

News from somewhere

By Lauri Rantala

BUT WOULD HE CHANGE PLACES?

It may come as a surprise to those of us living on this side of the Atlantic, but at least one observer professing to be in the know has declared that "the best promise of life is in Cuba."

In a recent tour of this paradise island, Harry Belafonte (popular singer turned political philosopher) maintained that Cuba should be a model for all countries struggling for independence. He explained that he was championing the cause of your average Cuban on the street, probably recalling the famous words of Father Fidel in 1959, "it does not matter how small you are if you have faith and plan of action"

Zeroing in on representative sections of America, Belafonte was quoted as saying that the recently departed refugees should live, "in Harlem, the South Bronx, Miami's riot areas or on Indian reservations. They'd learn the best promise of life is in Cuba." I suppose it is possible that several thousand refugees could be wrong.

IT'S NOT IN ENID BLYTON

Some people can't leave well enough alone. One typical twelve-year-old American girl was perfectly content with the Columbus County Library in North Carolina until her mother decided the library afforded children too much choice.

Elaine Cumbee's complaint was that her daughter brought home an adult novel with explicit sexual passages written by a well-known children's author. Ms. Cumbee and some of her equally puritanical friends decided they had nothing better to do than to attempt to have books of this nature banned from the local library.

The library board attempted to stick to its guns and refused to succumb to such pressure. But finally the administration agreed to a rule which would allow parents to restrict their children's library cards to

exclude adult books. Ms. Cumbee and Co. clamoured for the chance to censor the reading material of their offspring.

But some people are never satisfied. She discovered to her chagrin that the Bible was also in the category of books inaccessible to her children. One is reminded of the maxim, there are no bad books, any more than there are ugly women - nothing personal intended.

And now for the good news.

DOWN UNDER

Advice my mother once gave me was to never believe three things people might say to me: "I'll respect you in the morning;" "Your cheque is in the mail;" and "Hi. I'm from the government, and I'm here to help you." It seems the Australian Workers Party, the kissin' cousin of the American Libertarian Party, has been active in its attempts to publicize the kind of "help" their government has to offer.

The W.P. have championed the cause of an Adelaide man arrested and fined for not wearing a seat-belt. Members have publicly denounced the government's move to force students back into secondary school so as to reduce the number of names on the unemployment rolls. They have even challenged the leader of the opposition to charge the government with fraud under one of the many consumer protection laws. This is due to the fact that the government had been advertising 9¼% Savings Bonds as a good investment during a period of 10% inflation.

Help like that we can all do without.

MORE ISLAND LIBERTARIANS

Iceland is an excellent source of cocktail party trivia. It has the highest per capita population of horses in Europe. None of its native inhabitants have surnames. It is hotter in the north than it is in the south. The Parliament here is officially named "the thing."

The Libertarian Alliance is an independent, non-party group, with a shared desire to work for a free society.

But not since the 1972 Spassky-Fischer match have some libertarians even bothered to take note of this country. Now on this sparsely populated island are the makings of another centre of libertarian influence. Iceland's Libertarian Association has attracted 300 members since May of 1979 and is still growing strong. The leaders of the organisation hope to publish the first issue of their magazine *Freedom* this September. It will contain translations of the lectures delivered by Professor Hayek during his successful trip during April. The Libertarian Association also sponsors presentations at high schools and universities, and will soon hold public lectures on the industrial revolution. It may be a bit premature, but perhaps we can someday refer to the Icelandic government as a thing of the past.

A NO THAT MEANS NO

Reporting on the Swedish Nuclear Power referendum earlier this year, a headline in the British press read, "When a no means yes." Libertarian students in this Scandinavian country are not so subtle about expressing their opinions. While still small in number, a band of libertarian students plan to argue against the military draft at the upcoming AGM of the Free Conservative Students Union in November.

This won't be the first appearance of libertarians at an FCSU gathering - last year one of their ranks was elected vice-chair of this conservative organisation. Their current efforts aimed against the draft may bear out Victor Hugo's conclusion:

"More powerful than armies is an idea whose time has come."

Free Life