

The Libertarian

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MAILER FOR MAYOR

Norman Mailer's surprise entry into the Democratic primary for Mayor of New York City, to be held on June 17, provides the most refreshing libertarian political campaign in decades. Mailer has taken everyone by surprise by his platform as well as his sudden entry into the political ranks. The Mailer platform stems from one brilliantly penetrating overriding plank: the absolute decentralization of the swollen New York City bureaucracy into dozens of constituent neighborhood villages. This is the logic of the recent proposals for "decentralization" and "community control" brought to its consistent and ultimate conclusion: the turmoil and plight of our overblown and shattered urban government structures, most especially New York, are to be solved by smashing the urban governmental apparatus, and fragmenting it into a myriad of constituent fragments. Each neighborhood will then be running its own affairs, on all matters, taxation, education, police, welfare, etc. Do conservative whites object to compulsory bussing of black kids into their neighborhood schools? Well, says Mailer, with each neighborhood in absolute control of its own schools this problem could not arise. Do the blacks object to white dictation over the education of black children? This problem too would be solved if Harlem were wholly independent, running its own affairs. In the Mailer plan, black and white could at long last live peacefully side-by-side, with each group and each self-constituted neighborhood running its own affairs.

Mailer and his running mate for City Council President, the writer Jimmy Breslin, realize full well that this striking new idea cuts totally across old-fashioned "left"- "right" lines, that it could logically have an appeal to both groups, or rather to those in both groups that are truly attracted by an essentially libertarian vision. Those who want compulsory integration or those who want the blacks to continue under white rule will not be satisfied with this vision; but those who yearn for liberty, who want whites and blacks to treat each other as independent equals rather than as rulers of one over the other, should flock to the Mailer standard.

Mailer's other positions flow from his basic libertarian insight. He is opposed to compulsory fluoridation of the water supply, and he favors the freeing of Huey Newton-- both libertarian positions in the freeing of the individual and the community from the boot of the State. One of Mailer's key proposals is that New York City secede from New York State and form a separate 51st State: a position not only consistent with breaking up large governmental bodies but also with the crucial libertarian principle of *secession*. Secession is a crucial part of the libertarian philosophy: that every state be allowed to secede from the nation, every sub-state from the state, every neighborhood from the city, and, logically, every individual or group from

the neighborhood. Mailer's vision actively promotes this position. He is the first political campaigner since the Civil War to raise the banner of secession, a mighty call which unfortunately became discredited in the eyes of Americans because (a) the South lost the Civil War, and (b) because it was associated in their minds with slavery.

Another superb part of Mailer's libertarian vision is his reply about where the New York City government would raise funds; he points out that citizens of New York City pay approximately \$22 billion in income taxes to the federal government, and that New Yorkers only receive back about \$6 billion from federal coffers. Hence, if New Yorkers *kept* that \$22 billion in their own hands . . . That way lies secession indeed!

While Mailer's all-out decentralization should appeal to left and right alike, in actual fact so far the great bulk of his support is coming from the kids of the New Left. On the West Side of Manhattan, there is in the New Left-oriented Community Free Democratic club at least a strong bloc of ardent Mailer-Breslin adherents. As far as I know, there is nothing like this support on the Right-wing. Again I put the question to Mrs. Conservative: how come? You've been griping, and properly so, about swollen governmental bureaucracy for thirty years. For all that time you've been calling for decentralization, for fragmenting the government. Now, at long last, a candidate comes along that takes this position (Mailer calls himself a "left conservative", by the way). Why aren't you supporting him?

And so *The Libertarian* makes its first political endorsement: Mailer for Mayor of New York City and Breslin for President of the City Council. But this of course runs us squarely into the very widespread sentiment among libertarians against any support, vote or endorsement whatever for any political candidate. The contention is that any such support constitutes support of, and joining in with, the State apparatus and is therefore immoral for the libertarian.

While I respect this position, I consider it unduly sectarian. The point is that whether we vote or endorse or not, the offices of President, Senator, Mayor or whatever will *not* become vacant; *someone* will continue to fill these offices during the coming years. Since there is no way for us to opt for keeping these offices vacant, since we will be stuck with someone in these positions come what may, why shouldn't we at least express a hope that someone rather than someone else will fill such positions? If we know that either X or Y will fill a given political post, why can't we express our hope that X will win, or, more likely, that Y will lose? Since we are not yet able to reach that blessed state when *both* can lose, why not do the best we can with the material at hand for the time being? Or, to put it another way, the State apparatus allows us our biennial or quadrennial

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electoral choice. It is, to be sure, a piddling choice, a marginal choice, a choice which means little and which of and by itself cannot radically change the existing system. But it is at least *something*, it is at least some kind of a choice that we are allowed between different groups of would-be masters, and often such a choice may be important --as in the Mailer ideas and candidacy for this year. Why shouldn't we take advantage of the choices, however piddling, that our State rulers permit us to exercise?

I take as my text Lysander Spooner, one of the great Founding Fathers of individualist anarchism. Spooner wrote:

"in the case of individuals, their actual voting is not to be taken as proof of consent [to the U. S. government] . . . On the contrary, it is to be considered that, without his consent having even been asked a man finds himself environed by a government that he cannot resist; a government that forces him to pay money, render service, and forego the exercise of many of his natural rights, under peril of weighry punishments . . .

Doubtless the most miserable of men, under the most oppressive government in the world, if allowed the ballot, would use it, if they could see any chance of thereby ameliorating their condition. But it would not, therefore, be a legitimate inference that the government itself, that crushes them, was one which they had voluntarily set up, or even consented to." (Spooner, *No Treason*: Larkspur, Colorado, 1966, p. 13.)

There is another important reason for not necessarily scorning the endorsement of political parties or candidates. And that is the seeming fact that it is almost impossible to

organize ordinary middle-class citizens into action except through political parties. Blacks are organized in the ghettos, students on campuses, workers--for good or ill--in labor unions, but where are the permanent *issue*-oriented organizations that successfully attract the great bulk of the country in the middle-class? It seems that the middle-class is only organizationally attracted by political parties, party clubs, etc. If this is so, then political parties become a necessary instrument of the libertarian movement, because if we are to achieve victory we must eventually obtain at the very least the passive support, and hopefully a more active support, of the majority of the middle-class of the country. No organizing among the middle-class has been done by the New Left, although there have been perennial futile attempts to organize the industrial workers by the Marxist elements. The issues, I am convinced, are there: high taxes, inflation, inter-racial clashes arising from failure to achieve community control, a losing or stalemated war, all this can be brought home to the majority of the population. The rhetoric, of course, will have to differ from the rhetoric that appeals to students; but the underlying ideas and philosophy can be the same: individual liberty. But it seems clear the the organizational form for organizing the middle class will have to be a political party or something very much like it.

Libertarian sectarians should ask themselves seriously: do we want victory? If we really want victory for liberty, then we must employ the means necessary for its attainment, and it looks as if political action will be one--though by no means all--of those necessary means. And so Mailer for Mayor.

Letter From Washington

By Karl Hess

REPRESSION, DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN

Latest horrifying report in town is that the Department of Justice, perhaps making use of the barbaric special-arrest-and-detention-camp provisions of the McCarran Act, is planning to escalate its war against dissenters from sniper attacks against leaders to mass arrests of activists generally.

Whether the rumor is true or not, the very existence of the McCarran Act's provisions for broad round-ups of 'dangerous' persons during a time of 'emergency' plus the actual maintenance of prison camps on a stand-by basis (as graphically portrayed in *Look* magazine some time back) is bound to make one wonder.

Should any Senator or Congressman seriously be looking for a libertarian cause to pursue, the abolition of the McCarran Act's repressive provisions would be an interesting one to consider. For one thing, even proposing it should polarize the legislators, very usefully and very visibly. The lip-service liberty lovers who reach for state power whenever their special notion of order is disordered would, of course, recoil in horror, pompously shouting that the nation *must* thus defend itself. Liberals would be in their usual dilemma, trying to figure out whether they would lose any patronage or power if the prison camps were closed.

Not a rumor, but just as horrifying, are plans for the new

Civil Disorders War Room at the Pentagon. Fed by FBI data channeled through the White House, the new war room will seek completely to computerize all the factors involved in civil disorder such as the location at all times of known activists, militants, dissenters, critics--in short, everyone who attacks the state--as well as the availability and location of all repressive forces from U.S. marshals to paratroopers, state troopers and just plain old storm troopers such as the new Federally-trained phalanxes of paramilitary 'riot' police from most of the major cities.

Perhaps the most innovative feature of the war room will be the computer's reported ability to deal with pictures as input data. It is said that police routinely will photograph all public (and as many private as possible) meetings of dissenters. The photos will then be scanned and, if they show sufficient visual identity points for a face, persons pictured can instantly be identified and their presence at the particular meeting added to the disorder data bank for use in future analyses. Onward and upward with science in the service of the state.

Behind the farce of Vietnam there is tragedy, of course. Its main outline is the number of men, women, children, and soldiers who will die while the politicians in Saigon continue to use the politicians in Washington to bolster their bureaucratic barony. The bureaucrats in Washington, meanwhile, will be concerned solely by the electoral implications of what they do and not by the murder in which they are involved. The tragedy involves all those who must pay for this role-playing with their lives or sanity.

That the tragic sense has reached many in Washington is becoming more and more obvious, although there is no indication that it has penetrated the high, black-iron fence of the White House. At other levels of government, and particularly in the Pentagon itself, there is a growing recognition of the fact that the war is being and will be won by the NLF. Bitterest of all is the recognition that in justice they should win. In the months just ahead this should result

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S. D. S. And Black Self-Determination

Passing a resolution shining throughout with pure libertarianism and marred by only a few traces of Marxism, the recent Students for a Democratic Society convention in Austin, Texas committed themselves wholeheartedly to the support of the radical Black Panther Party and other black revolutionary groups who have as their purpose the abolition of the American State.

The text of the resolution began: "The sharpest struggles in the world today are those of the oppressed nations against imperialism and for national liberation. Within this country the sharpest struggle is that of the black colony for its liberation . . ." It might have added, of course, that as long as the American Leviathan exists most of us, even the Caucasians, will be enslaved; but it is true that, due to such brutes as the racist white police, far more oppression is executed upon the Negro community.

The Panthers were looked upon by the resolution as the most promising liberators of the blacks. Certainly, now that Negroes everywhere are rejecting the Statist fallacies of the NAACP and other conservative groups and embracing the demands for total freedom advocated by harbingers like Rap Brown, the Panthers offer much potential as an organizing body in the struggle to unshackle the chains that Big White Brother has imposed. As long as it confines itself to freeing the people from political power while not imposing its own rule, the Black People's (Panther) Army, which is "to be used not only in the defense of the black community but also for its liberation," may be most important.

Though one or two socialist fallacies blemish the logic of the document, it is made clear that the abolition of the State

is the primary and ultimate goal. "The demand for self-determination becomes the most basic demand of the oppressed colony." Self-determination, taken to its logical conclusion, means the right of every single individual to be free of all political power, i. e., anarchism. Thus it is quite ironic that the U.S. Government, which holds millions in bondage everywhere, pays lip service to the right of self-determination (remember LBJ's sophisms wherein he pleaded for the self-determination of the South Vietnamese).

Reactionary nationalism, the type of nationalism best exemplified by Hitler and encompassing the Führers of all nation-states in history, is totally rejected, while the completely different revolutionary nationalism, which means simply the uniting of individuals to throw off colonial tyranny, is applauded. As Panther leader G. M. Murray made clear, "We must destroy all cultural nationalism, because it is reactionary and has become a tool of Richard Milhous Nixon and all the U.S. power structure which divides the poor and oppressed, and is used by the greasy-slick black bourgeoisie to exploit black people in the ghetto."

Everyone professing libertarianism must go hand-in-hand with SDS in "its commitment to join with the Black Panther Party and other black revolutionary groups in the fight against white national chauvinism and white supremacy." The right of every individual to be free of any nation-state in general, and the U.S. despotism in particular, must be actively supported.

(Note: for the full text of the SDS resolution, see *New Left Notes*, April 4, 1969, p. 3.)

--Stephen Halbrook

EDITOR'S COMMENT:

The Panthers And Black Liberation

While I do not want to detract from Mr. Halbrook's excellent article, and while I realize that the great majority of revolutionary anarcho-capitalists are highly enthusiastic about the Black Panthers and their potential for leading a black liberation movement, I must record my serious reservations about the value of the Panthers.

The Panthers have three great virtues: (1) their enormous ability to upset and aggravate the white police, simply by going around armed and in uniform--the supposed Constitutional privilege of every free American but apparently to be denied to radical militant blacks; (2) their considerable capacity for organizing black youth; and (3) excellent black nationalist ideas--particularly in emphasizing a black nation with their own land in such areas as the Black Belt of the South--as expressed in some writings of Eldridge Cleaver.

But there are growing offsetting tendencies so serious as to call the overall merit of the Panthers into grave question. In the first place, there are increasing tendencies for the Panthers to abandon black nationalism almost completely for the Old Left virus of black-white Marxist working-class action. The problem is not only increasing infusions of Marxist rhetoric into the Panther material, but an unfortunate eagerness to reach out and make alliances with white radicals, thereby contradicting the whole point of black power, which is to develop separate black movements resulting in black national self-determination. Even tactically, the original idea was to have alliances between strong, independent black and white radical movements; neither the Panthers nor the white radical movements have grown sufficiently to validate any sort of alliance now, even as a tactic. The most absurd example of this was the decision of the Peace and Freedom Party last year to nominate Eldridge Cleaver for President--a ridiculous decision for

both the white and black movements since it involved a supposed black nationalist running for President of a white Republic--the U.S.A. It makes black nationalist sense to run candidates from Harlem or Watts; but not for Senators or Presidents from predominantly white constituencies. The question then arises: are the Panthers *really* black nationalists?

The second big reservation comes from the increasingly thuggish and Stalinoid tendencies in the Panther movement: viz. (1) the inexcusable pulling of a gun by the Panthers on SNCC leader James Forman, a fellow revolutionary black-nationalist, at a presumed peace meeting between the two groups. Pulling a gun on the State enemy is one thing; pulling a gun on fellow revolutionaries is quite another, and cannot be condoned in any way. Eldridge Cleaver's reported statement that Forman should have been shot because his strategic views make him "objectively counter-revolutionary" puts the whole affair in an even more grisly light. (2) The equally inexcusable pulling of a gun by the Panthers on the Peace and Freedom party leaders in New York to force those veteran bootlickers of the Panthers to withdraw their duly nominated candidate for the Senate, the pacifist David McReynolds, in order to leave the line blank and allow the Panthers to secretly support the black nationalist Herman Ferguson, who ran a predictably poor race for the Senate on the competing Freedom and Peace party ticket. (3) The outrageous and vicious attack on black revolutionary columnist Julius Lester by Kathleen Cleaver in the *Guardian* of May 3 for his tactical disagreement with the SDS resolution on the Panthers. This article, devoid of analysis and long on snarling invective, was in the worst tradition of Stalinist billingsgate, in those days often preparatory to a Stalinist purge.

All this means that we should, at the very least, withdraw our enthusiasm from the Panthers. In any event, it is the responsibility of whites to build the white movement, and to concentrate our time and energies therefore on white rather than black affairs.

RECOMMENDED READING

COUNTERPOINT. The nation's finest student libertarian periodical. Free, and published irregularly in mimeographed form by the Fordham Libertarian Alliance. Solidly anarcho-capitalist, *Counterpoint* has become increasingly trenchant and radical over the past year. Vol. 2, No. 7 has an excellent article expounding free-market anarchism by Mario J. Rizzo, an exposure of the relations between big business and government in founding the ICC by Joseph Castrovinci, and a refutation of the familiar "if you don't like it here, why don't you leave?" argument by David Hagner. FLA led the Fordham sit-in for the ouster of ROTC and every libertarian will enjoy FLA's handbill "ROTC OUT", published at the height of the agitation. All available from Fordham Libertarian Alliance, Box 763, Fordham University, The Bronx, N. Y. 10458.

Leviathan. In our April 15 issue, we neglected to give the address of this New Left monthly. It can be obtained from Subscription Department, Leviathan, 2700 Broadway, New York, N. Y. 10025. Price is \$5 a year, single copy 50 cents.

NACLA Newsletter. Published 10 times a year by the North American Congress on Latin America. NACLA is the country's best muckraking organization, no longer confining itself to Latin America as the title might suggest. Latest NACLA publication is the booklet Michael Klare, ed., *The University-Military Complex*, price \$1.00, an indispensable reference handbook of the detailed tie-ins between university professors and the military. Available from North American Congress on Latin America,

LETTER FROM WASHINGTON —

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in some interesting psychiatric, if not political studies and introspections. No matter what, militarists will continue to justify the war. It should sink them deeper and deeper into a brooding paranoia in which, although all of the facts are against them, they continue to think that it's all simply an assault on their honest patriotism. But for men of some residual conscience, every day that the war continues will create more of a crisis. Some may even be forced to make decisions—to renounce their role in the tragedy and to seek the redress of immediate withdrawal from Vietnam and long-range withdrawal from imperialism altogether.

P. O. Box 57, Cathedral Park Sta., New York, N. Y. 10025.

Barton Bernstein, ed., *Towards A New Past: Dissenting Essays in American History* (Random House, 1968; Random House-Vintage Paperbacks, 1969). A collection of representative essays, some excellent, by younger New Left American historians. Particularly recommended are Jesse Lemisch on the "mobs" during the American Revolution, and the Revisionist foreign policy articles of Lloyd Gardner and Robert F. Smith. Both are Revisionist on World War II and the Cold War, and Smith is the first historian to footnote Jim Martin's *American Liberalism and World Politics*, the mammoth 2-volume dissection of the shift of American Liberals from "isolationism" to war during World War II.

James Weinstein, *The Corporate Ideal in the Liberal State 1900-18* (Beacon Press, 1968; Beacon Paperback, 1969). Indispensable complement to Gabriel Kolko's work on the origin of government regulation of business in the Progressive Era from the desire of Big Business to achieve monopolistic privilege through government. Weinstein concentrates on the pro-government intervention ideology of Big Businessmen. The "enlightened" Big Business leaders scornfully referred to the NAM (in those days controlled by free-market small businessmen) as "anarchists".

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