

SOUTH CAROLINA LIBERTARIAN



OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA LIBERTARIAN PARTY

Editor's note:

When I decided to publish Marshall Danenburg's commentary in the July issue of the South Carolina Libertarian, I realized that I might be opening a can of worms. My prediction proved to be correct, for shortly thereafter I received commentaries on the June 11 S.C.L.P. Convention from two other individuals who urged me to publish their views.

My original plan was for the next issue of the newsletter to be published in early October, for I have some articles which will be of interest both to libertarians and, hopefully, potential libertarians who stop by our booth at the S.C. State Fair. However, I have decided to publish this special edition of the South Carolina Libertarian in order to air the views of the individuals who sent me their commentaries, and to air my own views. Since this issue deals with intra-party debate, and since many names are mentioned, this issue is not being sent to new prospects, libraries, newspapers, or broadcasting stations.

With this issue of the newsletter, the can of worms will be closed, at least for awhile. I ask those readers who dislike personal attacks to be patient. The October issue will, as planned, have articles on various subjects and will avoid intra-party debate. Any individuals who would like to make additional comments about the 1983 S.C.L.P. Convention should write to the individuals involved. Letters may be sent to me, and I will forward them to the appropriate persons.

S.C.L.P. member Daniel Hoertt is a delegate to the Libertarian Party Presidential Nominating Convention this year. He is also a member of Libertarian International.

THE CAPITAL INN PUTSCH

by Daniel Hoertt

A disturbing series of events unfolded at the 1983 convention of the South Carolina Libertarian Party. Apparently the dark clouds had been gathering for some months but only reached storm proportions on June 11. This article will, I hope, make clear the seriousness of this situation and its potentially disastrous consequences if this attempt at a new direction for the SCLP is not aborted.

At issue was a clash of ideas, and the battleground was the state platform. Essentially, what occurred was a concerted and flagrant attempt to transform the platform into a wishy-washy, vague, and, in some cases, anti-libertarian document. Had it succeeded, the result would have been an embarrassment to any libertarian and an insult to those who consider the LP the party of principle.

What libertarian would look away in disgrace when confronted by someone inquiring about his position on drugs, or prostitution, or abortion, or pornography, or gay rights? Yet, a number of delegates, lead by a newcomer to the SCLP, Dean Allen, would apparently not only blush but speak out against freedom of choice in these areas. Had these people had their way, all references to the "difficult" issues would have been purged from the platform. Not to worry, though. In their stead would have emerged statements of support for a strong national defense, backed by increased military expenditures.

Now, what were the motives of these individuals? Two interpretations are possible. The first is that these misguided individuals are essentially libertarians who have accepted in principle the right of individuals to lead their lives in any manner they choose. Their anxiety flows from their personal distaste for some of the choices that people would inevitably make, if free to do so. To defend personal choice, as they see it, is to sanction the choices made. Thus it was no surprise to see Allen stand up and sanctimoniously declare "I personally think that people who smoke marijuana are perverts."

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The second possible explanation for this seemingly odd behavior on the part of "libertarians" is that these people are not libertarian at all! Their goal is not a free society but only freedom from excessive taxation. The enemy is not oppressive government but oppressive taxation. This second explanation seems more plausible to me. Judging by some of the questions and comments from the floor alone, one would have to conclude that this faction was sorely lacking in basic libertarian theory. One individual found absurd the suggestion that anyone but the State was capable of constructing and maintaining a road. All appeared frightened of the idea that children have the same rights as adults. Not to mention all the pious talk one was subjected to when the topic turned to drugs, pornography, etc.

Then if it be the case that there was not a libertarian in the bunch, what in the world were these people doing as delegates to a state convention of the Libertarian Party? As I see it, this lunacy was orchestrated by Dean Allen to change the SCLP's image from that of a radical party of principle to a party of the radical right. And how might this be accomplished? Well, one could try persuading non-libertarians to hop on his anti-tax bandwagon and come to the convention as delegates in order to sweep away all references to civil liberties in the platform. This explains the presence of individuals with little or no grasp of libertarian theory and whose only contribution was to vote as a bloc with Allen as their spokesman.

But why go to all the trouble of changing a platform which few people see anyway? Since Allen made clear his intention of running for office again as a Libertarian, he wants to insure that the media do not confront him during his campaign with a radical libertarian platform to defend. He has no interest in the "difficult" issues. His strategy is to preach tax reduction and to turn a deaf ear to any talk of civil liberties. Libertarians should not make distinctions between one kind of state oppression and another. We did not choose the issues. The State has done this for us. If a Libertarian candidate is not prepared to speak in defense of liberty wherever and whenever possible, then he is in the wrong party. Libertarians, first and foremost, hold dear the principle that individuals should be free to make choices in the conduct of their lives. Libertarian candidates, therefore, should be willing to march against all violations of freedom and able to counter every act of aggression with a reasoned and principled argument for individual freedom.

Fortunately for all libertarians, Allen and his gang were narrowly outnumbered, and most of their amendments and deletions to the platform were defeated. But he has sworn to return next year with at least 200 new members. One can anticipate renewed attempts to overhaul the platform and even capture the party leadership. Hopefully, the SCLP will continue to grow and attract new libertarians and libertarian candidates who are not afraid to stand up and argue rationally for liberty for every person, in every situation, at any time.



Dean Allen, Sr. was the Libertarian candidate for U.S. Congress in Texas' 9th District in 1982 and was a member of the 1983 S.C.L.P. Platform Committee. He is a member of the S.C.L.P. Executive Committee and an announced candidate for the U.S. Senate in 1984.

S.C.L.P. CONVENTION - A PERSONAL COMMENT

by Dean Allen, Sr.

Some good news and some bad news came out of the recent state convention. The good news is that my organization has almost doubled the number of L.P. activists in the last 90 days and we have made substantial improvements in the Party Platform.

The pervert faction is in error if they think we came only to vote on a platform. We came to build a party, to run for office, to win elections, and to dismantle the socialist welfare state!

The "platform committee" was disorganized, insulting, catered to a handful of perverts, and hardly has any claim to define pure Libertarianism.

I have been accused of packing a convention! I guess it looks that way to folks who couldn't muster two dozen people after eight years of "organizing"! I understand there were 16 people at the convention last year. I promise to quit the party any year that I do not recruit more than 16 new people!

As for ethics, the pervert faction tried every parliamentary maneuver in the book, whined, complained, and tried to table the whole platform when they could not persuade a majority to go along. Real principle, right? Whine, moan, and sulk...a real class act.

Finally, I take exception to Mr. Danenburg calling me an opportunist. I received 2,500 votes in 1982 in a Congressional district where Ed Clark got 147 votes in 1980. In 1980 I was the Republican candidate for Congress and could have had the GOP nomination for the asking. I chose to run as a Libertarian because of principle. An opportunist would have remained in the GOP.

If you cannot convince the new members of the L.P. to support pervert positions, how do you hope to persuade a majority of the electorate? Oh yeah, the Chairman of the Platform Committee didn't impress the ladies present (or anyone else) with his unnecessary use of (F**) four letter words.



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EDITOR'S COMMENTS

I am not entirely certain what Mr. Allen means by "pervert faction", but according to the way he uses the term, it is clear that I am a member of this distinguished group. Since the Platform Committee is accused of having "catered to a handful of perverts", and since I put more time and effort into formulating the committee's proposal than anyone else, then I assume that I'm the ringleader of this "handful of perverts." It also seems that this illustrious group includes other members of the Platform Committee - my wife Jan, S.C.L.P. Chairman Steve Kreisman, S.C.L.P. Vice-Chairman and Platform Committee Chairman Steve Vandervelde, Shelly Vandervelde, and Dick Winchell. I also assume that Mr. Allen intends for the term "pervert" to refer to former S.C.L.P. Chairman Marshall Danenburg, former S.C.L.P. Chairman Tom Waldenfels, S.C.L.P. Secretary John Harllee, Richland County Chairman Bill Brooks, and all the other fine individuals who voted against one or more of his proposals.

According to Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language, a "pervert" is "a perverted person; esp., a person who practices sexual perversion." Well, I'm afraid that I'll have to admit that I'm not a very good "pervert." I don't know where Mr. Allen gets his information about my private life, but I do not practice "sexual perversion." Neither do I smoke marijuana, use drugs, get drunk, read pornographic books, or go to pornographic movies. To my knowledge, none of the other persons Mr. Allen refers to as "perverts" do these things either, although I don't pry into their private lives in order to get such information. I am faithful to my wonderful wife, I plan to start a family soon, and I even go to church sometimes. As a "pervert", I'm a hopeless failure.

Mr. Allen refers to the "pervert positions" of the Platform Committee. If Mr. Allen would simply read the national party Platform as well as the various position papers which the Libertarian Party has published over the years, he would see that each and every part of the Platform Committee's proposal was 100 percent libertarian and that most of his own proposals were inconsistent with "pure Libertarianism." It is true that "substantial improvements" have been made in the S.C.L.P. Platform, but the reason for these improvements is the fact that, for the most part, the Platform Committee's proposal was adopted, while most of Mr. Allen's proposals were either defeated or significantly altered before adoption.

Mr. Allen asserts that the Platform Committee was disorganized. There were two meetings of the Platform Committee. One was disorganized, while the other was organized and constructive. The disorganized meeting was the one which Mr. Allen attended. When the other Committee members failed to adopt his views, his insulting behavior was a major factor which contributed to the disorganization. Mr. Allen was absent from the subsequent meeting. The Committee accomplished much more at this peaceful meeting.

If, as Mr. Allen suggests, "the Chairman of the Platform Committee didn't impress the ladies present", with his use of a four-letter word (which wasn't even used in an insulting manner), then I must remind Mr. Allen that he certainly didn't impress the three ladies (or the four gentlemen) present at the first Platform Committee meeting when he used an insulting five-letter word to refer to one of the ladies - and this was in her own home! He also

used a four-letter word during the same explosive outburst, which ended with him being told to leave. Such ungentlemanly and insulting behavior weakens any basis Mr. Allen might claim to have for referring to certain decent human beings as "perverts."

Mr. Allen has announced his intention to seek the S.C.L.P. nomination to run for the U.S. Senate in 1984. If he wishes to have my support, he will have to quit making insulting remarks, start acting like a reasonable human being, and convince me that he is capable of fully embracing libertarian principles.

I believe that there were 19, not 16, South Carolinians at last year's state convention. Be that as it may - the precise numbers are unimportant - Mr. Allen did bring ten new members to the June 11 Convention. I heartily welcome new members into the S.C.L.P. There were also eight other persons present who were attending their first S.C.L.P. convention, so Mr. Allen is not the only person who is recruiting new members. The numbers game is not the only thing that matters, however. The best way for someone to join the L.P. is to learn a fair amount about libertarian principles before deciding whether or not to join the party, thus being capable of making an informed decision and contributing to any debate which occurs. To bring new persons into the L.P. before they gain a basic understanding of libertarian philosophy does a grave disservice both to the L.P. and to the individuals involved. I never expect a newcomer to be a purist, however. Six years ago, I did not agree with all L.P. positions, but I didn't join the party until I started embracing the libertarian philosophy. The new members whom Mr. Allen brought to the Convention seemed like decent persons who were interested in learning more, but the Convention is not the place for this.

I have fewer comments about Mr. Hoertt's article, for I agree with most of what he says. However, I don't like comments which criticize new party members. As I mentioned above, the new members that I had a chance to meet were considerate persons who seemed interested in the party. I certainly hope that they will be given an opportunity to learn more about the libertarian philosophy.

I especially agree with Mr. Hoertt's last sentence. All of us who value Liberty need to work harder in order to recruit more members who are willing to defend libertarian principles. We also need to discover a way to re-activate a few former S.C.L.P. activists who seem to have recently lost interest in the L.P. Any suggestions on how to do this will be appreciated.

Lastly, I would like to offer a comment about Mr. Danenburg's article in the last issue of the newsletter. I don't think that it is inherently unethical to "pack a convention." Whether or not this is good for the party depends on whether or not the individuals involved believe in libertarian principles. In my view, neither is opportunism unethical if the opportunistic actions serve the purpose of advancing the cause of Liberty. The reason why I disliked Mr. Allen's tactics was not that he was an "opportunist" or conspired to "pack a convention". I am critical of Mr. Allen because his goal is to eliminate sections of the Platform which expound upon important libertarian principles. In this regard, he has done a disservice to the cause of Liberty, and this disservice will not soon be forgotten.

- David Morris

"But the mania to control extends far beyond even our civil liberties in the narrower sense. It is rampant everywhere - from drugs and 'pornography', to consensual sexual relations, to guns and mandatory helmet laws, to saccharin, laetrile, and even vitamin dosages. It seems that as soon as people discover something they want to do, the bureaucrats will be there, armed and ready to monitor, supervise, guide, ration, license, prohibit - or else, if they're feeling particularly generous - merely to tax it. And everywhere they have their little would-be ayatollahs - of the left or right - to egg them on.

"One of the most egregious examples of government paternalism is the so-called war on drugs, which has been going on for decades now, and has cost taxpayers many billions of dollars. It is one of the most preposterous frauds ever imposed on the American people. Or, more precisely, it is the worst fraud inflicted on us since the "noble experiment" of Prohibition, which ended so ignominiously in 1933. The parallels between the old alcohol prohibition and the new drug prohibition are so obvious you would think they could penetrate even the smokescreen of deliberate obfuscation generated by the thousands of bureaucrats who now have a vested interest, in power and money, in the war. Just as with the prohibition of alcohol, drug prohibition is, first of all, an insolent interference on the part of politicians in the personal choices of individuals; and second, an interference that, even from the viewpoint of the prohibitionists, results in much more harm than good.

"What is more evident than that you have a right to put whatever substances you choose into your own body? The contrary view - that the government has various rights over your body, even in the absence of an injury to the rights of others - is, to be sure, a conceivable position; but it pertains, logically, to a different kind of social order than the one we Americans have selected ourselves. We correctly see alcohol prohibition as an attempt by some segments of our society to impose their own cultural norms on other segments. Similarly, drug laws are nothing more than an attempt to dictate what some people may ingest for recreational purposes, by other people who happen to prefer gin, Scotch, tea, postum, or Chablis."

- Ed Clark

A New Beginning, 1980

Note: Ed Clark was the Libertarian Party candidate for President in 1980.

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Statement of Principles

We, the members of the Libertarian Party, challenge the cult of the omnipotent state and defend the rights of the individual.

We hold that all individuals have the right to exercise sole dominion over their own lives, and have the right to live in whatever manner they choose, so long as they do not forcibly interfere with the equal right of others to live in whatever manner they choose.

Governments throughout history have regularly operated on the opposite principle, that the State has the right to dispose of the lives of individuals and the fruits of their labor. Even within the United States, all political parties other than our own grant to government the right to regulate the lives of individuals and seize the fruits of their labor without their consent.

We, on the contrary, deny the right of any government to do these things, and hold that where governments exist, they must not violate the rights of any individual; namely, (1) the right to life - accordingly we support prohibition of the initiation of physical force against others; (2) the right to liberty of speech and action - accordingly we oppose all attempts by government to abridge the freedom of speech and press, as well as government censorship in any form; and (3) the right to property - accordingly we oppose all government interference with private property, such as confiscation, nationalization, and eminent domain, and support the prohibition of robbery, trespass, fraud, and misrepresentation.

Since governments, when instituted, must not violate individual rights, we oppose all interference by government in the areas of voluntary and contractual relations among individuals. People should not be forced to sacrifice their lives and property for the benefit of others. They should be left free by government to deal with one another as free traders, and the resultant economic system, the only one compatible with the protection of individual rights, is the free market.

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