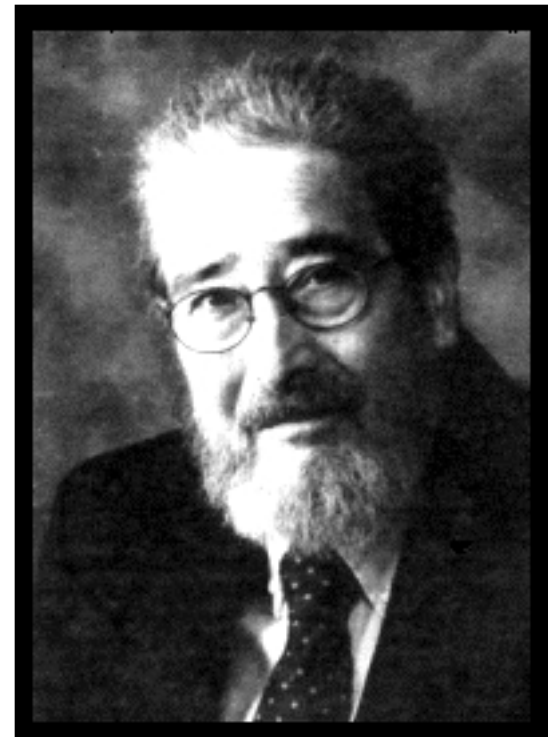


The Death of Politics



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Power and authority, as substitutes for performance and rational thought, are the specters that haunt the world today. They are the ghosts of awed and superstitious yesterdays. And politics is their familiar. Politics, throughout time, has been an institutionalized denial of man's ability to survive through the exclusive employment of all his own powers for his own welfare. And politics, throughout time, has existed solely through the resources that it has been able to plunder from the creative and productive people whom it has, in the name of many causes and moralities, denied the exclusive employment of all their own powers for their own welfare.

Ultimately, this must mean that politics denies the rational nature of man. Ultimately, it means that politics is just another form of residual magic in our culture — a belief that somehow things come from nothing; that things may be given to some without first taking them from others; that all the tools of man's survival are his by accident or divine right and not by pure and simple inventiveness and work.

Politics has always been the institutionalized and established way in which some men have exercised the power to live off the output of other men. But even in a world made docile to these demands, men do not need to live by devouring other men.

Politics does devour men. A laissez-faire world would liberate men. And it is in that sort of liberation that the most profound revolution of all may be just beginning to stir. It will not happen overnight, just as the lamps of rationalism were not quickly lighted and have not yet burned brightly. But it will happen — because it must happen. Man can survive in an inclement universe only through the use of his mind. His thumbs, his nails, his muscles and his mysticism will not be enough to keep him alive without it.

This is not a time of radical, revolutionary politics. Not yet. Unrest, riot, dissent and chaos notwithstanding, today's politics is reactionary. Both left and right are reactionary and authoritarian. That is to say: Both are political. They seek only to revise current methods of acquiring and wielding political power. Radical and revolutionary movements seek not to revise but to revoke. The target of revocation should be obvious. The target is politics itself.

Radicals and revolutionaries have had their sights trained on politics for some time. As governments fail around the world, as more millions become aware that government never has and never can humanely and effectively manage men's affairs, government's own inadequacy will emerge, at last, as the basis for a truly radical and revolutionary movement. In the meantime, the radical-revolutionary position is a lonely one. It is feared and hated, by both right and left — although both right and left must borrow from it to survive. The radical-revolutionary position is libertarianism, and its socioeconomic form is Laissez-faire capitalism.

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.

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. Such a system would be straight barter, except for the widely felt need for a division of labor in which men, voluntarily, accept value tokens

such as cash and credit. Economically, this system is anarchy, and proudly so.

Libertarianism is rejected by the modern left — which preaches individualism but practices collectivism. Capitalism is rejected by the modern right—which preaches enterprise but practices protectionism. The libertarian faith in the mind of men is rejected by religionists who have faith only in the sins of man. The libertarian insistence that men be free to spin cables of steel as well as dreams of smoke is rejected by hippies who adore nature but spurn creation. The libertarian insistence that each man is a sovereign land of liberty, with his primary allegiance to himself, is rejected by patriots who sing of freedom but also shout of banners and boundaries. There is no operating movement in the world today that is based upon a libertarian philosophy. If there were, it would be in the anomalous position of using political power to abolish political power.

Perhaps a regular political movement, overcoming this anomaly will actually develop. Believe it or not, there were strong possibilities of such a development in the 1964 campaign of Barry Goldwater. Underneath the scary headlines, Goldwater hammered away at such purely political structures as the draft, general taxation, censorship, nationalism, legislated conformity, political establishment of social norms, and war as an instrument of international policy.

It is true that, in a common political paradox, Goldwater (a major general in the Air Force Reserve) has spoken of reducing state power while at the same time advocating the increase of state power to fight the Cold War. He is not a pacifist. He believes that war remains an acceptable state action. He does not see the Cold War as involving U.S. imperialism. He sees it as a result only of Soviet imperialism. Time after time, however, he has said that economic pressure, diplomatic negotiation, and the persuasions of propaganda (or "cultural warfare") are absolutely preferable to violence. He has also said that antagonistic ideologies can "never be beaten by bullets, but only by better ideas."

A defense of Goldwater cannot be carried too far, however. His domestic libertarian tendencies simply do not carry over into his view of foreign policy. Libertarianism, unalloyed, is absolutely isolationist, in that it is absolutely opposed to the institutions of national

Student dissenters today seem to feel that somehow they have crashed through to new truths and new politics in their demands that universities and communities be made responsive to their students or inhabitants. But most of them are only playing with old politics. When the dissenters recognize this, and when their assault becomes one against political power and authority rather than a fight to gain such power, then this movement may release the bright potential latent in the intelligence of so many of its participants. Incidentally, to the extent that student activists the world over are actually fighting the existence of political power, rather than trying to grab some of it for themselves, they should not be criticized for failing to offer alternative programs; i.e., for not spelling out just what sort of political system will follow their revolution. What ought to follow their revolution is just what they've implicitly proposed: no political system at all.

The style of SDS so far seems most promising in this respect. It is itself loosely knit and internally anti-authoritarian as well as externally revolutionary. Liberty also looks for students who rather than caterwauling the establishment will abandon it, establish their own schools, make them effective and wage a concerned and concerted revolt against the political regulations and power that, today, give a franchise to schools — public and private — that badly need competition from new schools with new ideas.

Looking back, this same sort of thinking was true during the period of the sit-ins in the South. Since the enemy also was state laws requiring separate facilities, why wasn't it also a proper tactic to defy such laws by building a desegregated eating place and holding it against hell and high water? This is a cause to which any libertarian could respond.

Similarly with the school situation. Find someone who will rebel against public-education laws and you will have a worthy rebel indeed. Find someone who just rants in favor of getting more liberals, or more conservatives, onto the school board, and you will have found a politically oriented, passé man — a plastic rebel. Or, in the blackest neighborhood, find the plumber who will thumb his nose at city hall's restrictive licenses and certificates and you will have found a freedom fighter of far greater consequence than the window breaker.

Ward politics? However, I take exception to the notion of merely building in Harlem a political structure similar to but only separate from New York City's. And I may be doing Mr. Innis, who is an exceptional man, an injustice by even suggesting that that is what he had in mind.

But beyond this one instance, there is implicit in the very exciting undercurrents of black power in this country an equally exciting possibility that it will develop into a rebellion against politics itself. It might insist upon a far less structured community, containing far more voluntary institutions within it. There is no question in my mind that, in the long run, this movement and similar ones will discover that *laissez-faire* is the way to create genuine communities of voluntarism. *Laissez-faire* is the only form of social/economic organization that could tolerate and even bless a kibbutz operating in the middle of Harlem, a hippie selling hashish down the street, and, a few blocks farther on, a firm of engineers out to do in Detroit with a low-cost nuclear vehicle.

The kibbutz would represent, in effect, a voluntary socialism — what other form could free men tolerate? The hash seller would represent institutionalized — but voluntary — daydreaming, and the engineers would represent unregulated creativity. All would represent *laissez-faire* capitalism in action and none would need a single bureaucrat to help, hinder, civilize or stimulate. And, in the process simply of variegated existence, the residents of this voluntary community, as long as others voluntarily entered into commerce with them, would solve the "urban" problem in the only way it ever can be solved; i.e., via the vanishment of politics that created the problem in the first place.

If cities cannot exist on the basis of the skills, energy and creativity of the people who live, work or invest in them, then they should not be sustained by people who do not live in them. In short, every community should be one of voluntarism, to the extent that it lives for and through its own people and does not force others to pay its bills. Communities should not be exempted from the civil liberty prescribed for people — the exclusive enjoyment of all their own powers for their own welfare. This means that no one should serve you involuntarily and that you should not involuntarily serve anyone else. This means, for communities, existing without involuntary aid from other communities or to other communities.

government that are the only agencies on earth now able to wage war or intervene in foreign affairs.

In other campaign issues, however, the libertarian coloration in the Goldwater complexion was more distinct. The fact that he roundly rapped the fiscal irresponsibility of Social Security before an elderly audience, and the fact that he criticized TVA in Tennessee were not examples of political naïveté. They simply showed Goldwater's high disdain for politics itself, summed up in his campaign statement that people should be told "what they need to hear and not what they want to hear."

There was also some suggestion of libertarianism in the campaign of Eugene McCarthy, in his splendid attacks on Presidential power. However, these were canceled out by his vague but nevertheless perceptible defense of government power in general. There was virtually no suggestion of libertarianism in the statements of any other politicians during last year's campaign.

I was a speechwriter for Barry Goldwater in the 1964 campaign. During the campaign, I recall very clearly, there was a moment, at a conference to determine the campaign's "farm strategy," when a respected and very conservative Senator arose to say: "Barry, you've got to make it clear that you believe that the American farmer has a right to a decent living."

Senator Goldwater replied, with the tact for which he is renowned: "But he doesn't have a right to it. Neither do I. We just have a right to try for it." And that was the end of that.

Now, in contrast, take Tom Hayden of the Students for a Democratic Society. Writing in *The Radical Papers*, he said that his "revolution" sought "institutions outside the established order." One of those institutions, he amplified, would be "people's own antipoverty organizations fighting for Federal money."

Of the two men, which is radical or revolutionary? Hayden says, in effect, that he simply wants to bulldoze his way into the establishment. Goldwater says he wants, in effect, to topple it, to forever end its power to advantage or disadvantage anyone.

This is not to defend the Goldwater campaign as libertarian. It is only to say that his campaign contained a healthy element of this sort of radicalism. But otherwise, the Goldwater campaign was very deeply in hock to regular partisan interests, images, myths and manners.

In foreign policy, particularly, there arises a great impediment to the emergence of a libertarian wing in either of the major political parties. Men who call upon the end of state authority in every other area insist upon its being maintained to build a war machine with which to hold the Communists at bay. It is only lately that the imperatives of logic — and the emergence of antistatist forces in eastern Europe — have begun to make it more acceptable to ask whether the garrison state needed to maintain the Cold War might not be as bad as or worse than the putative threat being guarded against. Goldwater has not taken and may never take such a revisionist line — but, among Cold Warriors, his disposition to libertarian principles makes him more susceptible than most.

This is not merely a digression on behalf of a political figure (almost an antipolitical figure) whom I profoundly respect. It is, rather, to emphasize the inadequacy of traditional, popular guidelines in assessing the reactionary nature of contemporary politics and in divining the true nature of radical and revolutionary antipolitics. Political parties and politicians today — all parties and all politicians — question only the forms through which they will express their common belief in controlling the lives of others. Power, particularly majoritarian or collective power (i.e., the power of an elite exercised in the name of the masses), is the god of the modern liberal. Its only recent innovative change is to suggest that the elite be leavened by the compulsory membership of authentic representatives of the masses. The current phrase is "participatory democracy."

Just as power is the god of the modern liberal, God remains the authority of the modern conservative. Liberalism practices regimentation by, simply, regimentation. Conservatism practices regimentation by, not quite so simply, revelation. But regimented or revealed, the name of the game is still politics.

The great flaw in conservatism is a deep fissure down which talk of freedom falls, to be dashed to death on the rocks of authoritarianism.

lapses of logic — States' rights — nourished modern American racism by supporting laws, particularly in Southern states, that gave the state the power to force businessmen to build segregated facilities. (Many businessmen, to be sure, wanted to be "forced," thus giving their racism the seal of state approval.) The States' rights lapse is simply that conservatives who would deny to the Federal government certain controls over people, eagerly cede exactly the same controls to smaller administrative units. They say that the smaller units are more effective. This means that conservatives support the coercion of individuals at the most effective level. It certainly doesn't mean that they oppose coercion. In failing to resist state segregation and miscegenation laws, in failing to resist laws maintaining racially inequitable spending of tax money, simply because these laws were passed by states, conservatives have failed to fight the very bureaucracy that they supposedly hate — at the very level where they might have stopped it first.

Racism has been supported in this country not despite of, but thanks to, governmental power and politics. Reverse racism, thinking that government is competent to force people to integrate, just as it once forced them to segregate, is just as political and just as disastrous. It has not worked. Its product has been hatred rather than brotherhood. Brotherhood could never be a political product. It is purely personal. In racial matters, as in all other matters concerning individuals, the lack of government would be nothing but beneficial. What, actually, can government do for black people in America that black people could not do better for themselves, if they were permitted the freedom to do so? I can think of nothing.

Jobs? Politically and governmentally franchised unions do more to keep black men from good jobs than do all the Bull Connors of the South. Homes, schools, and protection? I recall very vividly a comment on this subject by Roy Innis, the national director of the Congress of Racial Equality. He spoke of Mayor John Lindsay's typically liberal zeal in giving money to black people, smothering them with it — or silencing them. Innis then said that the one thing Mayor Lindsay would not give the blacks was what they really wanted: political power. He meant that the black community in Harlem, for instance, rather than being gifted with tax money by the bushel, would prefer to be gifted with Harlem itself. It is a community. Why shouldn't it govern itself, or at least live by itself, without having to be a barony of New York City

It is to be expected that both liberals and conservatives respond to the notion of the end of nationhood with very similar shouts of outrage or jerks of reaction. The conservative says it shall not be. There will always be a U.S. Customs Inspector and long may he wave. The liberal says that far from ending nationhood, he wants to expand it, make it world-wide, to create a proliferation of mini- and micronations in the name of ethnic and cultural preservation, and then to erect a great super-bureaucracy to supervise all the petty bureaucracies.

Like Linus, neither liberal nor conservative can bear the thought of giving up the blanket — of giving up government and going it alone as residents of a planet, rather than of a country. Advocates of isolationism (although some, admittedly, defend it only as a tactic) seem to fall into a paradox here. Isolationism not only depends upon nationhood, it rigidifies it. There is a subcategory of isolationism, however, that might avoid this by specifying that it favors only military isolationism, or the use of force only for self-defense. Even this, however, requires political definitions of national self-defense in these days of missiles, bases, bombers, and subversion.

As long as there are governments powerful enough to maintain national boundaries and national political postures, then there will be the absolute risk, if not the certainty, of war between them. Even the possibility of war seems far too cataclysmic to contemplate in a world so ripe with technology and prosperous potential, ripe even with the seeds of extraterrestrial exploration. Violence and the institutions that alone can support it should be rendered obsolete.

Governments wage war. The power of life that they may claim in running hospitals or feeding the poor is just the mirror image of the power of death that they also claim — in filling those hospitals with wounded and in devastating lands on which food could be grown. "But man is aggressive," right and left chant from the depths of their pessimism. And, to be sure, he is. But if he were left alone, if he were not regulated into states or services, wouldn't that aggression be directed toward conquering his environment, and not other men?

At another warlike level, it is the choice of aggression, against politically perpetuated environment more than against men, that marks the racial strife in America today. Conservatives, in one of their favorite

Conservatives worry that the state has too much power over people. But it was conservatives who gave the state that power. It was conservatives, very similar to today's conservatives, who ceded to the state the power to produce not simply order in the community but a certain kind of order.

It was European conservatives who, apparently fearful of the openness of the Industrial Revolution (why, anyone could get rich!), struck the first blows at capitalism by encouraging and accepting laws that made the disruptions of innovation and competition less frequent and eased the way for the comforts and collusions of cartelization.

Big business in America today and for some years has been openly at war with competition and, thus, at war with laissez-faire capitalism. Big business supports a form of state capitalism in which government and big business act as partners. Criticism of this statist bent of big business comes more often from the left than from the right these days, and this is another factor making it difficult to tell the players apart. John Kenneth Galbraith, for instance, has most recently taken big business to task for its anticompetitive mentality. The right, meantime, blissfully defends big business as though it had not, in fact, become just the sort of bureaucratic, authoritarian force that rightists reflexively attack when it is governmental.

The left's attack on corporate capitalism is, when examined, an attack on economic forms possible only in collusion between authoritarian government and bureaucratized, nonentrepreneurial business. It is unfortunate that many New Leftists are so uncritical as to accept this premise as indicating that all forms of capitalism are bad, so that full state ownership is the only alternative. This thinking has its mirror image on the right.

It was American conservatives, for instance, who very early in the game gave up the fight against state franchising and regulation and, instead, embraced state regulation for their own special advantage. Conservatives today continue to revere the state as an instrument of chastisement even as they reject it as an instrument of beneficence. The conservative who wants a Federally authorized prayer in the classroom is the same conservative who objects to Federally authorized textbooks in the same room.

Murray Rothbard, writing in *Ramparts*, has summed up this flawed conservatism in describing a "new younger generation of rightists, of 'conservatives' ... who thought that the real problem of the modern world was nothing so ideological as the state vs. individual liberty or government intervention vs. the free market; the real problem, they declared, was the preservation of tradition, order, Christianity and good manners against the modern sins of reason, license, atheism, and boorishness."

The reactionary tendencies of both liberals and conservatives today show clearly in their willingness to cede, to the state or the community, power far beyond the protection of liberty against violence. For differing purposes, both see the state as an instrument not protecting man's freedom but either instructing or restricting how that freedom is to be used.

Once the power of the community becomes in any sense normative, rather than merely protective, it is difficult to see where any lines may be drawn to limit further transgressions against individual freedom. In fact, the lines have not been drawn. They will never be drawn by political parties that argue merely the cost of programs or institutions founded on state power. Actually, the lines can be drawn only by a radical questioning of power itself, and by the libertarian vision that sees man as capable of moving on without the encumbering luggage of laws and politics that do not merely preserve man's right to his life but attempt, in addition, to tell him how to live it.

For many conservatives, the bad dream that haunts their lives and their political position (which many sum up as "law and order" these days) is one of riot. To my knowledge, there is no limit that conservatives would place upon the power of the state to suppress riots.

Even in a *laissez-faire* society, of course, the right to self-defense would have to be assumed, and a place for self-defense on a community basis could easily be imagined. But community self-defense would always be exclusively defensive. Conservatives betray an easy willingness to believe that the state should also initiate certain offensive actions, in order to preclude trouble later on. "Getting tough" is the phrase most

fight atheistic Communism" school of thought. There are, of course, notable Jewish anti-Communists. And there are many anti-Communists who condemn anti-Semitism. But the operating question for most of the full-time anti-Communists that I have met is simply: Are you anti-Communist? Being also anti-Semitic is not automatically a disqualification on the right, though it usually is on the left.

Conservatives and liberals alike hold in common the mystical notion that nations really mean something, probably something permanent. Both ascribe to lines drawn on maps — or in the dirt or in the air — the magical creation of communities of men that require sovereignty and sanction. The conservative feels this with exaltation when he beholds the Stars and Stripes. The liberal feels this with academic certitude when he concludes that Soviet boundaries must be "guaranteed" to prevent Soviet nervousness. Today, in the ultimate confusion, there are people who feel that the lines drawn by the Soviet Union, in blood, are better than the lines drawn, also in blood, by American foreign policy. Politicians just think this way.

The radical and revolutionary view of the future of nationhood is, logically, that it has no future, only a past — often an exciting one, and usually a historically useful one at some stage. But lines drawn on paper, on the ground or in the stratosphere are clearly insufficient to the future of mankind.

Again, it is technology that makes it feasible to contemplate a day in which the politics of nationhood will be as dead as the politics of power-wielding partisanship. First, there is enough information and wealth available to ensure the feeding of all people, without the slaughtering of some to get at the possessions of others. Second, there is no longer any way to protect anything or anybody behind a national boundary anyway.

Not even the Soviet Union, with what conservatives continue to fear as an "absolute" control over its people, has been able to stop, by drawing lines or executing thousands, the infusion of subversive ideas, manners, music, poems, dances, products, desires. If the world's pre-eminent police state (either us or them, depending on your political point of view) has been unable to protect itself fully behind its boundaries, what faith can or should we, the people, retain in boundaries?

— but only by stopping an individual, dependent purchaser, never by stopping the purveyor, whose right to sell pornography for profit, and for absolutely no other socially redeeming virtue whatever, would be inviolate. An irate parent who attempted to hustle a smut peddler off the street, as a matter of fact, should be sued, not saluted.

The liberal attitude toward censorship is not so clear. At this point, it needn't be. Liberals practice it, rather than preach it. The FCC's egregious power to insist that broadcasting serve a social purpose is both a liberal tenet and an act of censorship. In the FCC canons, social purposes are defined so that a station can get good points for permitting a preacher free time but no points — or even bad points — for extending the same gift of free air to an atheist.

It is partly in the realm of air, also, that differences regarding nationalism between the old left/right politicians and the libertarian antipolitician show up. If today's conservative has his fervent jingoism for old nations, the liberal has just as fanatic a devotion to the jingoism of new nations. The willingness of modern liberals to suggest armed intervention against South Africa, while ignoring, even in terms of major journalistic coverage, slaughters in Nigeria and the Sudan, is a demonstration of interest only in politics — and in particular persons — rather than in human life per se.

Of course, conservatives have a similar double standard in regard to anti-Communist slaughter and anti-Communist dictatorship. Although it is not as whimsically selective as the liberal decision to be revolted or cheered by each particular blood bath, the conservative double standard can have equally tragic results. The distinct undercurrents of anti-Semitism that so obviously muddle many conservative movements probably can be traced to the horrid assumption that Adolf Hitler's anticommunism excused his other, but comparatively minor, faults. Somehow, anticommunism seems to permit anti-Semitism.

I have met in my time many anti-Communists who view communism as simply a creature of Jewish plotting for world dominion. The John Birch Society's separate chapter for Jewish members is a seriocomic reflection, I think, of such good old WASP anti-Semitism. The widely reported admiration of Hitler by the head man of the right-wing Liberty Lobby is a reflection, presumably, of the "you need a strong man to

often used. It does not mean just getting tough on rioters. It means getting tough on entire ranges of attitudes: clipping long hair, rousting people from parks for carrying concealed guitars, stopping and questioning anyone who doesn't look like a member of the Jaycees, drafting all the ne'er-do-wells to straighten them up, ridding our theaters and bookstores of "filth" and, always and above all, putting "those" people in their place. To the conservative, all too often, the alternatives are social conformity or unthinkable chaos.

Even if these were the only alternatives — which they obviously aren't — there are many reasons for preferring chaos to conformity. Personally, I believe I would have a better chance of surviving — and certainly my values would have a better chance of surviving — with a Watts, Chicago, Detroit, or Washington in flames than with an entire nation snug in a garrison.

Riots in modern America must be broken down into component parts. They are not all simple looting and violence against life and property. They are also directed against the prevailing violence of the state — the sort of ongoing civic violence that permits regular police supervision of everyday life in some neighborhoods, the rules and regulations that inhibit absolutely free trading, the public schools that serve the visions of bureaucracy rather than the varieties of individual people. There is violence also by those who simply want to shoot their way into political power otherwise denied them. Conservatives seem to think that greater state police power is the answer. Liberals seem to think that more preferential state welfare power is the answer. Power, power, power.

Except for ordinary looters — for whom the answer must be to stop them as you would any other thief — the real answer to rioting must lie elsewhere. It must lie in the abandonment, not the extension, of state power — state power that oppresses people, state power that tempts people. To cite one strong example: The white stores in many black neighborhoods, which are said to cause such dissatisfaction and envy, have a special unrealized advantage thanks to state power. In a very poor neighborhood there may be many with the natural ability to open a retail store, but it is much less likely that these people would also have the ability to meet all the state and city regulations, governing everything from cleanliness to bookkeeping, which very often comprise the marginal difference between going into business or staying out. In a

real laissez-faire society, the local entrepreneur, with whom the neighbors might prefer to deal, could go openly into business — selling marijuana, whiskey, numbers, slips, books, food or medical advice from the trunk of his car. He could forget about ledgers, forms and reports and simply get on with the business of business, rather than the business of bureaucracy. Allowing ghetto dwellers to compete on their own terms, rather than someone else's, should prove a more satisfying and practical solution to ghetto problems than either rampages or restrictions.

The libertarian thrusts away from power and authority that marked the Goldwater campaign were castigated from the left as being "nostalgic yearnings for a simpler world." (Perhaps akin to the simplistic yearnings of the hippies whom the left so easily tolerates even while it excoriates Goldwater.) Goldwater's libertarianism was castigated from the right — he received virtually no support from big business — as representing policies that could lead to unregulated competition, international free trade and, even worse, a weakening of the very special partnership that big business now enjoys with Big Government.

The most incredible convolution in the thinking that attacked Goldwater as reactionary, which he isn't, rather than radical, which he is, came in regard to nuclear weapons. In that area he was specifically damned for daring to propose that the control of these weapons be shared, and even fully placed, in the multinational command of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, rather than left to the personal, one-man discretion of the President of the United States.

Again, who is reactionary and who is radical? The men who want an atomic king enthroned in Washington, or the man who dares ask that that divine right of destruction become less divine and more divided? Until recently, it was a popular cocktail pastime to speculate of the difference between the war in Vietnam under "Save-the-world-from Goldwater" Johnson, or as it might have been under wild Barry, who, by his every campaign utterance, would have been bound to share the Vietnam decision (and the fighting) with NATO, rather than simply and unilaterally going it alone.

To return to the point: The most vital question today about politics — not in politics — is the same sort of question that is plaguing

Politics is not needed to prevent monopoly. Unregulated, unrestricted laissez-faire capitalism is all that is needed. It would also provide jobs, raise living standards, improve products, and so forth. If commercial activity were unregulated and absolutely unsubsidized, it could depend upon only one factor for success — pleasing customers.

Censorship is another notable example in which politics, and politicians, interpose between customer and satisfaction. The gauge becomes not whether the customer is happy, but whether the politician (either singly or as a surrogate for "the public") is happy. This applies equally to "public" protection from unpopular political ideas as well as protection from pornography. Conservatives are at least consistent in this matter. They feel that the state (which they sometimes call "the community") can and must protect people from unsavory thoughts. It goes without saying who defines unsavory: the political — or community-leaders, of course.

Perhaps the most ironic of all manifestations of this conservative urge to cleanthink concerns the late Lenny Bruce. He talked dirty. He was, therefore, a particularly favorite target of conservatives. He was also an explicit and, I think, incisive defender of capitalism. In commenting that communism is a drag ("like one big phone company"), Bruce specifically opted for capitalism ("it gives you a choice, baby, and that's what it's about"). There is no traditional conservative who is fit to even walk on the same level with Lenny Bruce in his fierce devotion to individualism. Lenny Bruce frequently used what is for many conservatives the dirtiest word of all: He said capitalism. When was the last time that the N.A.M. did as much?

Lenny Bruce wasn't the only man to alienate conservatives by opening his mouth. In 1964, Barry Goldwater alienated Southern conservatives in droves when, in answer to a regionally hot question about whether Communists should be permitted to speak on state-university campuses, Goldwater said, flatly and simply: "Of course they should."

Even anti-Communist libertarians have no choice but to deny the state the right to suppress Communists. Similarly, libertarians who are aesthetically repelled by what they deem pornography have no other course than not to buy it, leaving its absolutely unregulated sale to producer, purchaser and no one else. Once again, a parent could intrude

Television networks are fantastically advantaged by FCC licensing, which prevents upstarts from entering a field where big old-timers have been established. Even in agriculture, it is large and established farmers who get the big subsidies — not small ones who might want to compete. Government laws specifically exempting unions from antitrust activities have also furthered a monopoly mentality. And, of course, the "public utility" and "public transportation" concepts have specifically created government-licensed monopolies in the fields of power, communications, and transit. This is not to say that economic bigness is bad. It isn't, if it results from economic efficiency. But it is bad if it results from collusion with political, rather than with economic power. There is no monopoly in the world today, of which I could think, that might not be seriously challenged by competition, were it not for some form of protective government license, tariff, subsidy, or regulation. Also, there isn't the tiniest shred of evidence to suggest that the trend of unregulated business and industry is toward monopoly. In fact, the trend seems in the opposite direction, toward diversification and decentralization.

The technological aspect is equally important. Monopoly cannot develop as long as technology is dynamic, which it most abundantly is today. No corporation is so large that it can command every available brain — except, of course, a corporate state. As long as one brain remains unavailable, there is the chance of innovation and competition. There can be no real monopoly, just momentary advantage. Nor does technological breakthrough always depend on vast resources or, even where it does, would it have to depend upon a single source of financing — unless, again, only the state has the money. Short of total state control, and presuming creative brains in the community, and presuming the existence of capital with which to build even modest research facilities, few would flatly say that technological innovation could be prevented simply because of some single source enjoying a temporary "monopoly" of a given product or service. The exceptions, to repeat, are always governments. Governments can be — and usually are — monopolistic. For instance, it is not uneconomical to operate a private post-office department today. It is only illegal. The Feds enjoy a legal monopoly — to the extent that they are currently prosecuting at least one entrepreneur who operated a mail service better and cheaper than they do.

Christianity. Superficially, the Christian question seems simply what kind of religion should be chosen. But basically, the question is whether any irrational or mystical forces are supportable, as a way to order society, in a world increasingly able and ready to be rational. The political version of the question may be stated this way: Will men continue to submit to rule by politics, which has always meant the power of some men over other men, or are we ready to go it alone socially, in communities of voluntarism, in a world more economic and cultural than political, just as so many now are prepared to go it alone metaphysically in a world more of reason than religion?

The radical and revolutionary answer that a libertarian, laissez-faire position makes to that question is not quite anarchy. The libertarian, laissez-faire movement is, actually, if embarrassingly for some, a civil rights movement. But it is antipolitical, in that it builds diversified power to be protected against government, even to dispense with government to a major degree, rather than seeking power to protect government or to perform any special social purpose.

It is a civil-liberties movement in that it seeks civil liberties, for everyone, as defined in the 19th Century by one of Yale's first professors of political and social science, William Graham Sumner. Sumner said: "Civil liberty is the status of the man who is guaranteed by law and civil institutions the exclusive employment of all his own powers for his own welfare."

Modern liberals, of course, would call this selfishness, and they would be correct with intense emphasis on self. Many modern conservatives would say that they agree with Sumner, but they would not be correct. Men who call themselves conservatives, but who operate in the larger industries, spend considerable time, and not a small amount of money, fighting government subsidies to labor unions (in the form of preferential tax and legal considerations) or to people (in the form of welfare programs). They do not fight direct subsidies to industries — such as transportation, farming or universities. They do not, in short, believe that men are entitled to the exclusive employment of their own powers for their own welfare, because they accept the practice of taxing a good part of that power to use for the welfare of other people.

As noted, for all the theoretical screaming that sometimes may be heard

from the industrial right, it is safe to say that the major powers of government to regulate industry were derived not only from the support of businessmen but actually at the insistence of businessmen.

Uneconomical mail rates are cherished by businessmen who can profit from them and who, significantly, seem uninterested in the obvious possibility of transforming the postal service from a bureau into a business. As a business, of course, it would charge what it cost to mail things, not what is simply convenient for users to pay.

The big businessmen who operate the major broadcast networks are not known for suggesting, as a laissez-faire concept would insist, that competition for channels and audiences be wide open and unregulated. As a consequence, of course, the networks get all the government control that they deserve, accepting it in good cheer because, even if censored, they are also protected from competition. It is notable, also, that one of the most fierce denunciations of pay TV (which, under capitalism, should be a conceptual commonplace) came not from the Daily Worker but from the Reader's Digest, that supposed bastion of conservatism. Actually, I think the Digest is such a bastion. It seems to believe that the state is an institution divinely ordained to make men moral — in a "Judeo-Christian" sense, of course. It abhors, as no publication short of William Buckley's National Review, the insolence of those untidy persons who today so regularly challenge the authority of the state.

In short, there is no evidence whatever that modern conservatives subscribe to the "your life is your own" philosophy upon which libertarianism is founded. An interesting illustration that conservatism not only disagrees with libertarianism but is downright hostile to it is that the most widely known libertarian author of the day, Miss Ayn Rand, ranks only a bit below, or slightly to the side of, Leonid Brezhnev as an object of diatribe in National Review. Specifically, it seems, she is reviled on the right because she is an atheist, daring to take exception to the National Review notion that man's basically evil nature (stemming from original sin) means he must be held in check by a strong and authoritarian social order.

Barry Goldwater, during his 1964 campaign, repeatedly said that "the government strong enough to give you what you want is strong enough to take it all away." Conservatives, as a group, have forgotten, or prefer

the high price of the drugs leads the addict to rob and kill (rightist position), and that making drugs a public matter, for clinical dispensation, would eliminate the causes of his crime (leftist position).

These both are essentially political positions and clearly inept in a society where the line between mind-expanders such as coffee or LSD is highly technical. By choosing the economic and cultural approach rather than a political one, the antipolitical libertarian would say, sell away. Competition will keep the price down. Cultural acceptance of the root ethic, that a man's life and its appurtenances are inviolate, would justify defense against any violence that might accompany addiction in others. And what is there left for the "public" to do? Absolutely nothing — except, individually, to decide whether to risk drugs or to avoid them. Parents, of course, holding the purse strings of their children, can exercise a certain amount of control, but only individually, never collectively.

Incidentally, it is easy to imagine that, if drugs were left to economics and culture instead of politics, medical researchers would shortly discover a way to provide the salable and wanted effects of drugs without the incapacitation of addiction. In this as in similar matters — such as the unregulated competition from which it is felt people need protection — technology rather than politics might offer far better answers.

Monopoly is a case in point. To suppose that anyone needs government protection from the creation of monopolies is to accept two suppositions: that monopoly is the natural direction of unregulated enterprise, and that technology is static. Neither, of course, is true. The great concentrations of economic power, which are called monopolies today, did not grow despite government's anti-monopolistic zeal. They grew, largely, because of government policies, such as those making it more profitable for small businesses to sell out to big companies rather than fight the tax code alone. Additionally, Federal fiscal and credit policies and Federal subsidies and contracts have all provided substantially more assistance to big and established companies than to smaller, potentially competitive ones. The auto industry receives the biggest subsidy of all through the highway program on which it prospers, but for which it surely does not pay a fair share. Airlines are subsidized and so protected that newcomers can't even try to compete.

person who has volunteered to grow it. They agree on a price. One sells; the other buys. One acquires new capital; the other acquires a euphoric experience that, he decides, was worth allocating some of his own resources to obtain.

Nowhere in that equation is there a single point at which the neighbors, or any multitude of neighbors, posing as priesthood or public, have the slightest rational reason to intervene. The action has not, in any way, deprived anyone else of "the exclusive employment of all his own powers for his own welfare."

The current laws against marijuana, in contravention even of all available evidence regarding its nature, are a prime example of the use of political power. The very power that makes it possible for the state to ban marijuana, and to arrest Lenny Bruce, is the same power that makes it possible for the state to exact taxes from one man to pay into the pockets of another. The purposes may seem different, but upon examination they are not. Marijuana must be banned to prevent people from succumbing to the madness of its fumes and doing some mischief upon the community. Poverty, too, must be banned for a similar reason. Poor people, unless made unpoor, will angrily rise and do mischief upon the community. As in all politics, purposes and power blend and reinforce each other.

"Hard" narcotics must be subjected to the same tests as marijuana in terms of politics versus antipolitics. These narcotics, too, are merely salable materials, except that, if used beyond prudence, they can be quite disabling to the person using them. (I inject that note simply because, in my understanding, there remains at all levels of addiction the chance of breaking or controlling the habit. This suggests that a person can exercise a choice in the matter; that he can, indeed, be prudent or not.)

The person who uses drugs imprudently, just as the person who imprudently uses the politically sanctioned and franchised drugs of alcohol or tobacco, ends up in an unenviable position, perhaps dead. That, rationally, is his own business as long as he does not, by his actions, deprive you of your right to make your own decision not to use drugs, to assist addicts, or, if you wish, to ignore them. But, it is said, by right and left today, that the real problem is social and public — that

to ignore, that this applies also to government's strength to impose social order. If government can enforce social norms, or even Christian behavior, it can also take away or twist them.

To repeat: Conservatives yearn for a state, or "leadership," with the power to restore order and to put things — and people — back in their places. They yearn for political power. Liberals yearn for a state that will bomb the rich and balm the poor. They too yearn for political power. Libertarians yearn for a state that cannot, beyond any possibility of amendment, confer any advantage on anyone; a state that cannot compel anything, but simply prevents the use of violence, in place of other exchanges, in relations between individuals or groups.

Such a state would have as its sole purpose (probably supported exclusively by use taxes or fees) the maintenance of a system to adjudicate disputes (courts), to protect citizens against violence (police), to maintain some form of currency for ease of commerce, and, as long as it might be needed because of the existence of national borders and differences, to maintain a defense force. Meanwhile, libertarians should also work to end the whole concept of the nation-state itself. The major point here is that libertarians would start with no outstanding predispositions about public functions, being disposed always to think that there is in the personal and private world of individuals someone who can or will come along with a solution that gets the job done without conferring upon anyone power that has not been earned through voluntary exchange.

In fact, it is in the matters most appropriate to collective interest — such as courts and protection against violence — that government today often defaults. This follows the bureaucratic tendency to perform least-needed services — where the risk of accountability is minimal — and to avoid performing essential but highly accountable services. Courts are clogged beyond belief. Police, rather than simply protecting citizens against violence, are deeply involved in overseeing private morals. In black neighborhoods particularly, the police serve as unloved and unwanted arbiters of everyday life.

If, in the past few paragraphs, the reader can detect any hint of a position that would be compatible with either the Communist Party of the Soviet Union or the National Association of Manufacturers, he is

strongly advised to look again. No such common ground exists. Nor can any common ground be adduced in terms of "new politics" versus "old politics." New or old, the positions that parade around today under these titles are still politics and, like roses, they smell alike. Radical and revolutionary politicians — antipoliticians, if you will — should be able to sniff them out easily.

Specific matters that illustrate the differences would include the draft, marijuana, monopoly, censorship, isolationism-internationalism, race relations and urban affairs, to name a few.

As part of his aborted campaign for the Presidency, Nelson Rockefeller took a position on the draft. In it, he specifically took exception to Richard Nixon's draft stand, calling it "old politics" as contrasted with his own "new politics." The Rockefeller position involved a certain streamlining of the draft, but nothing that would change it from what it patently is — forced, involuntary servitude. Rockefeller criticized Nixon for having asserted that, someday, the draft could be replaced by a volunteer system, an old Republican promise.

The new politician contended that the Nixon system wouldn't work because it never had worked. The fact that this nation has never offered to pay its soldiers at a rate realistic enough to attract them was not covered in Rockefeller's statement. Nor did the new politician address himself to the fact that, given a nation that not enough citizens can be attracted to defend voluntarily, you probably also have a nation that, by definition, isn't really worth defending.

The old politician, on the other hand, did not present quite as crisp a position on the draft as the new politician tried to pin him with. Nixon, although theoretically in favor of a voluntary military, was — along with the presumably even more conservative Ronald Reagan — opposed to trying voluntarism until after the Vietnam war. Throughout the conservative stance one sees a repetition of this position. Freedom is fine — but it must be deferred as long as a hot war or the Cold War has to be fought.

All should be struck by the implications of that baleful notion. It implies that free men simply cannot be ingenious enough to defend themselves against violence without themselves becoming violent —

not toward the enemy alone, but to their own persons and liberty as well. If our freedom is so fragile that it must be continuously protected by giving it up, then we are in deep trouble. And, in fact, by following a somewhat similar course, we got ourselves in very deep trouble in Southeast Asia. The Johnson war there was escalated precisely on the belief that southern Vietnamese freedom may best be obtained by dictating what form of government the south should have — day by day, even — and by defending it against the North Vietnamese by devastating the southern countryside.

In foreign relations, as in domestic pronouncements, new and old politicians preach the same dusty doctrines of compulsion and contradiction. The radical preachment of libertarianism, the antipolitical preachment, would be that as long as the inanity of war between nation-states remains a possibility, free nation-states will at least protect themselves from wars by hiring volunteers, not by murdering voluntarism.

One of the most mediocrally fascinating minds of the 20th Century, that of Lewis Hershey, sole owner and proprietor of the Selective Service System, has put this unpretty picture into perfect perspective with his memorable statement, delivered at a National Press Club luncheon, that he "hate[s] to think of the day that [his] grandchildren would be defended by volunteers." There, in as ugly an example as is on public record, is precisely where politics and power, authority and the arthritis of traditionalism, are bound to bring you. Director Hershey is prevented from being a great comic figure by the rather obvious fact that, being involved with the deaths of so many unwilling men, and the imprisonment of so many others, he becomes a tragic figure or, at least, a figure in a tragedy. There is no new or old politics about the draft. A draft is political, plain and simple. A volunteer military is essentially commercial. And it is between politics and commerce that the entrant into radical or revolutionary politics must continually choose.

Marijuana is an example of such a choice. In a laissez-faire society, there could exist no public institution with the power to forcefully protect people from themselves. From other people (criminals), yes. From one's own self, no. Marijuana is a plant, a crop. People who smoke it do not do so under the compulsion either of physiological addiction or of institutional power. They do so voluntarily. They find a