

*** FREE NEW YORK ***
The monthly publication of the New York libertarian movement
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ably assisted by members of the Society for Individual Liberty
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April Is The Cruellest Month

Winston Churchill, when offered honorary U.S. citizenship just after World War II, replied: "Thanks -- but let's wait until after April 15." Now is a good time to remind your "elected representatives" about the injustice and destructive effects of the progressive income tax. Even those among us who concede powers of taxation for the purpose of funding a very limited government should raise the cry against a system whose very function is to seize the earnings of some and give them to others as an end in itself.

Even if I were to experience no salary growth at all over the remainder of my professional life, by the time I had reached 65, I would have paid over \$500,000 in income taxes and "Social Security contributions" to the federal and New York State governments. I will quite likely die penniless.

Just a thought.

-- Fran Porretto --

Recent Events

WESTCHESTER: On March 24, the annual LP-NY Convention was held at the White Plains Hotel in White Plains, N.Y. Despite numerous last-minute surprises, such as the cancellation received from featured speaker Timothy Leary, organizers Allan Rickman and Ludwig Vogel brought us another edifying, entertaining and well-attended event. Featured speakers Larry Dodge, the spearhead of the Fully Informed Jury Amendment (FIJA) movement, and State Senator Joseph Galiber, who has recently introduced legislation to legalize all currently illegal drugs in New York, enthralled their audiences with their visions of simple, clean solutions to several very persistent social problems.

Also particularly gratifying was the unusually high attendance at the morning "business session" of the Convention, at which the year's officers were elected and candidates for statewide offices were nominated.

The following persons were elected as officers of LP-NY for 1990, forming the LP-NY Executive Committee:

Chairman: Fran Porretto ✕
Vice-Chairman: Kevin Delaney
Vice-Chairman: Douglas Greene
Secretary: Martin Solomon ✕
Treasurer: Bill Stocker
At Large: Ludwig Vogel
Vicki Kirkland ✕
Clay Conrad ✕
Bruce Martin
Douglas Willinger

As Immediate Past Chair, Norma Segal retains a seat on the Executive Committee. County Chairs should be aware that each county chapter has the privilege of sending a voting member to any Executive Committee session.

The following persons were nominated for statewide offices:

Governor: Gary Johnson
Lieutenant-Governor: Dorothy-Louise Brokaw
Comptroller: Vicki Kirkland
Attorney-General: Margaret Fries

Free New York's editor and writers would like to wish all the new officers and nominees the very best of luck in their new responsibilities.

Upcoming Events

MANHATTAN: LP-NYC will hold its annual Convention at La Maganette, at the corner of Third Avenue and 50th Street, on Saturday, April 21, at Noon. The traditional luncheon banquet will be provided; the featured speakers will be Gene Burns of WRKO in Boston and Hutchinson Persons, founder of Street Aid and a well-known advocate of self-help for the homeless. The attendance fee is \$35. Annual LP-NYC dues will become due and payable at the event. Chapter officers for the year will be elected. For further information, please call LP-NYC's office: (212) 966-5772.

(Previous editions of *Free New York* mistakenly gave the location of La Maganette as Second Avenue and 50th Street. Please note that the correct address is on Third Avenue. We regret the error.)

SUFFOLK: The Suffolk County Libertarian Organization (SCL0), Suffolk's LP chapter, will hold its annual Convention on Saturday, April 28, at 679 Mt. Sinai-Coram Road, Mount Sinai, N.Y., at 7:30 PM. A variety of refreshments will be provided. Chapter dues will become due and payable at the event. Chapter officers for the year will be elected. For further information, please call either Audrey Capozzi, at (516) 467-2735, or Fran Porretto, at (516) 928-9419.

WESTCHESTER: The first meeting of the new Executive Committee of LP-NY will be held on Sunday, May 20, in New Rochelle, at Noon. The exact location is yet to be determined, but persons interested in attending should call Fran Porretto at (516) 928-9419 to be placed on the list of interested parties to be kept apprised of developments.

CAPITAL DISTRICT: The regular meeting of the Capital District LP will be held on Tuesday, April 9. Persons who wish to attend should call Jeff Russell, at (518) 233-1344, for further details.

On A Personal Note

The alert reader will have noticed that *Free New York's* editor -- your humble servant -- is now the Chairman of LP-NY. I was reluctant to allow my name to be placed in nomination for the job, since I have a huge list of other responsibilities and no great talent for the practical art of politics. Nevertheless, it was flattering to receive the support and the votes of the assembled conventioners in Westchester on March 24...especially since I had just told them all that most of the work was going to fall

upon them.

I meant it, too. The five areas I've targeted for increased LP-NY activity -- internal communications, media relations, membership growth, member activities and lobbying -- will each have a captain, *not myself*, whose task it will be to organize and, with help, to prosecute the effort. Be informed that I will be ruthless about twisting arms to get suitable people to accept these responsibilities...and equally ruthless about excoriating them publicly, should they fall down on the job.

If you believe in human freedom, if you consider yourself part of the worldwide liberty movement and kindred to the millions of courageous souls risking their lives for it in Europe, the Orient and Latin America, now is the time to stand up and be counted. One hyperactive activist can't do it all; the LP-NY Executive Committee can't do it all. We need you.

"No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main; if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friends or of thine own were; any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind; and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee." (John Donne)

-- Fran Porretto --

Recent News

Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev recently announced that, should Lithuania really be serious about its "absurd" demand for independence from the USSR, it would thereupon owe the USSR many billions of rubles, repayment for all the "economic aid" it had received from Moscow since its annexation in 1940. But the Baltic States are the sites of the most vicious Soviet depredations of a previously-industrialized economy that are known to the West at this time, with the possible exception of their treatment of East Germany. The Red Army vacuumed Lithuania virtually clean of all industrial plant and capital goods during the first months after annexation. Is this the "economic aid" for which the Lithuanians are supposed to make recompense to the Kremlin?

One domestic item of particular note has come our way of late: the federal government has laid on 1400 census takers, for duty in New York City *alone*, to count the homeless population of the City. On the morning upon which this was broached, several "homeless advocates" immediately trumpeted their convictions that there could only be a massive *undercount*. All announced their intention not to lend their names to such a fraud, and began to advise their "clients" not to cooperate with the census takers!

In the grandest of all these grand acts of nonsense, nationally-known homelessness activist Mitch Snyder said on national radio that he would refuse to permit any census taker to enter the huge shelter he operates (on a sizable grant of tax money) for the benefit of the homeless. His rationale? "These people have dignity; they don't need to be awakened in the middle of the night." Had census takers demanded access to Mr. Snyder's shelter at some ungodly hour? He declined to be more specific.

As the Welfare/Warfare State runs its

course into utter contemptibility, we may expect to see even more ludicrous antics of this type. Be ready, of course, for all the aforementioned "homeless advocates," who are working to thwart the counting of their client population, to claim that the federal count can't possibly be correct even to within an order of magnitude (which is, in effect, what they've been claiming all along). No matter how you feel about the unconstitutional extension of the census into areas of market research that have nothing to do with accurately apportioning Congressional representation, a sight such as this can't help but draw a laugh.

Is The Door Opening Just A Crack?

Steven Becker of Rochester writes to inform us of a Governor's Program bill (Assembly 8422; Senate 4443-A) designed, in the words of State Senator John Perry, "to facilitate access to the ballot by candidates who demonstrate a significant modicum of support." The bill would ease or eliminate various technical restrictions that apply to our least-favorite activity -- petitioning -- and would provide a grace period after the petitions had been submitted, during which challenges based on technical violations (e.g., improperly spelled street or town names) could be redressed by the submitters without penalty.

This is one to write to your assemblymen and senators about. Nothing costs LP-NY more aggravation -- or more money -- than the petitioning process.

"Fritzing" The Gun Show

Two downstate libertarians joined two upstate libertarians to man a rented booth at the March 17/18 Gun Show, at the Concord Hotel in Kiamesha Lake, N.Y., in a field test of LP-NYC's newly acquired "Fritz Booth."

Ludwig Vogel of New York City, Audrey Capozzi of Suffolk County, and Margaret and Charles Fries of the Binghamton district took turns manning the booth, the Advocates for Self Government's latest product for the outreach volunteer.

The crew met many rifle and gun enthusiasts who fell into the libertarian quadrant on the Diamond Chart, a revised Nolan Chart. Many others plotted themselves as conservatives and centrists. There were also two liberals and two authoritarians. (I guess the organizers let anyone in. There ought to be a law against that.)

The best news, however, is the number of people -- twenty-four -- who asked for further information on the Libertarian Party. We've added the names of the New Yorkers to LP-NY's mailing list, and have forwarded the names of the Pennsylvania and New Jersey residents to National Headquarters.

The Fritz Booth is a good tool for making contact with libertarians who don't know that they are libertarians. It's also a good way to test our own beliefs in discussion (*not argument*) with others who disagree with our basic tenets.

We look forward to using the booth at upcoming street fairs and science fiction conferences. Please join us for a couple of hours' fun and festivity. If interested, please call:

LP-NY office: (212) 966-5772

or Ludwig Vogel: (212) 838-0852

Sign up for whatever dates are

convenient for you. Also, let us know about other gatherings where the booth might be set up.

-- Audrey Capozzi --

[Editor's Note: When asked whether the names of the two authoritarians were forwarded to the New York Totalitarian Party, Ms. Capozzi declined to comment.]

The Decline of The Left: Two Views

I: Communism: The Unknown Ideal?

In a recent issue of *National Review*, a writer expressed his fear that many college students are unable to appreciate the decline of Communism because of the distortions taught them by Marxist-oriented professors. My concern is that the essence of Communism has eluded even its ideological opponents.

A case in point is *The Grand Failure: The Birth and Death of Communism in the Twentieth Century*, by former National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski. Brzezinski is both a critic and a victim of Communism; he has known it both in theory and in practice. Yet consider what he has written:

The Communist phenomenon represents a historical tragedy. Born out of an impatient idealism that rejected the injustice of the status quo, it sought a better and more humane society -- but produced mass oppression. It optimistically reflected faith in the power of reason to construct a perfect community. It mobilized the most powerful emotions of love for humanity and of hatred for oppression on behalf of morally motivated social engineering. It thus captivated some of the brightest minds and some of the most idealistic hearts -- yet it prompted some of the worst crimes of this or any century...

If one were to go by this passage alone, one could easily mistake "Communism" for something other than the philosophy of Marx and Engels, surely something other than the policies of Lenin. One would not know that Communism is a form of reductionist materialism in which human consciousness is a "social product" manufactured by the "means of production." (The machines make us, not vice-versa.) One wouldn't guess that it posits violent conflict between irreducible "classes" -- "The human essence is the true collectivity of Man." (Marx) -- as the motor of history. One wouldn't imagine that Communism's "brightest minds" and "most idealistic hearts" included Stalin, Mao, Pol Pot, Mengistu, Castro, Ortega, and Peru's Shining Path.

Brzezinski attributes to Communism virtues, not only that it explicitly rejects, but that were championed by Marxism's greatest foe: classical liberalism. He's handing the Marxists our moral high ground! He's repeating the oldest of the Big Lies -- that Communist theory is a "noble ideal." But it must be remembered, as has recently been cited by Mark LaRochelle in these pages, that "in January and February 1849, Marx published in his paper, *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, articles under Engels's byline that advocated the genocide of entire races in Europe judged (by him) to be "reactionary." When Stalin published *Foundations of Leninism* in 1924, he included quotations from this article. In the

bloody decades that followed, Stalin was only following the advice of Marx and Engels." Does this suggest that the practice of Communism is a betrayal of its promise?

A Communism that dies unknown may well become a Communism that rises again. Llewellyn H. Rockwell, Jr., president of the Ludwig von Mises Institute, recently wrote: "In America, events seem to move at an Eastern European pace, but in the opposite direction. While statism is being dismantled abroad, it is being constructed here at home." While Communism is becoming part of their past, it may be our future. Let us remember that Marxism is nowhere so dead as in the minds of those who have learned its tenets, and the evil thereof.

-- Frederic Bastiat --

II: "Animal Rights:" The Left's Last Stand

The "hard Left" -- Marxist-Leninism -- is rapidly going down the tubes. The "socialism with a human face" crowd has been telling itself, for comfort, that Eastern Europe and China have not rejected socialism -- God forbid! -- they just want it to be like Western Europe and have cradle-to-grave government insurance along with more civil liberties and maybe a little carefully watched free enterprise. Meanwhile, Hanoi has dropped rent control, and Soviet diplomatic and military personnel are fighting to be first in line to be posted to Saigon (called "Ho Chi Minh City" by everyone but the people who live in it), where free enterprise has been largely restored, and which is bursting with consumer goods unavailable in the USSR.

More and more, the Left has had to abandon the attempt, of Marx's and Lenin's time, to claim that free enterprise retards material progress. They have had to look for a new theme. The new theme is that free enterprise is bad because it promotes material progress, and material progress is bad! It is bad because it promotes Man's interests at the expense of the animals and the plants. Man can be permitted to exist, it seems, only if he has little or no impact on the "natural" environment; in other words, if he ceases to be Man and devolves back to the lemur-like creature from which he sprang. Don McLean sings: "...all the flowers that grow, all the birds that sing, somehow they know, that if Man is allowed to destroy all we need, he will soon have to pay with his life for his greed." So: the plants and animals have rights, but Man has no rights except the right to live like an animal.

Ironically, one of the rightwardmost greedy capitalists was partly to blame for the current popularity of the "animal rights" lobby. Many of us got our first look at the animal world, as children, through the cartoons of Walt Disney. Bears in his world are friendly, ducks wear scuba suits, and no animal has genitals or excretes wastes. In reality, animal life is disgusting, brutish and short, and real animals are little more than machines for chasing and devouring each other -- or us -- and for defecating and reproducing.

Many animals are useful to Man, though. Dogs and cats are useful as companions because they have been bred and trained to be so, by men, for a million years. Minks don't make good pets, but they do make good fur, and so that's what they are used for. But in all cases, the animal is the property of the human; it cannot be regarded as having

rights.

A "right" is a moral approval of someone's freedom to choose a certain action if he wants to do so. It does not mean a moral approval of the action itself. To say that you have a right to practice Christianity, without adding "or not," might mean that you have no right not to do so; it would therefore be a statement of obligation rather than a right. So when an ethical theorist says you have a "right," he is saying that his theory allows you a choice on the matter at hand.

Animals can't make choices, and therefore cannot have rights. By the same token, animals don't have obligations. You could lecture your dog all day about his obligation to go out and get a job, and about his rights of freedom of speech and enterprise, and it would make no impression on him. When a shark eats someone, do the police apprehend him, read him his Miranda rights, and try him before a jury of his peers? No. Having caught him, they might use him for food, since he's an edible natural resource (as we are to him).

Animals' behavior is determined by their nature, not by choice. Only Man can devise a code of ethics, or write it, read it, learn it or practice it, being the only animal that operates on the conceptual level of awareness. All other animals are confined to the perceptual level. (I am, of course, indebted to Ayn Rand for this line of thought.)

In short, if you own an animal, you may do as you please with it, as far as political rights are concerned -- even torture it to death if that's what turns you on. Of course, if you do gratuitous violence to your animal(s), you ought to see a psychiatrist and find out, *in your own best interests*, why such a thing appeals to you. The animal lover has similar rights to do as he pleases with any animal that he owns.

Since Man is the only creature with rights, all discussions of "animal rights" are fraudulent: they are really discussions not of granting rights to animals, but of *taking away* the rights of humans to acquire property in animals as they choose. For the people of the Arctic and subArctic regions, this would mean destroying their livelihood. Where is the sympathy for those humans? An irony in the case of the Pribilof Islanders of Alaska is that there would be no harvesting of seals except for a government subsidy that keeps this noneconomic practice alive. Another irony is that the killing of animals for fur, meat, oil, experiments, etc., and all the mistreatment of farm animals for milk, etc., are primitive practices that the operation of the free market has been eliminating. "Better Living Through Chemistry" -- the slogan of the much-maligned DuPont Corporation -- means eliminating our dependence upon relatively unpredictable animals and plant resources, in favor of minerals. (But I can see it now -- the Mineral Liberation Front!)

Sooner than anyone expects, nanotechnology will, if there is free enterprise to create incentives, eliminate all dependence on plants and animals, while simultaneously eliminating all pollution and bringing the breakout into space, after which the Earth might be given over entirely to parks, universities, game preserves, bird watching societies, etc.

It is understandable that the "animal

rights" lobby is now growing both in numbers and in budget. (Note the slick ads in subways and buses; there are Big Bucks to be made in Man-bashing!) Not just because of Disney, but due to capitalism having given Man such dominion over the world, it is easy to think of animals as endangered pets. But until the American and Industrial Revolutions, Nature was something you felt endangered by, not vice-versa. It would take only a few minutes locked in a cage with a polar bear to restore the animal-romanticizer's perspective.

In a way, I'm glad of the "animal rights" lobby, especially the "Gaia Hypothesis" (well covered by your public TV stations) which claims that the whole world is a single organism in which Man is an evil, greedy infection. It suggests that the Trendy Lefties have reached the bottom of the barrel. Once, the Left was supposed to help the working man keep food on his table by destroying free enterprise. That didn't wash, so now they're reduced to the claim that the trees and plankton have a right to be cured, by Dr. Left, of the disease germ H. Sapiens. From here, there is no place to go but up. Young people will come to the philosophy of Right and Reason, now that all other alternatives have been exhausted.

-- Fred Cookinham --

Uses Of Force Across National Borders

The US invasion of Panama is alarming, not least because the president's rationale was not merely the traditional crusade for democracy, but the suppression of financing and transshipment of cocaine. Now that reducing the importation of popular consumer goods is an acceptable pretext for war, Japan should be more tractable.

Force is justified in self-defense. Furthermore, it is an ancient principle of common law that "what one may do for himself, others may do for him [with his consent]." A rape victim may defend herself; therefore, if you see an attempted rape in progress, you may intervene on behalf of the victim. There is a global analogy: since each victim of tyranny has a right to depose the tyrant, anyone else may do so on behalf of a victim or victims of that tyranny.

But does a witness to an act of aggression have any positive obligation toward the victim? Suppose a witness to a rape in progress simply walks on by, without even seeking help. Should the victim be able to recover damages from the "bad Samaritan"? Aristotle says no. Each person has a negative obligation to refrain from initiating coercion, but no one can have any positive obligation that he has not voluntarily assumed.

Suppose the rapist enters your place of business the following day. You may refuse to deal with him, and use necessary force to remove him (or anyone else) from your property. But if you have no obligation to intervene in a rape, you likewise have no obligation to refuse to trade with the rapist. Even giving him a gift does not make you an accomplice in his rape.

Again, let us analogize globally. You have the right to depose tyrants in Grenada or Panama, but you have no obligation to do so. Indeed, if they do not aggress against you, and you suspect that their successors might, you may be wise to let sleeping dogs lie. Trading with or bestowing gifts upon a tyrant does not make you an accomplice to

tyranny.

If you have no obligation to depose tyrants, you cannot be conscripted to do so, nor can your funds be extorted to finance such an operation. This means that any legitimate mission of this type must be manned by volunteers, and voluntarily funded. Tax-funded defense may be endorsed on Public Goods grounds, but not tax-funded good Samaritanism.

The flawed prototype of a such an operation is the Nicaraguan Contras, an all-volunteer force supported by a voluntary network of campesino sympathizers, and armed by donations from foreign individuals, corporations and governments. The flaw is that in accepting (tax-funded) aid from foreign governments, the Contras are guilty of receiving stolen goods, and thus are little better than the Sandinistas themselves.

--- Mark LaRoche ---

For Theorists Only:

"One-Shot Wonders."

Imagine yourself President, confronted with a choice between two mutually-exclusive ballistic missile defense systems. The two systems, which we shall call A and B for convenience, are equal in cost, technological and political feasibility. However, they differ sharply in performance:

- System A is 100% reliable, but will only intercept 80% of the incoming warheads.

- System B is only 80% reliable. However, if it works, it will intercept 100% of the incoming warheads.

Which of these systems would you endorse?

The mathematically inclined reader has already noticed that the two systems have the same "expectation:" 80% of incoming warheads destroyed. But the concept of expectation is derived from the application of the "one-shot" probability figure to a significant number of trials. How many trials will the chosen system actually undergo? Indeed, what is the system's purpose?

If the object is to guarantee that some Americans would survive a nuclear attack, then System A is a better bet, although a sufficient increase in the offensive forces facing it could vitiate the guarantee. But if the object is to deter an attack, System B is to be preferred, because the aggressor would face four chances in five of confronting an undamaged (and very angry) United States -- after he had spent his missiles.

Either conclusion is founded upon an almost invisible premise: there will be no second trial. The kind of time-dependent reasoning which uses expectation figures is out of place.

A similar "aberration" in conventional reasoning appears on a much smaller scale when deciding whether or not to buy a gun for one's personal defense. Over a sufficiently long period, such a purchase will almost always appear to be a losing proposition. But guns are not used over long periods; they are used in momentary surges of need, in response to sudden threats to one's life or property. The same pattern applies to all forms of insurance.

(Some years before World War I, an opponent upbraided David Lloyd George for having lent his support to "unnecessary military preparations." Lloyd George replied at once: "Is my friend quite certain that

these preparations would today be considered unnecessary had they not been taken?")

It is often appropriate to base one's reasoning on the possibility of confronting a single critical moment, whose resolution will mark all subsequent events indelibly. This style of reasoning is much less appropriate for collective, politically made decisions, since then statistical norms come into play and "expectation" begins to mean something. However, this is actually a powerful argument for the minimization of collective decisions, since there's no such condition as "20% dead" for an individual.

If we leave aside the "feedforward" effects, in which well-made current decisions reduce the likelihood of the crises for which one is preparing, we can see clearly the sharp contrast between these "one-shot" scenarios and the superrationally approachable tableaux treated by the last two columns. Each mode of reasoning in its turn explains a large sphere of human behavior. The challenge lies in determining which is appropriate to a particular problem. Happily, on the individual level the appropriate mode is almost always self-evident from a clear statement of conditions...yet another pillar of support for the overriding importance of individual freedom.

--- Fran Porretto ---

Leonard Peikoff vs. Philosophy:
Part 3 of Three Parts

To separate theory from method, is to place theory above method -- and subject. Said "immutable" theory then becomes an ideological axiom, an undemonstrable Truth from which any further knowledge must derive. To propagate such a Truth, while condemning unbelievers as "enemies of reality," is the essence of religiosity. Through his alchemical inversion of the epistemological hierarchy of subject, method, and theory, Leonard Peikoff has transmuted the philosophy of Ayn Rand into an Objectivist theology, and himself, the heir to her intellectual fortune, into the Saint Peter of the Objectivist Church. By enshrining What Rand said as scripture, he has abandoned Objectivism as a philosophy, philosophy as a means to knowledge, and objectivity as fact.

No, Objectivism is not objectivity, any more than *The Origin Of Species* was the origin of species -- the theory is not the fact. Nor can it be maintained that while philosophy produced Objectivism, it may not review, let alone revise, its own product. However, none of this is of any concern to Leonard Peikoff, for he has made no secret of his priorities: "[L]et those of us who are Objectivists at least make sure that what we are spreading is Ayn Rand's actual ideas, not some distorted hash of them." The rest of "Fact and Value" is an excruciating effort to eliminate any possible ambiguity as regards the meaning of that statement. (4)

But what are the implications for the soul of man the philosopher? Peikoff provides an answer, which, as is his wont, he projects onto the David Kelleys of the world. The reader will judge to whom it (with one modification) best applies:

To such a person, intellectual discussion is a game; ideas are constructs in some academic or Platonic dimension, unrelated to this earth -- which is why, to him, they are unrelated to life or to morality. Inside this sort

of mind, there is not only no concept of "objective value"; there is no objective truth, either -- not in regard to intellectual issues. What this sort knows is only the floating notions he happens to find [from "some authority figure"]. Ideas severed from evaluation, in short, are ideas severed from (objective) cognition; i.e., from reason and reality.

That last line also works in reverse: no cognition, no evaluation, which is the inherent amorality -- and manifest immorality -- of Peikoff's position. This is the penultimate irony, for that relationship is the very point Peikoff stresses in his condemnation of Kelley. The gravamen of this latest schism is the moral standing of those who develop what may prove to be erroneous (and therefore "evil") ideas in metaphysics and epistemology; Peikoff approvingly offers the example of Ayn Rand's denunciation of Kant as "the most evil man in mankind's history." If the present essay argues from any premise, it is that it's a fundamental commitment to philosophy -- and not to any one particular school of thought -- that marks a man as rational, and therefore moral (i.e., intellectually honest). Conversely, it is with the rejection of philosophy and science, the abandonment of an objective means to knowledge, that we then truly have something approximating an "intellectual evil."

The ultimate irony, however, is that for all of his blared commitment to What Rand Said, Peikoff can't even maintain his grasp of that. Consider a statement Ayn Rand once made to CBS correspondent Mike Wallace: "If anyone can pick a rational flaw in my philosophy, I will be delighted to acknowledge him and I will learn something from him." (5) Got that? She did not say, "Metaphysical reality is immutable, so my philosophy is as well. The subject matter of philosophy is the same for men in all ages; as there are no new 'facts' to be discovered, so there is nothing new to be learned." She didn't say, "I've already committed myself on paper, so my position is now an authorized doctrine that remains unchanged and untouched." Nor did she say, "I reject the practice and possibility of flaw-finding. A valid system of philosophy is an integrated whole, therefore my philosophy as presented to date is an integrated whole. To change any one part -- to correct any 'flaw' -- would be to destroy the philosophy in its entirety." And she didn't say, "How can you tell me what's 'wrong' in my philosophy? I alone decide what premises will lead to what conclusions." And she never said, "Look, if someone imagines that he's found a 'flaw' in my philosophy, he is free to reject my writings and go form his own viewpoint. The trademark 'Objectivist,' however, is retained by me. That's all that matters." Finally, she did not declare Objectivism "a closed system." In short, Ayn Rand never held any of these premises that her "intellectual heir" attributes to her. Clearly, there is no way to reconcile the conviction of her statement with What Peikoff Said. Equally clear is that despite whatever title Ayn Rand may have deeded him in her will, Leonard Peikoff has squandered the last dime of his inheritance.

Still, let it not be said that Leonard Peikoff has done himself a total disservice with "Fact and Value," for he has exploded any justification for further psychobabble

about his "authoritarian personality." Among the many things his essay brings to light, pre-eminent is that the dogmatism of Leonard Peikoff is the product of declared principles and not unconscious drives. Of course, it's interesting to read that Peikoff himself, prior to his recent insights, could account for his disputants' criticisms "only psychologically, in terms of the attacker's cowardice or psychopathology." He fails to mention his qualifications for engaging in such psychologizing, which bears a striking resemblance to the Argument from Intimidation. Nevertheless, it is his own sanction of this practice, along with, more importantly, the upsetting nature of his declared principles, that gives us the right to present a certified psychologist's impression of the young Leonard Peikoff, circa 1953:

Leonard cared for nothing but philosophy -- and for this, I warned to him. But I could see almost immediately that in his consciousness there was no "objective reality," no sense of reality as such, apart from what anyone thought or believed; there were only Ayn's ideas and the ideas of his professors, and when Ayn was talking he couldn't retain the viewpoint of his professors, and when his professors were talking he couldn't retain the perspective he had learned from Ayn. I watched him, observed his struggles, tried to help him -- and tried to understand how someone so intelligent could be so lacking in autonomy. Sometimes my frustration was greater than my compassion. I would say to him, "Leonard, never mind what so-and-so thinks -- never mind what Ayn or I think -- what do you think?" [Judgment Day, pp. 128-9]

Over thirty-five years later, after much sound and fury, Leonard Peikoff, with "Fact and Value," has given Nathaniel Branden his answer.

-- Barry Loberfeld --

NOTES:

4. The ineluctable fate of Peikoff's crusade was observed recently by James S. Robbins. In the 7/89 issue of *Liberty*, he reports that a Harvard lecture by Peter Schwartz, editor and publisher of *The Intellectual Activist*, was "a dry rehash of Ayn Rand's thoughts read from notes...consisting almost entirely of quotations cribbed from Ayn Rand's writings. There was nothing that a perusal of Rand's writings would not reveal. Schwartz's performance underscored the stagnation of Objectivist thinking since Rand's death." Of course: given the premise embraced by "the Objectivist Rump," what else did he expect?

5. James T. Baker, *Ayn Rand*, Twayne Publishers, 1987, p. 68. Baker notes that in a later interview with Edwin Newman, she "continued to challenge anyone to find flaws in her reasoning." (pp. 68-69)

The Free New York Interview

[We continue our series of conversations with Dr. Gordon S. Thrushbotham, Chairman and guiding spirit of the New York Totalitarian Party.]

FNy: Dr. Thrushbotham, how do Totalitarians view the current controversy over abortion?

GST: Well, for a little while it caused no small amount of commotion in our ranks, but we have finally reached a settled policy.

FNy: So there were women's-rights and fetal-rights factions within the TP as there have been in all the other parties?

GST: Oh, no, nothing so pedestrian. You should know by now that these claims of "rights" that other political ideologies are always discussing have no place in Totalitarian thinking. Our focus is always on the good of Society.

FNy: What kind of factional alignments did you have, then?

GST: Until the Executive Committee ruled just a few weeks ago, there were three poles around which the discussion swirled. One group called for the absolute prohibition of abortion under any circumstances.

FNy: But not on the grounds of fetal rights?

GST: Heavens, no. Their primary concern was to raise the cost of illicit sex so high that old-time standards for sexual morality would return. Venereal diseases aren't enough of a disincentive to promiscuity. Even AIDS hasn't done much to stem the tide of non-marital sex. But the spectre of an unwanted pregnancy has always been a deterrent.

FNy: But what would that imply for the availability of contraception? If you needed condoms, would you have to show the pharmacist your marriage license?

GST: Or your doctor's prescription.

FNy: I see. What about the other two factions?

GST: The second group had a somewhat broader agenda. It advocated the formation of a Reproductive Interventions Board, which would regulate all matters concerned with pregnancy and interventions upon it. Gynecologists and obstetricians would be required by law to register all detected pregnancies with the Board, and to provide an information package about the prospective parents if requested to do so. The Board would make all decisions about which pregnancies would continue to term and which ones would be terminated.

FNy: All decisions? You make it sound as if they could decree compulsory abortions, against the will of the parents.

GST: Of course it could. The idea was to insure that babies would be born only to parents with suitable qualifications.

FNy: So that, if the Board decided that you were economically, morally or genetically lacking, you would be forbidden to procreate?

GST: Now you've got it.

FNy: And it would be a punishable offense to conceive after the Board had ruled you unfit for parenthood?

GST: No, that was considered unnecessary. Have you any idea how unpleasant any kind of compulsory medical procedure is? Virtually no woman would expose herself to two of them.

FNy: And what of the occasional successful offender, who manages to carry a proscribed infant to term?

GST: The child, if discovered, would become a ward of the State. If not, the parents would face extraordinary difficulties obtaining infant supplies without the required birth

license.

FNy: I see. What about the third group?

GST: Their position was a refinement of the second group's. The argument was raised that current "laissez-faire" procreation policies have done so much damage that positive corrective action was required. They proposed that the Board also have the power to assign childbearing responsibilities.

FNy: Compulsory parenthood? Childbearing by conscription?

GST: Exactly.

FNy: But we don't even conscript soldiers any more!

GST: That will change.

FNy: And all of this was, you should pardon the expression, conceived as being in Society's best interests?

GST: Of course. It's been accepted for ages that human quality is a function of heredity and environment, hasn't it? Well, with a well-informed authority reviewing people's hereditary qualifications, and the suitability of the home environments they maintain, we could expect to see quite substantial progress within a single generation. How could anyone who cares about the future of America disapprove?

FNy: I take it that it was this third position that the Executive Committee adopted, then.

GST: Correct.

FNy: Well, what would happen to children, families and fetuses already in existence if this policy proposal were suddenly to become law?

GST: Oh, policies like this don't leap into law that way. We're more likely to see a gradual accretion of these ideas, as each one is tried and is found to require the support of the next for full effectiveness. But let me address your question directly. Existing households would hardly be affected. Fetuses *in utero* beyond thirteen weeks would, in all probability, go untouched. Aside from an increased degree of official supervision, current families would, shall we say, be grandfathered into full legitimacy.

FNy: Well, that's a relief.

GST: What else did you expect? We're not monsters, after all.

In Our Next Issue...

The "Theorists Only" perch will be occupied by financial analyst Joan E. Smith, who has acceded to my request for a series of columns on the core principles of Austrian economics. Also, Fred Cookinham will return with further high school adventures, in Progress Report #3. And Dr. Gordon S. Thrushbotham will speak on gun control. Watch your mailbox!

About The Contributors

Frederic Bastiat is the *nom de plume* of a resident of New York City, who is not afraid of being mistaken for a "DWEM" (Dead White European Male).

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