



The Washington Libertarian

October

1983

Bergland On The Issues

INTERVIEW

LP Presidential Candidate, David Bergland gave the following exclusive interview to The Washington Libertarian on September 21. Due to space constraints, the interview will be carried in two installments.

TWL. What do you see in domestic terms as the proper role of government?

BERGLAND. Our view of the proper role of government is that it should be limited to assisting all of us in defending our rights against those who might violate them. That means that the only criminal laws that should be on the books are those which penalize such activities as murder, rape, robbery, kidnapping, theft, embezzlement, arson, trespass and fraud because those kinds of activities are situations where one person is violating the rights of another person. I also think that it is appropriate for courts to exist for final dispute resolution where amicable solutions can't be reached between the parties.

TWL. OK. I think that we are all in agreement that things such as social security, Aid to Dependent Children and so on are not proper functions of government. The question arises then, how do we get from here to there? How do we get ourselves out of the Social Security quagmire, how do we get out of ADC, and so on?

BERGLAND. The approach has to be one, first, for us Libertarians, of showing people that there is a better way of doing things rather than coercion, that voluntary, peaceful ways are in fact more effective. So, with regard to Social Security, it's necessary to demonstrate the great negative results that have occurred from a massive government welfare program that was supposed to help people. We are going to absolutely destroy the economy of the United States as the Social Security taxes go up to pay for those benefits, as the number of people in the working sector of the economy grows less and less, and as more and more people grow older. These are the demographics of course. I think some of the estimates are that we are going to have to increase the Social Security tax to about 50% of income after we have passed the end of the century if we were to try to just maintain the system as it is. This of course pits the elderly against the young. I'm not so young, but I believe that there isn't going to be anything for the young at the end.

The way out of it, as far as I'm concerned, is number one, we have to get the Federal Government out of it, get it out of the charity and welfare business. And with Social Security, the approach I would like to see examined, which I think would work, is look at what the people who are now receiving benefits, or who are soon to receive benefits, would be entitled to by examining what they have put into it and what they should get out of it—just off the books as they presently stand—and then go into the private market and purchase for them private annuity contracts—which are certainly better than the government system—to give them the same level of benefits.

The way to get the money to do that would be to take all of the government property, and we have to remember that the Federal Government owns about one third of the land mass, plus other non-real property that's very, very valuable. That property should be liquidated in a fashion that will maximize the return so that those annuities can be purchased, and thereby flip the system from a governmental bureaucratic system—that will go on for ever and ever if we don't stop it—into a private sector program. With regard to other, younger people, it [Social Security] is just over.

TWL. OK, In talking about sale of Federal property, are you talking about selling all Federal property?

BERGLAND. Only with respect to the Social Security system, I'm saying liquidate the property in a fashion that would maximize the proceeds of the sales. But, ultimately, the Federal Government shouldn't own property at all. The policy which I think is most appropriate for disposition of property the Federal government owns

is to do so on homesteading principles. Those people who are willing to go in and work that property should have the right to obtain it. Now, there are whole lots of people, not only in the Social Security system, but other people who have been ripped off by the government, and they should have claims against the government property for what has been done to them. But I was limiting my comments to simply a way to deal with the Social Security system.

TWL. I was thinking about criticisms that would arise from environmental groups and people who would say, "Are you going to sell the Grand Canyon?" and that sort of thing.

BERGLAND. My response to that is that the Federal Government is really a lousy manager of property. Private organizations such as the Audobon Society, Nature Conservancy, and Ducks Unlimited have demonstrated that they do a much better job of taking care of and managing wilderness and those kinds of environmental assets than the Federal or State governments do. In fact, companies like Weyerhaeuser and Georgia Pacific do a better job of managing environmental assets because they have a long term interest in maintaining this property in good shape on into the foreseeable future and even beyond that--much more so than the Federal Government does, because, as people who are involved in the environmentalist movement know, the big companies, developers and et cetera, really have more ability to influence bureaucratic decision making than do the environmental groups, because of just simply, "who has the bucks."

TWL. Turning to another aspect of what we are talking about here, you mentioned a little earlier that you felt that a judiciary as a court of last resort sort of thing was a proper function of government. How should a judiciary be financed?

BERGLAND. It should be financed by the people who are using it. It certainly shouldn't be financed by taxes. Again, our Libertarian position is that we should have only voluntary and peaceful relationships between all people including between people who make up government and the rest of us. So, the people who finance a "dispute resolution service," (and I purposely do not use the term "court," because there may turn out to be a variety of institutions which don't have that much resemblance to our modern day court) should be those litigants who ultimately wind up using the "dispute resolution service." Our fundamental Libertarian approach to the administration of justice (and here I'm not making any distinction between civil and criminal justice, but referring to the administration of justice across the board) is that those people who cause other people injury should pay. So, if a plaintiff has to go after a defendant in a breach of contract case or an automobile accident case, or any kind of case, the prevailing party should be put back into the condition he was in before the injury, or as close to it as can be done, at the expense of the wrong doer. The approach I would then recommend would be that the prevailing party would recover all of the costs of the litigation as well as his original damages. That would be how the system would work. As a matter of fact, that is the way it does work now in non-governmental arbitration, mediation, and conciliation. Litigants agree before hand that they will share the expense.

(NEXT MONTH--BERGLAND ON MILITARY DEFENSE AND THE LIBERTARIAN PARTY)

CALENDAR

October 11: PUGET SOUND LIBERTARIAN FORUM--will feature a speaker from the National Organization of Women. NOW has made repeated calls for government intervention in women's lives--here's an opportunity for libertarian women to express themselves directly to a representative of the "women's movement." Dinner and speaker, \$12.00, speaker only, \$2.50. Sunday's Restaurant, 620 1st Ave. N., Seattle, 282-1941. Cocktails at 6:00, dinner at 7:00, speaker at 8:00.

October 15: SNOHOMISH COUNTY LIBERTARIANS--Attorney Royce Ferguson will be leading a meeting exploring the possibility of re-establishing a local, Snohomish Party. This meeting will be of special value to all Snohomish County Libertarians. Cascade Financial Center, Suite 426, 2828 Colby, Everett, 258-9311 10:00am.

October 15: STATE CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING--Tom Spanos', 4611 College St., Bellingham, 676-9999, 1:00pm.

October 16: PIERCE-THURSTON LIBERTARIANS--Meeting to reorganize local party following precipitate resignation of former Chair James Martin. Main order of business, election of new Chair, setting local party goals. At press time, local activists Bill Allard and John Trinnis had expressed interest in the job. John Doherty's, 824 Tacoma Ave. N., Tacoma, 383-2076, 4:00pm.

QUOTES

"A general state education is a mere contrivance for moulding people to be exactly like one another; and the mould in which it casts them is that which pleases the predominant power in the government, whether this be a monarch, a priesthood, an aristocracy, or the majority of the existing generation. In proportion as it is efficient, it establishes a despotism over the mind, leading by natural tendency to one over the body."

J.S. Mill

"Each child belongs to the state. The purpose of education is the training of citizens for the state so the state may be perpetuated. Public schools promote civic rather than individual pursuits, and only public education can be used to gain a free society."

William H. Seavell, Professor of Education
University of Virginia

ET CETERA

For a limited period, new and renewal memberships in LPWS will receive free, Robert Ringers "Restoring the American Dream." This is the original, hardback edition that was sold at \$12.50. (Of course, you will also receive The Washington Libertarian, and LP News.) The date on your mailing label is the date your membership in LPWS expires. In an effort to make administration of State Party memberships easier, we are transitioning to a universal July 4th membership expiration date. If you renew now, your State membership will expire July 4th, 1985. National LP maintains separate membership rolls which means your National membership expiration date is different from your State expiration date. We have been lobbying National to convert to a universal July 4th expiration date. In the meantime, if you receive a renewal notice from National, please renew using the form on the back of this newsletter. That way, the State Party shares in your dues, and you'll get Winger's book and a subscription to TWL. If your membership has expired, please renew now while you are thinking of it. We don't mail separate renewal notices.

If you move, please let us know your new address. Post Office does not forward mail mailed bulk rate—that's us. Each address change costs us 25 cents. With about 1/4 of our 1500 person list moving each year, that's a considerable expense. Old addresses mean you miss at least one issue of TWL as well.

Have you noticed? This is the third State newsletter published in the last two months. We are now on track—TWL will be in your mailbox during the first week of every month.

If you've been missing the PUGET SOUND LIBERTARIAN FORUM, you've been missing a worthwhile and thoroughly enjoyable event. Liz Tross-Rarig and Rick Hafer present sometimes controversial, sometimes outrageous, always stimulating speakers month after month. Coming up in future months: Jeff Abdian, entrepreneur and lobbyist, Juan Ramos, Cuban emigre' and outspoken critic of communism, Mike Zhovtis, Russian expatriate and American business man. Good dinner, a social hour, thought provoking speaker—adds up to a pleasant evening for libertarian and non-libertarian alike. (And no party politics or business.) The FORUM meets the second Tuesday each month. Put a circle around those days on your calendar.

Discouraged about turnout at your last "event?" On September 13, 14 candidates for Tacoma Port Commissioner addressed a crowd of four (one a reporter) at a public forum sponsored by "Concerned Citizens for the 11th Street Corridor and Jobs", and the Fife Rotary.

Two members of the Liberal Party in Spain, the equivalent of the LP in the US, were elected to the Spanish Parliament recently. One of them, Evaristo Amat, is active in arranging the 2nd Libertarian International Convention planned for August, 1984 in Spain.

A missed opportunity? Local TV stations are regularly airing free spots for each of the 30 or so candidates for Senator Jackson's seat. Noticeably missing—the LP candidate. Dave Brazier had agreed to run, but no one would accept the responsibility of gathering the 200 signatures to get him on the ballot. Thus, no candidate, no free libertarian media exposure.

In a recent mailing to LP activists, Chairman Tomm Spanos suggests that we need a paid executive director. A director would allow those who are too busy or too shy to do daily work in the party to support the party with financial contribution—and let a paid director do the work. Tomm would like to have your input on this proposal. Give him a call or write. 696-9999 or P O Box 4097, Bellingham, WA 98227.

School board candidates Bill McCord and Wayne McLemore pulled 7% of the vote in the September 20 primary in Whatcom County. Kevin Burke and Tomm Spanos will be on the ballot in the November election, also running for school board. Both are receiving considerable media coverage.

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ROYCE A. FERGUSON, JR.
ATTORNEY AT LAW

LAW OFFICES
426 CASCADE FINANCIAL CENTER
2828 COLBY AVENUE
EVERETT, WASHINGTON 98201

AREA CODE 206
258-9311

Royce Ferguson graduated from Western Washington University in 1971 with a B.A. degree in sociology, and received his Juris Doctor law degree from Gonzaga University in 1974. His office has been located in Snohomish County for nine years. He is also admitted to practice in Arizona and before the United States Supreme Court.

His practice has heavy emphasis on criminal and civil trials, including lawsuits for personal injury, negligence and malpractice. Before and during trial Mr. Ferguson has experts and consultants available in such areas as accident reconstruction, applied economics, forensic sciences, investigations, medicine and products liability. He is also well versed in probate and commercial law, particularly partnerships, small business incorporation, collections and creditor's remedies.

CONTACTS

- LPWS Hotline.....525-7635
- LPWS Chair--Tomm Spanos.....676-9999
- Whatcom--Tomm Spanos.....676-9999
- Puget Sound Libertarian Forum.....282-1941
- King/Snohomish--Clark Rarig.....282-1941
- Pierce/Thurston--Kelly Haughton....564-1635

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- ___ Send information brochure on the Libertarian Party.
- ___ Have someone call me.
- ___ Send State newsletter for one year. Enclosed is \$5.00.
- ___ Enclosed is \$20.00 annual membership dues for:

- *** National Membership Card *** Subscription to national newsletter, Libertarian Party News *** Voting privileges at Annual State Convention
- *** Subscription to State newsletter *** Membership in local chapter.

"I believe that individuals have the right to live their lives in whatever manner they choose, so long as they do not forcibly interfere with the equal right of others. I do not advocate nor will I practice the initiation of force or fraud."

Date _____ Signature Required for Membership _____

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LPWS
507 3rd Ave, #1
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The Washington Libertarian

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