

\*\*\* FREE NEW YORK \*\*\*

The monthly publication of the New York libertarian movement  
679 Mount Sinai-Coram Road, Mount Sinai, N.Y. 11766  
(516) 928-9419

Francis W. Porretto, Editor-In-Chief  
ably assisted by members of the Society for Individual Liberty  
and the Libertarian Party of New York  
\$12.00 per year --- by subscription only

DECEMBER, 1989

### Upcoming Events

**SUFFOLK:** Saturday, December 16 brings the fourth annual SIL/Suffolk Winter Solstice Party, at Fran Porretto's home in Mt. Sinai. Nominal hours are from 7:00 PM to Midnight. All interested persons are warmly welcomed.

This is a "stone soup" party: guests are strongly encouraged to bring a dish. The host will be providing:

- a turkey (other than himself),
- a large amount of stuffing,
- a cauldron of some kind of soup,
- various soft and alcoholic beverages.

Those who do not drive are advised that transport from the Port Jefferson stop of the Long Island Railroad will be provided to all but the latest arrivals. Call (516) 928-9419 to register your intent to attend!

**NASSAU:** On Sunday, January 14, 1990, at 7:30 PM, there will be a joint SIL/Nassau-SIL/Suffolk price-fixe dinner at the Jolly Swagman Inn of Hicksville, NY. The price is \$25 per person; all interested persons are welcome. Please call Audrey Capozzi at (516) 467-2735 to register intent to attend.

The evening's entertainment will consist of talks by recent LP candidates for public office in New York City, relating their experiences on the campaign trail; and a talk by Dr. Gordon S. Thrushbotham, the current Chairman of the New York Totalitarian Party, on "The State of Democratic Totalitarianism in America, 1989." (An interview with Dr. Thrushbotham appears later in this issue.)

**MID HUDSON:** The Libertarian Discussion Club of the Mid-Hudson District will hold its next supper at the "College Diner" in New Paltz on December 12 at 7:00 PM. For further information, please call (914) 679-2733 or (914) 473-3025.

The previous meeting was on November 14. The evening included spirited discussion of the least bad tax and of taxation's effects on lives and behavior. (This was dubbed the "my favorite tax" discussion.) Also discussed were the effects of foreign ownership, leveraged buyouts, and the impact of company closings due to technological changes and capital shifts. Some of these discussions continued at other locales until 2:00 AM.

Interested parties with questions should contact Michael E. North, at 7286 Route 212, Saugerties, NY 12477, or (914) 679-2733.

[All libertarian organizations are urged to submit advance notice of their scheduled get-togethers to Free New York, for the widest possible dissemination.]

### Recent Election Results

Preliminary tallies, according to John Karr of LP-NYC, indicate that Warren Raum received about 1/3 of 1% of the votes cast for Mayor in the recent New York City elections. Clay Conrad, running for President of the City Council, and Vicki Kirkland, running for City Comptroller, each received about 3/4 of 1% of the votes cast for those positions.

### Attack Of The Gun Haters

On 11/9, the Public Safety Committee of the New York City Council and representatives of the gun control lobby revealed their contempt for all the City's residents, especially the City's gun owners, in a long, tense, densely packed hearing.

The Public Safety Committee called the hearing to discuss Intro 1193-A, a substantial revision of Intro 1193, a bill to outlaw the possession of "assault weapons" in New York City. The measure's sponsor, Councilman Gerald Crispino, did tell his constituents of the hearing, and the date was publicized by gun owners' organizations. But the Public Safety Committee did not make copies of the revised bill available to the public through the bill room by the day of the hearing. Citizens who wished to testify on the bill could only guess what it might say, while representatives of the Police Department told the video cameras what details of the (revised) bill the Department wanted changed. Those following the media coverage of the hearing took in the form of well-informed debate while most of those actually debating the bill were denied its substance.

The Council Chamber was standing room only well before the hearing began. Despite an attempt to solicit witnesses "from the community," the audience of about six hundred persons was overwhelmingly white males in suits or shooting club jackets and hats. It began with a threat from Councilman Sheldon Leffler, who chaired. "I'm not going to let you take over my meeting," he said to Gerald Preiser, head of the Federation of N.Y. State Rifle and Pistol Clubs. And he didn't.

When a few people jeered a solecism at the Chief of Police, a remark about semiautomatic machine guns" (a contradiction in terms), Leffler threatened to eject anyone who behaved in an obstreperous or disrespectful manner. But the audience was respectful enough for the Chief's testimony. Throughout the rest of the hearing, the audience was completely silent after the remarks of the bill's supporters, but loudly applauded the remarks of its opponents. Sometimes they even interrupted speakers like Roy Innes of CORE, and rose at the end to give long standing ovations. This led Leffler to exhort the crowd not to applaud so loudly or so long. "It will cut into the time you have to present your opinions," he said more than once.

The police set up two folding tables covered with seized weapons, including a rocket launcher (without a rocket). The Chief testified to the perils of "semiautomatic machine guns" and to the tremendous lethality and destructive firepower his men had faced when they arrested drug sealers in Harlem and other parts of the City. He asserted that his officers were often outgunned, but did not offer any statistical evidence of increasing risk to police. (Police fatalities and murders of all kinds have been decreasing from year to year.) He denied any knowledge of any shooting ranges in the City at which New Yorkers could find sporting or competitive use for such weapons. (True assault rifles



fire less powerful cartridges than do hunting rifles.) He professed surprise when audience members assured him, correctly, that there were several such ranges within the city limits. Leffler called for order and threatened to stop the hearing if more people spoke out of turn.

More police spokesmen offered anecdotes about how terrible assault weapons are supposed to be, but not statistics or trends. No one from the dais pressed them for facts or figures. One police witness discussed a list of prohibited weapons in the revised version of the bill that the general public had not been provided, and suggested removing Heckler & Koch 91, 93 and 94 rifles from the index of forbidden guns. He did not mention that the Police Department issues H&K 94s to some of its officers.

The television crews came forward for closeups of the seized guns, then withdrew and panned the crowd as it rose to applaud Gerald Preiser, who denounced Intro 1193 as an attack on the Fifth Amendment rights of gun owners who had registered semiautomatic firearms with the City. Sue Misiora of the National Rifle Association told the committee that assault rifles are already illegal under federal law, and that "assault weapon" has been so loosely defined as to be meaningless. She continued to say that legislation should focus on the criminal and not on the gun owner, but the TV crews had started to leave before she finished speaking.

When I left, before the end of the hearing, the ration of unfavorable to favorable comments about the bill stood at about four to one. Chairman Leffler alternated witnesses pro and con until he simply ran out of favorable witnesses, some time after the last cameras had gone.

A supposed "firearms expert" named Foglia brandished a 12-gauge shotgun at the Councilmembers on the dais, with another 12-gauge and an UZI on the floor at his feet. Chairman Leffler did not ask him to leave, nor did he take official notice of Foglia's appalling manners and gun handling. Foglia demonstrated how easy it was to remove the barrel of an UZI, shortening it below the minimum length for a rifle under federal law. No one on the dais asked whether the UZI, or any other rifle, could be fired without a barrel. (It could not.)

A woman from the Board of Education reminded us of the Stockton schoolyard massacre, which set off the drive to define certain guns as "assault weapons" and ban them. Her warning that there were over a thousand City schools where a similar psychopath could strike was quite inadvertently deflated by a man from the Board of Education, who announced that the Board planned to install many more metal detectors in the schools, to keep pupils from bringing handguns to school with them! One might wonder who would pose a greater danger around certain schools: a hypothetical psychopathic gunman or the actual pistol-packing students.

Roy Innes of CORE received the warmest reception of all witnesses against the bill. He noted that he had lost two relatives to gunfire, but that he still valued the Second Amendment as the bulwark of our freedom. He noted that the history of gun control laws is rooted in the former slave states, where laws were passed to disarm blacks so that they could be terrorized by the Klan. He noted that drug dealers can get all the weapons they want, and that all this bill would do

would be to disarm the law-abiding citizen and triple the street price of firearms.

Chairman Leffler reminded the audience yet again that the longer they applauded now, the less time other witnesses would have to speak later. He shouldn't have worried -- all the television cameras were long gone. But shortly thereafter, he set a limit on the time one could speak.

Richard Aborn, a director of Handgun Control, Inc., the leading interest group behind the drive to stigmatize "assault weapons," finally let the cat out of the bag, saying that New York City's passage of an assault weapons ban would "send a message" to Washington. (He could have added, "to Albany, too.") He noted that three cities had recently passed assault weapons bans, but he didn't note in how many cities and states similar initiatives had failed. (Except in California, most proposed bans have failed.) He suggested that if New York City hopped on this gun-control bandwagon, passage of a national bill would be far more likely. He did not add that widespread public opposition to the federal measure, including a recall petition against the bill's sponsor, has led the Senate Judiciary Committee to dilute S.747, the "federal ban," into a three-year moratorium which would not affect private ownership or sale of existing firearms. He did not add that the State Legislature was unreceptive to Governor Cuomo's pet assault weapons bill, which died in committee this past June, and stayed dead despite the Governor's attempts to convene a special session of the Legislature to consider the measure.

Aborn claimed that assault weapons were designed to be "spray-fired from the hip," unlike other firearms, and that they are the weapons of choice of drug dealers and terrorists. But he also admitted that when he was an assistant in Robert Morgenthau's office, he saw very few cases in which assault weapons appeared. He made it clear that the most important thing passage of Intro 1193-A would do would be to send a message to reluctant legislators elsewhere -- "a step in the right direction." No one on the dais asked why the City Council should pass laws simply to log-roll other people's bills.

When the bill's sponsor's firearms knowledge was challenged, he said he'd been a Marine for six years -- "Don't give me that!" But later, he claimed that an UZI couldn't be used for deer hunting, that it would blow the animal apart. After I testified, I couldn't resist telling him that an UZI cartridge packs only a quarter of the kinetic energy needed to kill a medium-sized deer. But by then it was clear that the members of the Public Safety Committee weren't about to be misled by the facts. The only thing that seemed to get through to them was a threat to drag Intro 1193 through the courts if passed, and to confront its sponsors in their home neighborhoods come election day. Councilman Leffler snarled, "Are you threatening us with war?" Personally, I hope so.

If the full City Council hears this bill as disdainfully as the Public Safety Committee held this hearing, they deserve a walkout -- before the television cameras go home.

-- Ludwig R. Vogel --

#### CALLING ALL THESPIANS!

We have the opportunity to write and produce thirteen half-hour television shows through a local cable TV station on subjects



of interest to libertarians and, hopefully, members of the viewing public.

Proposed subjects are: gun control, legalization of drugs, tuition tax credits and vouchers as a step toward privatizing education, etc.

These tapes would then become available as a lending library and/or part of a system whereby they could be loaned to cable stations in other parts of the state or country.

We must guarantee thirteen shows and are seeking "talent," people willing to discuss one or more of these topics on camera, and "production staff," people willing to help in scheduling, organization and production.

Anyone with experience in theatre or set design, or who has good organizational or writing skills, is welcome to work on the project. Please contact:

Ludwig Vogel	-or-	Audrey Capozzi
141 East 56th Street		433 Fir Grove Road
New York, NY 10022		Ronkonkoma, NY 11779
(212) 238-0852		(516) 467-2735

### Cause For Hope?

Thomas Hazard of Mountour Falls, N.Y. sends a clipping from the November 13th Elmira Star-Gazette, the headline of which is: **Decriminalization of drugs boosted:**

The conversion of former Secretary of State George P. Shultz has experts predicting others from across the political spectrum will join ranks with those who see decriminalization as a workable solution to the drug problem.

National drug control policy director William J. Bennett acknowledges that Shultz may draw others in with him, but argues that legalization is "a dopey idea" and a "moral disaster" that won't wash with anyone who "has been within five miles of a crack house."

"The liberal-conservative definitions keep crumbling," Princeton University's Ethan Nadelmann said in an interview. "Each is split into libertarian and social-control groups."

...

One swallow doth not make a summer, but it seems that decriminalization is gaining influential adherents and popular support.

### Topics in Proselytizing:

When Words Matter And When They Don't

Among the worst features of the grouping of people into categories of opinion is how the labels hung on the categories supersede the vitality and diversity of the people who, willy-nilly, wear the labels. Once the label gains precedence over the thing, all the vices of hyper-abstraction become possible. We hear syllogisms such as: "All libertarians want the drug laws repealed. People who want the drug laws repealed can't possibly care very much about whether people poison themselves with drugs. Therefore, this person who styles himself a 'libertarian' doesn't care whether my children are ruined by drugs."

But you're you. You're not a Democrat, not a Republican, not a liberal, not a conservative, not even, dare I say it, a libertarian. You're an individual human being, with your own approaches to living, and your

own opinions, derived from the experience and thoughts that only you have had.

The "label collectivism" effect has done us tremendous damage in several areas; no doubt each reader will have a list. It's almost enough to make one consider abandoning labels altogether. But we can't: opinion-group labels are necessary shorthand for describing the dialogue of ideas concisely. When properly tied to fundamental ideas, they elucidate the issues, and the kinds of thinking that have been done on them.

Marshall Fritz of California and Michael Emerling of Nevada have exhorted us all to greater linguistic sensitivity for some time now. They have focused instinctively on better choice of words with which to address specific issues and positions, rather than on mega-labels for wrapping up whole political scholia in two or three syllables. There is important insight here: qualitatively unique.

The larger the 'idea bundle' tied up in a labeled abstraction, the more difficult it is to thresh out the core concepts and examine them critically and dispassionately. Very few people who embrace one political label, at least after adulthood is upon them, ever abandon it for another. However, anyone who represents himself as a reasonable man, says to his conversational partner(s): "Despite my label (or lack of same), I am reachable...if you have the right evidence and the right arguments." He can be approached at the level of individual issues, where existing prejudices are usually of less moment; the danger is of triggering a quickly built wall of rejection by use of the 'wrong' words or appeal to the 'wrong' verities.

Thus, we favor careful selection of terms for favorable connotation, e.g. "noninterventionist" rather than "isolationist," or "free market economics" rather than "laissez-faire capitalism," just as we favor appeals to what matters to the target of our outreach over what matters to the outreachers himself. (To the conservative: "Ever since government got into the business of fighting drug abuse, it's had nothing to show but losses," and not: "It is inherently wrong that some should tell others what they must or must not eat, drink, smoke, snort, or inject.")

To those of you who would like to work more effectively for freedom in our time, but who've been stymied by the strange reactions that people often have to our label, here's a radical suggestion: drop the label and talk solely about issues. When asked for your affiliation -- and you will be, no doubt of it -- you might consider saying: "I'm a free-thinker." It will be true.

-- Fran Porretto --

### Liberty vs. Equality: The Real Debate?

Few conflicts in political discourse have proved as resistant to resolution as the perennial debate over liberty versus equality. The issues seem clear enough: libertarians champion liberty, by which they mean freedom from coercion, and egalitarians favor equality, by which they mean equality of condition and situation. For libertarians, equality such as that mentioned in the Declaration of Independence means only the equality of individual liberty; to egalitarians, liberty is valued only as freedom from inequality.

This is how the debate is usually framed, but beyond demonstrating that the two philosophies are polar opposites, it tells us



little; one need not incline toward either position. Part of the problem might be that this level of abstraction creates its own debate, obscuring one more fundamental. Therefore, let us examine these positions as they were applied by their proponents to a concrete situation: the military draft at the height of the Vietnam War.

Libertarian Murray Rothbard, a free-market economist, had opposed conscription long before Vietnam became an issue. Throughout the war, he consistently and trenchantly denounced the draft -- and the war. His reason was quite simple: conscription, both in theory and in practice, is an infringement of each individual's right to liberty. That the draft might be implemented "equally" was of no moral importance and not an issue. One could paraphrase Rothbard's views by stating that he thought the draft to be as much a violation of the right to liberty as Auschwitz was a violation of the right to life. The idea that some concept of "equality of condition" could justify either would be considered less morally revolting than simply ludicrous. (Also, since the war-time draft entailed both being forced to kill and to endure a high probability of being killed, one could, as Rothbard did, rightfully deem it a denial of the right to life.)

Egalitarian Michael Harrington, a socialist writer and activist, had rather the opposite opinion. His moral indignation was aroused by the possibility that implementation of the draft would be marred by the "inequality" of discrimination based on class. (He did not extend his concerns beyond this one distinction; thus, we may justifiably conclude that Harrington, who was writing at a time when "Women's Liberation" was storming the headlines, was indifferent to or incognizant of the inequalities of a system which impressed only males.) That conscription deprived the individual of his liberty -- that 19-year-olds were being sent to die in a foreign jungle -- was not his overriding concern and provoked no moral condemnation. Harrington's egalitarian hunger for "justice" would be sated by only the assurance that Harvard-educated whites and inner-city blacks alike would be herded away to serve as cannon fodder; the cardinal virtue of equality would remain unviolated. (Washington Evening Star, March 3, 1970)

The upshot of all this is clear enough: disarmed by his ideology, the egalitarian can ultimately defend no right other than the right of all men to be equally stripped of all rights -- save "equality." And while it would be reassuring to think that such sentiments have left the Left, there is little reason for wishful thinking; if anything, the quest for equality has replaced the conquest of poverty as the activists' ideal of "social justice." Rumblings from sectors of the feminist movement have expressed the idea that conscription (whether into the military or into "social service") would help to establish "social equality" between the sexes. Charles Peters, dean of the self-described neoliberals, has advocated a peacetime draft on the grounds that it would integrate unequal social classes and establish the principle of obligatory service to the State. (Peters' draft is specifically military; however, for those who make suspect growlings about "conscience," he will allow social service as a substitute...and for a longer tour of duty, to be sure.)

The moral bedrock for such policies can

be found in the 1987 book The End Of The Conservative Era: Liberalism After Reagan. Its author, left-liberal historian Robert S. McElvaine, generously offers a number of proposals for the coming liberal millenium. Among these is the charming suggestion that we create a "Bill Of Responsibilities to complement [i.e., to consume] the Bill of Rights." As both ethic and realpolitik, the following quote is given: "Most people, when called upon, will serve -- so long as they're not being singled out to get the short end of the stick...Equality of sacrifice is the key to getting people to cooperate for the common good." Well, there it is. The author of this quote, McElvaine tells us approvingly, is big businessman and relief recipient Lee Iacocca. Nevertheless, McElvaine has provided egalitarianism with its creed -- and its X-ray: a clear confession that "equality" in egalitarian thought is equality under the yoke, not equality from the yoke; that the real debate is not liberty versus equality, but equality under liberty versus equality under tyranny.

-- Barry Loberfeld --

[Editor's Note: In his book The Next Left: The History Of A Future, Harrington rhapsodized over the encouraging effects war and military crises have upon the readiness of the people to submit to the dictates of social engineers. Our cousins on the Left are indeed discovering that "he who says A must eventually say B."]

#### The Anarchists' Corner

[Editor's Note: This issue, I am pleased to welcome a new contributor, the first, so far as I know, to withhold his real name. Be that as it may, the two articles he has submitted are refreshing and excellent, and I hope for many more. So let's have a big welcome for that guy with the bag over his head.]

#### I. Be A Good Conscience!

I have often been asked what possible role an anarchist can play in an explicitly political movement. The question is serious, for the anarchist's primary concern must always be the denial of the legitimacy of all political processes and institutions. What most libertarians would regard as a major, epoch-marking victory -- for example, a Constitutional amendment repealing the income tax -- the anarchist would consider only one step in the journey toward a Stateless, all-voluntary society.

Yet anarchists have an important role to play in the political movement for freedom. In fact, it's doubtful that such a movement, deprived of anarchist participation, could continue to function at all. Anarchists, no matter how repelled by electoral politics and attempts to exercise "influence" over State decisions, must remain in contact with the Libertarian Party and similar groups, to stake out the moral high ground and to remind everyone of the ideal toward which we strive. It is our special role to be the "conscience" of the liberation crusade.

There are very few genuine anarchists. As simple and logical as it may seem to us, willingness to abandon the quest for "good, limited government" in search of genuine freedom and justice is not commonly found, requiring as it does the strength to bear up under assault with epithets such as "lunatic Utopian radical" and worse. Moreover, we are



not always appreciated by our minarchist colleagues, who often seem all too willing to consign us to the abyss called "the fringes."

Even so, and against their own convictions, the minarchists need us. As their efforts begin to bear fruit, they will become more aware of the destructive nature of all State power. It's not a criticism of them that they haven't got there yet; the monster is truly monstrous, and to dream of slaying it at a blow is a heroic fantasy for certain.

We have the longest-range goal. Therefore, it will be our role to keep the liberty movement headed up and moving. Note how, as Britain's Liberals began to taste success in the mid-1800s, they lost their momentum and eventually even their orientation. I believe this largely to have been due to an insufficient degree of interest from the anarchists of that time and place.

Even at present, anarchist thinkers provide the bulk of the theoretical arguments used by libertarians of all denominations. It's also remarkable how many of the really passionate and dedicated activist figures are anarchists. As the movement gains ground, it will need those assets all the more to keep from stalling in its tracks. It will behoove us to keep supplying them.

## II. Alternatives

Look ye well upon me, for I am a socialist who's in favor of the free market.

The socialist vision, however badly encrusted with political barnacles and tinpot messiahs seeking personal power, is at heart an inspiring thing: a vision of equal justice for all men. It need have nothing to do with the tawdry maneuverings of dictators or Central Committees. If those excrescences were flensed away, and if the world's good-hearted socialists would cease feeling compelled to defend a record of failure, then socialism of the defensible variety -- voluntary communalism -- could take its place among humanity's other modes of socioeconomic organization.

Let there be no confusing this with State socialism, defined by Marx as "public ownership of the means of production." We of the tradition of the libertarian left are well aware that there is no "public." Moreover, there can no longer be any denying that only free markets, with their freely fluctuating supplies, demands, and prices, can organize and transmit economic information adequately for a high production economy. So what does that leave?

Two aspects of the socialist ideal remain uncorrupted. First, there is the pressing necessity for the abolition of forcibly-maintained economic privileges. Laws used to exclude competitors from the market are the most egregious of privilege-protection devices; vampiric taxation, which prevents the accumulation of savings from which new enterprises are begun, or by which individuals may opt out of economic congress, is just as bad. Second, it is vital in these days of accelerating economic insecurity that people be made aware of the advantages of the alternative of voluntary communalism. As the State drains us ever drier, more people may hope to find individual security in small associations of free men committed to mutual support and protection. It has its inefficiencies, and admittedly it's not for everyone, but then neither are entrepreneurial nor corporate capitalism.

As always, freedom is the key. Socialism

can be saved from its murder at the hands of dictators and demagogues only by stripping it clean of all traces of statism -- of all involvement with political power. Only then will the world's advocates of voluntary, decentralized communal living be able, as the capitalists say, to "get down to business."

-- Mikhail Bakunin --

## Federalism and Stability

Stability is not always desirable (e.g., totalitarian stability). However, it is always a consideration to be addressed when discussing public policy. Is the proposed arrangement stable? What are its natural dynamics? What conceivable perturbations would move it toward a different equilibrium, and what would the new equilibrium be like?

For example, most government interventions into the market produce conditions without stability. The market is naturally equilibrating; interventions introduce unbalanced forces, to which compensating counterforces may be slow to develop. Nevertheless, at all times the system -- any system -- will tend toward stability: toward a configuration in either static or cyclodynamic equilibrium. It cannot be otherwise in a lawful universe.

Much of the thinking of the Founding Fathers concerned the stability of law and governmental institutions in a free society. (This may be the reason for most conservatives' fondness for them; the quest for stability is at the center of every kind of conservatism.) Federalism, the counterposition of the federal and state governments to check the accumulation of power, was critical to their vision of freedom conjoined with order.

But the distribution of power in the federal republic proved to be unstable. When the state governments overindulged in sectionalism over import tariffs and slavery, the civil War gave rise to a concentration of power in the federal government from which the nation never recovered. Even though the climactic events in the enervation of the state governments themselves -- the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Amendments -- were still fifty years distant, the seal had been set upon their future. Today, the federal government outspends the state governments by almost three to one, and routinely interferes unconstitutionally in their internal lawmaking and administration.

Once the balance of power between the federal and state governments had broken down, was accelerating centralization unavoidable? Was there another way the system could have failed that would have produced accelerating decentralization, perhaps restoring the state of affairs that had existed under the Articles of Confederation? Or was there a "public choice" dynamic at work that would have centralized power in Washington no matter when or why the federal system was pushed off dead center?

It's worth some thought, for, as with so many other things, the original meaning of the federalist principle has been perverted to harmonize with modern Welfare/Warfare statism. Whereas the state governments were once empowered to protect the individual against the federal government, and vice versa, children are now taught to regard the states as mere administrative extensions of Washington, from which all rights, laws and blessings flow. The tasks of the modern constitutionalist are to revive the original federal concept, and to buttress it strongly



enough with Constitutional amendments and supporting analysis that it will be stable against further attempts to centralize power. How can this be achieved?

-- Joan E. Smith --

### Crisis Of The Month

Yet another important American industry is slipping into extinction, yet our legislators display no concern whatsoever! Sales of one of our proudest native handicrafts, that symbol of our unique musical achievements, the electric guitar, are down to 41% of the peak reached in 1970. Thousands of jobs are in danger, and millions of dollars in export trade. The time to act is upon us!

Particularly frightening is the lack of a compelling explanation. The music industry seems healthy; the nation's radios and TVs blare forth popular material of all kinds; pop stars gyrate on stage before all-time record audiences, the members of which willingly pay all-time-record ticket prices.

But matters are too urgent to place comprehension before decisive action. We cannot risk the extinction of an industry upon which so many livelihoods depend. The Guitar Industry Board's "Save Our Necks" (GIB/SON) study group has proposed the following plan of attack upon the problem:

1) The initial stage should be modest:

1a) Federally subsidized low-interest loans should be made available to prospective purchasers in the target market (males age 16-35 with damaged hearing and one or more narcotics-related arrests).

1b) Investment tax credits should be established for the purchase of stock in electric-guitar manufacturing or retailing concerns; losses incurred thereby should be deducted from one's federal tax bill.

2) If the measures designated above as "stage 1" fail to restore adequate growth and stability to the electric guitar industry, more dramatic measures will be required:

2a) Federal export support: a price must be established at which the federal government will buy new instruments from domestic manufacturers, and we must extend foreign trade credits to Third World nations, limited to electric guitars of American origin.

2b) Foreign manufacturers of electric guitars must either agree to voluntary export quotas or accept compulsory import quotas.

3) If the problem remains:

3a) Federal legislation should mandate compulsory inclusion of basic electric guitar playing skills in all public high school course offerings. Perhaps these courses should be made compulsory for graduation, for all males not registered in drama, visual arts or Early College Admissions programs.

3b) Congress must charter a National Study Center for the Electric Guitar, at which all aspects of the instrument could be studied by interested Americans at public expense. The subheads of study would include, but would not be limited to:

- intermediate and advanced playing,
- electric guitar technology,
- composition and analysis,
- marketing and sales techniques,
- stage antics,
- media-motivating offstage behavior.

If in the face of this concerted attack the problem should remain intractable still, the ultimate restorative might be tried: war. To rain a torrent of destruction upon Western Europe or Japan in the hope of revitalizing

our electric-guitar markets might seem extreme to some, but "extremism in the defense of American jobs is no vice," and anyway, think how much fun it was last time!

-- Fran Porretto --

### The Free New York Interview

[This month's interview is with Dr. Gordon S. Thrushbotham, Chairman and guiding spirit of the New York Totalitarian Party. Dr. Thrushbotham holds the Josef Dzugashvili Chair of Social Engineering in the Rexford G. Tugwell Memorial College of Applied Coercion, recently established at SUNY Stony Brook.]

It was no small task securing an audience with Dr. Thrushbotham, who definitely prefers his privacy. Finally, he consented to a series of interviews, apparently concluding that Free New York's readership was badly in need of instruction in the principles underlying the operation of an orderly society. As always, Free New York spares no effort in bringing you news that matters.]

FNy: Dr. Thrushbotham, with regard to the name of your party, isn't totalitarianism preceived as an un-American ideology?

GST: Well, I must admit that it's much more often associated with certain other countries in the public mind, but this common American perception is far distant from the facts. In fact, I see democratic totalitarianism as the inevitable end state of every political trend in America at this time.

FNy: What do you mean by that?

GST: Belief in totalitarianism depends on the recognition that the government must be involved in everything of importance, from deciding on allowable modes of expression, through the regulation of personal behavior and family matters, all the way to the central management of the economy. Over the course of the past seventy-five years, American governments have gradually become involved in all of these things, at least in principle. It's only a matter of making the current state of affairs more explicit and more widely understood.

FNy: Oh, come now. How can that be when the Supreme Court so recently protected freedom of speech in the flag-burning case? [Texas v. Johnson, 1989]

GST: You apparently missed the point of that decision, as did most other people. The Court's decision held only political expression to be protected, and reserved for itself the privilege of deciding what is and what is not political expression. Any time they found it expedient to do so, they could decide that the exact same act was not political expression but incitement to riot. It was a good, solid assertion of State power, a proper totalitarian decision.

FNy: So totalitarianism is against free expression, then.

GST: Totalitarianism is pro-control. The totalitarian ideal is unity of purpose, concentration of effort, and minimization of waste. To get those things, you have to inhibit behavior that undermines them. Free expression, as you call it, has produced more dissension and more dispersion of effort than an orderly society can afford.

FNy: By implication, you'd have to be against religion as well.



**GST:** Not necessarily. In fact, current totalitarian consensus favors the institution of a single, compulsory religion, tailored to embody the most constructive possible ideals as dogmas, and closely supervised by the State. A government-run Church could be very effective at reinforcing national purposes and safeguarding the unity of the people around them. You may not be aware that the Swedes have exactly such a State religion, to which all Swedish citizens are required to belong.

**FNJ:** Well, about those national purposes, then. Just what might we expect them to be?

**GST:** In general terms, the promotion of the national interest. That can change a bit over time, but it will always include certain basics: secure borders, positive attitudes on the parts of neighboring governments, citizen loyalty and confidence in the government, order in the streets, a stable economy, a favorable balance of trade, the inculcation of appropriate values in the young, and so forth.

**FNJ:** That sounds an awful lot like the Democratic, Republican and Libertarian Party platforms.

**GST:** No, not like their platforms, like their ideals. And why shouldn't it? Aren't we all Americans? Don't we all want basically the same things? Politics isn't about what you want; politics is about how best to go about getting it.

**FNJ:** Let's consider the results produced by twentieth-century totalitarian regimes. Haven't they been horribly destructive?

**GST:** Yes, oftentimes, usually because their leaders weren't sufficiently serious about their undertaking or prepared for it. It's no easy matter to insure that a nation's leaders are appropriately trained for the use of absolute power. In the days of the hereditary monarchies, a man trained all his life for the job of King, usually under his own father. By the time he reached the throne, he was likely to know what he was doing.

**FNJ:** Are you proposing a monarchy for the United States?

**GST:** No, what's most important is to establish our policy directions. We believe this can be done within a democratic framework, although somewhat modified.

**FNJ:** What modifications would you favor?

**GST:** Well, the most obvious failing of modern democracies is their inability to sustain an effort. The flaw is regularly scheduled elections. If the implementation of a policy is going to require twenty years, how can we allow an election to reverse that policy in embryo, after only two or four years' work? Isn't that likely to be horribly wasteful?

The British have a somewhat better scheme. The ruling party can call for a general election at any time within five years of the previous one. But that still doesn't allow full flexibility for the planning and execution of large scale, long range social or economic reorganizations. The only proper method is to allow the government to decide when its work is ready to be judged.

**FNJ:** You're suggesting that elections should only be scheduled at the government's pleasure?

**GST:** Why not? By voting them in in the first

place, we entrusted them with unchecked power over us. Is it a greater expression of confidence in them, to let them decide when we'll next get to evaluate their efforts?

**FNJ:** It seems to me that whenever a ruler has seized that privilege, he's eventually had to be pulled down by force.

**GST:** Well, we've already touched on how difficult it is to get the right people into power. Greater voter participation might help, and we do favor making compulsory for all qualified citizens.

**FNJ:** Under penalty of what?

**GST:** A fine, as in Australia. That would give us the latitude to "tune" the penalty until we got the desired percentage of the populace involved.

**FNJ:** Are you really serious about this?

**GST:** You don't like it?

**FNJ:** You're inches from advocating a one-party State.

**GST:** Oh, come now, surely you don't think we'd go that far.

**FNJ:** Well, what makes you think the American people are willing to put that much trust in any politician or party?

**GST:** To get an accurate feel for what will sell politically, it's best to watch the two majority parties as they adapt their platforms to the tastes of the electorate. They've been in this business for a long time; they do more reliable market assessment than any so-called independent political analyst.

In their time in control of the White House, the Republicans have acted aggressively to restrict personal behavior, but not at all to advance their supposed free-enterprise agenda. The most successful Democratic activists have all concerned themselves with extending and intensifying government control of the economy, usually under color of social justice or environmental protection. They haven't done anything to protect civil liberties in forty years. The Totalitarian approach is only the combination of the real Republican agenda with the real Democratic agenda. We're selling what's been proved to sell.

**FNJ:** You're implicitly labeling all the leaders and officeholders of the two majority parties as hypocrites.

**GST:** That's your evaluation, not mine. And why should they bear any opprobrium for offering the people what the people apparently want?

**FNJ:** And if "what the people want" is in violation of someone's rights?

**GST:** What rights do you mean to refer to by that question?

**FNJ:** The classical rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, as imbedded in the Declaration of Independence.

**GST:** You could comb this country for years, and never find two people who agree on the meaning of any of those terms. Does the right to life imply the right to be supported by others? There's a right that's undergone some revision this century. What about the right to liberty? Does your right to liberty include the right ingest illegal substances? The law doesn't see it that way. And the



"pursuit of happiness" is simply too vague to be meaningful to anyone. You can pursue happiness so long as your brain is functioning, but does that mean you have a right to catch it?

**FNy:** It appears you're willing to dispense with the idea of inalienable individual rights, then. So what will the citizen use for protection against unwarranted exercises of State power?

**GST:** Oh, I'm far from the first to dismiss this silly notion of rights. Rights don't exist in objective reality, only in the minds of men. They affect human behavior only to the extent that humans believe in them. As legal constructs, they've been proved useless by the process of continuous attenuation they've been put through whenever some new measure was necessary for the common good.

As for "unwarranted exercises of State power," given that a sufficient majority under our system of government can sanctify any exercise of State power, just what standard are you proposing by which to tell the warranted ones from the unwarranted ones? And remember that the Constitution and the Bill of Rights themselves, with all their provisions for amendment by majority will, sufficiently expressed, were passed by majorities and imposed by force on minorities that did not want them. So the majority can redefine what your rights are, at any time it pleases to do so. And if that's legitimate, then what

The Society for Individual Liberty (SIL) and the Libertarian Party (LP) are the two principal "legs" of the liberty movement in the United States. Further information about SIL may be acquired from National Headquarters in Warminster, Pennsylvania, by calling: (215) 672-4133. Further information about the LP may be acquired by calling the State Headquarters in New York, New York: (212) 966-5772.

isn't?

### About the Contributors

**Mikhail Bakunin** is the pen name of a New York resident and activist with long experience in the operation of voluntary communes.

**Barry Loberfeld** is currently Secretary of the Suffolk County Libertarian Organization (SCL0), and has been a frequent contributor to Free New York and Suffolk Liberty.

**Michael E. North** is Chairman of the Mid-Hudson chapter of the Libertarian Party, and is a former editor-in-chief of Free New York.

**Fran Porretto** is Chairman of SIL/Suffolk, and is also active in both SCL0 and LP-NY.

**Joan E. Smith** is a financial counselor specializing in commodities and precious metals, and has been a frequent contributor to Suffolk Liberty.

**Ludwig R. Vogel** is a New York City activist with a special interest in the rights of gun owners and legislation that threatens them.

("Liberty vs. Equality: The Real Debate" is copyrighted (c) 1989 by Barry Loberfeld; "The Free New York Interview" is copyrighted (c) 1989 by Francis W. Porretto; all rights reserved worldwide.)

**FREE NEW YORK**  
679 Mt. Sinai-Coram Road  
Mount Sinai, N.Y. 11766

