

A Monthly Newsletter

THE
Libertarian Forum

Joseph R. Peden, Publisher

Murray N. Rothbard, Editor

VOLUME V, NO. 11

NOVEMBER, 1973

US-ISSN0047-4517

Ludwig von Mises, RIP*

And he is gathered to the kings of thought
Who waged contention with their time's decay,
And of the past are all that cannot pass away.

— Shelley, *Adonais*

On October 10, Ludwig von Mises, well designated by the New York Times obituary as "one of the foremost economists of this century", died in New York City, shortly after his 92nd birthday.

For those of us who have loved as well as revered this great and noble man, words cannot express our sense of loss: of this gracious, brilliant, and wonderful man; this man of unblemished integrity; this courageous and lifelong fighter for human freedom; this all-encompassing scholar; this noble inspiration to us all. And above all, this gentle and charming friend, this man who brought to the rest of us the living embodiment of the culture and the charm of pre-World War I Vienna. For Mises' death takes away from us not only a deeply revered friend and mentor, but it tolls the bell for the end of an era: the last living mark of that more gracious, freer and far more civilized era of pre-1914 Europe.

Mises' friends and students will know instinctively what I mean: for when I think of Ludwig Mises I think first of all of those landmark occasions when I had the privilege of afternoon tea at the Mises': in a small apartment that virtually breathed the atmosphere of a long lost and far more civilized era. The graciousness of Mises' devoted wife Margit; the precious volumes that were the remains of a superb home library destroyed by the Nazis; but above all, Mises himself, spinning in his inimitable way anecdotes of Old Vienna, tales of scholars past and present, brilliant insights into economics, politics, and social theory, and astute comments on the current scene.

Readers of Mises' majestic, formidable and uncompromising works must have often been surprised to meet him in person. Perhaps they had formed the image of Ludwig Mises as cold, severe, austere, the logical scholar repelled by lesser mortals, bitter at the follies around him and at the long trail of wrongs and insults that he had suffered.

They couldn't have been more wrong; for what they met was a mind of genius harmoniously blended with a personality of great sweetness and benevolence. Not once has any of us heard a harsh or bitter word escape from Mises' lips. Unfailingly gentle and courteous, Ludwig Mises was always there to encourage even the slightest signs of productivity or intelligence in his friends and students; always there for warmth as well as for the mastery of logic and reason that his works have long proclaimed him.

And always there as an inspiration and as a constant star. For what a life this man lived! Until near the end Ludwig Mises led his life very much in the world, pouring forth a mighty stream of great and immortal works, a fountainhead of energy and productivity as he taught continually at a university until the age of 87, as he flew tirelessly around the world to give papers and lectures on behalf of the free market and of sound economic science — a mighty structure of coherence and logic to which

he contributed so much of his own creation.

I am strongly reminded of perhaps the finest obituary in the history of economic thought — Joseph Schumpeter's tribute to his and Mises' great mentor of the Austrian School, Eugen von Bohm-Bawerk. (J. A. Schumpeter, "Eugen von Bohm-Bawerk, 1851-1914," *Ten Great Economists*, Oxford University Press, 1951, pp. 143-90.) Much of Schumpeter's eulogy applies to Mises as well:

"And now this great master has left us. No one who has been close to him both personally and scientifically would be able to describe the feeling that lies heavy on all of us. No words can express what he has been to us, and few of us if any will have yet resigned ourselves to the realization that from now on there is to be an impenetrable wall separating us from him, from his advice, his encouragement, his critical guidance — and that the road ahead will have to be traversed without him

"He was not only a creative mind but also a fighter — and to his last moments a live, effective force in our science. His work belongs not to one generation, not to one nation, but to mankind

"The silhouette of the man is everywhere the same — in all the fields comprehended by the wide orbit of his life, the intensive beat of his pulse left its mark. In all these fields we are met by the same brilliant personality, the same large and strong features — the statue appears cast of one metal at one pouring, no matter from what point we view it

"And in politics and scientific work the same character proved its mettle: the same self-control and intensiveness, the same high standard of duty which impressed itself on subordinates as well as on disciples, the same ability to see through men and things without the cold detachment of the pessimist, to fight without bitterness, to deny himself without weakness — to hold to a plan of life at once simple and grand. Thus his life was a completed whole, the expression of a personality at one with itself, never losing itself, everywhere proving its superiority by its own weight and without affectation — a work of art, its severe lines gilded by an infinite, tender, reserved, and highly personal charm.

"Bohm-Bawerk's (Mises') scientific lifework forms a uniform whole. As in a good play each line furthers the plot, so with Bohm-Bawerk (Mises) every sentence is a cell in a living organism, written with a clearly outlined goal in mind. There is no waste of effort, no hesitation, no deviation, but a calm renunciation of secondary and merely momentary successes The full superiority of the man,

(Continued On Page 2)

Libertarian Party

The elections of 1973 have come and gone, and the major result from our point of view has been the establishment of the Libertarian Party, and the Free Libertarian Party of New York in particular, as the central organizational force in the libertarian movement. And not only that: the fledgling FLP has now become a force to reckon with in New York politics.

The FLP campaign of Fran Youngstein for mayor provided a central focus for libertarians throughout the country. Libertarians all across the nation, even those with grave philosophical qualms about political activity, poured contributions into the Youngstein campaign, and enabled Fran and the FLP to gain an enormous amount of publicity and favorable recognition, and even endorsements from TV, radio, the press, columnists, and the public at large. Fran received approximately 9,000 votes for Mayor, far more than any minor party has received in New York City in many years, and FLP's Gary Greenberg, as the only candidate running for District Attorney of Manhattan against the gravely ailing Frank Hogan, polled over 8,200 votes, approximately 4% of the total vote. Not only that: the FLP campaign has gained libertarianism a powerful recognition factor among New York City voters, so that a remarkable number of men-in-the-street, while scarcely converted, knew instantly who we were and roughly what we stood for. The publicity, the TV spots (a first for a minor party candidate in New York!) were done remarkably well, aided immeasurably by expert advertising and media people who joined the party and aided the campaign.

One exciting development highlighted by the campaign was the fulfilling of the strategic vision that many of us once had in the abstract: namely, that it theoretically should be just as easy to attract libertarian converts from the liberal Left as it is from the conservative Right. When

this notion was first put forward, it appeared in a context in which the then existing libertarian population had come exclusively from the Right. But in the last couple of years, events have caught up with theory, and many of our most active libertarians had formerly been liberals, including Fran Youngstein herself. Indeed, the FLP message stressed our kinship with liberals on victimless crimes and civil liberties on the one hand, as well as with conservatives on property rights and the free market on the other. In fact, of course, only libertarianism can consistently fulfill both of these promised liberties, on which liberals and conservatives themselves fall down and lapse into inner contradictions. It is precisely this consistent fulfillment offered by libertarianism that draws liberals and conservatives alike into our ranks. Politically, this across-the-spectrum strength was embodied in the fact that Fran was quietly supported by various candidates and clubs in both the Conservative and Liberal parties in New York. The Youngstein campaign has vividly demonstrated the cross-spectrum pull that can make libertarians a vital political and ideological force in American life.

A word should be said here about the remarkable personal qualities which enabled Fran Youngstein, a political neophyte, to hold down a highly responsible and demanding job at IBM while still waging a notably vigorous and energetic campaign. Such intelligent and tireless dedication to the cause deserves the heartfelt gratitude of every libertarian.

The FLP has high hopes: presumably it plans now to take advantage of the momentum achieved by its electric burst into New York City politics, by running a full-scale ticket for Governor and Senator in 1974. For this it will need more manpower and more support by libertarians throughout the country. The point is this: if the FLP can win 50,000 votes for

(Continued On Page 3)

Ludwig von Mises, RIP —

(Continued From Page 1)

motivated by a great task and full of living creative power, is here revealed to us: the superiority of the clear, self-possessed mind which from a feeling of intellectual duty renounced many a passing distraction. And this integrated plan was carried out in full. Completed and perfect, his lifework lies before us. There cannot be any doubt about the nature of his message.

"He knew as few did what he wanted to do, and this is why it is so easy to formulate. He was a theorist, born to see — and to explain — large relationships; to seize instinctively, but with a firm hand, on the threads of logical necessities; to experience the most intimate joy of analytical work. At the same time he was a creator, an architect of thought, to whom even the most varied series of small tasks, such as the course of scientific life offers to any man, could never give satisfaction"

"To say that his work is immortal is to express a triviality. For a long time to come, the memory of the great fighter will be colored by the contending parties' hates and favors. But among the achievements of which our science can be proud his was one of the greatest. Whatever the future will do to it or make of it, the traces of his work will never perish."

And yet, in contrast to his celebrated teacher Bohm-Bawerk, Ludwig Mises was made to suffer grievous neglect in the last four decades of his life. Mises' steadfastness and courage in the face of treatment that would have shattered lesser men, was a never-ending wonder to us all. Once the literal toast of both the economics profession and of the world's leaders, Mises was to find, at the very height of his powers, his world shattered and betrayed. For as the world rushed headlong into the fallacies and evils of Keynesianism and statism, Mises' great insights and contributions were neglected and scorned, and the large majority of his eminent and formerly devoted students chose to bend with the new breeze.

But shamefully neglected though he was, coming to America to a


second-rate post and deprived of the opportunity to gather the best students, Ludwig Mises never once complained or wavered. He simply hewed to his great purpose, to carve out and elaborate the mighty structure of economics and social science that he alone had had the genius to see as a coherent whole, and to stand four-square for the individualism and the freedom that he realized was required if the human race was to survive and prosper. He was indeed a constant star that could not be deflected one iota from the body of truth which he was the first to see and to present to those who would only listen.

And despite the odds, slowly but surely some of us began to gather around him, to learn and listen and derive sustenance from the glow of his person and his work. And in the last few years, as the ideas of liberty and the free market have begun to revive with increasing swiftness in America, his name and his ideas began to strike chords in us all and his greatness to become known to a new generation.

Optimistic as he always was, I am confident that Mises was heartened by these signs of a new awakening of freedom and of the sound economics which he had carved out and which was for so long forgotten. We could not, alas, recapture the spirit and the breadth and the erudition, the ineffable grace of Old Vienna. But I fervently hope that we were able to sweeten his days by at least a little.

Of all the marvelous anecdotes that Mises used to tell I remember this one the most clearly, and perhaps it will convey a little of the wit and the spirit of Ludwig Mises. Walking down the streets of Vienna with his friend, the great German philosopher Max Scheler, Scheler turned to Mises and asked, with some exasperation: "What is there in the climate of Vienna that breeds all these logical positivists (the dominant school of modern philosophy that Mises combatted all his life)?" With his characteristic shrug, Mises gently replied: "Well, after all, there are several million people living in Vienna, and among these there are only about a dozen logical positivists."

But oh Mises, now you are gone, and we have lost our guide, our Nestor, our friend. How will we carry on without you? But we have to carry on, because anything less would be a shameful betrayal of all that you have taught us, by the example of your noble life as much as by your immortal works. Bless you, Ludwig von Mises, and our deepest love goes with you.

* A briefer version of this article appeared in *Human Events*, October 20, 1973. 

From The Old Curmudgeon

Psy Lib Once More. Our friends at Rampart College are apparently intending to push heavily on the Psy Lib front, attempting to integrate "humanist psychology" with libertarian politics, ethics, and economics. On the face of it, the Psy Libbers have a formidable task on their hands. Not only do they have to demonstrate that psychology is a scientific discipline somewhere significantly above the level of mumbo-jumbo and witch-doctory — a tough task in itself. But they also have to answer what might be called the "Davidson challenge" to science fiction and metal detection ("Libertarians and Culture," *Lib. Forum*, October, 1973): namely, the relevance to libertarianism. One is reminded of the *Libertarian Connection's* recent fascination with vitamin pills — an admirable devotion, no doubt, but rather difficult to link up with libertarian concerns. Or, to put it another way, even if it were true, should libertarian journals allocate some of their preciously scarce space to the latest news on the technique of filling cavities?

From what I can gather, the Rampart answer to this challenge on relevance goes somewhat as follows: we have all had the experience of beaming our libertarian views at people and not seeing them converted. Since our ideas are correct, why do people not accept them? On this view, the answer must be "psychological hangups", a failure to be humanistic, an uptightness about other people, an authoritarian personality or whatever. In short, people must be converted to the precepts and lifestyles of humanistic psychology before they can be ripe for conversion to the libertarian creed.

This argument strikes me as a mass of *non sequiturs*. In the first place, it is simply empirically wrong. I know lots of people with "hangups", "authoritarian personalities," etc. who are excellent libertarians.

Libertarian Party —

(Continued From Page 2)

Governor next year, then it achieves a permanent line on the New York ballot, with none of the time-consuming hassle required to gain petitions to get on the ballot for each year's election. If we can achieve a permanent line on the ballot, stepping up to the status of the current four major parties, then the political clout and influence of the FLP throughout the state will accelerate enormously. This will enable us to achieve the balance of power, and even the victories, which the Liberal and Conservative parties have managed to achieve after gaining their permanent lines. The 1974 campaign will therefore be vital to the continued growth of the FLP.

As for the mayoralty election, apart from Fran and the FLP, it turned out to be dull as dishwater, by all agreement the dullest mayoralty campaign in decades. Only slightly over 40% of the eligible voters bothered to turn out to the polls. The reason was the universally-anticipated landslide victory of Democrat Abe Beame, a colorless but "safe" right-centrist, whose major asset was to offer a refreshing contrast to John Lindsay's leftish charisma. Of his three major opponents, John Marchi's Republican candidacy was undercut from the start by the almost savagely open support given to Beame by Governor Nelson Rockefeller, already tooling his forces for his (hopefully) final try at the Presidency in 1976. West Side liberal reformer Al Blumenthal's Liberal campaign was made still more hopeless by the unseemly haste of his fellow Democrat reformers to leap on the Beame bandwagon, jostling each other for future patronage. As for poor old Biaggi, in addition to the desertion to the Marchi camp by the Buckley family and their powerful crew of Establishment Conservatives, Biaggi himself, savaged by the revelation of his lying about taking the Fifth Amendment before a grand jury, was rumored to have made a deal with the Democratic leaders to run a very, very quiet campaign. Having made no waves, the right-centrist Democratic leaders will welcome Biaggi back into the fold. All in all, a campaign for snoozing, which increased the willingness of possible Biaggi and Blumenthal voters to vote their conscience and cast their ballots for Youngstein. With the outcome a dead certainty, the "lesser evil" argument cut no ice in any political camp.

It is appropriate at this point to take stock of the libertarian movement itself. Not only the Youngstein campaign, but also such successful activities as the Ohio party's hosting of the Libertarian Party's national conference this summer, as well as the forthcoming libertarian-feminist

Similarly, there is no logical connection whatever. For example, let us postulate a typical Authoritarian Libertarian, worried about the loss of traditional morality, "uptight" about drugs, promiscuity, and bestiality; he may firmly believe that many people around him are doomed to Hell, either on earth and/or in the nether regions, but he may also firmly believe that they have the right to do so, that everyone has the right to go to Hell in his own way, and that they and everyone else should be left alone. There is surely no contradiction here, and empirically such people have abounded in our great libertarian past, and even, *mirabile dictu*, are still around in our permissive present. Perhaps even our Rampart friends, as psy liberated as they are, may have a few qualms about heroin addiction, and yet this does not stop them or any other libertarian from advocating heroin freedom. In short, and this is surely an elementary libertarian lesson, one does not at all have to approve of something to advocate a person's right to do it.

There is another consideration here: our liberated brethren are not so free of "hangups" or moral judgments themselves. What happens is that the moral and social pressure simply cuts the other way. What happens, for example, to the guy in a "non-judgmental", "humanistic" encounter group who doesn't want to be touched, who values his personal and emotional privacy, who wants to be "closed" rather than "open", who wants to preserve his own principles rather than "flow with it"? In the old expression, what happens to him shouldn't happen to a dog. Similarly, the inevitable thrust of a "libertarian-humanist" approach would be to cast into outer darkness all of those libertarians who are not and emphatically don't want to be "liberated", who are, in short (name one:

(Continued On Page 4)

conference organized by the Kentucky party, make clear that the LP is currently the only flourishing vehicle for libertarian organizing. The LP is organized at last count in 34 states, and in each state the party is forming the nucleus for the ingathering of new converts, as well as the return to vigorous libertarian activity by those who had formerly become torpid or disenchanted, or who simply could not see any activist outlet for their libertarian impulses. No other libertarian organization is making a comparable record, which makes anti-party sentiment among libertarians look all the more sectarian and futile.

Looking at other libertarian activities, there has been a mixed record of retrogression in some areas and advances in others. On the East Coast, three important journals have folded. The monthly *Outlook*, founded in the high hopes of forming a vehicle and a locus of activity for the New York movement, has collapsed, partly due to personal feuds; the *Outlook* activists have either shifted their focus to the FLP or have dropped out altogether. The highly ambitious attempt to organize a biweekly tabloid, *The New Banner*, by the South Carolina movement has toppled in the midst of schisms and a police bust. The monthly *Individualist*, a Maryland publication of the Society for Individual Liberty, has also folded. SIL itself, however, now exclusively Philadelphia based, and headed by Don Ernsberger and Dave Walters, continues to be active as our only national campus organization. On November 17, SIL conducted a successful libertarian conference at Philadelphia. Energetic political lobbying continues to be conducted by the National Taxpayers Union, in Washington, and the National Committee to Legalize Gold, headquartered in New Orleans.

The collapse of several journals, however, has left the movement weak on the publication front. We are left with our one major "professional" magazine, the monthly *Reason*, published in southern California; a few newsletters: the mimeographed *Libertarian Connection* (also southern California); and the monthly *New Libertarian Notes*, published in New York by Sam Konkin and centering around his "radical caucus". A particularly hopeful sign, however, is the growing prosperity of Bob Kephart's monthly review *Books for Libertarians*, which has now absorbed the defunct *Brandean Academic Associates News*, and may soon expand to a regular tabloid format. Furthermore, we are improving in book dissemination, the major sources now being *Books for Libertarians*, and New York's *Laissez-Faire Bookstore*. Chuck Hamilton, of New York, is now launching a new publishing venture, which will begin by reprinting several libertarian classics, including: Nock's *Our Enemy the State*, Flynn's *As We Go Marching*, and Oppenheimer's *The State*. All in all, a time of excitement, ferment, and the emergence of the Libertarian Party as our major organizational vehicle. □


The Middle East

Let it not be thought that the current cease-fire in the Middle East is anything more than another interlude of uneasy peace in what is bound to be a protracted decades-long struggle, a struggle which will continue so long as the grievances of the Palestinian Arabs remain unsatisfied. The press does everyone a disservice by concentrating on the superficial maneuverings of the Sadat regime in Egypt, the Syrian government, most of the other Arab states, and even the "orthodox" Palestinian guerrilla movement headed by Al Fatah, whose basic objective of a rollback of Israel to the pre-1967 borders would leave the Palestinian Arab question still unresolved.

In this chronic and permanent crisis, the major task of American libertarians is to call for the elimination of American intervention in the Middle East. President Nixon's frenetic world-wide alert is only one alarming indication of the lengths to which an unstable President with zero credibility at home is willing to go to recoup his political fortunes. The call for American "isolationism", for non-intervention in the Middle East, is more than simply an application of libertarian political theory to one more foreign crisis: it is essential for American survival in a world suffering under the ever-present threat of nuclear destruction.

All this highlights the importance of the advertising campaign launched by the National Taxpayers Union in the midst of the recent crisis. The NTU placed a full-page ad in the *Washington Star-News* and other newspapers throughout the country, signed by Congressman Steven Symms (R., Id.), chairman of the newly-founded Taxpayers for Peace, and by the Executive Committee of the NTU (James D. Davidson, A. Ernest Fitzgerald, Robert D. Kephart, and Murray N. Rothbard.) The ad (e.g., *Washington Star-News*, October 21) began with the headline: "Do We Need Another War?" It continued with a marvellous quote from the grand old isolationist and conservative-libertarian Congressman H. R.

Gross (R., Iowa). Gross, speaking on the floor of the House on October 17, asserted: "I do not know who is going to win the war in the Middle East, but I do know one thing for dead sure and certain — that I can name the loser. That will be the common, garden-variety citizen and taxpayer of the United States of America. He and she will be the losers, and mark this well. It is time this government tended to its own business and that is the welfare of the American people. It is time we stopped intervening in the affairs of others all over the world."

The ad continued by calling for demands that Congress "deny funds which the Pentagon is seeking to pay for still greater involvement in the Mideast." It also urged a demand for "an immediate end to foreign aid." in the Middle East and elsewhere. Attacking U. S. aid to Israel as well as to the Soviet Union, the ad continued: "You should insist that your representatives in Congress repudiate all 'sweetheart' deals with foreign dictators. Suspension of all taxpayer sponsored foreign credits and loan guarantees would also help prevent your money from financing wars." Hitting hard at special interests using the government apparatus, the ad then urged that "this prohibition should extend to the operations of mischief-making international banks — which finance arms acquisitions with your money and credit. Remember that we have nothing to gain from this war no matter who wins. Remember also that powerful special interests are eager to use this war as an excuse to seize even more of your hard-earned money. When these special interests have had their way in the past, many Americans have died in foreign wars. This will happen again if we let it." Revisionism reborn! The ad concludes by urging readers to join the Taxpayers for Peace. All interested parties should get in touch with the National Taxpayers Union, 325 Pennsylvania Ave., S. E., Washington, D. C. 20003. 

From The Old Curmudgeon —

(Continued From Page 3)

closed, private, authoritarian, uptight, morally principled).


Let us take even the extreme case of an Authoritarian Person who has what might be called a bureaucratic or a sado-masochistic personality, in short, someone who either feels a great need to obey orders and commands, and or feels a great need to hand out orders and commands and have them obeyed. Is such a person, at least, an inveterate enemy of libertarianism? Certainly not, for he might very well hold that all s-m activities must be strictly voluntary: in a free, libertarian society, then, he can voluntarily join private s-m clubs, or voluntarily abase himself before a guru, a Perfect Master, or some other Authority, or gather around him willing subjects to whom his every wish will be their command. Certainly not a very healthy picture, but perfectly compatible with the freedom that libertarians are looking for, the freedom to form whatever interactions one wishes so long as they are voluntary.

We conclude, then, that if the drive for liberty has to be more or less suspended until everybody's psyche is "liberated", we will have to wait forever. Happily for our cause, liberty does not have to wait for everyone's psyche to shape up in some way that we want; we don't have to wait for a world of "humanists" or rationalists or traditional moralists. Libertarianism, the free society, is compatible with any psyche that holds firmly to the rights of person and property, whether for humanistic, traditionalist, or totally non-psychological reasons.

But what of the broader question? Why don't we libertarians enjoy the instant conversion of everyone who hears our message? Here, the strategists of Marxism, who have cogitated on these matters for over a hundred years, have a lot more to say to us than the murky purveyors of psychological nostrums. We do not, as do the liberators and the Randians, have to hurl psychological anathemas at the unconverted. The basic problem is simply that most people are not really interested; every person is busy about his or her personal and everyday affairs, and certainly this kind of preoccupation with one's daily life is not self-evidently irrational. The demands on their attention, on their thought, in

their free time are enormous, and they are bombarded from every direction, from all manner of cults, groups, interest groups, activities, etc. On most of these matters, they simply cannot give thought or attention, and so they tend to absorb their views on matters of marginal concern from the world around them: parents, teachers, friends, the media. And since, in ideological matters, most of these influences tend to favor whatever status quo exists, their tendency is to go along with the current system. The fact that a few of us — happily growing in number — are fascinated by ideological concerns and devote a great deal of thought and care to them is splendid, but is not by itself enough to convince the busy and harassed citizen that he must go and do likewise.

So what does stir these people up, command their attention, cause them to devote themselves to political and ideological problems? As the Marxists point out, it is the occurrence of crisis situations, situations which call their attention to the evident fact of a breakdown in the existing system. Such breakdowns could be of many sorts: a losing war, a depression, a runaway inflation, a sudden "energy shortage." Whatever they are, we libertarians know that statism will inevitably bring them about, and furthermore that they will come about with accelerating frequency in the months and years ahead. As these crises occur, more and more people will be induced to give attention and thought to these matters, and more and more of them will inevitably become libertarians. But they can't do so if they don't hear the message, or if they haven't heard the message in the past, predicting the crises upon them. The task of dedicated, self-conscious libertarians (the "cadre", in Marxist terminology) is to spread this message, to stand ready to do so, until, in crisis situations, our ranks are significantly swelled. As a matter of fact, it seems very plausible that the enormous increase in the number of libertarian cadre in the last few years is not unrelated to the accelerating number of such crisis, in domestic and foreign affairs.

Let us, then, not become so frustrated by the failure of instant mass conversion, by the failure to heed our message, that we start reaching for psychological smears with which to bombard the unconverted (either that they are "uptight" or that they are "loose-lipped evaders", depending on one's psychological theories). Let us treat the unconverted with the same respect with which we ourselves would like to be treated. Sometimes the Golden Rule is the best as well as the simplest guide. 

Music: The Art No One Thinks About

By Kenneth LaFave

There is a classic and semi-humorous response to the question, "What do you know about art?" "What do I know?" comes the reply. "Well, I know what I like!" The exchange usually concerns the visual arts, but will here serve our purpose as the signpost to a discussion of music: for music is the art everyone "feels", writes poetry about, and uses as a catalyst to magnificent fantasies. Music is the art no one thinks about.

"No one" is admittedly an overstatement, but only a small one. Musicians and the musically knowledgeable are always a little confused by otherwise scholarly folk who, when listening to music, invariably engage in reveries about their childhood or their first romance. To these people, music means nothing more than "association." The "goodness" or "badness" of a piece of music depends on the place, time, or event associated with it. If you associate Bach with church, your attitude toward his work may well depend on what kind of experiences you've had with churches and religion. One way or the other, Bach loses, and so do you. Associating certain music with fond memories, of course, can be quite pleasurable, and I'm not entirely dismissing the purely associational value of my favorite art form. Yet most people go no further than to accept such patterns as criteria for "knowing what they like", which is my thesis exactly.

Two questions should be raised here: 1) what is meant by "thinking about music", and 2) what is the purpose of doing so. I shall begin by stating what I do not mean by "thinking about music."

By "thinking about music" I do not mean reading and contemplating the lives of famous composers. This is strictly public school "music appreciation" stuff. One is presumably able to "hear" the composer's life in his work: we "hear" Beethoven rage against his deafness in the Ninth Symphony; we "hear" Tchaikovsky's loneliness and desolation in the "Pathétique" Symphony. This kind of nonsense is related to another elementary school trick — "painting" mental pictures to music. In other words, not thinking about the music, but about what the music reminds you of. Whether concerned with the composer's emotions or your own visual imagination, these games are just two more forms of association, and give additional credence to my claim that people will do almost anything to keep from truly intellectualizing what they consider a mere emotional indulgence.

By "thinking about music" I also do not mean analyzing the emotional effects of music. To find out why people react in such-and-such a way to music is fine, but such is psychology, not aesthetics. Emotions are a product of music, not a part of it. Emotions may even be the purpose of music, but they are not music itself.

Music is sound organized along certain principles of acoustics. To "think about" it means to identify what a composer (the "organizer") is doing in a certain piece — i.e., how he is structuring some harmonic progression, what form he is using, how he varies some melodic passage. It is also interesting to consider the nature of a given performance: how a performer interprets the music, how brilliant is John Doe's technique, etc. But this is not the intellectual core of music, it's not what music is about. The understanding of music does not consist of emoting over a Rachmaninoff prelude, or even playing one well. It consists of identifying how Rachmaninoff organized sound in terms of musical language.

That may sound simple, and even obvious, but we are immediately faced with a seemingly insurmountable barricade — for the key word in my last sentence is "language." Music is not a language in the way that English, Chinese, or Dutch are languages. All of the latter have the power to denote: they all contain sounds and symbols which have reference to something in the "real" world. "Bird", for instance, refers to a particular kind of thing that exists. But we cannot sing the pitch, "la" for a specific duration and mean the same thing as the word "bird". (No doubt such a system could be devised, but it would not bear much if any relation to what we know as music.)

This classic and oft-noted point has several important ramifications. Primarily, it places music in a unique position among the major art

forms. Both literature and the visual arts have the power of reference: the poet can write of a bird and the painter can paint his image on a canvas, but the composer cannot "compose" a bird, without the aid of words in the form of a title or program. Take away the title, and the programmatic "meaning" of Stravinsky's "Song of the Nightingale" is up for grabs. It could be "Song of the Sea", if you wanted it to be that.

So music has **no content**, as such, and is more akin to architecture or chess than to poetry or painting. It is **all style**, and that will make our analysis of that Rachmaninoff a little more difficult. We will have to understand musical form, structure, counterpoint, harmony, etc. In short, we will have to learn the **musical language**. By this I do not mean a subset of English comprised of the above words, but the things to which those words refer. By "musical language" I mean the concepts and applications of counterpoint, harmony, etc. Perhaps the closest analogy to "musical language" is another "language" which defies translation into denotative words: the language of mathematics.

Ask a mathematician to explain a higher equation to you without understanding the concepts expressed in that equation and you'll only walk away frustrated. And so it is with trying to understand a Bach fugue or even our Rachmaninoff prelude without knowing much about music. Again, this places music in a unique position among the arts. It is not necessary to have knowledge of meter or perspective in order to enjoy poetry or painting, though such knowledge does no doubt enhance one's enjoyment, but it is impossible to really enjoy music beyond the merely associational or "cultural" (associational on a societal scale) level, without "speaking the language."

Music, far from being the most subjective of the arts, is the most rigorously logical. Its objective basis is acoustics, the science of sound, and all good composers take that into account. Were I to make a case for the evaluation of music, I would base it on the degree of musical (contrapuntal, harmonic, etc.) interest a piece generates. Just as a difficult equation is of more interest than a simple arithmetical problem, so the Bach fugue is of more interest, objectively, than the Rachmaninoff prelude. But that is another essay, and a harder one.

Now it is time to consider the second question: why should we, why should anyone, "think about music." What does the objective analysis of organized sound have to offer us that mathematics doesn't? In order to sufficiently answer this, I hope the reader will excuse what may seem like a digression.

We are at an all-Beethoven concert of symphonic music. We have never heard Beethoven before, nor have we heard "live" symphonic music: it is a totally new experience for us. The major work on the program is the famous Fifth Symphony, and as we witness the performance, our first impression is a physical one — the sheer strength of the music, the massive power of the sound. We do not like the second movement much, as it doesn't have the mere volume that was so physically exciting to experience in the first movement. The last movement proves to be our favorite: the physical sensation of sound waves striking our ear drums and our bodies is exhilarating.

We go home, forget about the concert for a few days, until, quite by accident, we hear Beethoven's Fifth on the radio. We remember with delight our evening at the concert: the sensations we experienced come back like a welcome dream. But over the radio, much of this physical dimension is lost, and as we listen a second time, we are struck with a vague sense of "something important is going on here". It is not just a physical sensation anymore, it is a real intellectual observation, based on our ability to discern variations in amplitude, pitch, duration, etc. in same way as we might look at a building and say, "I don't know a thing about architecture, but something about that building seems to deserve my investigation." So we read a few books on music — Bernstein's *THE JOY OF MUSIC* is great for beginners; buy a pocket dictionary of music (*THE HARVARD BRIEF DICTIONARY OF MUSIC*); and even learn to

(Continued On Page 6)

Arts And Movies

By Mr. First Nighter

A Touch of Class. dir. by Melvin Frank, with George Segal and Glenda Jackson.

One of the great movie genres was the sophisticated comedy of the 1930's, usually starring Cary Grant, Katherine Hepburn, or Carole Lombard. The scintillating wit, the high style, the sophisticated intelligence of both hero and heroine were a joy to behold. In these days, when intelligence and wit have been virtually expunged from the cinema, the "Cary Grant-type" comedies of the 1930's seem as remote as a Golden Age of long, long ago. Not since such isolated and wondrous bursts of late glory as the Hepburn-Tracy movies of the 1950's ("Pat and Mike", "Adam's Rib") have we seen anything to compare with the classics of the thirties.

A Touch of Class is an interesting attempt to harken back to the great tradition. For most of the picture, the dialogue crackles, and the wit sparkles, until Frank felt that he had to end on a note of leaden moralism. Glenda Jackson is particularly good; there is even a trace of the great Hepburn in her intelligence and in her command of every situation. In her previous pictures furthermore, Miss Jackson had been generally cast in somehow decadent roles: here she hits her stride as a "classical" comedienne.

The major problem here is George Segal. Certainly a funny actor, Segal is far from the classic mould of intelligence and wit; instead, his is the humor of the self-deprecating schnook; the style might be called New York-Jewish. There is certainly a place for this brand of humor in movies; Segal himself was brilliantly cast in that hilarious movie about third-rate New York Jewish intellectuals, **Bye, Bye Braverman** (from the equally hilarious Wallace Markfield novel, **To An Early Grave**). But for attempting classical comedy, Segal, for all his amusing moments, is a fish out of water. Such is the dearth of wit in the movies, however, that it is difficult to suggest a replacement, barring the magic ability to make Cary Grant thirty-five years younger.

Paper Moon. dir. by Peter Bogdanovich. With Ryan O'Neal, Tatum O'Neal, and Madeline Kahn.

Peter Bogdanovich is perhaps the most interesting of our younger film directors. Bogdanovich is a brilliant neo-classicist, consciously moulding his movies in the classical, Old Culture form. His typical mode is to return to the classical cinema by casting his pictures in the period of the old movies, and then to make them in a similar manner. **The Last Picture Show** was Bogdanovich's remarkable tribute to the culture and the world of the 1950's, as well as the classical kind of movie of the pre-60's era which he remakes in the current world. **The Last Picture Show**, however, was marred by a deeply pessimistic outlook, so that the movie was an elegy to a dying small town in the Southwest. But now, with **Paper Moon**, Bogdanovich has gone further back — to the world and to the movies of the 1930's — to make a delightful, heartwarming movie free of any taint of the bleak pessimism of his earlier work.

Paper Moon marvellously recreates the world of the 1930's, its way of life, its pop culture. Like all great directors, Bogdanovich has always wrung superb performances from all of his actors, and he does it again here. Ryan O'Neal is plucked out of pretty-boy roles to turn in an excellent performance as a lovable, roving conman; little Tatum O'Neal steals the picture as a tough little kid with a heart of gold (or at least, silver.) Madeline Kahn is superb as a floozy with airs.

A lot of nonsense has been written about Tatum O'Neal being a conscious contrast to the simperingly sweet kid acting of such thirties' stars as Shirley Temple. These critics forget that the thirties also had a lot of tough little urchins in the movies, including Jane Withers and the Dead End Kids; Tatum O'Neal is simply another jewel in a re-created tradition. With each movie of loving recreation of an older day, Peter Bogdanovich is raising a standard against the irrationality and morbidity of today's avant-garde. □

Music —

(Continued From Page 5)

read music (it is not difficult for an intelligent adult) well enough to make sense out of the reader's score of the Beethoven Fifth. All this takes some time and a little money. We could spend less time and a lot more money if we decided instead to build ourselves the greatest stereo in the world, but we're intelligent and know that it's much more important to **understand** what comes out of a pair of speakers than to worry about "marvelous tone". That would be like pronouncing Chinese perfectly and not understanding a single word.

So, after some weeks of study, we buy a recording of the Fifth and give it a listen, following it, perhaps, with a copy of the score. What happens is amazing. The physical and associational aspects are there still, but they take a back seat to an entirely new dimension: **understand**. "Meaningless" notes now have meaning as part of the structural whole. And we are overwhelmed with a great sense of — **emotion!** Not physical "feeling", not association, but emotion over the logic of the music. For music is like mathematics with a physical dimension: **music is logic incarnate**.

We have for the first time experienced emotion over the music itself, not over something we associate with it, not physical "feeling" devoid of understanding, but **emotion**. The experience of music, then, is on three levels; physical, "feeling", association (good or bad) with extra-musical places or events, and emotion. The first two happen quite naturally, the last can only occur via knowledge of the art. Almost everyone stops on the second level.

I am not suggesting that everyone go out and buy books, take lessons, and spend the time necessary for the further enjoyment of music. Nor am I denying the validity of using music for purposes of association, relaxation, dancing or any one of a thousand other conceivable uses. My purpose is simply to make people aware of deeper musical dimensions

available to them. It may also serve to make a few people aware of the appallingly low level of music criticism in this country, with the exceptions of a few major newspapers and here and there a journal. Music criticism in "popular" magazines and most newspapers is incredibly trashy, dwelling, as most of it does, on the "feeling" (a mere physical sensation) of the music.

A major mistake made by many well-meaning individuals, and particularly rampant among Rock musicians and critics, is the equation of "good music" with that which is technically performed well. But the playing of music is not music's essence. Music is sound organized according to certain principles of acoustics. The essence of music is **composition**, not performance. But, thanks largely to this mistake, we have the spectacle of an entire musical culture (Rock) pretending to be "intellectual" because its members know a lot about amplifiers and different kinds of guitars. That's like claiming knowledge of literature because you know how to bind books.

There is no space within the confines of this or any other single essay to begin an adequate discussion of musical theory. There are books on that subject. I only know there is more than coincidence to the poet's analogy of romantic love to music; both sublimely combine the physical and the intellectual, and few people ever attain the real understanding of either. □

Roman History In A Paragraph

The Romans had many gifts, but statesmanship was not one of them. No major reform was ever carried out without civil war; the achievement of the Republic was to fill Rome with a pauperized rabble, to ruin Italy and provoke slave revolts, and to govern the Empire — or at least the richer parts — with a personal rapacity that an Oriental monarch would not have tolerated; while the achievement of the Principate was to accept the fact that political life was impossible, and to create, in its place, a machine.

H. D. F. Kitto in **The Greeks** (Penguin 1951).

The Fall Of The Republic

One of the inevitable effects of the Watergate affair has been to compel a wide spectrum of public men to take cognizance of the transformation of our political institutions and practices during the last century. The claims of the Presidency in the last decade have established the legal setting for virtually unrestricted exercise of power by one man — the President. His claims have included the right to make war without effective congressional control or authorization; to wiretap, bug, and even burglarize any person or place without the due process of judicial warrant; to impound legislatively mandated expenditures at his will; to withhold information from the Congress and the courts, even when it clearly involves obstruction of justice; to deny that either the Congress or the courts have any power to restrict the President's actions except through impeachment. In effect, as many now realize, the Presidency is changing before our eyes into a monarchical office of the type known to historians as an Augustan principate. While the tenure of the officeholder still remains limited in time, the powers of the office are monarchical in character.

Benjamin Franklin is reputed to have remarked when asked what kind of government he had helped to create, "A republic, sir, if you can keep it!". He was not the only observer to be skeptical about the viability of the republican form of government. A century later, one of the most able and respected juriconsults of the age, Charles O'Connor of New York, a man considered by Benjamin Tucker to be one of those unterrified Jeffersonian Democrats who followed their premises logically into anarchism, held that the first American revolution had attempted to abolish both monarchy and aristocracy and create a democracy in which all citizens enjoyed equal rights under law. But it had failed to do so. The founding Fathers recognized the "necessity of repressing in the newly conceived system the most conspicuous abuses; standing armies were denounced as dangerous to liberty; wars for the extension of territory were regarded as unjust and foreign alliances as inexpedient; and public debt as mischievous; but strangely enough, no barriers were instituted against any of these practices . . . On the contrary, powers to introduce and foster the most dangerous of them were expressly delegated, in the name of the people, to their public agents . . . We have seen, accordingly, that whilst ostracizing monarchy, the founders of the American Union invested it with most of the powers by which the few had oppressed the many in all previous times" (Charles O'Connor, *Democracy*, N. Y. 1876.)

O'Connor identified two principal bulwarks of increasingly despotic governmental power: indirect taxation (excise and sales taxes, and all other taxes which are obscured from the immediate awareness of the taxpayer) and public debt. O'Connor believed that, if all taxes were collected directly from the pocket of each taxpayer, this experience would create a vigilant and frugally-minded citizenry who would in their own interest deny the government all but the most obvious and needed expenditures.

As for public debt, he saw it as one of the principal means by which the State gratifies its penchant for war, waste and the creation of privilege. Moreover, public debt created a new aristocracy — the bond holders — whose personal financial interest it now became to encourage the state to further warfare, waste and increasing indebtedness. O'Connor called for constitutional barriers to the creation of any public indebtedness for any reason whatever. Also, he argued that the government should be prohibited from exercising any authority over coinage, and commercial paper, or from issuing its own paper for circulation as money. No revenue should be derived from lands in the public domain, and no gifts made therefrom to any but actual settlers.

We are now almost a century beyond Charles O'Connor's analysis of what had happened. O'Connor frequently spoke of the need for a second American Revolution — a revolution that would fulfill the promise of 1776 and abolish all trace of monarchy and aristocracy forever, creating a democratic system by securing to all citizens the utmost measure of freedom. The task of reformers was, he believed, "to break the sceptre of the trading politician and thus, at last, to establish liberty on the only reliable basis — a popular censorship on democratic principles, perpetually stimulated to its duty by the simple operation of intelligent

Mr. First Nighter, Soft on the Enemy?

By H. Primae Noctis

Is "Mr. First Nighter" soft on avant-garde culture? Could it be that the apostle of rearguard is secretly soft on the enemy? Surely it isn't so. But yet here is evidence: Along with an excellent series of capsulated reviews, Mr. First Nighter praises "Shamus," starring Burt Reynolds. "Shamus?" Booh Mr. First Nighter! You're giving in to the enemy. The incoherent plot of this movie betrays it for what it is — imitation *arriere-garde*. Hollywood should never be able to get away with it. We know they are watching, waiting for the good word. I say hold out. Don't give your critical blessing to a flick that only has some of the trimmings of a good movie. Sure "Shamus" has some old-fashioned hard-hitting action. But it lacks old-fashioned coherence which made the movie upon which "Shamus" was modeled so much more interesting. "The Big Sleep," starring Humphrey Bogart, did make sense. The meaning was there for the true detective fan to piece together. "Shamus," on the other hand, doesn't make it. Let's demand that movie makers produce *arriere-garde* flicks, not just imitations which capture some of the trappings — but lack the essence of the old-fashioned action movie.

To this end, I suggest a more precise rating form in the future. Mr. First Nighter should use a scale of from 0 to 4 squares for each movie reviewed. Each square could stand for a favorable attribute. For example, if a film used sane camera techniques, but lacked any other redeeming virtue, it would be only a one square movie. If it had both good cinematographic technique and portrayed sane, real people, it would merit two squares. Three squares would be reserved for movies, which added to the aforementioned virtues, the element of a coherent plot. The final accolade, the fourth square, should be reserved for movies which toe the party line. Thus Mr. First Nighter's fans could be sure of getting the straight scoop on cinema. The ratings could even be extended to other areas of cultural endeavor. Which brings me to my last point: the r.i.p. for Noel Coward may have gone too far. He was a delightful and talented man. But in spite of his fetching qualities he was only a three square playwright . . . a bit too weird to merit that last square.

• • •

MFN replies: It is always a pleasure to be attacked from a more extreme position than my own. And so I welcome Mr. Primae Noctis' contribution; for, to paraphrase the old adage, "the price of a rational, classical aesthetic is eternal vigilance."

self-interest."

The task set down by O'Connor was not accomplished. Today the forces of monarchy and aristocracy are infinitely stronger, more secure, and more prone to violence than a century ago. O'Connor witnessed the transformation of the Jeffersonian republic into the post-Civil War triumph of Hamiltonian mercantilism. We now have witnessed the further transformation through monopoly capitalism to corporate state capitalism exercising a world-wide imperium, and the institutional change from the republican simplicity of Washington and Jefferson as chief magistrates to the Caesarian principate of R. Milhous Nixon, Imperator Augustus.

Time is running out O'Connor and the Radical Democrats of the late 19th century fought bravely and resourcefully to retard the growth of Leviathan: Tucker and his circle did their best to clarify the issues even more plainly. Yet we must face the fact that they failed. We know who won; we know who won; we know what was lost, is being lost still. At the very least we must examine more carefully the failures of the libertarian forces of the past, and learn from their mistakes. We cannot combat the array of power which crushes and robs the bulk of the productive people of America unless we develop a grand strategy that will involve more than the few thousand readers of *Lib. Forum*, Reason and the few other publications espousing a libertarian ethic and political philosophy. Every day's headlines press us more and more to answer Lenin's famous question: What is to be done?

(J. R. P.) □

For Conspiracy Theorists Only!

The 'Final Solution' To The Arab Problem

1. Air America Inc. is the well known CIA-owned air transport company operating chiefly in Indo-China. Its books are audited by Coopers and Lybrand Inc. The Southern Air Transport Co., whose most profitable asset has been a federal contract to fly charter freight to SE Asia, Africa and Latin America, has just been revealed to have been founded and owned by the CIA. It shared Washington offices with Air America, and had the firm of Coopers and Lybrand as its auditors. President Nixon has now published an accounting of his financial relations with Bebe Rebozo and Robert Abplanalp in the purchase of the Western White House at San Clemente. The auditors of this public accounting — Coopers and Lybrand!

2. New York's muckraking weekly, *The Village Voice*, is running a series of articles detailing the friendship and business partnership of Richard Nixon and Bebe Rebozo, especially concentrating on the history of the Biscayne Bay land properties which are part of the Florida White House complex. It is a tale involving the alliance of Meyer Lansky and his "business" associates with Fulgencio Batista, late dictator of Cuba, and his friends, and the process by which money was "laundered" by passing through Cuba back into Florida where it was invested in real estate, banks and other enterprises in a series of complex sales, re-sales, mortgages, loans, and other gimmicks that would confuse and hide the real sources and ownership of the wealth. While Nixon claims his friendship with Rebozo dates from 1951, the *Voice* suspects otherwise. Nixon is known to have visited Cuba to investigate business opportunities in 1940 shortly after completing law studies at Duke University. By 1942 Bebe Rebozo was in the tire-recapping business in Florida — a business he financed through Frank Smathers, father of George Smathers, later Senator from Florida and close personal friend of Nixon. Nixon during this year was in Washington working in the Office for Price Administration. His particular unit was responsible for supervising the tire industry. George Smathers was at that same time an attorney for the tire interests of Standard Oil of Kansas which was allegedly routing American-made tires through Cuba to avoid American rationing controls. And Rebozo is reputed locally to have made the "seed money" of his fortune in the "grey market" of tire-rationed wartime Florida. Of course, this is possibly just a coincidental parallel of time, of men and interests. But clearly biographers (to say nothing of prosecutors) ought to examine the career of young Mr. Nixon more closely.

Freedom, the English anarchist weekly published a brief report entitled *Israel: a Nazi State?* (23 June, 1973) which contained several quotations of prominent Israeli generals made at a symposium on the problem of the occupied territories. General Yitzhak Rabin, recent Israeli ambassador to Washington, urged the view that "conditions should be brought about now, which, in the future years, would, quite naturally cause a drift of (Arab) population towards the east bank of the Jordan". This would be accomplished "without resorting to force". It is now reported in the *New York Times* that the ruling Labor party in Israel will undertake to sponsor and encourage the "purchase" of Arab-owned private land in the conquered Gaza strip, west bank of Jordan and Golan Heights. All purchases must be authorized by the Israeli government and priority will go to developers of new towns, factories and kibbutzim. In this way the most valuable properties will be transferred from Arab to Israeli ownership — encouraging the Arab property-owning class to liquidate its assets in Israeli-held territories, and migrate abroad.

Defense Minister Moshe Dayan summarized the Israeli government's viewpoint thusly:

We have settled in this region essentially to create a Jewish State, and we will simply not allow the Arabs to control its frontiers. Had we wished to show any respect for the supremacy of the Arabs and their desires when they had occupied the country so extensively and for so long a period, it would have been impossible to create a Jewish State. They (the Arabs) no doubt believe themselves to be in the right, but if our aim is to fashion our own State, I do not see how we can avoid stepping on their toes. It is certain that Jews will come and establish themselves in the very areas which were formerly inhabited by the Arabs. The moment we accept the principle that we must ask permission of the Arabs in order to settle in regions where they themselves live, then we can say goodbye to our notion of a Jewish State.

Perish vilely all that delight in monarchy or oligarchy in the State; for the name of liberty is worth all the world, and even if one have but little, he is deemed to have great possessions.

— Euripides

- J.R.P. Moved, left no address
- No such number
- Moved, not forwardable
- Name & address unknown

The Libertarian Forum
 BOX 341
 MADISON SQUARE STATION
 NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10010



N. Stroles 1174
 770 W. Imperial
 El Segundo, CA 90245

First Class

SUBSCRIBE NOW

Please enter a subscription for:

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Subscription is \$8.00 per year.

Libertarian Forum Associate subscription \$15.00 or more.

THE LIBERTARIAN FORUM
 Box 341 Madison Square Station
 New York, New York 10010