

The Libertarian Opportunity

The history of mankind is a history of the struggle between the individual and the State. In age after age, land after land, oppressive states have totally repressed human liberty and progress, while weaker states have permitted barely just enough individual liberty to prevent their subjects from revolting.

In 1776, individualism triumphed in the American Revolution and the world witnessed the birth of a society actually founded on the beliefs that individual liberty was the highest end and that government should be the servant and not the master of society. However liberty in America was never complete and from the outset there were those who longed for a return to a society of class and privilege, rulers and masters. From the birth of America, liberty was in decline—from the scandle of the construction of the Erie Canal, to state grants of monopoly privilege to railroads, to the institution of the first national draft during the Civil War, to the institution of the income tax in 1913.

Today America is in the grips of a full-blown welfare/warfare state. Personal liberty is threatened by a conservative moralistic revival, prosperity is threatened by an economy sinking under the dead weight of government regulations and taxes, and peace is threatened by a bloody new nationalism and militarism.

There is, however, hope. The last decade has also witnessed growing popular rejection of the traditional two party system and traditional liberal and conservative ideologies. The tremendous growth in the numbers of "independent" registered voters and the people who refuse to vote at all in elections where Republicans and Democrats offer bland, "more of the same" answers to social problems is being properly interpreted as a rejection of the old politics.

More and more people who are concerned about the basic problems facing our society are turning away from the Republicans and Democrats and from the ideologies of liberalism and conservatism. There is a growing awareness that most of society's problems are caused by lack of liberty and continued governmental interference in economic and personal affairs. People are listening with ever-growing interest to the ideas of libertarianism. With dedication and effort, the 1980's can be the beginning of a new renaissance for liberty in America with libertarians leading the way.

The Need for Education In Liberty

As more and more people have become convinced of the case for liberty and joined the libertarian movement, there has developed a growing need to provide an effective education to newcomers in all phases of the philosophy of libertarianism. Many join us because of the libertarian insistence on economic freedom without recognizing that a free economy also requires complete political and personal liberty as well. Others see libertarians as champions of voluntary lifestyles and the only consistent opponents of victimless crime laws without recognizing that personal liberty cannot exist without complete individual property rights. Still others are attracted to libertarianism because of our advocacy of peace and opposition to imperialism without recognizing that peace abroad will not long exist without liberty at home.

As these newcomers to libertarianism join with us, there is an growing need for a continuing program of internal education. Cassette lectures cannot replace critical thought. Reading a book or two is no substitute for intelligent discourse. There is a pressing need for a systematic, educational program in basic libertarian principles and the application of these principles to specific issues of the day.

Who Should Be Holding Principles of Liberty Discussions?

Every local libertarian club—affiliates of S.I.L., the Libertarian Party, Students for a Libertarian Society, etc.—should sponsor this program for their newer members (and even for "old-timers" who want to increase their knowledge of the application of basic libertarian philosophy to scores of issues).

Individual libertarians, who don't belong to a local club or who find it difficult to attend scheduled meetings, can purchase the program without the discussion leader handbook, and learn at their own pace at home.

The Principles of Liberty Program

The Society for Individual Liberty has developed a 6 to 8 session discussion group program to meet the needs of internal education for newcomers to the libertarian movement. The program is not a lecture series, not a collection of books to be read, not a collection of taped speeches. Rather it is a Socratic approach to self-growth and learning built around readings and discussions.

The program format is based on self-education in discussion groups of 5 to 15 persons, meeting with a discussion leader who is already familiar with basic libertarian philosophy. The program is also suitable for individual at-home study if that is preferred or a discussion group is not available.

The participants are required to:

1. Maintain the reading schedule in order to be prepared for each discussion session.
2. Respect the rights of all members in the discussion group to question and comment on the issues being considered.
3. Have a desire to learn more about libertarianism and use their minds to think critically.

The program kit offered by S.I.L. contains the following materials:

1. A handbook for the discussion leader, which includes complete instructions for conducting Socratic discussion sessions and suggestions for conducting the group sessions.
2. Participant reading selections—5 essays in each of the following study areas, corresponding to the 6 to 8 sessions. Each participant will study these areas:

Basic Principles of Libertarianism

Issues of Economic Freedom

Issues of Personal Liberty

The Operation of a Free Society

Foreign Affairs

Individualism In Our Age

Social Problems of Today

3. Study Guides—accompanying each set of readings will be a study guide containing an overview of the topic area; questions for discussion based upon the readings, questions for analysis after the initial discussion period, and a bibliography of specific background reading in the area covered.

ORDER FORM

Please rush me the materials checked below:

- ___ Copies Discussion Leader Handbook
Program Instruction Manual
at \$10 each
- ___ Copies Participant Readings
Study Guides
at \$4 each
- ___ Copies Package Deal "A"
1 Discussion Leader's Handbook
Program Manual/5 Participant
Readings & Study Guides
at \$25
- ___ Copies Package Deal "B"
1 Discussion Leader's Handbook
Program Manual/10 Participant
Readings & Study Guides
at \$40
- ___ Copies Individual Study Package
(Instruction Sheet & Readings
& Study Guides)
at \$5

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone Number _____

Amount Enclosed \$ _____

SIL Principles of Liberty
P.O. Box 1147
Warminster, Pa. 18974

ENDORSEMENT

"I approve of your study program. My view increasingly is that this kind of rigorous education program is desperately necessary if the movement is going to remain viable."

**Dr. Murray N. Rothbard, author
For A New Liberty**

"The SIL Issue Paper packages offer a balanced, thought provoking introduction to libertarian principles and their application to real world issues. I especially recommend the SIL program to new L.P. members seeking a better grasp of the basics of libertarianism."

**David Nolan
Founder, Libertarian Party**

"I think that the discussion group program that you have put together is excellent—and necessary. The fallout from libertarian **political** activity is that there is now tremendous **interest** in liberty. SIL is in a perfect position to educate and nurture that interest. I certainly would recommend this program to local groups for educational purposes."

**Dr. Dom Armentano, author
The Myths of Antitrust**

"The SIL program is perfectly suited to accomplish a critical task: teaching liberals how important economic freedom is to personal liberty, and conservatives how important personal liberty is to the free market. The indivisibility of liberty is what this program demonstrates so well."

**Sheldon Richman
Libertarian Party Platform
Committee**

"What you are attempting here has brought me more excitement than I've experienced in many a noon. This is a program of enormous potential. I am enthusiastic about it."

**Robert LeFevre
Founder, Rampart College**

Introducing...

PRINCIPLES OF LIBERTY

