

VITAMIN B-17: FORBIDDEN WEAPON AGAINST CANCER

By Michael L. Culbert

In a decade when the federal government is spending billions annually on its War on Cancer, this book treats of what the cancer establishment calls an "unorthodox" cancer remedy. *Vitamin B-17: Forbidden Weapon Against Cancer* outlines the history of the suppression of Laetrile, a non-toxic substance derived from apricot pits and a variety of fruits.

Laetrile advocates argue that cancer is caused not by external factors, but by a metabolic breakdown within the body. Furthermore, cancer is a disease of modern man living on a high level of civilization. It follows that cancers may be set off by the *lack* of something in a diet, a lack for which Laetrile is said to compensate.

Based on interviews with the originator of Laetrile, biochemist Ernst T. Krebs, Jr., author Michael L. Culbert concludes that "cancer is not formed by an alien, outside force but through natural processes that run wild when man's tampering with nature has removed or diminished the natural restraints on those natural processes."

Few claim that Laetrile offers a total cure for cancer, but many point to the tumor-reducing effect reported by the cancer patients of Dr. Ernesto Contreras, who, in his Tijuana, Mexico, clinic, each month administers the cancer remedy that is banned in the U. S. to numbers of American patients. There is, however, general agreement on the pain-reducing characteristics of Laetrile.

Because of the Food and Drug Administration's unwillingness to permit clinical testing on Laetrile, it is available only through the "Laetrile underground." Culbert describes the growth of the Laetrile lobby, which includes those from both ends of the political spectrum who advocate freedom of choice in cancer therapy. He concludes that "there is something to Laetrile, and the growing wave of evidence makes a compelling case for facing this fact without assuming Laetrile is the total answer or that all opposition to Laetrile has an identical vested interest in its suppression."

The reader is led to feel that the ban on non-toxic Laetrile, which may or may not be efficacious in cancer treatment, is perhaps as senseless as the legalization of highly toxic cancer drugs that have done little to cut the cancer death rate and frequently only further debilitate systems already weakened by cancer.

In 1953 the California Cancer Commission issued a report stating that Laetrile had no effect on cancer tumors and citing the use of 44 case studies in its research. Subsequent statements have been based on the 1953 study, despite the fact that it was later discovered that in the California study Laetrile was not given in dosages large enough to warrant reaching any conclusions about the substance. In recent years raids have been made on doctors' offices where officials suspect that Laetrile is being used. In 1973 Dr. John A. Richardson was charged for using Laetrile under California's "cancer quackery" statutes. The FDA and the National Cancer Institute have followed the line taken on Laetrile in 1953. In December 1973 NCI stated: "Based on all of the studies we have carried out, we conclude that the material does not possess activity in any of the tumor systems that we have utilized." Recent statements echo the same sentiments, including that of the Sloan-Kettering Cancer Institute, which several years ago "leaked" positive findings on Laetrile to the public. Among those who disagree with NCI's official statement is the recently retired former head of NCI's cytochemistry unit, Dr. Dean Burk.

Laetrile's foremost advocate, Ernst Krebs, points to the "billions of dollars" at stake in cancer therapy and cites the "fantastic ego considerations" among scientists and bureaucrats as key elements in cancer politics. "If you bring in Laetrile you've eliminated the department of tissue pathology, therapeutic radiology, and will have made one hell of a dent in surgery," is how Krebs explains the perceived threat of Laetrile.

Culbert's book does not plead the case for Laetrile, although it includes a chapter of remarkable testimonials. Instead it demonstrates the logic of acting upon the "test Laetrile now" slogan in order that cancer patients may have freedom of choice. Despite the fact that a predicted 350,000 persons in the US will die of cancer this year, the cancer bureaucracy keeps a closed mind to anything but the time-tried and minimally successful orthodox cancer therapies. This book makes it clear that the basic issue is not the efficacy of Laetrile, but the infringement of freedom in what amounts to a life and death question. Reviewed by Solveig Eggerz / *Survival* / LR Price \$8.95

THE BALANCING ACT & BLACK STUDIES REVISITED

By George Roche, Alan Reynolds, and Ernest Van Den Haag

The Balancing Act, consisting of two separate pieces—*Quota Hiring in Higher Education* by George Roche and *Black Studies Revisited* by Alan Reynolds and Ernest Van Den Haag—lays bare facts that should frighten the hell out of anyone interested in America's colleges and universities. Although the problems of higher education are by no means confined to these two issues, these issues are symptomatic of the kind of behavior that is threatening to destroy the American university, if in fact it has not already been destroyed.

Quota hiring in colleges that receive federal money is by no means an "official" policy, Roche tells us. Rather it is masked by all sorts of subterfuge, such as the employment of Newspeak which insists that the "goals" the Office of Civil Rights lays down for colleges under its grip are not the same as "quotas." Nevertheless, "When a bureaucrat can threaten withholding virtually millions of dollars in funds from Columbia University, not because Columbia has been found guilty of specific acts of discrimination, but because Columbia, after a half-dozen attempts and the expenditure of tens of thousands of dollars in computer studies, has failed to come up with an Affirmative Action plan satisfactory to the bureaucracy, the results should be obvious to all. . . ."

Roche makes an impressive case for the thesis that the bureaucracy is in fact operating a quota system, not the least evidence of which is the fact that the Equal Opportunity Employment Commission itself has been hit with a number of complaints charging reverse discrimination and a quota system of hiring.

On top of everything else, many members of minority groups end up being discriminated against because they do not fit the image of deprivation—the stereotypes—dreamt up by those who make the rules. While Roche agrees

that discrimination has in fact taken place in higher education, the cure seems to be worse than the disease.

The sad thing about *Black Studies Revisited* is that it hints at what could have been. The push for Black Studies courses could have led to the establishment of a true line of scholarship in this area—something which is totally legitimate. Instead, as the authors point out, Black Studies became something quite different—group therapy for black students who were not academically qualified and a place to isolate unqualified black students whose presence elsewhere would have lowered standards (but who, safely locked away in Black Studies courses, were harmless to the university as a whole). In addition, since the number of people qualified to teach Black Studies could not possibly meet the demand in so short a time, many unqualified instructors had to do. Reynolds and Van Den Haag point out that the real contributions to Black Studies came from those trained in other disciplines, such as economics and history.

I found the authors of *The Balancing Act* a bit overzealous in expressing their indignation; they might have benefitted by a less exclamatory style of writing. I must admit, however, that their indignation was infectious, for I too found myself outraged. Also, I found myself wincing at Roche's use of a Mencken quotation about women that seemed like an underhanded swipe at the women's liberation movement (an ill-placed and ill-informed one at that).

But all in all, *The Balancing Act* provides a lot of insight into the problems of quota hiring and Black Studies, and it demonstrates the ramifications of political intrusion and maneuvering in the academic realm. Reviewed by Susan Love Brown / *Education* / LR Price \$8.95

"Libertarian Cross-Currents" is a new *LR* feature designed to facilitate communication among libertarians. All too often libertarians suffer the dread anti-movement malady of isolation from and ignorance of what other libertarians are thinking, reading, and doing. I hope this column will help somewhat to fill that void by becoming an integral part in a growing libertarian "committee of correspondence" network. But the success of this column will depend entirely upon *you*, the reader.

LR cannot serve as a clearing house and communication coordinator unless you give me your input. Please help *LR* help you by sending me information on:

(1) **Academic activity.** What areas of libertarian scholarship are you or your colleagues pursuing? What papers or articles have you recently written or presented? What is your thesis or dissertation topic? (Often people have worked for years on a subject only to find that others have been duplicating their work. Cross fertilization could have saved hours of research and perhaps have proved inspirational to one or both parties.)

(2) **Recommended reading.** In your own studies and reading, you will often run across a new book, an important magazine piece, and obscure journal article, a lost speech, et cetera. These readings need not be only about libertarians or even pro-libertarian. I am also interested in articles, books, et cetera, of a non- or even anti-libertarian nature with which libertarians should be familiar if they are to effectively deal in the world of ideas.

(3) **Organizational activity.** Here, I am, of course, interested in organized political-party activity, but we are foremost interested in ad hoc movement activity. I am interested in campus lectures and organizing. I would like to hear about your attempts to set up seminars and study groups. I am also interested in local organizations that have successfully organized around local issues. Furthermore, I want to hear of successful organizing attempts applying broad ideological or national issues to local conditions. I would also like to announce forthcoming conferences, seminars, and symposiums of interest to libertarians.

Please send me announcements of talks, meetings, conferences, et cetera, 45 days before the first of the month that you wish your announcement to ap-

pear. Due to space limitations, I cannot promise that all announcements will be included, although I will try to get in as many as possible. Send all "Cross-Currents" correspondence to me, Walter E. Grinder, c/o *Libertarian Review*, 410 First Street, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003.

• One of the most encouraging things about Professor F. A. Hayek's recent tour of the country is that after he finishes his current three-volume project, *Law, Legislation, and Liberty*, he will undertake another theoretical work on economics. It seems that the combination of the Nobel Prize and contact with genuinely interested young people has renewed his interest in a discipline upon which he has not focused his attention for almost 35 years.

• A symposium on Austrian economics sponsored by the Institute for Humane Studies (1177 University Drive, Menlo Park, CA 94025) was held 22-28 June at the University of Hartford under the able direction of Professor D. T. Armentano. The central focus of attention was the presence of F. A. Hayek. Hayek was magnificently libertarian throughout. Youth, however, stole the spotlight away from even Hayek. A number of brilliant theoretical papers were presented, the most exciting of which were delivered by Roger W. Garrison of the University of Virginia (interest theory), John B. Egger of S. M. U. (business cycle theory), J. T. Salerno of Rutgers University (international trade), D. T. Armentano of the University of Hartford (monopoly and competition), and Gerald P. O'Driscoll of Iowa State (Hayek and Keynes). John Hagel III of Harvard and I gave two more papers in our continuing Austro-libertarian investigations into the area of political economy. The comments, especially by Murray N. Rothbard and Israel M. Kirzner were particularly scintillating. It was a very productive week for both Austrian economics and liberty.

• Professor Robert Nozick, National Book Award winner and Professor of Philosophy at Harvard will be giving a course on Austrian economics (in the Philosophy Dept.) this fall.

• There will soon be published a new series of books on Austrian economics, beginning with a third edition of Murray N. Rothbard's *America's Great Depression*. Other forthcoming titles will include a reprint of Carl Menger's great

AN AFTERWORD FROM

Hosanna!

I read Veatch's review of Kiefer with great interest, but I am hardly in the best of all possible positions to comment on Kiefer myself, not having been exposed to his tape.

If I read Veatch correctly, then Kiefer's theistic argument uses the approach I find most compelling. . . . The most fruitful approach to the theistic problem is to begin with an effort to understand our own mind and its functioning.

We speak of the processes of nature, with reference to such sequences of events as iron rusting, food digesting, water falling, trees growing, and so on. Now, there is one process which is utterly different from all the others; it is the sequence of events by means of which the other processes are known. The knowing event is unique; the act of awareness or consciousness is radically different from all other sequences. There's no getting around the dualism of knower and the known. Which is to say that mind is *sui generis*. Mind is an ultimate real; there's no way the non-rational could give rise to the rational, no way for the mental to be derived from the non-mental, for thinking to be a mere reflex of neural events.

To realize that mind is an ultimate real is to agree that it is not a mere epiphenomenon; mind was here *ab initio*—and we have arrived at the God of the philosophers, the cornerstone of religion.

Compression involves distortion, and I'm not sure that the above is intelligible to anyone except myself!

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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 LR, 410 First Street, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003.

Dunned Again

In the May *LR*, Michael Emerling takes an aggressive swipe at Alvin Toffler's *Future Shock*; his first words consist of an indictment and condemnation of Toffler. Harping this charge throughout his remaining comments, Emerling presents Toffler as a pernicious statistician—when any judicious reading of *Future Shock* would show Toffler's policy suggestions to be of secondary importance, compared to his main thesis on cultural adaptability. If Emerling chooses to condemn Toffler, fine, but it serves no purpose to prejudice readers who might find more value in the book than Emerling did.

The most egregious example of prejudice, however, is Petr Beckmann's blanket review of works arguing the "limits-to-growth" position. I am sympathetic to Beckmann's scorn and contempt for the modeling errors and argumentative deceptions that characterize some of these works. But I cannot accept his residual conclusion: there is no need to worry about technological expansion. This conclusion is really an unwise appraisal of contemporary and future problems, and does not reflect the concern of researchers who are presently seeking solutions. For instance, Beckmann laughs off the question of thermal pollution. He does not seem to appreciate its implications, though, for a projection of our present energy growth shows that we will be releasing enough heat into the environment by the mid-twenty-first century to alter the position of the sea level. True, few fishes would be harmed, but I also notice that Professor Beckmann would have little cause to worry about such environmental perturbations, he living in Colorado.

My general objection to Beckmann's review is the underlying attitude that technology is somehow to be regarded as omnipotent in its capability to restore damage wrought by unwise social policies. It is perfectly possible to press human ingenuity to the limit, and, in these times, it is not irrational to think that the limits are being strained. Profligate overbreeding, conspicuous consumption of natural resources, and the careless disconcert of persons such as Beckmann may yet reduce us to a shadow of our present prosperity, strokes of scientific genius notwith-

standing. If *LR* persists in soliciting such prejudicial and advocacy reviews, it will grow increasingly difficult for its customers to purchase books with any confidence that they understand what they are getting.

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Callous Freaks or Aesthetic Elite?

Petr Beckmann's attempt to hang the "elitist" label on the environmentalists is amusing when one remembers that this was the charge most often leveled at the *Atlas Shrugged* society—that it was the Men of the Mind imposing their lifestyle on everyone else. The rejoinder of course is that you've got a mind too; it's part of your birthright and it's your free choice whether or not to use it. Likewise we can say that aesthetic sensibility too is part of your birthright. Environmentalists are of all social classes and political persuasions and hold in common only that they are a little more sensitive than most to the natural world around them and what is happening with it.

Beckmann's characterization of Sierra Club types as callous freaks who prefer fish to people and condemn coal miners to die is not only ridiculously unfair (no ecology group to my knowledge has ever advocated coal as an alternative to nuclear power), but based on the same dwindling-fixed-quantity theory he has taken pains to demolish earlier in the article. The mentality that says we must build that nuclear plant, we must dam this river, we must rip off that forest, is the same scarcity-scare mentality that makes economic growth an obsessive end-in-itself rather than a means to more intensive enjoyment of living.

Factually there is not the slightest scarcity of energy on this planet, nor the slightest need to use polluting and hazardous sources of power. Energy from the Sun, wind, tides, waves and geothermal activity are literally inexhaustible for the habitable life of Earth. The only scarcities at the moment are in inventiveness in developing these for broadscale use, and guts on the part of our tit-fed utility companies in this nursemaid state in making the transition to them.

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