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I agreed to come here today to speak on some such subject as "The Libertarian as Conservative." To me this is so obvious that I am hard put to find something to say to people who still think libertarianism has something to do with liberty. A libertarian is just a Republican who takes drugs. I'd have preferred a more controversial topic like "The Myth of the Penile Orgasm." But since my attendance here is subsidized by the esteemed distributor of a veritable reference library on mayhem and dirty tricks, I can't just take the conch and go rogue. I will indeed mutilate the sacred cow which is libertarianism, as ordered, but I'll administer a few hard lefts to the right in my own way. And I don't mean the easy way. I could just point to the laissez-faire Trilateralism of the Libertarian Party, then leave and go look for a party. It doesn't take long to say that if you fight fire with fire, you'll get burned.

If that were all I came up with, somebody would up and say that the LP has lapsed from the libertarian faith, just as Christians have insisted that their behavior over the last 1900 years or so shouldn't be held against Christianity. There are libertarians who try to retrieve libertarianism from the Libertarian Party just as there are Christians who try to reclaim Christianity from Christendom and

communists (I've tried to myself) who try to save communism from the Communist parties and states. They (and I) meant well but we lost. Libertarianism *is* party-archist fringe-rightism just as socialism really is what Eastern European dissidents call "real socialism," *i.e.*, the real-life state-socialism of queues, quotas, corruption and coercion. But I choose not to knock down this libertarian strawman-*qua*-man who's blowing over anyway. A wing of the Reaganist Right has obviously appropriated, with suspect selectivity, such libertarian themes as deregulation and voluntarism. Ideologues indignate that Reagan has travestied their principles. Tough shit! I notice that it's *their* principles, not mine, that he found suitable to travesty. This kind of quarrel doesn't interest me. My reasons for regarding libertarianism as conservative run deeper than that.

My target is what most libertarians have in common — with each other, and with their ostensible enemies. Libertarians serve the state all the better because they declaim against it. At bottom, they want what it wants. But you can't want what the state wants without wanting the state, for what the state wants is the conditions in which it flourishes. My (unfriendly) approach to modern society is to regard it as an integrated totality. Silly doctrinaire theories which regard the state as a parasitic excrescence on society cannot explain its centuries-long persistence, its ongoing encroachment upon what was previously market terrain, or its acceptance by the overwhelming majority of people including its demonstrable victims.

A far more plausible theory is that the state and (at least) *this* form of society have a symbiotic (however sordid) interdependence, that the state and such institutions as the market and the nuclear family are, in several ways, modes of hierarchy and control. Their articulation is not always harmonious (herein of turf-fights) but they share a common interest in consigning their conflicts to elite or expert resolution. To demonize state authoritarianism while ignoring identical albeit contract-consecrated sub-

servient arrangements in the large-scale corporations which control the world economy is fetishism at its worst. And yet (to quote the most vociferous of radical libertarians, Professor Murray Rothbard) there is nothing un-libertarian about "organization, hierarchy, wage-work, granting of funds by libertarian millionaires, and a libertarian party." Indeed. That is why libertarianism is just conservatism with a rationalist/positivist veneer.

Libertarians render a service to the state which only they can provide. For all their complaints about its illicit extensions they concede, in their lucid moments, that the state rules far more by consent than by coercion — which is to say, on present-state "libertarian" terms the state doesn't rule at all, it merely carries out the tacit or explicit terms of its contracts. If it seems contradictory to say that coercion is consensual, the contradiction is in the world, not in the expression, and can't adequately be rendered except by dialectical discourse. One-dimensional syllogistics can't do justice to a world largely lacking in the virtue. If your language lacks poetry and paradox, it's unequal to the task of accounting for actuality. Otherwise anything radically new is literally unspeakable. The scholastic "A = A" logic created by the Catholic Church which the libertarians inherited, unquestioned, from the Randites is just as constrictively conservative as the Newspeak of *1984*.

The state commands, for the most part, only because it commands popular support. It is (and should be) an embarrassment to libertarians that the state rules with mass support — including, for all practical purposes, theirs.

Libertarians reinforce acquiescent attitudes by diverting discontents which are generalized (or tending that way) and focusing them on particular features and functions of the state which they are the first to insist are expendable! Thus they turn potential revolutionaries into repairmen. Constructive criticism is really the subtlest sort of praise. If the libertarians succeed in relieving the state of its exiguous activities, they just might be its salvation. No longer will reverence for authority be eroded by the prevalent official in-

eptitude. The more the state does, the more it does badly. Surely one reason for the common man's aversion to Communism is his reluctance to see the entire economy run like the Post Office. The state tries to turn its soldiers and policemen into objects of veneration and respect, but uniforms lose a lot of their mystique when you see them on park rangers and garbage men.

The ideals and institutions of authority tend to cluster together, both subjectively and objectively. You may recall Edward Gibbon's remark about the eternal alliance of Throne and Altar. Disaffection from received dogmas has a tendency to spread. If there is any future for freedom, it depends on this. Unless and until alienation recognizes itself, all the guns the libertarians cherish will be useless against the state.

You might object that what I've said may apply to the minarchist majority of libertarians, but not to the self-styled anarchists among them. Not so. To my mind a right-wing anarchist is just a minarchist who'd abolish the state to his own satisfaction by calling it something else. But this incestuous family squabble is no affair of mine. Both camps call for partial or complete privatization of state functions but neither questions the functions themselves. They don't denounce what the state does, they just object to who's doing it. This is why the people most victimized by the state display the least interest in libertarianism. Those on the receiving end of coercion don't quibble over their coercers' credentials. If you can't pay or don't want to, you don't much care if your deprivation is called larceny or taxation or restitution or rent. If you like to control your own time, you distinguish employment from enslavement only in degree and duration. An ideology which outdoes all others (with the possible exception of Marxism) in its exaltation of the work ethic can only be a brake on anti-authoritarian orientations, even if it does make the trains run on time.

My second argument, related to the first, is that the libertarian phobia as to the state reflects and reproduces a profound misunderstanding of the operative forces which make for social control in

ing them at will and assigning each a place in an imposed division of labor. The taste for freedom and pleasure can't be compartmentalized.

Libertarians complain that the state is parasitic, an excrescence on society. They think it's like a tumor you could cut out, leaving the patient just as he was, only healthier. They've been mystified by their own metaphors. Like the market, the state is an activity, not an entity. The only way to abolish the state is to change the way of life it forms a part of. That way of life, if you call that living, revolves around work and takes in bureaucracy, moralism, schooling, money, and more. Libertarians are conservatives because they avowedly want to maintain most of this mess and so unwittingly perpetuate the rest of the racket. But they're bad conservatives because they've forgotten the reality of institutional and ideological interconnection which was the original insight of the historical conservatives. Entirely out of touch with the real currents of contemporary resistance, they denounce practical opposition to the system as "nihilism," "Luddism," and other big words they don't understand. A glance at the world confirms that their utopian capitalism just can't compete with the state. With enemies like libertarians, the state doesn't need friends.

avoid subjection to one nation-state or another. But freedom means more than the right to change masters.

Hospers and other libertarians are wrong to assume, with Manchester industrialist Engels, that technology imposes its division of labor "independent of social organization." Rather, the factory is an instrument of social control, the most effective ever devised to enforce the class chasm between the few who "make decisions" and the many who "implement them." Industrial technology is much more the product than the source of workplace totalitarianism. Thus the revolt against work — reflected in absenteeism, sabotage, turnover, embezzlement, wildcat strikes, and goldbricking — has far more liberatory promise than the machinations of "libertarian" politicos and propagandists.

Most work serves the predatory purposes of commerce and coercion and can be abolished outright. The rest can be automated away and/or transformed — by the experts, the workers who do it — into creative, playlike pastimes whose variety and conviviality will make extrinsic inducements like the capitalist carrot and the Communist stick equally obsolete. In the hopefully impending meta-industrial revolution, libertarian communists revolting against work will settle accounts with "libertarians" and "Communists" working against revolt. And then we can go for the gusto!

Even if you think everything I've said about work, such as the possibility of its abolition, is visionary nonsense, the anti-liberty implications of its prevalence would still hold good. The time of your life is the one commodity you can sell but never buy back. Murray Rothbard thinks egalitarianism is a revolt against nature, but his day is 24 hours long, just like everybody else's. If you spend most of your waking life taking orders or kissing ass, if you get habituated to hierarchy, you will become passive-aggressive, sadomasochistic, servile and stupefied, and you will carry that load into every aspect of the balance of your life. Incapable of living a life of liberty, you'll settle for one of its ideological representations, like libertarianism. You can't treat values like workers, hiring and fir-

the modern world. *If* — and this is a big "if," especially where bourgeois libertarians are concerned — what you want is to maximize individual autonomy, then it is quite clear that the state is the least of the phenomena which stand in your way.

Imagine that you are a Martian anthropologist specializing in Terran studies and equipped with the finest in telescopes and video equipment. You have not yet deciphered any Terran language and so you can only record what Earthlings do, not their shared misconceptions as to what they're doing and why. However, you can gauge roughly when they're doing what they want and when they're doing something else. Your first important discovery is that Earthlings devote nearly all their time to unwelcome activities. The only important exception is a dwindling set of hunter-gatherer groups unperturbed by governments, churches and schools who devote some four hours a day to subsistence activities which so closely resemble the leisure activities of the privileged classes in industrial capitalist countries that you are uncertain whether to describe what they do as work or play. But the state and the market are eradicating these holdouts and you very properly concentrate on the almost all-inclusive world-system which, for all its evident internal antagonisms as epitomized in war, is much the same everywhere. The Terran young, you further observe, are almost wholly subject to the impositions of the family and the school, sometimes seconded by the church and occasionally the state. The adults often assemble in families too, but the place where they pass the most time and submit to the closest control is at work. Thus, without even entering into the question of the world economy's ultimate dictation within narrow limits of everybody's productive activity, it's apparent that the source of the greatest direct duress experienced by the ordinary adult is not the state but rather the business that employs him. Your foreman or supervisor gives you more orelse orders in a week than the police do in a decade.

If one looks at the world without prejudice but with an eye to maximizing freedom, the major coercive institution is not the state,

it's *work*. Libertarians who with a straight face call for the abolition of the state nonetheless look on anti-work attitudes with horror. The idea of abolishing work is, of course, an affront to common sense. But then so is the idea of abolishing the state. If a referendum were held among libertarians which posed as options the abolition of work with retention of the state, or abolition of the state with retention of work, does anyone doubt the outcome?

Libertarians are into linear reasoning and quantitative analysis. If they applied these methods to test their own prescriptions they'd be in for a shock. That's the point of my Martian thought experiment. This is not to say that the state isn't just as unsavory as the libertarians say it is. But it does suggest that the state is important, not so much for the direct duress it inflicts on convicts and conscripts, for instance, as for its indirect back-up of employers who regiment employees, shopkeepers who arrest shoplifters, and parents who paternalize children. In these classrooms, the lesson of submission is learned. Of course, there are always a few freaks like anarcho-capitalists or Catholic anarchists, but they're just exceptions to the rule of rule.

Unlike side issues like unemployment, unions, and minimum-wage laws, the subject of work itself is almost entirely absent from libertarian literature. Most of what little there is consists of Randite rantings against parasites, barely distinguishable from the invective inflicted on dissidents by the Soviet press, and Sunday-school platitudinizing that there is no free lunch — this from fat cats who have usually ingested a lot of them. In 1980 a rare exception appeared in a book review published in the *Libertarian Review* by Professor John Hospers, the Libertarian Party elder state's-man who flunked out of the Electoral College in 1972. Here was a spirited defense of work by a college professor who didn't have to do any. To demonstrate that his arguments were thoroughly conservative, it is enough to show that they agreed in all essentials with Marxism-Leninism.

Hospers thought he could justify wage-labor, factory discipline and hierarchic management by noting that they're imposed in Leninist regimes as well as under capitalism. Would he accept the same argument for the necessity of repressive sex and drug laws? Like other libertarians, Hospers is uneasy — hence his gratuitous red-baiting — because libertarianism and Leninism are as different as Coke and Pepsi when it comes to consecrating class society and the source of its power, work. Only upon the firm foundation of factory fascism and office oligarchy do libertarians and Leninists dare to debate the trivial issues dividing them. Toss in the mainstream conservatives who feel just the same and we end up with a veritable trilateralism of pro-work ideology seasoned to taste.

Hospers, who never has to, sees nothing demeaning in taking orders from bosses, for "how else could a large scale factory be organized?" In other words, "wanting to abolish authority in large-scale industry is tantamount to wanting to abolish industry itself." Hospers again? No, Frederick Engels! Marx agreed: "Go and run one of the Barcelona factories without direction, that is to say, without authority!" (Which is just what the Catalan workers did in 1936, while their anarcho-syndicalist leaders temporized and cut deals with the government.) "*Someone*," says Hospers, "has to make decisions and" — here's the kicker — "someone *else* has to implement them." *Why?* His precursor Lenin likewise endorsed "individual dictatorial powers" to assure "absolute and strict *unity of will*." "But how can strict unity of will be ensured? By thousands subordinating their will to the will of one." What's needed to make industrialism work is "iron discipline while at work, with *unquestioning obedience* to the will of a single person, the soviet leader, while at work." *Arbeit macht frei!*

Some people giving orders and others obeying them: this is the essence of servitude. Of course, as Hospers smugly observes, "one can at least change jobs," but you can't avoid having a job — just as under statism one can at least change nationalities but you can't