LIBERTARIANISM — (Continued from page 4)
sector, conditions are imposed on the free market by govern-
which distorts the market and impedes its efficiency." Now
my objection to this is fundamental: the radical distinctions are
not between the public and private sectors, or public
and private ownership and control, but rather between just
and unjust ownership and control. Ultimately, all decision
making comes down to a few individuals, or one person,
over a specific property. It is morally irrelevant whether
this be "private" or not. What is relevant is whether or
not it is just. Suppose, for instance, that a thief makes off
with someone's watch. Is that watch in his possession now
"public" property? Is it "private" property, which, re-
member, is equated by Hospers (and Rand, apparently) with
the uncoerced, free market sector? Or take the case of a
government seizing everyone's property and giving it to
individuals who are not technically part of the State
apparatus. Is that "private property," or the "free market,
uncoerced sector?" Also, take the hypothetical case of
someone justly owning something and donating it to
those in the government, such as somebody's donation of a private
library to the government. Is this part of the "public
sector" which is equated with the coercive sector?
The point is this: whether public or private, the real moral
distinction is between property which is justly held, and
which is unjustly held. And a large part of the "private
sector" in the world is property which is, by libertarian
standards, unjustly held, such as the case with the land in
the multitude of feudalist countries which still exist. But if
this is true in one case, it may also be true in another.
Which cases it is true in, can only be established by means
of detailed research and by the application of libertarian
principles. I submit that had Prof. Hospers approached the
issue this way, he would have been far more harsh on
so-called "private" people and institutions than he has been in LIBERTARIANISM. The questions of "ultimate
responsibility" and the like are, of course, different issues,
and must also be analyzed. But it is Hospers' concern
with "public" or governmental actions which has led him to
play down the role of practically anyone except liberal
intellectuals in the rise of Statism.

There is the same problem in the case of Hospers'
critique of student takeovers of university campuses. The
argument against the claim that justly established
"private" universities is clear. But what about State
universities? And what about the so-called "private" un-
iversities which are nearly 90% bankrolled by the state?
Or which seize land from its rightful owners by aligning
with the State? Or the tenets of eminent domain? Or those
who align with the State to do "research" into ways and means
of destroying other people's lives and property? Whatever
one's position on these might be, it is surely more com-
plex an issue than Hospers makes it.

Let us take one final, related, issue before zeroing in
on foreign policy: the case of the students' reactions to
Dow Chemical's presence on campuses across the U.S.,
at the time when Dow's own napalm was being used to
zap Vietnamese peasants at the height of the Vietnam
War. Hospers makes it a simple case of free speech
good case can be made for this position. But if one holds
— as I do — that the Vietnam War is a criminal war for
which the U.S. is far more responsible than the Communists
of North Vietnam, then the issue becomes more complex.
In his chapter on international relations, his response to
the menace of the Communist criminals is not "having
relations of any kind with such nations — not diplomatic
and, more important, no trade . . . " This is not made
clear — does Hospers support U.S. government prohibitions
of American citizen trading with communist countries? If
so, then this is the age-old problem of whether or not
one is morally justified in coercively preventing one from
trading with a criminal. If one is, and if the U.S. govern-
ment is also criminal (i.e. it initiates force, though

The Liar As Hero
By Walter Block

It is all too easy to be an advocate of free speech when it
comes to the rights of free speech of those with whom
one is in agreement. It is all too easy to wax eloquent
about the free speech rights of people who recite the boy
scout pledge or the pledge of allegiance, or who sing the
star spangled banner. Or other equally controversial
things. The real test of free speech advocacy, is when it
comes to controversial speech; better yet, when it comes to
vicious, nasty speech that practically everybody is against.

There is perhaps nothing nastier or more vicious than
libel, especially when it is personal and even false. We must
therefore take especial care to defend the free speech rights of
the libeler who furnishes us with a most important arena
for free speech protection. For if the free speech rights
of libelers and slanderers can be protected, the rights of
any of the rest of us who do not give as much offense will
certainly be more secure. If the free speech rights of
libelers and slanderers are not protected, they are done a
disservice, and the rest of us are that much less secure.

The reason that there has not been much action (to say
the least) in behalf of the slanderer and libeler on the part
of civil libertarians is that it is widely felt that they
(unjustifiably) ruin people's reputations. Crim tales about
lost jobs, friends, etc., abound. Far from being concerned
with the free speech rights of the libeler and slanderer,
civil libertarians have been concerned with protecting
what they call the rights of those who have had their
reputations destroyed by libelers and slanderers. It should
be realized, however, that the truth as well as falsity
can ruin reputations; so merely stopping false charges
from being uttered is no guarantee of maintaining a person's
reputation. If we take the view that reputations are all
somehow sacrosanct, then we must prohibit all sorts of
denigration, even truthful ones. No kind of unfavorable
literary criticism, satire, movie, play, music, or book
reviews could be allowed. All diminish reputations to some
degree.

Although it is interesting that the deniers of free speech
to libelers would not be willing to consistently deny free
speech to all detractors, this alone will not clearly and
unambiguously establish the free speech rights of the
libeler. In order to do this, we must realize that a person's
reputation is not his private property (as, for instance,
is his coat). His reputation is rather what other people
think of him. His reputation consists solely of the thoughts of
other people. Thus, to prohibit the slanderer from ruining
someone's reputation is to prohibit the slanderer from
trying to affect the thoughts of other people. A man does not own his
reputation any more than he owns the thoughts of others —
because that is all his reputation consists of. A man's
reputation cannot be stolen from him any more than can
thoughts of other people be stolen from him. Whether his
reputation was "taken from him" by fair means or foul, by
truth or falsehood, he did not own it in the first place and
hence should have no recourse to the law for damages.
Paradoxically, reputations, owned or not, will probably
be more secure without laws prohibiting libelous free
speech. Nowadays, with laws prohibiting libelous falsehoods,
there is a natural tendency for the public to believe any
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THE LIAR AS HERO — (Continued from page 5)

publicly made libel or slander. "It would not be printed if it were not true," reasons the gullible public, if libel and slander were freely allowed, there would be so much of it, and from every possible slant, that the public would not be so gullible. Scurrilous attacks would have to be checked out or substantiated before they would have much effect. Commercial agencies like Consumers Reports and the Better Business Bureau might arise to meet the demand on the part of the public for more accurate scurrilous information.

Until that great and glorious time when vicious nasty false remarks are accorded their proper free speech protection, we should all, liars and truth tellers alike, give aid and comfort to the libeler and slanderer; failing that, we should at least recognize them for the heroes that they are. For it is the libeler and slanderer who is on the front line of the battle to protect the freedom of speech of us all.

From The Old Curmudgeon

Psychology and All That.

My strictures against the California Psychology conference gave rise to a few critical letters from the California movement, ranging from the cogent to the frenetic. Roy Childs pointed out, quite correctly, that humanistic psychology is philosophically far more akin to libertarians than behaviorism, since both believe in free will. Roy holds that the Conference made no particular commitment to forms of therapy. All this is fine, although the conference literature made far more grandiose claims. But it still leaves the conference as just one recent example of the fledgling growth, both in the libertarian movement and in the American culture as a whole, of what we might call psychologie.

The hallmark of the psychologist is that the focus of his attitudes undergoes a severe change. Instead of concentrating his activities on grappling with the outside world (including the world of ideas), he turns morbidly inward, and spends his energies worrying about his own psyche and inflicting this worry on all around him. Note that I am not trying to denigrate the almost universal existence of psychological problems, their importance to the individual, or the possible value of therapy. What I am attacking is the person's elevation of his psychic problems into a matter of seemingly cosmic significance, in the course of which the person's effectiveness in dealing with the outside world wavers amidst the bog of fuzzy-headed morbidity. A typical psychologist will say: "I now see that all these political and economic problems are unimportant; the only really important concern is one's inner growth', experiencing one's feelings, expanding one's 'openness'."

Not only does all the palaver about inner growth shift the focus from the outside world, thereby often intensifying the person's troubles, but the psychologizing promotes not only chuckleheadness, but also the very instability, hedonism, and 'whim worship' that the world is suffering too much of in the first place. Much of the humanist writings, particularly those of the late Abraham Maslow, contain a great deal of value, emphasizing as they do free individual choice and the importance of individual self-development. But the problem is that even in the best of these writings, whim-worship is encouraged, because they have no moral principles, no ethical guidelines for choice to offer to their readers and followers. Stressing individual self-development without setting rational moral guides for that development (develop where? in what direction?) leads to caprice, hedonism, instability, and irresponsibility — in short, whim-worship.

I suppose it was bound to happen; much of this is an overreaction against Randianism. Many of these people are former Randians; after spending several years in the cast-iron rigidities of Orthodox Randianism, in which the slightest deviation from the tastes of the cult was condemned as "irrational", many ex-Randians have gone whole hog the other way: in place of a rational ethic they have substituted unstable and hedonic submission to whim and caprice; in place of reason they have set unanalyzed feelings upon the throne.

A large part of the newly burgeoning psychologie in the libertarian movement is due to the intensifying influence of the New Nathaniel Branden, in his post-Randian development. In many ways, the New Branden is Randgone-Hollywood, as the old emphasis on reason begins to get lost amidst the hip and the mod, in immersion in all the fashionable, Hollywood-spawned techniques of the day, from hedonism to encounter groups to the Instant Cure. As a veteran battler against Orthodox Randianism, I never thought that I would ever come to say this: but I think that the Movement could benefit from an increased dose of the Old Rand, with her insistence on the primacy of a rational ethic. Let us not throw out the rational ethical baby along with the Orthodox Randian bathwater.

The Shadow Cabinet

Back in the days when I was a youthful extreme rightist, one of our great party pastimes was to conjure up a "dream cabinet", a cabinet to be installed in the unlikely event that we would "have our druthers". And regardless of the differences of opinion amongst us, there was always one selection we could all agree upon: "For Secretary of Labor...Westbrook Pegler." Yes, those were heady days.

But now, lo and behold, fantasy cabinet-making has come out of the closet. It is now indeed the fashion among those presidential candidates without what used to be called a "Chinaman's chance" for victory. The candidate — be he Dr. Spock or Senator McCarthy — issues a promise of what might have been. Not one to be caught lagging, I hereby present my shadow cabinet — the men and women whom I would have chosen had I swept to victory on the Libertarian Party ticket this year. Each one of these choices could be trusted to do the appropriate and proper thing by his chosen field of expertise. There are, of course, many gaps in the Cabinet, but that is because I have not yet been able to find the right man for the vacancy.

And now, here this America:

Secretary of State ......................... Leonard P. Liggio
Head of the Middle Eastern Desk ........ Stephen P. Halbrook
Ambassador to the Court of St. James ... John P. McCarthy
Secretary of Defense ..................... Robert LeFevre
Secretary of the Treasury .............. Jerome Daly
Secretary of Labor ...................... Sylvester Petro
Secretary of Housing and Urban

Development ............ Edward C. Banfield
Secretary of Transportation, and Head of the
Transportation and Urban Development
Division of the Dept. of Justice ... Ronald Hamowy
Head, Anti-Trust Division .................. Sam Pelman
Head, Bureau of Indian Affairs .......... Rosalie Nichols
Head, National Institute of Mental
Health ..... Dr. Thomas Szasz
Head, Voice of America .................... Karl Hess
Head, NASA and the Patent Office ... Andrew J. Galambos
Administrative Assistant, in Charge of
Minority Groups ...... Walter Grider
Administrative Assistant, in Charge of
Women's Rights .......... James D. Davidson
..... and last, but certainly not least,
Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare ...... Ayn Rand

"The art of government is the organization of idolatry."

--- George Bernard Shaw.

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