

Massachusetts LIBERTY

May 1981 Issue

Editor: Steve Trinward

Lpm '81: the biggest yet!

By Steve Trinward

El Salvador, educational tax-credits and the future of Prop. 2 1/2. These were the primary issues as nearly 100 local Libertarians gathered at the Airport Ramada Inn, East Boston, last March 21, for the Libertarian Party of Massachusetts' 9th Annual convention.

It was the first major gathering since the 1980 elections for most people, and the atmosphere was an amalgam of campus homecoming and corporate boardroom. The business suits, smoke-filled rooms and parliamentary debates rubbed elbows with the t-shirts, non-smoking sections and rhetorical battles. The subject was--first, last and always--human freedom.

The theme, "Growing from the Grassroots", often took a back seat to other matters. Two resolutions, condemning U.S. intervention in El Salvador and supporting educational tax-credits in the Commonwealth, bogged down over rhetoric for a time. The former wrangle concerned specific clauses which sought to identify one side or the other in the wargaming as particularly more or less evil; compromise found a motion to enclose a press release with the resolution, to explain specific reasons for the Party's stance.

The educational proposal was the endorsement of House Bill 5280, introduced by Rep. William Galvin (D-Brighton), which would provide a \$250 direct credit on state income taxes to anyone contributing that much to a child's

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LIBERTY AMENDMENT NOW IN NINE STATES!

April 15th was the day they took it away, as usual, but in Indiana it was also the day they tried to give it back!

Confiscation Day, 1981, marked the passage of a resolution endorsing the Liberty Amendment by the Indiana State Senate. This made the Hoosier State the ninth of the necessary 33 states to pass such a resolution. The others are Wyoming, Texas, Nevada, Louisiana, Georgia, South Carolina, Mississippi and Arizona.

The Liberty Amendment (otherwise known as House Joint Resolution 23 in Congress) is intended to break the connection between government and economic activity forever, by clarifying the division of commerce and state which its sponsors say was the original intent of the U.S. Constitution. Its text is simple and straightforward:

Sec. 1: The Government of the United States shall not engage in any business, professional commercial, financial or industrial enterprise except as specified in the Constitution.

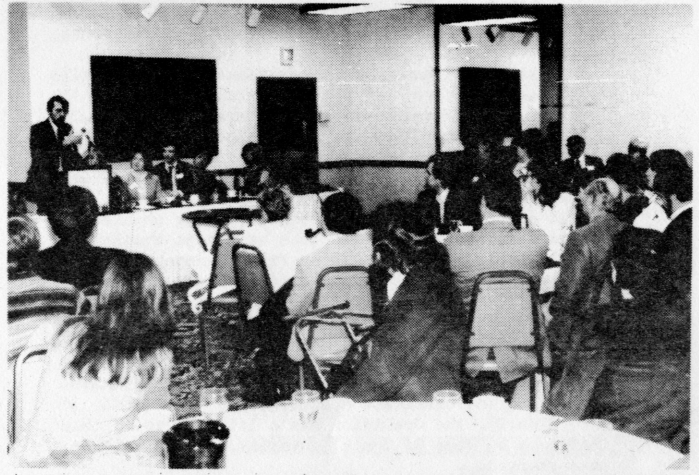
Sec. 2: The constitution or laws of any State, or the laws of the United States shall not be subject to the terms of any foreign or domestic agreement which would abrogate this amendment.

Sec. 3: The activities of the United States Government which violate the intent and purposes of this amendment shall, within a time period of three years from the date of ratification of of this amendment, be liquidated and the properties and facilities affected shall be sold.

Sec. 4: Three years after the ratification of this amendment the sixteenth article of amendments to the Constitution of the United States shall stand repealed and thereafter Congress shall not levy taxes on personal incomes, estates, and/or gifts.

HJR23 is co-sponsored by Congressmen John Rousselot

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Banquet speaker Robert Poole addresses over 50 Libertarians at Convention '81

ON THE INSIDE:

- o CARD Convention: Exclusive Interview with BAARD Members Who Attended
- o LPM Educational Tax Credits Bill: A Report From Tom Glass

National LP Convention

In case you haven't received one of the multiple mailings as yet, the 10th Annual National LP Convention will be held August 26-30 in Denver, Colorado. It should prove to be the Libertarian event to top all others, with speakers like Karl Hess, David Friedman, John Holt and Bob Nozick, and topics from The Future of the LP to Environmental Issues to the Draft.

Further information can be obtained through the state party, or by writing to: LP/10, c/o Libertarian Convention Committee, 1041 Cherokee Street, Denver, CO 80204. Bear in mind that all dues-paid LPM members are automatically Alternates at the Convention, and with the possibility that at least one elected delegate may not be able to attend, the door is wide open for procrastinators with open vacation plans...

A LOCAL LIBERTARIAN HERO?

According to a recent article in Parade magazine, we should be making pilgrimages to yet another graveside in the Commonwealth, this one in Leominster's Evergreen Cemetery. There, says the article, lies a man who went to jail for refusing to shave his beard.

Joseph Palmer was a Fitchburg farmer (forgive me, folks, but I think my forays into songwriting are starting to take over...) who grew himself a long flowing beard, back in 1830. The locals didn't care for this, citing vanity as the cause of it all, so they tried ambushing him with scissors and razors (Hmmm...Sounds a bit like today's urban life, except they don't want your hair!). When Palmer defended himself he was charged with "unprovoked

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In lieu of a standard one-issue commentary, a few notes on a variety of subjects:

The formation of the Coalition for a Party of Principle (bringing such diverse elements as Reason publisher Robert Poole, Murray Rothbard and Bill Evers, LP founder David Nolan, and your esteemed editor into the same fold, somehow) has taken up the cudgel of purism in politics, and will be a major factor at the Convention with a series of rules changes to bring candidates under some sort of direct accountability for the actions they take in the name of the LP.

Although it sounds on the surface like a throwback to the days of Communist Party purges, however, it may be the only way to ensure that the Libertarian banner does not become indelibly associated with the rather half-baked products of the 1980 campaigns. Ed Clark did an excellent job under impossible circumstances, many of which were the result of opportunism and shortsightedness in his advisors and staff-members; such handicaps should not be allowed to similarly hamper future campaigns. Moreover, the presumed Libertarian victory of one Ms. Mary Shell, the new mayor of Bakersfield, California (who had been registered as a Libertarian and was thus labeled, until she won the race and declared herself a Democrat!) would never have been at issue, had the LP had some means of keeping track of the ideological content of the candidate's efforts.

Clearly, the Coalition has a lot more to do than institute a "Dump Ed Crane" movement, as its critics have charged...

The Minority Education Enterprise outreach project fostered by outgoing LP National Chair David Bergland has not exactly covered itself with flowers as of this writing. According to Frontlines and other sources, the organization seems more concerned with keeping Black Libertarians from running for Mayor of Los Angeles (on the premise that this would somehow hurt outreach chances, because running against the incumbent, Tom Bradley, would be seen as "racist"), than with serious efforts to bring Black and Third World people into the LP.

Add the fact that Vernon Brown, Bergland's partner in the venture, is by his own accounts "51% Libertarian", and it appears that the MEE project is doomed to the same failures that Libertarian Vanguard will face unless it stops trying to pander to a stereotyped Left and starts paying attention to the real allies we have on the communalist side. (See the interview with BAARD activists, also in this issue.)

The battle with the City of Woburn goes on, but it looks as though it may be coming to a close soon. At the trial on April 14, LPM members Jim Poulin, Walter Ziobro, Jr. and I testified that we were not now, nor had we ever been, a "political party" under Mass. law. The defense attorney, representing the City, did a dreadful job of cross-examining the three of us; he repeatedly began his questioning with words like "Why...?", leaving the door wide open for any line of response we chose. Keeping a watchful eye on our own counsel, Michael Reilly, Esq. we each proceeded to fill the court record with longwinded tales of how the Party had been of educational and civic service to the people of the Commonwealth (despite the fact that few of those beneficiaries ever bothered to darken our doors). According to Reilly, this sort of slipshod questioning technique is frowned upon by professional barristers of every stripe.

At the end the judge took the case under advisement, and at this writing we still haven't gotten a response. Should our suit be granted we'll be applying for a Las Vegas Night permit within the hour; should they deny it we probably have the justification, if not the capital, for a serious appeal. As Mike put it, it's sort of a Catch-22 situation: if they declare us a Party, we then have to fight the state for ballot-status, which they won't grant; if they declare that we're not one, then we will by all rights be entitled to the Vegas license (which they don't want to give us, for fear that, as the Woburn City Clerk put it, "Tip O'Neill and George Bush will be next at the roulette wheel..."). Stay tuned...



An LPM Reunion?: Several LPM activists, past and present, brunched together the day after the Convention.

On the legislative front, the LPM filed, through legislators, four bills in the 1981 session. Three of them, all dealing with various aspects of making ballot status and maintenance easier for everybody, never made it out of committee and were quickly round-filed. The fourth, sponsored and even supported by Rep. William Galvin (D-Brighton), would bring a \$250-maximum tax credit to anyone providing that much toward a child's education in or out of the public school system. Surprisingly, this one is still being considered, and might even reach the floor for a vote (see Tom Glass's article, elsewhere in this issue). The kicker is that the credit would be open to anyone -- with or without children--since donations for scholarships, athletic programs and similar measures could be used as well. A corporation could deduct up to half of its liabilities for such a donation, while individual taxpayers might never have to pay another cent to keep Fast Eddie King's limousines running, provided that they put their money where it could do some real good, for a change. The bill is House Bill #5280 (as in how many feet in a mile?); write and call your legislators today and urge their support for it. Mention the effect on cutting school spending budgets while you're at it...

A final note, and a chance to toot my own horn a bit. As many of you know, the April 1981 issue of New Age magazine has a story written by the editor of this rag. What you may not be aware of is that lightning may strike twice, or three times, very soon: the magazine now has another of my works in hand, and by the time the Denver convention rolls around they should have printed both it and an article I'm doing on Bob Poole, based on his recent trip to Boston in March. Furthermore, Bob himself has commissioned me to do an interview with "Growing Without Schooling" author and educator John Holt for probable use in Reason sometime next fall or winter. Other things are pending; it's easy to see why I'm desperately looking for some help in getting this newsletter out on a reasonable schedule again...

D-DAY APPROACHETH

...And I don't mean June 6th! Decriminalization Day, 1981, will occur on July 3, the day before the rest of the country celebrates its "independence".

Started by Robert Bakhaus, a California Libertarian with grand promotional skills, two years ago, D-Day will probably be a national event this time, with rallies and demonstrations and rallies all over the land. Here in Massachusetts we hope to be doing something ourselves, but things are still in the planning stages so far.

Anyone wishing to help out with a festival affirming our right to eat, drink, smoke, inhale or otherwise ingest whatever we wish, or to transact business for whatever purposes we wish, or to generally be left the hell alone, contact me through LIBERTY and we'll see what we can do.

education tax credits now

By Tom Glass

As many of Massachusetts' public school districts are facing fiscal problems, private education is looking more and more attractive to many parents. In response to this awareness and the need for local school districts to reduce educational costs in response to Prop 2 1/2, I thought that this year would be a good time for the introduction of an educational tax credits bill at the state level.

At my request, Representative William Galvin (D-Brighton) introduced House 5280, concerning educational tax credits. This bill was written by Bill Burt, former National Director of the Libertarian Party, for the National Taxpayers Union in California in 1979. It has the same format as the proposal endorsed by Ed Clark at the national level during his 1980 Presidential campaign.

The bill provides for a \$250 per year credit against state income taxes for anyone paying educational expenses on behalf of any student, aged kindergarten through college, enrolled in a public or private school. It has many interesting points to offer:

o Under the bill's provisions, a taxpayer could donate money on behalf of children in three ways: as a direct payment to a chosen student; as a payment to a school, which would then distribute the money to individuals in need; or to a charitable organization, which would then provide scholarships to individuals.

o "Taxpayer" is defined in the bill as either an individual or a corporation. Although individuals could deduct up to 100% of their tax liabilities, corporations could only use 50% or less of their own liabilities.

o Donations need not be only for scholarships in lieu of tuition payments, but could apply to lab fees, athletic costs, field trips, etc. This is why it is called an education tax credit.

o The bill is uniquely designed to meet constitutional challenges, on two fronts: it is more than just a tuition credit; and (more importantly) it provides credits for public as well as private schools. Lower courts have thrown out previous bills because most of the beneficiaries of tax reductions have been religious schools. But with these two added facets, House 5280 reduces the probability of such challenges, and clearly states that its purpose is the provision of choice in education.

o This credit is not a subsidy, but a tax reduction to allow individuals more choice in how they spend their own money.

The \$250 figure has been criticized by some Libertarians as being too low; they argue that similar bills proposed in California and the District of Columbia, and during the 1980 Clark campaign, all had a larger (\$1200) credit in mind. Their main point is that \$250 will not really give sufficient incentive for low income parents to make the switch to better schools for their children.

Yet the tuition at South Boston Heights Academy was only \$325 per year for first grade, and \$955 for high school seniors in 1980, many Catholic schools are similarly priced. Still, if I had this to do over again, I'd introduce a bill with higher amounts.

I lowered the figure from previous attempts because I thought that the revenue loss to the state would be hard to sell in the State House. This bill, however, can be sold as a partial solution to Prop 2 1/2. The general idea is that government schools spend much more per student than private schools do. As students leave the government schools in favor of private education, costs to the public system are reduced far more than the revenue loss from the tax credit. These savings may then be distributed between the state and the local level, so that no branch of government must bear the entire financial strain.

I have contacted many organizations which can be potential allies in lobbying for this bill. The only enthusiastic response so far, however, has been from the Association of Christian Schools.

The main impetus for House 5280 must ultimately come from parents and non-parents making their state

legislators aware of their support for the bill. With enough pressure in the right places we can pass this bill in Massachusetts. Take the time to call your representative and senator to voice your support, today. The next few months will be crucial, as it winds its way from committee to floor. Let's not let this opportunity pass us by:

-FROM PG 1 -- LIBERTY AMEND.-

(CA), Lawrence McDonald (GA), John Ashbrook (OH), James M. Collins (TX) and Ron Paul (TX).

Meanwhile, here in the Bay State there is a resolution pending to adopt the Liberty Amendment. Although it does not have much momentum within the legislature as yet, the efforts are being coordinated by David Grossack of Hull, who may be contacted through LIBERTY if you wish to aid the cause.

CLASSIFIED(S?)

SELF HYPNOSIS

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WANTED: COMPULSIVE LIBERTARIANS!!

Hello, folks: Right now you're probably asking yourself, "How much longer am I gonna subscribe to this nutcase's ravings, with no guarantee of when I'll see the next issue, with no idea what will be in it, and with no conceivable interest in whatever it is?"

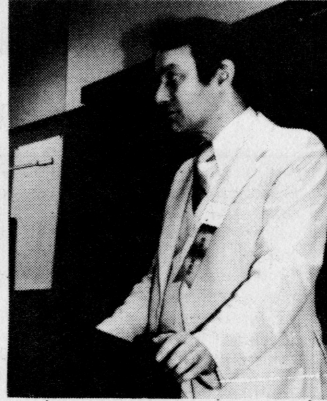
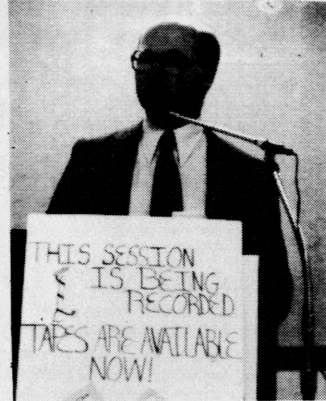
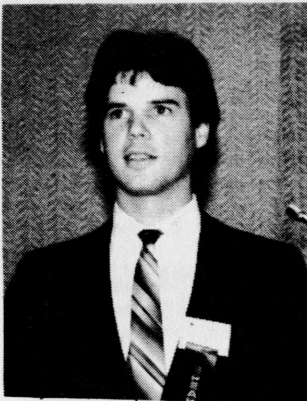
The answer is in your hands, because unless somebody else begins to show more than passing interest in whether or not Liberty actually sees print on random occasion it's not going to last much longer. In the year or more that I have been editing this newsletter (this time around, that is) it has gone from a professionally typeset production-crew operation to a sporadic product of a balky typewriter to almost non-existence. The new members among you probably haven't heard anything from the local party except fund-raising solicitations since the election. The old folks have seen this act before, and the last time I did it Lee Nason stepped in to save the bacon.

But she's got too much to do already, as have most of the central-core activists of long standing. (The rest are in their burnout stages; having been there at least twice before myself, I have nothing but sympathy, and gratitude for their past efforts, to offer them.) It's time for a new beginning...in so many ways, and the newsletter is just one of them.

It's not as if I'm asking to give up the whole Liberty process; all I'm looking for is some help from time to time. I enjoy editing the copy, and I love being able to take a few well-aimed(?) potshots at the muckymucks in the LP partyarchy, local and national. I also like planning the way pages will be organized, and pasting up the boards, and even setting the type on occasion.

What I don't like is that ever since last June or so, I've been having to do ALL OF THE ABOVE, or Liberty does not go out. Add to this the fact that most of the mailing and stuffing gets done in my living-room (and I'm faced with the choice of trying to organize a mailing-party (which I'm terrible at, because I hate asking people to do things by phone), or do the whole 200+ piece job by myself, as I have for the last two alleged issues), and you can perhaps understand my annoyance with the whole project.

Let me put it this way: THIS IS THE LAST ISSUE OF LIBERTY TO BE PRODUCED BY A ONE PERSON TASK FORCE!! Unless I get some serious offers of help--with writing, or editing, or paste-up, or typing copy, or organizing the mailing and collating routine--one of the movement's best newsletters (according to numerous people around the country) will go under. I am quite willing to help anyone who wants to learn about the publishing business; I will also be available to DO much of the work that has to be done. But unless I get some real support you can 86 this little game; I have too many things to do involving my basic survival, without extending myself even farther and finding nobody cares enough about it to lend a hand...



(1 to r): Eric O'Keefe, LP National Director; Bill Burt, former Director, now Regional Rep. to National Committee; Barbara Anderson, Citizens for Limited Taxation; Howard Katz, LPM member and breakfast speaker, all addressing LPM Convention 81.

LPM CONVENTION -- THE BIGGEST ONE YET!!

FROM PG. 1

education outside the public school system. Rather than being restricted to parents only, this provision was to be applicable to any individual or corporation donating such a sum to a private scholarship fund as well.

The dispute over the resolution concerned its vagueness. However, thanks to the passionate plea of Lee Nason, a Cambridge homeowner, mother and architectural planner with impeccable Party credentials, the tide was turned. "This is not a perfect Libertarian document," she readily admitted, "but it is terribly important that we enable at least some parents to pull their kids out of the public schools. They are miseducating our students, and diverting enormous amounts of time, money and attention away from freedom and into socialist and authoritarian styles of thinking. If we don't make some start on this problem now, in 20 years we'll be surrounded by a whole bunch of illiterates who believe in collectivism."

Also on the day's program were a breakfast speech by Howard Katz, author of "The Paper Aristocracy" and others works; a workshop on local organizing, featuring Citizens for Limited Taxation Director Barbara Anderson and a pair of national LP figures; and banquet speaker Robert Poole, author of the tax-cutting Bible, "Cutting Back City Hall".

Katz presented a history of left and liberal doctrines, from Marxism to the New Deal, and concluded that none of these pro-state manifestations could seriously lay claim to "humaneness", but were rather derived from conservative and feudalistic antecedents. He blamed "the split between liberty and compassion" for the failure of libertarian elements, from both the right and the left, to have any significant influence during the 1960s.

Anderson, speaking on coalition building despite a painful back ailment which kept her standing throughout, was greeted with a rousing ovation. She began by stating that "the real coalition" had been forged by the anti-2 1/2 forces, and marveled at how "they got them all to sit down in the same room, and stay there long enough to agree on something."

She resisted the temptation, even with a rare friendly audience, to attack her erstwhile opponents, or even to lash out at the politicians who had made the referendum so necessary. "It's not that politicians are feeding on the taxpayers," she said. "They just don't know how to cut. For years they've done nothing but increase budgets, and Taxachusetts has grown so fast, it's really more like 'Topsy-chusetts'." She noted that the week after the elections she had received several calls from state legislators, asking for advice on where the first cuts should come.

Despite Anderson's local prominence, however, the unquestionable star of the day was Bob Poole. As editor of Reason magazine, a former Local Government Center consultant to cities in nine different states, an MIT graduate and a recognized expert on more-for-less in municipal budgets, he had spent the previous 36 hours on the radio talkshow circuit, dealing with the topic of his banquet speech, "Capitalizing on 2 1/2".

Poole unveiled a "Ten-Point Plan for Boston" which stressed privatization, user-fees and consolidation of agencies as ways to streamline bloated city budgets. "We all rightly look down our noses at the failures of

socialized medicine and steelmills in Great Britain," he said. "But it never seems to occur to us that there might be something wrong with socialized garbage collection, or recreation, or fire departments...The answer to these overpriced, inflexible white elephants is not to bail them out, but to desocialize them, and return them to the marketplace. There's no reason why the rents of the poor should be paying for golf courses and tennis courts for the upper-middle class."

And for the services the poor do use regularly, Poole recommended direct subsidies, coupled with scholarships and free passes sponsored by local business and community groups in exchange for tax-credits. "Not everybody is disadvantaged," he said, "and there's no reason to treat society like we're all on welfare." He noted that many hospitals in America already take on a percentage of low- and non-paying patients, without the slightest incentive from tax-writeoffs.

"We have developed the kind of welfare state society which has given people all sorts of incentives to be stupid," Poole concluded. "But somehow they manage to find and buy food, clothing, records, cars, etc. By and large they don't get totally ripped off or defrauded. They have incentives to learn something about being a smart consumer, how to make decisions, and so forth. It's really selling people short to assume that just because they've never been asked to make decisions about things

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FROM THE CHAIR



This column was a regular feature in LIBERTY several years ago, and as your new State Chair I am going to revive the tradition. I hope to cover current Party activities so that all members will know where the LPM is going and where help is most needed.

This year's State Convention was a great success and those of you who did not attend should try to make it to the '82 Convention. One of our major goals this year is to prepare for the gubernatorial election next year, and this requires a lot of help with fundraising activities. The Party has recently gone to court to obtain a favorable ruling that would allow us to hold "Las Vegas Nights". One of these functions alone could raise \$3,000 or more, but it will require 30 to 35 members to run the show.

Another area the Party is becoming active in is legislation at the state level. We have had several bills introduced this session, including one dealing with tax credits for private education, and there are more in the works.

As a final note all members will be receiving pledge cards soon, and I encourage all of you to pledge as much as you can afford for the 1982 campaign. Remember, if we can get 3% of the vote in that gubernatorial election we will have permanent ballot status. The savings in time, energy and money from not having to petition for the '84 Presidential election and others in the future is something to keep in mind as you fill out the cards.

Norm MacConnell,
LPM State Chair

BAARD, LP, ET AL FLUSHED BY SEVERE DOSE OF THE "TROTS"

card conference

By now it's been three months since the deal went down in Detroit. The First (and perhaps last) National Convention of the Coalition Against Registration and the Draft (CARD) has been written up in just about every Libertarian publication as either (1) a temporary setback, or (2) a major moral victory for the libertarian movement. Surprisingly little has been made of the actual events which led to what some have called a disaster for the peace movement.

First, the facts--as nearly as we've been able to decipher them. A national convention was held at Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan, in mid-February. Over a thousand activists from all over the country, and from every ideological camp, attended. The conference considered numerous issues, not all of which were directly related to the draft. Authoritarian elements at the conference, led by the Socialist Workers Party (otherwise known as the "Trots", for Trotskyites), attempted to take over the leadership and prestige of CARD for their own ends. The takeover was at least somewhat successful...

The following is a partial transcript of an interview with two active left-libertarian members of the Boston Alliance Against Registration and the Draft (BAARD). Nora Leyland, 27, and Mike Compos, 37, have been with BAARD from its inception over two years ago, and were among the small contingent of non-authoritarians attending the Detroit debacle in February. In an effort to get at the truth of what happened, from a somewhat more objective viewpoint than usual, this interview (conducted in early April) is offered.



Nora Leyland



Mike Compos

LIBERTY: Let's start with the beginning. What were your first impressions of the CARD conference, upon arriving in Detroit?

NORA: We hadn't been in Detroit too long before we realized the front-groups holding the convention--Detroit CARD and Cass Tech High School CARD--were SWP-controlled. It was obvious from the proposals they'd submitted and from the large number of very heavy goon-style marshalls, who were everywhere.

One of the first things that happened was on Friday night, when David Affler (BAARD activist) was trying to pass out copies of the BAARD Resistance Resolution. He was stopped by these marshalls, including one guy from Pittsburgh CARD, Al Duncan, who we know is definitely SWP. They were into strong physical force and were ready to use it to stop David from leafletting.

We were very much interested in pushing CARD to take a pro-resistance (pro-non-registration) stance, by openly encouraging people not to register. This has been the most effective way to resist the draft we've found. There was a lot at stake in Detroit: CARD was wide open; the Principles of Unity would be binding; all that went before was being scrapped in favor what happened in Detroit; we were forming CARD anew.

LIBERTY: Was this a mutual decision of all the participating groups, or a railroad edict?

NORA: I specifically asked that question. People who were planning to introduce resolutions for the Principles of Unity session were called to a special meeting beforehand -- which we came to refer to as the "smoke-filled room meeting" -- and I asked if we were starting from scratch with CARD. Someone there said the conference was wide open, and since nobody contradicted that, that was the impression we were under. There were 1200 of us there in Detroit, and CARD had never been brought to a large meeting like that before.

That meeting, by the way, was the first indication of things to come. Throughout the weekend anyone who had a proposal was taken aside and attempts were made to have that proposal consolidated with others and/or watered down or compromised. It was also the first indication that there was a lot of sentiment against the Libertarians, and in favor of pushing them out.

MIKE: We had a meeting Friday night, caucusing with some people we thought we'd be able to work with, at least on the resolution to "encourage people not to register". At any rate, we were discussing the defense of people who had not registered, and one person said, "Well, you certainly wouldn't want to defend a Libertarian!"

NORA: We freaked out...

MIKE: I thought David Affler was going to pop him one...

NORA: From that point on, we resisted any attempt to change or soften our resolution all the way to the floor. I even pointed out at this pre-meeting meeting that we had come with a proposal from a group, and had no authority to change it until it had at least been presented on the floor. They seemed to have forgotten this, but then democracy was not what you'd call rampant at this conference.

LIBERTY: What was the structure of the conference?

NORA: There were three sessions. Saturday afternoon was Principles of Unity, Sunday morning was for Specific Action Proposals, and Sunday afternoon was for Basic Structure. Originally, Saturday night was for Actions, but we ran over.

Saturday began with rules submitted by the present CARD leaders, calling for a 2/3 vote on most things and 3/4 to pass Principles of Unity. This was immediately challenged by almost

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everyone there, and a clear majority was ruled sufficient for all decisions.

The Principles of Unity session was fairly well done. Many proposals were considered and passed, including one against national service, which BAARD introduced.

MIKE: I should interject here that although that resolution did pass, only about 2/3 of the conference voted. This indicated what was to come, as one of our members who used to be with SWP noted that whenever there was an issue the SWP had no party position on, their members didn't vote at all.

NORA: And so the motion passed.

MIKE: Overwhelmingly. And after that, any time there'd be a vote there was a large bloc of people voting late. One guy would raise his hand, and the others would all follow. It was really very funny.

NORA: Two or three hundred of them!

LIBERTY: That much lockstep?

MIKE: That much lockstep.

NORA: The overall sentiment was that this was SWP vying with CARD for control. I hadn't known it until a few weeks before the conference, but the old CARD board consisted of 5 white men; I was really shocked to find that out, but Barry Lynn, Duane Schenk, Tom Palmer, Mitch Adelstein of ADA, and... the lawyer...

MIKE: David Landau.

NORA: Right. And with Duane being one of two CARD staff-members, and the other being a woman, who was not on the Board...

LIBERTY: Men dominated radical groups in the 60s, the 70s, and now the 80s. Nothing changes, it would seem. But getting back to the conference business: What sort of planks did get passed?

NORA: There was support for minorities, and women, and Native Americans...

MIKE: A basic anti-racism plank.

NORA: Yes, and "money for jobs, not war", which the Libertarians were not too happy about. And then there was our resistance plank; we tried hard, but with support from only the War Resisters League...

MIKE: And the Yippies.

NORA: And the Yippies, and whatever other anarchists were present, and the RCP (Revolutionary Communist Party). We were the darlings of the RCP by the time it was over.

The basic debate over our plank involved language, whether to use "encourage" or "support". We wanted strongly to encourage people not to register; we felt it was very much a responsibility, knowing what we know, to come right out and tell people that their safest course -- the best choice among no good choices -- was not to register at all.

A watered down version finally passed, which spelled out a whole range of resistance forms and kept the intent of our original motion for the most part. It also had no reference to the word "non-violent", which was also fine with us. We had included it in the first place in hopes that it would help it to pass, and when it was dropped, nobody in BAARD was particularly upset. I think it's a term which has different meanings to different people, and a lot of us are sort of Quaker-pressured into it, which I resent.

LIBERTY: Within the LP we've had problems with that issue. The 1980 anti-draft resolution almost bogged down over it, and you're right -- there are almost as many definitions of the word as there are theories on where rights come from.

NORA: That's sort of true... Anyway, that concluded Saturday for the most part, except for a few little things...

MIKE: Let me back up a little, though. On Saturday there were two chairs: Norma Becker from MOBE (Mobilization for Survival) and Jim Lafferty, who is basically a mouthpiece for SWP, although he doesn't officially belong. The debate procedure was alternating pro and con on each issue, so things got presented, despite the tendency of Lafferty to call on people who could present a good case for his side, and less eloquent speakers on behalf of the opposite argument. But at least

THE SONG OF THE DRAIN

There's nothing so bad as an overflow drain
To take the fun out of baths.
If a man wants to overflow it should be
His business, not theirs.
And if he doesn't want to, let him
Watch his running water!
You'll notice they don't have those drains
On toilets where they'd be useful.
I think I'll plug up the overflow drains
For a few of the houses here.
You'll see a little panic at first
When they realize they've got to choose,
But after they get used to it all
You'll see them splash their thanks.

Joanna Lancaster



Outgoing LPM Chair Jim Poulin looks on as Bob Poole outlines his "Ten Point Plan for Boston" during the banquet speech.

CONVENTION - FROM PG 4 -

like private education, or garbage collection, or transportation, that they couldn't do it if given the opportunity.

"It's the system, not the people, which is wrong and needs to be replaced."

Also on the agenda was the election of state party officers and delegates to the national convention in Denver this August. Filling positions on the state committee was, as usual, a bit like finding candidates willing to run for any Libertarian campaign, but as always seven arms were sufficiently twisted to cause their attached persons to say, "I do". Holdovers include Sue Poulin (later chosen Financial Officer), Steve Trinward (once again Executive Director), Lee Webber and Norm MacConnell (our new Presiding Officer/Chair). New faces this time are Dimitri Rotow, Michael Reilly and Howard Pearce (Recording Officer).

Delegate selection was equally painful, but 12 candidates were eventually found and shanghaied. Along with the abovementioned Rotow, Pearce, Webber and Trinward, those chosen included former State Committee members Lee Nason, Jim Poulin, Bill Hurst, Walter Ziobro, Jr. and Tom Glass, as well as former LP State Rep. candidate John Shanley of Dorchester and Westfield, Alan Burnett of Lexington, and Joan Kennedy Taylor, Senior Editor of Libertarian Review and a former LPM activist and longstanding member.

At presstime there is a chance that we will be able to charter a plane to the Denver festivities, thereby saving up to 50% off the usual fares. If this does work out, there may well be room for additional passengers whose late-August plans open up. Contact the LPM by mail or phone (POB 2610, Boston 02208, or (617)-426-4402) for further details.

things did get aired, with no real screaming or dissension. At the end of the Saturday session we had one issue left to discuss: nuclear power and weapons.

LIBERTY: I wanted to ask about that. Was there a feeling that the conference was primarily concerned with anti-draft work, and opposing interventionism abroad? Or did the whole 'agenda' -- I hate that word the way it's now used -- of other issues get brought to the floor in the guise of broadening the debate?

NORA: I think people assumed we'd work on the draft, but that there were other issues that would be raised as well. We were working against the draft and war, but there are lots of issues we can't ignore as human beings, and if we can't give time to them at least we can state how we feel about them.

MIKE: We tried to tie in the draft each time, showing how militarism and conscription affected a given issue.

NORA: I think those of us in BAARD, who work hard against the draft, wouldn't be involved in a group which didn't have the most progressive position on all the major issues. So to answer your question, that didn't bother me; in fact, I sort of liked it.

LIBERTY: But there are different ways to do things like this. One thing which bothers me about the Mel King organized People's Coalition here in Boston is the tendency to let the so-called "agenda" items overshadow whatever major issue they are working on. Failing to see that the issue at hand is of primary concern, they sometimes alienate a lot of potential supporters for local action on areas of agreement.

NORA: Now that I think about it, it was pretty clear once we got down to it that there were only a few items in the Principles of Unity that directly related to the draft, and those were the ones BAARD introduced: the resolution against national service, and the resistance one. I guess you can see where BAARD is coming from, at least.

LIBERTY: The next session was Sunday's Action Plenary. What happened there?

NORA: Well, it started about an hour late, for one thing. And when they did start there were the Cass Tech High School people, who were SWP throughout, demanding to be heard, so they were. Nobody voted on it; the chair just said, in effect, "shut up and listen". It was like we were in church...

LIBERTY: Well, after all, it was Sunday!

NORA:...So they got these four Cass Tech people each speaking for about five minutes or so, and it was right out of the fucking Militant, of course, but we had to sit and listen to their garbage. But that was just the beginning.

MIKE: After the speeches, the co-chair, a black, well-dressed woman from SWP, started the session, with almost these exact words: "Now that we've heard from the high school students, our

HERO? - FROM PG. 1 -

assault", and fined. He refused to pay it, and was thrown in jail.

Other prisoners were offered reduced sentences if they could shave Joseph; two tried, both failed. Palmer got letters out to the world through his son, and they were published in the Massachusetts Weekly Spy. He made the point that the Constitution gave him the freedom to wear what he wished, thereby becoming another in the long line of Americans who think that scrap of paper is somehow sacrosanct in the face of the onslaughts of judiciary types.

Palmer's cause was taken up by the likes of Alcott, Thoreau and Emerson. After a year he had so incensed the jailers that they told him to leave his cell. He refused, unless they first publicly admitted that he had the right to walk bearded if he so pleased. One day the jailers just lifted him, chair and all, and carried the lot into the street and left him.

Joseph bought a piece of good farmland called Fruitlands, which lay nearby. and spent the rest of his life running it as an "asylum for waifs, and tramps, and men with beards." When he died in 1875, his tombstone was carved, with an inscription which reads, in part, "Persecuted for Wearing the Beard".

first Action proposal will be presented by Jim Lafferty." No raising of hands, no procedure at all.

She also announced that proposals would now have "open discussion", with 20 minutes per proposal and extensions as needed.

LIBERTY: I take it that Robert's Rules of Order were not in effect?

MIKE: Theoretically, Robert's Rules were in force.

NORA: They even had a parliamentarian at the table...

LIBERTY: More SWP?

NORA: No, AFSC (American Friends Service Committee), but he might as well have been...

MIKE: (to Nora as well) I found out later he belongs to both groups, so he was SWP, too.

LIBERTY: Now it makes sense how they pulled it off. You can railroad anything if the parliamentarian is in the bag.

MIKE: Anyway, as Lafferty came forward I stood up to be recognized. Since we were in the third row they had a hard time ignoring me. I hollered, "Point of Order", and the chair said, "Sit down...You're out of order!"

LIBERTY: A point of order is out of order? Interesting...

MIKE: I finally got the floor, though, and pointed out that they hadn't finished the Principles of Unity from the night before -- the nuclear resolution, that is -- and asked when they would deal with it. They said, "We don't know. MOBE's working on it. But we'll cover it later today".

So I sat down. But that was the beginning of a very long day...

LIBERTY: When was the walkout of the Libertarians. Was it during the debate over "Money for Jobs, Not War"?

NORA: No, they didn't walk out then, although they did oppose that resolution in the Monday meeting, which is another story.

They walked out over an extremely principled issue, during the introduction of some Support Resolutions at the Action Plenary. One of these was submitted by the John Brown Anti-Klan Committee, the remnants of Prairie Fire, which is part of the old Weather Underground Organizing Committee. It was a resolution supporting SWAPO (Southwest African People's Organization), and it had some pretty specific language in it, like recognizing SWAPO as the "sole legitimate representative of the people of Namibia", and something about armed struggle. Anyway the proposal was perfectly clear, and people seemed to know what they were voting for. It passed.

After the Action Session ended there was a two-hour break before the Structure Session. When we came back in, the parliamentarian, who happened to be black (minorities were used like a club over everyone's head at this conference) was acting

-TURN TO PG. 8-

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like he was going to chair the session himself. He entertained a motion from the chair to the effect that because some church groups had had problems with the SWAPO resolution, it should be brought back to the floor for reconsideration. This was completely out of order...

LIBERTY: Particularly with the parliamentarian bringing it up...

NORA: He spoke for like 20 minutes, and we were freaking out, jumping up and screaming, "The Chair's out of order!" He refused to recognize anyone, though. Oh, I should mention that they opened up the session by trying to get people to think David (Affler) was a cop, in order to discredit us...

So the Namibia thing got back on the floor, because of all sorts of organization blackmail garbage, and they voted to reconsider it. Mike Morgan, a Namibian representative to the U.S., went out to draft a new resolution which left out "Armed Struggle". He wrote it, it was voted on, and it passed.

MIKE: But one guy got up and said he'd withdraw from CARD if this stood, and moved for another reconsideration. After a lot of screaming, the motion was tabled. Morgan went out to rewrite it again, came back and wanted to introduce the new resolution. I got up and pointed out that we couldn't do that, since no action was possible until we passed the tabled reconsideration motion; until then, the original resolution was still in effect. I was ignored completely, and they said, "The new motion is now passed..."

NORA: That's when the Libertarians walked out.

LIBERTY: So it was more a case of realizing that no procedural considerations would stand in the way of the SWP juggernaut, so to speak, rather than an issue of particular moment, that sent them away?

NORA: Right. And it was really interesting to see how other people reacted. We were approached by someone from WACARD (Washington, D.C.'s chapter) while we were screaming about this blatant disregard for the process. We weren't concerned about the changes in the resolution, which was actually stronger without the words "armed struggle", because it was more all-encompassing.

So the WACARD person comes up and says, "Don't you realize how much better this proposal is than the other one?" "We know that," we said, "But don't you care about the process of how these things get done?"

"Well, look," he said, "at least we got rid of the Libertarians!"

And I said, "I have nothing to say to you. Go away..." BAARD is the faction sometimes accused of not caring enough about process, but here we were screaming about the authoritarian way the meeting was being run, and how only SWP people were allowed to speak. Throughout the rest of the conference we got no support from the Peace movement, or the other major forces there; only the small fringe parties which hadn't yet been corrupted were willing to take a stand with us.

MIKE: Maybe 20 or 30 out of about 600 in the room...

NORA: At one point I saw Lafferty up on the platform, and I knew that though he wasn't any friend, he did have the ability to stop all this. So I walked down the aisle and got about four feet from the front of the room and was immediately surrounded by about ten marshalls. And this big dude, Al Duncan, says, "Siddown!"

And I said, "I want to talk to that guy." "You're not talking to anyone. Siddown!" And at this point I'm saying, "Who the fuck are you? What do you mean I can't talk to him?" He turned to our staff person, Julie, and says "Siddown!". And Julie says, "Look, I don't sit, I don't roll over, I don't play dead. You wanna talk to me, fine, but don't give me any orders!"

Anyway, just when it looked like they were going to have us all thrown out of there, the TV cameras came in. We all picked up newspapers and hid our faces, as a symbolic protest of the invasion of privacy, which was what we'd been screaming about in the first place.

I guess the point I want to make out of all this was that our own rowdiness escalated because of the opposition. We were provoked continuously, and when we responded they made accusations about "police agents in the crowd, who tend to be disruptive, like some people here today." We were sitting there waiting for the clubs to come down on our heads. We'd been acting out of principle and felt this was very unfair. People don't get away with that stuff in the circles we move in. And when I heard the chant, "BAARD Should Be Barred!" I knew we weren't going to accomplish much more.

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We were kept off the Interim Steering Committee formed on Monday because of our rowdy behavior, I guess. Perhaps it was because we laughed in church.

LIBERTY: Was there anything notable in the last session?

MIKE: The SWP's structure proposal passed, which allowed basically anyone to belong to CARD as long as they had some members and paid their ten bucks. Then they could be on the committee.

NORA: They wanted to hold four meetings a year, with everyone traveling to Washington. This figured to keep local groups from having much to say, confining it to national groups, and perhaps only the ones SWP could fund. BAARD proposed regional groups, like New England; each region would send someone maybe once or twice a year, and hold regional meetings the rest of the time. This would promote more local activity, and the big meetings could move from one region to another.

But the SWP clearly won, and with only about 500 in the room at the time of the vote, and only about 300 people voting. And then everyone went home and that was it, except for Monday, which was...

MIKE: That's not quite true. Let me interject about my last fling at being productive.

NORA: Oh, sorry, Mike. I forgot about you moment of glory.

MIKE: After the SWP proposal passed, the chair said there were "one or two more brief little things to cover" before adjourning. These were innocuous issues which would take maybe three minutes to vote on, she said.

I rose to a point of order, and although they tried to ignore me, I finally got recognized. "Fine," I said. "Now we've had the whole day, and the first thing this morning I asked when we were going to finish the Principles of Unity. Are we going to vote on the nuclear weapons plank and finish it?"

There was nothing they could say; they had agreed we were going to do it, so reluctantly they let me give my speech. And then a MOBE member delivered their proposal, which passed overwhelmingly, much to my surprise. It said we opposed nuclear weapons, that we urged all people working for the nuclear industry to go on a general strike, that we urged military personnel to refuse to use nuclear weapons, and that we'd support anyone who did resist. It was the strongest plank in the whole conference, but they were so unprepared for what he proposed that the SWP didn't know what to do.

LIBERTY: What's been happening since the conference?

NORA: There were a lot of rumors flying around that proved to be untrue. One said the old CARD Board, the five white men, had met Monday and overturned the Structure decision. They didn't, but they did vote to remain in control until the new structure could be implemented. An interim steering committee was formed to develop the new structure, subject to approval from the old board. BAARD was excluded from this.

There was a meeting in early March in D.C., and BAARD went in order to lobby for a seat on the committee. We got it, but it took some work. There was also a proposal to give two votes to national groups and only one to regional and local ones; we fought this down the line, too. The result was a proposal to make CARD completely open, to let any group meeting basic criteria onto the steering committee: you needed ten members; a two-year existence; and if you could afford it you paid the \$10 fee. The first open CARD meeting is to be held on June 6.

On Tuesday night in Washington, the old CARD Board met and overturned all this, stating that we had no authority to do such things. Adelstein said that the grassroots groups were acting "like a bunch of unruly children who need a kick in the teeth". (This gives you some idea of how unwilling some of the peace movement groups are to give up their power.)

LIBERTY: So it seems as if the Trots couldn't even manage to keep their power-play intact for even a few weeks before someone else grabbed a piece of the action.

NORA: Well, the movement has definitely been fragmented somewhat by all this.

But there's something more important, which I alluded to before, and it could have alarming possibilities for the future of the anti-draft movement. We are so sensitive about minority representation that all a group has to do to take charge is to bring out its minority members -- they can do no wrong! We saw this again in mid-March at a meeting in New York, where the Black Veterans for Social Justice almost took over the meeting.

I don't think having five black men is any better than having five white men, or all women, running things. It was specifically stated, though, that a white woman could not run against a black man. The sympathies would be divided; and that was somehow not "politically correct".

LIBERTY (After a brief discussion of the Vernon Brown situation, detailed elsewhere in this issue): We seem to be facing the same problem within the Libertarian Party these days.

NORA: I think it's really important to deal with this. A lot of us in BAARD were very concerned about how Workers World and others have been using the minority thing -- with a very anti-feminist strain to it!

LIBERTY: What about BAARD's future? How does all this affect that?

NORA: We're going to be doing this for a long time as we see it. We don't want an anti-draft movement which starts out again as just another wing of SWP or Workers World. Grassroots groups are it; we do not want to see national organizations taking over. We want it to be run by those who are on the streets organizing, and we want to participate only on those terms. We're not hiring buses to go to Washington, in order to hear a bunch of pro-Soviet speeches.

LIBERTY: But how can it all be done? How can we bring about an anti-authoritarian anti-draft movement, where special-interest groups and agendas are the baggage, but the primary issue is the draft?

NORA: I'm a decentralist. I really feel the best organizing is local, or regional at most.

LIBERTY: Can this be strong enough to overcome the nationalist movements?

NORA: Well, CARD is essentially dead, and PAM (People's Anti-War Movement) and Worker's World have sustained a lot of damage. I'm encouraged, though, by looking at the number of groups in Boston which are working on the draft and are specifically not parties bent on taking over for other purposes. There's Parents Against the Draft, Teenagers Against the Draft, the Military Law Task Force (part of National Lawyers Guild), the Veterans groups, BAARD, Women Organized to Resist the Draft (WORD), the Counseling Network... There are at least nine specific groups not aligned with any kind of dogmatic philosophy which work around the draft issue.

I think the Draft will pass this summer and we'll all have to be ready to work together. For Boston it looks great; I don't know about the rest of the country.

It's so hard to work without getting sucked into some rigid authoritarian program, and it seems to me that you almost have to go through that first. Dorothy said the other day that if she had never been in the Left, she'd never have thought of anarchism; being on the Left will drive you toward it, because most structures are set up just like the government. Most peace-establishment groups and almost all left-wing parties are that way. The biggest reason for the growth of anarchism lately is how right-wing the Left is getting.

I don't care if people are fully developed anarchists or what. As long as they can reject authority and hierarchy, they're on their way. Most of the people walking around Boston who call themselves anarchists don't know the meaning of the word.

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