

Costello: Of course.

Spellman: And do you want to go to Heaven?

Costello: Of course.

"Then we need you to get us . . ." and Cardinal Spellman named the specified sum, to be turned over as quickly as possible. The funds were supplied forthwith, and presumably Frank Costello received his pass for the Pearly Gates. Fantastic as it seems, this story has been checked out, though it will probably be denied by the CIA, which was involved in Operation Brook Club.

Burnham, Hess, and I decided that perhaps Frank Costello might be willing to finance our nickel-and-dime operation, with the understanding that should the law crowd him too much, his participation might be considered an extenuating factor. We knew, as well, that the Mafia had little love for any political system that impinged on its scope and its operations. To approach Costello was certainly worth trying. Costello's lawyer, I knew, was George Wolfe, so we called him and made an appointment. At our first visit, we gave Wolfe a schematic account, with almost no particulars, of what we were hoping to achieve, and we hinted diplomatically at how Costello's help might also help him in the future. "You know, of course, that Mr. Costello is not a rich man," Wolfe said blandly. "But I'll talk to him. See me next week."

When we returned the following week, Wolfe told us that "Mr. Costello is interested and would like to know more of the details." But, he warned us again, "Mr. Costello is, as you know, not a rich man, and \$50,000 is a lot of money." We suggested that he might have friends and elaborated on our plans. Again we were asked to return the following week. At the next meeting a much more expansive Mr. Wolfe assured us that "Mr. Costello" was very interested but wanted even more details. These we happily supplied, certain that he was ready to participate and to give us the money we needed.

But clearly, Frank Costello was not going to be taken in by what could be a scheme to relieve him of 50 grand. As we talked to George Wolfe, there was a knock on his office door and three of the biggest, most sinister-looking bruisers walked in. "We come to get de papers," one said, and for several minutes they carefully stared at us in what was surely an eyeball frisk. Then, having

memorized our faces, they picked up a handful of papers from Wolfe's desk and departed. We got the message and left with the injunction to return the following week to get our final and, we were certain, affirmative answer.



But another kind of history was on the move. Between the time of our visit and the time we were to return, Estes Kefauver and the Senate Committee to Investigate Organized Crime set up shop in New York, sending out subpoenas to Frank Costello and other crime figures to appear at a series of sensational televised hearings. (Frank Costello refused to sit for the cameras, and he made investigatory history by allowing only his hands to be shown.) When we called Wolfe's office to confirm our appointment, it was "James who? Ralph who? Karl who?"—and most important, "Frank who?" The project was dead, and Jim Burnham never mentioned it again to either of us or, I believe, to anyone else.

Years later, Karl Hess and I blessed the Kefauver Committee. For on more serious thought, we realized that the "triangulation" could easily have blown up in our faces. Neither Karl nor I had much to lose, but it would have meant the destruction of James Burnham as a professor, a writer of important books, and a figure who in the realm of politics and ideas commanded great respect from most intellectuals, though not George Orwell. But even had our half-baked scheme worked, we would have been the target of an enemy not to be underestimated, the KGB. Even my journalistic efforts at exposing Soviet espionage and subversion led in time to phone calls to my wife, threatening to kill me and our children. Even here there was irony, for when I applied for a permit to own and carry a gun, a New York sergeant of detectives said, "Nah. If somebody takes a shot at you, we'll let you have it."

Ralph Robert Toledano writes from Washington, D.C.

Sanctions

by Murray N. Rothbard

War on the Cheap

The modern weapon of "sanctions" seems made-to-order for the foreign policy of Bill Clinton. Remarkably evasive and unprincipled even for a modern politician, Clinton is possessed of a horror of commitment in both his personal and his political life. The armamentarium of minute differentia in sanctions allows Clinton to posture at length as a man of peace or of toughness in foreign policy while seemingly keeping all of his options open. In particular, sanctions allow the President to assume moral stances while avoiding any unpleasant consequences.

Sanctions are measures to inflict economic pain on countries whose governments in some way displease the United States. They can range from seizure of the other country's assets in the United States to embargoes on financial dealings, investments, or trade. The embargoes can range up to all imports to, or exports from, the sanctioned country. The attractive point to the President is that they exert coercion upon another country without actually dropping American bombs or sending American troops into harm's way. War on the cheap; exertion of American force on relatively defenseless nations. What could be more attractive?

Bill Clinton, it is true, scarcely invented the sanction device. It has been used ever since Woodrow Wilson launched the perpetual global crusade to impose replicas of American institutions throughout the world. Franklin Roosevelt's sanctions against the Japanese in the late 1930's—embargoing oil to Japan and confiscating Japanese financial assets in the United States, coupled with Secretary of State Hull's ultimatum to the Japanese in late November 1941 to get out of Indochina, or else—drove Japan in desperation to attack Pearl Harbor, thus falling for the trap set by FDR to get the United States into World War II against the wishes of the American people. Presidents Reagan and Bush enforced stringent economic sanctions against South Africa, under cover of United Nations agreement. But with Bill Clinton, sanctions seem to have tak-

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en over as almost his only foreign policy. Sanctions against the Serbs are starving them and ruining their economy; sanctions against the Haitians are accomplishing similar goals; and there are a wide variety of sanctions against the North Koreans to prevent them from acquiring one or two puny nuclear weapons. Of course, by the time this article appears in early fall, Clinton may have already decided it is worthwhile to go to war against any of the three countries above.

Typically, these Clintonian sanctions embargo all trade with the hapless country except for "humanitarian" food and medicine, but in practice food and medicine can't get into the country either, as the Serbs and Haitians have discovered. For how can every plane and every truck be searched in order to exempt whatever food or medicine might be on board? Typically, too, sanctions, from the mildest to the severest, don't "work" in the sense of forcing the country to obey American commands. They don't work for a simple reason: if the sanctions are mild, they don't have much effect; but if they are severe, the economic pain is inflicted *not* on the country's power elite, who manage to live high off the hog regardless of what happens, but on the country's hapless subject population. Victims of American embargoes in Serbia are not Miloshevitich and his ruling elite, but the Serbian people; sufferers from starvation in Haiti are not the ruling military, but the subject people.

Remarkably, the more candid advocates of sanctions admit they don't work, which means that they can only escalate to the severest forms. The United States must then either forget about the whole thing or launch a military strike. So what's the point? The point of sanctions is to shore up the psyche and the political prestige of the sanctioners, that is, the American rulers. To the hue and cry of the pundits and the sentimental watchers of CNN who ask, "How can you sit and watch [fill in almost any country] and do nothing?" the President can reply: "I *am* doing something. I'm imposing sanctions." As far as actually changing the actions of the despised governments, this is almost beside the point. Sanctions "work" by buying time so that the President can baby the situation along for another few weeks or months without having to commit to any real course of action; they also "work" by en-

abling him to throw a few bones to the permanent-war crowd and allowing him to oppose whatever foreign evil is being held up for attack this month. And who knows? If the President babies the situation long enough, maybe something will turn up, Allah will provide, or maybe he can stick his successor with the accumulating mess.

Meanwhile, the permanent-war crusaders, the laptop bombardiers, are not really satisfied; in the name of the High Moral Ground, they keep calling for Serbian or Haitian or Korean or Iraqi blood. But even if their full satisfaction has to be postponed, they are partially appeased by contemplating the sight of the United States, in its moral crusade, at least inflicting starvation on millions of poor Serbs, Bosnians, Rwandans, etc. It's a measure of the debasement of current political discourse that the thirsters after starvation and mass murder are considered the "moralists," while those of us opposed to such measures are denounced as "selfish," "uncaring," and "standing by while . . ." In the end, however, participating in mass murder and imposed starvation seems to rank a bit worse on one's scale of values than refusing to do so.

But the biggest delusion concerning sanctions is the notion that they are a moderate alternative to war. Under international law, sanctions are considered an act of war, and indeed how could they not be? In old-fashioned pre-Woodrow Wilson international law, nations were supposed to leave the trade of other countries alone; even warring countries were not supposed to interfere with the rights of neutral nations to trade with their enemies. Moreover, in old-fashioned pre-Wilson international law, carved out over the centuries by scholastics and jurists and more or less adhered to by all civilized nations, civilians of enemy countries are never supposed to be targeted. You are not supposed to bomb enemy civilians unless they are directly in the path of military attack (a fortified city in the path of battle). Sanctions and embargoes, however, are pure attempts to injure the civilian population and thereby put pressure on government to change its ways. But on the contrary, the sanctioned government will be able to rally the public behind it even further, in common and justifiable hatred against the American sanctioner, who has not even had the candor and the guts to declare war.

Sanctions, then, are in no sense a substitute for war. They are a warlike act and a cowardly and deeply immoral means for the United States to inflict pain on hapless civilians without suffering any sort of retaliation. Perhaps one day, in some far-off future, the worm may be able to turn, and the sanctioned country may be able to turn the tables. It will be interesting to see how the President, and the permanent-war pundits, would react to a little sanctioning themselves.

Murray N. Rothbard is a professor of economics at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and vice president for academic affairs at the Ludwig von Mises Institute.

The Business of Escape

by Christine Haynes

Peter Mayle's Provence

Peter Mayle has dominated the non-fiction best-seller lists in recent years with his chronicles of life in the south of France. *A Year in Provence* and *Toujours Provence* (both published in the United States in 1991) even spawned a four-part television series, which was produced by the BBC and has run regularly on the Arts & Entertainment Network since its debut in the spring of 1993. Mayle's name has graced (and sold) picture books and calendars featuring paintings of Provence, and his first novel (set in—where else?—Provence) received a favorable write-up in the *New York Times Book Review* when it appeared last fall.

Mayle's recent literary fame—and fortune—has only enhanced the already comfortable life he was leading as a former advertising executive-turned-writer. In an interview with Mayle last October, *Publishers Weekly* described his writing career as “one stroke of luck after another.” Mayle ended a 15-year career in advertising (split between London and New York) in 1975, after he sold his manuscript for an illustrated children's sex manual entitled *Where Did I Come From?* to a publisher in 15 minutes. (The book is still in print and has been trans-

lated into 17 languages.) This success inspired 12 relatively lean years of writing in Devon, England, before Mayle and his third wife Jenny decided to move to Provence, where they had vacationed for years, in 1986. Both *A Year in Provence* and *Toujours Provence* recount how they refurbished an 18th-century farmhouse near Ménerbes and adapted to new physical, linguistic, and gastronomical surroundings.

Mayle follows a long line of both French and foreign writers about Provence, and many of his observations have already been made by others. This makes them no less true—or amusing. Mayle makes good use of his senses, following the example of Lawrence Durrell, who “experienc[ed] the country with [his] feet as well as [his] tongue.” He shows an appreciation for the grey crags, green brush, blue sky, and yellow light that comprise Provence's scenery, as well as for the garlic, melons, goat cheese, herbs, asparagus, olive oil, thick-crust bread, and robust wine that constitute its cuisine. Indeed, food and drink are as much of an obsession for him as they are for the French themselves. Mayle's *Year in Provence* begins with a New Year's Day lunch and ends with a Christmas dinner of leg of lamb at a nearby *auberge*. In between are trips to various markets and *boulangeries*; lessons in truffle gathering, game hunting, olive pressing, and rabbit husbandry; and introductions to cherry picking and grape harvesting. As M.F.K. Fisher once observed, even the lower classes in France eat well, and Mayle's descriptions of a truck driver's lunch or a peasant's evening meal make an American reader wish for a day in the life of a French worker or farmer.

But Mayle's books offer more than menus. In both his fiction and his non-fiction, Mayle is a modern-day Henry James in his attention to the habits and characteristics of France's natives. He does a particularly nice job of conveying what Durrell termed the “conversational salt” of the Midi. His accounts of the Provençal language (“... it was a rich, soupy patois, emanating from somewhere at the back of the throat and passing through a scrambling process in the nasal passages before coming out as speech”), greetings (“To be engulfed by a Provençal welcome [is] as thorough and searching as being frisked by airport security guards”), and gestures (“... jerky aerobics ... accompany any heated conversation in Provence—shoulders twitch-

ing, arms waving, hands wagging in emphasis, eyebrows threatening to disappear upwards into [one's] cap”) border on caricature, as critics of both his books and the TV series have argued; but, exaggerated or not, these images elucidate the personality of a people.

Yet such comments reveal only the comic side of the Provençal character; as Jacques Chabot noted in a book called *La Provence de [Jean] Giono* (1980), there is another more somber and secret side to this character, especially among the inhabitants of the mountains of Upper Provence. Mayle's sketches exhibit only a superficial understanding of both the natural elements and the human history that shape life in Provence. To be sure, Mayle refers to the intense heat and bright light of summer days here, but for him they mean no more than the necessity to spend afternoons by the pool. In reality, such heat and light affect perhaps the most important—and certainly the most precarious—resource in Provence: water. The viewer of Claude Berri's film *Jean de Florette* (based on a novel by Provence's most popular native-son, Marcel Pagnol) can sense the torridity produced by a summer without rain in frames of hazy sky, withered stalks, and dead rabbits accompanied by a sound-track of chirping cicadas. (As Alphonse Daudet—another native-son—remarked, the shrill cry of the cicadas “seems the very resonance of the immense luminous vibration” of a July afternoon.) Jean's long, painful, and—ultimately—fatal struggle to supply his household and small farm with water after his neighbors have plugged the spring on his property illustrates why Pagnol's compatriots consider water to be “liquid gold.” Lack of water in summer can mean seemingly interminable droughts (and sometimes forest fires), while too much water in springtime can yield dangerous floods. This and similar dualities (as between the burning heat of the sun and the frigid gusts of the “Mistral,” a wind that sweeps from the Alps down the Rhône Valley to wreak havoc with the hats—and temperaments—of all Provençaux) profoundly influence both natural and social life in Provence.

Jean Giono, among other Provençal writers, recognized the “cycle of eternal return” inherent in these dualities. Nature to Giono is sensual, and days as well as seasons are not linear but round. Man's labors follow nature and are there-