chosen the more universal symbol of their cult – the golden calf. Worshippers of wealth and success, and hedonists, are seldom very attractive people. They are incapable of either love or true friendship for both are founded upon disinterested loyalty and self-sacrifice to the needs of another. It is not surprising that at a West coast convention should wildly applaud a young man who openly bragged that he had betrayed his fellow students to the police and his only regret was that he had not done it for money! Or as an ex-Randian once put it, the only poetry that will ever come from the Randians will be an Ode to Greed.

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bellent to many people otherwise attracted to libertarian voluntarism, decentralization, and even the market economy. Carroll's experience should alert us to the spiritual bankruptcy of that particular school of libertarian thought, and direct us to introduce young libertarians to alternative ethical value systems - such as Christianity - which are rationally and historically compatible with essential libertarian principles.

Comment

by M. N. R.

Dr. Warren Carroll's Leap Over the Wall from Randianism to Triumphantist Christianity highlights two important problems that deserve far more attention than they have received from libertarians: the growing problem of defection, and the status of Christianity and the Christian ethic within the movement.

As Professor Peden points out, a major reason for Carroll's defection was his thirst for Instant Victory - a flaw that he shared with all too many libertarians. When Instant Victory was not forthcoming, Carroll took flight for a retreatist Utopia in Tasmania, and when that proved abortive, abandoned the cause altogether. Why can't libertarians settle down cheerfully to a lifelong struggle for liberty? Carroll argues repeatedly that libertarianism offers "no reward along the way", no "reward in the road itself" except for the eventual attainment of liberty. But why not? Why is there not joy in dedication to the advancement of liberty?

Apart from their respective merits, then, it is no accident that, in practical application - from sex to music - Christian ethicists should have a far more rational batting average than the Randian. After all, Randian thought has only the last thousand years to develop. We stand on the shoulders of the thinkers of the past, even though of average ability. And yet this has been the major charge hurled at us by mainstream Randians, and their libertarian bona fides sharply questioned. Being on the whole - perhaps as a result of their Christian training - far nicer people than their tormentors, these Christian libertarians have put up with this shabby treatment with calm and good humor. But it should be crystal clear that a libertarian movement which imperiously insists upon atheism as a necessary condition for membership is going to needlessly alienate countless numbers of potential supporters. Atheists, to be sure, believe that Christianity, libertarians claim, is inherently evil and thereby provide a legalized, legitimate quagmire of the capricious and the bizarre.

There should be nothing very mysterious about that. If their actions are to be guided by any coherent set of values - take them passively, almost as a result of their system of values? Surely that system with the longest history is a Christian one. And to ignore these Christian philosophers and to attempt to carve out an ethical system purely on one's own is to court folly and disaster.

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That is, while we are fighting to libertarianize society through the vote, we must also refuse to be drafted, to pay taxes, to obey the myriad restrictions on peaceful activities.

If we are going to work with non-libertarians, it follows that we must seek out a viable group somewhere along the political spectrum with whom we find ourselves most compatible. By "a viable group" I mean one that is politically alive and active and operating with a good measure of support. Reform liberals fit that bill for us at the present moment. If we are far apart on economic principle, it is the one area where we are miles apart from every other major faction in the country. At the very least, left liberals are sympathetic to the idea of radical decentralization, and it is through this avenue that we must channel our efforts to achieve the libertarian ideal of individual liberty (Every time I bring up the subject of "decentralization," I am bowed by morons who want to know why we should fool around with a system which might lead to neighborhood tyranny. If the reasons aren't apparent by now, then to hell with it. Suffice it to say that neighborhood dictators are easier to deal with than the immensely more powerful ones in federal, state and city governments).

As far as actual candidates are concerned, again we are talking about the "lesser of evils," about the "best of a bad lot." Politicians, by definition, are a "bad lot" according to libertarian theory. But as long as we are saddled with a system based on patronage, graft, corruption, and the apportioning of power -- with no real hope of eliminating that system in the near future -- we are forced to think in terms of "degrees of evil" whenever we step beyond the confines of ivory-tower purism. It is only by working with other groups, such as reform liberals, that we can hope to influence them in their own choice of political candidates -- perhaps guide them toward one or two more acceptable to us out of a stable of half a dozen or so.

The way the political sweepsakes are shaping up for 1972, this is how the various entries look from this observer's vantage point:

MARK HATFIELD is perhaps the most acceptable of all. He is serious about getting out of southeast Asia, about eliminating the military draft, about liberalizing trade and diplomatic relations with all other nations, and he has taken a uniquely libertarian position on the middle east -- that is, he is the only major politician to speak out publicly for the displaced Palestinians, the real victims of the Arab-Israeli conflict. On the negative side, he continues to vote for centralist welfare schemes, although he has lately spoken favorably of Rothbardian economic principles. Most damaging of all, he voted for Nixon's no-knock legislation, an inexcusable violation of libertarian principle which requires a very cautious attitude toward his general position on civil liberties.

GEORGE McGOVERN. Good on the war. Good on the draft. Speaks favorably about political decentralization. His stand on the middle east is typically liberal establishment-middle easternally and unqualifiedly pro-Israel. Economically, he is liberal-welfarist, though he seems open to decentralist alternatives.

EUGENE MCCARTHY. The remarks on McGovern apply generally here with one major exception: he appears to be a bit more flexible on the middle east, however, his credibility as a serious contender has been considerably weakened by his own标igrination.

PAUL MCCLOSKY continues to be a one-issue candidate; he is against further U. S. participation in the war. His position on other issues has remained vague until this writing. Most damaging: he is on record as being in favor of the military draft. Still, he might be worth supporting.

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**Traditional China And Anarchism**

By Murray Rubinstein

(Professor Rubinstein’s fine summary of traditional Chinese political concepts suggests an important lesson for libertarians. In Chinese thought the anarchist ideas were applied within a statist structure; there had been no attempt to overthrow the state but merely to introduce anarchist practices to modify and improve the situation. The result was oppressive; anarchist ideas cannot be applied while the state system continues in existence. In fact, it may be that the application of anarchist ideas within a statist structure can only lead to worse oppression. The state is the central issue; its abolition is the central objective. The introduction of anarchist practices or operations while the state continues to exist may not only be irrelevant but if widespread in application may result in worse oppression. This is an important warning for libertarians. What was the reason for the failure in China to move to an anarchist society? Elitism. There was a disdain for the common people and their institutions. The clan and self-help organizations provided a suitable basis for a libertarian legal system. But their powers were curtailed and limited because they were viewed as a threat to the state structure from which the ruling class drew its wealth. Although they might be committed to the anarchistic philosophy of the Chinese sages, the local rulers recognized that they drew their wealth from the statist structure. Thus, they viewed all activities against the standard of the preservation of the statist structure and acted in their official capacities not as anarchist philosophers but as statist oppressors. —Leonard P. Liggio)

The Chinese Civil Service System with it complicated examination path and its structured pattern of rule and control from above seems far distant from an anarchistic model of society based on free association or voluntarism, and a laissez-faire economy. Yet at the heart of this system are basic concepts very close to those libertarians adopt as their own.

The ideological basis of the System was a combination of Taoism and Confucianism which represented a functional application of these seemingly contradictory thought systems. It is my purpose to examine some of these basic tenets and see how they were modified in the process of application.

Taoism, in its philosophical form, is represented by two major works, the Tao Te Ching (Book of the Way) and the Chuang Tzu. Each of these books is a product of the Warring States period, an age in which much of Chinese philosophy was developed. Taoism on this level is a pantheistic thought system which holds that the universe is a continuum in which all matter is in the process of becoming differentiated and then non-differentiated. The Taoist believes that there is a single source to the “ten thousand things” and that he must reestablish his unity with the universe. The inner harmony of nature should be related to the outer harmony of man’s actions. To achieve this external harmony is to leave things alone. The best government is the least government; the best ruler is he who is content to leave his subjects alone.

Confucianism on the surface seems the opposite of this WuWei (non-action) form of rule (or non-rule). It is a
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philosophy that seems to stress precedent and strict adherence to rites and ceremonies. Li (ritual) is only one aspect of the Confucian ideology, for there is also deep faith in Jen (benevolence-good) and chih (wisdom). The operation of government and thus of society should be in the hands of the Chun-tzu - the gentleman who advises the ruler and leads by moral virtue. The Confucians viewed formal punitive law as negative and only to be used as last resort. There was no formal concept of civil law, for in a society based on virtue such would be unnecessary. In the Analects, this belief in government by virtue is expounded at length:

95. Confucius said, "If a ruler himself is upright, all will go well without orders. But if he himself is not upright, even though he gives orders, they will not be obeyed."

97. Confucius said, "Lead the people by laws and regulate them by penalties and the people will try to keep out of jail, but will have no sense of shame. Lead the people by virtue and restrain them by rules of decorum and the people will have a sense of shame and moreover will become good."

Theoretically, therefore government means good men, living properly, rather than good laws, strictly enforced. How did these ideas, Taoist and Confucian, work out in practice, but the ethics became formalized and a concrete set of rituals and church structure were developed. This religious Taoism can still be seen in operation today on Taiwan.

Confucianism, on the other hand, did become the state orthodoxy. In the reign of the Han emperor Wu Ti the philosophy of Confucius, as it had been passed down and thus modified since 500 B.C., became the theoretical basis for government. During the T'ang Dynasty a method of examination was developed and a complicated government structure developed to make use of the talents of the trained scholars. The means of choosing and utilizing the potential Chun-tzu was thus devised. Once the student had passed through the three stages of exams, the district level, the province level and the central administration level and had achieved the degree of Chih Shih, he was ready to put into practice the lessons he had learned (lessons learned by memorizing and analyzing the works of Confucius and the other "Classics"). He became on the district level the embodiment of the concept of 'rule by good men'. But instead of letting society run itself, he found himself forced to rule as a despot, acting as tax collector, judge, jury and prosecuting attorney, defense chief, police chief, flood control expert, and moral instructor to the local gentry. He was constantly under the scrutiny of his superiors and had to move to a new post every three years in accordance with custom. The magistrate was thus an overburdened local bureaucrat.

very far from the ideal of a man leading by the force of moral virtue alone.

The lesson of Traditional China for those who believe in freedom and the creation of a totally free society is this: that ideas are not enough, that even concepts conceived of by men such as Confucius and Lao Tzu can become stale, rigid, even despotic in application. China in the formative centuries developed proto-anarchistic ideas. The total, unsystematic application of those ideas created a system as rigid, as formalistic, as tyrannical as any we have today.

From The Old Curmudgeon

(Once again, the need for him arises. Tall and lean, he dons his mask, leaps on his trusty white horse, and rides off into the West. Champion of Truth, Defender of Justice, scourge of deviationists, heretics, sinners, and evildoers, the bane of Young Whippersnappers, he rides again. In a storm of thundering hooves, with a hearty "Hi-yo Silver", here he is, back by popular demand... the Old Curmudgeon.)

Excess Curmudgeony.

I never though I'd have to say this, but as a long-time champion of both Old Curmudgeony and the Golden Mean, I have to admit that there can be such a thing as being too much of a curmudgeon. For example: under the guidance of Jerome Tuccille and Murray Rothbard as Advisory Editors, Arno Press, a respected reprint publisher and subsidiary of the New York Times, is putting out a series, hopefully by this Christmas, of reprints on "The Right-Wing Individualist Tradition in America." One would think that libertarians and individualists would jump at the chance of wide distribution in hard cover. But no! Several Old Right-wing Curmudgeons, sequestered away on their literal or figurative mountaintops for decades have sniffed some sort of Establishment Plot in all this and have refused to sell their copyrights to Arno preferring to keep their purely printed and almost unknown editions to their hermitic bosoms. Come on, fellas; we respect and admire you for your lonely battles over the decades. But new times have arrived; it is at last in to be an individualist. Come on, relax and enjoy the New Dispensation; after all, we didn't want to vindicate the old left-wing smear that we became Individualists in order to justify our anti-social psyches, would we?