

THE

# Libertarian Forum

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## The New Movement: Peace Politics

There is no doubt about it: Richard Milhous Nixon is the most effective organizer that the anti-war movement has ever had. Before Cambodia, and its ancillary Kent State, the anti-war movement was dead as a dodo. Confused and lulled by the Johnson Paris negotiations followed by Nixon's promises of withdrawal, the anti-war movement had all but disappeared into ecology and into the febrile nonsense of guerrilla theatre, Women's Lib, Weathermania, Panther worship, Yippies and Crazies, etc. The only organization with a potential for heading a mass movement, the Vietnam Moratorium, had dissolved in despair. Now, at the one stroke of the aggression into Cambodia and the consequent massacre at Kent State, Dick Nixon has revived the anti-war movement at a pitch, an intensity, a breadth and a sanity many times what it ever was before. A veritable Phoenix, a giant, has arisen from the ashes, and it's all a brand new ballgame.

None of this glorious flowering renders obsolete our recent pessimistic editorials ("The New Left, RIP", Mar. 15; "Farewell to the Left", May 1). On the contrary, one of the happiest facts about the recent upsurge is that, at long last, it consists of "real people", and this great influx of real people has totally dwarfed and rendered insignificant the whole gaggle of Crazies-Panthers-Weathermen, etc. of the extreme Left. The interesting point is that the shocking events of Cambodia and Kent State impelled millions of people to think at long last: "Alright, *now* this is serious. *Now* we *must* stop this monstrous war." And with this welcome turn to seriousness, the movement suddenly realized that all the hogwash and puerility, the guerrilla theatrics and the indiscriminate "trashings", the pointless demonstrations and the rock-throwings, had to go. Seriousness had to replace self-indulgence. And it was clear that seriousness could mean only one thing: concerted, non-violent purposive political action, that is, action upon our political "representatives".

To those libertarians who reject violent revolutionary action, either out of moral or strategic principle, I would say this: If you oppose violent action, then you have the profound moral obligation to favor and to press all effective forms of *non-violent* action. Non-violence must not mean passivity. In the present context, non-violent political action can take numerous effective forms, all of them amounting to irresistible political pressure upon the politicians in Congress and even the executive branch. The new anti-war movement has swiftly moved into these forms of action. There is the lobbying and the petition campaigns in Congress; one of the most effective and "consciousness-raising" is the petitions for the McGovern-Hatfield bill to cut off all appropriations for our Southeast Asia adventure after July of next year. Another is the mass campaign for the impeachment of Richard Nixon for his barbaric aggression

in Southeast Asia, an aggression that is unconstitutional for its violation of the sole power of Congress to declare war, and flagrantly anti-libertarian for its high crimes against peace and against humanity, its mass murder and mass destruction. The fact that the impeachment campaign will undoubtedly not succeed is totally beside the point; its effectiveness lies in getting the previously unthinkable *idea* of impeachment of our rulers into the public consciousness; the result will be amassive desanctification and delegitimation of our rulers among the populace. So that maybe the "fifth" impeachment campaign from now *will* succeed.

Vigorous peace lobbying and political petitions mean finally, peace politics. It means favoring or punishing political candidates, particularly in the national arena, on the single crucial political theme of our epoch: war or peace. It means the same sort of ruthless concentration on this overriding issue that brought the Anti-Saloon League its victory in the Prohibition Amendment. It means, in short, that if two people are running for office, of whom A favors immediate withdrawal from Southeast Asia, while B is better on lower taxes or on price control but fudges on the war, we must choose A, and regardless of his party affiliation.

It has taken the Left-liberals, i. e. those who make up the bulk of the anti-war movement, a very long time to arrive at this sensible and cogent idea of Peace Politics. Indeed, this was precisely the overriding issue, the issue of war, peace and America's imperial foreign policy, that led me and a tiny handful of friends to "leave" the Right-wing over a decade ago. It was the Right-wing's inexorable shift from pro-peace "isolationism" in the thirties, forties and early fifties, to its current position of all-out war that made our break with the Right-wing inevitable.

It is long forgotten now, but the unsung originator of Peace Politics was Mark Lane, then an Assemblyman in New York. Many months before tragic events were to thrust him into the role of pioneer in Kennedy Assassination Revisionism, and at a time when the peace movement was Old Left and embodied in the SANE Nuclear Policy Committee, Mark conceived the simple but cogent idea that the Left should concentrate its political action on the one overriding issue of war or peace, and, for example, that it be prepared to endorse otherwise conservative candidates who might be better on the peace question than their liberal opponents.

I well remember the small meeting in New York called by Mark Lane to propagate his idea among the Left and among the peace groups. Aside from Leonard Liggio and myself, I don't think there was one person in that room who had anything but scorn for Mark's proposal. Pacifist after pacifist,

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## THE NEW MOVEMENT — (Continued from page 1)

leftist after leftist, liberal after liberal, arose to denounce the idea: it would neglect and disparage civil rights for Negroes, it would neglect the crucial goal of socialism, it would subordinate personal "witness" and street demonstration for the more comfortable indoor activity of old-fashioned political action. And so the opportunity was lost, the Left and the anti-war movement drifted impotently for several more years—until our bombing campaign against North Vietnam, and the Lane idea of peace politics was lost and forgotten, seemingly beyond repair.

But now the idea of peace politics has been almost miraculously revived. The *student* movement has been transformed into a *university-wide* movement of students, faculty, and even college presidents. Young people who became Clean for Gene are now, in far greater numbers, becoming Clean for McGovern and Hatfield. Anti-war sentiment has expanded in the ranks of businessmen, particularly those who do not subsist on the handouts of war contracts, and even unto the President's Cabinet. The anti-war movement has, for the first time, become a truly *mass* movement, made up in the greatest part, as we said above, of "real people". These real people will be nothing if not repelled by trashing, guerrilla politics, Panthermania, and all the rest of the nonsense of the ultra-Left. Real people understand lobbying and petitions, and they understand political action at the polls. They can readily understand Peace Politics. Here is the only direction that the anti-war movement can go if it is to succeed. Already, the movement had succeeded in toppling Lyndon Johnson, and now it has certainly caused the Nixon Administration to be at least more cautious in its evident aim of expanding the war.

You can't fool all of the people all of the time. The *Libertarian Forum* takes no pleasure in being consistent and almost along, left, right or center, in predicting that Richard Nixon's aim was not to withdraw from Vietnam but to get further into the war under the guise of a rhetorical withdrawal. Nixon's lies and hypocrisies will no longer work. The supposedly absolute June 30 deadline for withdrawal from Cambodia is already seen at the time of writing (May 23) to be a sham and a hoax; for we will continue at the very least to supply air and artillery support to the Saigon invaders of Cambodia, and we will continue to use our fleet to blockade the Cambodian coast. And what will happen when the forces of Prince Sihanouk of Cambodia (recently deposed by a CIA-led military clique) and his National United Front (misleadingly smeared in the American press as "North Vietnamese") capture the Cambodian capital of Pnom Penh? At the very least, a strong, militant and growing Peace Politics movement might be able to prevent Nixon from following his instinct to move into Cambodia *en masse* to make "free Cambodia" safe for its current military dictatorship. At

the most, Peace Politics might be able to force America to get out of Southeast Asia.

Jerry Tuccille's article in this issue, written before the Cambodian invasion, turns out to be remarkably prescient. For now its call for a form of tactical rapprochement with Left-liberalism has suddenly become of the highest relevance. And Peace Politics is the path.

## The New Libertarianism

With the official disbanding of the Vietnam Moratorium Committee and the disintegration of New Left activism in general, a vacuum has been created within the radical movement. As the productive elements of New Leftism fade away, the void is quickly being filled by a familiar two-headed beast: the old scarred and ugly face of doctrinaire Marxism and the more hideous visage of self-righteous nihilism. The absence of a well-formulated philosophical base to support the activist programs of the New Left has given birth to a new generation of crusading irrationalists, frustrated bomb-throwers, and penis-hating feminists.

What this means to libertarians is that the fundamental anti-authoritarianism and anarchism of the radical movement is in serious danger of being eroded. The great challenge that is presented to libertarians at the beginning of the 1970's is to salvage this splintering movement and transform it into a healthy and creative radicalism over the next ten years.

It is to make the *New Libertarianism* the movement of the 1970's; to make our brand of radicalism as influential in the next decade as the New Left was in the middle and late 1960's.

How do we go about it?

The first thing we ought to learn is how to avoid the mistakes of our predecessors. The *last best* chance for free market radicalism in the United States came in the late 1950's following the publication of *Atlas Shrugged* and the establishment of Objectivism as an organized intellectual movement. Some twelve or thirteen years later we now see that Objectivism has failed in its long-range goals; it has failed to strike a responsive chord in the general population. While Objectivist literature has sold into the millions, the basic tenets of Objectivist philosophy have not, and I think we can safely say, will not take root in society at large. The high sale of books is no guarantee that the public is also buying the *ideas* presented. A quick scan of the best-seller lists is ample proof that people prefer a "good read" more than anything else.

Objectivism has failed to become a mass movement primarily because it failed to grapple, except in an arrogant and highly superficial manner, with the key issues of the past ten years. While Objectivists engaged in the exclusive luxury of abstractions and ideology, a war was going on, housing and education among other vital institutions were coming apart, the cities were exploding with violence, the American middle class was falling into a daze, and government grew increasingly more repressive.

What was the Objectivist cure for this? *Selfishness*.

What was the cause of all our ills? *Altruism*.

What should we do about exploited minorities? *Leave them alone*.

This is hardly the stuff to fire the imagination of a populace literally begging for solutions and definitive answers to their questions. *Why?* The Objectivists failed to respond. Champions of the marketplace, they remained aloof from the disordered marketplace of American society and the public has rewarded them accordingly with silence.

If the New Libertarianism is to succeed it will have to do so by responding to the issues, by applying theory to the marketplace. The way things are shaping up, the primary

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## THE NEW LIBERTARIANISM —(Continued from page 2)

concerns of the next few years are going to be: the continuing war in Asia and its progenitor, an imperious U. S. foreign policy; ecology and pollution control; housing and education; women's rights (as distinct from the loony women's separatist fringe); day care centers for working mothers; the development of expanded abortion facilities; cheaper and better medical assistance for the poor. To these we can add our own *bête noir*—taxation and the regulated economy.

Instead of replying, "rational self-interest", when people want to know how to meet these concerns, we will have to demonstrate how a strict enforcement of property rights will protect them from environmental contaminants; why the free market will provide them with abortion clinics and day care centers (perhaps as a fringe benefit of private employment); how expanded health care can be made available to all without the AMA to lobby against competition and restrain the flow of medics into society. After all, is it not the purpose of the free market to supply demand in the most efficient manner? Why should suggestions to meet the demands of low-income groups be simplistically dismissed as altruism if these suggestions are in accord with libertarian principles? Is it not in our own interest to offer solutions to the issues before the authoritarians co-opt them for their own ends?

Another tactic we will have to develop if we are to build a mass libertarian movement is obtaining *favorable exposure* in the major media. The major organs of communication are largely controlled by liberals. It was the liberal news-media which actually brought the New Left into prominence through constant and favorable exposure. A blackout in the mass media will lead to the certain death of any incipient movement. If the ideas are not favorably analyzed by the opinion-makers (And let's face it. Public opinion is a manufactured product. If most people were rational enough to formulate their own opinions we would now be living in at least a *reasonably libertarian* society), their chances of taking root are reduced to nil.

To do this will require severing any lingering ties with the brand of "conservatism" currently practiced by the Nixon-Agnew-Reagan-Buckley Club and staking out a more independent course. The liberals are completely down on the New Left these days. They have finally realized that the current crop of New Leftists actually wants to kill them. "Kill a Parent a Day" was the theme of a recent SDS gathering. The liberals in their usual muddled and soft-headed manner are capable of sitting down over martinis and debating the pros and cons of whether they should be wiped out or not. By merely *not* advocating the wholesale slaughter of liberals we offer a Modest Proposal (If only Jonathan Swift were alive today) agreeable to at least the less-masochistic liberals. I have no doubt that some of them crave Death by Flagellation. But most are ready to lionize anybody who is not in favor of exterminating them and I see no reason why we should not capitalize on this situation while it lasts.

There is an area on the Left, ranging from Mailer and Goodman among the radicals to Hamill and Wicker among the quasi-libertarian liberals, that is becoming more receptive to the New Libertarian position. It strikes me that this is the best strategic position for us at the beginning of the 1970's, with the more outspoken critics of government repression who have access to the major communications media. The alternative is to remain in an ideological Ivory Tower, vilifying everyone not in full agreement with ourselves as "irrational" and "immoral", where we are certain to die the slow inevitable death of the Objectivists. If the New Libertarianism follows a similar fate, any hope for free marketism in the foreseeable future will vanish with it. It will certainly be a long time before an opportunity such as this is made available again.

It is for us now to succeed where the Rand and her mimics failed before us.

— Jerome Tuccille

## The Judges

Americans used to have an enormous, almost religious, reverence for the federal judiciary, and especially for the members of the Supreme Court. They were as gods. As a result, this group of life-appointed oligarchs, with the absolute power to make the final, ultimate decisions on interpretation of the laws and of the Constitution, had unquestioned power to rule our lives. Calhoun, one hundred and forty years ago, forecast the pernicious, statizing role of the Supreme Court, deducing his prediction from the very nature of government. If you have a Constitution, he pointed out, however rigorous the limits it places on government, these limits will dissolve if you leave the power to interpret that Constitution in the hands of a monopoly Supreme Court, appointed by the government itself. This means that one organ of government is able to decide on the limits of its own power, and over the years, the party in power will inevitably decide to keep expanding that power, and weakening its limits. The results, Calhoun saw early on in the process, will necessarily be to dissolve the constitutional checks on federal power. And that is precisely what has happened. The idea of a strictly limited, *laissez-faire* government turns out to be a Utopian, unrealistic one. It can never work, which is one of the main reasons why anarchists see the necessity for eliminating the State altogether, rather than try to limit and confine it once it is there.

In recent years, however, we have had the growth of a healthy skepticism and irreverence toward the Supreme Court, and the more this spirit of doubt and hostility spreads, the better. This means that libertarians should welcome all the campaigns to question or impeach the Supreme Court, regardless of the specific merits or demerits of the people involved. The seemingly foolish Birch Society campaign to impeach Earl Warren had the liberating effect of desanctifying, or de-legitimizing, the Chief Justice in the eyes of much of the public. Ditto the roar of disapproval that ousted Abe Fortas, ditto the lengthy and caustic going-over accorded Clement Haynsworth and Harrold Carswell, ditto the impassioned drive to impeach Justice Douglas. All of these have their very useful cumulative impact. The Supreme Court will never be the same.

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## The Lenin Centennial

April 22 marks the 100th anniversary of the birth of Vladimir Ilich Lenin, and is a date which should not pass unnoticed by libertarians. And not alone because of our gratitude to him for providing a colossal practical confirmation of Benjamin Tucker's 1897 prediction that "whatever the State Socialists may claim or disclaim, their system, if adopted, is doomed to end in a State religion, to the expense of which all must contribute and at the altar of which all must kneel!"

Quite aside from their socialist content, he who takes advantage of this centennial year to review a few of Lenin's writings will discover many sound principles of importance to any movement opposing the *status quo*. The following examples are drawn from the famous pamphlet "*What is to be Done?*"

On theory: "Without a revolutionary theory, there can be no revolutionary movement." The importance of theory is still greater, because "our party is only in the process of formation, its features are only just becoming outlined, and it has not yet completely settled its reckoning with other tendencies in revolutionary thought which threaten to divert the movement from the proper path."

On alliances: "Only those who have no reliance in themselves can fear to enter into temporary alliances with unreliable people." But, [now quoting Marx], "if you must combine, then enter into agreements to satisfy the practical aims of the movement, but do not haggle over principles, do not make 'concessions' in theory."

On spontaneity vs. consciousness: Lenin mocks the view that "in the same way as men and women will multiply in the old-fashioned way notwithstanding all the discoveries of natural science, so the new social order will come about in the future *mainly* as a result of elemental outbursts, notwithstanding all the discoveries of social science and the increase in the number of conscious fighters." He warns

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that following the spontaneous movement, the line of least resistance, leads to "the domination of bourgeois [read "statist"] ideology for the simple reason that bourgeois ideology is far older in origin than Social-Democratic [read "libertarian"] ideology; because it is more fully developed and because it possesses *immeasurably* more opportunities for becoming widespread."

On terrorism: The terrorists argued that their methods were necessary to "excite" the movement, and give it a "strong impetus". Lenin replied, "It is difficult to imagine an argument that disproves itself more than does this one! Are there not enough outrages committed in Russian life that a special 'stimulant' has to be invented? On the other hand, is it not obvious that those who are not, and cannot be, roused to excitement even by Russian tyranny will stand by 'twiddling their thumbs' even while a handful of terrorists are engaged in single combat with the government?"

On organization: "Our primary and most imperative practical task [is], namely, to establish an *organization of revolutionists* capable of maintaining the energy, the stability, and continuity of the political struggle."

These and many other passages deserve the attention of libertarians as the 1970's begin, for our movement today has much in common with the bolshevism of the *Iskra* period. As Lenin wrote in 1902,

We are marching in a compact group along a precipitous and difficult path, firmly holding each other by the hand. We are surrounded on all sides by enemies, and are under their almost constant fire. We have combined voluntarily, especially for the purpose of fighting the enemy and not to retreat into the adjacent marsh, the inhabitants of which, right from the outset, have reproached us with having separated ourselves into an exclusive group, and with having chosen the path of struggle instead of the path of conciliation. And now several in our crowd begin to cry out: Let us go into this marsh! . . .

Oh yes, gentlemen! You are free, not only to invite us, but to go yourselves wherever you will, even into the marsh. In fact, we think that the marsh is your proper place, and will render you every assistance to get there. Only let go of our hands, don't clutch at us, and don't besmirch the grand word "freedom" . . .

Within fifteen years of writing these words, Lenin's "compact group" had become the dominant political force in Russia. What can we learn from him to help us do as well? What will 1984 bring if we fail?

— Edwin G. Dolan

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