

**Two young disciples of the radical right argue
that government should have no more than enough
power to keep one man from attacking another.
Anything more, they say, is regimentation.**

But what makes liberal rule especially intolerable is the inescapable fact that, once the state is allowed to subordinate individual freedom to what it considers the public welfare, there is no limit to the liberties it may take in even the most democratic system. We were led into Vietnam, for example, by those liberal Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson. The peacetime draft was first instituted by Franklin D. Roosevelt and later revived by Harry S. Truman. And some liberals have seriously proposed a compulsory national service plan for all draft-age

young people.

In the late fifties and early sixties, people on both sides of the political spectrum began to recognize that the United States Government was growing increasingly powerful and increasingly indifferent to the desires of its subjects. From this awareness the New Left was created, while the long-quiescent conservative movement was reborn.

THE New Left, which consisted mostly of young people brought up on liberal ideology, never questioned the philosophical premises or long-

range goals of 20th-century liberalism; in fact, a major theme of New Left propaganda was the gap between the promises and the performance of the liberals. In effect, the radicals did not criticize the Government for exerting too much power, but for using its power to achieve the wrong ends.

The New Left laid the blame for the Government's wrongdoings on the perversion of the democratic process by private interests—in particular, the military-industrial complex. This argument recalled the up-

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The New Right

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roar after World War I over the alleged role of munitions makers in bringing the United States into that conflict. And, like their predecessors, the New Left radicals saw their salvation not in the reduction of Government power, but in the confiscation of the property of the ruling class.

Another important feature of the New Left program was the advocacy of "participatory democracy." The formulation of this concept was an attempt to reconcile the contradictory aims of an all-powerful state and a responsive state. Suffice it to say that talk of "participatory democracy" gradually disappeared from New Left rhetoric as the movement drifted inexorably toward hackneyed Marxism and naked terrorism.

Nevertheless, the New Left did for a while appear to be an antiauthoritarian force on the American political scene. Its legions were in the vanguard of the cultural change that was so much a part of the sixties, challenging restrictions on drugs, sex, long hair, rock music and even the use of four-letter words. In addition, the New Left opposed military conscription, if only because of the specific purposes for which it was then being used, and, in its innumerable demonstrations, frequently engaged in pitched battles with the police. These phenomena suggested to many uncritical minds that the New Left was antiauthoritarian.

Above all, however, the New Left seemed to many to be the only viable alternative to the status quo; few young people considered the conservative viewpoint seriously, and the conservative movement was to discredit itself in the sixties anyway. The New Left reached the height of its appeal by misrepresenting its goals as libertarian, and it began to decline as soon as its totalitarian nature became evident.

THE radical left was not the only source of opposition to liberal supremacy in the sixties. Various actions of the liberal establishment—notably its attempts to impose racial integration and "eradicate" poverty—began to arouse the ire of conservatives, who had long questioned the growing power of the Federal Government. Suddenly the right awoke from its lethargy and began to be heard.

What most conservatives

were originally interested in conserving was not the mixed-economy welfare state instituted during the New Deal. On the contrary, conservatives saw the welfare state as a radical aberration from the traditional principles of the republic. These principles (held to be self-reliance, industriousness and moral rectitude) were threatened by a system under which people depended more and more upon the benevolence of politicians for the solution of problems that could best be settled privately or on the local level. Unlike the radicals, conservatives recognized that the Federal Government had far too much power; but rather than addressing themselves directly to the question of individual freedom vs. state power, the conservatives concentrated on the diffusion of state power—in short, on the concept of federalism.

At the same time, conservatives tended to be nationalistic when it came to foreign policy. Most were extremely concerned about the threat of foreign Communism, and felt the problem could be dealt with only militarily. This put the conservatives in the strange position of advocating a stronger nation-state to preserve freedom.

The conservative movement attracted a disparate assortment of adherents in the early sixties. Some were rabid anti-Communists who would sooner have seen the world decimated in a nuclear holocaust than have given the Communists an inch of some rotting jungle. Some were motivated by religious considerations and primarily concerned with Supreme Court decisions prohibiting prayer in public schools. Some were the self-appointed purifiers of society—those who wanted to "clean up" pornography, drug use, long hair and other vices. Some were plain bigots who saw the decentralization issue as a means of justifying resistance to laws against racial discrimination.

Still others were libertarians—people who had been influenced by the philosophy of Ayn Rand, who saw individual freedom as an absolute, who strongly opposed both the collectivist schemes of the liberals and the attempts by some conservatives to legislate morality and piety. In short, these were people who took seriously all the conservative rhetoric about freedom. The libertarians never quite

fit into the conservative movement, and until they were driven out of it were a constant source of irritation to other conservatives.

While the movement was split at a very early stage into libertarian and "traditionalist" camps, infighting remained at a tolerable level as long as the common enemy was the liberal establishment. In fact, various attempts were made to demonstrate that the dif-

improbable an adventure. Libertarians believed that if the country were really in danger a free citizenry would be more than willing to defend it voluntarily.

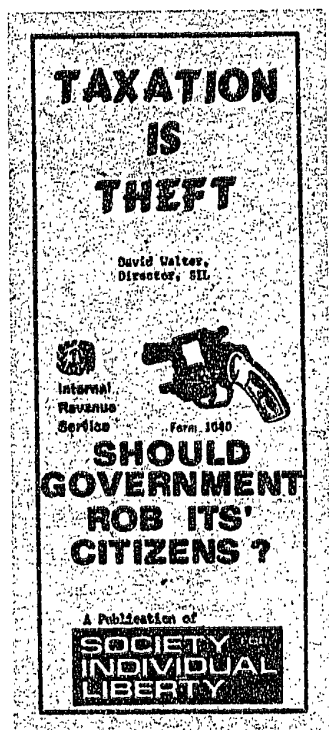
The drug fad of the mid-sixties and the advent of the hippie movement further accentuated the traditionalist-libertarian split. Traditionalists saw the use of even lowly substances like marijuana as a dire threat to the well-being of the nation; libertarians were more concerned that the state was undertaking to legislate personal morality by prohibiting the use of drugs.

While relations between traditionalists and libertarians were severely strained by these differences, it was the issue of protest and revolution that finally led to a break. It should be noted—despite some traditionalist charges that the libertarians were actually left-wing infiltrators—that the libertarians had little sympathy with the substantive goals of the New Left. In fact, libertarians on such campuses as Stanford and Columbia frequently opposed the radical left, and in some cases were involved in physical confrontations.

While conservatives preached that all laws should be obeyed until repealed, libertarians placed the welfare of the individual over that of the state and argued that an individual is morally justified, for instance, in resisting the draft or smoking marijuana. Moreover, while traditionalists placed a premium value on stability and order, the libertarians were not all that opposed—in principle, at any rate—to the basic idea of shaking up or even overthrowing the liberal state. Most important, libertarians did not want to become apologists for and defenders of the existing order.

Having contended that there was no difference between the traditionalist and libertarian schools, and having gone on to contend that the libertarians were actually left-wing infiltrators, the traditionalists finally decided to try a new tactic. At the final showdown between the libertarian and traditionalist factions, the 1969 convention of the so-called Young Americans for Freedom—from which many libertarians had been purged—William F. Buckley Jr. reportedly announced that his conservative philosophy was the true libertarianism, that the libertarians who disagreed with this philosophy were irresponsible libertines. Jerome Tuccille recounts the incident in "Radical Libertarianism: A Right-Wing Alternative":

"Another interesting fact



A publication of the chief national organization of libertarians. On the following pages are lapel buttons and books that express some of the views of the authors of this article and of the S.I.L.

ferences between traditionalists and libertarians were nonexistent. Frank Meyer, a leader of this "fusionist" school of thought, argued, for instance, that the traditionalists were trying to conserve the traditions of freedom, while the libertarians were trying to achieve freedoms that were all part of America's tradition. Like Lyndon Johnson's much-touted "consensus," however, the fusionist approach to conservatism was to be relegated to the scrap heap by the tides of war, protest and cultural change.

THE war in Vietnam was one of the first areas of difference between the Old Right and New Right; while traditionalists automatically supported any step the Government chose to take against Communism, the libertarians were more concerned about whether the Government had the right to tax and conscript its citizens to undertake so

... is Mr. Buckley's attitude on the question of freedom. In his speech he mentioned that freedom is for those who agree to live within the framework of our traditions. ... Here, precisely, is the mystical element in the conservative mentality which has pushed conservatives so far apart from their former allies: the notion that freedom is a gift to be dispensed among our worthy citizens by a moralistic government. The anarchists claim that freedom is a natural right, and if the state denies it to its citizens they have a right to seize it themselves."

Before we examine the libertarian philosophy closely, it is instructive to note that with the departure of the libertarian wing from the conserv-



ative movement, conservatism has become what the left was calling it all along—a defense of the status quo. Conservatives have virtually ceased talking about changing the system, but rather are concentrating almost exclusively on protecting it from the onslaught of left-radicalism. The only issues conservatives do seem to be discussing are law and order and the need, for pressing on with the cold war. The fact that conservatism is as popular as it is among the rank and file of organized labor is one result of this new direction; labor leaders have found it impossible to convince their followers that conservatism poses a threat to the welfare state they have fought for so long to develop. Thus, even as liberals became conservative in their refusal to consider alternatives to the New Deal welfare state, conservatives in effect became liberal by placing their primary emphasis on nothing more than the preservation of the welfare state.

Throughout recorded history, men have been told that they have no right to live their own lives but must surrender their minds and bodies to emperors, kings, mythical deities, priests, witch doctors, tribes, communities and nation-states. Fundamental to this arrangement is the belief that a human being is inherently worthless and must

be molded by self-appointed benefactors if he is to attain some continuously redefined "higher" good.

LIBERTARIANISM, in contrast, holds life itself as an absolute good, and therefore rejoices in the capacity of the unfettered human intellect to provide for both individual and social advancement. However, libertarians recognize that this advancement can come about only when the individual is free from regimentation and exploitation by an unbridled state. Karl Hess summed up the libertarian ethic nearly two years ago in a *Playboy* article called "The Death of Politics":

"Libertarianism is the view that each man is the absolute owner of his life, to use and dispose of as he sees fit; that all man's social actions should be voluntary, and that respect for every other man's similar and equal ownership of life, and, by extension, the property and fruits of that life, is the ethical basis of a humane and open society. In this view, the only—repeat, only—function of law or government is to provide the sort of self-defense against violence that an individual, if he were powerful enough, would provide for himself.

"If it were not for the fact that libertarianism freely concedes the right of men voluntarily to form communities or governments on the same ethical basis, libertarianism could be called anarchy."

Conservatives, liberals and left radicals are all statist—they all believe that the individual should be subservient to the state. All would like to scoff at libertarianism as something reactionary. Yet statism in one form or another has been the status quo virtually throughout history. It is statism that is reactionary; libertarianism is the only progressive, even radical, alternative available.

This is not to say that the struggle for individual freedom has not been going on for a long time. The American Revolution was one early triumph of the libertarian cause, but the victory was short-lived as Hamilton and the Federalists moved quickly to reassert the reactionary doctrine of the powerful nation-state. Early liberalism, in combination with the rough approximation of laissez-faire capitalism that followed the Industrial Revolution, was another significant expression of libertarian thought. But the early liberals soon lost sight of their goal and gradually placed egalitarianism over freedom in their hierarchy of values. Modern libertarianism is thus in some re-

spects a continuation of 18th-century and 19th-century liberalism.

On the other hand, modern libertarianism is on a much more solid intellectual footing than old-style liberalism ever was. While many early liberals tried to argue that "all men are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights," this was merely a reversal of the old divine-right theory of kings, albeit with happier results. Both theories were based on equally spurious premises. In contrast, modern libertarianism argues not from unprovable mysticism, but rather from a scientific appraisal of the nature of man and his needs.

In purporting to demonstrate that freedom is unworkable, statist frequently argue that too many people are incapable of making rational decisions and must therefore be guided by a paternalistic government. Libertarians, in contrast, recognize that governmental errors are at least as frequent and far more consequential than the mistakes of individuals. Moreover, all evidence indicates that state paternalism is not only ill-conceived, but usually ineffectual as well. As Spinoza wrote 300 years ago:

"All laws which can be violated without doing any one any injury are laughed at. Nay, so far are they from doing anything to control the desires and passions of men that, on the contrary, they direct and incite men's thoughts the more toward those very

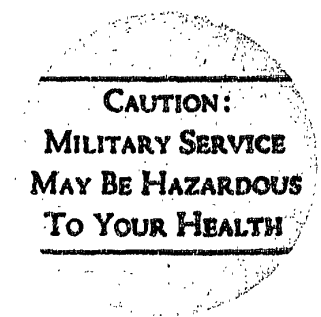


objects; for we always strive toward what is forbidden and desire the things we are not allowed to have. And men of leisure are never deficient in the ingenuity needed to enable them to outwit laws framed to regulate things which cannot be entirely forbidden. . . . He who tries to determine everything by law will foment crime rather than lessen it."

This statement has been most dramatically vindicated in recent years by the failure of governmental efforts to repress the use of marijuana and drugs in the United States. However, while at least some statist have gotten the message with respect to private

morality, they have yet to acknowledge that statism is equally impractical in the economic field.

In "The Death of Politics," Karl Hess says: "Laissez-faire capitalism, or anarchocapitalism, is simply the economic form of the libertarian ethic.



Laissez-faire capitalism encompasses the notion that men should exchange goods and services, without regulation, solely on the basis of value for value. It recognizes charity and communal enterprises as voluntary versions of this same ethic. . . . Economically, this system is anarchy, and proudly so."

Laissez-faire capitalism is rejected automatically as a socioeconomic philosophy by both the Old Left and New Left as well as by the Old Right. Nevertheless, laissez-faire capitalism—as it really is, rather than as it is generally and mistakenly understood to be—is demonstrably superior to accepted statist economics.

Socialism, communism, fascism and Keynesian mixed economics all boil down to the intervention of the state in the economy through regulation, direct management or confiscation. The efficacy of state intervention can be ascertained by answering a single question: Has any economy ever benefited in the long run from it? Invariably, the answer is no.

For example, the Russian economy, the most managed in the world, is generally considered to have fallen far behind the potential of the emerging capitalist economy it replaced in 1917. Britain is only now recovering from an economic collapse brought about not by capitalism, as the Marxists and statist would have us believe, but by Government mismanagement of the economy. The United States is struggling to contain an inflation and recession, both springing not from the elements of capitalism we still retain, but rather from the economic tinkering and regulation practiced under three statist regimes.

In fact, economists of the Austrian school have demonstrated that depressions, recessions and other extreme

business fluctuations are not inherent in the free-market system, but are caused by governmental interference with the money supply through various forms of central banking. Even many Keynesians concede that the bungling of the Federal Reserve System was the primary cause of the Depression in the thirties.

The bankruptcy of statist economics can be more fully illuminated by slightly changing the original question: Is it possible to find a state intervention in the economy that has not, in the long run, been detrimental to the nation? Again, the answer is invariably no. A single example is enough to prove this point.

Take the Government's decision to begin a massive road-building program in the early fifties. Since then, nearly \$70-billion have been spent to construct a projected 42,000 miles of highways. The program, originally intended as a defense road network and a continuation of the road-building schedule in use before World War II, is only now being connected with its results, and even so, only partially.

POLLUTION is one result. The interstate highway program clearly provided a direct stimulus to the sale and use of automobiles. Automobiles, in turn, have been the direct cause of most present-day air pollution.

In fact, the whole problem of pollution is in itself an indictment of statism. Communal ownership of air and water resources has fostered a denigration of individual rights and responsibilities by placing in artificial limbo the media of pollution. The result has been an indifference on the part of polluters to the consequences of pollution and an inability on the part of the victims to redress damage to health and property caused by pollution. The statist concept of "national goals" has also been responsible for pollution by private concerns. In the late 19th century, for instance, when the effects of air pollution were just becoming apparent, courts invariably held for polluters and denied the suits of victims of pollution on the grounds that the need of society for factories overrode the individual's right to the property being damaged by pollution. Water pollution was similarly ignored, since no one owned rivers but the community — whose interest the state took to be factories, not the protection of the individual rights of those who owned riverfront property or who drank the water.

In addition to protecting
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private polluters from the claims of their victims, the state has secured for itself the power to pollute with impunity. Whereas corporations can be and sometimes are held responsible for damage to life and property caused by their pollution, the state has been pumping garbage into the sky and dumping sewage into rivers and lakes without the faintest possibility of legal constraint. Likewise, the state monopoly transportation system, the highway network, has created pollution which has today become intolerable.*

However, the effects of the Federal road-building program go much farther than that. By intervening in the transportation market on the side of the automobile and truck, the state has caused an unnatural shift of demand away from other modes of transportation. Dollars which would have been spent on or invested in trains, inland shipping or newer alternative modes of transportation, such as monorails, were diverted to servicing the automobile industry. Dollars which railroad companies could have reinvested to improve service were instead spent by companies making automobile-related products; this, in turn, further fueled the automobile industry. The interstate highway program has therefore seriously damaged if not destroyed the American mixed transport system, and the collapse of the Penn Central Transportation Company is only the most recent and most spectacular proof of this fact.

The effects of the interstate highway program do not end here, however. It has also wreaked havoc in and is causing the death of American cities. Street congestion, noise and air pollution have become the bane of almost all city dwellers. These human costs, added to others which the state has imposed in various ways, have caused a drastic change in American living habits, forcing many out of the city into the suburbs. The suburbs, in turn, have created what is referred to as the "automobile culture"—the automobile is the major, if not the only, transportation mode available. Thus the highway program has had social as well as economic effects;

*It is clear that the way to stop pollution is not through the further exercise of state authority, but through the recognition of the inviolability of individual rights and the return to the private sector of all industries. Only then can pollution be ended, since only then will individuals be able to sue directly those responsible for damage caused by pollution.

moreover, these effects stretch far beyond the imagination or intentions of the original planners.

LIBERALS and the New Left admit that these problems are the result of economic mismanagement, the misallocation of resources. The solution they propose is the "proper" allocation of resources through the "competent" management of the economy — the capacity for which they obviously reserve for themselves. Aside from being a restatement of the statist ethic that the state should exercise control over the economy and retain the power to control an individual's life, this "solution" is self-contradictory. The state cannot manage the economy "competently," it can only create distortions. Moreover, it cannot "correct" distortions it has already made—it can only create new distortions. In "Man, Economy and State," Murray Rothbard explains why the state cannot successfully manage an economy:

" . . . [the] state, deprived of the real market and its determination of the prices of producers' goods, cannot calculate and can therefore run a productive system only in chaotic fashion."

Laissez-faire capitalism is the only answer to the chaos statist economics has brought to the world. Through the free market—the only real determinant of consumer need and desire—laissez-faire capitalism produces sustained, natural economic growth. Those who prosper are those who can satisfy consumer demands. Exchanges are made only on the basis of mutual benefit; no one is forced to pay for the construction of a road, the purchase of a bureaucrat's typewriter or the maintenance of a rope company in Massachusetts or tea tasters in New York.

Under laissez-faire capitalism, the problems of the highway program would never have been created. All transportation facilities would be privately owned. The transportation dollars in the economy would have been divided among the various competing modes of transport, with those companies and modes offering the best product being rewarded. Laissez-faire capitalism would have resulted in the improvement of rail and sea transportation, the more limited development of the automobile and the development of newer, more convenient and cheaper modes of transportation. Just what these modes would have been is open to speculation; that they would have been developed is beyond doubt, since part of

that \$70-billion spent on highways would have been spent by entrepreneurs to develop new systems.

As the economic derivative of libertarianism, laissez-faire capitalism is an economics of life, of rationality. Like libertarianism in general, it is founded on a belief in the ultimate ability of the individual to engage in enterprises and exchanges of mutual benefit. Like libertarianism, it represents man's aspiration for freedom. And, like libertarianism, it is the only viable solution to the catastrophe of statism in the modern age.

THE libertarian movement, which is only beginning to make itself felt in intellectual circles, has already grown to significant proportions and is undoubtedly the fastest-growing movement in the country. As movements go, it is already well stocked with house and reference philosophers, economists, historians, novelists and propagandists. Ayn Rand has been and probably will continue to be its key philosopher. Nathaniel Branden, her former protégé, is another major thinker. Ludwig von Mises qualifies as the movement's chief economist, as well as an important historian. Another economist and historian who has had a significant impact on libertarianism is F. A. Hayek, author of the seminal "Road to Serfdom." Murray Rothbard, editor of the newsletter Libertarian Forum and author of the aforementioned capitalist textbook, "Man, Economy and State," is another movement economist and publicist. Robert Heinlein's novel, "The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress," is enjoying considerable popularity among libertarians, as are the writings of sociologist Paul Goodman, who, for his own part, seems to be finding the libertarian movement, if not an ideological home, at least a very hospitable place to visit. Movement scholars even have their own quarterly journal, Libertarian Analysis.

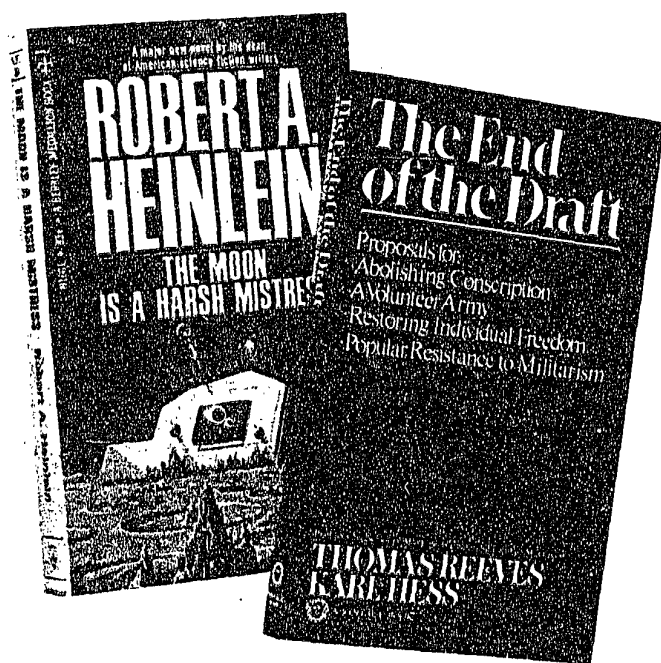
As for propagandists and leaders, the movement has many, with new ones emerging almost daily. Karl Hess, a onetime Goldwater speechwriter, has been a prime publicist, and recently co-authored "The End of the Draft," a scathing attack on military conscription. Another is Jerome Tuccille, whose "Radical Libertarianism: A Right-Wing Alternative" was the first exposition of radical libertarianism to come from a "straight" publishing house. Other publicists include Lowell Ponte, who writes a syndicated bi-weekly column for The Los Angeles Free Press, and Don Franzen and Leon Kaspersky,

who have started an underground libertarian newspaper called Protos, which is beginning to be distributed nationwide. The most professional libertarian publication is the magazine Reason, edited by a 23-year-old graphic artist, Lanny Friedlander.

The chief libertarian organization nationally is the Philadelphia-based Society for Individual Liberty. Founded by Don Ernsberger and Dana Rohrabacher, both former members of Y.A.F., it publishes a monthly magazine called The Individualist, acts as a service agency for its local

rather than minor areas of disagreement, the conflict is really more apparent than actual. Limited government and anarchy are not so far apart as they seem. From one point of view, limited government is a subset of anarchy, a natural monopoly on courts, police and defense, evolved from the free market. Those who call for limited government and those who call for anarchy would be content to live in one another's systems if either were instituted.

As for the question of means, revolution and working through the system are



affiliates and sponsors occasional libertarian forums.

The last forum, held at Drexel University last September, drew more than 300 libertarians from all over the East to hear Von Mises, Ponte, Rohrabacher and David Friedman, son of economist Milton Friedman. David Friedman is still another libertarian publicist, and is one of the movement's most brilliant and articulate spokesmen.

Most active libertarians are young and fail to match the popular conception of right-wingers as stodgy, clean-cut in appearance and super-straight in attitude. "As the New Left drifts further into rigid Marxism," says one libertarian student at Columbia, "it is getting straighter and straighter, while we are getting progressively looser and freakier."

At present, the only areas of disagreement within the libertarian movement are whether the movement should strive for anarchy or for limited government, and whether it should work through revolution or within the system. While "only" sounds like an understatement, and ends and means seem to be major

not necessarily contradictory or mutually exclusive. Libertarian revolutionists realize that a revolution that will bring freedom can be built only by engaging the support of the people through a long period of sustained education. On the other hand, those who advocate working in the system realize that only a revolutionary charge in attitudes and institutions can ultimately bring about the libertarian ideal. Again, each side would be more than happy if the other's formula were to succeed.

John F. Kennedy, one of the leading reactionaries of the sixties, is remembered for his famous line, "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country." Today, more and more young people are instead following the advice of David Friedman: "Ask not what government can do for you . . . ask rather what government is doing to you." When Friedman's remark is as widely known and as enthusiastically received as Kennedy's, the libertarian movement will be well on its way toward the liberation of the United States. ■