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Hospercult

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In January 1973, Your Friendly Neighborhood Anarchocolumnist (YFNA—ed.) tore into shreds an article written by John Hospers, Ph. D. The article fuzzed up the archy/anarchy controversy, and it will probably be viewed historically as the last ditch defense of minarchy through obfuscation. As far as I know, Hospers has ceased & desisted in this area.

Let me keep the fuzz out of one realm: personalities. Go-betweens inform me that Dr. John was offended by a lowly doctoral candidate in theoretical chemistry blowing his professorial dissertation. Of course, *scientists* are required to use rigour and logic on a day-to-day basis... No, the good doctor need not feel miffed and was assured of no rancor. Since his Abaco fomenting, he seems to have broadened his outlook and is developing quite admirably. As a person.

The critique I wrote was part of a general attack on REASON. The magazine has improved somewhat since then, printing some tame anarchists; and, as I said, so has Hospers. But a new phenomenon has arisen, one which evokes guffaws as a response, hardly deserving of the ponderous artillery of Aristotle.

I refer to Hospercult.

YFNA has seen many “cults of personality” come and go. When he came along in 1969, Rand was out, Branden was in decline, Leonard Read was receding, and LeFevre and Rothbard were shining. Above all was the intellectual giant, Ludwig von Mises.

These were individuals of achievement, men and women who stood as examples of the efficacy of a single person—the unique one. The heresy of “following” an individualist is damning enough—but so easily understandable.

All of them earned this respect. By their own efforts. In the all-too-hostile marketplace. Nobody “voted” them awards... until much past their prime.

What then can we think of a movement which honours those of no visible achievement? Surely libertarians, anti-Statists of all persuasions, cannot regard vote-getting as a worthy achievement!

But, for the sake of a column, let’s suppose that we can admire it as an accomplishment of some sort—as we might admire the Isolationist aspects of Hitler’s or Mao’s foreign policy even while recoiling in choking fury from their domestic. Very well. Now, let’s see, how many votes *did* Hospers get?

No John C. Fremont here. Again, lest poor Doc John feel put upon, let us throw in Fran “*I Bring Much*” Youngstein, who got one-third as many votes as she got petition signatures! And let us mercifully forget the quixotic campaigns of Messrs. Block and Greenberg, with their ballotophelic “Outlook.” One thing we can say about libertarian candidates in general—they sure don’t threaten us with their charisma. That is, they are not going to turn the general public into fanatical arm-banded followers for a coup.

There *are* charismatic libertarians. Dana Rohrbacher and Robert LeFevre come quickly to mind. Is it coincidence that they are anti-“political”?

I would urge upon my fellow libertarians an end to attacks on—and thus defense of—the professor. Let him gracefully slip

away after the coming debacle in California for the LP there, and get back to his work of self-improvement. Perhaps his greatness lies waiting yet to blossom, and we are distracting and stunting it by dumping on all this fertilizer prematurely.

Perhaps the Libertarian Party could move back in tune with the Movement by offering a joke candidate. Someone whose only claim to political accomplishment is the acquisition of a meaningless office, and who would campaign in a whimsical, folksy, one-of-the-rednecks manner. Like an Electoral College graduate.

I can see it all now: “Don’t Leave MacBride at the Altar—He’s the Best Man!”