



FREEDOM

FROM PAGE ONE

authority the subjects it governed. The contradiction has worked imperfectly, but it has worked. Even at present, with people in power who want it all, the system's checks frustrate them. It is the responsibility of the people to always contain the power of their government which without that restraint will continue to take power away from the people. In this century government has taken much power for itself, some of it for the betterment of the people, such as civil rights laws; but much of it against the people, such as the rule of terror, secrecy and doubt caused by the nuclear arms race.

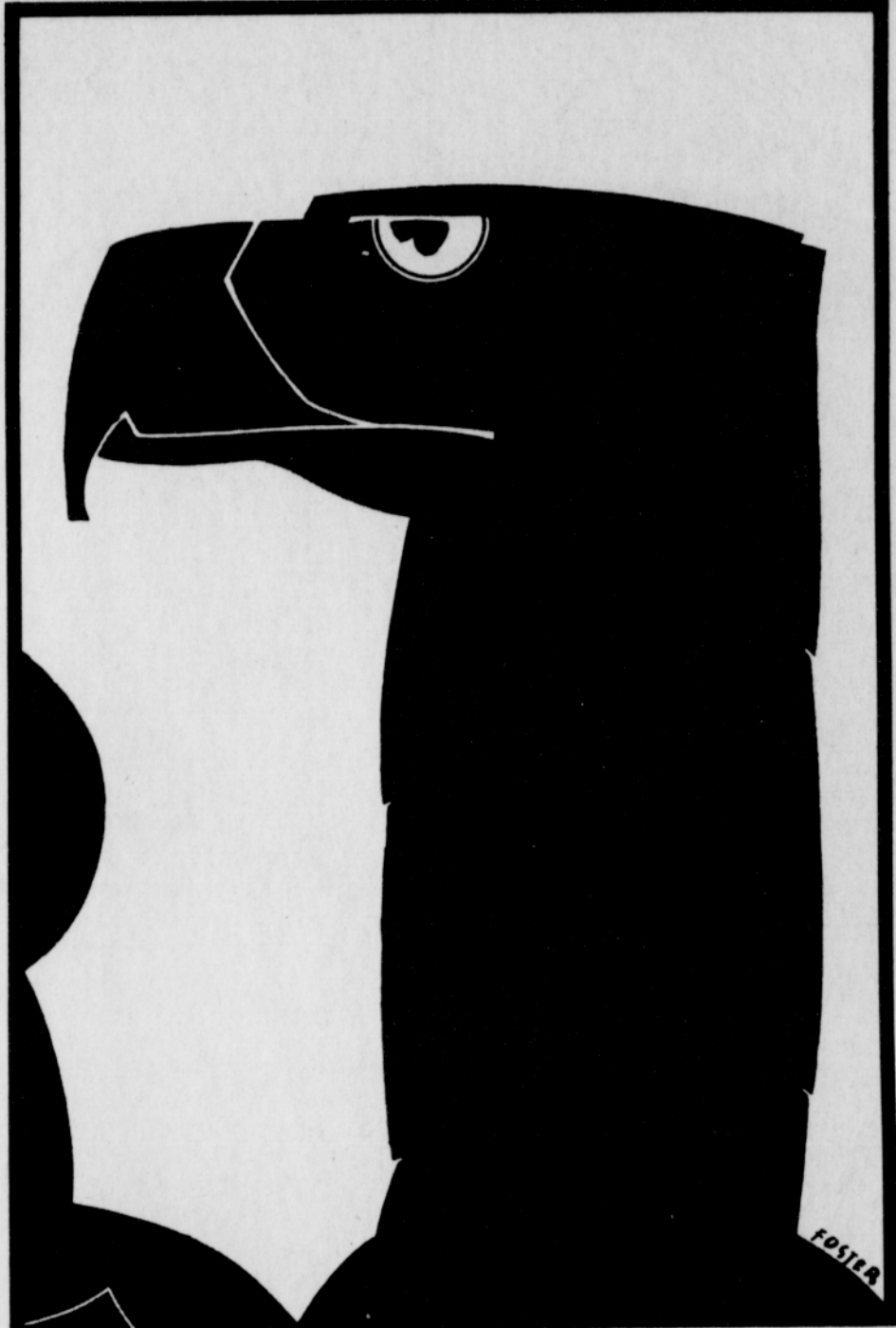
The nature of authority demands that no one grow up. Governments encourage an immature citizenry which must be told what to do and whose only freedom is the freedom to obey. (In a consumer society which this one boasts itself as, the compulsion to possess freezes the average age at about twelve.)

Freedom implies a mature citizenry. To be free and remain that way is a large responsibility and many people do not want it. Freedom is an abstract. We are never far from fear or the possibility of death or injury. We must work to feed, clothe and shelter ourselves and our families, and always there is the fear that it will all be taken away. Freedom insists upon the value of the individual but the ever increasing complexity of our society is constructed upon aggregates and masses and makes less valuable the usefulness and contributions of each of us. Our thinking and sense of self worth are profoundly affected. An individual and ultimately aggregate sense of personal and political helplessness sets in. Even our own government perpetuates the psychological and Constitutional paralysis. It attempts to make itself seemingly omnipotent to such a degree that any dissent to its policies or actions is treated as treachery. If someone disagrees with our insensitive President or tries to curb the power of the bellicose and insatiable Pentagon, that person must be a communist: such is the sinking level of our current national dialogue. Yet those policies are quickly changing our nation into an autocracy. The rise of the military is especially ominous, not entirely for the threat of war and probable nuclear obliteration but for the obliteration of civil law and the assumption of military rule which considers citizens only as economic and utilitarian objects of no personal worth or independence.

It is exactly that which our ancestors attempted to break away from, though of course some of them wanted only to substitute themselves as the local authority in the absence of the King's power.

A free and open flow of information regardless of ideology or opinion is quite truthfully the only method of preserving what is left of our freedoms and enlarging them in a world where they are constantly shrinking.

July is also the birthday of the North Coast Times Eagle. This issue celebrates the start of its seventh year out of the crypt. Just after acknowledging its fifth birthday last summer, The Born Again Bird went into a coma that lasted for eight months, until March of this year. It is still convalescing. After six years it has no assurances, much like a human life.



BOOMS

I hate the Fourth of July. Not the part that commemorates the American Revolution but the part that simulates it. The firecrackers and M-80 bombs.

Every year during the first week of July all around sounds like a war. I get nervous and shaky and try to stay indoors, or when I am outside I feel a compulsion to dash from cover to cover. I try not to throw myself on the ground when an M-80 or a series of firecrackers explode near me with the suddenness of an attack or ambush. Half of my brain shouts that it is no longer necessary to hit the deck or run for cover, and that I shouldn't get frantic that I can't locate my rifle. My brain's other half, however, usually responds to more primitive signals and I often go for the ground.

Hardly anyone I talk to sympathizes. I shouldn't think about it, I am told; after all, it's only fireworks. I want to shout that fireworks are purposely made to sound like warfare and the sounds of war trigger certain responses in survivors of combat that previously did much to preserve their bodies if not quite their minds. But all they seem interested in is getting their hands on bigger and noisier booms. When I had a dog she and I usually kept company under my bed the early part of July.

You might remember this note the next time in July you see someone running crazily around or throws himself down in the street in front of your car.

— Michael Paul McCusker



MARIJUANA

FROM PAGE EIGHT

ter to a group opposing the marijuana initiative, the Chemical People Task Force, the same day that OMI submitted signatures. The letter informed the antidrug group that OMI had turned in eighty-five thousand signatures. The fact that Phelps managed to get the letter out so quickly and the fact that Conde found a document that tallied the good and bad signatures on the OMI petition that Phelps had denied existed, made him wonder if Phelps was really was a neutral official.

Other pieces fit into a still unfinished puzzle. In a conversation with HIGH TIMES writer Ed Rosenthal, Reagan's advisor on drugs, Carlton Turner said that the Reagan administration would never allow Oregon to vote on legalizing marijuana.

Investigators discovered, however, that the verification process was such a mess that it would be nearly impossible to prove a deliberate attempt to squelch the marijuana initiative.

One of the problems Conde and OMI investigators faced in checking on the elections division was the lack of accountability and uniformity between counties. Each county has a different system for dealing with signature verification. Investigators also found that many signers of the marijuana initiative had been purged from voter files for not voting. Some voters were mysteriously purged from some counties after being registered for only a few weeks.

OMI made another attempt to overrule Paulus in the courts and filed a motion in the Supreme

Court asking that the fifty-three signers be counted and that a full reverification occur. The motion was denied without comment. OMI attorneys tried one more challenge in October in the Circuit Court of Marion County. The suit asked that the fifty-three signatures be counted and that because the sampling estimate was inconclusive that either all signatures be counted or the measure be simply placed on the ballot. Judge Val Sloper dismissed the suit on October 22. He argued that it was too late. OMI had managed to convince eighty-five thousand people that the issue should be voted on, but in the end failed to convince one judge.

With the November election so close it became clear that OMI was not going to win its rightful place in the ballot. All this controversy raises serious questions about the initiative process. Obviously there needs to be some sort of mechanism for weeding out frivolous proposals. No one wants it to be too easy to get a proposal on the ballot. That is what the signature requirement is for. But when the system is misused by elected officials, basic questions about fairness and democracy are raised.

Organizers are now planning for a 1986 Oregon Marijuana Initiative. In July we plan a three week blitz throughout the state. That will give us a full year to challenge any signature problems. And if we find out that we are on the ballot this summer, then we will have more than a year to campaign for the November 1986 election.

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