tome of Venable Herndon. Although Herndon somehow manages to blame Dean's death on Joe McCarthy and Richard Nixon, he at least takes the time to make sure that there are no pomposities or spelling errors such as those which stud every other page of Dalton's work (my favorite was Dalton's misuse of "exoterically speaking").

Herndon also examines Dean's life far more closely in the crucial time when he was just starting out as an actor than does Dalton. He does not hide Dean's many homosexual adventures, for example, how he offered his body to homosexual big wheels in the entertainment business in exchange for help in his career. While those escapades do not add or detract from Dean's talent and attraction as a cult figure, they are certainly interesting and important as parts of the life of a sex symbol.

After reading both books, the reader knows a great deal about James Dean and has each biographer's theory about why James Dean is a cult figure. Dalton says that he was the first "mutant,"a creature belonging neither to the old generation nor to the children of the old generation, but rather a new species, and that the teenagers of the 1950s were also mutants and they recognized him as their leader. Herndon says that Dean, like other great cult figures, was obsessed with pushing things to their limits and that the crowd loves to see a daredevil—whether in daring to bare his emotions and needs or to drive his Porsche along Route 5 at over 100 miles per hour.

But for this reader at least, the mystery lingers on. Why is James Dean a legend? Why does he electrify one generation after another of viewers? Why, even in the fall and winter of 1974, do popular singers use him in their lyrics?

It has something to do with the feeling of torment that one gets out of his face. He looks like all those medieval portraits of the suffering Christ. He has the look, the feel of an angel who, through no fault of his own, has been made to suffer and has become a little twisted by it. Perhaps it is a feeling that we have about ourselves and James Dean is an idealized version of ourselves, and that is why we love him so. Perhaps the connection is so obvious between James Dean and our own self-pity that we idealize our self-pity in him.

In any event, the cult of James Dean lives on. He would be forty-four today if he had lived, and perhaps he would be doing $100,000 a week shows at the International in Las Vegas instead of being a living god. But that's show business. □

Ludwig von Mises

It is said that a number of years ago, when Bill Buckley was at the beginning of his career of college-speaking, he once wrote two names on the blackboard and thereby nicely dramatized the point that students in his audience were being presented with only one side of the great world-forming debate between capitalism and socialism. The name of the defender of democratic socialism (I think it was Harold Laski, possibly John Dewey) was recognized by most of those present. The name of Ludwig von Mises was entirely unknown to them. Needless to say, the situation has not basically improved since then (unless perhaps in the sense that most college students would now recognize the name of William F. Buckley, Jr.). How has it been possible that the great majority of economics and social science students, even at elite American universities, are completely unfamiliar with Mises? Even the *New York Times,* in its notice at the time of his death in October 1973, termed Mises "one of the foremost economists of this century," and Milton Friedman, though from a completely different tradition of economic thought, has called him "one of the great economists of all time."

But Mises was even more than a great economist. Throughout the world, among knowledgeable people—in German-speaking Europe, in France, in Britain, in Latin America, in our own country—Mises was famous as *the* great twentieth century champion of a school of thought which could be said to have a certain historical importance and a certain intellectual respectability: the one that began with Adam Smith, David Hume, and Turgot, and included Humboldt, Bentham, Benjamin Constant, Tocqueville, Acton, Carl Menger, Pareto, and many others. Offhand, one would have thought that this acknowledged position alone would have entitled Mises to being presented within the "pluralistic" setting of left-liberal Academe.

And then there were Mises' scientific achievements, which were extraordinary. For example, it is conceded on all sides that in the whole discussion revolving around the viability of a system of central economic planning, Mises played the key role. Quite possibly the great intellectual scandal (still unadmitted) of the past century has been that the vast international Marxian movement, including thousands upon thousands of professional thinkers in all fields, was for generations content to discuss the whole issue of capitalism vs. socialism solely in terms of the alleged defects of *capitalism.* The question of how, and how well, a *socialist* economy would function, was avoided as taboo. It was Mises' accomplishment—and a sign of his superb independence of mind—to have brushed aside this pious "one-just-doesn't-speak-of-such-things," and to have presented comprehensively and arrestingly the problems inherent in attempting rational economic calculation in a situation where no market exists for production goods. Anyone familiar with the structural problems with which the more advanced Communist countries are continually faced and with the debate over "market socialism," will perceive the significance of Mises' work in this field alone.

How then can we account for the fact that those who managed to take a Laski and a Thorstein Veblen—or even a Walter Lippmann and a Kenneth Galbraith—seriously as important social philosophers somehow could never bring themselves to familiarize their students with Mises or to show him the marks of public recognition and respect that were his due (he was, for example, never president of the American Economic Association)? At least part of the answer, I think, lies in what Jacques Rueff, in a warm tribute, called Mises' "intransigence." Mises was a complete doctrinaire and a relentless and implacable fighter for his doctrine. For over sixty years he was at war with the spirit of his age, and with every one of the advancing, victorious, or merely modish political schools, left and right. The totality and enduring intensity of his battle could only be fueled from a profound inner sense of the truth and supreme value of the ideas for which he was struggling. This (as well as his temperament, one supposes) helped produce a definite "arrogance" in his tone (or "apodictic" quality, as some of us in the Mises seminar fondly called it, using one of his own favorite words), which was the last thing academic left-liberals and social democrats could accept in a defender of a view they considered only marginally worthy of toleration to begin with. (This would largely account, I think, for the somewhat

greater recognition that has been accorded Friedrich Hayek, even before his greatly deserved Nobel Prize. Hayek is temperamentally much more moderate in expression than Mises ever was, preferring, for instance, to avoid the old slogan of "laissez faire." And it is hard to imagine Mises making such a gesture as Hayek did in dedicating *The Road to Serfdom* "to socialists of all parties.")

But the lack of recognition seems to have influenced or deflected Mises not in the least. Instead, he continued his work, decade after decade: accumulating contributions to economic theory; developing the theoretical structure of the Austrian School (which one may read about in Murray Rothbard's very lucid and intelligent little book, *The Essential Von Mises*); and, from his understanding of the laws of economic activity, elaborating, correcting, and bringing up to date the great social philosophy of classical liberalism.

Now, within the classical liberal tradition, distinctions may be drawn. One very important one is between what may be termed "conservative" and "radical" liberals. Mises belonged to the second category, and on this basis may be contrasted to writers, for instance, such as Macaulay, Tocqueville, and Ortega y Gasset. There was very little of the Whig about Mises. The vaunted virtues of aristocracies; the alleged need for a religious basis for "social cohesion"; the reverence for tradition (it was somehow always *authoritarian* traditions that were to be reverenced, and never the traditions of free thought and rebellion); the fear of the emerging "mass-man," who was spoiling things for his intellectual and social betters; the whole cultural critique that later provided a substantial foothold for the attack on the consumer society—these found no place in Mises' thinking. To take an example, Tocqueville, in *Democracy in America,* at one point cries out: "Nothing conceivable is so petty, so insipid, so crowded with paltry interests—in a word, so anti-poetic—as the life of a man in the United States." Whether or not this judgment is true, Mises would never have bothered to make it. As a utilitarian liberal, he had more respect for the standards by which ordinary people judge the quality of their own lives. It is highly doubtful that Mises felt any of the qualms of liberals like Tocqueville at the Americanization of the world. (In fact, their attitude towards America would be a good rough criterion for categorizing a classical liberal as "radical" or "conservative.") Mises, then, was *radical* liberal, in the line of the Philosophical Radicals and the men of Manchester.

All the elements of radical liberalism are there: first of all, and most basic, his uncompromising rationalism, reiterated again and again. (Symptomatic of Mises' avoidance of everything he would consider mystical and obscurantist in social thought is the fact that, to my knowledge, he never in all his published writings once mentions Edmund Burke except in the context of someone who, in alliance with writers like de Maistre, was ultimately a philosophical opponent of the developing liberal world.) There is his utilitarianism, taking the end of politics to be not "the good," but *human welfare,* as men and women individually define it for themselves. There is his championing of *peace,* which in the tradition of those nineteenth century liberals most closely identified with the doctrine of complete laissez faire—Richard Cobden, John Bright, Frédéric Bastiat, and Herbert Spencer—he bases on the economic substructure of free trade. And, more surprising, there is in Mises a basically democratic concern and, in an important sense, an egalitarianism, such that this requires special comment.

Selected Works of Ludwig von Mises

(a price indicates that the book is in print)

Human Action: A Treatise on Economics, 3rd. rev. ed. (repr.: Chicago: Regnery, 1966). $17.50.

Socialism: An Economic and Sociological Analysis (New Haven, Conn.: Yale, 1951).

The Free and Prosperous Commonwealth: An Exposition of the Ideas of Classical Liberalism (Princeton, New Jersey: Van Nostrand, 1962).

The Theory of Money and Credit (repr.: Irvington, N.Y.: Foundation for Economic Education, 1971). $4.00

Theory and History (repr.: New Rochelle, N.Y.: Arlington, 1969) $10.00

Planned Chaos (repr.: Irvington, N.Y.: Foundation for Economic Education, 1961). $1.00

Bureaucracy (repr.: New Rochelle, N. Y.: Arlington, 1969).

Omnipotent Government: The Rise of the Total State and Total War (repr.: New Rochelle, N. Y.: Arlington, 1969). $8.00.

The best introduction is: *The Essential von Mises,* by Murray N. Rothbard, available from Bramble Mini-Books, Box 836, Lansing, Mich. 48904

Mises' fundamentally democratic and egalitarian outlook is not, of course, to be understood in terms of belief in some innate equality of talents or in equality of income (about both of which so much nonsense is now being written and, more often, spoken). When Mises discusses the great question of the equality of human beings in society, he does not have in mind a future fantasy utopia, where each will absolutely count for one and none for more than one, but rather the empirical conditions under which human beings have hitherto found themselves in various societies. What have actually been the conditions of class, status, degree, and privilege in the history of mankind, and what difference does capitalism make? The history of pre-capitalist societies is one of slavery, serfdom and caste- and class-privileges in the most degrading forms. It is history made by slave-owners, warrior-nobles and eunuch-makers, by kings, their mistresses, and courtiers, by priests and other Mandarin-intellectuals—by parasites and oppressors of all descriptions. Capitalism shifts the whole center of gravity of society ("The World Turned Upside Down," as Lord Cornwallis troops played at Yorktown). In the hackneyed but true and sociologically enormously important statement: every dollar, whether in the possession of someone totally lacking in the social graces, of someone of "mean birth," of a Jew, of a black, of someone no one ever even *heard of,* is the equal of every other dollar, and commands products and services on the market which talented people must structure their lives to provide. As Marx and Engels observed, *the market* breaks down every Chinese Wall and levels the world of status and traditional privilege that the West inherited from the Middle Ages. It is the battering-ram of the great democratic revolution of modern times. (This is what is behind the continuing American Revolution that Revel talks about, in his *Neither Marx Nor Jesus,* although he appears to be too superficial to be able to identify it.) Mises maintained that the pseudorevolution which socialism would bring about would be much more likely to lead to the re-emergence of the society of status and the redegradation of the masses to the position of pawns, to be *planned for* by an elite which would assign itself the title role in the heroic melodrama, *Man Consciously Makes His Own History.*

As far as the caliber and quality of Mises' thinking goes, my own view is that he is able to penetrate to the heart of important questions, where other writers typically exhaust their capacities on peripheral points. Some of my favorite examples are his discussions of "worker control" (which promises to become the preferred social system of the Left in many Western countries), and of Marxist social philosophy (which Mises deals with in a number of his books, most extensively and trenchantly in *Theory and History,* pp. 102-158). As an illustration of the power of Mises' thought, however, an example of greater interest to conservatives might be his clarification of the relationship of Christianity to capitalism and socialism.

That there is an intimate relationship between commitment to a free society and faith in Christianity is a view commonly found among American conservatives, and one that is usually argued for in the vaguest and most general terms. The thinking embodied in writings along these lines could, it seems to me, be tightened up immeasurably by a reading of the brief section in Mises' *Socialism* dealing with "Christianity and Socialism." For although the social philosophy implied in the Gospels is "not socialistic and not communistic," Mises asserts that the Gospels are of no help to

the free society either, being "indifferent to all social questions on the one hand, full of resentment against all property and all owners on the other."

It was Christianity's very lack of close involvement with any particular social system that was in part responsible for its phenomenal success: "Being neutral to any social system, it was able to traverse the centuries without being destroyed by the tremendous social revolutions which took place. Only for this reason could it be become the religion of the Roman Emperors and Anglo-Saxon entrepreneurs, of African Negroes and European Teutons, medieval feudal lords and modern industrial laborers. Each epoch and every party has been able to take from it what they wanted, because it contains nothing which binds it to a definite social order." Interestingly, this is the same conclusion which Tocqueville finally reaches in his preface to *The Old Regime and the Revolution*, where he despairs of Christianity's being of any particular value for the free society, because "the patrimony of the Christian faith is not of this world."

Christianity, moreover, could sometimes be harmful to the free society. Mises, who had witnessed the rise to prominence of a "Christian social thought" and Christian social movements that tried to distance themselves equally from socialism and from horrid laissez faire, underscored the continued warfare of the churches against liberal institutions in terms which some may find surprising: "It is the resistance which the Church has offered to the spread of liberal ideas which has prepared the soil for the destructive resentment of modern socialist thought.... It is not as if the resistance of the Church to liberal ideas was harmless.... In the last decades we have witnessed with horror its terrible transformation into an enemy of society. For the Church, Catholic as well as Protestant, is not the least of the factors responsible for the prevalence of the destructive ideals in the world today...."

Finally, Mises contrasts the ethical achievements of Christianity over two thousand years with what capitalism has accomplished in a couple of centuries: "Compare the results achieved by these 'shopkeeper ethics' with the achievements of Christianity! Christianity has acquiesced in slavery and polygamy, has practically canonized war, has, in the name of the Lord, burnt heretics and devastated countries. The much abused 'shopkeepers' have abolished slavery and serfdom, made woman the companion of man with equal rights, proclaimed equality before the law and the freedom of thought and opinion, declared war on war, abolished torture, and mitigated the cruelty of punishment. What cultural force can boast of similar achievements?"

What emerges from these pages is by no means a free-thinking attack on Christianity *per se*: Mises, perfectly content with his own personal rationalist and scientific world-view, looking on all forms of "fanaticism" with an almost French irony and skeptical detachment, could not be less interested in any individual's profession of religious faith. But, as a historical and sociological matter, the notion that Christianity is particularly useful to proponents of a free society (in reason, of course, and not as a propagandist's trick), and the naive Sunday preacher's idea that it is synonomous in actual practice with all elevated ethics, are rendered completely untenable.

We appear to be entering an age of increasing "social" concern on the part of the Christian churches: as an example, after centuries of (at best) utter indifference to mercantilist-created poverty, to imperialism, overpopulation, and other causes of world wars, Roman Catholic bishops meeting at a synod in Rome have expressed their deep concern over "structural" injustices in the international economy, including multinational corporations and the world monetary system. While some Christian theologians engage in "dialogues" with Marxist theoreticians, others are desperately anxious to prove the relevance of their creed to current problems through all sorts of activism and "witnessing." Perhaps most significantly, in the spring of 1973, a Vatican publication expressed its profound admiration of the society that is being built in China, and noted the similarity of many of its values and aspirations to those of Christianity and the social teachings of the popes. In particular it praised that filthy anthill for its "devotion to the mystique of disinterested work for others, to inspiration by justice, to exaltation of simple and frugal life[!], to rehabilitation of the rural masses, and to a mixing of social classes." Thus, we may be seeing before our very eyes the accommodation of organized Christianity to the *next* social system, the emerging world state-socialist order. In any case, over forty years ago Mises provided us with a perspective on the situation: Christianity existed for many centuries before capitalism; it may well outlive it. And not only is there no reason to assume any intrinsic connection between the two, but the Christian churches in many ways prepared the ground for the twentieth century's almost unanimous intellectual condemnation of the capitalist system.

No appreciation of Mises would be complete without saying something, however inadequate, about the man and the individual. Mises' immense scholarship, bringing to mind other German-speaking scholars, like Max Weber and Joseph Schumpeter, who seemed to work on the principle that someday all encyclopedias might very well just vanish; the Cartesian clarity of his presentations in class (it takes a master to present a complex subject simply); his respect for the life of reason, evident in every gesture and glance; his courtesy and kindliness and understanding, even to beginners; his real wit, of the sort proverbially bred in the great cities, akin to that of Berliners, of Parisians and New Yorkers, only Viennese and softer—let me just say that to have, at an early point, come to know the great Mises tends to create in one's mind life-long standards of what an ideal intellectual should be. These are standards to which other scholars whom one encounters will almost never be equal, and judged by which the ordinary run of university professor—at Chicago, Princeton, or Harvard—is simply a joke (but it would be unfair to judge them by such a measure; here we are talking about two entirely different sorts of human beings).

Finally, for the serious reader of politics and social philosophy who has never studied Mises my advice would be to make the omission good as soon as possible: it will save a lot of otherwise wasted effort on the road to truth in these matters. *The Free and Prosperous Commonwealth* or *Bureaucracy* would be a good start; or, for those with a special interest in twentieth century history, *Omnipotent Government;* or his *Socialism,* which remains for me the finest book I have ever read in the social sciences. Considering the absolutely critical place America has in Western civilization today, it would truly be a tragedy if a few establishment professors succeeded in keeping intelligent young Americans from acquainting themselves with the rich heritage of ideas left us by Ludwig von Mises. □

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All the Commissar's Men

In early 1969 the president of *Reader's Digest* accepted a proposal by John Barron, now a senior editor, for a detailed investigation of the KGB, the Soviet state security police, designed for the general Western reader. Several years and many interviews later Barron's efforts were presented to the world in the form of the present book. In addition to the logistic support of the *Reader's Digest*'s worldwide research facilities, Barron had a knowledge of Russian, some background in intelligence work, and—most importantly—a thorough comprehension of the importance of a secret police system for Communist regimes generally. Such a vast and necessarily shadowy subject cannot be treated exhaustively in a single volume, even one of over 450 pages, but Barron has done an excellent job of gathering information on the history of the Soviet secret police, its organizational structure, the methods it utilizes within the Soviet Union itself to maintain the Communist leadership's control over the Soviet people, and most especially its clandestine offensive against the outside world.

That offensive is conducted on various levels: by working through secret police of "fraternal" Communist countries who can occasionally perform missions more easily than Soviet agents, by disseminating "disinformation" and disorienting foreign opponents, by murdering prominent anti-Communist figures abroad with highly sophisticated devices, by gathering extensive military and political intelligence, by subverting host countries through the use of "diplomatic personnel" who are really KGB agents (the author comments that China presents an "exceedingly difficult target" for Soviet subversion, which is logical since the Chinese have surpassed their Soviet tutors in many aspects of state security.) Some of the espionage accounts read like spy stories, which they are, and they supply much of the book's narrative interest. Occasional Soviet espionage failures demonstrate that Western counterintelligence can sometimes be defensively brilliant, but a good offensive is hard to block all the time, and the Soviets make frequent gains in this concealed warfare. Barron is not completely successful in systematizing the information he has gathered: it remains fragmentary at times, especially when he describes the careers of particular Soviet agents. This slight disjointedness does not, however, detract overmuch from the book's interest.

In the 1780s a Russian aristocrat and intellectual wrote a utopian novel (one of the few in the history of Russian literature) in which he described a model society on a distant island in which religion and the observation of religious rites were the responsibility of the police. Nearly a century and a half later a Russian middle-class intellectual, Vladimir Lenin by name, actually brought such a social order into being in Russia. For if a government does not rest upon the freely given assent of the governed, it must depend instead upon force and the compulsion and manipulation of assent.

The KGB is no incidental excrescence on the Soviet body politic: it is central to its being. Barron quotes Lenin as saying in 1920 that "the scientific concept of [utopian] dictatorship means neither more nor less than unlimited power resting directly on force, not limited by anything, nor restrained by any laws or any absolute rules. Nothing else but that." The Soviet security police was organized very quickly after the October Revolution, and its founder, the Polish intellectual Feliks Dzerzhinsky, spoke frankly of the necessity for "organized terror," at least in the early stages of the regime's history. And Dzerzhinsky was no monster from whom the regime now recoils in horror. On the contrary, an elaborate Moscow subway station is named in his honor, and Nikita Khrushchev during his premiership ordered a monument erected to him outside the Lyubyanka prison. Thus the explicit aim of the Soviet state apparatus is the manipulation of the population under its control by force, terror, and fraud; these elements are at the core of the entire Soviet state system. A recent Soviet émigré has wisely counseled all Western statesmen who deal with Soviet leaders to recall constantly that the latter are, literally, killer. One sometimes has to deal with killers, but one adopts quite a different approach to them than to ordinary men with the customary moral scruples. Dzerzhinsky, Lenin, Stalin, and Khrushchev were all men who did not hesitate to kill, and the KGB is the formalized instrument of their control.

KGB:
The Secret Work
of Soviet Secret Agents

by John Barron
Reader's Digest Press **$10.95**

The very fact that Barron's book has been published in an age so given to the exposure of the American intelligence system and its putative crimes, is important. In *The Gulag Archipelago*, that remarkable effort at generalization on the domestic system which the KGB maintains within the Soviet Union, Solzhenitsyn points out in his very first chapter (on the arrest) that the task of the Soviet security police is made easier by the fact that their victims almost never resist, take evasive action, or even protest. They simply submit. The power of the secret police could be whittled down immediately, he implies, if more victims would cease to submit, as Solzhenitsyn himself and the Soviet dissidents have done. By refusing to go quietly these dissidents have caused their captors much discomfort. We who are the victims of the KGB's foreign operations must do the same if we are to shackle its power.

In his final chapter Barron offers a number of cogent suggestions for combating the KGB abroad, all of which finally reduce to a variant of the rule "Let us not submit." The advocates of silence often advance numerous sophisticated and superficially convincing reasons for maintaining silence on the outrages of the Soviet secret police, but they are all meretricious. Barron's book itself helps bring the entire subject into the light of day: he tells the world of the KGB's guilt without glossing over its crimes, for, unlike State Department adepts, he is not paralyzed by fear of "embarrassing" the Soviet government. There is no earthly reason, he points out, for Western countries to permit the swollen diplomatic representations which the Soviets regularly dispatch abroad: only a few are legitimate diplomats, while the rest are KGB agents there to subvert the host country. Sometimes the disproportion becomes ludicrous: in 1971 Mexico needed five diplomats to conduct its business in Moscow, but the Soviet Union had sixty accredited to Mexico City. Any Western country solicitous of its own internal stability can easily and logically limit Soviet diplomatic personnel in its capital to approximately the same number it maintains in Moscow. Adherence to this simple rule in itself would make the KGB's work abroad measurably more difficult. Then too, Barron recommends, Western governments should prosecute any KGB agents they uncover who are not protected by diplomatic immunity, and expel those who are covered by such immunity; they should in addition refuse to accept as a "diplomat" any individual already identified as such an agent. Barron furnishes a thirty-five page list of such individuals as an appendix to his book. The main thing, however, as he says, is to comprehend the nature of the KGB and its place in the Soviet system. The Soviets, to do them justice, have never really concealed their aims, or even their methods, for the most part. Instead, the West has deluded itself about the Soviet system for nearly sixty years, Barron asks us to see things clearly, and helps us in that task. □