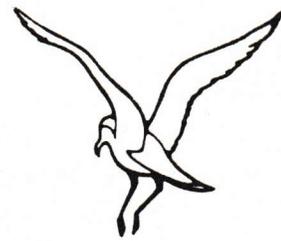


The Libertarian

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A QUESTION OF OWNERSHIP

A difficult problem facing any political party advocating the dismantling of the state is how to dispose of government-owned assets. On January 11, the B.C. Social Credit government announced that they would distribute five free shares of the crown-owned B.C. Resources Investment Corporation to every eligible person in the province, thus transferring ownership from the government to the public.

Reaction to this dramatic announcement from the opposition New Democratic Party was predictable. The socialists were outraged. Premier Bennett was resorting to "political chicanery" and "gimmickry". How dare he give us property which we "already own"! The move was looked on as nothing more than an election gimmick, and NDP resource critic, Charles Barber, predicted that we could expect more of the same in the future.

As libertarians, let us hope so. Setting aside the possible motives for this plan, the idea itself is very libertarian. To quote Premier Bennett, "This is the commitment of our government to individual ownership rather than socialism or government ownership."

How refreshing to see a political leader resolve a problem using principles. Premier Bennett has tackled a monster — the myth of public ownership. Cliche would be a better word. The socialists have popularized the word "own" in relation to public property for so long that we forget what "own" means.

To own property means to control it, to have the right to dispose of it and to acquire it. Does this resemble the "ownership" we have with "our" post office? Hardly! The government owns the post office. All of it. They buy and sell assets for it, and decide how it is to be mismanaged. None of us are ever asked to vote for a board of directors or attend stockholders meetings. The public is only brought into the picture to pay the yearly deficit. Some ownership!

The citizens of B.C. will own BCRIC. They will receive shares in the corporation and can then buy or sell them as they see fit. This and only this is ownership. Ownership without control of the property is mere word playing.

Perhaps a more libertarian party would have handled this issue differently. One can argue with the choice of recipients of the shares, with the decision to give them away rather than sell them, or with other mechanics of the program. Nevertheless the fundamental principle of ownership was faced here. And for once, the individual won, rather than the state. Premier Bennett, more of the same please!

FORGIVING OUR DEBTORS

by Kenneth McDonald

In 1977, following a decision by the Conference on International Economic Co-operation, the federal Government agreed "to convert Canada's soft loans — which were 90 per cent grants in the first place — to grants of 100 percent to the 13 LDCs (least developed countries) with which Canada has aid relations."

The rationale was contained in a memorandum as follows: "The amount: \$254 - million approximately. Dollars owed in the future have less value than they do today when they are loaned, at zero interest, for 50 years with the first payment due in only 10 years after the loan is made. The discounted value of the \$254 - million, therefore, is \$35 - million in today's terms . . . The decision to forgive the loans (current value of \$35 - million) does not affect Canada's aid budget of \$1.1 - billion."

For the hapless taxpayer this vicarious generosity presents a tantalizing spectacle. The government that urges him to buy Canada Savings Bonds in the assurance that he

will get his money back with interest neglects to mention that his money's value will be somewhat attenuated. The destruction of the currency that makes the repayment of foreign debts unnecessary also makes the repayment of domestic ones less burdensome.

Certainly, the value of money lent at zero interest will decline faster than the value of money with interest. But the governing circumstances are the same. As long as inflation continues, the value of money will decline. The unwary purchaser of Canada Savings Bonds may get 9.5 per cent on his money, but it will be paid in money that is worth less every day. With inflation at 8.7 per cent, if his income is taxed, the return is negative. His capital is eroded.

Buying power declines

To take a commonly accepted measure, the consumer price index, for which the average in 1968 was 90, had risen 10 years later (June 1978) to 175.1. The purchasing power
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THE LIBERTARIAN FOUNDATION: PROGRESS REPORT

HALT

Thanks to director Ed Murphy, HALT made tremendous progress in January. Ed supplied HALT with thousands of names and addresses of people who wrote him to order his book "Legacy of Spending". He also wrote a cover letter recommending that his readers support HALT. And in the two week period from January 6th on, about 10,000 of these letters along with Taxpayers' Charters were sent out. Since then HALT's membership has more than doubled and is fast approaching one thousand.

Favorable press has also helped our cause. On January 3rd, an editorial in *The Delta Optimist* quoted most of the Taxpayers' Charter noting "It's nice to start the new year with some good, basic truths".

Also on January 3rd, Noel Wright wrote his column in the *North Shore News* on Walter Boytinck's suit against the government for monetary fraud and on HALT. He described the Taxpayers' Charter as a document "calculated to curdle the blood of all conscientious Revenue Canada Officials". Further, "the program is obviously just what we need".

On January 12th Gorde Hunter wrote about HALT in his column in Victoria's *Daily Colonist*. Urging his readers to support HALT, Hunter said, "A few bucks won't kill you and could possibly save you hundreds in the future. Of course, if you want government spending to continue on its ruinous way, don't bother".

All in all, a superb month for HALT.

Visit by Tonie Nathan

In mid-January we were fortunate indeed to have a visit from Tonie Nathan, Vice-Presidential candidate for the U.S. Libertarian Party in 1972. Tonie and her running mate John Hospers received an electoral college vote from renegade Republican elector (and now an active libertarian) Roger McBride, making Tonie the first woman in U.S. history to receive such a vote.

Tonie was here at the invitation of the UBC Libertarian Society. Thanks to Cam Osborne for making the arrangements. She spoke to a meeting of the UBC Libertarian Society on Friday, January 19th. Her topic was Libertarianism, Feminism and Politics. A good forty people turned out to listen to Tonie.

The previous evening she had spoken to a public meeting of the Libertarian Foundation at the Rembrandt Hotel. An edited transcript of her speech, "Are You a Closet Libertarian?" appears elsewhere in this issue.

But perhaps the most exciting event of her visit was her appearance as a guest on Webster on BCTV January 18th. Jack and Tonie talked about libertarianism and about the Salem rape case for 45 minutes. Part of their discussion

was reprised as "The Best of Webster" on the Sunday Newshour January 21st.

We enjoyed Tonie's visit and hope we'll have the pleasure of her company again soon.

Bolstler Hits the Big Time

We were all very proud that *The North Shore News* reprinted Rick Bolstler's answer to the provocative question "Is there really a Santa Claus?" from the December Libertarian. It was reprinted January 17th under the title "No Virginia, Santa is You and I" with Rick's byline and a statement that it was reprinted from *The Libertarian*. We're now waiting for Rick to write a book!

HUMAN ACTION

by Mike Little

This column will appear from time to time in *The Libertarian*. The general theme is to be "Acting Man" with the emphasis placed on examples of men and women who are acting in a manner which will further the cause of liberty here in Canada and eventually throughout the world.

Most people are familiar with the phrase "ideas move the world". We know that philosophers and their philosophies are the cause of all change that takes place. This is why libertarians are the most optimistic group of people around. We know that our philosophy will eventually change the world. We are also completely secure in the knowledge that this change cannot be stopped. However, most of us do not understand the process by which change happens. For if we did, perhaps we could be more effective in speeding it up.

An idea is a wonderful thing to hold. We all feel good when we have this idea in our heads, to cherish, think about, roll around and contemplate, but unless we externalize it, i.e. act upon it, get it outside of us in some manner, it remains as nothing as far as the outside world is

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DULLARDS & SENSE

by Bill Buckler, Jr.

A national survey of high school age students in the United States has come up with some frightening results. Their findings:

- 67% of the students saw no need for profits in business
- 62% believe that government should provide them with jobs
- 61% agreed that a worker should not be expected to produce all he can
- 55% were for improving standards of living with higher wages, not more production.

Is there any doubt that the figures from a Canadian survey would be as bad if not worse? Could there be a more graphic illustration of the need to introduce Libertarian ideas and *principles* into the education of our children?

At a conference of the Alberta Federation of Labour's committee on *political education*, John Booth, head of the Alberta Public Employees Union publicly called on unionists to vote NDP in the next Provincial election. He thoughtfully added the disclaimer - "I can't say that in my official capacity". Political education? Vote NDP

The Reverend E. Scott of the World Council of Churches defends grants made to the Rhodesian terrorist organization, Patriotic Front, on the grounds that "we agree with their attitude to racism". Presumably he means that because the Patriotic Front murders whites and blacks indiscriminately it is not racist.

HUMAN ACTION (from page 2)

concerned. This holds for all ideas big and small, for the philosopher — the creator of large ideas — or for a son who has the idea of writing a letter to his mother. The philosopher will not take his part in the changing world unless he takes action, puts his idea into a book and has it published. The same holds true of the son who will not bring about the desired effect on his mother that he wishes unless he takes action and writes that letter.

The key and absolutely necessary ingredient for change, any change, is action. Unless you act nothing will happen. At least nothing you want will happen except by the accidental result of someone else's action.

Man has been described as a thinking animal. But this is not enough. Man is much more than just a thinking

"Taxes are the price we pay for civilization". An inscription on the IRS building in Washington, D.C.

"The income tax is not only a tax; it is an instrument that has the potentiality of destroying a society of humans". Frank Chodorov, from his book *THE INCOME TAX/ROOT OF ALL EVIL*.

Due to public outcry, Britain is ending the outrageous practice of virginity checks on Asian women who go there to be married. Immigration officials rationalized the practice on the grounds that virgins "are more likely to be truly engaged to marry". Apart from the totally spurious nature of this argument, the issue here is the insensitive and arrogant disregard for a person's physical privacy. We can only speculate as to the psychological harm done to the victims of this appalling act.

Stephen Harper, chairman of the Waterloo Regional Police Commission, doesn't like the fact that the Crown must prove that a person suspected of a crime is guilty "beyond a reasonable doubt". He would like to substitute the phrase "beyond a reasonable preponderance of probability". The acceptance of such pernicious pedantry would be a giant step towards the despotic creed of "guilty until proven innocent".

QUOTE OF THE MONTH: When asked by an irate taxpayer why the address and phone number of the new Tax Center in Surrey were not given out, Revenue Canada's public affairs co-ordinator replied "That's the way it is, like it or lump it"!

animal. It is thinking, acting man that survives and progresses. Without action he would die.

This general principle - action promotes survival, non-action leads to death - is a universal one. It applies to every living entity, be it an individual, an organization, a movement, or a society.

Libertarians love to think, we thrive on it, we are excited by it, we spend a great deal of time at it. But if we are to become part of the movement we must become acting man as well as thinking man. It is time that we turned our energies toward implementation in practice, not just in theory.

Human action is the necessary connection between the idea as an abstraction and its implementation in reality as a concrete.

Next month I will explore some necessary prerequisites without which action cannot take place.

ARE YOU A CLOSET LIBERTARIAN ?

by *Tonie Nathan*

This is an edited transcript of a speech given by Tonie Nathan at a public meeting of the Libertarian Foundation on January 18, 1979.

In Oregon last year, preparing for the November elections, Oregon Libertarians had formed a committee to work for the passage of Measure Six, which was a tax limitation bill similar to Proposition 13. One of the chores I had promised to do was to call up people and ask them if they would support and vote for Measure Six.

So one night I sat down at the telephone and I began to call. We had called our committee "Libertarians for Measure Six". Since the name was kind of unwieldy, I decided to shorten it. So when the first person answered I said, "Hello, I'm calling for Libertarians for Six". There was a silence on the end of the phone for a minute and then he said, "Libertarians for sex! Well great, I'm all for that. I'll vote for you".

I wish it were as easy to persuade people to vote for libertarians as to vote for sex. It isn't always that easy. We have a major job to do in the way of education and people have all kinds of strange and erroneous notions about libertarians.

I'd like to give you a very concrete answer to what a libertarian is. I'm going to read you the United States' Libertarian Party Statement of Principles because it is a beautiful document and really quite short. Our Statement of Principles, which was adopted in Denver in 1972 and written for the most part by John Hospers, says:

We the members of the Libertarian Party challenge the cult of the omnipotent state and defend the right of the individual.

We hold that all individuals have the right to exercise sole dominion over their own lives and have the right to live in whatever manner they choose, so long as they do not forcibly interfere with the equal rights of others to live in whatever manner they choose.

Governments throughout history have regularly operated on the opposite principle, that the state has the right to dispose of the lives of individuals and the fruits of their labour. Even within the United States, all political parties except our own grant to government the right to regulate the lives of individuals and seize the fruits of their labour without their consent.

We, on the contrary, deny the right of any government to do these things, and hold that where government exists, it must not violate the rights of any individual: namely (1) it must not violate the right to life. Accordingly we support prohibition of the initiation of physical force against others. (2) the right of liberty of speech and action. Accordingly we oppose all attempts by government to abridge the freedom of speech and the press, as well as government censorship in any form.

(3) the right to property. Accordingly we oppose all government interference with private property, such as confiscation, nationalization, and eminent domain, and we support the prohibition of robbery, trespass, fraud and misrepresentation.

Since governments, when instituted, must not violate individual rights, we oppose all interference by government in the area of voluntary and contractual relations among individuals. People should not be forced to sacrifice their lives and property for the benefit of others. They should be left free by government to deal with one another as free traders; and the resultant economic system, the only one compatible with the protection of individual rights, is the free market.

Now that's an important Statement of Principles and it means something to libertarians. We call ourselves the "Party of Principle". What does it mean to be a party of principle?

Well, a principle is a fundamental truth, like the law of gravity. It's only a principle if it's true in every single case, in every circumstance. If there's an exception to it, then it's no longer a principle.

Most professions today have to have some principles. Engineers have to have principles to design their projects. Doctors have to have principles that they follow when they're doing surgery or diagnosing a patient. Almost every profession, almost every occupation, almost every endeavour by mankind today is based on some sort of principle of operation and it's constantly refined so that the exceptions either change the principle or the principle is refined to where it becomes more solidly effective in every single case.

It's only in politics that we find no consistent adherence to principle. Now all libertarians do adhere to the one principle that they are not going to initiate force. This is the principle on which the party was founded because we believe that aggression is immoral and should be excluded in regulating the affairs of civilized men and women. And most persons agree.

Well, what does the principle of non-aggression mean? Let me ask you some questions and we'll see how this principle applies in any issue you might want to look at.

Is there anyone here who thinks it is okay to enter a stranger's house, beat him up, put your hands in his pockets and rob him? It's morally wrong, isn't it? We all agree that it is wrong. We don't have much trouble with that.

But let's go a step further and see how consistent our belief in this principle is. If it's morally wrong to enter a man's house, beat him up and take his money, is it also wrong if you just threaten him with a gun? After all, you haven't touched him and you haven't physically violated his person. It's still wrong, I think you would agree, to threaten a man with a gun.

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ARE YOU A CLOSET LIBERTARIAN? (from page 4)

Now what if the holdup man doesn't want a lot of money? He just needs five dollars. It's an insignificant amount, so is it okay to demand it? I think you'll agree that it's still wrong. The amount of money doesn't matter. A person is being threatened. A crime is being committed.

What if the man is a millionaire? He has a lot of money and he can afford five dollars. Now does this change the nature of the act in any way or is a crime still taking place? Isn't the holdup man still aggressing? He only wants five dollars and the millionaire has got five dollars; he's got thousands of times more than that. But isn't the act still wrong?

But what if the holdup man wants the money for a good cause? He says, "I have to have five dollars for a cab to take my wife to the hospital and you've got it and I want it". Is it still a wrongful act? Libertarians say yes it is. The motive doesn't change the nature of the act. A crime is being committed. Aggression is taking place.

What if the millionaire won't pay? Now our holdup man, not wishing to kill the millionaire, decides to take another tack. He goes around the neighbourhood with a petition. All the neighbours agree that the holdup man needs the money and the millionaire has adequate funds and therefore they all sign a petition demanding the millionaire give the holdup man five dollars. Do we still have a wrongful act? Yes, we do. There is still coercion, threats being brought against the millionaire.

The pressure from the community hasn't persuaded the millionaire. He's not afraid of the gang out there in the neighbourhood. He bars his doors and he hires his own private guards. Now the holdup man figures he just doesn't have enough clout yet, so he takes his petition to the city council. The councilmen vote to put the petition on the ballot and in the next election all the voters vote to force the millionaire to "contribute" five dollars to the holdup man. Now is the action still wrong? Okay, it's no longer legally wrong, but it *is* morally wrong.

How many laws do we have that are legally correct but not morally correct? There is a difference. Crimes are taking place many times today. They may have legal sanction, but they are nevertheless crimes. They are aggressions against individual people. Just because fifty neighbours signed a petition or a whole city votes for something or 95% of the people vote for something doesn't make that something morally acceptable.

It doesn't matter who has the money and who has not, who needs money, or how great his need is. No one has the right to aggress against others. Not even if the whole world thinks so.

There was an interesting case recently. A man who was dying, in need of a kidney transplant, had a cousin who,

being a relative, had the right kidney and could have donated one to this dying man. The dying man sued to make the state force the relative to give up a kidney to save his cousin's life. And the court said no. Not even in this life and death situation does the state have the right to demand that he give a part of his body. The option as to whether to donate a kidney or not belonged to the person that owned the kidney.

Thankfully that was a correct decision. But we get an awful lot of court decisions that aren't that correct. A person owns himself, his own body, and he has the right to dispose of his life the way he wishes. The state does not have the right to make decisions about this for him.

Now if you see the point about being consistent about not violating the rights of others, if you can see the fact that there is a moral principle at work here by which you can judge all legislative acts, you are probably a libertarian. Perhaps in a closet for now, but you are a member of a group of very special people who would rather suffer perhaps personal want and hardship than violate the rights of others, and you are a person who reveres justice.

We libertarians desire our rights to be recognized so we therefore scrupulously defend the rights of others whenever it is appropriate to do so. We want to abolish aggression in personal and public relationships, which means an uncompromising antagonism towards state coercion.

Now what are the benefits of holding a libertarian position? Well, personally, I think one of the major benefits is peace of mind because no other position is possible to an honest and consistent person. Whether we think the libertarian movement can succeed or not, how can we support injustice? And how can we support the organizations of the state that encourage injustice? Or fund injustice? Do we just write off those persons who are defrauded and harassed by the state because they are a minority?

I think that opposition to injustice is one of the highest callings of human beings. And I think it's absolutely necessary for psychological health. But there's yet another reason for adhering to the libertarian position. If we're libertarians, we find that we become extremely self-reliant and productive. For when a person realizes he really doesn't have a moral claim on the property and lives of others and that he has no moral right to coerce them, even if it's legal, then he sets about taking care of himself. The desire to be self-reliant leads to invention, co-operation, production and peace. The challenge is enormous I know, but it's very inspiring and exciting.

There are lots of warnings about environmental degradation and pollution today but I think that the environment that we need most and is most important and absolutely necessary to us as civilized human beings is the environment of freedom. I hope that those of you who have been stifled and stagnant in the closets of statism will pull open the door and breathe the fresh air of a free society.

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rumblyngs

by Marco den Ouden

Count Me Out

In the Cliche of Socialism we reprinted in the August 1978 issue of *The Libertarian*, Murray Rothbard argued that statistics "are the eyes and ears of the interventionists: of the intellectual reformer, the politician and the government bureaucrat. Cut off those eyes and ears, destroy those crucial guidelines to knowledge, and the whole threat of government intervention is almost completely eliminated." The argument being, of course, that what it doesn't know, it can't control.

So it is heartening to libertarians when someone fights back against the prying busybodies of Statistics Canada.

We reported one such case last May. Gordon Robson, director of the Vancouver Whitecaps and co-owner of the Rembrandt Hotel, had ignored up to 1000 questionnaire forms he had been asked to fill out for StatsCan over a two year period. "If someone can be put behind bars for refusing to fill out a form," he said, "then it's time we all went to jail in Canada."

StatsCan never prosecuted Robson. David Rushton, Statistics Canada field division regional director, told the press that departmental policy was to prosecute only when a delinquent hampered the over-all results of a survey. We doubt it. We suspect StatsCan was too chicken to tackle a prominent businessman. The stink would have been too great.

Instead, StatsCan decided to prosecute a young divorcee from Maple Ridge who lives alone with her ten year old daughter. The vital information she refused to tell Statistics Canada: among other things, which door she uses to leave her house and who (if any) her houseguests were on a certain date in 1976. The information was required of her in StatsCan's mini-census taken that year.

The woman was Angela Sheremata, a woman who cherishes freedom and integrity, an admirer of author

Alexander Solzhenitsyn and tax rebels Howard Jarvis of California and Gerald Hart of Winnipeg.

Mrs. Sheremata had told the press that she was prepared to go to jail if necessary to fight for individual freedom. She appeared in court December 1, 1978 to answer charges of having refused or neglected to fill in the 1976 census form. She argued that the census law was unconstitutional and an unwarranted intrusion into an individual's freedom, a threat to the supremacy of the individual over the state. She was not opposed to censuses as such and had given her name and the number of occupants of her house. The other questions she considered an invasion of her privacy.

When census officials had warned her that she was breaking the law, she told them that "just because there was a law didn't make it morally right. Hitler had a lot of laws also."

Judge Lorne Clare declined to render a verdict at that time, wanting to study the case further. On January 5, 1979 he acquitted Mrs. Sheremata on a technicality. The prosecution had neglected to present the census form Mrs. Sheremata had submitted, consequently there was a reasonable doubt as to whether it was improperly filled out or not.

Although it was not the constitutional judgment she had fought for, Mrs. Sheremata was elated over her victory. Her victory, however, may be shortlived. The crown is contemplating appealing the case. At Statistics Canada, it seems, bureaucrats count, people don't.

Those of us who share Mrs. Sheremata's detestation of the omnipotent state and may occasionally be disheartened by the paucity of our numbers and the strength of the enemy can take heart from this remark she made, "History was never changed by the majority ever, but by a dedicated minority."

With dedicated people like Angela Sheremata in the ranks of lovers of freedom, we can rest assured that victory will ultimately be ours.

FORGIVING OUR DEBTORS (*from page 1*)

of the dollar at the end of the present Government's first decade was barely more than half what it had been at the start.

This is entirely consistent with the foreign aid thesis. Whether the dollars are lent at zero interest or not, their value declines with time. But the coin in which foreign aid is dispensed has two faces. One is turned toward the taxpayers of donor countries, the other toward commercial banks.

In 1976, 72 per cent of the total aid to developing countries, or \$51 - billion, was from sources other than official development assistance. Although the other sources included other government departments and non-government organizations, most of the \$51 - billion flowed, not as soft or zero-interest loans, but as commercial loans.

The Canadian International Development Agency's annual review for 1976-77 made the point that "the poor countries faced debt service costs of \$33 - billion, about double the official aid flow from the rich countries."

Without attempting to argue the pros and cons of foreign aid, it may be remarked that the process of economic development, which has been described by the CIEC as "frustratingly slow for developing countries", was just as slow, and no doubt every bit as frustrating, for the "rich" countries during their development.

The impulse to "create jobs" that drives western governments to subsidize the export of manufactured goods is a political one. The domestic picture glows a little brighter in consequence. Whether another consequence, by implanting new wants in recipient countries, is not to aid but to retard their development is another matter.

Underlying the business of foreign aid is the popular delusion that money in the hands of governments is somehow different from other money and that it can be spent at whim without penalty.

Business of Lending Money

Nowhere in the declarations of concern for LDC debt burdens, and in the consequent forgiveness of a portion due to governments, is there any suggestion that a portion due to private banks might be forgiven also.

Nor should it be. Banks are in the business of lending money, not of giving it away. That is the prerogative of governments. But governments, even though they hold a monopoly on the manufacture of money, need the help of banks to circulate it. Even though governments, by manufacturing more money than is warranted by the production and exchange of goods and services, cause the value of money to decline, they must still take the rest from taxpayers before spending it.

Whether or not taxpayers are willing donors of foreign aid is impossible to determine for the simple reason that they are never asked. The governments they elect every few years are permanent members of the international committees that decide what is to be allotted to whom and how much.

It is possible that if taxpayers were asked to give a certain amount of their money to aid the impoverished of Transutopia, they would not object very strenuously. But if it were explained that by doing so they would make it easier for the Government of Transutopia to pay the interest due on loans from commercial banks, the objections might be strenuous indeed.

Yet that is the effect. When a government borrows from commercial banks it contracts to repay principal and interest. If it borrows to excess, the risk is shared by borrower and lender. For other governments to go to the aid of the parties may be charitable but scarcely business-like. When they do so without the consent of the taxpayers who are obliged to bear part of the risk, there is more than a hint of collusion.

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ARE YOU A CLOSET LIBERTARIAN? (*from page 5*)

Do I sound too idealistic? Well, we've been accused, we libertarians, of being impractical dreamers. I'd like to close with a quote from Kay Harroff, a libertarian woman who ran for U.S. Senate from the State of Ohio in 1973 against John Glenn. He won but she got some 70,000 votes against him and we were very surprised. Here's what Kay had to say: "If you think that libertarians sound very idealistic, I must agree and point out that not to have ideals is to have no values, no principles, no consciously held goals and that this is perhaps the greatest tragedy of America today. If

you're thinking that libertarians sound like dreamers, I must agree. Libertarians hold the dream of individual and universal human dignity, a humane and just society and a better tomorrow for ourselves and our children. But I shall tell you also that libertarians are the most practical, the most realistic and the most determined of people and that we are offering the only practical and realistic solutions to all the problems descended upon us by the high priests of power, pragmatism and political opportunism. And if, in cynicism and hopelessness, you say our system could never work, I must point out to you that it is the present system that is not working. Our system has never been tried".

OUR READERS INQUIRE

In a libertarian society, would Nazis or other groups that advocate using force against minorities be allowed to speak freely?

In a word, yes.

This is an issue that comes in many forms and has been vexing advocates of freedom for many years. Anyone who is a consistent advocate of freedom must realize that in order for his freedom to be protected he must be willing to grant that the same freedom must be protected for everyone else, even though they may say or print things which he may find utterly revolting.

Some might say, particularly of such groups as Nazis, that they advocate the initiation of the use of force against some group or individual and therefore we must suppress their freedom of speech in self-defense. This is a natural enough reaction and it has some validity. There is a very fine line between advocating the initiation of force and actually threatening anyone with force. To advocate an action is not physically or morally equivalent to actually taking that action or threatening that you will. A person may advocate whatever he pleases. He may attempt to convince or whip up - but not pay - others to do whatever he wants. So long as he does not take such actions nor receive any material benefit himself, nor do more than attempt to persuade others to take them, we may not legally take any forcible action against him. We may disapprove, we may speak or write against him, we may ostracize him, but we may not use force against him.

But what if someone, hearing or reading what the person says, goes out and commits an act of violence? The person who commits the act should be punished, but no action may be taken against the speaker. In a free society every person must acknowledge that he is self-controlling and self-responsible. Therefore, no one may excuse his actions by saying he was influenced by what someone said, and no one else may use that as an excuse to take forcible action against the speaker. Furthermore, we might find that people participating in mob scenes (strikes, etc.) would think twice about running amok just because some agitator said "Death to the capitalists;" or "Let's burn the factory . . ." or anything to that effect, if they knew that they and only they would be held responsible for their actions.

The incident which sparked the recent wave of controversy on this topic, the Nazi marches through Skokie, the Jewish suburb of Chicago, while it should have outraged libertarians, was not an example of a problem caused by freedom of speech. It was, rather, the kind of problem which arises when property rights are not properly defined or recognized. The Nazis applied to the city of Chicago for permission to march through Skokie. They did not have to ask the people who lived there because those people have no property rights in their own neighbourhood; the streets are owned by the city. In a libertarian society it is entirely

reasonable to expect that a private organization such as, for example, a neighbourhood association, would own the streets. Thus the people who lived there would control who can march and the controversy would never arise. (If the Nazis did march without permission they would be trespassing and could legitimately be met with force and carted off to jail.)

No one's freedom of speech is interfered with by a property owner's order to shut up while on his property. You may use your own property to facilitate your freedom of speech. You may use whatever property others voluntarily provide without any interference from anyone else. You may not force others to make their property available as a forum to support your speech.

— Robin Gillespie

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