

FLP Split!

The big libertarian political news from New York is the defection from the Free Libertarian Party of nine of its leading members, including four of its former candidates for office, and two of its former chairmen. Of the nine, three have resigned from the FLP outright (Childs, Millen, and Rothbard), while the other six remain, in the words of the joint statement of the nine published below, "alienated, but continuing to do what they can for our cause . . . on their own." All of them have "disengaged" from the FLP.

The walkout was precipitated by the events at the recent FLP annual convention (March 26-28) but the causes have been brewing for a long time. Basically, the recent convention demonstrated that what I have called the "left sectarian" faction in control of the FLP was determined on continuing and escalating its long-standing campaign of personal slander and abuse against ourselves and against the national LP leadership. The campaign, orchestrated by what the Statement calls "an absurd Robespierre (Howard S. Katz), suspecting treachery and lack of virtue everywhere", has been conducted, as the Statement declares, "on the assumption, of course, that the victims would always be there, passively allowing themselves to be the butt of the ill-will of others." The Statement announces that "this particular show has now folded in New York, because those who were cast as the antagonists of the People of Virtue have simply walked off the stage."

The Statement speaks of anger and sorrow as two leading emotions held by those of us who have walked off the stage. My own dominant emotion is relief, relief at no longer having to be in a symbiotic relationship with those who control the FLP. For beyond the personal abuse, there is the vital point stressed by Roy Childs in his letter of resignation to the FLP, published below: that the FLP, in the hands of the sectarian faction, is a gross fraud, a fraud on those of its members who believed they were joining what the FLP purports to be: a political party. When I joined the FLP three years ago, there were flourishing clubs within the party that devoted themselves to studying and acting upon political issues. For that, after all, is what a libertarian political party is supposed to be doing: taking a public lead in applying libertarian principles to the vital, burning political issues of the day. But those clubs have long since evaporated, and in the last couple of years, the FLP has shown no interest whatever in any political issues. What did the FLP say or do about such leading political issues of 1975-76 as Angola or the New York City default crisis? The answer is Nothing, and the same is true about all the other vital issues. The FLP doesn't even have a platform. Instead, under the control of the People of Virtue, they have devoted all of their energies to sniffing out alleged moral impurity in fellow libertarians.

I have used the term "sectarian" in analyzing this faction, but even this term gives them too much credit. Thus, when, recently, the Mid-Hudson chapter of the FLP egregiously violated libertarian principle to the extent of calling for a sales tax (!) — a resolution that was later overturned by the narrowest of margins — our "purists" indicated that

they couldn't care less. To them, the content of libertarian ideology is a secondary and unimportant matter, far less important than sniffing out alleged philosophical immorality among libertarians who have never violated the content of libertarian principle. It is truly a bizarre situation.

I say that "relief" is my own dominant emotion at resigning from the FLP because, quite simply, for a long time I have not in good conscience been able to advise new and budding libertarians to join the FLP — an organization that displays no interest in political issues but only in personal and insufferably self-righteous abuse of their colleagues. And so it dawned ever more clearly: why should I continue to belong to an organization that I cannot recommend anyone else to join? That inner contradiction is now happily resolved.

My parting words to the Katznik faction is this stanza from Bobbie Burns' great poem, *An Address to the Unco Guid*:

O ye wha are sae guid yoursel'
Sae pious and sae holy,
Ye've nought to do but mark and tell
Your neebour's fauts and folly.

As the Statement makes clear, we nine defectors continue to support enthusiastically the MacBride-Bergland Presidential ticket — indeed, that is one of the key issues in the split. The three resigners continue to be national members of the Libertarian Party.

A STATEMENT

Concerned with the mischievous course which the Free Libertarian Party has come increasingly to pursue; mindful of the need to bring about a reappraisal and a redirection of the FLP; and attentive to the respect which we owe to ourselves, we the undersigned disengage ourselves, in varying degrees, from the FLP.

The causes which have led us to this action are many. In the case of some of us, we have been struggling against them — tediously, and at great emotional cost — for years. Others of us have only recently become aware of the deep problems which a certain faction continues to generate in our Party.

The faction whose conduct has occasioned our suspension of support has been guilty of harassment, of gossip-mongering, of character assassination and of the petty personal sniping that finally saps anyone's will to persevere in any organization — even one dedicated to the noble ideals of the FLP. Acts of spite and irresponsible accusations go back a long time with members of this faction. Some of the more recent ones are as follows:

Our errors are presumed to have malicious intent, while theirs are merely "mistakes;" praise for good work, and acknowledgment of

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dedication to our cause is systematically withheld from some (including our presidential candidate) — rather we are constantly subjected to suspicion and malicious speculation as to our "real" motives; unguarded comments of some of us have been greedily seized upon and blown up to the proportions of the Dreyfus case; other comments, published in private newsletters, have for some reason been made into the official business of the FLP; an absurd Robespierre, suspecting treachery and lack of virtue everywhere, is permitted — even encouraged — to impugn the integrity of his moral and ideological betters; the FLP newsletter has been used to savage libertarians who dissent from the editorial line; indeed, and finally, for those with no more pressing Libertarian work to do, casting doubts on the integrity of other FLP members has developed into a kind of pastime, on the assumption, of course, that the victims would always be there, passively allowing themselves to be the butt of the ill-will of others. We hereby announce that this particular show has now folded in New York, because those who were cast as the antagonists of the People of Virtue have simply walked off the stage.

In announcing our disengagement from the FLP, we feel not only anger, but also sorrow. Some of us have dedicated years of effort to the FLP. All of us have cherished the idea of working with an FLP that was a community of women and men working together for the highest things we know, and a friendly haven from a crazy world — where we have always supposed our real adversaries are to be found.

The implacable wrong-headedness and vindictiveness of a powerful faction in the FLP has made all this impossible. The apathy and "who am I to judge" attitude of an acquiescent membership has become intolerable. Some of us are resigning outright; others will remain in the FLP, alienated, but continuing to do what they can for our cause — above all for the MacBride-Bergland ticket — on their own.

Walter Block	Andrea Millen	Murray N. Rothbard
Roy Childs	Ralph Raico	Jerry Tuccille
Gary Greenberg	Howard Rich	Fran Youngstein

LETTER OF RESIGNATION

by Roy A. Childs, Jr.

It is with something akin to sadness that I have decided to resign my membership in the Free Libertarian Party of New York. This decision, far from being merely a personal response to personal events at the last FLP convention, and far from being impulsive, has been made only after weeks of careful thought and consideration. I should like to lay out my reasons for resigning, so that there can be no misunderstanding concerning my motives.

I feel quite frankly that I have been defrauded by the FLP, that my membership fee was in fact solicited under false pretenses, and that I have not gotten what I have paid for.

When I was solicited to join the FLP, I was told that I was joining a political party. Since it was an avowedly Libertarian political party, I thought that its purposes and functions were clear: it would be concerned with political issues, and with organizing a consistent, unified and effective Libertarian response to the issues of the day. It would, I supposed, run candidates where appropriate, endorse other candidates when that was appropriate, and address the burning political issues of our time, in terms of fundamentals, in terms of principles, and in terms of specifics. This last I held to be particularly important, for without a concern for facts, no discussion of concrete political issues is possible. When I joined the party, immediately after moving to New York City from California, I was very enthusiastic about the FLP; here in the den of statism. I thought, there was no lack of important issues to address. It would be both exciting and important to address them. The FLP, I thought, was just the institution to mount a concerted attack on the foibles and policies of the day. It was a vehicle whereby important issues could be identified and sorted out from unimportant issues. It was an institution which could above all organize libertarian responses to issues. I was very excited, in short, about the prospects for the FLP, and had high hopes in joining the party.

I was wrong to have had those hopes, for in the past year, every one of

them has been frustrated and thwarted. As I watched issue after issue arise, I witnessed a nightmare: Libertarians, uninterested in political events, calling themselves a political party, showing political judgment which was at best naive, at worst astonishingly superficial and wrongheaded. But above all, I witnessed in the FLP what I had earlier witnessed in the Society for Individual Liberty: impotence. As in earlier cases of the decay and destruction of Libertarian institutions and organizations, I watched the gradual takeover of the party by a particular spirit, a peculiar animating vision which can best be compared to the Objectivist discussion group of years past. Sterility, boredom and personal abuse had all become central to the FLP. I watched members of a political party give no thought to making effective use of opportunities which could only be described as monumental. Not only was there no serious thought or discussion about what the party should be doing, there was not even serious thought or discussion over who would be best in what office or in what campaign. There was never any effective, well-conceived response to any political issue. Instead, some people, whose comparative advantage apparently consists in their dubious ability to dissect other people's motives and hidden plans, to invent plots and posture as moral leaders whom it would be laughable to emulate, have systematically thwarted any attempt to grapple with the issues of the real world.

There was no protest from the FLP about the Mayaguez incident. There was no concern over U.S. intervention in, of all places, Angola. There has been no protest against U.S. involvement in the Middle East, despite the fact that most FLP members live in the city from which the push for such intervention has come.

Although there are in this city several brilliant and eloquent libertarian feminists, there has been no renewed response to the renewed push by the the so-called "pro-life" lobby to impose a theocracy on the people of the United States, through their campaign against legalized abortion. What this campaign amounts to is nothing less than the attempt to impose the peculiar moral tenets of the Roman Catholic Church on the people of America. But there has been no outcry, no opposition, from the FLP. We have seen several attempts by the municipal unions, in the case of the garbage collectors, the cops, the firemen, the transit workers, to blackmail the people of New York City, to fleece them through taxation for their own personal financial gain. There has been no opposition from the FLP. We are in the midst of continuing enforcement of the vicious Rockefeller Drug Law, the most monstrous consumer-rights law ever to be passed in this nation since prohibition, a law which daily destroys the lives and hopes of countless numbers of people, people who are not articulate enough to defend themselves. Organized crime and the city police work hand in hand to divide the profits from drugs, and oppress several hundred thousand drug users. There has been no outrage expressed at these injustices from the FLP.

A massive financial breakdown has occurred in this city, with no one pointing a way out of the city's difficulties, no arguments for privatizing city services, no opposition to federal bailing out of the city government, a government run by irresponsible shell-game artists and downright hoodlums. The FLP, in short, remained silent. In fact, there is not a single current issue of any importance that the FLP has concerned itself with. Instead of organizing opposition to these and other vitally important political events, to the actions of the local, state and federal governments, we have seen incredible (and immoral) wasting of resources and time on petty personal squabbles, and on minor issues light-years away from anything which could be remotely conceived of as important. We have seen fruitless social gatherings, bitching and infighting, slander and moral denunciations, all designed, apparently, to make serious discussion of important political issues all but impossible, and to drive those who are concerned solely with political issues, out of the Free Libertarian Party. It has now become impossible to recommend membership in the FLP to those coming upon Libertarianism for the first time. One whiff of the poisonous atmosphere at an FLP meeting would, very likely, alienate them forever.

For discussion of political issues to be impossible within an organization which calls itself a political party, is obscene. I for one cannot any longer tolerate this fraud, and I cannot lend my name or support to such an organization, however painful such a decision may be to me personally.

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In sharp contrast to the machinations and irrelevancies of the FLP, there is the national Libertarian Party and the MacBride for President campaign. In my view, these are magnificent models of what a libertarian political effort should be. We had no right last August to hope that the MacBride campaign would be anywhere near as successful as it has proven to be. I have been astonished at the consistently good political judgment shown: MacBride's immediate response to Reagan's view that we should "eyeball" the Russians over Angola, for example, or the press conference called to attack the Supreme Court decision on gay rights. Most of all, perhaps, there has been the distribution of vast quantities of good, solid literature on issues from a Libertarian perspective. Again and again good sound judgment has been manifested by Roger MacBride and his co-workers in this campaign.

If there was a concern immediately after the national LP convention as to what course a MacBride campaign would take, that concern should have evaporated. If there was a concern about the candor and honesty used in addressing issues, that concern should have passed. If there was a concern about the effectiveness with which Roger MacBride would speak out on the hard, tough issues in public, that concern should have been set aside. If there was a concern, in fact, about any major element of the MacBride campaign, that concern should have rationally been transformed into white-hot enthusiasm for the MacBride for President campaign. But it has not, not within the FLP at least, and the FLP's reluctance to support MacBride in this critically important election year with every available resource constitutes my gravest complaint against the FLP.

Should the day come when the FLP rejects its petty factionalism, its discussion-group-mentality, and turns instead to an authentic concern with political issues, with the cause of advancing Liberty in our time, I shall be happy to give it my enthusiastic support. But I do not expect this to happen in the near future, since recent events have shown precisely how members of the FLP are prepared to treat those who are concerned, passionately concerned, with political issues. When one stops to realize that the only resolution passed by the FLP at its recent convention was concerned, in its state-of-nature format, with attacking and slandering Murray Rothbard, Andrea Millen, and myself, the true concern of party members becomes evident. These are not my concerns. Indeed, when I brought this up to several members of the self-appointed "purist" faction, it was suggested to me, in so many words, that that's what we were for: Walter Block, Gary Greenberg, Andrea Millen, Ralph Raico, Howard Rich, Murray Rothbard, Jerry Tuccille, Fran Youngstein and myself were expected to come up with the resolutions and proposals for addressing issues, while the rest of the party members would, apparently, concern themselves with our moral character. Surely the only proper response to such an openly exploitative and manipulative outlook is for the victims to head for the nearest exit.

I believe in a great Rothbardian principle: that of demonstrated preference. This principle holds that individuals reveal their actual values, their actual preferences, in action. From what I have seen, then, the values of the members of the FLP are greatly at odds with my own. I am interested in addressing the important political issues which confront us. It is a paradox of the FLP that perhaps I can best pursue this end by not being a member. I have come to that conclusion with a great deal of reluctance, but nothing will be helped if I continue to play a role in sustaining the fundamental evasion and self-deception of the members of the Free Libertarian Party of New York: that they are a political party, that they are interested in political issues, that they are interested in promoting and advancing Liberty. I cannot allow myself to hope for changes any longer, I cannot allow myself to waste any more time with a political party which is not concerned with politics, which means: with the events of the real world.

It is therefore with great sadness and disillusionment that I resign my membership in the FLP, and turn instead to those political issues which are my first concern and my first love. I wish things could have been different, but unless FLP members listen to reason, they will never be any different. The only loser, unfortunately, will be Liberty, and therefore the human race itself.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF THE FREE LIBERTARIAN:

by Walter Block

I object to your decision to print the "Declaration On Tactics for the LP" in the Jan.-Feb. issue of the *Free Libertarian*. The F.L.P. is supposed to be a political party, or so I thought when I joined; and political parties do not encourage smears, innuendoes and mud-slinging by one faction of the party against another. Even the Republicans have an eleventh commandment: not be vicious and nasty to each other. And the Democrats certainly would have fired any official responsible for allowing such an attack on one sector of their party by another. Political parties concentrate on attracting new members, gaining votes, and spreading their philosophy.

I object even more to your **headlining** the "Declaration." As I hope to show in the main body of this letter, the sentiments expressed in it are completely at variance with the libertarian philosophy.

But even more than printing it at all, and headlining it, I must object most strenuously to your decision not to offer at least an equal amount of space to someone willing to express an opposite point of view. Certainly Dr. Murray N. Rothbard, and Roy Childs, who are mentioned by name, in an out-of-context attack, might have been offered an opportunity to reply, in the same issue. As far as I know, however, they have not even yet been offered an opportunity to reply, even to this date.

I shall now reply to the specifics of the arguments made in "LP Declaration of Tactics". I shall reply at greater length, one, on the ground that it takes more effort to combat falsehood than merely to state it, and two, in order to correct the already existing injustice outlined above.

In my humble opinion, the essence of libertarianism is that it is wrong, immoral, evil, for anyone to initiate or threaten force or fraud against any other person — or his property. Everyone should be free to do exactly what he or she wants, provided that they respect the equal liberty of everyone else to do the same.

Libertarianism, as I see it, is an extremely limited philosophy. It's a political philosophy, not a philosophy of life. As a political philosophy, it states that people have the right to use physical violence only in response to those who break the libertarian code and initiate violence. It's not a philosophy of life stating how one can live the good life, setting out in fine detail how one may act in every conceivable situation. Practically the sole concern of libertarianism is that everyone keep his mitts off everyone else, unless, of course, he has that person's permission.

The beauty of this version of libertarianism is that it allows for an amazing diversity. Only libertarianism gathers together all who believe in this limited philosophy. We've all seen businessmen with suits, ties, and vests mingling with flower children. We've all seen teetotalers and alcohol drinkers at libertarian functions. We've all seen pot smokers, acid heads, drug freaks — together with Murray Rothbard, the straightest of them all. We've seen priests, monogamists, family men, as the fellow libertarians of the gays, the sado-masochists, the leather freaks, and those into what they call "rational bestiality." As Ralph Raico stated in his keynote address to the FLP state convention, only libertarianism could gather together the homosexual motorcycle gang, the acid dropper fascinated by the price of silver, and the Puerto Rican nationalist immersed in the Austrian School of economics.

At one time I thought that virtually all those calling themselves libertarians agreed with this limited view of libertarianism. Since then, I've learned differently. For example, according to the "Declaration on Tactics for the LP"'s definition, the libertarian must be honest and truthful. In extreme variations, people can even be condemned for secrecy or concealment.

Now this version of libertarianism is socialism. For, surely, knowledge is an economic good. It is no different to compel full disclosure than to compel giving away any other economic good. But in the case where someone is told to give away his goods — we libertarians have a name for it: theft. Yet, in the FLP of New York, Roger MacBride was roundly condemned, on supposedly libertarian grounds, for not telling all, for not letting it all hang out. We must reject the view that secrecy and privacy are incompatible with libertarianism.

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Combatting Conservatism

As the libertarian movement grows and develops, one of its most vital tasks is in distinguishing ourselves from conservatism — of making it crystal clear that we are not simply an “extreme” variant of the Conservative Movement. We are liable to make such an error because of the similarity of the free-market rhetoric — but the similarity is in rhetoric only, and there is only a segment of the economic realm. We are the “extreme” (read consistent) heirs, not of the Conservatives, but of their ancient enemies, the Classical Liberals. Classical Liberalism, with its devotion to individual liberty and a peaceful foreign policy, found itself from the beginning at the polar opposite from Conservatism, and this polarity continues today. Then as now, Conservatism has stood for Big Government and statism across the board; for militarism and repression of civil liberties at home, and for interventionism, imperialism and a warlike foreign policy abroad; for a reverence for the State and its Leader (whether King or President or some other Führer); and for a theocratically imposed “morality” in which the State imposes a religiously conceived behavior on its subjects. Libertarianism, as the heir of classical liberalism, stands, on the contrary, for individual liberty and the absence of government intervention at home or abroad. Our reverence is for the peaceful individual and our hostility goes out to the State apparatus. We hold religion and morality to be strictly the private concerns of each individual.

Contemporary Conservatism is very much in the mold of our long-standing Enemy. It still advocates militarism and imperialism, it still believes in a State-coerced morality, it still reverences the State and its Leader, it still represses dissent. It is our Conservatives who call for warlike confrontation with the Soviet Union, for American intervention everywhere, for ever greater appropriations for wasteful and dangerous Pentagon boondoggles; it is our Conservatives who hail the FBI and the CIA, despite their proven record of trampling on individual rights of person and property, despite their persistent use of burglary, wiretapping, and repression — or perhaps because of these secret police methods. And it was our Conservatives who went down the line and to the end in support of the tyrant Nixon and his approach to a police state in America. And as for the free market, conservative interest is minimal and declining; witness their willingness to retain a “moderate” welfare state so long as military appropriations continue to rise. No; we are not Conservatives; and the more this is made clear, to the public and to ourselves, the better.

Hence, we must particularly hail trenchant attacks on conservatism in recent issues of important libertarian periodicals. In the new expanded format of *Libertarian Review*, March-April, for example, Walter Grinder has an excellent attack on the “neo-conservatism” of Irving Kristol. Replying to a defense of Kristol by one Bruce Ramsey, Grinder rips into the Kristol “right of center chic clique” as “the most immediate, most dangerous, and most pressing enemy of libertarianism.” Grinder points out that the mission of the Kristol clique is to streamline the existing New Deal system to make it work more efficiently. As against Kristolite neo-conservatism, Grinder upholds Mill and especially Albert Jay Nock, and points out why he believes that the Kristol clique “are the first line defense of the American State, and of American statism, albeit a proposed more streamlined version.”

Also in the March-April issue of LR is an excellent defense of the Libertarian Party by national chairman Ed Crane against the “left sectarianism” of Sam Konkin and against the conservative hostility of Jim Toole, Florida LP Chairman. Crane rebuts Toole’s attack on the LP platform’s affirmation of an isolationist foreign policy and of its call for abolition of the FBI; as Crane writes, “The United States needs a national police force like Germany needed the Gestapo.”

Then, in the current, January-February issue of the LP News, Ralph Raico points out our anti-Conservative heritage in his scintillating article, “English Libertarians Battled War, Tariffs.” It is a fine tribute to the truly radical meaning of Cobden, Bright, and the Manchester School — the “extreme” wing of the British classical liberals. Finally, in the same issue of the LP News, there is a thoroughly researched article “Conservative Darling — Schlesinger: Spokesman of Interventionism” — in which James Schlesinger’s conservative and Reaganite foreign policy

views are keenly dissected. The article shows that Schlesinger, like American imperialists before him, are Marxist-Leninists in reverse: i.e., that failing to comprehend the market economy, they believe that the U.S. must conquer natural resources abroad, and coerce the export of capital and goods in order to survive. The article also points out that “paradoxically, some Reagan conservatives who fear the closing out of U.S. trade (by Communist countries) also wish to prohibit East-West trade. The Libertarian Party, in contrast, favors the repeal of all prohibitions on individuals or firms contributing or selling goods and services to any foreign country or organization.” The LP News article also contrasts the extremely dangerous “limited” nuclear war-counterforce — first strike strategy of the Schlesingers, to the less fanatical but still dangerous Establishment strategy of deterrence via “mutually assured destruction” — to the LP third alternative: our platform’s “call for prudently negotiated nuclear disarmament.”

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But we must reject the more moderate view. Lying violates no libertarian principle. Certainly, we can lie to a thief who demands to know where our money is. Surely, as a representative of the Libertarian Party, we could lie to a reporter who asked what we thought of the assassination of a president or king: if we thought he was a dictator and immoral, and felt it was justified to kill him, we’d certainly be justified in lying, especially since such thoughts are illegal.

Even if asked what time it is, there is no libertarian principle that says we cannot lie. Remember, I am operating under the libertarian principle that forbids force and fraud against persons or property, a principle whose sole purpose is to answer the question: When may force be legitimately employed? and answers — Only when force or fraud were used previously.

Now it may not be nice to lie, it may not be admirable. The person we give the wrong time to may get into all sorts of difficulties because he believes us. That’s tough. But society is not justified in using force against the liar. For the liar has not first initiated force himself. He is not acting contrary to libertarian principle.

We must, of course, distinguish lying from fraud. In fraud, as opposed to mere lying, there is a contractual relationship between the perpetrator and the victim. Fraud is logically equivalent to theft. It makes no difference if you rob someone of \$1000, or charge him \$1000 for a bag of gold which turns out to be filled with worthless rocks.

If you have a contractual relationship to tell someone the correct time whenever he asks, and you lie to him, you are guilty of fraud. You are actually stealing money from him in that you are not giving him the services for which he has paid you.

Giving the correct time is a valuable economic service. If a beggar on the street asks you for the correct time, you have a right to ignore him and remain silent, and you have the right to make him a voluntary gift of something he has not asked for, namely the wrong time. It’s the same with the beggar who asks you for a dollar for a drink. You have the right to ignore him and give him nothing. Or you can make him a gift of something he hasn’t asked for, a “Get out of jail free” card, if you want.

Anyone who asks you a question is logically in the position of a beggar. He is asking you for something. You don’t owe him the truth unless he’s paid you for giving it.

Now of course in most cases, we usually find it in our self-interest to tell the truth. But it’s only a matter of self-interest, or pragmatism, not libertarian principle. That’s why the famous statement, “If lying helps, I say lie,” is justified. Usually it won’t help. But if it does, you are under no libertarian obligation to tell the truth. How else, for example, can a woman be justified in lying when asked for her phone number?

I come now to perhaps the most dangerous and vicious of all the
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mistaken definitions of libertarianism. The one that says that in order to be a libertarian, you have to "live the libertarian life", or "live the life of a libertarian."

Now at first glance this seems innocuous enough. After all, if libertarianism means that you cannot initiate force, leading a libertarian life would seem to mean that you actually have to live that way; that you have to take it seriously and really not do things like that.

But this is not at all what these "live libertarianism" people mean. Instead, they've got a whole bunch of things on their agenda. We either obey, or we're accused of not being libertarians.

What are the specifics? Well, they vary according to which person you've spoken to last, but most of them seem to include the following: being nice, not discriminatory, being truthful and honest, not hating, not making sexual jokes, not making ethnic jokes, not leading a dissolute life, and so on.

The most well known example of this sentiment surfaced at the National LP convention in NYC last August. There, it was actually held by a sizable portion of the delegates that it was anti-libertarian to vote against or veto a person for high office on the grounds that he is a homosexual or a smuggler. Now, I have nothing but the highest regard for homosexuals and for smugglers. Some of my best friends are homosexuals and, for all I know, smugglers.

But it seems the most abject nonsense to say that people who oppose homosexuals and smugglers running for high office on the LP ticket are not acting in accordance with Libertarian principles. It's not only nonsense, it's vicious and unjust because it expels people from the ranks of libertarianism who adhere fully to the principle of non-aggression.

It's dangerous to the vitality of our movement because it will sap our diversity, a scarce and vital resource. Look. If we define libertarianism narrowly, we can accept all as libertarians who agree to the limited premise that initiation of coercion may be forcibly stopped. But, as we add on proviso after proviso, we reject more and more people. Things have gotten to such a point in New York, that even people like Dr. Murray N. Rothbard, Andrea Millen, and Roy Childs have quit the FLP because they've been made to feel unwelcome by the "live libertarian" fanatics.

The "Declaration On Tactics for the LP" states that: "We do not contend that all, or necessarily any, of the tactics we oppose are in violation of libertarian principles. However, we believe there must be more to a viable movement than its disembodied ideology. There must also be a sort of animating ideal or spirit to give the movement a sense of purpose, direction, and identity. The modern libertarian movement was born of, and its steady growth sustained by, just such a spirit."

Now let me make my point in the language of this Declaration. I am convinced that there must not be more to our libertarian movement, than its disembodied ideology — its non-aggression principle. Any sort of additional "animating ideal" or "spirit" will only needlessly, and unjustly, force true libertarians to leave; although they may agree with the non-initiation of force, they may not be in tune with this undefined, ineffable "spirit". They may not even like "spirits."

We libertarians will just have to learn to get our sense of purpose, direction and identity from the one and only defining characteristic of libertarian political philosophy — opposition to the initiation of force. If we can no longer become excited, exalted, invigorated, impassioned with this, the libertarian principle, if we no longer love it, if we no longer think of it as excruciatingly beautiful, we won't get it from any other principles either — and still remain libertarians.

The modern libertarian movement has nothing at all to do with such non-libertarian "spirits". If there is anything that the modern libertarian movement was born of, and its steady growth sustained by, it is the work of just one person, and you all know who that one person is; a person that has just quit the FLP.

If there is anything that is destructive of our fledgling libertarian movement, it is the tactic adopted by the "Declaration on Tactics", of reading people out of the libertarian party, who, by your own admission, goddamn it, "are . . . not . . . in violation of libertarian principles." It's

crazy. It's incomprehensible. How can you attack people for not being consistently libertarian in the same declaration that you admit they are not in violation of libertarian principles?

Moreover, I cannot, for the life of me, understand how the signers of the "Declaration" can object to Prof. Rothbard's statement: "Tactics are purely a matter . . . of efficiency and practicality. In short, the proper realm of 'pragmatism' is that realm where principle does not apply." This doesn't mean, as the "Declaration" asserts, "that questions of strategy and tactics are exempt from challenge on grounds of principle or morality." All it means is that there are some decisions where libertarian principle does not, indeed cannot, apply. For example, the questions of what color ink, or kind of paper, should our **Free Libertarian** newsletter be printed on, is purely a matter of tactics, strategy, efficiency and pragmatism. Equally "pure" libertarians can hold different views on this burning question. Common sense? Sure. Yet Rothbard was taken to task for just such a small "evasion" and "distortion."

Several signers of the Declaration have expressed themselves as willing, even eager, to discuss the issues raised by the document. I hereby offer myself as willing to speak, discuss and debate any and all issues raised here.

I'd like to end with a plea for tolerance.

I realize that much of what I have said is controversial. But I think it's to all our benefit — ourselves, our movement, and the cause of liberty we love so much — not to read all those we don't agree with out of the movement.

There must be room for all deviant but non-aggressive behavior in a truly libertarian society. And in a truly libertarian party. □

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A Political Party, Once More

The March-April issue of the *Libertarian Review* has a three-cornered debate on the Libertarian Party, in which equally frenetic attacks appear from the Right by Jim Toole (likening the LP to the SLA and the Manson Family, no less!) and from the Left by Sam Konkin (calling the LP "Machiavellian hacks" who are a conscious "vehicle of an invasion from the State"). Ed Crane has an excellent reply to both of these irresponsible attacks, although it is curious that such a worthy and ecumenical organ as LR should give so much space to these wild-swinging and rabble-rousing charges.

The Konkin article gives rise once again to the now venerable problem of the morality of political action for anarchist libertarians. While this may be in the nature of beating a dead horse, perhaps a bit more can be said on this critical issue. In the first place, the anti-party libertarians never make it clear which of the following charges they are making: (a) the strong case — that all political action is immoral for libertarians *per se* because it sanctions the State; or (b) the weak case — that while not immoral *per se*, a libertarian party that seeks for and attains State power is bound to sell out.

Let us take the strong case first, best exemplified by the pure anarcho-pacifism of Bob LeFevre. LeFevre takes the certainly consistent position that, since defensive violence is just as immoral as aggressive violence, that therefore the use of the State to pass an unjust law (e.g. the draft) is no more unjust than using the State to repeal such a law. In short, that repeal of the draft, or price controls, or the income tax, is just as wrong as passing such measures, because those who want such measures are being "coerced." A consistent position no doubt, but also an absurd one, and surely one that few libertarians will wish to adopt. As for myself, I have no compunction whatever about coercing criminals, either in using violence to repel their assaults, or in repealing criminal measures that some statist may wish to see enforced.

Failing pure LeFevranism, it is difficult to see what the philosophical groundwork of the Konkinites and the other strong anti-party types might be. Is it because a libertarian party necessarily takes part in State activity? No doubt, but so do we all when we decide to walk or drive on State-owned and operated streets and roads. In the modern world of pervasive State activity, the "purist" who wishes to avoid the State everywhere will soon die out. Surely morality requires, not cutting our own throats or self-flagellation, but in banding together to rollback or overthrow the State. We libertarians are not responsible for the existence of the State, nor for its pervasiveness in modern life, and there is no reason for us to assume that guilt. Let us band together to try to abolish the State as rapidly and as effectively as we can.

Passing to the soft argument against the Libertarian Party, here the critics are on stronger ground. For surely the danger of an eventual sellout is always real, and must be guarded against; in the great Jeffersonian phrase, eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. But the fable of the boy who continually cried "Wolf" is very relevant here, for if the cry of "sellout" is directed toward every bit of trivium that anyone thinks, does, or might do, the serious issues of substance get overlooked.

But the crucial strategic point is this: what alternatives do our anti-party libertarians have to offer? How are we going to rollback or even abolish the State? It is all too easy to point to dangers in the strategy of political action; but where are the plausible alternatives? Let us examine whatever strategic alternatives have been all too sketchily offered. First, there is **armed revolution**. Konkin hints at this alternative when he writes that the "game of democracy" is to withhold violence but jockey for the use of acceptable, legitimized violence." One point that can be made is that the danger of "sellout" by the armed rebels is at least as strong as that of a political party, but this is a minor issue. The major point is the historical truth that no successful armed revolution has ever taken place in a democratic country, i.e. a country of free elections. No matter that we know that democracy is a substitute of ballots for bullets, and that the democratic "game" scarcely confers moral legitimacy on the victors. But there is the overwhelming historical fact that every

successful revolution has taken place against a dictatorial form of government. So unless and until the United States goes openly fascist and eliminates free elections, the hope of armed revolution in this country is a chimera, and a dangerous one at that. What happened to the New Left when it began to go over into armed violence should be a sober and instructive lesson for us all.

A second strategy is the LeFevrian one of converting all the State rulers to libertarianism and wait for them to resign. I think the inanity of such a strategy should be evident to anyone with a grasp of State reality, i.e. that the State benefits from exploiting the citizenry, and is not about to cheerfully or shamefacedly surrender those benefits upon reading libertarian literature.

A third strategy is a bundle of different alternatives that all boil down to ignoring the State and hoping that it goes away or leaves us alone. One variant is **retreatism** — running off to a cave or to a libertarian island, a new "Atlantis." Again, an inane alternative that ignores State reality, that offers hope to only a few enthusiasts, and, what is more, gives up the market. For crippled and restricted that the market may be, it is still the only hope for man to survive: the only hope for massive capital equipment, and for a widespread division of labor. Forming our own "markets" or running off to our own caves, is not the answer, and reduces us to sterility, starvation, and utter defeat. The same strictures apply to the ignoble "**Browneing-Out**" variant of Harry Browne, that is, to forget the State, make a pile, and put it in Swiss bank accounts, caves, etc. Once again, not only does this immorally give up the cause of liberty, but it won't even work, because the State will eventually find those bank accounts and sniff out the caves. Finally, there is the third Konkinite variant of the so-called "counter-econ", in which libertarians build up their own "markets" separate from the market. But, once again, the counter-econ suffers from all the above failings; a puny "market" in which libertarians exchange beans, baseball cards, and bottle tops is just a game and leads nowhere, and ignores the dependence of all us on the market, crippled and controlled though it may be. The Konkin scheme is reminiscent of an older counter-econ variant in which it was held that libertarians should only hire or buy from other libertarians; the idea was that since libertarians are uniquely rational, they would make the best traders and employees. A libertarian metallurgist would automatically be a better metallurgist, for example, than a "straight" metallurgist; the history of our young movement should have put an end, once and for all, to this pleasant but idiotic fable. The record of incompetence and/or ripoffs among libertarians is too blatant to fall for that anymore.

And so this leaves us with one and only one practical route toward rolling back the State — political action, as full of pitfalls as this course might be. Between action **within** the older parties and trying to forge a pure Libertarian Party surely only one choice is possible. The new Libertarian Party has already introduced literally tens of millions to libertarian ideology and to the libertarian alternative. It has provided a focus for libertarian activity and a **foco** for spreading the principles to the media, the public, and to pressuring the older parties in a libertarian direction. And hopefully it may in the future grow to such an extent as to mobilize and articulate the anti-government mood among the public, and to become a viable conduit for dismantling the Monster State. In the face of the nobility of this course, in the face of the absence of strategic alternatives we can only bend our energies into making the attempt.

I know many worthy and excellent libertarians who have refused to join the Libertarian Party not on Konkinite or Toolean grounds, but for precisely the opposite reasons: namely that there are too many neo-Konkinites or neo-Tooleans in the Libertarian Party, too many left sectarians and conservative ideologues, for the Party to succeed. Perhaps they are right, although I don't think so; strategy, after all, is an art and not an exact science. But surely the cause and the effort are noble enough for all of us to try our best. And we do have an excellent Presidential ticket and an excellent National Office to give us fine prospects for success, and for going forward with a high heart. □

The 'Defense Gap' Mythology

It's budget time at the Pentagon again, and this time the traditional and meretricious Pentagon scare propaganda is being reinforced by the menace of Schlesingerism and the Reagan-Jackson warhawks. The war crowd has trotted out the old imperial vainglory — That America must be "second to none" — combined with the old scare tactic that we are now "behind" the Russians. Reagan has been making all too effective use of this demagogy in his presidential campaign.

In the face of this propaganda barrage, there are several vital points that must be made. In the first place, there is no such thing as being "behind" on overkill. We have the capacity to annihilate all the Russians many times over, and they have a similar capacity to "overkill" us. With this sort of mutual deterrence, the concept of being "behind" no longer make any sense; if, for hypothetical example, we have the capacity to kill the Russians 800 times over, and they can kill us 900 times over, in what sense are we "behind"? Only in the sense of adding to the enormous military boondoggles of the Pentagon and its industrial allies. Only mutual nuclear disarmament would rid both countries, and the world as a whole, of the threat of nuclear annihilation that hangs over us all.

Secondly, even within this "mutually assured destruction" framework, there is no need any longer for bombers, surface vessels, or land-based missile sites. They could all be scrapped overnight, with no loss of American deterrent power. Our Polaris-Poseidon submarines are more than sufficient for this task. In twenty years, neither superpower has even begun to come up with a useful method for submarine detection, which makes these submarines invulnerable to a first missile strike. There is therefore no need for the Pentagon's latest, hugely expensive submarine toy, the Trident, which permits hitting any part of the world from any ocean; the range of the existing Poseidon submarines from the northern hemisphere is more than enough.

Let us now turn to a narrower framework — the current Pentagon scare campaign. (Here see the excellent analyses of Rep. Les Aspin (Dem., Wisc.), a former Pentagon systems analyst, available in the current *Foreign Policy* magazine, and in the April 3 issue of the *Nation*, "Budget Time at the Pentagon"; and further analyzed in "The Great Defense Budget Debate," *International Bulletin*, April 9.) First, there is the alleged "spending gap". The Pentagon-CIA complain that the Soviets, in terms of the dollar, are spending 40-50% more on defense than the U.S.: specifically, that, in 1974 dollars, the U.S. spent \$80 billion in 1975 while the Russians spent \$114 billion on defense. Scary? But the operative fallacy here is "in terms of dollars." For the Russians don't spend dollars, they spend rubles, and there is no free currency market, and hence no accepted rate of exchange between dollars and rubles. The "dollar" costs of Soviet defense are enormously inflated by the fact that a new U.S. soldier gets paid more than \$83 a week, whereas a Soviet recruit gets less than a ruble a week. Computing Soviet army costs at American rates of pay therefore enormously inflates our computation of Soviet defense expenditures. As Rep. Aspin states, "By computing the payroll costs of the Soviet armed forces at U.S. military wage scales, we discover a \$50 billion Soviet payroll that exists only in the Pentagon's imagination." If, on the other hand, we were to use ruble costs for both budgets, it would appear that the Russians spent far more on defense than the U.S. At the heart of the comparison problem is the fact that wages are low and technological equipment costly in the U.S.S.R. and the reverse is true in the U.S., so that the Soviet army is high in dollar cost, while American technology is very costly in ruble terms.

Another flaw in these Pentagon comparisons is that many of the advanced technologies of the U.S. are simply too costly for the Russians to produce: the Russians, for example, have no TV-homing bombs; the ruble costs for the Russians only show the old-fashioned iron bombs; if we add in the ruble costs for the American equipment the Russians do not have, the total ruble costs of American defense would be far greater than the Soviet military budget.

Furthermore, even using the fallacious dollar figures, the Pentagon

figures leave out the spending of our NATO allies, which outspent Moscow's Warsaw Pact allies last year by \$61 billion to \$8 billion; so that even using the dollar terms, the NATO countries outspent the Warsaw countries last year by \$141 billion to \$122 billion.

Another piece of alarmism widely circulated by the Pentagon are alleged gaps in specific weapons production. Thus, Pentagon charts show the Russians out-producing us in the number of tanks; average annual tank production from 1972-74 was 3,000 for the Soviets and 462 for us, a seemingly awesome 6.5-1 advantage. But these charts fail to show that: (a) the Pentagon itself felt it had enough tanks several years ago and advocated lower production; (b) the Pentagon then decided, after the October War in 1973 that it needed higher tank production to replace high losses in any possible future tank warfare; the Pentagon itself then requested a tripling of U.S. tank production by 1977, and Congress promptly agreed. (c) our NATO allies produced as many tanks as the U.S. did in these years, while the Soviet allies produced zero. (d) The huge total of 1250 Russian-made tanks were destroyed in the 1973 Middle East war. (e) Soviet tank production declined substantially in 1975. (f) The U.S. and NATO have substantial superiority in anti-tank weapons. All of this makes for a far different tank picture.

One of the big bugaboos, fueled by tireless speeches by retired U.S. Admiral Elmo Zumwalt (now trying to oust Senator Harry Byrd in Virginia as the Democratic nominee) is the alleged Russian lead in ship production over the U.S. It is true that the Russians outproduced the U.S. in ships in the 1972-74 period by 3.5 to 1, if we count every dinghy and rowboat. But if we concentrate on major combat ships, production was about equal. And if we take just those ships larger than 250 tons, total NATO production outpaced Warsaw Pact production by over one-third in 1972-74, and was double Warsaw Pact production in 1975. Thus, more subtle analysis transforms the Pentagon scare figure of a 3.5 to 1 Soviet advantage in ship production to a 2 to 1 Western advantage!

Another old standby in Pentagon scare tactics is the alleged "missile gap", in which the Pentagon asserted that the Soviets led America in the number of missiles possessed, by 2,400 to 1,700. But, the important statistic is not the number of missiles but the number of warheads, in which we outpace the Russians, plus we have many more bombers. Altogether, the U.S. has 8,500 nuclear warheads, while the Russians have only 2,800; this is "second best"?

Furthermore, American tanks and naval vessels are far better in quality than Russian tanks and ships. American tanks can fire more rapidly and accurately, and have thicker steel armor; Soviet tanks are also extremely vulnerable to burning up from hits on their external fuel tanks. America's huge aircraft carriers have enormously more fire power than the entire Soviet navy.

Another important point is that much of the Soviet armed forces are poised to fight, not the U.S. but Red China. The Russians have 500,000 men poised on the Chinese border, where they hardly threaten the United States: much of the Soviet arms buildup in the last few years is directed against what they increasingly perceive to be a likely war with China. Furthermore, about 430,000 Soviet soldiers are devoted to internal police, and 5 per cent of its officer corps are simply political commissars with no military role. Also, when we look at the comparative total numbers of Russian and American soldiers, we have to realize that construction and other supply and administrative tasks that America assigns to relatively highly paid civilians, the Russians assign to its soldiery.

Let us keep these sobering points in mind as the Pentagon creates bogeymen to scare the Congress, and as the right-wing hawks gear up for a rerun of old discredited scare tactics. It would be a major tragedy if the gloriously growing anti-Big Government mood in this country were derailed, as it has been so often in the past, by the scare propaganda of the militarists and the global crusaders. □

Recommended Reading

compiled by Bill Evers

Les Aspin, "How to Look at the Soviet-American Balance," *Foreign Policy*, (Spring, 1976.) A debunking of current alarmism on Soviet military spending, missile throw-weights, troop strength, and naval strength.

G. E. Aylmer, ed., *The Levellers in the English Revolution* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1975). Documentary material on the first modern libertarians — the Levellers of the late 1640s. Includes Richard Overton's "An Arrow Against All Tyrants," and important pieces by John Lilburne. Excellent introduction, scholarly apparatus, and annotated bibliography. Published in a paperback edition.

P.T. Bauer, "Western Guilt and Third World Poverty," *Commentary*, Jan. 1976.

Index on Censorship. This quarterly provides thorough coverage, major documents, and in-depth analysis of the suppression of freedom of expression around the world. The spring 1976 issue, for example, treats the trial of Yugoslav social democrat Mihajlo Mihailov, torture in Iran, East German censorship, the trial of Ukrainian nationalist Vyacheslav Chornovil, South African censorship, and Senate Bill One in the United States. Each issue includes a country-by-country listing of censorship incidents. (\$14 per year from Index on Censorship, Room 221, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10010.)

Jere Cohen, Lawrence E. Hazelrigg, and Whitney Pope, "De-Parsonizing Weber: A Critique of Parsons' Interpretation of Weber's Sociology," *American Sociological Review*, April 1975. Discussion of Talcott Parsons' distortion of Max Weber's notion of power. Weber talked of power as domination, as power over others. Parsons, in translating Weber and writing about his thought, transforms this into the functionalist notion of power as a resource.

CounterSpy. This quarterly provides analyses and information on the practices, organization, and objectives of U.S. intelligence agencies. The Winter 1976 issue contains articles on current plans to use the military and police in civil disorders in the U.S., and on the U.S. involvement in Angola. A one-year subscription to *CounterSpy* costs \$6. Checks should be payable to the Organizing Committee for a Fifth Estate, P.O. Box 647, Ben Franklin Station, Washington, D.C. 20004.

Edwin T. Layton, Jr., *The Revolt of the Engineers* (Cleveland, Oh.:

Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1971.) Scholarly historical treatment of Progressive-Era engineers to promote social engineering and scientifically managed government intervention. Herbert Hoover is a central figure.

Karl Olivecrona, "Appropriation in the State of Nature: Locke on the Origin of Property," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, April-June 1974.

Karl Olivecrona, "Locke's Theory of Appropriation," *Philosophical Quarterly*, July 1974.

A.F. Ringold, "The History of the Enactment of the Ninth Amendment and its Recent Development," *Tulsa Law Journal*, Spring 1972. Argues that the forgotten Ninth Amendment, which recognized unenumerated rights retained by the people, can properly be used to attack the constitutionality of peacetime armies, suspensions of the laws and federally-imposed monopolies.

Lionel Rothkrug, *Opposition to Louis XIV: the Political and Social Origins of the French Enlightenment* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1965). Focuses on the anti-mercantilist thought of persons like the Christian humanist Fenelon and the early utilitarian Antoine Hotman (descendant of the famous Huguenot monarchomach Francois Hotman.) Published in a paperback edition.

William Shawcross, "Cambodia Under Its New Rulers," *New York Review of Books*, March 4, 1976. French-educated intellectuals are trying to impose a Rousseauian republic of virtue. They are depopulating the cities, impressing former city dwellers into the farm labor force, strictly enforcing victimless-crime laws, and exchanging gunfire with Cambodia's more liberal neighbors in South Vietnam.

Wealth of Nations Bicentennial. The March 2 *Times Literary Supplement* from England contains a review by Donald Winch of the new University of Glasgow-commissioned edition of the *Wealth of Nations* and of a new volume of essays on Smith. The March issue of *Encounter* reprints William Letwin's introduction to the new Everyman Library reissue of the *Wealth of Nations*, published by J.M. Dent. (This issue of *Encounter* also contains a short piece by Maurice Cranston on Hannah Arendt: "She repudiated the whole liberal conception of freedom as a private right of the individual to be preserved against the intrusion of other men, including men in authority. For Hannah Arendt . . . freedom is positive participation in the political life of one's city.")

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