

# Editorials

## *The night of the bandits*

**T**hat hated day is upon us again—April 15th. That is the date by which the American people must either pay up or run for cover, the deadline for payment of their “taxes,” that venal tribute which robs them of their rightful earnings day after day, month after month, year after year, lifetime after lifetime. Taxation in America today has reached unpying proportions, and the people of this nation find themselves staggering ever more under its weight. But the cruelty and venality of the tax collectors knows no civilized limits. Political leaders come before us and pledge to reduce the awesome burden; no one takes them as anything but filthy liars. They are not willing to acknowledge the right of people to keep what they earn; they are not willing to cut back on their spurious “programs” which—virtually without a notable exception—are leading to the ruin of society and economy alike; they are not willing to stop oppressing the American people.

To reduce taxation in America today we must be ruthless both in describing the activities of the government and in describing the nature of taxation itself. Only when the American people understand that the programs dragged before their eyes as the solutions to every conceivable problem merely make matters worse, while benefitting a small, privileged elite at the expense of the majority, can we abolish these destructive functions of government. Only when the brutal truth about taxation itself is understood will the American people begin to see that the reduction in the size of government and in taxation must be regarded today as virtually an end in itself. Those who wish to grasp fully the inner essence of taxation can do no better than to read and reread the classic passage from *No Treason*, by the great libertarian Lysander Spooner, which cuts through lifetimes of obfuscation and confusion:

“It is true that the *theory* of our Constitution is, that all taxes are paid voluntarily; that our government is a mutual insurance company, voluntarily entered into by the people with each other; that each man makes a free and purely voluntary contract with all others who are parties to the Constitution, to pay so much money for so much protection, the same as he does with any other insurance company; and that he is just as free not to be protected, and not to pay tax, as he is to pay a tax, and be protected.

“But this theory of our government is wholly different from the practical fact. The fact is that the government, like a highwayman, says to a man: “Your money, or your life.” And many, if not most, taxes are paid under the compulsion of that threat.

“The government does not, indeed, waylay a man in a lonely place, spring upon him from the roadside, and,

holding a pistol to his head, proceed to rifle his pockets. But the robbery is none the less a robbery on that account; and it is far more dastardly and shameful.

“The highwayman takes solely upon himself the responsibility, danger, and crime of his own act. He does not pretend that he has any rightful claim to your money, or that he intends to use it for your own benefit. He does not pretend to be anything but a robber. He has not acquired impudence enough to profess to be merely a “protector,” and that he takes men’s money against their will, merely to enable him to “protect” those infatuated travellers, who feel perfectly able to protect themselves, or do not appreciate his peculiar system of protection. He is too sensible a man to make such professions as these. Furthermore, having taken your money, he leaves you, as you wish him to do. He does not persist in following you on the road, against your will; assuming to be your rightful “sovereign,” on account of the “protection” he affords you. He does not keep “protecting” you, by commanding you to bow down and serve him; by requiring you to do this, and forbidding you to do that; by robbing you of more money as often as he finds it for his interest or pleasure to do so; and by branding you as a rebel, a traitor, and an enemy to your country, and shooting you down without mercy, if you dispute his authority, or resist his demands. He is too much of a gentleman to be guilty of such impostures, and insults, and villainies as these. In short, he does not, in addition to robbing you, attempt to make you either his dupe or his slave.”

When they realize that they have had enough, and that there is *no reason* to suffer the treatment that they get at the hands of the government, the American people will take their first step down the road of that rebellion against taxation and regimentation which will find, at its end, true individual liberty. They have done it before; they must do it again.

## *Left and Right: The case for an eclectic strategy*

**I**n the February issue of *Reason* magazine, there appears a “Viewpoint” column by Edith Efron which has stirred up a storm of controversy: “Warning to Constitutional Republicans.” Beneath a pile of “factoids,” as Norman Mailer used to call them, and an astonishing degree of selectivity in presenting portraits of both the Left and the Right—some of which are analyzed by David Ramsay Steele elsewhere in this issue—there lies a single point which is at the heart of the issue: Because the Left is anticapitalist, a libertarian “can never rationally ally himself with the Left.” Passing by her most blatant slander of the Left (she claims, for example, that the Left “evades mass murder in Cambodia,” when the truth of the matter is that there has been far more in the way of exposes of Cambodia in leftist publications like *The New York Review* than in a whole stack of right-wing publications), let us take up this strategic point in some detail.

The fact of the matter is that libertarianism as an ideology cuts across the political spectrum. Our principled adherence to the nonaggression principle—which opposes the initiation of physical force to gain ends in society—means that we are principled advocates of private property and *laissez-faire*, civil libertarians opposed to victimless crime laws and other violations of civil liberties, and are opposed to militarism and foreign interventionism. We share some concerns with elements in the Left, other concerns with elements in the Right. Our opposition to the draft did not lead us to endorse plans for compulsory national service; our opposition to the war in Vietnam did not lead us to take up the call for government-enforced boycotts of South Africa or Rhodesia; our opposition to OSHA did not lead us to call for pouring more government money into the arts; our hatred for Communism has not seen us endorsing jingoism or global interventionism; our demand that the rights of gays and other cultural minorities be respected in full and immediately had not led us to advocate antidiscrimination ordinances which would prohibit private discrimination. We dance to nobody's tune. We are not ashamed of the fact that we are neither Left nor Right, but rather represent a radical rethinking of political issues. We are proud of our independence and rejection of incoherent, conventional package deals.

But this very fact that libertarianism is neither Left nor Right creates a paradox: *because* libertarianism is *neither*, it must seek allies from *both*. In a complex society, goals are served in complex ways. That is a fact of reality. To achieve our purposes, we must be able to incorporate into our plans the *complementary* actions of others, necessarily including those who do not share our ultimate ends or motives. We ought to learn a lesson from Austrian economics: In a complex society goals are *never* achieved only by the actions of those whose plans are identical. For their achievement, goals require the actions of those for whom the attainment of our libertarian ends has no importance. It is not their intent that we should achieve what we strive for; but that consequence may very well be in part the *result*, the *unintended consequence* of their actions nevertheless. Let us take advantage of that fact; anything less simply ignores the nature of the market economy, and the advantages which it brings to us.

In forming alliances with various individuals or even groups (The Committee to Stop Government Spying, NORML, in supporting the Jarvis tax-limitation initiative in California, or in supporting a group opposing Carter's energy program, for example), we should do so on *specific issues* that will advance libertarianism. Moreover, in forming such *ad hoc* alliances, we should focus on *our own* goals, not those of others. It is for the *very purpose* of underlining our own *independent* political position that we ought to ally with elements across the political spectrum. In an age of stale, boring, conventional viewpoints, we should flaunt our own unconventionality. The American people are crying out for an alternative. We must advertise that *we* are different, working with a great variety of those who share our particular positions on specific issues, pressuring divergent groups continually.

Moreover, these criss-crossing alliances, on an *ad hoc* basis, will increase our credibility by showing that we mean what we say when we defend individual liberty across the board.

Above all, we must not be afraid to join hands temporarily with those whose other views we find repugnant. We must show that we are unafraid of their errors, and that we are fully confident that we are right, that we will win. We must develop and sustain the will to achieve liberty, the *will to victory*. If we continually focus on the motives and goals of *others*, rather than on how they fit in with a pursuit of *our own* goals and values, we shall, quite simply, never achieve anything.

**In a very important and fundamental sense, Edith Efron's approach to strategy is *profoundly altruistic*.** Consider, if she had her way. We could not march in public against the Vietnam War, because someone might hoist a Vietcong flag. We cannot demonstrate against laws that restrict the individual rights of gays, because fellow demonstrators might be egalitarians. We cannot publicly express our outrage at the vicious drug laws of this country, because drug users are part of the hatred "counter-culture." We could not have marched against the draft, against slavery, because some fellow marchers might be communists.

Given such a view, what issues could we *not* be frightened away from? How could a libertarian *ever* rise to a position of leadership motivated by such foreboding? Shall we abandon the fight for airline deregulation, just because Edward Kennedy has gotten aboard that particular bandwagon? Shall we announce to scoundrels that they can paralyze us in our pursuit of liberty at the drop of a hat?

Anyone who takes Edith Efron's approach is in face being a profound second-hander—motivated not by positive values of their own, but by a reaction *against* the motives of others—taking the values of *others* as primary. But it is not the political *alliance* which is of prime importance; it is the political *end* being sought. In a complex world, some of our particular ends *have* to be achieved with the help of those who do not share *other* ends.

Time and again, statism has triumphed in history because statisticians have managed, on issue after bloody issue, to manipulate people, to split what we might call the "natural opposition constituency," that natural constituency which, from across the spectrum, every corner of the nation, *might have*—had it come together in time—*blocked* violation after violation of the liberties and rights of the American people. The rulers of this nation want desperately to keep conventional categories *rigid*, to keep Left and Right apart, to prevent any coalition that might—just *might*—begin the long, slow, tedious process of *rolling back state power* in this once-proud nation. Edith Efron has played into their hands, with a virtuoso performance. Don't work with the Left to roll back the military, she declares! Don't work with the Left to halt censorship! Don't work with the Left to expose the illegalities of the FBI and CIA! Don't oppose foreign dictatorships which are "pro-American" (and what a line *that* is!). Don't

work with the counter-culture to abolish the drug laws! Don't work with the Left to expose business-government ties and corruption, even if you *do* make it crystal clear that you are for *laissez-faire*. How far is it from there to impassioned cries not to work with those who are for deregulating the American economy, because some are for it in order to wound big business, by restoring free competition?

Indeed, is there any issue from which we could *not* be frightened away on such grounds?

The result of Edith Efron's "strategy" would be to produce—as it already has among far too many who already believe in it—a profound paralysis, a sense of helplessness. And that sense would reflect reality precisely, because they would be announcing to the world that the way for *anyone* to stop them from achieving their goals would be to adopt the same end, for reasons they find repugnant. They would then abandon the battle.

And that, sadly, is precisely how Edith Efron operates. Because her attitude toward the Left is one of repugnance, there is scarcely one key issue that she is not willing to grant to Leftists, abandoning any struggle for real leadership in those areas where basic libertarian values are at stake.

Edith Efron paves the way for Leftist victories just because she hates them, paradoxically enough. She acts to create a leadership vacuum in those areas where libertarians *agree* with them. But this means nothing less than that the Left will *necessarily* rise to leadership in *any* movement or crusade where libertarian goals that they also share are at stake. Her "strategy" will produce the opposite of her intentions. Beginning with a vision of liberty and capitalism, she will give up precisely to the degree that the Left sides with her on specific issues. *That* is the nature of her "warning." It is a prescription for revulsion, paralysis, cowardice, and defeat. It is a confession of emotional exhaustion, of the desire not to have to struggle for our ideals anymore. It is profoundly evasive of the facts of reality.

If Edith Efron were listened to, the result would be an intensifying paralysis in the libertarian movement which thus would rapidly shrink in size and influence. All the progress of the past few years would be abandoned. She herself is not totally paralyzed *only* because she manages a highly selective focus on aspects of the Right, evading whole chunks of their beliefs, so that she can continue to deal with them.

But all this does not result from a "commitment to affirmative values." It is not a point reached because of "reverence." It is the result of fear, and of a profound paranoia. The panic results from a fear that if we libertarians work with the Left on some issues, *our* actions will somehow benefit *them*. One can almost hear Edith Efron shriek: "They're Leftist issues!"

But they're not Leftist issues, Edith. They're *our* issues, and we have no right to give them up to the Left. We must assert proudly our right to those issues, our right to our own ideology. We must never surrender that right, never give it up—not to anyone—for any reason.

And that is why we have a moral obligation to work

with both the Left and the Right, *and* to denounce both. Look at it in reverse: If these *are* our issues, then *they* are working with *us*. We define our ideology, and work to fulfill our vision; their goals are secondary. We do not accept *their* "package deals"; we welcome the destruction of those package deals.

We have our own ideology. We have our own world to win.

No one is suggesting that we abandon our ideology, to throw our lot in with the Left. We are adults. We can remember what we are all about. The achievement of a free society requires nothing less.

We dare not give up the world because of the venality—real or imagined—of others. Recognizing that, let us face up to the real requirements of social causality. Paranoia is self-indulgence.

Let us rather take up the challenge which confronts us. Unafraid of alliances, let us move forward. Moved by a reverence for *liberty* and contempt for those states that are its greatest enemy, let's get to work.

## Phyllis Schlafly rides again

**P**hyllis Schlafly, the Bonnie Parker of the American Right, has recently let loose with a broadside in her column "From the Right" against—are you ready?—drugs and rock music. Her theme is really a boiled-down version of such right-wing classics as *Hippies*, *Drugs*, and *Promiscuity* and *The Marxist Minstrels*. But for those whose memories stretch back to the early 1960's, it was a refreshing bit of nostalgia reminding one of the tirade of the once highly-esteemed preacher, the Rev. Billy James Hargis. Hargis, for those who do not know, was a revered fundamentalist on the Right who fell from grace after having been caught fooling around with young lads and damsels under his sway, in—how shall we say it?—a most *un-Christian* manner. His *magnum opus* on the subjects concerning which Ms. Schlafly waxes eloquent, was the well-known tome *Communism, Hypnotism and the Beatles*. Its theme, in a nutshell, was that rock music of the Beatles' sort was in fact a subtle form of hypnosis leading the young, drug-crazed, and appropriately mesmerized into the camp of the Enemy. Having reduced American youth to a squishy pulp, the Communist armies would certainly march against a vulnerable America.

Ms. Schlafly pulls back a bit from this precipice, but her heart is still with the Rev. Hargis: "Hard rock music has fostered the great wave of drug addiction among young people in the United States and England," she intones, echoing a "union musician" [egads!] correspondent, Jack Staulcup. She informs us that "prior to 1964 drug use among . . . students was almost unheard of" [What about booze and "reefer madness," Phyllis?], but since then the entertainment media have "peddled the line that drug use, as well as illicit sex, sloppy dress [gasp!] and rebellion against authority are the 'in' activities." Not only that, but "a steady diet of rock and roll junk promoted degenerate



rebelliousness among teenagers that finds its outlet in drugs, alcohol and illicit sex."

Moreover, it is not even good for *dancing*: "Teenagers really do not even dance to it; all they can do is move their bodies in an obscene motion." Oh, she admits that there were earlier such fads: the Charleston, the Big Apple, and the Jitterbug, for example. These might have been "silly" or, ahem, "energetic exercise," but none of *these* noble fads were "lewd or obscene." No, today's music is unique: "It is the biggest legalized racket that this country has ever seen." Aha! Shall we *outlaw* it? Well, not exactly; but "if we value civilization, we cannot afford to ignore any longer the high correlation between the multibillion-dollar hard-rock racket and the explosion of drug use and illicit sex among their teenage victims." She backs off from censorship and government intervention—which the rest of her blessed New Right often embraces—in calling for "parents [to] take a more active part in monitoring their children's entertainment." What a letdown! Just when things were starting to get interesting, a cop-out. No censorship, no local police swooping down on them, guns blazing, only good-old-fashioned parental control.

Really, though, there *is* a racket going on here—this continual scapegoating of those with different cultural tastes and lifestyles, of which Ms. Schlafly is so fond. Anyone who knows anything about history at all knows that Ms. Schlafly's complaint is only the latest on a road extending back through the centuries, with each generation pouncing on the one that follows. She might well go back and read what was said of alcohol or the Jitterbug in days of old—not to mention the rowdiness of the *Charleston*, which sent the Phyllis Schlaflys of the day into a tizzy. Ah, but those were the good old days, so different from today. It's an old, old story.

## Cloning: menace or promise?

**T**he science writer David Rorvik has written a just-published book claiming that an American millionaire has secretly managed to clone himself and produce a small boy, now 16 months old and well. Scientists claim that the technology for cloning humans is not yet available, and Rorvik says he is sworn to secrecy in naming the millionaire, the boy, or the scientists who performed the feat, in order to protect the privacy of all concerned.

Whoever is right on the facts, there is no doubt that cloning humans will eventually be feasible, that possibility raises important moral and political issues. Already, in response to the news of the Rorvik book, several scientists have sued the federal government under the Freedom of Information Act to try to force disclosure of what research the government has sponsored in this area. The statements issued by the scientists indicate that they are critical of the whole idea. Thus, Harvard genetics professor Jonathan Beckwith refers sweepingly to "medical 'advances' which allow meddling in the human gene pool." And, as MIT genetics professor Ethan Singer puts it: "What are the rights of cloned individuals? What are the ethical and moral aspects of cloning humans? Who has the right to clone?"

We can expect, in fact, severe opposition to cloning from both ends of the political spectrum. Liberals, who used to be in favor of scientific advance, now tend to be opposed to it for fear of technocratic control of individuals. And conservatives may be expected to raise the cry that cloning is tampering with God's gene pool and God's control over the reproductive process.

To put the problem in perspective, we must first point out what cloning is *not*. Cloning is not what we see in sci-fi movies, in which a new person is created whole with the identical memory and personality of the person being cloned. Cloning is essentially the creation of a new baby which will be an identical twin of the adult being cloned. In short, if John Doakes (or Jane Doakes) is cloned, Doakes Jr. will be a baby with the same genes as his father (or mother), and thus will be an identical twin of someone of the previous generation.

Putting the point this way should show how the question of rights can be resolved. Who should have the right to clone? Whoever has the right to have a baby by orthodox means: i.e. everyone. What should be the rights of a clone? The same as every other baby. The parents should have no more right to enslave a cloned baby than they have to enslave a baby now. Similarly, parents should have no less right to bring up a cloned baby than parents have to bring up a baby now. If John Doakes in some way created a cloned Doakes Jr., then so did he create (or half-create) the non-cloned Doakes offspring in the world now.

If the man is the one cloned, will the mother's role be different—though still essential—since only the father's genes will be passed on to the child? Why should this alteration of circumstance affect the roles or the rights of parents or children? After all, we have families with adopted children now where *no* genes are passed from parents to child, and yet the legal and moral status of all family members remains precisely the same. We should also realize that the clone will in no sense be a puppet of his creator; the clone will be as fully human a baby, as endowed with the freedom to choose and develop, as any baby is today.

The lesson here is that we should stop being so afraid of science: We should recapture the optimism with which earlier decades greeted technological advances. But we should always guard against any abuse of civil liberties whether using primitive or advanced technology. The human race could not have achieved its millennial climb upward from the cave man to civilization and high living standards for hundreds of millions without the aid of science and technology. To say that we must not tamper with God's gene pool is as sensible as saying that airplanes are evil because if God wanted us to fly he would have given us wings. Every time that men and women mate and produce children they are engaging in their own kind of "genetic engineering," by deciding which individuals they will attempt to mix their genes with. Cloning and other scientific advances will allow individuals to choose freely and determine their fates with far more knowledge and precision. Probably few mongoloids and hemophiliacs, and more geniuses, will be produced in the future. Is this such a terrible fate?

Mankind has accomplished its remarkable upward climb by using its reason to find out more and more about how the world works. Let us proceed with a high heart, undeterred by obscurantists—from whatever end of the political spectrum—who are eager to place shackles on man's mind.—MNR

# The Public Trough

## *The environmental backlash*

by Bruce Bartlett

In the fervor generated by the environmental movement in the United States, Congress and the state legislatures have enacted a mountain of new rules and regulations aimed at preserving and improving environmental quality, without taking a close look at the costs of their well-intentioned schemes. But now, recent considerations of these expenses is having a major impact on Congress, and may lead to a sudden backlash against such regulations in the near future.

One of the most significant analyses of this issue was presented by Edward Denison of the Brookings Institution in a recent article in the *Survey of Current Business*. Calculating the changes in the American economy over the past 30 years, he discovered that since 1968—when the proliferation of legislative strictures began to accelerate the growth of productivity has declined at an ever-increasing rate, evidently because of environmental and other new regulatory efforts. By 1975, the output for each unit of input was some one percent

smaller than it would have been under 1967 regulations. Productivity grew in 1973 by 0.2 percent less than it had in 1972; by 0.4 percent less in 1974 than the previous year; and by 0.5 percent less in 1975 than in 1974.

The reason? Scarce capital resources are being diverted from investments which can yield production to investments that cannot—namely, pollution abatement. The amount of capital thus shunted aside is enormous. According to the report issued recently by the Council on Environmental Quality, cumulative capital investment for pollution abatement will total \$252 billion over the next ten years. Yet these figures are dwarfed by the additional costs of operating and maintenance for this pollution control equipment and the cost of the capital used to acquire it: another \$554 billion by 1985. Thus more than \$800 billion will be diverted over the next decade from market-oriented investment which would yield higher productivity and output, to nonproductive pollution control.

Note also that the historical before-tax return on investment in the United States has averaged 12 percent per year. Thus, we can project that this \$800 billion could produce additional wealth of approximately \$100 billion a year. This is wealth which would have produced jobs and well-being for all Americans.

Yet there clearly are benefits to the country as a whole from cleaner air and water. But the cost is staggering, and the American people have a right to know what the alternatives are, so they will be able to make intelligent decisions about the allocation of scarce resources in the future.

It has taken nearly a decade for the costs to become apparent. The reaction has been slow in developing, but it is growing rapidly. Recently, *Harper's Magazine* (December 1977) published a brilliant essay by William Tucker on the Storm King Mountain controversy called, "Environmentalism and the Leisure Class." In that essay, Tucker showed rather conclusively that most of those opposed to building a new hydroelectric facility at Storm King on the Hudson River were not concerned about "the environment" in some abstract sense, but only looking out for their personal interests, with no particular regard for those who could benefit from a new hydroelectric facility. The most recent New York City blackout probably would not have happened if the Storm King facility had been built.

Senator Edmund Muskie, perhaps the leading environmentalist in Congress for the past decade, praised Tucker's article and noted that he was being attacked viciously by extreme environmentalists for supporting a hydroelectric facility, similar to that proposed at Storm King, on the St. John River in Maine. As Muskie argued, the only alternative to clean hydroelectric power must be new generating facilities fueled by coal, oil or nuclear fuel. So the question is: Who are the real environmentalists?

Ultimately, the jobs issue will be the downfall of the environmentalists. It appears that the north-central states are rapidly turning into a bloc on environmental issues, just as the oil- and gas-producing states of the Southwest are. This stems primarily from the slowdown in older manufacturing industries, like steel, which are most heavily hit by pollution-abatement costs, and which are located largely in the north-central states like Pennsylvania and Ohio. Evidence of this fact is shown by the establishment of a Steel Caucus in the Congress, which has proposed many measures which would free the steel industry from compliance with environmental regula-

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