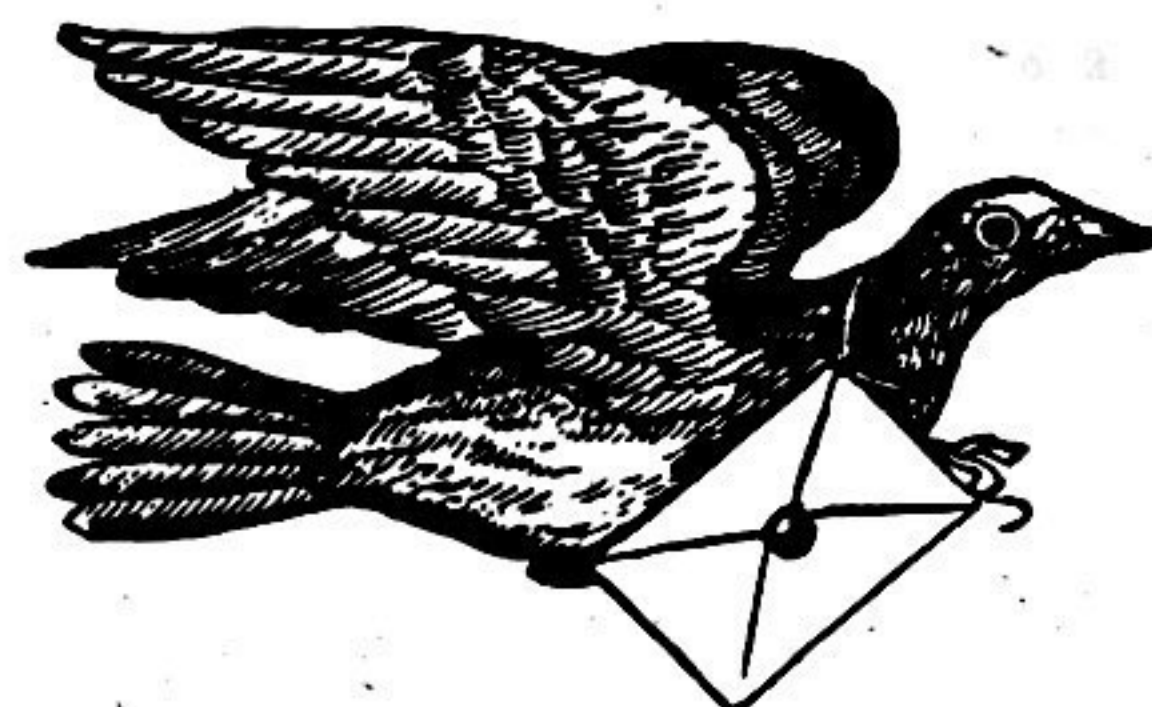


Has The Libertarian Movement Gone Kooky?

A SPIRITED EXCHANGE



I. Alan Reynolds

The criticisms of libertarians by Ernest van den Haag and Lawrence V. Cott [June 8] rest on extremely restrictive conceptions of both libertarian and conservative views, definitions that preclude diversity. Professor van den Haag somehow defines the elimination of "half the present government activities" as conservative, and elimination of all government as libertarian. Since no shadings are admitted to exist between these positions, it follows by definition that there must be "unbridgeable chasms" between them; van den Haag literally has no word at all to describe those who favor a very small, strictly limited government. In reality, of course, opinions are not sharply discontinuous but spread in varying degrees along many dimensions.

Both van den Haag and Cott define libertarian as synonymous with the Cato Institute; Cato is defined as synonymous with *Inquiry* magazine; and all libertarians are held responsible for every word written by Murray Rothbard. None of this is remotely accurate, much less fair.

Murray Rothbard and the editors of *Inquiry* (Bill Evers) and *Libertarian Review* (Roy Childs) are leaders of the Libertarian Party Radical Caucus—a splinter group that seeks to push the party toward a non-interventionist foreign policy. The Libertarian Party itself has always attracted the most activist of libertarians, yet this "radical caucus" can claim to have generated some interest among only 10 per cent of the California branch of the party. What *NR* chooses to label the libertarian movement is in reality only an avowedly radical faction within an activist wing.

Mr. Cott is quite right that many (probably most) libertarians acknowledge "a need for some national defense, some police agency, and a court system." And since that is true, van den Haag must be wrong in claiming that "all libertarians believe that crime is . . . not an act that organized society must punish . . ." Some libertarians may believe that, but others do not.

Both van den Haag and Cott observe that many of those who write for *Inquiry* are "no more libertarian than those in *The New Republic*." Yet they fail to draw the obvious conclusion, which is that *Inquiry* is not a libertarian journal and is therefore irrelevant to a critique of libertarians. Nobody has ever claimed that *Inquiry* is libertarian—not Rothbard, not the journal itself.

In fairness, Cato does more than publish *Inquiry*, despite Mr. Cott's curious failure to report anything else. Cato publishes a fine newsletter on economic policy, *Policy Review*, and subsidizes *Libertarian Review* (which follows the Rothbard line, but contains some good material). Cato also finances seminars, speakers, radio debates, and research (e.g., F. A. Hayek's).

Remarkably, *Reason* magazine gets only two parenthetical shrugs in van den Haag's critique. Yet this little Santa Barbara journal has survived for a decade, mainly on dedication and merit (not massive subsidies), and has a circulation of around twenty thousand. *Reason* probably has the fairest claim to representing the mainstream of libertarian thought, having survived the test of a tough market.

Since Mr. Cott provided a list of writers who appear in *Inquiry*, here are

a few of the "kooks, neurotics, and perverts" (to use van den Haag's phrase) who have appeared in *Reason*: Milton Friedman, Robert Nozick, Bill Rickenbacker, William Niskanen, Edith Efron, Sidney Hook, Paul Craig Roberts, Jim Davidson, David Brudnoy, W. Phillip Gramm, Henry Manne, Petr Beckmann, and Ronald Reagan. A really dangerous bunch.

There is very little in van den Haag's critique that had not already been handled more expertly within the libertarian literature itself. *Reason*, for instance, has published such self-examination as "Wishful Thinking Is No Defense," by R. J. Rummel, "Those 'Natural' Rights Aren't," by John Goodson and David M. Longinotti, and "Must We Abolish the State?" by Arthur Shenfield. Robert Nozick's *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* covers much of this same ground from a libertarian perspective.

VAN DEN HAAG claims that "Libertarians lack either the willingness, or the ability, to make crucial distinctions with respect to Communism." Not true of Rothbard; even less true of others (*Reason's* Tibor Machan, for example). In *Libertarian Review* this February, Rothbard deplored the way Stalin "brutally collectivized" the Soviet economy and reigned by "political terror." He also described the "Cambodian monstrosity" as "the most monstrous, bizarre, and evil State in many centuries." From a man who hates *all* states, those aren't soft words. Although Communist states do differ substantially in practice, their driving vision is clearly the precise antithesis of libertarian.

"The main issue," says Mr. van den

Haag, is "shall we all submit to law—and punish those who don't . . . ?" Yet even the anarchist wing among libertarians is scarcely opposed to law and punishment. They would rely particularly heavily on common law—tradition—as opposed to the unpredictable whims of a current legislature. Liability law, enforced by arbitration agencies of the sort that already exist, would play an important role. Compensation for victims would be stressed rather than punishment *per se*. Whether this is practical or not, it certainly need not offend conservative tradition. "If I were to describe slavery," wrote Burke, "I would say . . . it is living under will, not under law."

Professor van den Haag surely does not speak for all conservatives when he equates law, tradition, and society with state coercion. He says that "libertarianism is opposed to . . . tradition itself." But this turns out to mean that it opposes "bonds and norms . . . enforced by the traditional social institutions." And the enforcer here is clearly the police power of the state. All voluntary social arrangements (family, church, neighborhood) are dismissed out of hand as merely "a private sphere." Such voluntary private arrangements, van den Haag implies, would not provide people with that "minimal human solidarity which restrains them from eating each other." Yet, as Burke taught, most social discipline does not derive from state coercion. Statesmen, said Burke, "ought to know the different departments of things; what belongs to laws and what manners alone can regulate."

IN THE LIBERTARIAN vision, van den Haag complains, "society is denied the ability to impose . . . social norms and bonds." No; the state is denied the ability to impose its norms by force, whether in the name of society or anything else. As the late Frank Meyer wrote, "If freedom is indeed the essence of man's being, that which distinguishes him from the beasts, he must be free to choose his worst as well as his best end."

Van den Haag seems anxious to adopt F. A. Hayek as a conservative, even though Hayek's *Denationalization of Money* contradicts van den Haag's restrictive definition ("conservatives be-

lieve in . . . central banking, legal tender"). In any case, it is difficult to reconcile Hayek's *Law, Legislation, and Liberty* with van den Haag's Hobbesian definition of law as "any particular coercion (law) of the state." If law is simply "the product of the will of the legislator," says Hayek, then "justice can in no sense be a determinant of what in fact is law but . . . it is rather the law that determines what is just."

It is unreasonable to fault libertarians for not being conservatives. There is a difference, but there is also considerable common ground. If van den Haag is serious about returning half of what government does to the realm of voluntary market choice, he will need a lot of help. A bunch of enthusiastic young libertarians might provide the necessary extra push. After we get rid of half the state, that will be an appropriate time to argue about what to do with the other half.

MURRAY ROTHBARD has written that "we believe in allying ourselves with whoever has a libertarian position on issues important to us." That certainly should include conservatives on most economic issues. Since any country is easier to push around if its economy is strangled by taxes and regulations, the economic issues should be important to defense hawks too. But divisive bickering between conservatives and libertarians is of no use to anyone but the tax collectors.

As for the libertarians, their pursuit of purity can be an obstacle to accomplishing anything. William Simon's influential book is sufficiently libertarian to get him categorized to my right in *Esquire's* listing of "neo-conservatives." Yet Roy Childs faults Simon for not stressing the abolition of victimless-crime laws: "I think it must be demanded of such a person," writes Childs, "as proof of his sincerity."

Nearly a decade ago, William Buckley wrote that "NATIONAL REVIEW will never define to everyone's satisfaction what are the tolerable limits of the state's activity, and we never expected to do so. . . . The freeway remains large enough to accommodate very different players with highly different prejudices and techniques." Despite the unsuccessful efforts of Messrs. van den Haag and Cott to narrow the freeway,

it still remains wide enough to accommodate many gradations of preference between the traditionalist and libertarian perspectives.

II. Henry Hazlitt

Ernest van den Haag has done a brilliant and devastating job of exposing the contradictions and absurdities of the New Anarchism. But I must list a few serious reservations:

1. He calls the group he attacks "libertarians," and their doctrine "libertarianism." It is true that these are the names they have themselves appropriated. But the true designations are "anarchists" and "anarchism."

Years ago, I used to think of myself as a liberal. I concurred in the social philosophy of such nineteenth century liberals as Gladstone and Mill, Tocqueville and Acton. That name was stolen sometime in the Twenties by statist, socialists, and other leftists. So we Old Liberals had to call ourselves libertarians, long-tailed as that word is. Are we going to allow that also to be stolen from us?

2. Van den Haag identifies himself as a conservative. But I wonder whether he does not do an injustice to the conservative philosophy when he says that it decides the merits of government intervention not on the basis of principle but on a "case by case" basis. That is pragmatism, not conservatism. Conservatives believe in the rule of law; and the principles of law apply to all cases without exception. Van den Haag also contends, for example, that conservatives believe in "central banking" and "legal tender." But an increasing number are beginning to recognize that both of these are instruments of inflation.

3. Van den Haag, after detailing Murray Rothbard's political aberrations, disparages his achievements as an economist. This is natural, but not justified. In my review of Rothbard's *Man, Economy, and State* in the September 25, 1962 issue of NATIONAL REVIEW, I hailed it as the finest contribution to economics since Ludwig von Mises' *Human Action*. I have since found no reason to change that opinion. But in that review I also remarked on the flakiness of some of Rothbard's political and moral pronouncements. These have since become even more astonishing. I have long given up trying to explain or reconcile the two Rothbards.

4. My most serious reservation concerns van den Haag's effort to defame the whole Austrian School by referring to it in a footnote as "the Austrian *disease*" (my italics). The Austrian School, in fact, achieved the greatest advance in economic analysis since the foundation work of the classicists, Hume, Adam Smith, and Ricardo. In economics van den Haag appears to be completely at sea; he has neither read enough nor thought enough about the subject; and his confused remarks about its proper methodology do not call for serious refutation. Nor is contemporary "Austrian" economics—as represented in the work of such figures as, say, Ludwig von Mises, F. A. Hayek, Israel Kirzner, and Ludwig M. Lachmann—in any sense a "degeneration" from the work of the founders, Menger and Boehm-Bawerk. It has, on the contrary, been applying the Austrian tools of analysis to achieve an ever-greater precision and understanding.

But—to conclude—once more my gratitude to Ernest van den Haag for his net contribution.

III. David Friedman

Ernest van den Haag to the contrary, I am not a utilitarian and I do believe in natural rights. Not only am I cleverer than most libertarians, I am too clever to hold a philosophical position that van den Haag can summarize in one word.

As to the rest of "Libertarians & Conservatives," van den Haag starts by saying that libertarianism has attracted some good minds and bears serious examination; he then gives a summary of libertarianism that consists almost exclusively of Murray Rothbard's views. Many libertarians—perhaps a majority—are not anarchists (Robert Nozick is a particularly distinguished example), and those of us who are anarchists do not always agree with Rothbard.

Discussing van den Haag's arguments in detail would require a book, not a letter. I happen to have written one; it is called *The Machinery of Freedom* and is available from Arlington House. Those interested in some empirical evidence on how a system of private law would work might also be interested in my article "Private Creation and Enforcement of Law: A Historical Case" in the March issue of the *Journal of Legal Studies*.

IV. Richard Brookhiser

Conservatives pride themselves on their ability to make what someone has called "relevant distinctions," so it surprised me that Professor van den Haag, in an otherwise devastating piece, failed to make a rather important one—that libertarianism and Rothbardism are not the same thing. Many libertarians still happily accept the conservative label (and vice versa), and many of the libertarians who do not, reject the Cato Institute's crotchets. If Professor van den Haag had written a piece on the Berrigans, would he have entitled it "Catholics & Conservatives"?

V. Roger L. MacBride Publisher, *The Mercury*

It is unfortunate, but perfectly understandable, that Ernest van den Haag and Lawrence V. Cott regard the Cato Institute and its personnel as the very embodiment of the libertarian movement. After all, it appears that those folks certainly think they are.

But that's far from the case. I can assure you, based upon wide acquaintance, that not merely a majority but a sizable majority of libertarians do not accept many of the extreme positions Mr. van den Haag cites Rothbard and others as advocating. While doubtless we do differ from conservatives in some areas of foreign policy and civil liberties, we're no more willing to pull the world down on our heads, Samson-like, than any other responsible American. And that fact is consistently made clear by the writings and speakings of those in the movement not associated with the Cato group. For example, *Reason* magazine is by far the largest-circulation magazine intended for liber-

tarian readers. It consistently reflects, as its name suggests and Mr. van den Haag appears to concede, a rational point of view.

For the record, I'd like it to be clear that I resigned from its Board of Directors immediately after the Koch Foundation set itself up in San Francisco as the Cato Institute in January 1977.

VI. Mike Lavelle

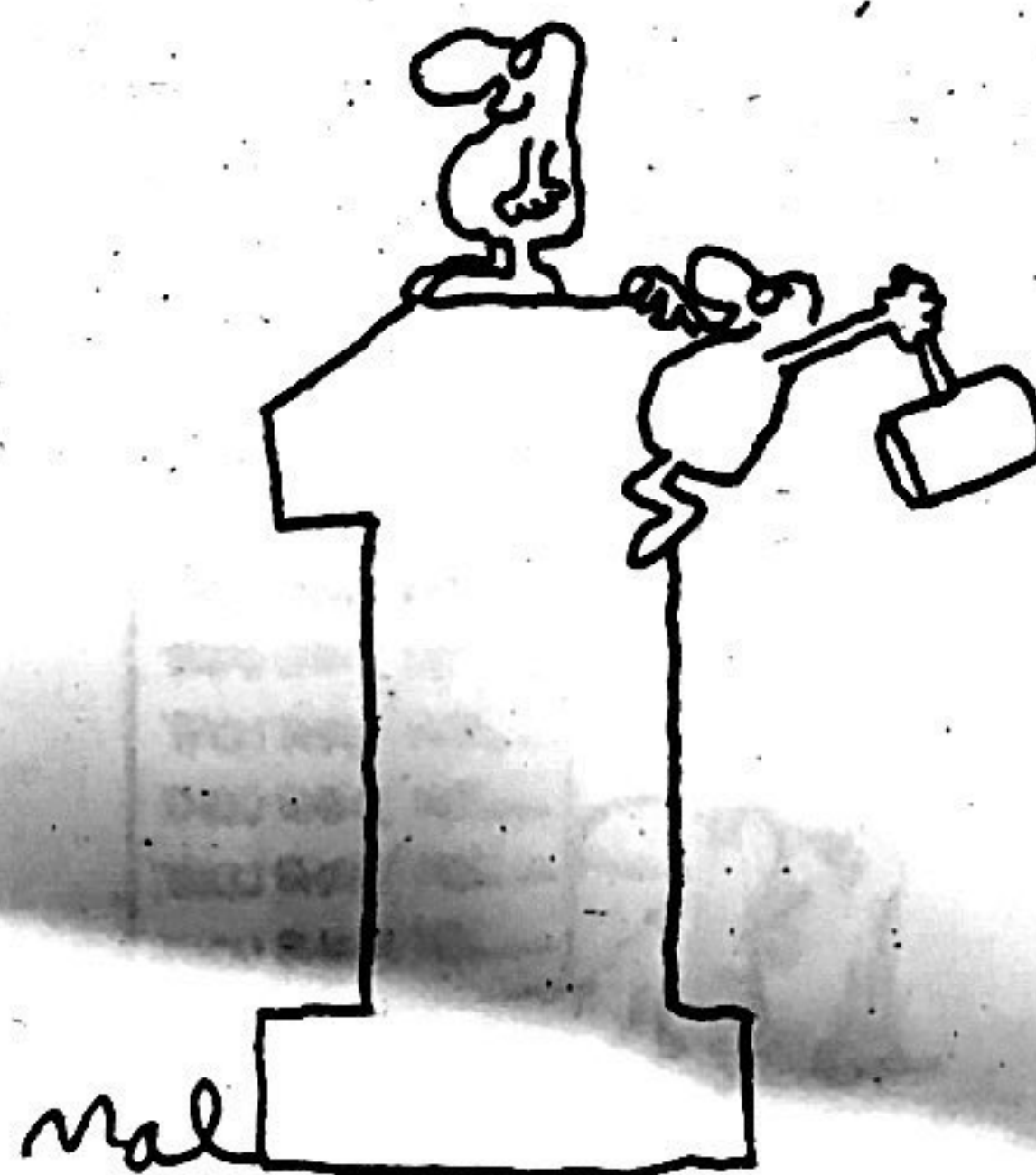
Ernest van den Haag gives the libertarians too much credit by ascribing either sense or nonsense to their string of childish rantings. I suspect that the libertarians believe *nothing* consistent or concrete. They stand on shifting sand because that's where all the fun is. They eschew any reasonable amount of responsibility because that would force them into a coherence that they are not capable of. I would recommend to libertarians that they read *The Revolution of Nihilism*, by Hermann Rauschning (Alliance Books, 1939), for an understanding of the part that anarchy plays as midwife to totalitarianism. Ernest van den Haag should have surrendered entirely to his "temptation to be flippant," because that is about all the libertarians are worth.

VII. Robert Poole Jr. Editor, *Reason*

The articles by Professor van den Haag and Mr. Cott gave a very distorted view of today's libertarian movement. By focusing almost exclusively on the views of Murray Rothbard and quoting only from the two San Francisco-based magazines with which he is affiliated, NR managed to portray libertarians *per se* as anarchists, as isolationists, and generally as utopians.

In fact, the libertarian movement is far from the monolithic unity portrayed in these articles. The most widely read libertarian magazine, *Reason* (scarcely acknowledged in either article), has much more accurately reflected the diversity of libertarian views during the past 11 years. And in fact, anarchism and isolationism constitute minority points of view within the movement.

Recent surveys of the members of both the California Libertarian Party and the Society for Individual Liberty bear this out. In the CLP, 42 per cent urged a strong national defense against possible foreign aggression and another 43 per cent supported at least enough



defense to protect America against any enemy; only 6 per cent favored "individual" or "no" defense.

In both groups the most influential or most-read author was Ayn Rand—76 per cent in the CLP and 70 per cent in the SIL—while Rothbard's writing was influential to only 4 per cent in either group. *Reason* was the favorite magazine in both groups, read by 62 per cent in the CLP and 85 per cent in the SIL (as against 42 per cent and 45 per cent, respectively, for *Inquiry*).

It is true that the amount of money expended by the folks at the Cato Institute exceeds the spending of the many other libertarian organizations: the Reason Foundation, SIL, Institute for Humane Studies, World Research, Inc., Foundation for Economic Education, etc. It is also true that Rothbard's book proclaims itself "the libertarian manifesto." But saying it is so does not make it so. While Rothbard's views are challenging and provocative, they have not been accepted by a majority of libertarians. Readers desiring an accurate view of libertarianism—both its ideas and its institutions—will have to delve far beyond the articles of van den Haag and Cott.

VIII. Edward H. Crane III President, Cato Institute

I found Ernest van den Haag's alleged analysis of libertarianism to be blatantly dishonest. With hardly a reference to such important libertarian thinkers as F. A. Hayek, Robert Nozick, John Hospers, Eric Mack, Milton Friedman, or Tibor Machan, Mr. van den Haag proceeds to offer a biased, selective, and distorted view of Murray N. Rothbard's writing as representing the entire corpus of libertarian theory. The libertarian intellectual and political movement is much broader and much stronger than van den Haag would have *NR*'s readers believe. For those who would like to know what Rothbard *really* believes, I recommend his brilliant defense of free enterprise and the free society in *For a New Liberty* (Macmillan, 1978).

Equally perplexing was Larry Cott's report on the Cato Institute—based on a twenty-minute conversation with me that ended when he started lecturing me on the tragedy of the U.S.'s not bombing North Vietnam back into the Dark Ages. Factual errors and distortions so permeate the article that they would

have done ol' Joe McCarthy—undoubtedly one of Cott's heroes—proud.

Allow me to set the record straight on one of his more glaring errors. It is not and never has been the policy of the Cato Institute to advocate "the abolition of the Army, Navy, and Air Force." Mr. Cott and *NR* have acted in a seriously irresponsible manner in printing such a falsehood.

We do have under way what I believe will be an important study on the military, political, and economic implications of a non-interventionist foreign policy—the foreign policy, incidentally, of the Old Right. Such important individualists and defenders of free enterprise as Albert Jay Nock, Frank Chodorov, Felix Morley, Robert Taft, and Leonard Read have recognized the dangers of an interventionist foreign policy and a bloated military establishment.

Libertarianism is the antithesis of Communism—in theory and practice. Those conservatives who are really interested in defending limited government and free enterprise from foreign totalitarianism must eventually come to grips with the reality of the world situation. U.S. attempts to control the internal affairs of other nations have only created enemies and facilitated the spread of Communism. Our military presence throughout the world arguably *decreases* our security by increasing the likelihood of our becoming involved in local conflicts that might escalate into thermonuclear war. Our \$130-billion defense budget (most of which actually goes to defend other nations perfectly capable of defending themselves) is stifling our domestic economy.

The Cato Institute's devotion to liberty motivates it to support such pronouncements as these: "The CIA should

simply be abolished" (*Inquiry* magazine, July 10, 1978); "... recent Soviet activity in Africa has been largely a response to Western actions ..." (*Inquiry*, June 26, 1978); "... [American] policymakers ... were responsible for wars in Korea and Indochina, the acceleration of the arms race, the waste of hundreds of billions of dollars" (*Inquiry*, May 15, 1978). Mr. Crane does libertarians like Hayek and Nock a grave disservice by associating them with the Cato Institute's strategic naïveté.

—ED.

IX. Charles G. Koch Founder, Cato Institute

As a long-time supporter of the limited government, private property, free enterprise system, I was dismayed to read in the June 8 *NATIONAL REVIEW* that my support was dangerous to liberty. The attack becomes understandable only with the realization that the authors of the two distorted, erroneous articles are not, themselves, advocates of the free enterprise system.

Mr. Koch's letter suggests 1) that Mr. Koch has not been reading Inquiry magazine lately, and 2) that he has not been reading NATIONAL REVIEW. Mr. Koch's tu quoque wobbles feebly next to the cumulative evidence amassed by Larry Cott and Ernest van den Haag.

—ED.

X. Tibor R. Machan Senior Editor, Reason

I've known for months that *NR* was planning some pieces on libertarianism and have tried to supply Dr. van den Haag with some samples of work outside the Cato circle. Yet the *NR* pieces took scant note of anything other than Rothbard et al. Where are Hospers, Nozick, Mack, MacBride, Branden, and many others who have done more profound and in-depth work on libertarian thought than virtually anyone at Cato? You seem to suffer the general disease of the media—those who make the most noise are reality (e.g., anti-nuclear demonstrators and the Cato crowd), while the folks working for long-range impact and with minimum fanfare don't even exist (e.g., the millions who want nuclear energy but cannot afford to parade around, and the hundreds of careful, non-hysterical libertarians not marketed by the Cato group). Too bad



—I had hoped for a bit better from Ernest, really.

XI. Israel M. Kirzner

As a reasonably conservative disciple of the free-market teachings of Mises and Hayek, I wish to react—with dismay—to the intemperate articles on the libertarian-conservative question.

Dr. van den Haag's article makes only passing reference to Mises and Hayek (and allots only a contemptuous footnote to Austrian economics). Since the current gratifying vitality of both libertarian and conservative thought owes so much to these intellectual giants, it may be useful to clarify matters. To do so may, moreover, be helpful to puzzled readers who recall a time not so long ago when Mises and Hayek (and Austrian economics) were among *NR*'s heroes, rather than apparent candidates for its enemies list.

AS DR. VAN DEN HAAG correctly points out, Mises was, emphatically, no anarchist. Mises would have been deeply disturbed (as I am) by some of the more extreme libertarian views on the state and on foreign policy. However, Mises' system of positive Austrian economic thought led him to espouse a policy of thorough-going laissez-faire. Some conservatives, such as van den Haag, endorse Mises reluctantly and half-heartedly (describing Austrian economics as having "degenerated" from Menger and Boehm-Bawerk). Libertarians, on the other hand, have followed Mises' economics consistently. (One group which has maintained a consistent Misesian policy position, without sharing the non-Misesian views your authors attack, is Leonard Read's staunchly free-market Foundation for Economic Education.)

It would be deeply regrettable if the attacks on libertarian thought were to permit your readers to lose sight of the intellectual debt conservative followers of Mises and Hayek owe to Murray Rothbard for his role in spreading those profound Austrian insights, which modern economies so desperately need. Conservative lovers of freedom may surely disagree sharply with libertarians on many of the issues raised by your authors, without feeling it necessary to barter a principled, Mises-Austrian understanding of the free market for

the fuzzy "mixed-economy" economics suggested by Dr. van den Haag.

XII. John Hospers

Though it was gratifying to see so much space devoted to the libertarian movement, I would scarcely be able to recognize it from the description in your articles. Yet I have been associated with it almost from the beginning, both as author of the first comprehensive book on it (*Libertarianism*, 1971) and as the Libertarian Party's first candidate for U.S. President (1972).

The biggest mistake in Professor van den Haag's article was to identify libertarianism with anarchism. The majority of libertarians believe, as I do, in limited government, along the lines of Jefferson and Madison. We consider the revolution of 1776 to have been a libertarian revolution (one directed against government tyranny), and believe that the American Republic that began in 1789 is a worthy model for imitation today.

Limited-government libertarians differ from anarchist libertarians, not in that we insist on having tax-supported municipal police forces rather than privately hired ones (private competing organizations almost always do the job better), but in that we believe there must be one *lawmaking* body within a geographical area (a nation) whose main function is to keep the peace and arbitrate disputes. The difference lies not in the enforcement but in *what* they may legitimately enforce.

The foreign policy you describe is

HAPPINESS
IS SATISFACTION
& SATISFACTION
IS HAPPINESS!



that of a minority of libertarians who may indeed dominate the Cato Institute but not the libertarian movement. Most of us, while opposed to international meddling, are 1) committed to a national defense sufficient to ward off all aggression, and 2) quite aware of the threat posed by the Soviet Union, or for that matter by an alliance with Communist China.

Professor van den Haag refers to Barnett and Hagel's anthology *Assessing the Criminal*. Had he examined it more carefully, he would have seen—in my own essay, for example—that most libertarians do not look upon restitution as the main function of punishment, but *justice*: that is why I hold a retributive theory, as does Rothbard himself. But Professor van den Haag's misapprehension of the views held by the main body of libertarians is so grotesque that it would take an entire volume to refute it point by point.

Ernest van den Haag Replies

The letters that precede do not charge that I misrepresented the main views attributed to the libertarians I quoted; nor do the writers address, let alone refute, my analysis of these views. It seems fair to conclude that my correspondents found the views I criticized correctly described—and indefensible. However, my correspondents complain that they do not share these libertarian views. Indeed, the views quoted are only the views of those quoted. Do they misrepresent libertarianism? Did I give undue weight to the ideas of Murray Rothbard and to the policies of the Cato Institute, as charged by Messrs. Reynolds, Brookhiser, MacBride, Poole, Friedman, Machan, and Hospers?

I should be more easily persuaded of the misperception charged had I not received in today's mail an official invitation to the "1979 Libertarian Presidential Nomination Convention" (L.A., of course). The speakers include John Hospers, Roger MacBride, and other innocents, as well as Morton Halperin, Earl Ravenal, and Alan Baron ("the politically astute" former "advisor to Senator George McGovern and Executive Director of the Democratic National Committee"). My correspondents questioned the representativeness of *The Libertarian Review*, from which I quoted extensively. Its editor, Roy A. (Continues on page 986)

(Continued from page 984)

LINDA BRIDGES

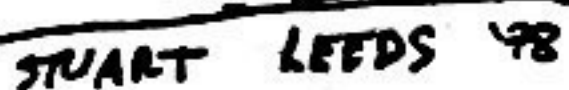
miraculous identification with his eccentric, tormented subject, and through the most profound and gracefully deployed scholarship—lovable. There is no way in a review of this length to show how the author has accomplished so much. But every reader curious to know how one of the great triumphs of the human intellect emerged from a psyche so damaged, and in an age so devoted to frivolity and superstition, is urged to read this book.

SELDEN RODMAN

MAUREEN BODO

(Continued from page 973)

Hazlitt is right when he says that "central banking can be used as an instrument of inflation." Wine can be used to get drunk; but it needn't be so used. And inflation can occur without central banking. Unlike Hazlitt, I don't think that Rothbard's *Man, Economy, and State* is the "finest contribution to



omics since . . . *Human Action*." ingenious, but uneven and often silly. Even Hazlitt sometimes nods.

ALAN REYNOLDS uncharacteristically offers prolix contentiousness and little content. He strings together irrelevant quotations and seems vastly out of his depth. His view that "Reason has probably the fairest claim to representing the mainstream of libertarian thought" is wishful thinking. But he is right in suspecting that I do not share Hayek's definition of law. Why is this relevant to my point, which was that libertarians reject law, whether in Hayek's or my definition? I do not "equate" "law, tradition, and society with state coercion"—only law requires coercion (but "equate"?). I did not accuse Rothbard, let alone Machan, of Communism. I charged Rothbard—emphatically not Machan—with favoring an unsavory alliance, and with imitating Communist tactics. The evidence I presented is not rebutted by refuting charges I did not make. There is no point in responding to so much pointless confusion.

DAVID FRIEDMAN'S belief in natural rights surprised me. (Sorry.) His commendation of his *Machinery of Freedom* is less surprising. But it is the cleverest presentation of a silly thesis, and I recommend it too. I do not think David's article on Icelandic history, its historiographic merit aside, shows anything relevant to libertarianism. History can be interpreted in many ways.

WHY PROFESSOR KIRZNER thinks that I "endorse Mises reluctantly and half-heartedly" beats me, since I did not endorse (or disendorse) Mises at all. And why Kirzner accuses me of "fuzzy, 'mixed economy' economics" only he knows. Why does he quote me as writing something I never wrote (or could have written)? Misinterpretation is one thing. Misquotation is another. I hope "Austrian economics" does not always imply the deficient reading comprehension displayed in Kirzner's letter.

I am sorry about my Austrian footnote, which is not really germane to my topic. (The editors of *NR*, who counseled dropping it, were right—I was unduly stubborn.) However, economics is as much a positive science as is physics, and no more "Austrian" than physics is "Jewish." I have learned much from Austrians, such as Menger and Boehm-Bawerk, or, for that matter,

Hayek and Schumpeter. I learned no less from Walras or Marshall, without believing in "Swiss" or "English" economics, and from Friedman père without favoring "American" economics. Economics is a contemporary science—not a series of historical "schools."

IF LIBERTARIANISM involves no more than Jefferson and Madison, as John Hospers believes, then Rothbard is no libertarian, and I am. Hospers should explain that to him, not to me. I wrote that some libertarians wish to replace punishment with restitution, but I made it quite clear that many, including Rothbard, believe in private retribution. I did not here criticize Hospers' view (which I do not share), having already done so elsewhere (*American Political Science Review*, March 1979, p. 198) and having no wish to repeat myself. This goes as well for Nozick's *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (which I reviewed in *NR*, July 4, 1975), trotted out by nearly everybody.

I am disappointed by the evasiveness of the letters. None seriously tried to defend the views I criticized—or, for that matter, any specifically libertarian views. Saying "you don't believe in the free market," or "I don't agree with Rothbard," scarcely constitutes a defense of libertarianism. None was offered. □

MOYNIHAN

(Continued from page 966)

If, then, the matter is not resolved beforehand, I would suggest that in 1980 it ought not to be enough for candidates simply to indicate a warm disposition toward a popular cause. Candidates who wish to be understood as favoring some form of aid should be expected to say just what form they intend, and then to say that they will press the matter through Congress in order that it may be tested in the Supreme Court. They should be asked to specify that they will not use the constitutional question as an excuse to avoid the question of public policy.

It seems to me that this is a reasonable expectation. It may be that when it is put in this manner no candidate will want to be associated with support for non-public schools. In which event, fair enough. It is an important issue, and very much an urban issue. (I hap-

(Continues on page 989)

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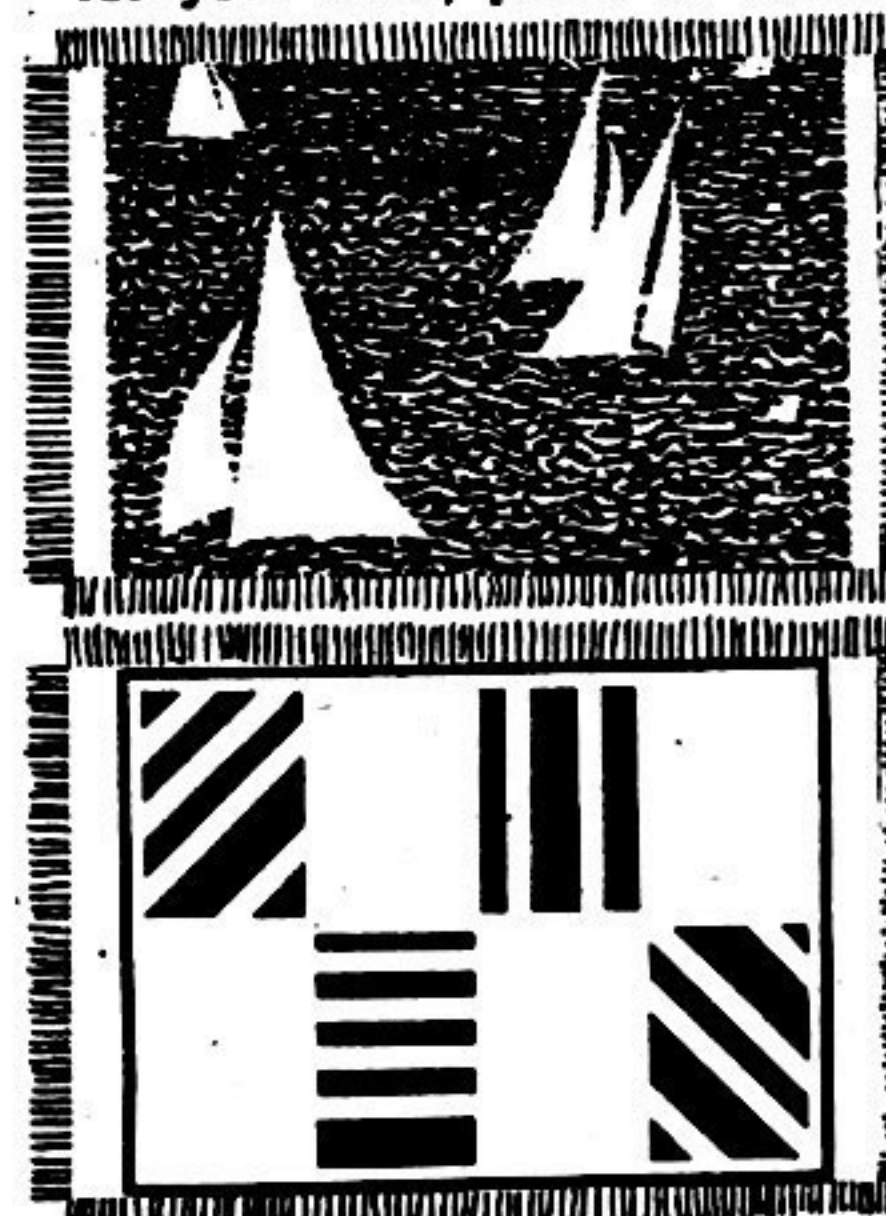
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