

will hardly be in a position to criticize them as they too make adjustments and *rapprochements* in their relations with the East, however politically, militarily, or economically discomfiting such actions may, in the future, prove to us.

Finally, Helsinki makes little sense even if one prefers to ignore its moral implications or its possible deleterious impact on the policies of our allies. If nothing else, ratifying the current political division of Europe should have been viewed as an important bargaining counter in what former President Nixon styled an "era of negotiation" rather than "confrontation." Our position on this issue was apparently a matter of some import to the Soviets. What, one may respectfully ask, did we get in return? The answer is distressingly clear—virtually nothing. We received formal Soviet endorsement of vague, rhetorical affirmations of the importance of a whole laundry list of civil liberties—all of which, of course, will be absolutely unenforceable. Why we should expect the leaders of the Russian Communist Party to pay more attention to such declarations when signed at Helsinki than they do to the similar sentiments expressed in their own constitution is past reasonable comprehension. Beyond that, we got little more than the dubious pleasure of seeing Ford

and Brezhnev in innumerable moments of good-natured, back-slapping, hail-fellow-well-met bonhomie, which is supposed to make us breathe a sigh of relief at this "visible relaxation of tensions" between the superpowers.

Ultimately, it is this last which stands as the most frightening aspect of Helsinki. One begins to suspect that obtaining this ephemeral, falsely comforting sense that "we can get along with them" and "there doesn't have to be a war" is what détente is really all about. Judging from SALT and Helsinki, the lengths we are prepared to go and the concessions we are willing to make in order simply to achieve this occasional, fleeting feeling of relaxed reassurance about the future of mankind in a nuclear age, are becoming truly astounding. It is almost, in the words of George Ball, as if détente were "more an obsession than a policy." Certainly, it seems less and less a responsible course of action.

The Soviets seem remarkably unafflicted with similar obsessions in the conduct of their own foreign policy. Rather, their actions over the last several decades—if not always their words—indicate that their ultimate ambition, their only obsession, remains pretty much what it has always been. Nothing save our own wistful and self-deceptive think-

ing has ever really suggested otherwise.

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn asked recently in New York, "How do you warn a people who have never suffered?" I am not sure how one answers that, finally; but it cannot hurt to recall the 1948 remarks of Winston Churchill in *The Gathering Storm*: "There can hardly ever have been a war more easy to prevent than this second Armageddon. I have always been ready to use force in order to defy tyranny or ward off ruin. But had our British, American and Allied affairs been conducted with the ordinary consistency and common sense usual in decent households, there was no need for Force to march unaccompanied by Law; and Strength, moreover, could have been used in righteous causes with little risk of bloodshed. In their loss of purpose, in their abandonment of even the themes they most sincerely espoused, Britain, France, and most of all, because of their immense power and impartiality, the United States, allowed conditions to be gradually built up which led to the very climax they dreaded most. They have only to repeat the same well-meaning, short-sighted behaviour towards the new problems which in singular resemblance confront us today to bring about a third convulsion from which none may live to tell the tale." □

Edith Efron

Conservatism: A Libertarian Challenge

(This essay has been adapted from a lecture given by Miss Efron at the Harvard Institute of Politics.)

It is not uncommon in the intellectual world for an occasional course to be given in conservative thought—either in the form of a published anthology or a university lecture series. It happens about once every four years. Typically, a conservative is given the chore of rounding up a collection of writers or lecturers to answer that mysterious question: What do conservatives think? Only, for some reason, if, two months later, you ask those who have read the book or attended the lectures to explain what conservative philosophy is, their answers will be extremely vague. The experience is strangely akin to eating a Chinese dinner.

Now, other political philosophies and movements do not induce a comparable amnesia. No one, with minimal political literacy, would find it too difficult to tell you what black militants advocate, what Communists seek, how liberals perceive the role of government, or what values are stressed by the New Left. Such questions can be readily answered even by casual observers. The answers might be

inaccurate, they might often contradict themselves, and members of these groups might protest that the explanations are caricatural. But the point is, nobody would stare blankly and answer: I haven't the faintest idea. This is not the case with conservative thought.

Defining Conservatism

This is particularly odd, since there are so many conservatives around. They constitute about thirty to forty percent of the people and they even have a national political party—the Republican Party, most of which considers itself conservative. One would think that such a group would be ideally situated to make known its dominant values, principles, and goals. But this never seems to occur. All anybody ever really seems to remember about conservatism—and this apparently includes most conservatives themselves—is that whatever liberals are for, conservatives are against. William F. Buckley, who is widely viewed as the father of the modern conservative movement, confesses with perverse pride: "I have never failed to dissatisfy an audience that asks the meaning of conservatism." But, he

says, he can spot a liberal at fifty paces.

Indeed, Buckley collapses, however wittily and eloquently, whenever he tries to present conservatism in a coherent fashion. He is most successful when—to use John Roche's apt description—he sets out "to smite the liberal hip and thigh," to impale "the contradictions, the hypocrisies, the pretensions of liberal and radical pontiffs," and to publish journals and anthologies of writers doing the same. For conservatism is generally graspable or intelligible only in this negative aspect—in the dissection and flagellation of liberal and radical irrationality. It is rare indeed to find affirmative presentations of conservative political theory on which all or most conservatives would agree.

I began to look for such affirmative presentations when people started calling me conservative. They assumed I was a conservative because in my book *The News Twisters* I had come up with findings of political bias that supported many charges of the Republican and conservative world, among others. Actually I am not a conservative, but a lifelong liberal who, twenty years ago, after growing disenchantment with proliferating govern-

ment, read writers like Ayn Rand, Ludwig von Mises, and Henry Hazlitt, and became a "limited state" libertarian. Since people began describing me as conservative, however, I became increasingly curious about what it was that I was supposed to be—and what it was that I was supposed to be thinking. And in the process of studying the affirmative works of conservatism, I learned some things about the fundamental conflict between libertarianism and conservatism, which go to the heart of what is often described as the "conservative dilemma."

When I first confronted philosophical works by conservatives detailing their affirmative beliefs—initially, in the form of occasional essays in *National Review*—I couldn't understand them. I mean that quite literally. I didn't know what on earth these writers (whose names I immediately forgot) were talking about, and a reasonable intelligence, a background in both literature and philosophy, and two university degrees did not help me. A lot of this material seemed to me to be strikingly hollow verbiage, a fusion of metaphysics and pop-sociology couched in the language of Corneille and Racine—perorations on Society woven around such concepts as God, Authority, Order, Tradition, Duty, Patriotism, and so on. Never were these Platonic abstractions derived in any rational way; they were just asserted as self-evident truths. Never were they defined, applied, or integrated into any system of principles. Indeed, writers of this type often expressed overt disdain at the very idea of firm definitions or principles, and appeared to pride themselves on not having any. What they seemed to agree on was that Society—any society—with any Order, and any Tradition, was worthy of preservation, loyalty, honor, and obedience. After much puzzling, I grasped something about this type of conservative literature. I realized that if I were to boil the content down to the simplest, most unpretentious English sentence I could construct, I would end up with this one: "God made society this way, Grandpa liked it this way, so it should remain this way." It appeared to be an implacable dedication to the status quo dressed up as metaphysics.

The contrast between the clarity and intellectual independence of libertarian writers, and the murky conformism of these metaphysical writers, was striking.

Dissecting the Conservative Psyche

I got my first disturbing glimpse of the applied meaning of these abstractions when I read James Burnham's *Suicide of the West*—a famous conservative work with an extraordinarily brilliant dissection of the liberal psyche. I discovered that Burnham, too, was unable or unwilling to define conservatism—save in opposition to liberalism. But in attempting to clarify this opposition, he constructed a fascinating little test. It consisted of 39 statements of belief which he had selected from assorted *liberal* docu-

ments, including the French Declaration of the Rights of Man, American Civil Liberties Union questionnaires, and the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Burnham tested out these liberal sentences quite systematically and reported that most people who defined themselves as liberals believed anywhere from 85% to 100% of them—and that 100% of was a common record. Conversely, he said, people who defined themselves as reactionaries or hard conservatives repudiated 85% to 100% of them—and 100% disagreement was also a common record. Between these two groups, he reported, there was much variation, but to the degree that people consciously considered themselves strong liberals or strong conservatives, they agreed or disagreed with most of these sentences. I checked myself against Burnham's list of ideas, and found the process very reveal-

9.) "All nations and people, including the nations and peoples of Asia and Africa, have a right to political independence when a majority of the population wants it." I agree—and take due note of the odd isolation of the peoples of Asia and Africa.

10.) "We always ought to respect the religious beliefs of others." I agree—simply as part of my respect for freedom of thought.

11.) "The primary goal of international policy in the nuclear age ought to be peace." I agree—but would further qualify: the primary goal of international policy in all areas ought to be peace, by which I do not mean spineless capitulation to acts of aggression against us.

12.) "Except in cases of a clear threat to national security, or, possibly, to juvenile morals, censorship is wrong." I agree—except that I would be immensely cautious in applying the standard of

Actually I am not a conservative, but a lifelong liberal who, twenty years ago, after growing disenchantment with proliferating government, became a "limited state" libertarian.

ing. For one thing, I agreed with a little more than half of the liberal statements. And I'm going to cite those 20 liberal statements with which I agree because they provided me with my first insight into the invisible content of conservatism.

I use my own numbering here, but the liberal sentences are precise quotations from *Suicide of the West* (the second printing, in 1964): Liberal Sentence 1). "All forms of racial segregation and discrimination are wrong." I agree.

Liberal Sentence 2). "Everyone is entitled to his own opinion." I agree.

Liberal Sentence 3). "Political, economic, or social discrimination based on religious belief is wrong." I agree.

4.) "In political or military conflict, it is wrong to use methods of torture and physical terror." I agree.

5.) "A popular movement or revolt against a tyranny or dictatorship is right, and deserves approval." I agree.

6.) "Any interference with free speech and free assembly, except for cases of immediate public danger or juvenile corruption, is wrong." I agree—but disagree with the qualification. Any interference whatever with free speech and free assembly is wrong—and I will allow parents to worry about the corruption of juveniles.

7.) "Communists have a right to express their opinions." I agree. All American citizens have a right to express their opinions.

8.) "Corporal punishment, except possibly for small children, is wrong." I agree—but would reverse the qualification. Corporal punishment is wrong—and most particularly for small children.

national security, and would never consider juvenile morals an excuse for censorship.

13.) "Congressional investigating committees are dangerous institutions and need to be watched and curbed if they are not to become a serious threat to freedom." Here we are dealing with a quaint historical development; this was a liberal position when conservatives investigated liberals; today, when liberals are investigating conservatives, they would not say this. Nonetheless, I agree with the sentence, as it applies to both situations.

14.) "Qualified teachers, at least at the university level, are entitled to academic freedom: that is, the right to express their own beliefs and opinions, in or out of the classroom, without interference from administrators, trustees, parents or public bodies." I agree. Without this freedom in a system of public education, no intellectual life could exist; it would shortly be crushed by pressure groups and by the State.

15.) "In determining who is to be admitted to schools and universities, quota systems based on color, religion, family, or similar factors are wrong." Again, we are facing here a quaint switch in liberal views. But I agree. So long as it is public education, no such discriminatory selection is appropriate.

16.) "The national government should guarantee that all adult citizens, except for the criminals and the insane, should have the right to vote." I agree, save that people should never be given the right to vote in a manner that would violate any individual's rights.

17.) "There are no significant differ-

ences in intelligence, moral or civilizing capacity among human races and ethnic types." I agree. No scientific information about this subject exists—but if it did exist, it would have no bearing on inalienable rights.

18.) "Steps toward world disarmament would be a good thing." I agree. If it were actually possible, it would be a good thing.

19.) "Everyone is entitled to political and social rights without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status." I agree.

20.) "The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government." I agree—with the understanding again, that the will of the people does not sanction the violation of individual rights.

I very much suspect that by now you know why Burnham preferred to present these crucial test-ideas in their liberal form, and to leave their mental translation into conservative ideas up to the unusually diligent. For if he had been willing to make this translation himself—and to state these conservative ideas in the first person—here is what Burnham would have been obliged to write:

"I believe in racial segregation and discrimination."

"I do not acknowledge freedom of thought for all."

"I believe in religious discrimination."

"I believe in using physical torture and physical terror on political enemies."

"I accept dictatorships and tyrannies, and disapprove of revolutions against them."

"I do not believe in universal free speech and free assembly."

"I think censorship of speech, literature, science and the press is legitimate."

"I do not believe in academic freedom."

"I believe in concepts of racial and ethnic superiority and inferiority."

"I believe in restricting political rights to those who conform to some unstated standards of race, color, sex, language, religion, family, property, and opinions—political or other."

...and so on and so on.

Conservatism: A Mystical Collectivism?

On confronting this list, I began to understand why nobody quite manages to define conservatism. If Burnham is right, and a significant number of conservatives believe a significant number of these ideas—even in qualified form—such conservatives, at least, have good reasons to be vague, even amnesiac, about their "affirmative" beliefs.

The blunt truth is that such ideas are simply totalitarian. And that raised a battery of questions in my mind: *Was* this what was tucked away behind these concepts of Authority, Tradition, Order, and Duty which, somehow, were never derived, defined, or illustrated? Tradition for the sake of Tradition—even if that

tradition is enslaving you? Order for the sake of Order—even if you are in the grip of a tyrant? Authority for the sake of Authority—even if the authority is butchering you? What kind of philosophy was this, I wondered, that cannot grasp the primacy of the individual mind, its right to self-assertion, to thought, to value judgments, to self-interest—its right to flout tradition, if that tradition is fatuous or irrational, its right to repudiate authority, if that authority is imbecile or immoral, its right to destroy order, if that order is unjust or malignant? What kind of a mind was it that perceives society—*any* society—as some sort of irreducible Holy Unit to be respected, obeyed, and revered—while viewing the individual as some eternal private in Life's Army who must say Yes, sir, Yes, sir, until he dies?

At a bare minimum, this seemed to represent some sort of mystical collectivism, which places the alleged authority of the tribe above the interests of the individual. At a bare minimum, it seemed to represent a view of man that does not enshrine reason—for the exercise of reason is a purely individual affair. At a bare minimum, it seemed to be bigoted, racist, and religiously authoritarian. At a maximum, it would be a blueprint for fascism.

Conservatism's Anti-intellectualism

I continued to read *Suicide of the West* seeking clarification, and, shortly, Burnham made both this philosophical minimum and maximum explicit. He did it by contrasting liberal and conservative philosophical assumptions about the nature of man and society. Liberals, he pointed out, define Man by his capacity to think, hold that there is no higher authority for men than reason, and believe that free intellectual inquiry and expression, education, and plebiscitary democracy can solve most human problems. Burnham quoted philosopher Sidney Hook to sum up: "The Liberal has faith in intelligence."

Conservatives, on the other hand, according to Burnham, believe such ideas as these: man is contaminated by original sin; man is often irrational; reason, science, and education, accordingly, cannot solve many or most human problems; certain races, in particular, are presently less educable than others; the organic community, with its accumulation of concrete habits, customs, traditions, institutions, and entrenched hierarchies, has primacy over the individual; the social cohesion of this organic community is far more important than free thought, free speech, free academic inquiry, and free dissent, which threaten its stability; and secular social goals should be eternally subordinate to moral religious values taken on faith, without the possibility of majority revocation.

Burnham had answered my questions, and confirmed my darkest suspicions. I was indeed facing the philosophical lineaments of religious totalitarianism, replete with its usual baggage of religious and

racial bigotry. Indeed, Burnham granted that liberals perceive such ideas as "fascist" (his quotes). But that is not a silly perception: there *is* a fascist-Hegelian strain in conservative thought, just as there *is* a socialist-Marxist strain in liberal thought. Indeed, conservatives and liberals often defend and rationalize fascist and communist dictatorships respectively. While Marxian-socialism, however, claims to be a rational, scientific system of ideas, the Hegelian political philosophy carried to its fascist extreme does not; on the contrary, it explicitly asserts its mystical base, and its contempt for reason and intellectualism. At the base of this conservative set of ideas lies the precise opposite of Hook's statement about liberals—namely, the conservative does *not* have faith in intelligence. Indeed, if Burnham was accurate, conservatism considers intelligence to be largely unnecessary.

My recognition of this fascist, anti-intellectual strain in conservative thought shocked me so severely that I sought out other descriptions of conservative beliefs to discover whether Burnham's was atypical. It was not.

Russell Kirk's work, for example, attests to his scorn for man's "puny private stock of reason" and to his reverence for the organic community. Among his key ideas, he believes "that a divine intent rules society" and that the "leading classes" are those "who have been placed by a divine tactic in positions of responsibility." He rejects, on the other hand, the "dogma" of "freedom of choice" and the view that "nearly every man is fit by nature to choose for himself in all things." The late Clinton Rossiter declared that conservatism constitutes a belief in: "the need for a ruling and serving aristocracy"; "the rights of man as something earned, not given"; "order, unity, equity, stability, continuity, security, harmony, the confinement of change" as "the marks of a good society"; and, above all, "the primacy of the organic community." And similar or identical ideas were to be found in the works of Michael Oakeshott and Peter Wilemski.

The Tsars of Holy Mother Russia would have found these conservative visions quite congenial. So would the Pharaohs, the Emperors of Ethiopia, the feathered Princes of the Aztecs, and the Kings of the Watusi. It is the same "affirmative" metaphysics and social philosophy that has underlain all theocracies since the days of the cave man.

Conservatism's Anti-individualism

When I examined this "affirmative" social theology carefully, I discovered that it is organized to combat one central evil—the individual and his unfettered mind. No matter who had authored the statement of conservative philosophy, or whatever its subtle variations, it always added up to a fierce negation of individualism. For conservatives, I learned, the individual is *not* the primary

unit of social life; individual reason is *not* significant; the individual mind is *not* inviolable; the individual person is *not* untouchable; the individual may *not* choose his own values; individual actions may *not* be based on private judgments; the individual may *not* use his own thought as an exclusive guide to his life; the individual may *not* challenge or rebel against society's traditions and edicts; individual rights are *not* immutable or inalienable.

Coexisting Contradictions

But having discovered this theocratic and totalitarian strain in "affirmative" conservatism I was completely baffled. For what was I now to make of the clear and obvious fact that it is conservatives alone, today, who constantly proclaim their devotion to individualism and economic freedom, who constantly warn that the growth of the State threatens that freedom, who characteristically resist all expansion of the State's power over economic life, who occasionally even try to wrest power away from the State? What was I to make of the vocal free enterprise tradition in the conservative world? Or of the growing body of brilliant free-market economic literature?

Indeed, what was I to make of the fact that the *very same* conservative philosophers whom I have been describing in this essay can often be such partisans of individual freedom? Here, for example, is the kind of thing that Russell Kirk says when he is *not* insulting Man's "puny stock of private reason":

"Ability is the factor which enables men to lift themselves from savagery to civilization, and which helps to distinguish the endeavors of men from the routine existence of insects. Ability is of various sorts: there are philosophical ability, mechanical ability, commercial ability, directive ability, and persuasive

the uneasy condition of pensioners of the state.... It has remained for the arrogance of the doctrinaire socialist and state planner, in our time, to deal contemptuously with the traditional incentives to ordinary integrity. But they will be paid back in their own coin, once Ability has been reduced to mere Labor—labor with the mind as well as the hands, dull and routine... In the total state, everything may be dedicated to Labor; but with the crushing of Ability, that dedication will result in the rapid impoverishment of Labor, too, and probably in consequences yet more grave."

In holding such views, Mr. Kirk is not alone. All these themes, too, ring out in the writings of serious conservatives. There is not one who does not express a respect for ability, a desire to protect the rewards of achievement, a concern for private property and individual security, a contempt for bureaucratic intervention into the economic area, a condemnation of the omnipotent state, a desire to protect the productive individual from state coercion.

The mystery of conservatism, and the chronic incapacity of conservatives to explain it, was becoming clearer. Every one of these anti-individualist pro-totalitarians is, simultaneously, a pro-individualist anti-totalitarian! All are dedicated to limited government and individual economic freedom! And many are aware that economic freedom is the *arch* pre-condition for all individual freedom!

Given this striking set of contradictions, what then could be concluded about the mysterious philosophy of conservatism? This: Like the liberals whom they so brilliantly criticize, conservatives are collectivists and statists. They merely choose to strangle the individual in different realms, according to their professed theories. The conservative denies the individual's right to think, value, and act

Now how can such authoritarian and libertarian elements logically coexist in *any* philosophy—conservative or liberal? The answer to the question is simple: they can't. There is no rational way to integrate them. In any given mind, the combination is only possible if at least one of these sets of contradictory principles is held, not as rational theory, but as a lesson recited by rote—in other words, only if it has the epistemological status of a religious belief, a dogma taken on faith.

That is certainly the epistemological status of the conservative's authoritarian collectivism, the view that Society is a Divine Primary; it is an avowedly religious belief, along with the social virtues it suggests: Obedience to Authority, Tradition, etc. But, tragically for America, that is *also* the epistemological status of the individualist, free enterprise elements of conservative belief. At least, that is the case for most conservatives, if not for the small brilliant band of rational economists and the minority of intellectuals who genuinely understand them. For most conservatives, support for the Horatio Alger, free enterprise tradition is really a vestige of Calvinism. The Calvinist believes, as an article of religious faith, that individual competence and productive zeal (Russell Kirk would say Ability and Labor)—and their result in the form of wealth—are the signs of spiritual grace on earth. The individual must be left free to pursue this state of spiritual grace: hence, free enterprise. But religious belief and Platonic forms of the Good are not rational political theory—and thus they can coexist with the most startling political opposites, and can be consistently betrayed without noticing it. And this is exactly what has happened. The conservative community has long since sold out free enterprise—to the total despair of its members who do hold free enterprise as rational economic theory.

The so-called American capitalist, today, usually does not know what genuine free enterprise is. It means the total exclusion of the state from the economic realm, leaving producers free to compete, subject to the risks and hazards of the law of supply and demand alone. But the contemporary businessman's working definition of "free enterprise" is bribing specific government officials for favors—for contracts, for subsidies, for monopolies, for protective tariffs, for preferential tax treatment, for shelter *against* competition at home and abroad. If the conservative is a government official, his working definition of loyalty to the free enterprise system is executing these very favors for specific businessmen. The conservative commitment to free enterprise has long since degenerated into a mere commitment to cash. Most conservatives do not know the difference. They can point with pride at America's magnificent system of individualism and free enterprise—a system which no longer exists—only because they speak a symbolic-religious language

Like the liberals whom they so brilliantly criticize, conservatives are collectivists and statists...they deny the individual's right to think, value, and act freely, save in one realm.

ability. But all these are various aspects of the special talent, produced by intelligence, which is independent of routine or of brute strength.

"There is only one way to find and encourage Ability, and that is to reward it....

"One of these rewards is the ownership of private property, in its many forms; another is membership in a reputable undertaking, as distinguished from impersonal employment by the all-embracing state; another is the sense of security and permanence of possession; another is the assurance that thrift and diligence will bring some degree of decent independence, as distinguished from

freely, save in one realm: economic production. There (in principle at least) he is to be free. The liberal (in principle, at least) acknowledges intellectual and value freedom—but denies the individual freedom in the realm of production. There he is to be a state-regulated beast of burden with the duty of carting the incompetent through life. In fact, both philosophies are authoritarian, both philosophies are elitist, both philosophies are coercive. Above all, both reject the concept of individual autonomy. They profoundly share the view that man is a being who can be conceptually sliced in two—with one half free, the other half slave.

The tragic truth is that Watergate is a quintessentially conservative phenomenon. It clearly emerges from the philosophical context I have been describing....

that has no connection whatever with reality.

Conservatives have paid desperate penalties for the core contradiction at the heart of their philosophy, and for the mystical epistemology which renders its principles impotent. One of these penalties is the political disaster called Watergate. For the tragic truth—the many honest and morally distinguished conservatives notwithstanding—is that Watergate is a quintessentially conservative phenomenon. It clearly emerges from the philosophical context I have been describing. The Watergate syndrome, with its obsession with order and its hatred of those who flout authority, with its secretive violations of individual rights, with its totally negative anti-liberal focus, with its overpowering anti-intellectualism, with its helpless inability to do ideological battle in a rational affirmative manner, with its unthinking tribal spirit, its blind obedience and leader-worship, is a perfect dramatization of that psychology which is embedded in the conservative philosophy I have been discussing. The two most common explanations heard from Watergate participants were: "I did it for my country" and "I didn't think for myself." This is the voice of the Divine Primacy of Society and its voracious demand for the renunciation of individual thought.

And this remains true, however one-sided and hypocritical the Congressional and media onslaught may have been. One batch of statist authoritarians sitting in righteous judgment on another batch of statist authoritarians—particularly when their specific illegalities have been identical, historically—is bound to present an unedifying spectacle. But the hypocrisy of the judges does not wipe out the crime, nor its uniquely conservative style, motivation, and psychology.

William F. Buckley has angrily—and correctly—denounced Watergate as a "proto-fascist" phenomenon. Barry Goldwater has been disgusted by it. Both are honorable men, and both are appalled by Watergate. They very much resemble such distinguished Old Leftists as Sidney Hook, Irving Kristol, and Irving Howe, who were equally appalled in 1968 by the explosions of dictator-worship and totalitarianism in the elite liberal world. Neither old guard has recognized its paternal relationship to the phenomenon it so detests. Gentlemanly thuggery was not what they had intended, when they preached their respective collectivist-statist philosophies, and it revolted them. Unfortunately, the road to hell is paved with good intentions. The authori-

tarian sins in both camps have come home to roost in a catastrophic manner. The libertarian traditions are being crushed to death by the authoritarian traditions; they cannot logically coexist, in theory or in practice.

The plain fact, today, is that the two dominant philosophies in the United States have broken down under the weight of their own inner irrationality. Both liberals and conservatives have attempted to integrate freedom and slavery, and have failed. And America is drifting, disintegrating, slowly dying for lack of rational political principles calculated to guard individual rights above all else. All that is left is pressure groups and their Congressional representatives, mutually hostile mobs fighting like piranhas for chunks of the public treasure, with the mediating Supreme Court torn by the identical conflicts. The Constitution has become a rubber document, betrayed by generations of pragmatic liberals and conservatives who shy away from principles as vampires shy away from the cross.

Libertarianism's Promise

It is my deepest conviction that young Americans, both liberals and conservatives, who are hurt, bewildered, and frightened by the philosophical bankruptcy of their elders, and the catastrophic deterioration of their country, must make it their most serious business to study the works of libertarian scholars, and to rethink the assorted rationalizations for statism which they have been taught. So long as young liberals accept the fundamental contradiction of liberalism—the belief that one can have freedom and a big controlling State as well—they will merely continue to build their own socialist-totalitarian prison, and, helplessly cry out in rage against their vanishing liberty. So long as young conservatives accept the fundamental contradiction of conservatism—the belief that one can have value-authoritarianism and freedom too—they face only two possible futures, both of them tragic: They will march toward cultural extinction—or toward fascism. Indeed, if they want a future at all, young conservatives must take their own libertarian tradition seriously. When they do, they will extricate themselves from their presently untenable position—that of blindly conserving authority, tradition, and order in a state moving fast toward socialism. They will become radicals, intent on a drastic reformation of their society.

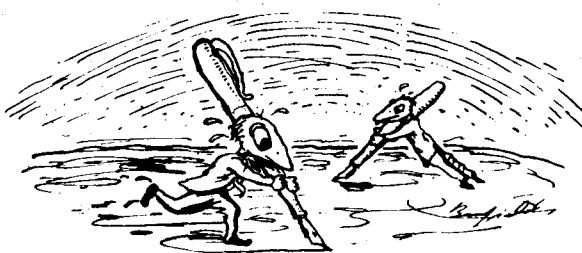
It is crucial, in this connection, that the

religious young understand clearly that the radicalism of the libertarian position requires no renunciation of religion. In a free society, the individual is free to interpret the universe as he wills, and to join or preserve the religious institutions he cherishes. Libertarianism only requires a complete acceptance of intellectual liberty, and the separation of Church and State. But this means: a conscious repudiation of *theocracy*, explicit and implicit. It means: a total renunciation of any attempt to coerce others by law into submission to one's own religious, ethical, or sexual views. Preaching, teaching, criticism, moral pressure, cooperative voluntary organization, economic boycotts—all are acceptable means of influencing one's fellow citizens. Force is not. Libertarianism forbids the use of force on people who have not, themselves, initiated the use of force.

It is, in fact, the libertarian position on government force which makes it the most radical philosophy in America today. Libertarianism honors *both* the liberals' and the conservatives' most fundamental traditions of freedom, those which forbid the use of government coercion against individuals. It integrates both traditions—the liberal's spiritual *laissez-faire* and the conservative's material *laissez-faire*—into one consistent system. But to take both liberals and conservatives at their respective words about individual freedom is as radical an action as can be conceived. Inevitably, the most common responses in both groups to this libertarian integration are incomprehension, hostility, and hysteria. One can well understand why. In a genuinely free society, ninety percent of all liberal and conservative political action would cease. Shorn of their "right" to use brute force against peaceful men who have committed no crimes, liberals and conservatives would be left, disarmed, facing the true meaning of the freedom in which both claim to believe: *Hands Off People*.

For two hundred years, American thinkers and politicians have talked piously about the inalienable individual right to liberty. Few have ever meant a word of it. And with each successive generation, they have increasingly forgotten the meaning of the concept and continued to fight merely over which *aspect* of the individual to enslave, and how much. During this particular season of America's decline, "rights" tend to mean, on the Left, the right to the foulest and most nihilistic forms of self-expression, and the right to other people's money, while, on the Right, they tend to mean the right to muzzle the foul-mouthed and nihilist, and to hold on to one's money. The very level and content of the battle is contemptible. But the inalienable right to liberty is mankind's—and America's—flaming political ideal. It cannot be allowed to degenerate into the grunting of pigs, and to perish. It is time for the betrayed young of this generation to launch a philosophical crusade to resurrect and restore that ideal. □

Among
the
Intellectualoids



by
Stephen R.
Maloney

A Dim View from the Penthouse

(One of civilized man's eternal misconceptions is that the barbarian always rides a charger and whoops for blood, a head impaled on his spear, flies buzzing about his disheveled noodle. This is far from the mark, but as misconceptions go it has amazing stamina.)

In the 1920s civilized Americans discovered that the barbarian was often a go-getter Rotarian, a 100-percenter, or a hayseed Luddite, when he was not a man of the cloth launching tirades against the cocktail and sermonizing on the essential sinfulness of the Ford.

And so today have we learned that liberty may be scotched at any time, from any direction, by an biped? Not at all. We still wage war against a pitiful band of fundamentalists, boosters, and middle brows, fearing that at any moment a furious reaction against progress and putative liberality is going to come roaring out of Arkansas. In the meantime the barbarian, mimicking the ways of yesterday's progressives and civil libertarians, is turning our civilized order into a shambles and continually snipping at the Bill of Rights.

Today's barbarian is the intellectualoid, the solemn purveyor of half-baked notions of enlightenment which, upon closer scrutiny, always appear as the purest voodoo. Post-industrial society crawls with these barbarians. Their pretensions to intellectuality and virtue are boundless. And always just beneath their fragile veneer of learning grunts the primitive mind of a Vandal. So where can you find them, what do they look like, what are the fauna and flora of their range?

In this series The Alternative will undertake yet another public service for its readers. We shall exhibit the various activities, disguises, and personalities of this modern barbarian. We shall at times identify particularly odious intellectualoids and plumb the depths of their fatuities. At times this will make for highly amusing reading, but—even in the archest moment—the reader must remember that—no matter how ridiculous the claims and misadventures of the intellectualoid—the intellectualoid is, down deep, as dangerous to the civilized order as yesterday's Ku Kluxer and as dangerous to liberty as the votary of Prohibition. He is eternally a philistine, a fraud, and a scoundrel.—RET,jr)

Among the contemporary girlie magazines, *Penthouse* is only number two. But unlike *Avis*, this glossy gawk sheet does not try harder. It doesn't have to; it is an Edsel with buyers in a society that is all eyes. Like the other purveyors of such offerings (*Oui*, *Rogue*, *Gallery*, etc.), *Penthouse* is an unashamed imitator of *Playboy*. The success of these publications grows out of what we might call the Iron Law of Voyeurism: one can occupy himself ogling the Playmates and assorted bunnies in *Playboy* for at most a few hours. How is one to waste the rest of his time? The saturation point for *Playboy* imitators will probably be reached when they total about thirty, the number of days in an average month. Then the "readers" can begin again. Publishers of the girlies know, of course, that such magazines do not live by color pictures alone—there must be a text of sorts, lest mammaries, derrieres, yea even pudenda, become boring through repetition. To be sure, very few people actually read those tendentious, but oh so chic, pontifications by John Kenneth Galbraith and Garry Wills in *Playboy* and its brethren. *Playboy* admittedly has its moments; *Penthouse* is lucky if it manages a few seconds. "The International Magazine for Men" (*Penthouse's* humble self-description) is, one suspects, directed to the downwardly mobile, people who lie on advertising questionnaires, those who have never loved intensely—only lost. So as Joan Rivers remarked when Johnny Carson informed her that "modern psychology" teaches us that a woman reaches her sexual prime at age 37: "Yeah, but nobody cares." *Penthouse's* worldwide circulation is 5,350,000. Somebody cares. In fact, it may be *Penthouse* tells us more about the real meaning of the sexual revolution than do all the earnest participants in academic (and girlie magazine) symposia. For even if, as I suspect, *Penthouse* is not much read, it is much looked-at—the ads as well as the pictures—and a picture is worth, in this case, five million buyers at \$1.25 a head.

T.S. Eliot once spoke about those authors who become confident enough to transcend mere allusion and to steal outright from their predecessors. In quality *Penthouse* is to its prototype as the "Before" picture is to the "After." But that is only a metaphoric claim to priority over *Playboy*. *Penthouse* has its key, its nude centerfolds ("Pets"), its advice column

(by hooker-philosopher Xaviera Hollander), its endless letters section (more about this later), even a club of sorts (albeit no clubhouse): the "*Penthouse/Viva Leisure Club*." (*Viva* is a spinoff from *Penthouse*; it is a "boylike" magazine, breasts and vulvae being replaced by hairy chests and quiescent penises. It is, incredibly, more banal than its sire.) The "*Leisure Club*" is, one infers, sort of a raunchy version of the Arthur Murray clubs, suggesting—one doubts delivering—an occasional group grope for Mature Adults. Cost is \$25 for singles, \$32 for two, if *Penthouse* readers have a friend that is. In format *Penthouse* is perhaps best described as *Playboy* after arteriosclerosis: short reviews, inept articles on fashionable topics, unfunny cartoons, leering advertisements directed toward dirty old men who fancy themselves fashionable lechers, oodles of questionable advice to the hung-up. Hefner could sue. But it would be a little like John Wayne naming Mickey Rooney as a co-respondent.

Penthouse's one claim to originality among the slick girlies is its introduction of pubic hair. *Playboy*, not devoid of kinks, had a thing about hair, leaving portrayals of its genital manifestations to the magazines one purchased in decayed tobacco shops from grizzled men with nicotine-stained hands. But after *Penthouse* lifted the veil, so to speak, *Playboy* had to follow. And all those fabled airbrushes, the cameraman's depilatory, went into the trashcan. Now a self-respecting man's magazine would no more think of displaying a naked girl sans pubic hair than Julia Child would of cooking without wine.

The man responsible for this breakthrough is *Penthouse's* Hefner of sorts, Bob Guccione. He is a more attractive kind of Hefner, considered superficially. Less visible publicly, without the logorrheic paeans to his own studhood, without the pleasure grotto, certainly without closed-circuit television equipment to monitor erotic movements in his pad. (Yes, friends, Mike Royko broke the story: Hefner videotapes posteriors in action for posterity. Poor Barbi Benton, Hugh's playmate; first she appears on "Hee Haw," now she stars in Hefner's re-runs. But after all, he did vow to make her an actress.) Mr. Guccione does possess at least a tad of the Hefnerian megalomania, however. He is founder, original editor, president, chairman of the board,