

LIBERTARIANISM — (Continued from page 4)

sector, conditions are imposed on the free market by government which distorts the market and impedes its efficiency." Now my objection to this is fundamental: the radical distinctions are *not* between the public and private sectors, or public and private ownership and control, but rather between *just* and *unjust* ownership and control. Ultimately, *all* decision making comes down to a few individuals, or one person, over a specific property. It is morally irrelevant whether this be "private" or not. What *is* relevant is whether or not it is *just*. Suppose, for instance, that a thief makes off with someone's watch. Is that watch in his possession now "public" property? Is it "private" property, which, remember, is *equated* by Hospers (and Rand, apparently) with the uncoerced, free market sector? Or take the case of a government seizing everyone's property and *giving* it to individuals who are not *technically* part of the State apparatus. Is that "private property," or the "free market, uncoerced sector"? Also take the hypothetical case of someone justly owning something and *donating* it to those in the government, such as somebody's donation of a private library to the government. Is this part of the "public sector" which is *equated* with the "coercive sector"?

The point is this: whether public or private, the *real* moral distinction is between property which is justly held, and that which is unjustly held. And a large part of the "private sector" in the world is property which is, by libertarian standards, unjustly held, such as is the case with the land in the multitude of feudal countries which still exist. But if this is true in one case, it may also be true in another. Which cases it *is* true in, can only be established by means of detailed research and by the application of libertarian principles. I submit that had Prof. Hospers approached the issue *this* way, he would have been far more harsh on so-called "private" people and institutions than he has been in LIBERTARIANISM. The questions of "ultimate responsibility" and the like are, of course, different issues, and must also be analyzed. But it is Hospers' concern with "public" or governmental actions which has led him to play down the role of practically anyone except liberal intellectuals in the rise of Statism.

There is the same problem in the case of Hospers' critique of student takeovers of university campuses. The argument against this in the case of justly established "private" universities is clear. But what about State universities? And what about the so-called "private" universities which are nearly 90% bankrolled by the state? Or which seize land from its rightful owners by aligning with the State's power of eminent domain? Or those which align with the State to do "research" into ways and means of destroying other people's lives and property? Whatever one's position on these might be, it is surely more complex an issue than Hospers makes it.

Let us take one final, related, issue before zeroing in on foreign policy: the case of the students' reactions to Dow Chemical's presidence on campuses across the U. S., at the time when Dow's own napalm was being used to zap Vietnamese peasants at the height of the Vietnam War. Hospers makes it a simple case of free speech. A good case can be made for this position. But if one holds — as I do — that the Vietnam War is a criminal war for which the U. S. is far more responsible than the Communists of North Vietnam, then the issue becomes more complex. In his chapter on international relations, his response to the menace of the Communist criminals is not "having relations of any kind with such nations — not diplomatic and, more important, no trade . . ." This is not made clear — does Hospers support U. S. government prohibitions of American citizen trading with communist countries? If so, then this is the age-old problem of whether or not one is morally justified in coercively preventing one from trading with a criminal. If one is, and if the U. S. government is *also* criminal (i. e. it initiates force, though

The Liar As Hero

By Walter Block

It is all too easy to be an advocate of free speech when it comes to the rights of free speech of those with whom one is in agreement. It is all too easy to wax eloquent about the free speech rights of people who recite the boy scout pledge or the pledge of allegiance, or who sing the star spangled banner. Or other equally controversial things. The real test of free speech advocacy, is when it comes to controversial speech; better yet, when it comes to vicious, nasty speech that practically *everybody* is against.

There is perhaps nothing nastier or more vicious than libel, especially when it is personal and even false. We must therefore take especial care to defend the free speech rights of the libeler who furnishes us with a most important arena for free speech protection. For if the free speech rights of libelers and slanderers can be protected, the rights of *any* of the rest of us who do not give as much offense will certainly be more secure. If the free speech rights of libelers and slanderers are not protected, they are done a disservice, and the rest of us are that much less secure.

The reason that there has not been much action (to say the least) in behalf of the slanderer and libeler on the part of civil libertarians is that it is widely felt that they (unjustifiably) ruin people's reputations. Grim tales about lost jobs, friends, etc., abound. Far from being concerned with the free speech rights of the libeler and slanderer, civil libertarians have been concerned with protecting what they call the rights of those who have had their reputations destroyed by libelers and slanderers. It should be realized, however, that the *truth* as well as falsity can ruin reputations; so merely stopping false charges from being uttered is no guarantee of maintaining a person's reputation. If we take the view that reputations are all somehow sacrosanct, then we must prohibit all sorts of denigration, even truthful ones. No kind of unfavorable literary criticism, satire, movie, play, music, or book reviews could be allowed. All diminish reputations to some degree.

Although it is interesting that the deniers of free speech to libelers would not be willing to consistently deny free speech to all detractors, this alone will not clearly and unambiguously establish the free speech rights of the libeler. In order to do this, we must realize that a person's reputation is not his private property — as, for instance, is his coat. His reputation is rather what *other* people think of him. His reputation consists *solely* of the thoughts of *other* people. Thus, to prohibit the slanderer from ruining someone's reputation is to prohibit the slanderer from trying to affect the thoughts of other people. A man does not *own* his reputation any more than he owns the thoughts of others — because that is *all* his reputation consists of. A man's reputation cannot be stolen from him any more than can thoughts of *other* people be stolen from *him*. Whether his reputation was "taken from him" by fair means or foul, by truth or falsehood, he did not own it in the first place and hence should have no recourse to the law for damages.

Paradoxically, reputations, owned or not, will probably be more secure without laws prohibiting libelous free speech. Nowadays, with laws prohibiting libelous falsehoods, there is a natural tendency for the public to *believe* any

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perhaps in lesser measure than some other government), then are private citizens justified in preventing other "private" citizens — such as Dow Chemical — from trading with *our* criminal government? This is an extremely complicated issue, and I think that Hospers does it a disservice in discussing it in only a few paragraphs. I myself am opposed to preventing Dow from recruiting on campuses, but the issue is not so simple as Hospers makes it sound. ■

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publicly made libel or slander. "It would not be printed if it were not true," reasons the gullible public. If libel and slander were freely allowed, there would be so much of it, and from every possible slant, that the public would not be so gullible. Scurrilous attacks would have to be checked out or substantiated before they would have much effect. Commercial agencies like Consumers Reports or the Better Business Bureau might arise to meet the demand on the part of the public for more accurate scurrilous information.

Until that great and glorious time when vicious nasty false remarks are accorded their proper free speech protection, we should all, liars and truth tellers alike, give aid and comfort to the libeler and slanderer; failing that, we should at least recognize them for the heroes that they are. For it is the libeler and slanderer who is on the front lines of the battle to protect the freedom of speech of us all. ■

From The Old Curmudgeon

Psychology and All That.

My strictures against the California Psychology conference gave rise to a few critical letters from the California movement, ranging from the cogent to the frenetic. Roy Childs pointed out, quite correctly, that humanistic psychology is *philosophically* far more akin to libertarians than behaviorism, since both believe in free will. Roy holds that the Conference made no particular commitment to forms of therapy. All this is fine, although the conference literature made far more grandiose claims. But it still leaves the conference as just one recent example of the festering growth, both in the libertarian movement and in the American culture as a whole, of what we might call *psychologism*.

The hallmark of the psychologizer is that the focus of his attitudes undergoes a severe change. Instead of concentrating his activities on grappling with the outside world (including the world of ideas), he turns morbidly inward, and spends his energies worrying about his own psyche and inflicting this worry on all around him. Note that I am not trying to denigrate the almost universal existence of psychological problems, their importance to the individual, or the possible value of therapy. What I am attacking is the person's elevation of his psychic problems into a matter of seemingly cosmic significance, in the course of which the person's effectiveness in dealing with the outside world withers amidst the bog of fuzzy-headed morbidity. A typical psychologizer will say: "I now see that all these political and economic problems are unimportant; the only really important concern is one's inner 'growth', experiencing one's feelings, expanding one's 'openness'."

Not only does all the palaver about inner growth shift the focus from the outside world, thereby often intensifying the person's troubles, but the psychologizing promotes not only chuckleheadedness, but also the very instability, hedonism, and "whim worship" that the world is suffering too much of in the first place. Much of the humanist writings, particularly those of the late Abraham Maslow, contain a great deal of value, emphasizing as they do free individual choice and the importance of individual self-development. But the problem is that even in the best of these writings, whim-worship is encouraged, because they have no moral principles, no ethical guides for choice to offer to their readers and followers. Stressing individual self-development without setting rational moral guides for that development (develop where? in what direction?) leads to caprice, hedonism, instability, and irresponsibility — in short, whim-worship.

I suppose it was bound to happen; much of this is an

overreaction against Randianism. Many of these people are former Randians; after spending several years in the cast-iron rigidities of Orthodox Randianism, in which the slightest deviation from the tastes of the cult was condemned as "irrational", many ex-Randians have gone whole hog the other way: in place of a rational ethic they have substituted unstable and hedonic submission to whim and caprice; in place of reason they have set unanalyzed feelings upon the throne.

A large part of the newly burgeoning psychologism in the libertarian movement is due to the intensifying influence of the New Nathaniel Branden, in his post-Randian development. In many ways, the New Branden is Rand-gone-Hollywood, as the old emphasis on reason begins to get lost amidst the hip and the mod, in immersion in all the fashionable, Hollywood-spawned techniques of the day, from hedonism to encounter groups to the Instant Cure. As a veteran battler against Orthodox Randianism, I never thought that I would ever come to say this: but I think that the Movement could benefit from an increased dose of the Old Rand, with her insistence on the primacy of a rational ethic. Let us not throw out the rational ethical baby along with the Orthodox Randian bathwater. ■

The Shadow Cabinet

Back in the days when I was a youthful extreme rightist, one of our great party pastimes was to conjure up a "dream cabinet", a cabinet to be installed in the unlikely event that we would "have our druthers". And regardless of the differences of opinion amongst us, there was always one selection we could all agree upon: "For Secretary of Labor . . . Westbrook Pegler." Yes, those were heady days.

But now, lo and behold!, fantasy cabinet-making has come out of the closet. It is now indeed the fashion among those presidential candidates without what used to be called a "Chinaman's chance" for victory. The candidate — be he Dr. Spock or Senator McCarthy — issues a promise of what might have been. Not one to be caught lagging, I hereby present my shadow Cabinet — the men and women whom I would have chosen had I swept to victory on the Libertarian Party ticket this year. Each one of these choices could be trusted to do the appropriate and proper thing by his chosen field of expertise. There are, I'm afraid, many gaps in the Cabinet, but that is because I have not yet been able to find the right man for the vacancy.

And now, heed this, America:

Secretary of State	Leonard P. Liggitto
Head of the Middle Eastern Desk	Stephen P. Halbrook
Ambassador to the Court of St. James	John P. McCarthy
Secretary of Defense	Robert LeFevre
Secretary of the Treasury	Jerome Daly
Secretary of Labor	Sylvester Petro
Secretary of Housing and Urban Development	Edward C. Banfield
Secretary of Transportation, and Head of the Obscenity Division of the Dept. of Justice ...	Ronald Hamowy
Head, Anti-Trust Division	Sam Peltzman
Head, Bureau of Indian Affairs	Rosalie Nichols
Head, National Institute of Mental Health	Dr. Thomas Szasz
Head, Voice of America	Karl Hess
Head, NASA and the Patent Office ...	Andrew J. Galambos
Administrative Assistant, in Charge of Minority Groups	Walter Grinder
Administrative Assistant, in Charge of Women's Rights	James D. Davidson
and last, but certainly not least, Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare	Ayn Rand

"The art of government is the organization of idolatry."
--- George Bernard Shaw.