

The Libertarian

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EDITORIAL

END OF A DECADE

While the 80's will assuredly go down in history as the libertarian decade, the 70's will be remembered as the decade of transition. These were the years when free men and women once again banded together and said, "Enough!" to government interference. The ideas of liberty were fused into a movement with the birth of the United States Libertarian Party in 1971, spreading north in 1973 with the formation of the Libertarian Party of Canada. Libertarian ideals were already filling the vacuum left by the failure of the New Left and by the Rand-Branden split. Now the adherents had a platform from which to address their prospective supporters.

Long on idealism but short on experience, libertarians on both sides of the 49th took on the heavyweights of the political establishment. Many were proven to be short-fused, burning themselves out after one campaign. But the survivors carried on, strengthened by what they had experienced while at the front.

California's Proposition 13 in 1978 became the shot heard around the world of this our latest libertarian revolution. Muskets were replaced by ballots and libertarians were up front with Jarvis and Gann. One month after Proposition 13 became a reality, HALT, a child of the Libertarian Foundation was created. Thirteen months later, HALT Calgary launched its own mini-13 with a petition to have a plebiscite on a \$250,000,000 civic center. The petition requirements were met. Cal-

(continued on page 3)

COMMENTARY

NON-ELECTIVE POLITICS: THE CHALLENGE OF THE 80'S

On November 28, Calgarians went to the polls and defeated a proposal to stick them with a \$234 million bill for a Civic Center. The plebiscite had been forced by a petition drive launched by HALT Calgary in August.

What this victory for the taxpayer proves in spades is that yes, you can fight city hall, and win. It proves the lie in the assertions of those who said that elected politicians have a mandate to do whatever they want.

And the key thing this victory has done is launch a new brand of politics in Calgary municipal affairs. HALT's victory has reintroduced non-elective politics into the Canadian political fabric.

In an editorial in *The Calgary Herald* entitled "HALT's success could mark new era in local politics", Herald editor William F. Gold commented "HALT could have a lot of clout. The process (non-elective politics) could mean much political activity taking place outside the more traditional confines of the council chambers."

Commenting on patterns of voter turnout in provincial, federal and municipal elections, Gold concluded that "organizations like HALT can have an enormous amount of influence if they can command the support of as little as 20-odd per cent of the eligible voters."

"HALT-type politics," he continued, "can easily wash across individual ward boundaries and could offset the parochial accommodations a ward politician reaches in his neighbourhood."

(continued on page 8)

IN THIS ISSUE:

"Heart of Reality: Apocalypse Now" by Heather Engstrom

HALT PRESIDENT ADDRESSES HUDAC

by Richard Bolstler

We reported briefly in our last update that HALT President Mike Little addressed the Housing Urban Design Association of Canada in mid-November. Here we present a detailed account of Mr. Little's speech.

On November 13 HALT President Mike Little addressed the Victoria Chapter of Housing Urban Design Association of Canada (HUDAC). Asked to address the problems of government regulation and red tape, Little pointed out the narrowness of this topic and pointed out the importance of bypassing the symptoms of our problems, such as red tape. Instead he took his audience of over 100 HUDAC members back to the root causes of our problems.

Little got to the point quickly. "This central idea that you can regulate people's action in order to improve the general welfare of those same people is behind and is the underlying concept which causes all of our problems, including its red tape that you have to face every day. But of course identifying the cause of our problem does not explain why politicians continue to practice spurious ideas." Little could have launched into a tirade against politicians but chose instead to place the blame for the problem on the people who put them in power - you and I.

Recognizing the complexity of the problem, Little continued by addressing just two mistakes businessmen have made. The first mistake came out of ignorance of the free market system itself. Through inconsistency born of ignorance, the defenders of free enterprise had repeatedly called on government to help destroy free enterprise. Little provided a recent illustration from his own experiences" "Subsequent to the successful HALT Calgary petition drive to force a plebiscite on the Civic Center, I went to Calgary for the purpose of talking to the heads of oil companies. I spoke to ten of them. Every single man without exception told me quite bluntly that he was totally opposed to HALT's action in stopping the building of the Civic Center, the reason being in every case that the Civic Center would be good for bus-

iness. They could each show how they and their own businesses would derive a benefit. They also told me they were free enterprisers - they believed in the free enterprise system. Blanked out in their minds was the fact that they were willing to sanction an act by the government, an act which involves the taking of other people's property, other businessmen's property through expropriation, its taking of taxpayers' money without permission in order to build something that essentially should have been built by the private market place. *The point I'm making here is that by stating to the public and your friends that you are a free enterpriser, and then acting in a manner totally opposite to that concept, you are effectively destroying the meaning of free enterprise. Not only that, deeper than that, you are acting in a manner which will eventually destroy yourself...you are working against yourself. That kind of inconsistency must stop. It is this inconsistency between what we say about free enterprise, and what we practice, that is one of the major causes of the destruction of freedom in this country.*"

After pausing to let the message hit home, Little went on to analyse the second mistake commonly made by businessmen - the formation of special interest pressure groups. He pointed out the grand scale on which pressure groups are acting. "It's like a national bingo game. Everyone is playing the game and the government promises everyone a winning card. We have grown into a nation of sheep who no longer look to themselves as the source of everything they have, who no longer look to themselves as capable and responsible people, who all look to the government to provide them with the material and spiritual goods that must be created.

"We must stop asking for government
(continued on page 3)

HALT PRES. ADDRESSES HUDAC (*from page 2*)

favours, as pressure groups or as individuals. If we didn't ask the government to do things for us, 90% of the government's reasons for existence would disappear, and then perhaps politicians could get back to protecting our rights instead of violating them."

Both groups, free enterprisers who aren't and pressure groups, are guilty of inconsistency and have resulted in the destruction of property rights.

"All government intervention violates the right to private property and therein lies the key to a solution to get our country back on a principled political direction." Little continued, "We (HALT) see our task to be the reinstatement of property rights in this country, so that we may once more live in harmony with our fellow man and see a rebuilding of a prosperous economy." Little went on to talk about the Taxpayers' Charter and the HALT method for change.

He ended his speech by driving home the idea of choice. "There is no middle ground. You can do nothing and abide by the wishes, the demands and commands of others. You can choose a controlled society where some men sit and rule over us, or you can choose a path such as I have - where men are free and property rights are recognized."

"But choose you must!"

After a very enthusiastic round of applause, Little fielded questions from the audience. His answers were as hard hitting as his speech. Businessmen seldom hear speeches as blunt as this one. When they become commonplace, perhaps the world will sit back and wonder why they had ever allowed it to be otherwise.

HOME-WRECKING MAYOR DEFEATED

Incumbent mayor Tom Constable of Burnaby, instrumental in the expropriation bid on the home of Mrs. Lillian Mann (as reported in the last two issues of this newsletter) was soundly defeated by challenger Dave Mercier in municipal elections in British Columbia in late November. Mercier had come out in support of Mrs. Mann while an alderman.

EDITORIAL (*from page 1*)

garians had the opportunity to save \$500 for every man, woman and child in the city. They voted for frugality and freedom, thus becoming the most vociferous tax haters on a per capita basis in North America. So dramatic was the HALT victory that William F. Gold, editor of the pro-civic center Calgary Herald, wrote a special editorial on the event titled "HALT's Success Could Mark A New Era in Local Politics." We at the Foundation agree with his estimation and greet the 80's with unguarded optimism.

The libertarian movement in its many forms - educational, political, single issue, tax resistance, to name a few - can not be dismissed by the establishment. We have left childhood behind and are entering adolescence. The 80's belong to us and we shall not let go in our lifetime.

"The protection of an American's liberty is not in voting, it is in the Constitutional restriction of the officeholder's interference with individuals; and in every American's vigilant defence of human rights - his own, and every other person's - by individual and mutual action, in all human relationships."

-Rose Wilder Lane

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MOVIE REVIEW

HEART OF REALITY: APOCALYPSE NOW

by Heather Engstrom

I have noticed in certain circles of the sub-culture the gradual inundation of an old noun turned into a new verb: to apocalypse, from the movie "Apocalypse Now", meaning to stun with artistry, to create such an impact on one's audience that they are left powerless to reply - knowing that something of unavoidable importance has passed before their senses, but needing time to even begin to integrate the power of these images.

Recognizing this impact is the key to enjoying "Apocalypse Now". It is not a pleasant film, nor a happy one, but it is capable of teaching great truths and consequently of being incomparably entertaining. The problem is that this very magnitude leaves us at first unable to sort out the movie's realities. We know that we have encountered something big, but fear that we have been conned into believing that it is not only big but important as well. If the viewer were to succumb to this initial skepticism, the movie would not leave a good impression. If, on the other hand, he takes the time to analyse, to integrate and to avoid intimidation, something of what the movie has to offer becomes obvious.

Without allowing for this period of open integration, one may make the mistake of falling into the Apocalypse Now-intellectual-denial syndrome, rampant among those who cannot (or choose not to) bring the film into focus. Libertarians are no less immune - consider two libertarian reviewers, David Brudnoy (Libertarian Review, November 1979) and John Hospers (Reason, November 1979), who respectively dismiss the movie as "pedestrian as an aid to insight" and "pretentious". Hospers states as his thesis (one with which I am usually sympathetic): "Mystical gobbledygook is no substitute for genuine significance, although unprobing minds may easily mis-

take the first for the second." I would remind him that unprobing minds mistaking the second for the first is also a common phenomenon, and one from which no reviewer is exempt.

an artistic triumph

"Apocalypse Now" is not a movie that you go to see only once. It is impossible to assimilate all that director Francis Ford Coppola offers in one viewing. It would, for example, be possible to go once merely to *watch* the film, since it is a movie of such incredible photographic impact. Whether it be the muted choreography of helicopters hanging over the water, or Captain Willard's (played by Martin Sheen) ever-watchful eyes as he journeys up the river, or decapitated human heads carelessly juxtaposed with the magnificence of overgrown temples, Coppola has spared no detail of attention to any portion of any frame of the movie.

It would be possible also to see "Apocalypse Now" once merely to *listen*. A new standard in auditory quality has been set by this movie. The very texture of the sound is revolutionary: the subtle balancing, the focusing in and out of one particular sound is always effective.

There is one scene in particular that is so massive in its auditory impact as to demand special mention. A squadron of some dozen American helicopters swoop in attack on one of "Charlie's" villages. As the fleet nears the village, the commanding officer cuts into a taping of a chorale version of Wagner's "Ride of the Valkyries". The convergence of the building music with the steady menace of the helicopter blades verges on indescribable. Calculated to terrify the natives, the Wagner serves also to stun the audience. Combined with the visual effects of the floating

(continued on page 5)

HEART OF REALITY (*from page 4*)

'copters, and eventually the strafing of the village, this produces what may well be the strongest cinematic scene in movie history. The episode demands an intensity of personal focus that is nearly overwhelming.

Or, while we are discussing the aesthetic fare that "Apocalypse Now" offers, you could if you wished see the movie a time or two just to enjoy the flawless realism of the characters. In a method unprecedented in films of this decade, Coppola has seen to it that every word, every gesture, every action of every character is meaningful and artistically honest. There are no clichéd images of human nature here, no stereotypes or dishonest humbuggery.

At the same time, the movie abounds in character metaphors. Thus:

- Captain Willard, on an intelligence mission to "terminate the command" of Col. Kurtz (played by Marlon Brando), can be seen to represent the guilelessness of the American silent majority who gradually integrated the absurdity of the Vietnam war and began to agitate for its close

- the intelligence officers who assign Willard his mission (brilliantly characterized in one of the movie's first scenes) offer us glimpses of the entire military bureaucracy, with their focus on all the variations of the "keep up a good public image", "don't hassle the establishment", "honour the hierarchy" themes

- the boys on the boat who share harrowing experiences with Willard are indeed the American soldier, attempting to live a life without context.

- the American photographer (Dennis Hopper) who has chosen to live with Kurtz in his jungle hideaway can represent the American press, selectively and intuitively discerning.

- Col. Kurtz can represent war itself - its power, its horror, its appeal to mankind, and its apparent contradictions: how can a human being function with full courage and sense of life in the context of something as anti-life and mindless

as war?

But just as these characters can be generalized, it is Coppola's genius that even in this most negative of movies every bit of dialogue and of action, every death and every breath are real, human, and have a positive side. These are people struggling as best they can within the framework of the realities that have (as they see it) been presented to them. Each teaches us something of the magnitude and awfulness of this imposed reality, as well as of the magnificence of the human kind in adapting to it - in adapting and surviving.

A classic example of this ability to adapt is Lt. Kilgore (Robert Duvall), who arranges the Wagner blitzes. Tempting it is to dismiss him as totally insane because he loves the war ("I love the smell of napalm in the morning"), because he has no fear of death, and because he is liable to choose the villages he will destroy by their proximity to good surfing water. Insane? He doesn't duck when shells are falling, he scratches his privates when they itch, he chooses to *live* in the environment in which he finds himself. He is a canny warrior with undoubtedly a better-than-average war record and a way of getting the best out of his men. Lustily and without hesitation, he attacks the role that the army has given him to play.

Similarly are the young sailors on the boat thoroughly real characters, in spite of their apparent incompetence. Consider Lance (Sam Bottoms). What in the name of justice is this boy doing in Vietnam? He is an American surfing hero, knowledgeable, calm and steady on his surfboard, but 'way out of his territory in this jungle madhouse. The horror around him and the drugs he has found handy for diluting reality are the catalyst for the gradual dissolution of his mind. He is left with what he desired: a shell which can finally cope adequately with his environment.

the contradiction

Ultimately, however, one goes back to
(*continued on page 6*)

HEART OF REALITY (from page 5)

"Apocalypse Now" to reassess the themes. They are so myriad, and so subtle, that there is endless delight in trying to pinpoint and integrate them.

First and foremost, you must forget all you have heard claiming that this is the definitive movie about Vietnam -- it is not even particularly about Vietnam. Even those of us who were never personally affected by that war find ourselves involved in this movie. It screams personal messages at us so intense and so numerous that it is difficult to put them into a workable perspective, but we are always aware that it is about *us*.

The movie works around two basic interrelated themes, both involved with the necessity for the individual to acknowledge reality. The first we could call an exploration of the nature of truth: that only truth is functional, that only truth can win any battle. Kurtz, who has been accused of the murder of four people he executed as spies (interestingly enough, spy activity in his sector disappeared after these executions), rails at the military bureaucracy when he says, "There's one thing I detest, and that is the stench of lies!" Independently, Willard recognizes that principle in a nightmarish scene where the captain of his boat insists on stopping for a standard inspection of a civilian sampan. This leads to a mistaken massacre of all aboard; all are strafed with machine gun fire and instantly dead, except for a girl who gives indications of life. To the horror of his men, who are scrambling to save the shattered girl for medical attention, Willard shoots her with his pistol, afterwards lamenting to himself the inherent lie in the principles of a nation that will shoot someone apart with machine gun fire and then attempt to patch him up with bandaids.

And then Coppola links to truth his other major theme: horror. Horror and the personal conquest of horror may seem to be a long way from central to any of our lives - but it is exactly this theme which has greatest impact on us. Con-

sider by way of example a story told by Kurtz. He is involved in a program of mass inoculation of the children in a Vietnamese village. The medical units arrive and administer the vaccine. On returning to the village later, Kurtz witnesses a pile of little arms at the spot where the inoculations took place: every child has had his arm amputated by the Viet Cong in a gesture of defiance.

Kurtz reacts in horror. The monstrosity of the action nearly breaks his very heart - and then he sees ("like being shot through the forehead with a diamond bullet") the brilliance of the action. Superficially the act seems insane (as does Kurtz in describing it - the incomparable Brando articulates with the largest measure of dramatic intensity, his eyes fixed in inspiration, his voice low and thrumming).

However, consider the Viet Cong objective: to win the war by destroying the enemy. What is a pile of small arms in comparison with destroying U.S. morale, holding true to an ideological position, refusing to co-operate with an enemy force in *any* way? As Kurtz explains, these people have used horror as a tool. They have told a blinding truth with it. As you might destroy a favorite painting rather than let an invading power have it, the Viet Cong were able to maim children in order to score a vibrant point. Kurtz goes on to say, "If you do not make horror your friend, it will become your enemy." He speaks to all of us who allow our fears to make our actions incomplete, dishonest, fruitless. What you do, *do!* Do not vaccinate a people you are committed to destroy, do not patch machine gun wounds with bandaids. Kurtz denies compromise to an extent that would frighten most of us. It would not frighten John Galt or Ragnar Danneberg.

But there is indeed a fly in the Kurtz ointment. With the degree of conquering fear that he is able to command, why does it so quickly become obvious to Willard after he arrives at

(continued on page 7)

HEART OF REALITY (*from page 6*)

Kurtz' camp that Kurtz is waiting for the right executioner and is hoping that Willard will prove worthy of the task? Why should a man who has nothing to fear choose to die? What is Kurtz' great flaw that prohibits his fulfilling his life?

The answer to this question is never crystallized. The movie becomes too big for the troubled Coppola. Those of you who have followed his colossal problems in producing this movie will be aware of the anguish Coppola went through in the construction of the ending. (In its first showing at Cannes, Coppola offered the assemblage two alternate endings, appealing to them for help in resolving his dilemma.) The ending gradually moves into a completely surrealistic environment where Coppola no longer attempts to deal literally with the issues he has introduced.

The chosen ending? A mentally exhausted Willard has been the pupil of Kurtz, and in consenting to slay him, becomes the teacher. He leaves the body of Kurtz to walk toward the usual throng of Kurtz followers, lays down his own weapon, and walks unharmed through these worshippers as they too lay down arms. He climbs into his boat, presumably to return to civilization, having resolved nothing except that he will not be returning to life in the army.

But Willard has taken an action that suggests that he may have intuitively resolved the great contradiction in Kurt Kurtz. Kurtz has trained himself for this war with acute foresight. Ironically, considering that the military establishment wants him destroyed so badly, he fights it brilliantly. He terrifies the enemy, improves his position, enjoys the worship of his men. But he accepts without question the premises of the very men for whom he has the least respect, the reality-denying bureaucrats - and it is this burning contradiction that inevitably destroys him.

Willard, on the other hand, cannot accept the war. As he learns to accept the horror, as he learns the lesson of

the lies, he is led inexorably to a dismissal of the premise that war is a proper context for worthwhile living. Thus Willard appears to be on the verge of resolving the contradiction.

Coppola, however, is never in complete command of this concept, and thus evolves what is basically a negative movie. It shows us the core of the great life force - what Ayn Rand calls objectivism, the ability to live without fear or guilt - but permits a contradiction that allows pain. Coppola can show us the ingredients of a good life, but cannot show us how to incorporate the motivating force of happiness.

In contrast, recall the final scene in Ken Kesey's classic "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest". Chief Brompton seizes the washroom sink, pulls it from the floor by its very roots, propels it through the meshed window, and bolts to freedom. Kesey leaves us optimistic in the face of the enormous tragedy that has happened just before; we know that the Chief is on a constructive, positive road that will lead to contentment. Coppola, on the other hand, has no real grasp of this potential in man's nature.

No, "Apocalypse Now" is not a complete movie. But it is so brave in its scope that even if some of its elusive truths have almost escaped its producers, we can perhaps overlook some thematic unevenness. Coppola serves up a rare feast of intensely calculated sensual and intellectual stimulation. "Apocalypse Now" throws a gauntlet in the face of every arty, contrived, ineffectual box office hit of the decade. Let the 80's see a valid response to this challenge.

"I once voted at a Presidential election. There being no real issue at stake, and neither candidate commanding any respect whatever, I cast my vote for Jefferson Davis, of Mississippi. I knew Jeff was dead, but I voted on Artemus Ward's principle that if we can't have a live man who amounts to anything, by all means, let's have a first-class corpse."

-Albert Jay Nock

NON-ELECTIVE POLITICS (*from page 1*)

Can these tactics be effectively used in provincial or federal politics? Clearly they have been successful in California and other states of the union. But in a country like Canada, where politicians pay lip service to participatory democracy but eschew the idea of integrating referendum initiatives into the system, it is obviously much more difficult.

Nevertheless, politicians here, as everywhere, are sensitive to the interests of large voter blocks. Labour unions have used this sensitivity to great advantage for many years. If HALT can mobilize the disgruntled taxpayer into an effective voice, the politicians will listen.

After the May election, many people approached by HALT said, "Let's wait and see what the Tories can do."

On December 11, Finance Minister John Crosbie brought in the first Tory budget, a budget that is surely a slap in the face to all the idle dreamers who thought the Tories would be an improvement on the Liberals.

Crosbie raised taxes drastically and offered a worse than token spending cut. There is no attempt to trim the fat of a gluttonous government, merely a feeble attempt to hold government *growth* (sic) to slightly under the rate of inflation. A budget deficit of over \$10 billion is forecast. This is austerity?

The time for open tax revolt is now. The Crosbie budget was the final straw that broke the camel's back.

The Crosbie budget is a blessing in disguise for libertarians. It will further enhance the already abundant skepticism about government and the political process. The time is ripe for a swing towards non-elective politics. And HALT is in the vanguard of that movement.

-Marco den Ouden

to all our readers:
A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND A PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR!

NON-CONFIDENCE IN GOVERNMENT

On December 13, an NDP sponsored non-confidence motion was passed in the House of Commons and Canadians now face another federal election. But what this country needs is a vote of non-confidence in government per se. The debacle of six months of Conservative government has shown, with resounding clarity, that there is no real difference between the profligate Liberals and cowardly two-faced Conservatives.

Let's just compare two significant examples. In an election several years ago, the Liberals promised not to impose wage and price controls. After being re-elected, controls were imposed. In the election last May, the Tories promised tax cuts and spending cuts. Once elected they sang a different tune, higher taxes and the largest deficit in Canada's history. Two-faced dishonesty is inherent in the nature of politics. The man who said there is no such thing as an honest politician was right. Instead there are just degrees of dishonesty.

And the dishonesty of the New Democratic Party, which condemns a company for "excessive profits" when that same company could make greater profits by investing all its assets in Canada Savings Bonds, does not need discussion.

Is there much hope for change through the political process? Would a vote for the Libertarian Party be a worthwhile effort? Much as I sympathize with the LP, my disgust with politics has reached the point where I cannot vote for any Party that takes the electoral process seriously and treats it as legitimate. I will urge all my friends and acquaintances to spoil their ballots or vote for a party that is obviously mocking the electoral process, such as the Rhinoceros Party.

What concerned Canadians must do is not to opt for a headache over an upset stomach, but to condemn disease as such. It is not a question of rejecting the Tories or the Grits or the NDP. It is a question of rejecting the legitimacy of government, period. -MdO