

Strengthening the LP

National conventions and electoral campaigns are surely the most dramatic things about the Libertarian Party (or about any political party). But sometimes quiet and undramatic work in committee is of equal or greater significance. This is particularly true of the L.P., which, in contrast to other parties, is not merely interested in vote-getting or electing people to office. It is vitally concerned with transforming its ideas into political issues and hence into reality: hence the enormous importance of the L.P. platform. But it is also interested in a third endeavor: forging itself into a coherent instrument by which to effect libertarian social change.

The biennial national convention decides on the L.P. platform; local candidates are decided by each state, while Presidential and Vice-Presidential candidates are chosen every four years at the convention; but it is the task of the national committee to decide upon and implement strategy for the party to achieve the aims set down by its platform and basic statement of principles. The national committee is chosen at every convention, half at large and the other half by regional groups of states. For its two-year term, the national committee is the democratically chosen voice of the Libertarian Party throughout the country.

Last summer, I had the honor of being elected as one of the at-large members of the national committee. This has given me a unique chance to report on the vitally important measures that the National Committee has taken to build a coherent party organization and to develop a strategic vision of how the party should go about effecting our common aims.

In the first place, the committee decided, at considerable cost in time and resources of its members, to double its number of meetings per year. We are now far more of an active and working committee. Secondly, and partly emerging as a result of more frequent meetings, we have developed a tradition which began at our Denver meeting in October 1977, of combining each meeting with speeches and workshops delivered at regional meetings of the LP held at the same time. In that way, national committee members can aid in improving party cohesion and spurring activism by members and sympathizers in the region of the meeting. So far, this had been done successfully at Denver, Atlanta, and Seattle.

Thirdly, the regional reps began to deliver reports on state activity in their region, thus giving national—and the other states and regions—important information on how each state party is doing and how it can be strengthened.

If the regional reps were to report on their particular regions, what work would there be for the at-large members to do? Carol Cunningham, an at-large member, decided to get the at-large members together before the October meeting at Denver to see what they might do. Out of that meeting emerged a new concept for the national committee: the adoption of a statement of purposes and strategy to guide the committee and the

party in the pursuit of libertarian goals. After lengthy discussion, the national committee adopted a slightly amended version.

And so the national committee now has a superb statement of purposes and strategy, a guideline for it to follow.

The following is the purposes and strategy resolution, in full:

PURPOSES OF NATIONAL LP

I. To Educate

- a. To introduce the public to libertarian ideas and programs.
- b. To attract to our movement the type of intelligent, energetic, dedicated individuals who are capable of changing society.
- c. To educate our own members in developing their libertarian commitment and in applying libertarian principles to real world problems.

II. To Provide Political Activity for Libertarians

- a. To provide the means for useful and important political activity for libertarians to advance their cause in the real world.
- b. To reinforce libertarians' commitment by finding other libertarians in each area and helping them work together.

III. To Roll Back The State

- a. By influencing people, media, voters, opinion-molders.
- b. By pressuring politicians and other parties in a libertarian direction.
- c. By getting ourselves elected in order to be in a position to dismantle the State.

STRATEGY FOR NATIONAL LP

I. We must hold high the banner of pure principle, and never compromise our goal—a world embodying the LP Statement of Principles. We must work to achieve our pure goal. The moral imperative of libertarian principle demands that tyranny, injustice, the absence of full liberty, and violation of rights continue no longer.

Any intermediate demand must be treated, as it is in the LP platform, as pending achievement of the pure goal and inferior to it. Therefore, any such demand should be presented as leading toward our ultimate goal, not as an end in itself.

Holding high our principles means avoiding completely the quagmire of self-imposed, obligatory gradualism: We must avoid the view that, in the name of fairness, abating suffering, or fulfilling expectations, we must temporize and stall on the road to liberty. Achieving liberty must be our overriding goal.

II. We must not commit ourselves to any particular order of destatization, for that would be construed as our endorsing the continuation of statism and the violation of rights. Since we must never

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Block and the Rights of the Father

by Jocelyn Maxwell*

In working towards a libertarian view of abortion, Walter Block developed some excellent arguments. Nevertheless, although he covered wide ground, I believe he overlooked some aspects of the rights of the various parties involved.

Because of the complexity of the issues relating to abortion I shall concentrate on a single facet only. I shall seek to establish the proposition that the foetus possesses no rights which it is entitled to assert against the mother.

My argument will be based on libertarian principles. These are that the individual possesses the right to self-ownership, including the ownership of his own body, his own labour and the fruits thereof. No one has the right to interfere coercively with the rights of any other. A person may voluntarily enter into contracts with others involving the use of his body, his labour and/or any other property rightfully acquired. All parties to contracts voluntarily entered into are morally obligated to abide by the terms of the contract.

I shall not attempt to argue whether or not the foetus is human. In order to do that it would be necessary to establish the attributes required to satisfy the definition of a human being. This approach is unsatisfactory, mainly because the attributes required to satisfy the definition can be disputed endlessly, but also because the attributes possessed by the foetus change with time. The difficulty in trying to establish the rights of an entity based on its attributes in this case is due to the fact that one would be discussing different entities at different stages of development.

In strict medical terminology the egg after conception, as it develops, is called a zygote, an embryo and finally a foetus. For the sake of brevity and also in order to maximise the status of the entity discussed, I have promoted the in-womb creature to foetus for the remainder of the discussion.

I shall assume that the foetus is a separate entity. If it is not, if it is simply a part of the woman, this argument ends forthwith for the part can claim no rights over the whole.

The basic difference between the status of the woman and the status of the foetus is that the woman's status is that of an independent being whilst the status of the foetus is that of a parasite. What is a parasite and what does it do? The Oxford Dictionary defines a parasite as an animal or plant living in or upon another and drawing nutriment directly from it. This describes concisely the actions of a foetus. A foetus lives within a woman and draws nourishment from her bloodstream.

To emphasize the nature of parasitism it is important to distinguish it from what it is not. It is the antithesis of independence. In its relationship to the host it is not therapeutic and not symbiotic (relating to the permanent union between organisms each of which depends for its existence on the other).

In fact a major characteristic of a parasite is that its existence is hostile to the well-being and health of the host. This must be so as the parasite takes nourishment which would otherwise go to protect, repair or fuel the body of the host. The parasite and therefore the foetus acts as an aggressor. It does not wait to be fed as does a baby or a child. It takes, even if by taking, deficiencies are created in the body of the woman. It therefore violates the property rights, i.e., the body and food input of the woman.

Because the actions of the parasite are inimical to the well-being of the host, the parasite has developed certain survival techniques that ensure it will not be expelled or ejected from the body of the host until its own needs have been met. These techniques may be listed as deception, invulnerability and persuasion.

Deception occurs where the host is unaware he or she is carrying any other creature. Therefore any actions towards expulsion will not occur. In the early stages of pregnancy it could be argued that the foetus uses deception to its advantage as it does not herald its existence in any conspicuous manner. With regard to the use of deception until the point of birth of a human baby, such cases today are rare but still do occur.

Invulnerability becomes a survival technique for a parasite when the host becomes aware of its existence but is unable to rid itself of the parasite without causing death to the host. Until about a hundred years ago this was the major survival technique of the foetus. There was no way a woman could rid herself of it without seriously endangering her own life.

Persuasion is also possible. Thus even with an unplanned pregnancy, the existence of the foetus may be persuasive enough to convince a woman she desires a child, and the pregnancy becomes a source of pleasure both present and anticipated. Today when technology has advanced to the stage where an abortion poses relatively little danger to the woman, persuasion is the only technique the foetus can rely upon.

By stating that the foetus acts as an aggressor in taking nutriment from the woman, this is not to state that the actions of the foetus are "irrational". Quite the contrary. It is bound to act the way it does because it has no other means of survival. If the woman wishes to bear a child she will, for the sake of both herself and the child, use every care to ensure that her own diet is adequate to the task of both maintaining her own body and building up the tissues of the foetus. To be adequate this diet will need to be more generous than before pregnancy, particularly in proteins and those vitamins which act as catalysts in tissue building. The assault on her own body should not be underestimated if through ignorance or lack of money she does not or cannot eat adequately. There are a whole host of ailments, some of them permanent, all resulting from food deficiencies, which will afflict her if she fails. The most severe of these is toxemia which can lead to eclampsia, convulsions and death. Toxemia can develop late in pregnancy and is generally acknowledged to be the result of multiple deficiencies. It is a condition associated only with pregnancy.

Thus the aggressive role of the foetus should not be underestimated. I am therefore bound to say that Walter Block's description of the foetus as a trespasser or an unwelcome guest (where the foetus is not wanted) is too mild by far. Those words conjure up the picture of a creature merely taking up room on property when it is not wanted. A ruthless raider of the larder would be a more apt description, for this is what a foetus does at the same time that it is enjoying shelter.

Because of the aggressive actions of the foetus it cannot claim the right to remain undisturbed within the womb until birth. To argue otherwise, to argue that the foetus does have this right, is to argue that because of its very existence, the mother must be slave to the foetus. Slavery is never justified, whether it be slavery for a lifetime, a number of years, nine months or nine seconds. We do not condone slavery on the grounds that the slave will be freed after an allotted time has passed.

There can be no question of contractual commitment to the foetus. As Walter Block has pointed out, a person cannot enter into a contract with someone who doesn't exist. One cannot contract with a nonexistent x that x be brought into existence.

The argument for equality of rights of fetuses is also a valid refutation of the theory that the woman has an obligation to the foetus because of her own voluntary acts.

This argument is as follows. The rights of all fetuses are equal. For it cannot be argued that the rights of the foetus conceived in rape are less than the rights of the foetus conceived as the result of a voluntary action. A woman is under no obligation to a foetus conceived in rape on the grounds of her own voluntary actions. But the rights of all fetuses are equal. Therefore a woman is under no obligation to a foetus however

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Rights of the Father —

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conceived. This will be so even if her own actions preceding pregnancy involved gross negligence.

Those who are concerned that a person acts responsibly at all times and bears the consequences of his or her own actions, and this surely includes all libertarians, often express a sense of injustice on occasions where women have appeared to act thoughtlessly, have become pregnant and have then, sought an abortion. They argue that she is attempting to escape the consequences of her own voluntary actions. But she is not doing so unless she gets the state to finance her abortion. The pregnancy is the consequence of her actions as well as the attendant necessity to seek an abortion with all the expense, pain and inconvenience involved. If I stupidly risk life and limb by climbing a tree which is beyond my capabilities to climb, and I fall and break my leg, the principle that one must bear the consequence of one's own actions does not require me to drag myself around for the rest of my life with a broken, unset leg. I am entitled, surely, to seek medical aid, providing I am willing to pay for it.

Of course, if a woman participates in sexual activity when stranded on a desert island where there are no medical facilities, the consequence could well be carrying the pregnancy through to term, provided she can survive up to that point. But these are not the circumstances in which most women find themselves.

As I have stated previously, to argue that the woman has no right to expel the foetus from her body is to argue that the woman should be slave to the foetus.

No doubt there will be many that argue that because the act of expelling brings about death, because the foetus cannot live outside the body, slavery is justified because it is the alternative to death of the foetus. But would these people argue similarly in other circumstances? Let me draw an analogy.

If there is a right to stay, there is a right to enter, or to re-enter a place once vacated. Suppose a technique which overcame the problem of changed breathing methods could be developed whereby a premature baby, battling to live, had a better chance of survival if re-inserted in the womb. Would any one argue it should be so returned despite objections of the mother?

If a dialysis machine were not available and a technique had been developed whereby dialysis of one person's blood by another could be achieved by a linking of bloodstreams for a few hours every day, should the mother (or father) of the person whose kidneys had failed be forced, if they were not willing, to undergo this procedure?

A very simple analogy of a case where one person makes use of part of another's body is a blood transfusion. Blood transfusions in many instances are life saving, but the contributing of blood is voluntary, not compulsory.

If the foetus has no rights on the grounds of its parasitism, no right to resist expulsion from the womb, does it then follow that the question of whether it should stay or go rest entirely with the mother?

Here, unfortunately, the rights of another party must be introduced. I say unfortunately because this admission of the rights of another adds greatly to the complexity of the whole issue, and makes the justice or otherwise of an act of abortion all the more difficult to determine. If only it were not so. But the heads-in-the-sand attitude of a large number of pro-abortionists on this matter does I believe undermine the strength of their own case.

If the foetus has no right of self-ownership on the grounds of parasitism, it is then the property of someone else. It is the property of the mother if she has been the victim of rape, if the man involved has expressly stated his disinterest in having children or has negated any rights he might have by his subsequent disregard for the woman once pregnant.

In all other cases the foetus is the joint property of the parents, and the question of whether pregnancy is to be terminated should be one for them to decide.

The grounds for the man concerned to have a say in the matter stem from the rights of an investor in a joint project. It would be difficult for a

woman to argue that when fatherhood was voluntary and not forced, the foetus was not the property of the father as well as the mother. Are his time and his energy worth nothing, not to mention the contribution of his sperm? In fact there is no way the foetus can be brought into existence without his participation. It may seem strange how seldom we hear men asserting their rights to be fathers. The reason of course is that those men who have campaigned most vigorously against abortion have nearly always done so in the name of the right of the foetus. In doing so they have virtually negated the right of the mother. Thus they cannot in logic assert that the father has rights. To concoct a principle whereby the father and the foetus are united to enslave the mother would be too much even for the most ardent male chauvinist to embrace. Therefore, ironically, it must be left to those who are basically pro-abortion in their beliefs to assert the principle that the father does have rights.

In the case of joint-ownership of foetus, problems arise when one parent puts a negative value on the foetus and the other parent values it positively.

To digress here, the different roles of the sexes and the nature of the sex act make possible a type of victimisation which is specific for each sex. These types of victimisation stem from the fact that rape is possible, pregnancy resulting from rape is possible, rape in all except rare instances is impossible to prove and fatherhood resulting from either rape or voluntary participation is impossible to prove.

If a woman is raped she is the victim of an injustice. She is the victim of an even greater injustice if she becomes pregnant as a result of rape.

A man becomes the victim of an injustice, if, following an agreement with a woman that she will bear his child, that woman on becoming pregnant has an abortion.

Sadly these injustices, even when acknowledged, have been accompanied by very little compassion from either sex when dealing with the other. This may be due to the fact that it is difficult to comprehend the horror of something that could never physically happen to oneself. There may be good practical reasons for dwelling on a horror that could happen, if for no other reason than it helps to ensure that steps will be taken to avoid it. But to dwell on something unpleasant that is either impossible or so unlikely as to be beyond the realms of possibility is normally a fruitless exercise. For this reason how many women are aware of the intensity of the sense of loss a man can feel in cases where a foetus he has fathered has been aborted, even in cases where that particular pregnancy was unplanned? Horrors which are specific to a woman are, in addition to rape, being forced to undergo a pregnancy she does not want and losing, through accident, a foetus she does not want to lose. The event of losing a foetus that is precious to her not through accident but human design i.e. abortion, is, because in the realms of science fiction, inconceivable to a woman. Yet this, in essence, is what can happen to a man. Similarly, because it is an impossible event for them how many men are completely oblivious to the horrors of an unwanted pregnancy? Startling evidence of the latter was offered in Karl Pflock's article entitled "It's a Matter of Life and Death" in "Reason", April, 1978. ("A normal pregnancy requires no extraordinary action on the part of existence, something any sensible person does anyway. She is not required to sacrifice herself to benefit another.")

To deal with these injustices which are specific for each sex, each has sought remedies through the law to strengthen their own position. Women demand that the law act more strongly against rapists. Men have sought to outlaw abortion. But it is because of the difficulty of proof of the actual circumstances surrounding the sex act that the law is an inappropriate vehicle for remedying the various injustices perpetrated by a member of one sex against a member of the other.

It is because of this, because of the possibility that the woman's participation in the sex act was not voluntary, that the law has no place in prohibiting abortion and should leave the question entirely to the woman. It goes without saying, of course, that if she wishes to terminate a pregnancy she will require the voluntary co-operation of a medical practitioner. Few doctors will consent to terminate late in a pregnancy.

What of a hypothetical case when a man secures a woman's written agreement to bear his child and the woman subsequently seeks an abortion? Should the law then grant an injunction preventing it? Depending on the terms of the contract, an injunction could well be

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Assassination Revisionism

I: LARRY FLYNT: OR, A LONE NUT STRIKES AGAIN

Someone has, indubitably, shot and almost assassinated Larry Flynt, creator and publisher of *Hustler* and other publications. Why did he do it? The Establishment theory is that a lone nut Christian did it, and indeed they picked up an authentic Christian at the scene of the crime, only to find that he was not the assassin.

Let us examine the alternative possible theories: (1) the Lone Nut Christian. But why would the lone Christian, however nutty, try to kill Larry Flynt shortly after he had converted from pornography to Jesus? Maybe before, but after Larry saw the light? Why would a Christian kill a newly found brother? Of course, he might have his doubts, as we all may, about the sincerity of Brother Flynt's conversion. But this way madness lies, for surely we can't kill all suspect newcomers to a proselytizing Church. And if someone like Chuck Colson remains unscathed, why pick on poor Flynt? And so soon? (2) Flynt might have been shot by a fellow pornographer, sore at Larry's desertion of their common cause to that of

Christianity. Dubious, for after all pornographers tend to be more interested in moolah than in ideology or solidarity, and so any pornographer would probably bid good riddance to a formidable competitor. And that leaves (3), the fascinating hypothesis, somehow neglected in press speculation, that Flynt's shooting may have nothing whatever to do with Christianity, but is rather related to the fact that only a few days previously, Larry Flynt had taken out ads all over the country, offering no less than \$1,000,000 reward "for information leading to the arrest and conviction of anyone involved in the planning or execution of President Kennedy's murder, or for information which makes it possible for the truth to come out." Oho! The Kennedy Assassination redivivus! In fact, Flynt had become such an Assassination buff that he had recently purchased the *L. A. Free Press*, and made the veteran revisionist Mark Lane the major editor of a new supplement, or Special Reports, on the Kennedy murder. The first supplement had just appeared on the stands. There have been so many murders, and mysterious deaths, surrounding

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Block on Abortion

by Roger E. Bissell

In his article in the September 1977 *Libertarian Forum*, Walter Block correctly argues that the foetus is a human life—i.e., that it is alive and is human—and not merely a potential, but an actual human life (even from the two-cell stage of development, immediately after conception). He further demonstrates that "the foetus conceived in rape has many (or as few) rights as any other," that all foetuses are created equal, giving mothers of such foetuses no special right to abortion not possessed by other pregnant mothers.

Mr. Block wisely distinguishes normal, healthy pregnancy from "medically contra-indicated pregnancy," in which the mother's life is in danger. The latter, he shows, is a true "life-boat situation," where only one of them (at best) can survive. The mother is justified in having an abortion by her right to self-defense, to the preservation of her life in the face of the mortal threat (which continuing to carry the foetus would pose).

If only Mr. Block had stopped at this point, all would be well. But he goes on to say that a woman may have an abortion for any reason which seems compelling to her, any strong desire not to carry the foetus, not merely the fear of death. Interestingly, part of his preceding discussion provides a clue to just where his argument went off course and how it can be corrected.

Arguing from the analogy between a homeowner or host and the pregnant mother, Mr. Block claims that "if the foetus is unwelcome, it than becomes a trespasser inside the mother's body." What does one do with trespassers? By right, one can ask them to leave, or can otherwise remove them; for they cannot insist on a long-term sanctuary, nor is one obliged to provide it.

What of the helpless individual? The host, while not obligated to care for him, is certainly not entitled to kill him either. "What he can do," says Block, "is transport (him) to the 'church steps' or the modern equivalent, in as gentle a manner as possible." The homeowner may carry him to some "public meeting place where unwanted (are) commonly left for people to pick them up"

It now seems reasonable to ask: Why not extend this argument to the case of the foetus and the pregnant mother? Presumably because the length of time required is considerably greater for the pregnant mother to transport the nine-month dinner guest (her foetus) to the 'church steps,' than for other hosts with already physically separate individuals trespassing on their property.

Let's explore this facet of Mr. Block's argument some more. He claims that "a dinner guest has no right to insist upon a nine-month visit." Yet, if you invite a person out for an airplane ride, according to Block, your guest does have the right to be transported back to the ground (or at least

given a parachute), and not to be evicted from the plane at an altitude of 10,000 feet simply because one desires that he no longer remain in one's property.

True, plane rides are relatively short, but what of extended ocean voyages of several days or weeks, with no life preservers or lifeboats, through shark-infested waters? What of space voyages of several weeks, months or years? Is one any less entitled to have transport back to safety, rather than immediate eviction as a "trespasser," regardless of the consequences, merely because the required period of time to do so is longer?

It should be clear that the length of time one is morally obligated to spend in transporting an unwanted guest to the "church steps" is the minimum necessary time to do so. There is no arbitrary cutoff point beyond which one is no longer obligated to make an effort.

Naturally, as technology progresses, this minimum necessary period of time will be drastically shortened. As Mr. Block points out, life-preserving methods of removing foetuses will allow the unwilling mother to make the trip to the "church steps" relatively swiftly.

Even at present, it should be recognized that full-term pregnancy could be a lower-cost option of discharging one's unwanted guest, than is abortion, were one only permitted to sell one's guardianship rights over the baby on an open market. Here, then, is yet another example of state intervention creating a victimless crime, distorting and limiting the options open to individuals, while not only permitting the murder of non-life-threatening foetuses to go unpunished, but sanctioning such murder as well.

The Editor Replies: In his critique of Block's article on abortion, Mr. Bissell continues Block's point about the unwanted dinner guest, and escalates it to a ship or space voyage. Actually, the proper analogy would not be a dinner guest or an invited traveller who outstays his welcome, but a stowaway who agresses against the ship or plane owner from the very beginning. But the important point is something else that needs saying: It may well seem like overkill, even if punctiliously correct from the point of view of libertarian law, to toss a stowaway overboard. But just as it is a far greater crime to murder or assault someone than to steal his property, so it is a far graver trespass against someone to invade his or her body than it is to stow away on his property. The fetus is an invader of, an aggressor against, a woman's body, and hence insisting on immediate ejection does not carry the same bizarre connotation as tossing a stowaway overboard. A woman should have the right to eject an unwanted parasite within her body as rapidly as possible—whether or not the parasite is considered "human". □

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justified. Certainly in the case of a written agreement the man would be justified in seeking damages if the abortion were carried out.

The determining of rights in cases of joint property ownership is always complex, and I do not wish to go beyond this point.

I merely wish to demonstrate that on the question of abortion, on moral grounds there are the rights of the two parties to be considered, the man and the woman. There is no one else.

On legal grounds, except in cases where there is a written agreement stipulating otherwise, the question of abortion should be one for the woman alone to decide.

The Editor Replies:

Jocelyn Maxwell's cogent and hard-hitting article regards the fetus as not simply a parasitic aggressor and trespasser, but also as a ruthless and rapacious killer. This goes a little further than I would in characterizing the fetus, but it is an interesting and even charming contribution to the ever-growing libertarian dialogue on abortion.

Maxwell's stress on the rights of the father does indeed raise a neglected and interesting point, but I think the point is totally mistaken. In the first place, Maxwell suffers from an erroneous theory of contract, so that a purely written promise, one that does not transfer title to

property, is held to give the father some sort of property right in the mother's body.

On the contrary, I believe that the mother's right to her own body is inalienable, so that any previous surrender of such right can be revocable at will. Neither does the father have any sort of "moral right" to the fetus, as Maxwell believes he does even in the absence of an agreement. It seems to me monstrous that the father's donation of sperm should give him some sort of title to the internal organs and processes of the mother's body. Again, this violates the basic libertarian axiom of self-ownership, and each person's absolute ownership of his or her own body.

What about the baby after birth? Who, the father, the mother, or both jointly, should have the right of trustee-ownership, or guardianship, over the baby? It seems to me that, legally, the mother should have the sole trusteeship right to the baby (though, morally, there may be a good case for jointly-shared responsibility). This sole right of the mother rests on two points. First, the mother is the only evident and clear parent. Biologically, her parentage is the only one that is clear-cut; who the father is, is doubtful and murky, and surely does not have the evidential certainty of motherhood. In some cases, even the mother doesn't know for sure. But let us assume that blood tests or whatever can some day tell with certainty who the father is. In that case, second, the ownership of the baby should still rest with the mother alone. For, on homesteading principles, the mother is the first "occupier" of the fetus. Or, to employ a bad pun, on Lockean principles the mother and not the father "mixed her labor" with the fetus. Legally, then, the mother should have the sole right to trustee ownership of the baby. □

Assassination —

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the assassination of Kennedy and Oswald (and of Officer Tippitt), that we would have to go with this unsung hypothesis as at least a likely explanation.

The press has hinted at a fourth explanation for those who cannot quite swallow the Lone Nut Christian theory: (4) that the Mafia gunned down Flynt for interfering with their magazine distribution monopoly. But the very raising of the point about the Mafia is dangerous for the Establishment, because there is much evidence that the Mafia was hip-deep in the Kennedy Assassination itself. So that is not likely to be a well-publicized theory.

Larry Flynt adds one more name to a growing roster of mysterious and unsatisfactorily explained political assassinations and quasi-assassinations in recent years:

John F. Kennedy; Lee Harvey Oswald; John Connally; and Officer J. D. Tippitt—all killed or wounded on or around Nov. 22, 1963 in Dallas. Robert F. Kennedy; Martin Luther King; George C. Wallace; and Malcolm X. All of these were ostensibly killed or wounded by lone nuts, with the exception of Malcolm, where the top "conspirator" claims that his fellow convicts had nothing to do with the murder. And then, on the possibly political level, there are the murders of Sam Giancana and Johnny Roselli, both supposed to be purely gangland killings of undetermined and trivial origin.

II. THE HOUSE COMMITTEE

How goes the House Select Committee on Assassinations? The answer, unsurprisingly, is: not very well. It looks as if the well-orchestrated ouster of Richard Sprague early last year has drawn the Committee's teeth and assures yet another governmental whitewash of the Kennedy-Oswald and King killings.

The L.A. Free Press Special Report Number One, co-edited by Assassination Revisionist Mark Lane, reports that, when Rep. Thomas Downing (D., Va.) established the Committee, another leading revisionist, Washington lawyer Bernard Fensterwald, Jr., was offered the key post of chief counsel. Fensterwald allegedly told Lane that the CIA had levelled a death threat at Fensterwald if he should take the post, and that three other attorneys had been similarly warned off. After Fensterwald then turned down the post, it went to the abrasive, dynamic Richard Sprague, the successful prosecutor of the famous Yablonski murder case at the United Mine Workers.

After Sprague showed signs of taking the job seriously, he was subjected to an unprecedented, and seemingly coordinated smear-campaign in the press, after which he was fired by the new Committee chairman, Rep. Henry Gonzalez (D., Tex.) after almost hysterical personal attacks directed by the Congressman against Sprague. Was there any "old boy" Texas influence working on Gonzalez?

Since then, the Committee has been quiet, which L. A. Free Press hopes is a sign that the Committee is doing effective work behind the scenes. But the signs are not good, if we can credit the report in the Feb. 20 issue of *New Times*. For, apparently, the new chief counsel, G. Robert Blakey, has been so low-key that he has returned almost half a million dollars to the Treasury as unneeded. Many staff members have complained that Blakey's action has pulled punches in the investigation and has crippled its effectiveness.

There are more sinister aspects to Blakey's behavior than simple penny-pinching. For as soon as he took over the post, Blakey cracked down on his staff, required them to sign agreements that they would not acknowledge their jobs at the committee without permission. Violation will bring instant dismissal and a \$5,000 fine.

More troubling than the mere martinet aspects of the Blakey regime is its attitude toward the CIA, the self-same agency that allegedly threatened Fensterwald. For Blakey has refused to allow access to classified material to any staff member who cannot get CIA clearance. Not only that: any staff members who do read CIA documents must submit any notes they make to the Agency for review! Blakey's refusal to call former CIA director and admitted perjurer Richard Helms before his committee, is of a piece with a statement he once made about U.S. intelligence agencies: "You don't think they'd lie to me, do you? I've been working with those people for twenty years." Hmmm.

There is also an ambivalence in Blakey's attitude toward organized crime—which possibly had important links to the assassination (pace Giancana, Roselli, and, especially, Jack Ruby). After building a reputation as a crusader against racketeers, including a stint as Special Prosecutor in Bobby Kennedy's organized crime strike force, Blakey weighed in with an anti-free press affidavit supporting La Costa Ranch in its libel suit against *Penthouse Magazine* in the winter of 1976. Things get curiouser and curiouser.

At any rate, we may now judge that another Warrengate is in the works, that the Committee may eventually peter out with yet another rubber-stamp of the Oswald-Ruby-lone nuts thesis. So what else is new? □

Strengthening the LP —

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be in the position of advocating the continuation of tyranny, we should accept any and all destatizing measures wherever and whenever we can.

III. The goal of liberty must always be the important consideration, not organizations or activities themselves. In short, the means must never be allowed to become ends in themselves.

IV. Since our goals and principles are radical enough, we should avoid any extra alienation of people by the form of our presentation or by our image. In short, our content should be embodied in an image appropriate to our status as a national party aiming to become a new majority. We must bear in mind, however, that we must always distinguish ourselves from the conservative movement and emphasize that we are not on the left-right political spectrum.

V. There should be no endorsement of candidates who are not libertarians.

VI. A detailed study should be made of setting up guidelines for LP candidates who will be elected to administrative or legislative offices. Should they accept salaries, should they vote consistently on every measure, etc?

The statement of purpose is straight forward: the party's aims are to educate itself and the public, to apply libertarian principles to real problems, to provide useful political activity, and to roll back and dismantle the State.

The statement of strategy deserves to be underscored. We are now committed to pure principle, and to our consistent goal as our overriding objective. In presenting any intermediate demands, we must always be clear that these are only way-stations to the ultimate goal. Above, all, the Libertarian Party is now committed firmly and squarely against "obligatory gradualism," against the corrupting view that we should prefer a more gradual rather than a more rapid pace toward liberty. To repeat the LP nat com's statement of purposes: "We must avoid the view that, in the name of fairness, abating suffering, or fulfilling expectations, we must temporize and stall on the road to liberty. Achieving liberty must be our overriding goal." In keeping with this perspective, we then go on to conclude that "we must not commit ourselves to any particular order of destatization,"—to any four-year plan—"for that would be construed as our endorsing the continuation of statism and the violation of rights." In contrast to such a plan of ordered gradualism, and "since we must never be in the position of advocating the continuation of tyranny, we should accept any and all destatizing measures wherever and whenever we can."

With this statement, the LP now sets itself firmly against all forms of preferential or obligatory gradualism, against the sort of surrender of principle which says that we should not cut Tax A by more than X%, or that we should not repeal statist measure B until we can repeal C. Similarly, it sets itself against any sort of "alternative budget", in which libertarians declare how much each organ of government should be spending in the coming years. For if we name a particular figure, the implication is that this would be better than any alternative lower figure, which of course undercuts and contradicts libertarian principles. We will

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Arts and Movies

by Mr. First Nighter

High Anxiety. Dir. by Mel Brooks, with Mel Brooks and the gang. There is no such thing as a bad or a dull Mel Brooks movie. His films are either blockbusters in their consistent hilarity (*The Producers*, *Blazing Saddles*), or else merely first-rate, quieter and with a consistent charm (*Twelve Chairs*, *Young Frankenstein*). Brooks' latest, *High Anxiety*, is merely first-rate. It is a charming valentine and tribute to Brooks' cinematic hero, Alfred Hitchcock, and the comic-suspense plot is chock-full of familiar references to Hitchcockian touches (in *Vertigo*, *Psycho*, *Foreign Correspondent*, etc.) Brooks plays a prominent psychiatrist (a funny situation in itself) who takes over the shady Institute for the Very, Very Nervous in California.

The usual Brooks crew is on hand, ably seconded by Cloris Leachman as the new-Nurse Fletcher, and the charming Howard Morris as Brooks' psychiatric mentor. One of the great bits in the movie is Morris providing an instant psychoanalytic cure for Brooks' height phobia. The undoubted high point of the film, however, is Brooks' splendid imitation of Frank Sinatra singing the title song, *High Anxiety*. Brooks provides the definitive comic imitation of Sinatra, and that alone is worth the price of admission.

Julia. Dir. by Fred Zinnemann. With Jane Fonda, Vanessa Redgrave, and Jason Robards. Being left-wing does automatically disqualify a movie from being a superior film. *Z* and the *Battle for Algiers* are cases in point. But such a picture, since it is a "message movie", has to be lucid and skillfully directed.

Julia is just the opposite. It is not only left-wing; it is an abysmal movie, which has only ridden to fame and fortune by virtue of its fuzzy leftist credentials.

The problem with *Julia* is that it is all shot from the point of view of the Lillian Hellman character (Jane Fonda). And while the film is directed with extreme and almost sickening reverence for La Hellman—with constant boasting by her about her own brilliance, sensitivity, great writing,

and social consciousness—it is clear from the evidence of the film that Hellman was nothing less than a nitwit. Fonda-Hellman wanders through the murk of Europe without knowing a thing about European politics, except for being vaguely anti-Nazi and in favor of "workers". The problem is that, four decades later, Hellman seems to know no more than she did at the time, and so the audience doesn't know what's going on either. Who was the mysterious man who paid for Hellman's hotel room in Vienna, and why did he do it? What happened to Maximilian Schell? What happened to Vanessa Redgrave's daughter? Who knows, and who cares?

For no one can really care about any of these people, since they are only shadowy reflections of Fonda-Hellman, and of her silly and ignorant outlook on the world. Everyone else is there only as pale wraiths reacting to the narcissistic Hellman, and this includes, not only Robards-Dashiell Hammett, but even the eponymous Julia, who is on screen only a small portion of the time, and is confined to smiling a proletarian, anti-Nazi grin and looking fragily heroic. The leftists in *Julia* are all good, insufferably good people, while the vaguely limned right-wingers are scoundrels who don't love their children, are interested only in money, and are the sort of people (indeed are the people) who sleep with their sisters. "Loaded" hardly suffices to summarize this drivel.

In addition, to all this, *Julia* is a slow, draggy, incredibly pretentious picture. As a veteran moviegoer, I could spot the way the whole movie was going to go from the very first murky and pretentious scene, where Fonda sits on a rowboat in a lake, while her voice utters sappy platitudes (If she doesn't exactly say "life is a river", she just as well could have).

Strip away the current Hellman cult, strip away the fuzzy leftism and the fact that Hellman was a Stalinist when it counted, and *Julia* would never have left the studio. If anyone should have the misfortune of finding himself seeing this movie, he might inject some interest into the proceedings by pretending that Hellman was pro-facist and then contemplate whether this turkey ever would have been produced.

Strengthening the LP —

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seek and accept reductions of statism wherever and whenever we can, and we will never endorse its continuation in any area.

The rest of the statement presents a cautionary reminder that liberty is the goal, and that no organization, however worthy (including the LP itself), can ever be allowed to become ends in themselves to the neglect of our primary goal. It also points out that since our principles are radical, it is senseless—in view of our task of becoming the majority party—to add extra alienation by presenting a needlessly wild image.

Last fall, I submitted a paper "On Coalitions and Alignments" to the national committee for its consideration. After being printed in *LP News* and being subject to discussion and consideration for several months, the resolution was passed by the National Committee this May. (For the full text, see *LP News*, Jan.-Feb. 1978).

The resolution "On Coalitions and Alignments" begins by reiterating that libertarians must cleave to pure principles, while still acting effectively in the real world, and that it attempts to apply such a strategic policy to the question of coalitions.

In sum, the resolution says as follows: coalitions with non-libertarians are right and proper, provided they are on specific issues that will advance libertarian positions. Such coalitions must never be permanent organizational alignments. "We should always remember, then, that coalitions are for limited purposes, and that we should never extend uncritical support to groups who happen to be our allies on particular issues." Next, the resolution states that it is legitimate for LP organizers and activists to join, as individuals, non-libertarian organizations with whom we have ad hoc, specific issue coalitions. But there is a prudential proviso: that the LP activist should not join an organization that is so out of public favor that such membership would be counter-productive for the

movement (e.g., joining the Ku Klux Klan, even if it happens to be libertarian on one or two issues.)

Should the LP accept monetary contributions regardless of source? Yes, but with two provisos, one moral and one prudential. The moral: that we accept no money from the State, whether it be the CIA or the federal elections machinery. The prudential: that we do not accept the money if it would seriously embarrass us in the goal of becoming a majority movement in America (eg., from the Ku Klux Klan.)

With whom should we form coalitions? Whether we form them left, right, or center on specific issues, it is always important to remember that the coalition be against the State, and not with it. Says the nat com resolution: "As an example of coalitions not to form, many conservative libertarians, in the late 1960's, allied themselves with the police and with government-run and financed universities, and against the student rebels against the statist institutions."

The resolution goes on to say that the potential libertarian constituency in America is all net taxpayers. It adds that as statism continues to founder and collapse, we can expect that even many government employees will become libertarians. Our policy on them: "These government employees should be welcomed in the libertarian movement, but we must always realize that the abstract convictions of these members continually cut against their own personal economic interests." We must beware when people's economic interests are for more government and therefore greater tax revenue.

The resolution proceeds to point out that while ad hoc coalitions on specific issues may be formed across the political spectrum, that "we must be far more wary of coalitions with conservatives than with other groups." Why this extra problem with conservatives? Because: "(1) most of the media and the public perceive us as being a variant of

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Strengthening the LP —

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extreme conservatism' ... (2) ... the media and intellectuals tend to be anti-conservative, often for good reasons (because of conservative positions on civil liberties and foreign policy). (3) In fact, the greatest single threat to American liberty is the pro-war foreign policy of the conservative movement." I think it extremely heartening that the national committee of the Libertarian Party has gone on record as identifying pro-war foreign policy as the greatest single threat to American liberty.

The resolution then proceeds to an attack on "unprincipled logrolling". That is, neither the LP nor its elected legislators may ever engage in log-rolling, e.g. backing statist measure A because some other person or group will back our anti-statist measure B. It is vitally important that a libertarian legislator, for example, vote perfectly consistently libertarian straight down the line. He or she must be nothing less than 100% libertarian.

The resolution next reiterates that the Libertarian Party, if it is to be built as a libertarian organization, must not endorse non-libertarian candidates. But the "Coalitions and Alignments" resolution goes on to flesh out this simple assertion of the Strategy Statement: namely, "we should not endorse any candidates who are not libertarians, i.e. who fail to endorse our national Statement of Principles." This should be non-controversial within the LP; after all, the Statement of Principles is enshrined in our platform as not being amendable except by a 2/3 vote of all delegates registered at a national convention. And the resolution continues: that LP officials and members should not also be members of rival, statist political parties.

The resolution concludes with this brief paragraph: "It should be noted that by looking for this exclusivity of membership, of political commitment, we are not cutting against our approval of ad hoc coalitions. On the contrary, this is all part of a consistent strategic outlook for the LP; namely, that we form coalitions with non-libertarian groups on specific issues where our goals and principles are being fostered: but that we ourselves concentrate on building our own party of libertarians, who do not endorse non-libertarians for political office."

This is not all: the May meeting of the national committee also addressed itself to a question of principle that has vexed many libertarians: how can members of the LP, the Party of Principle, accept tax-looted salaries once they get elected to office? It is a question, as our Strategy Statement indicated, that needs study. At the May meeting, I introduced a resolution proposing that LP commit itself to attempting to pay all salaries of its elected officials through a blind trust, consisting of voluntary contributions to the LP by individuals not known to the official. I also proposed that, instead of simply tearing up his salary check and thereby leaving the money in the hands of the State, the official, should,

with all appropriate fanfare, announce that he is distributing the money in small checks at random to voters in his constituency. He will then explain to each of the recipients the point of the whole thing— that, in contrast to other, ripoff political parties, the LP, instead of living off the taxpayer, is committed to returning his funds. We can then ask the same taxpayer to contribute his "dividend" voluntarily to an LP blind trust. The blind trust resolution concludes: "The blind trust method, then, will satisfy our libertarian consciences, demonstrate to one and all, potential supporters, media, etc. that we are uniquely the party of principle, and also score a propaganda coup which the party and our candidates can use effectively."

The blind trust resolution was passed unanimously. In it, the Libertarian Party "commit(s) itself to attempting to pay the salaries of our elected officials through a blind trust or other voluntary means," and appoints a sub-committee to work out the details.

The LP national committee has done several other great things since last fall:

(1) It has formally joined the Campaign to Stop Government Spying, a coalition of many diverse groups and organizations dedicated to one vital issue: the abolition of government spying on political dissidents.

(2) It has established a finance committee, to raise funds on a serious and systematic basis. Ray Cunningham, now of Connecticut, is chairman of the committee.

(3) It adopted unanimously a resolution on "Assistance to State Parties," committing the national LP to assisting state parties in setting up a newsletter, press release programs, funding programs, membership programs, Young Libertarian Alliances, etc. When we can afford it, we will employ a Field Coordinator for the task; in the meanwhile, the regional reps to the national committee will bear primary responsibility in assisting state parties in their region. In a follow-up resolution, the national committee particularly stressed the importance of a regular newsletter as at least a necessary condition of a seriously functioning party.

Through its national committee, The Libertarian Party has taken giant steps forward in forming itself into a coherent organization, in forging a strategic vision of how it will implement its ultimate goals. On the Labor Day weekend, September 6-9, 1979, we will have another mighty extravaganza, our next Presidential nominating convention at the Bonaventure Hotel in Los Angeles. When we consider our next Presidential ticket, we must take care to pick candidates who adhere, not only to our Statement of Principles and our national platform, but also to the strategic vision that has been hammered out these past months. □
* Jacelyn Maxwell is Education Director of the Progress Party of Queensland, Australia. Maxwell writes that the article expresses "my personal beliefs and are not necessarily the beliefs of the Progress Party, which is split on the issue of abortion."

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