



# Books for Libertarians

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## THE LOTUS AND THE ROBOT

By Arthur Koestler

Arthur Koestler

The  
Lotus  
and  
the  
Robot



During 1958-59 Arthur Koestler journeyed to India and Japan to determine whether the doctrines or religions of these countries offered viable alternatives to, or supplements for, elements within Western culture. Koestler never explains just what he takes the malaise of the West to be. But that is not his concern in *The Lotus and the Robot*. His concern is his search, and the failure of his search, for wisdom in the East.

Koestler's work does not deal with all the myriad views that are important in Indian, Chinese, and Japanese culture and history. He focuses, instead, on the two phenomena most often offered to Westerners as radical alternatives to their own heritage, namely, Hinduism and Zen Buddhism. Koestler's work is neither a bloodless dissection nor a historical account of these doctrines-religions-ways of being. It is an attempt—a successful one—to get at the fundamental sense and point, if any, of these doctrines-religions-ways of being. Koestler talks with the practitioners, both humble and exalted. He shows the cultural setting and the character of Hindu and Zen practice. He takes us into the world he is investigating. It is this feature of Koestler's study that accounts for the book's similarity to a science fiction novel which presents to us distant and alien worlds.

Since Koestler's study is primarily a presentation and not an argument, one cannot give a summary or outline of it. One can only report on some of the scenes in this presentation and some of Koestler's probing and accurate commentary. Koestler takes us on visits to four contemporary Indian saints of whom my favorites are Krishna Menon Atmananda and Anandamayee Ma. The former is a particularly silly (but very serious) expositor of the traditional Vedantist view that all is Consciousness or Real Self, all else (what else?) is illusion (and not Real Self?), salvation from illusion and suffering consists in realization of Consciousness, which realization is identical with the destruction of consciousness. Koestler gives amusing accounts of his contacts and discussions with Krishna Menon.

Anandamayee Ma is, perhaps—none of Koestler's Indian informants were very clear about this—God, of The Enlightened, or simply Mother. It is difficult to tell, as is indicated by one of the Indian's chief theologians: "What is really needed is to feel that She is Mother and we are Her children and that as mere children we cannot be expected to know Her as She is but only as She shows Herself to us in response to our cravings." One of the cravings which Anandamayee Ma satisfied was the craving of one of her disciples to be allowed to lick the pus off a wound on her foot.

Koestler also presents us with Yoga practice and theory and current Indian "scientific" research into Yoga phenomena. His discussion of "samadhi" the goal of Yoga practice and the chosen goal of Hinduism is superb:

The dreamless, trance-sleep of samadhi is a homage to Tanatos, an exercise in death while preparing for the "final samadhi".... The ultimate meaning of Yoga practice is the systematic conditioning of the body to conniving in its own destruction... through the temporary suspension of consciousness, to the ultimate step.

The second, and equally good, portion of *The Lotus and the Robot* brings Koestler to Japan and the study of Zen. Here Koestler's thesis is more complete. He presents a convincing case for seeing the Zen advocacy of pre-rationalism, total spontaneity, and mindless abandonment to It (do not ask what It) as the counterpoise to the rigidity, predictability, orderliness, and repression of a fundamentally Confucian culture. Koestler draws his evidence for this thesis about the traditional function of Zen from a survey of Japanese manners, culture, art, and psychotherapy. His main evaluative thesis is that a method for relieving the strain and psycho-pressure which Koestler dubs "the confucian syndrome" has mistaken itself for a profound philosophy—a philosophy so deep that it cannot be expressed discussively, but can only be intimated in parables and non-sensical anecdotes. But the real reason for Zen's inexpressability is not its depth, but its emptiness. Koestler's extensive discussions of Zen Buddhist training, education, and self-delusion are masterful, as is his development of the implications of a wholly socially-oriented "shame" ethic (i.e., the Confucian ethic).

*The Lotus and the Robot* is a beautifully written book—clear, open, and incisive. It is a remarkable work of (selective) cultural anthropology. REVIEWED BY ERIC MACK / *Philosophy* (285 pages) / BFL Price \$2.25

## EXERCISE IN SELF-DISCOVERY

By Nathaniel Branden

Most of us are aware, in our daily lives, of feeling helpless or inhibited in dealing with personal problems, of feeling blocked in thinking about about problems, or in communicating with other people—people that we are close to and have intimate relationships with. This is particularly true in our problems and relationships with people that we love—and the result is that we find that pain, hurt, anger, and fear become part of our daily lives. The pain, the hurt, the anger, and the fear combine to produce deep-seated feelings of resistance to communication beyond a superficial level, feelings of frustration and loneliness. Couples whose relationships start out open and exciting gradually decay by imperceptible degrees until they no longer have anything to say to each other, and eventually they may even forget why they are together at all. Some people accept this pattern as an inevitable part of life, as a part of some universal human tragedy. Others—like Nathaniel Branden—try to do something about it.

*Exercise In Self-Discovery* is a cassette tape-recorded exercise taken from Branden's practice of psychotherapy, and it is an attempt to provide ways and means for individuals to conquer these problems, to remove some of the blocks to thinking and communication, which so often inhibit us in our attempts to achieve happiness. Branden explains the principles behind the exercise, gives us examples of how it works, and explains how we can use it in helping to surmount some of these problems.

The principle behind the exercise is not complicated: Branden has observed that direct attempts to examine a problem often fail because blocks and inhibitions are thrown up. The purpose of this exercise is to remove those blocks, to remove much of the pressure to come up with a "right" answer, and to remove the possibility and temptation to argue about psychological insights or problems. "Many of my clients have found it useful," states Branden, "and I have trained them how to use it at home. The very least it will do is to get to know yourself better and more deeply than you ever have before... and so will the person working with you, so that if two people really want to get to know each other and to reach the depths of intimacy that perhaps they never imagined possible, well, this technique will take them there. With practice, you may learn how to understand yourself much better and to understand why you do the things you do and to grow, in consequence."

The exercise involves two people working together, face-to-face, while sitting on the floor. Branden presents a list of about 75 sentence fragments such as "I am a person who..."—"ever since I was a child..."—"mother made me feel..."—"if I were willing to let myself be embarrassed, I might tell you..."—"you make me feel angry when..."—"and "one of the ways you hurt me is..." Each person, in turn, repeats the fragment ten or

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fifteen times, with different endings supplied by him each time. No discussion, conversation, or argument is allowed here. The object is to "get into" oneself and to flow with these sentences, to open oneself up. The result is that you will often find yourself coming out with information, insights, and answers which will surprise you. Many people who have not communicated successfully for years may begin to discover why their relationship has stagnated and developed into a frustratingly superficial one, or even one in which silence, taunts, barbs, pain, and anger are the normal, not the exceptional. People who do not remember how they related to their parents as small children often remember; people who have not communicated with each other for years may do so for the first time; people who have not thought seriously about the course of their lives in years, often begin to do just that.

If this sounds amazing, then to discover how it can really work in practice is even more so, particularly since it seems so very simple. I have just touched on the content of the sentences, and on how to use them—Branden explains both in detail on this cassette. I am not one of those who

thinks that psychology is a solution to all the world's problems, but it seems clear that it can provide the solutions to some psychological problems, at least. This *Exercise in Self-Discovery* is something that I and a great many other people have found highly effective in this regard. Those who work with it seriously will find it to be of immense value. Highly recommended. REVIEWED BY R. A. CHILDS, Jr. / *Cassette Recording* / (Tape #541, 43 minutes) / BFL Price \$9.95

## RENDEZVOUS WITH RAMA

By Arthur C. Clark

In the twenty-second century mankind has begun to colonize the solar system, but the stars remain distant beacons in the sky. The busy complacency of the human race is abruptly shattered by the intrusion of a large new celestial body into the solar system. Massing over ten trillion tons, Rama is first identified as an asteroid. However it quickly becomes evident that Rama is not a natural object at all but the fantastic product of an alien civilization: an interstellar space ship 31 miles long and 12 and

## AN AFTERWORD FROM READERS,

### Rothbardian Red Herring?

There is one red herring argument delivered in Mr. Rothbard's review of *The Inevitability of Patriarchy* [BFL, April 1974] that I can't let pass my eyes again without pointing out a few of the fallacies in it:

[M]any scientific studies as well as human history... demonstrate overwhelming male superiority in those disciplines that require great ability in abstract logic. The latter include mathematics [and] philosophy.... (Where are the female Aristotles, Einsteins....)

Well, excuse my degrees in physics and astronomy!

As I understand libertarian philosophy (female though I may be, Ayn Rand help me), a person ought to be judged by his/her repertoire of talents, not by some average quantity ascribed to any of the person's associated groups. (If you're Jewish why aren't you rich; if you're blond why aren't you dumb; if you're black why can't you dance?) Goldberg's (and/or Rothbard's) argument could be construed that all men rate higher than all women in areas requiring abstract skill. Talk about egalitarianism, you've gone and made all men equal. It may be true that Einstein had a greater intellect than Madame Curie (but that depends on how you define intellect), but do you really think that you would rate a barely competent male technician above her in reasoning ability? The point is not that there have been 100 males "capable" of doing mathematics, philosophy, or whatever, for every one female who, up to this time, has succeeded in these fields. The point is that a woman of comparable ability to a male shouldn't be sent home to scrub floors. A problem with the Aristotle, Einstein, etc., argument is that many problems that need to be reasoned out don't need that level of ability. You don't have to be Einstein or male to be able to work out a problem or experiment in relativity. All it requires is same ability, and it's as obvious as breasts that some women (and only some men)

possess that ability. And that's not to say that there will never be a female Einstein.

I'm puzzled by Mr. Rothbard's (and, apparently, other "libertarians") inability to accept "women's lib" (though I'm not really sure how they interpret that term) and [their linking] it to "egalitarianism." There is no such animal as "the male" or "the female," anymore than there is some being as "the public" or "the French." All that's there is people, individuals. Nor is history a valid argument in defining the accepted roles for females (they've always been in second place so it must be in their "nature"). There have been no societies to date that have functioned without governments, mostly tyrannical. Could that be chemically related? If you believe history, you might also conclude that it must be in the "nature" of humans to want to be subjected to force, to follow a leader, to let themselves be robbed. So why bother thinking about such a thing as liberty from such things? Someone could just as easily write a book on the inevitability of governments, of taxes, of the common cold, of war. Where are the societies that allowed a free-market system to flourish? If they never existed, then it must be that they never will. (Yes, Mr. Rothbard, arguing by analogy is not the strongest way to present an idea, but I couldn't resist the temptation when it's so blatant.)

Free and unequal, yes. But that inequality comes from much more than mere estrogen. There's more to people than that, and it's the whole person, not the parts, that count.

JULIA WHITE

Research Associate (astronomy), Aerospace Corporation, Hawthorne, Calif.

### Dr. Rothbard replies:

In her letter, Ms. White repeats the major substantive point of Mrs. Leon's review: that being an individualist means that one cannot properly classify individuals in any way, such classification being somehow "collectivist" in concept. I must say that this argument strikes me as patent nonsense. Yes, each person is an individual; but also yes, there are a very large number of classifications that may properly be made of traits that these persons have in common. Thus, there is a class of people under six feet in height, a class of people with red hair, a class of people with diseased livers. These classes exist in reality, and if such classes were not understood and acted upon, the garment industry and the

medical profession, to name only two occupations, would be out of business tomorrow. And there are classes of people with different kinds of genes; and—I hope—that the Mss. Leon and White are not trying to deny the importance of genetic imprinting. Genes and biology thereby determine the fact that some persons are "males" and some "females," and I must insist that these are real classes of persons.

If such classes exist, why study them? For all sorts of reasons: for the advancement of scientific truth and knowledge of reality, and also for all sorts of decisions (such as the manufacture of sizes of clothes) which must be made in advance and hence on the basis of estimates of social class. Here Ms. White sets up a straw man; I have never heard of any "racist" or "sexist" worth his or her salt who will make a claim that every woman is less intelligent than every man, or that Mme. Curie had less conceptual ability than the corner (male) grocer. Here we are dealing with sociological and statistical classes, with multiple causes of which the male-female division is but one of numerous factors at work. But that factor has been important enough so that in every one of several thousand human societies, males have been in the "dominant" positions in society.

The crucial point about individuals and social classes is this: if one must make estimates or decisions in advance, one must go on the basis of class averages. If one decides not to rent an apartment in Harlem, one is not implying that all Negroes are muggers, but only making the rational and prudent decision, based on social averages, that the level of mugging by Negroes is statistically significantly far above mugging by whites. When one gets to know particular individuals—be they Negroes, women, redheads, Lapps, or whatever—then the class judgments, of course, fade away, to be replaced by fuller knowledge of the individual person. But the point is that in life we simply do not have the time or the resources to study every individual in the world; we must make advance judgments and decisions, and these can only be done on the rougher class average basis. Is a decision by a white person not to live in Harlem "unfair" to the great majority of Negroes who do not commit crimes? Undoubtedly; but it is the only rational decision that a person can make under the circumstances. Life, in general, is "unfair," in that some individuals and groups are more intelligent, prettier, healthier, etc. than others. But either we adjust to this natural and ineluctable fact, or we try to use compulsory methods

Letters from readers are welcome. Although only a selection can be published and none can be individually acknowledged, each will receive editorial consideration and may be passed on to reviewers and authors. Letters submitted for publication should be brief, typed, double spaced, and sent to BFL, 422 First Street, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003.



a half miles wide, a million times larger than any man-made vehicle.

With more than a little forboding, the spaceship *Endeavor* is dispatched to explore Rama. The crewmen discover a mind-boggling, cylindrical inside-out world within: complete with rivers, suns, cities and other, totally incomprehensible artifacts. Mystery after mystery confounds the explorers as the gigantic ship slowly comes alive.

Set against the background of twenty-second century socio-politics, Arthur C. Clark again demonstrates his brilliant ability to combine science, fiction and suspense. Always believable, insightfully human, *Rendezvous With Rama* is a truly exciting novel. REVIEWED BY JARRET B. WOLLSTEIN / Science Fiction (303 pages) / BFL Price \$6.95

## THE SEA WOLF

By Jack London

Humphrey Van Weyden, a literary intellectual, a man who, by his own admission, "had known life only in its intellectual phases," is shipwrecked near the California coast and drifts out to sea. He is rescued by the seal-hunting crew of a schooner called the *Ghost* and enters the world

of its captain, Wolf Larsen. And Larsen's world, by contrast, is life in its physical phases. He tells Van Weyden,

This body was made for use. These muscles were made to grip, and tear, and destroy living things that get between me and life. But have you thought of the other living things? They, too, have muscles, of one kind and another, made to grip, and tear, and destroy; and when they come between me and life, I outgrip them, outtear them, outdestroy them.

To Larsen, no organism has a right to survive unless it can grip, tear, and destroy a living for itself out of its environment. And he bases his rule of the *Ghost* on that principle. He gives Van Weyden the chance to earn his life. And *The Sea Wolf* is the story of Van Weyden's success.

The traditional conception of man is of a rational animal. And in *The Sea Wolf*, these two characteristics—rationality and animality—are separated and personified in the opposing figures of Humphrey Van Weyden and Wolf Larsen. Of course, neither is limited strictly by the characteristic he personifies: Van Weyden amply demonstrates his fitness to survive in an untrammelled state of nature, and one of Wolf Larsen's most fascinating traits is the erudition and intellectual rigor with which he defends his view that only brute force is valuable in the service of life.

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## AUTHORS, AND REVIEWERS

to level everyone and mould them into a Procrustean and egalitarian uniformity. There is no other choice available.

Ms. White's analogy with the history of the State is inapplicable on many counts. In the first place, the history of societies is, on the sex issue, used to answer a specific and directly relevant question: are men biologically more dominant—do they have greater ability and/or drive for social status? Neither Professor Goldberg nor myself cite history blindly to justify any particular condition or institution. I am sure that every society also suffered from colds and nose-bleeds, but that doesn't mean that I am opposed to using science to correct this situation. I was not using history per se to justify any state of affairs. The State can be shown, on other than historical grounds, to be parasitic and dysfunctional for mankind; the fact that it has often existed doesn't justify its existence. But if males have greater status drive due to biology, e.g., testosterone, how can the feminists alter this situation short of using coercive methods to alter fundamental biology? The libertarian in this situation wants to channel drives for status out of coercive and into voluntary and free-market channels. The libertarian solution for the State is to eliminate coercion; any solution to change biological norms has to be not only extremely coercive but is probably doomed to failure.

Furthermore, Ms. White's analogy is not even superficially correct. There have been a great many societies without coercion or the State; as a matter of fact, most if not all tribes and societies began without the State, which took over much later in the game. But male dominance is universal in time and in place.

Returning to the subject of individuals and social classes, I would like to take this opportunity to state that only the fact that very few if any libertarians have written on the subject has made me seem to be the champion of "male chauvinism" in the libertarian movement. On the contrary, I hold that each individual should fulfill his or her self to the maximum potential, and certainly, a large number of females more properly fulfill themselves in careers. The true male chauvinist is the person who asserts that "woman's place is in the home" and resents any attempt by individuals to leave for a career, thereby trying to mould every individual by social averages. I sincerely rejoice in Ms. White's career in physics and astronomy, and wish her every success. As a matter of fact, I personally prefer the company of intelligent

females, and deplore any sort of discrimination against them. For me the question is strictly a scientific one, and what I dislike in the whole controversy is the general attempt to sweep scientific truth under the rug in the name of "fairness" or sparing people's feelings. As far as I am concerned, if I should be proved wrong, and if tens of thousands of female Einsteins should rise up in the next few years, I would be among the first to applaud. But scientific truth is at stake, and I think it most unfortunate that neither Mrs. Leon nor any of the letter writers bothered to mention the testosterone argument.

MURRAY N. ROTHBARD  
NEW YORK, N.Y.

### Liberfemliblitt

Even though I am puzzled as to why a book service for libertarians would see fit to publish Rothbard's paean to the biological collectivism of Goldberg and Gilder (although I suppose he doesn't have to be an individualist to be a libertarian...) I am glad you gave Riqui Leon a chance to comment from the feminist perspective.

Ms. Leon did a very good job of defending the ethic of treating people as individuals rather than as members of a gender. However, I would like to correct one minor error in her review: namely, that there is no libertarian literature on sexism and feminism. In fact, the December 1971 issue of *Reason* (available for \$1.50 from P.O. Box 6151, Santa Barbara, CA 93111) was devoted to a discussion of feminism, sex roles, and new marital styles (the latter in an interview with author Robert Rimmer) from a libertarian perspective.

For a more detailed presentation of libertarian feminism one can go to John Stuart Mill's classic (yet amazingly contemporary) "On the Subjection of Women," which is, incidentally, popular reading in feminist circles.

In addition, the Harris County Libertarian Party (P.O. Box 5202, Houston, TX 77012) has available three pamphlets (by Sharon Presley, Lonnie Brantley and Mike Holmes) which present the case for libertarian feminism in brief form.

The libertarian literature on feminism isn't as extensive as it should be—but it's not a total loss either!

LYNN KINSKEY  
Executive Editor, *Reason*  
Santa Barbara, Calif.

### One Man's Opinion

I still have yet to understand why libertarians, who are usually so enlightened on philosophical, political, and economic matters, insist on remaining culturally ignorant in their reading of second-rate literature. I am speaking specifically of BFL's recent offering of *The Virginian* by Owen Wister [BFL, March 1974]. In almost every respect, *The Virginian* is an inferior novel: the characterizations are superficial, the plot is awkward and cumbersome, the action scenes are horrendous.

If libertarians wish to read good novels with quasi-individualist themes, I suggest they pick up a copy of *Catch 22* by Joseph Heller, *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison, or any of the works of Joseph Conrad, Henry James, or Ernest Hemingway (just to name a few).

Perhaps some libertarians could learn a little from a fellow comrade, Albert Jay Nock: "... the effect of keeping good company in literature is exactly what it is in life. ... It makes one better."

ALVIN F. KIMEL, Jr.  
Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y.

### And From the Authors...

Thank you for your courtesy in sending me a copy of the *Books for Libertarians* issue containing George H. Smith's review of *The Rise of Radicalism*.

Please tell your reviewer I agree with him on the title of the book! After initially tagging the manuscript, I had second thoughts and conversations with some friends, and tried to change the title to *The Rise of Revolutionary Radicalism*, but the publisher vetoed it on grounds of typography, marketability, etc. At that point I was too weary to wage war over it, and contented myself by inserting in the introduction a declaration like Alice's [sic]: "When I use a word, it means what I say it means." But that didn't really solve anything!

EUGENE H. METHVIN  
Washington, D.C.

Thank you very much for sending me a copy of *Books for Libertarians* containing Professor Veatch's review of my *Reason and Analysis*. I was of course delighted with it not only because it was generous in appreciation, but also because it was so well written and so just in criticism. I think it is a striking feather in the cap of the journal to be able to publish reviews of this quality and competence.

BRAND BLANSHARD  
New Haven, Conn.



# SUPERSTITION IN ALL AGES

By Jean Meslier

## PRIMITIVE SURVIVALS IN MODERN THOUGHT

By Chapman Cohen

In 1972, Arno Press, with Madalyn Murray O'Hair as advisory editor, published a series of reprints under the series title of "The Atheist Viewpoint." Many of these books had long been out of print, or were available only through obscure distributors. These reprints, like other works published by Arno, are rather expensive editions directed primarily at the library market. The cost of the entire set is prohibitive for the average reader; but several of the books, if purchased individually, are a bargain at any price, and provide the reader with excellent insight into what is commonly referred to as the free thought movement. Jean Meslier's *Superstition in All Ages* and Chapman Cohen's *Primitive Survivals in Modern Thought* are among the finest volumes in "The Atheist Viewpoint" series.

Jean Meslier (1664-1729), perhaps the least restrained atheist of the French Enlightenment, was an unknown Catholic priest throughout most of his life. In the 1720's, he wrote his *Testament*—a scathing attack on theism, Christianity, and political authority—which he kept secret during his life because, he explained, he did not wish to be burned until after his death. *Superstition in All Ages* is that portion of the *Testament* which deals specifically with Meslier's critique of theism and Christianity.

This work differs from much of the anti-clerical writing that was to appear during the Enlightenment period because, unlike later freethinkers who promulgated deism, Meslier was unabashedly atheistic. He simply refused to compromise on any issue. "I will not sacrifice my reason," he wrote, "because this reason alone enables me to distinguish good from evil, the true from the false." Theology was viewed by Meslier as "a continual insult to human reason," and religion he defined as "the art of occupying limited minds with that which is impossible for them to comprehend."

Much of Meslier's writing has a surprisingly modernistic ring. Those philosophers who herald the alleged innovations of contemporary philosophy in its analysis of theism—especially the principle that the concept of God must be defined and scrutinized before any attempt is made to establish the existence of God—would do well to consult this atheist of over two centuries ago:

Can one honestly say that he is convinced of the existence of a being whose nature is not known, who remains inaccessible to all our senses, and of whose qualities we are constantly assured that they are incomprehensible to us? In order to persuade me that a being exists, or can exist, he must begin by telling me what this being is; in order to make me believe the existence or the possibility of such a being, he must tell me things about him which are contradictory, and which do not destroy one another.

As for the concept of God, Meslier concludes, "what has been said of Him is either unintelligible or perfectly contradictory; and for this reason must appear impossible to every man of common sense."

No aspect of Christianity escapes Meslier's barbed comments. The idea that God can forgive crimes, for example, he finds unconscionable: "He who has the power to pardon crimes, has He not the right to order them

committed?" The ethics of Jesus and the New Testament he regards as "opposed to man's nature"; "it must be divine," he quips, "because it is impracticable for men." The doctrine that "the truths of religion are beyond reason" he rejects totally: "To say that there are objects on which reason should not be consulted, is to say that in the most important affairs, we must consult but imagination, or act by chance." The theological notion of creation is dismissed by Meslier as absurd: "[T]he universe is a cause, not an effect; it is not a work, has not been made, because it was impossible that it should be made. The world has always been, its existence is necessary." Even the Christian stress on charity is taken to task:

The Christian and Mohammedan States are filled with vast and richly endowed hospitals, in which we admire the pious charity of the kings and of the sultans who erected them. Would it not have been more humane to govern the people well, . . . to permit them to enjoy in safety the fruits of their labors, than to oppress them under a despotic yoke, to impoverish them by senseless wars . . . and afterward build sumptuous monuments which can contain but a very small portion of those whom they have rendered miserable?

The preceding passages hopefully convey some of the spirit and imagination contained in this amazing book. In summary I can but second the evaluation of Voltaire: "Know that this book is very rare; it is a treasure!"

Chapman Cohen (1868-1954)—third president of the National Secular Society of Britain, author of many books and over 2,700 (!) articles, and editor of a leading free thought journal for 35 years—was among the most astute and prolific members of the freethought movement. *Primitive Survivals in Modern Thought* contains five of his best essays: "On Splitting Hairs," "What is Religion?," "Why Agnosticism?," "The Ghost of a God," and "Are Miracles Impossible?"

"On Splitting Hairs" deals with what Cohen regards as the greatest danger to philosophical truth: imprecise language. "Words should convey exact thought," he writes, and "the objection to splitting hairs, and to discussing the meanings and implications of words, is part of a dislike for exact and careful thinking." Cohen then criticizes the leading scientists of his day who defended theism, such as Jeans and Eddington, for "indulging in sheer theologizing," camouflaged in sloppy language.

"What is Religion?" is Cohen's reproach of fellow freethinkers who, although atheistic, persisted in using religious terminology. "The Freethinker," Cohen argues, "is . . . distinctly out of order when he deliberately and gratuitously uses words heavily charged with religious significance to express ideas that are in fundamental antagonism to religion." After demonstrating "belief in the supernatural" to be the defining characteristic of religion, Cohen issues this call-to-arms:

[T]o say plainly and deliberately, "I do not believe in a God of any kind, I have no religion of any kind" to say this in the simplest possible language, and without the slightest equivocation, implies a degree of mental clarity and moral courage, of which but a minority of people are capable.

In "Why Agnosticism?" Cohen demolishes the notion that agnosticism  
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## THREE SACRED COWS OF ECONOMICS

By Alex Rubner

Alex Rubner is a British economist whose work is scarcely known in Britain, let alone the United States. Yet he has written a truly admirable work, which deserves wide reading among laymen and economists alike. His style is especially suited for such a wide spectrum of readers, for it is a splendid blend of scholarship and clear, hard-hitting, and lucid writing. Rubner is not afraid to call a spade a spade—and hammer his and our enemies into the ground with it! The world needs far more works that blend scholarship and passion, and when the result is libertarian, our admiration must know no bounds.

Specifically, Rubner's book is devoted to an evisceration of three "sacred cows" of Establishment Economics: "The GNP Fetish," "The Myth of Forecasting," and "The Virtues of Economic State Planning." Rubner's attack on planning is fine, and contains much wisdom, but is a little too confined to British examples to excite the American reader. But his attacks on GNP, and on economic forecasting, are superb—in fact, the best to be found anywhere in economic literature. The denunciations are at the same time comprehensive and uncompromising, and they make mincemeat of both of these fetishes of the economic—and political—professions.

Every page is a gem, but perhaps we might best quote Rubner's response to the plea by the head of the British National Union of Railway-

men, Frank Moxley, that automobiles be nationalized as "wasteful," with private ownership of a car permitted only if government authorities were convinced "that it was absolutely necessary." In our absurdly ecological age, Rubner's reply is particularly timely:

Frank Moxley repeatedly uses the word "waste" because he thinks that his readers, the railwaymen and others, think that "waste" is something bad. But is it? . . .

To use privately acquired goods in a manner considered wasteful by planners is part of our raised standard of living. So-called physical waste is not always the antithesis of human welfare but may actually enhance it. If one values leisure highly, and can afford to use it, one does not darn stockings or repair broken kitchen chairs, but buys replacements. In the olden days small soap remnants were saved in order to mould out of them a large cake of soap; Moxley's railwaymen are too affluent today to spend their time on this. Of course national resources are squandered—and valuable dollars wasted on increased pulp imports—when each family today buys one or two daily newspapers. Before the war, two or three penurious households sometimes clubbed together to buy jointly one copy of a newspaper. Shall we now return to this system? Or, perhaps better still, send everyone to read his papers in a public library? . . .

The people of Britain derive pleasure from underutilized television sets, cars and newspapers. The happiness, derived from their wasteful use, may not be recorded in the conventional GNP, but it is no less profound for that.

REVIEWED BY MURRAY N. ROTHBARD / *Economics* (273 pages) / BFL Price \$9



# MARKET STRUCTURE AND INDUSTRIAL PERFORMANCE: A Review of Statistical Findings

By John Vernon

The most generally accepted *raison d'être* for State intervention in economic affairs has been that a free market could not sustain competition: unregulated capitalism would inherently spawn monopolies, and these monopolies would inherently "misallocate" scarce economic resources.

Economists have weaned two generations of students on the notion that the structure of a market determines the degree of "competition" on that market and, ultimately, the economic performance to be expected from that market. Economists still routinely argue that if markets are "purely competitive" in structure (small firms producing homogeneous products) they will automatically generate a situation where price and marginal cost are equated, in other words, good economic performance. Anything less than pure competition—all real production situations!—necessarily misallocates "society's" resources and justifies, according to this view, State intervention (the antitrust laws, et cetera) in the public interest.

Recently, some enterprising economists have gone beyond the theoretical arguments and have sought to "measure" the resource misallocation suggested by the classical theories of competition. Empirical studies abound, students are assured, that "prove" that large firms misallocate resources, or that profit rates (an indicator of "performance") and industrial concentration are positively correlated, or that, generally, market structure is a reliable guide to probable economic performance. Indeed, the issue is thought to be so settled, that it has simply become an article of faith among antitrust and "industrial organization" practitioners and need never, apparently, be questioned again.

John Vernon's *Market Structure and Industrial Performance: A Review of Statistical Findings* may, hopefully, begin to crack the unwarranted professional smugness concerning structure/performance. Professor Vernon dispassionately reviews the conventional theories of competition and monopoly and all the important empirical studies that attempt to relate structure to performance or measure the misallocations of resources associated with "monopoly power." His incisive and marvelously objective treatment of the issues casts serious doubt on both the relevancy of the assumptions surrounding "pure competition" and the methodology and conclusions discovered in these studies. Indeed, he concludes the entire discussion by noting that the supposed link between structure and performance is so tenuous that "solid factual support for public policy in

this area does not exist." (One can almost hear the hot air escaping from the sails of the antitrust enthusiasts now!)

To indicate the sort of issues examined in the Vernon book, take the "advertising controversy." Most economists have accepted the notion that advertising expenditures are a serious "barrier to entry" that serve only to limit effective competition between firms in the American economy. They argue that advertising wastefully enhances a phony product differentiation, increases concentration, and ultimately bestows higher profits on the firms that spend the most.

According to Vernon, however, both the "theory" and the proof that would warrant such a pessimistic view concerning advertising are open to the most serious question. He notes arguments that advertising can increase competition and says that it would be sheer nonsense to ignore that fact. More pointedly, he relates that a review of the leading empirical studies on the subject does not bear out the belief that a solid, positive correlation exists between advertising and industrial concentration or profit. Some important studies have found no such relationship, and even the studies that found a correlation lose that correlation when their sample size is increased to make them more representative. As in many other areas of the "monopoly problem," there is more wishful thinking here than hard fact.

In summary, the Vernon book is valuable because it reviews and criticizes the classical theories of competition and monopoly, because it exposes the questionable methodology employed in all empirical studies of structure/performance, because it reviews in summary the most important and influential conclusions of these studies, and because it contains an excellent bibliography in the industrial organization area. It is deficient in ways that libertarians might easily anticipate. Vernon does not involve himself in moral issues, does not reject completely the theory of pure competition and the classical theories of competition and monopoly, does not call for the abandonment of antitrust, and does not even hint that the notion of "monopoly power" and even "concentration" might relate more to political factors (tariffs, patents, defense contracts, et cetera) than to anything inherent in laissez-faire capitalism. Nonetheless, the book is a valuable contribution toward clarity and light in an area dominated by holy myth. REVIEWED BY D. T. ARMENTANO / *Economics* (140 pages) / BFL Price \$4.95

## THE SHORTER OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY

Prepared by William Little, H. W. Fowler, and Jessie Coulson

One hundred and forty-one years ago the British first published their great—in every respect—*Oxford English Dictionary*. Not even its publishers, the Oxford University Press, seem to know exactly how voluminous that dictionary was, but it was at least twelve volumes. (Sometimes Oxford says there were thirteen volumes.)

Then in 1971 Oxford published the above dictionary in two volumes, a feat that was accomplished by reducing the earlier work "micrographically." (The two volumes were, to prevent wholesale blindness, sold with a magnifying glass!)

Now comes the latest reduction, *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, but this time the OED has not been reduced by a photographic process, but rather by simply whacking great gobs out of the definitions and illustrative quotes. In other words, the size of this edition's print will allow anyone under the age of 40 with normal eyesight to read it unaided, and the size of its entries will make anyone over the age of 40 recall wistfully those good old days, even in his own lifetime, when scholarship meant elaboration, not crimping back.

This version of the OED is the literary equivalent of Maxim's being put under the management of McDonald's. Well, okay, maybe that is an exaggeration; after all, *The Shorter* does have 163,000 words, combinations, and idiomatic phrases, which is still two-thirds the number of entries in the original, and the scope of the definitions and illustrations is often, though not always, as good as that of Webster's unabridged. Nevertheless, we must warn you that much of the endearingly donnish spirit of the original OED has been bled away.

John Dean III, former counsel to the president, has left many people wondering just what duties he was supposed to be performing. The original OED gives assistance, telling us that the King's counsel (who, by the way, "wears a silk instead of a stuff gown") "must not be employed in any cause against its interest (that is, against the government's interest), without special license of the Crown, which is however never refused." This is a quotation plucked from the literature of 1853 and indicates, it seems, that bending laws to suit the top dog's whim is hardly new.

Then, dropping down to "counsel" as a verb, we find among the pleth-

ora of illustrative uses, this one, most appropriate in regard to both Mr. Nixon and Mr. Dean, from Spark's *Life & Writ. II* (1789): "He has neither sense to counsel himself, nor to choose counselors for himself, much less to counsel others."

On the word "counsel," alone, all of the above, and much, much more besides, is left out of *The Shorter OED*.

Now let us turn to one of the words most frequently deleted from the Nixon transcripts—a word, after all, that has become commonplace elsewhere than in the Oval Office—and see how much less generously it is treated in *The Shorter* than even in Webster's unabridged:

### The Shorter:

Shit, shite, sb. Not now in decent use. OE. . . . 1. Excrement from the bowels, dung 1585. b. A contemptuous epithet applied to a man, 1508. 2. Diarrhaea, esp. in cattle—late ME. Also vb. trans. and intr.

### Webster's unabridged:

Shit. . . vb. shit, shitting, shits. . . vt. 1. to defecate in—usu. considered vulgar 2. slang a: to talk nonsense to b: to attempt to deceive.

Shit noun-substantive 1. excrement—usu. considered vulgar 2: an act of defecation—usu. considered vulgar 3. slang a: nonsense, foolishness b: something of little value (didn't give a—) (not worth a—) c: trivial and usu. boastful or inaccurate talk 4. slang: a contemptible person 5. shits pl. but sing or pl in constr: diarrhea—used with the; usu. considered vulgar.

But none of this is sufficient to fill the needs of *The Era of Transcripts*. One must still go to the original OED to get a feel for the pungent history of this very British word, to learn, for instance, that in the *W. Somerset Word Book* of 1885 the gentry was instructed that using the word to describe a contemptuous person was very common but that it is "applied to men only."

Indeed, to understand fully what our President or any other politician is getting at, one requires at least the original twelve volumes. However, if one's life is limited to the company of ordinary folk and if one limits one's reading to such periodicals as *The Nation* or *Human Events*, then *The Shorter* version will do very well. And it is a handsome book. REVIEWED BY ROBERT SHERRILL / (2,672 pages) / BFL Price \$47.50



## THE WORLD SINCE 1939: A HISTORY

By Carroll Quigley

*Tragedy and Hope: A History of the World in Our Time*, by Professor Carroll Quigley of Georgetown University is a work of immense scope—quite literally a history of the entire world during the first two-thirds of the twentieth century. It is a tale superbly told, and it holds the reader spellbound throughout its 1,348 pages. Though it is filled with thousands of facts, including the most minute, it reads almost like a novel. Most works of history, especially scholarly ones, are ploddingly written and of interest only to the specialist; this one is not. There are plots and subplots, rhythms and counter-rhythms through the long and fascinating narrative. History truly comes alive under Professor Quigley's pen. In *Tragedy and Hope*, Quigley does for the entire world what Vernon Parrington did for American intellectual history in his three-volume *Main Currents in American Thought*.

Though, unfortunately, it contains not a single footnote, the recital of facts is detailed and—as far as one can tell from sample comparisons—accurate. It is obviously a work of tremendous labor and careful scholarship. Most histories are partial to Western Europe and the United States, but this one has long and fact-filled sections on the Soviet Union, the Far East, the Near East, and Latin America. Its scope is indeed the world, during the first two-thirds of our embattled century. Not only wars and the causes of wars are described in it: there are long discussions of economic issues, of the psychology of leaders, of literary trends and philosophical movements, and amazingly precise descriptions of scientific advances, such as the atomic bomb. Professor Quigley has a genuinely synoptic vision: one sees all the people and movements take their place in the vast panorama of history.

It is only when Quigley goes into his own philosophical speculations that, in my opinion, he fails, particularly in the last chapter of the book. He is much better when tracing an historical narrative than when presenting abstract ideas, and when presenting ideas he appears to be better at expounding those of others, rather than his own. It is impossible, of course, to be a specialist in everything all at once, even in the history of the twentieth century, but if there are gaps in Quigley's knowledge, they are not particularly noticeable in this book. In each chapter, no matter what part of the world he is discussing, or which decade of history he is describing, he appears to be master of his material and reading every chapter is both enjoyable and rewarding, at least to the reader who is not already a specialist in the period under discussion.

For the reader to whom it matters, it is just as well to indicate where Professor Quigley stands on several issues. (One must sometimes read these things between the lines, since he seldom allows his own opinions to obtrude into the narrative.) He is not really a "revisionist" historian. However, he is not all on the other side: he has no illusions, for example, about the *Lusitania* incident and the conditions of the U.S. entry into World War I. Nor is he blind to the proximate causes of Pearl Harbor, or to the United States' unnecessarily intransigent attitude toward certain reasonable Japanese requests, which made Pearl Harbor, at least from the Japanese point of view, inevitable. Whatever one may think of his views on the causes of the major historical events of this century, I would advise: do not short-change him; listen to him. He presents a rather thoroughly reasoned case.

In domestic policy, he appears to be somewhat of a limited welfare-statist. He is certainly no libertarian, but neither is he a liberal "bleeding heart." He is well aware of the disadvantages of even the limited welfare system which he, with reservations, approves.

On the other hand, he is fully aware of the bloodthirsty nature of the Soviet regime, and returns to this point again and again. He quotes at length from Khrushchev's 1956 speech denouncing Stalin's atrocities and documents the case that Khrushchev was just as guilty. "The fault," he concludes, "was not merely with Stalin; it was with the system, and even wider than that, it was with Russia. Any system of human life which is based on autocracy and authority, as Russian life has always been, will turn up sadistic monsters, as Russia has throughout its history, again and again." He also argues for a strong American defensive stance against the U.S.S.R., contending (among other things) that had it not been for the U.S. occupation of Western Europe after World War II, the Soviet armies would probably have occupied Continental Europe. He is always and everywhere brutally realistic about the government of the U.S.S.R.

**I**N MY OPINION, his very best sections are on the period between the two world wars. His description of conditions in Germany after World War I (including an interesting essay on the German temperament), the Weimar republic, and the rise of Nazism, though relatively familiar territory to many readers, is irresistible reading. Even in this well-combed

area, surprising things come out: I had not known, for example, that in its earlier years Hitler's regime was almost laissez-faire, and that Hitler left big business pretty much alone, at least well into World War II. Quigley's account of the American developments in the invention of the atomic bomb is laid out with the care and fascination of a detective novel. And one reads page after page in total absorption as Quigley details the causes of the Bolshevik revolution and the horrors of life in the Soviet Union between the wars.

Though most of his attempt lies in getting the facts before us, from time to time interesting hypotheses appear which cast new light on already known events. Not being a historian by profession (except of philosophy), I cannot often evaluate these hypotheses adequately, but at the very least they are thought-provoking and challenging. I have space for only one example: In his section on Latin America since World War II, having described the miserable economies of Latin American nations, Quigley concludes, "The solution to this problem is not to redistribute incomes in Latin America, but to change the pattern of character and personality formation so that excess incomes will be used constructively and not wasted (nor simply redistributed and consumed)." And then he advances the concept that he calls the "Peruvian-Pakistani axis," concerning the personality characteristics of leaders and workers in Arabic as well as Latin American countries (the historical link being the Moorish influence in Spain immediately preceding the era of its colonization of Latin America): Arab life is characterized by male dominance: "sons are brought up in an atmosphere of whimsical, arbitrary personal rules where they are regarded as superior beings by their mother and sisters. . . ." Arabic boys grow up "egocentric, self-indulgent, undisciplined, immature, spoiled, subject to waves of emotionalism, whims, passion, and pettiness." This, combined with scorn of honest, steady manual work, has had a profound influence upon civilization wherever these personality patterns have had a chance to shape history: true affluence has never come into existence, or, once acquired, has been squandered by "conspicuous consumption," as a child would squander it.

**I**N ENGLAND AND AMERICA during and after the Industrial Revolution, entrepreneurs lived rather unostentatiously, reinvested their profits in their physical plants, took on new workers, laboriously perfected new processes, and decade by decade raised the standard of living; whereas in Latin and Arabic countries instant consumption has prevented any such process from getting off the ground. Hence the perpetual poverty of these nations. The vast difference in development between the Anglo-Saxon and the Latin cultures, says Quigley, lies chiefly in the ability of the one, as against the inability of the other, to postpone immediate rewards for the sake of greater but remoter ones.

I have not yet mentioned the one thing for which Quigley's book has become most famous, thanks to the recent popular books by Gary Allen and others (see below). Early on in the book we are given an unsparing account of the international bankers, the international banking system, and the creation of the Federal Reserve System under President Woodrow Wilson. To those who have not read other books on the subject—such as H. S. Kennan's *The Federal Reserve Bank* and Silas W. Adams' *The Legalized Crime of Banking*—Quigley's account, though not nearly as detailed as others, may come as a complete surprise. So will Quigley's account of the Council on Foreign Relations and its influence upon international finance, trade, and war. The C.F.R. is very briefly described, but Quigley names names and traces the organization's history and purpose, as well as revealing his own sympathy with these aims. This account is only a tiny portion of the entire book, and one gets the impression that the matter is of no greater relative importance than the space he allots to it. It is, in any case, unfortunate that later writers have seized upon these few paragraphs in Quigley's book and paraded them forth as if they were the main content of the book or the chief message Quigley has to give us. Such distortion is quite unfair to Professor Quigley, whose book is so far from being a partisan tract that it, alone among books of history that I know of, is truly what its title indicates: a history of the world in our time.

The only edition of Quigley's book which is currently in print is the shortened paperback version entitled *The World Since 1939: A History*. Page one of the paperback edition is the same as page 661 of the cloth-bound edition. From that point on the text of the book is unchanged. This puts us, however, in the unfortunate position of having just half a book, although Quigley has written a new introductory essay for this edition. The new edition contains only the final seven of the original twenty chapters. We begin the shortened version with the outbreak of World War II, without the preceding material dealing with its causes and the history of the nations and peoples of the world prior to 1939. (Thus we



# & NONE DARE CALL IT CONSPIRACY

By Gary Allen

get the C.F.R. but not the international bankers.) The new edition, though doubtless dictated by considerations of financial feasibility on the part of the publishers, is truncated, torn from its carefully nurtured roots, and lacking in developmental background (including, in my opinion, most of the book's best chapters).

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**I**n *None Dare Call It Conspiracy*, Gary Allen states many important truths which the general public desperately needs to know. Most important among these are:

1. The media of national television and radio are virtually controlled by a small group of "Eastern seaboard liberals" who slant the news, omit what they do not like or prefer one not to hear, and feed us the resulting mishmash as truth. In fact, what one hears on radio and television has very little to do with what is really going on in the world. Important history is being made, but only a few hints of it here and there are heard on the media, and then only if one listens carefully.

2. Once upon a time in this country people became millionaires largely by noncoercive means: for example, by manufacturing and mass-producing products which people wanted to buy in large enough quantities. Today, with a nearly omnipotent government, a man gets rich much more easily by getting "in" with the government; by getting special privileges, subsidies, and contracts, he can steal the wealth that has been taken from individual citizens as taxes. If you want power today, in Allen's words, "Get into the government business! Become a politician and work for political power, or, better yet, get some politicians to front for you. That is where the real power, and the real money, is."

3. Socialism, which has become the prevailing economic view in Washington, is not favored by "typical Tom" but by a comparatively small group of men at the top, who can use it to get their hands on the public till. They advocate socialism (though not by name) as a means toward their own power, not toward the equalization of wealth for the masses. Socialistic policies must be imposed by a strong central government, and one cannot obtain such a degree of centralization by sticking to constitutional means. One must bypass the Constitution—and corrupt the courts, which has been done—in order to achieve such a degree of power. The Rockefellers and the Kennedys are in practice (in spite of their false-front free-enterprise talk) socialists, who always favor the imposition of larger tax burdens and inflationary schemes on the taxpayers. In fact, says Allen, the politics of both Republican and Democratic parties today are closer to the 1932 platform of the Communist Party than they are to their own platforms of the same year: "The idea that socialism is a share-the-wealth program is strictly a confidence game to get the people to surrender their freedom to an all-powerful collectivist government."

4. The Federal Reserve System is one of the most destructive con-jobs ever imposed on an economically ignorant citizenry. Prior to the establishment of the Federal Reserve in 1913, if a bank lent more than it could return on demand, it went broke, and the individual depositors in that bank were ruined, but the entire national economy did not go down the drain as a result. With the creation of the Federal Reserve System, and with the member banks being bailed out of whatever troubles they got themselves into by infusions of unbacked paper money from the Fed, an enormous engine of inflation was created on a national scale, which leads inevitably to inflationary spirals and depressions—from which a nation always emerges with still more government controls "to handle the emergency."

5. Less well known is the fact that the Federal Reserve is in the hands of a small number of men, who are not responsible to the electorate, and who (once they are in office) are independent even of the president of the United States, who appoints them for a 14-year period. They can inflate the currency as they choose; they can cause panics and depressions, as well as huge inflations, by their own independent decisions.

The warning Allen gives in this connection is a most salutary one:

Karl Marx [wrote] a blueprint for conquest called *The Communist Manifesto*, [of which] the fifth plank read: 'Centralization of credit in the hands of the state, by means of a national bank with state capital and exclusive monopoly.' Lenin said that the establishment of a central bank was 90% of communizing a country. Such conspirators knew that you cannot take control of a nation without military force unless that nation has a central bank through which you can control its economy.

Allen also cites the misgivings of senators and congressmen: Henry Cabot Lodge, Sr. said of the Federal Reserve Bill, "It seems to me to open the way to a vast inflation of the currency. . . . I do not like to think that any law can be passed which will make it possible to submerge the gold standard in a flood of irredeemable paper currency." And Rep. Charles

Lindbergh, Sr. said: "This act establishes the most gigantic trust on earth. . . . The invisible government by the money power. . . will be legalized. The new law will create inflation whenever the trusts want inflation." And Congressman Wright Patman has said, "In the U.S. today we have in effect two governments. . . . We have the duly constituted government. . . and then we have an independent, uncontrolled and uncoordinated government in the FRS, operating the money powers which are reserved to Congress by the Constitution."

6. Allen is also correct in his allegation that it was big business that wanted and agitated for the controls on the economy such as the Sherman Antitrust Act. Gabriel Kolko's book *The Triumph of Conservatism* has shown this once and for all. Kolko said (as quoted in Allen): "Despite the large numbers of mergers, and the growth in the absolute size of many corporations, the dominant tendency in the American economy at the beginning of this century was toward growing competition. [But] competition was unacceptable to many key business and financial interests." They wanted the field to themselves; those they could not put down through competition on the open market they put down by passing laws. By means of the income tax, for example, "a siphon was gradually inserted into the pocketbooks of the general public." New competitors, hamstrung by government regulations and clobbered by new taxes which they could not afford during their early formative period, were forced under one by one—their imagination and ingenuity all for nothing in the face of ever-increasing coercive measures by government. It is almost impossible now for newcomers to amass enough capital to survive and compete, whereas the big corporations already have the wealth and funnel much of it through tax-free organizations like the Rockefeller Foundation (always socialist in its selections and preferences), while the new competitor struggles against the state-favored giant and time after time is snuffed out.

7. The entrance of the United States into World War I was unjustified by facts available even at the time. The literature on the *Lusitania* incident has now proliferated so that, 50 years after the event, the fact is obvious to anyone who cares to read about it. The effects of U.S. entry were also unfortunate: As Churchill said, if the U.S. had stayed out, "peace would have been made with Germany, there would have been no collapse in Russia leading to Communism, no breakdown of government in Italy followed by Fascism, and Nazism would never have gained ascendancy in Germany."

But now we come to the principal thesis of the book: all the events described above are the results of a Grand Conspiracy. Now conspiracies, by their very nature, desire to remain secret, and for that reason their existence is difficult to establish. But, at any rate, Allen's thesis is that there is and has been for several generations now a conspiracy of "big money interests," particularly in the United States and Western Europe, which is working to control the world by propelling its nations into socialism and bankrupting their governments through welfare-state spending and contrived wars, thus putting the governments at the mercy of the giants of finance such as the Rothschilds and the Rockefellers, and, ultimately, causing them to unite into One Socialist World dominated by these few "international bankers."

According to Allen, the conspiracy has included most twentieth-century U.S. presidents. Woodrow Wilson was a part of the conspiracy, which he implemented by initiating the Federal Reserve System and by getting the U.S. involved in World War I. Wilson, "Colonel" House, and others encouraged and financed the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, quashed most criticism of it in the American press, and when it was endangered in the early '20s, supplied further funds to keep the Soviet regime alive. The current conspiratorial headquarters in the United States, says Allen, is the Council on Foreign Relations, which includes as members many U.S. secretaries of state (including Kissinger) and other high government officials, along with their co-conspirators, the leaders of industry and finance. Here Allen quotes from Quigley's *Tragedy and Hope*, to show that there is such a conspiracy, that the C.F.R. is its chief locus, and that Quigley has at last publicly acknowledged its existence.

If such a conspiracy exists, why has it not been exposed? Says Allen:

One might expect Walter Cronkite to be thundering in wrath about an elite clique meeting to plan our lives; or the *New York Times* editorialists to be pounding their smoking typewriters, fuming about 'the public's right to know.' But of course, the landscape painters merely brush the Bilderbergers right out of existence and focus the public's attention on something like the conditions in the prisons or coke bottles littering the highways. Since the Bilderbergers are a group of the Left (or, as the liberals in the media might say, but don't, "a group of progressives"), they are allowed to go on in peace and quiet planning for 1984.

Apparently the media, too, are parties to the Grand Conspiracy.

(Continued on Page 8)



I HAVE ASKED historians about all this and they say that the conspiracy theory is ridiculous paranoid nonsense. Twenty years ago the Big Bad Men were the Communists; today they are the Bilderbergers, the captains of banking and finance. The names change, the fashions change, but always they must have themselves a conspiracy. People find it satisfying to personalize evil: it is easiest to wreak hatred or envy or fear upon something personal, such as the devil, or those who are allegedly conspiring to destroy us, but that which we find satisfying may not be true.

Of course, Allen would reply that academic historians are either ignorant of the conspiracy or trying to cover it up. And there we are: if it is hard to prove a conspiracy, it is even harder to disprove it. If one denies its existence, one is told that this only proves that the conspiracy has been cunning and successful.

At any rate, one can accept much, if not most, of what Allen says without having to invoke an international conspiracy to explain it. And even if one admits the existence of such a conspiracy, one need not conclude that it is so powerful that it can do all the things that this one has been charged with doing. (There are probably thousands of conspiracies going on all the time, but most of them are ineffective.)

When one is presented with a new hypothesis which is as startling as this one—requiring the secret cooperation of businessmen, financiers, presidents, foreign ministers, and the media throughout a period of many years—one does cast about for other possible explanations. Could not, for example, a considerable portion of the facts cited by Allen be explained along the following lines: A large number of people, including Woodrow Wilson, thought (however mistakenly) that the U.S. should get into World War I and, afterward, that it should join the League of Nations “to make the world safe for democracy.” They were not conspirators; they may have influenced one another in some cases, but they arrived at their opinions, if not independently, at least nonconspiratorially. And after World War II, a very large number of people, appalled at the prospect of nuclear holocaust, opted in favor of “One World” under the guidance of the United Nations; even if the U.S. would have to give up some of its sovereignty in the process, they believed this would be preferable to nuclear annihilation. They also believed, though they did not like high taxes, that certain welfare measures were desirable for the needy, and that large military expenditures were desirable for defense, although admittedly both of these got a bit out of hand. All of these views might be mistaken or even stupid, but they were—and are—held independently by a very large number of people—people who elect presidents to office on the basis of platforms and promises. Would this not explain the government spending programs, the annual deficits, the welfare state and the American Socialist State, the détente with the U.S.S.R. and China, and U.S. economic aid to the Soviet Union? I really do not see why the basic—and tragic—trends of our time cannot be explained without resort to a Grand Conspiracy.

My counter-suggestion, however, does not explain every fact presented by Allen. But then one wants to know (1) whether all the alleged facts really are facts, and (2) whether, even if true, they establish his case. For example, I daresay there really was (as he alleges) a meeting of the Bilderbergers in Laurance Rockefeller's Woodstock Inn on April 23, 1971, and that the proceedings were kept secret from the press. But because of

this secrecy (whatever the reasons for it), we do not know what they discussed, nor whether they had the power, even if they had the wish, to dictate the shape of the world to come as a result of their deliberations. The facts presented may suggest such a hypothesis, but the facts do not by themselves entail or necessitate such a hypothesis. Again, it is perfectly possible that one of the Rockefeller brothers flew to Moscow on a Tuesday and that on the following Thursday Nikita Khrushchev was kicked out of office. But it does not follow from this that Rockefeller had Khrushchev fired because someone else in the U.S.S.R. was considered more capable of advancing the “One World” conspiracy.

If Allen's hypothesis is indeed true, it is the most shocking truth of our time: a handful of men in various countries are bringing about socialism and centralized government, bankrupting nations, fomenting wars, and (at the same time!) promoting international détente, in order to achieve, in Allen's words, “a world government [and] a world police force to enforce the laws of the World Superstate and keep the slaves from rebelling.” If all this is true, it should be shouted from every housetop in the world, so that the people may know of this plot against their lives and liberties before it is too late. Yet precisely because it is such a vast and all-encompassing hypothesis, one wants more facts and more verification, lest one be caught with his pants down if the hypothesis turns out to be untrue.

The aim of the conspiracy, according to Allen, is control of the world through a world government. And “you can't do this if individual nations have sovereignty. And before you can facilitate the Great Merger [of nations], you must first centralize and control within each nation, destroy the local police, and remove the guns from the hands of the citizenry. You must replace our once free constitutional republic with an all-powerful central government. And that is exactly what is happening today with the Nixon Administration.”

Now, we may grant that if one had such a plan, to carry it out one might well take just such measures as Allen describes—provided you have the power to bring it off. But what if you have no such conspiratorial plan, or what if you do, but lack the enormous power required to carry it out? The actions of the Nixon-Kissinger alliance (those I am familiar with) seem to me to be explainable rather common-sensically without bringing in a conspiracy—which is not to say that the allegation of conspiracy is false, only that it is unproved. Nixon and Kissinger (apparently) want international peace—at almost any price—both because they genuinely value peace and because they want to be honored in history. They are willing to get détente, even over the dead bodies of a thousand Solzhenit-syns. They believe that an armed United States will have deterrent effect on would-be conquerors, but at the same time they wish (however wrongly) to extend to the Soviets every possible favor in order to convince them of our peaceful intentions. Now what is so implausible about that? Is it not possible to explain each of these events without resorting to the hypothesis of a Grand Conspiracy which operates in utter secrecy decade after decade behind the scenes in order to bring about the demise of freedom in the U.S. and the rest of the world?

Just possibly it is not, but in that case, I want to see much more hard evidence, and far fewer hasty inferences. REVIEWED BY JOHN HOSPERS / *History / World Since 1939* (676 pages) / BFL Price \$3.95 / *Conspiracy* (141 pages) / BFL Price \$1

## READINGS IN INTRODUCTORY PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS

John Hospers, Editor

*Readings in Introductory Philosophical Analysis* is the companion anthology to Professor Hospers' *An Introduction to Philosophical Analysis*, an excellent text which I reviewed in the July 1972 issue of BFL. *Readings* is a compilation of excerpts and articles regarded by Hospers as among the most lucid discussions of central philosophical problems, including epistemology, causality, mind and body, the existence of God, knowledge of the physical world, and ethics. The purpose guiding each selection, notes the editor, “has been [to offer] a clear and vivid introduction to each problem treated.”

This objective has, for the most part, been achieved. The selections in this volume are well-written statements representing various points of view in philosophical debates, and they provide the introductory reader with a sampling of what he may expect if he chooses to pursue philosophy in more detail. What he may expect, in short, is an admixture of sense and nonsense.

On the side of sense, for example, we have Norman Malcolm who, in defense of empirical certainty, points out that many “philosophers have defined ‘certainty’ in such a way that knowing with certainty about empirical matters is... a logically impossible state of affairs”; Brand Blanshard who, in a selection from his magnificent *Reason and Analysis*,

delivers a coup de grace to sundry doctrines of logical positivism; Antony Flew who, in his classic parable of an invisible, undetectable gardener, demonstrates that the concept of God suffers “death by a thousand qualifications”; and Ayn Rand who, in her articles “The Objectivist Ethics” and “Man's Rights,” provides a powerful defense of rational ethics.

On the other side of the ledger, however, we have such philosophers as A. J. Ayer who, in a chapter from *Language, Truth and Logic*, argues that “no proposition which has a factual content can be necessary or certain”; Herbert Feigl who, in the name of removing “false pretense and illusion” from philosophy, tells us that “all justification is relative to chosen premises”; H. H. Price who, in a tortuous attempt to ground certainty in sense-data, claims that when he sees a tomato there is much that he can doubt, including “whether there is any material thing there at all”; and C. H. Whiteley who, after baldly asserting that “there is no logical absurdity in denying or refusing to admit the existence of a material world,” goes on to “rescue” the belief in material existence as a “supposition... to account for the regularities in sensory phenomena”—thereby affording a case study in how to present a weak, obscure argument in support of the self-evident.

(Continued on page 9)



(Hospers—Continued from Page 8)

In addition to these selections, *Readings* contains material from classical philosophers, including Descartes, Mill, Aquinas, Hume, Locke, and Berkeley; as well as selections from other contemporary sources, such as Richard Taylor, J. J. C. Smart, John Hick, R. B. Perry, and Sir David Ross. All in all, therefore, a broad spectrum of opinion is presented in this anthology, and it can serve either as a collection of essays in its own right, or—even better—as a collection of source material to be read in conjunction with *An Introduction to Philosophical Analysis*. Especially when used for the latter purpose *Readings* is a convenient and informative educational tool. Those with an interest in philosophy will, I am sure, find it a worthwhile investment. REVIEWED BY GEORGE H. SMITH / *Philosophy* (387 pages) / BFL Price \$6.95

(London—Continued from page 3)

Still, the world of the *Ghost* is a fundamentally non-rational world, one governed by force and animal passion, even in such necessarily intellectual activities as argument:

Their method was one of assertion, assumption, and denunciation. They proved that a seal pup could swim or not swim at birth by stating the proposition very belliciously and then following it up with an attack on the opposing man's judgement, common sense, nationality, or past history. Rebuttal was precisely similar.

Humphrey Van Weyden enters this world with a respect for the rationality of man and leaves it with a respect for his animality. He begins, physically inept, with only his intelligence to guide him, at the bottom of Wolf Larsen's world, as the *Ghost's* cabin boy. He ends as master of the vessel and a better man for having learned that he is neither an instinct-manipulated body, nor a pure, rational consciousness, but an integrated organism who can live successfully only as a unit, both rational and animal.

*The Sea Wolf* is a novel of ideas, but it is not a novel of intellectual debates among characters who hold different points of view. It is an adventure story whose events expertly embody its theme and show the reader the consequences both of ivory tower intellectuality and of mindless brutishness. Finally, it provides a glimpse of what men and women can achieve when they master both the physical and intellectual phases of existence. And, as such a glimpse, it is a joy to read. REVIEWED BY JEFF RIGGENBACH / *Fiction* (366 pages) / BFL Price \$5.95

(Meslier and Cohen—Continued from page 4)

is a coherent third alternative to theism and atheism. Focusing on T. H. Huxley's original derivation of the term, he shows that Huxley's view of the universe "is completely atheistic, since it leaves God out." As for the agnostic's claim that one should suspend judgment on the existence of God, Cohen remarks: "We cannot suspend judgment concerning an inconceivable proposition. . . . [I]t is committing intellectual suicide to say, 'I suspend judgment concerning a thing, the meaning of which I have not the slightest comprehension.'"

In the next essay, "The Ghost of a God," Cohen drives home his point that atheism is simply the absence of belief in a god:

So far as a belief is concerned one either has it or one is without it. . . . If one believes in a God, then one is a Theist. If one does not believe in a God, then one is an A-theist—he is without that belief. The distinction between Atheism and Theism is entirely, exclusively, that of whether one has or has not a belief in God.

Finally, in "Are Miracles Possible?" Cohen examines Hume's attack on miracles within the context of Hume's denial of necessity in causation; and he concludes that, "if Hume's statement of causation is correct, then a large part of his argument against miracles loses its force." Moreover, Cohen argues, it is not enough to show, as Hume did, that no evidence can be produced in favor of an alleged miracle; rather, we should support the much stronger position that, given the nature of reality, miracles are impossible. Hence: "Knowing the constitution of water and of wine, I do not say that I do not believe there is evidence enough to prove that Jesus turned water into wine; I say I know he did not."

In recommending these two books, as with other books sympathetic to atheism that I have reviewed in the past, I do not wish to imply that they have any direct connection with libertarianism. Libertarianism, a political theory based on voluntarism, is neither theistic nor atheistic. It should be remembered, however, that the strength of libertarianism rests principally on its uncompromising appeal to reason, on its insistence that man has nothing to lose, and everything to gain, from the truth. Atheism, in my opinion, is simply the extension of reason into another sphere of human inquiry. Thus, although there is no substantive correlation between atheism and libertarianism, there is a definite methodological affinity. Both are the result of man's quest for truth, often in the face of tremendous opposition. It is for this reason that *Superstition in All Ages* and *Primitive Survivals in Modern Thought* will unquestionably appeal to the readers of *Books for Libertarians*, and it is for this reason that I commend them to your attention. REVIEWED BY GEORGE H. SMITH / *Philosophy* / *Superstition* (339 pages) / BFL Price \$15 / *Primitive Survivals* (141 pages) / BFL Price \$7

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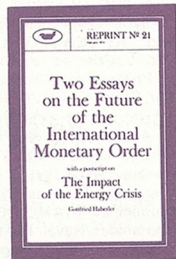
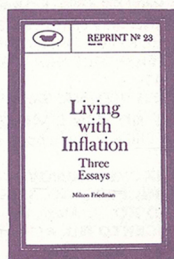
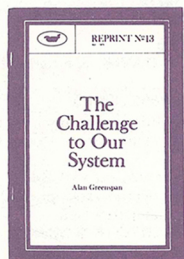






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## A WORD TO OUR READERS

■ We are pleased to announce that John Hospers, Walter Grinder, and Tibor Machan have agreed to serve as associate editors of *BFL*, joining Murray N. Rothbard and R. A. Childs, Jr. on our masthead. Professor Hospers teaches philosophy at the University of Southern California and was the 1972 Libertarian Party presidential nominee. Walter Grinder is a long-time libertarian activist, writer, and scholar who teaches economics at Rutgers University. Tibor Machan is associate professor of philosophy at S.U.N.Y., Fredonia. He is the editor of the new book *The Libertarian Alternative*, which will soon be reviewed in these pages.

■ If you have been thinking of writing a review for *BFL*—don't. That is, please query first. *BFL* reviews are done on assignment, and if you spend time and trouble on a review that has already been commissioned, it will be all for naught. So please drop us a note telling us what you have in mind before you sit down at the typewriter.

■ Several paperback editions of some of the more popular books reviewed in recent months have appeared, some we are happy to make available. These include Duncan Williams' important book *Trousered Apes* (reviewed in our February 1974 issue) at \$2.25; Alex Comfort's best-selling *The Joy of Sex* (reviewed in July 1973) is a quality paperback available at \$4.95; Thomas Szasz' collection of aphorisms *The Second Sin* (also reviewed in the July 1973 issue) sells for \$1.95; and Rose Wilder Lane's splendid work *The Discovery of Freedom* is again a paperback and sells for \$2.50.

■ *BFL* offers its heartiest congratulations to the *Libertarian Forum* which reached its fifth anniversary in April, well in the black and with a circulation of some 600 hardcore faithful. Edited and chiefly written by Murray Rothbard and published by Joseph Pedan, *Libertarian Forum* has served as a vehicle through which Prof. Rothbard's brilliantly insightful analysis of current events are set forth with incomparable style, wit, and occasionally, invective. It is hard to imagine a serious libertarian who does not subscribe to *LF* (Box 341, Madison Square Station, New York, N.Y. 10010, \$8 per year).

**REVIEWERS FOR THIS ISSUE:** D. T. Armentano is associate professor of economics at the University of Hartford and the author of *The Myths of Antitrust*. R. A. Childs, Jr. is an associate editor of *BFL*. John Hospers is professor of philosophy at the University of Southern California, a spark plug of the Libertarian Party, and an associate editor of *BFL*. Eric Mack teaches philosophy at Eisenhower College in New York. Jeff Rignbach is a broadcast journalist and free-lance writer. He has published in *Reason*, *Invictus*, *Book News*, and *Volition*, and is currently writing a book on the theory of literature. Murray N. Rothbard is professor of economics at Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn, editor of *Libertarian Forum* and an associate editor of *BFL*. Robert Sherrill is Washington correspondent of the *Nation* magazine, a prolific writer on American politics and a consultant to the *Harper Dictionary of Contemporary Usage*. George H. Smith is author of *Atheism: The Case Against God*, which, hopefully, will be published before the Last Judgment! Jarret B. Wollstein is in the investment business in Washington, D.C.



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