

LIBERTARIAN LIFELINE



Why Conservatives Will Never Roll Back the State *by George L. O'Brien*

Many Libertarians are disappointed at the relatively slow progress of the Republican Congress at rolling back the state. Equally disquieting is the declining public support for even the trivial changes currently being proposed by the Republican majority. If conservatives have emerged as the new ideological majority, it is not being reflected in the public opinion polls. What may be even more disquieting is the number of conservative writers who seem intent on abandoning "all this strident anti-government stuff" while focusing on "social issues" instead. In some cases, the argument goes beyond political tactics and instead reveals an overly anti-market bias. I will suggest that no strategy for dismantling the mega-state will succeed if it is based on working with "conservatives."

Conservatives Really Are Conservative

One of the greatest myths propagated by American socialists is the idea that conservatives are "anti-government." While it is true that some conservatives are remarkably anti-government (tax patriots and militia people for example), most conservative are *not* anti-government in any meaningful sense of the term. One of the reasons for the confusion is that conservatives have long opposed the expansion of the welfare state. Most conservatives dislike socialism and really dislike having the progressives setting public policy. But that is hardly the same thing as saying that conservatives are anti-government.

The mainstream of conservative thought is far from being anti-government in any general sense. So while a great number of them will pay lip service to "free market economics" as a desirable goal right up there with middle class motherhood, they do not mean it in the way Libertarians do.

I predict that most conservatives will never do more than pay lip service to free market economics and radically shrinking the size of the state. They prefer to have the state maintain the existing economic order, preserving the wealth and position of the upper-middle class that mainstream conservatives inhabit, while suppressing competition from the poor and immigrants. If we are ever to have free markets, it will require the creation of a new political movement that

is not dependent on conservatives.

Conservatives Are Not Revolutionaries

Several months back, a writer in the conservative magazine *The Weekly Standard* made the point that the radical changes being promoted by Republican House Speaker Newt Gingrich, et al., were inconsistent with the temperament of conservatism outlined by Edmund Burke in his attacks against the French Revolution. He argued that conservatives should be suspicious of any plans involving radical change. Burke has always been a hero to the opponents of rapid change. This is why his ideas were used frequently in the 60-plus-year-old struggle to oppose the spread of domestic socialism. Now his arguments against rapid change (or any change at all for that matter) have become the basis for *defending* socialism.

Gertrude Himmelfarb criticizes this tendency, "Surely conservatives are meant to conserve, not to revolt -- to conserve by a series of prudent, gradual, incremental accommodations to reality, not by any radical, precipitous change. That is how conservatives have traditionally thought of themselves and how some conservatives still do. For the classical conservative, all change corrupts and radical change corrupts absolutely. Radical change is all the more repugnant because it is in the service of an idea, an idea so compelling as to warrant so radical a change. This too is anathema to the classical conservative, who is as wary of ideas as of change."

Yet radical change is the only way to dismantle the statist system. As Gertrude Himmelfarb notes, "Nibbling away at the edges of this or that program, or cutting the budget of this or that agency, is little more than an invitation to restore that cut the following year and to devise yet another 'initiative' to warrant the continuance of the agency."

An example of this aversion to radical change has led Owen Harries of the London *Spectator* to insist that Bob Dole is the only true "conservative" running for the Republican nomination. Temperamentally, this resistance to any structural change should not be that surprising. The very term "conservative" conjures up someone trying to conserve or keep something, rather than opening up society to Schumpeter's "creative destruction" implicit in laissez-faire. As long as someone considers oneself a

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“conservative,” there is an implicit bias for defending the status quo. This means the current power arrangement. The Left likes to refer to conservatives as being part of the “comfortable classes.” There may be something to this. While purely free markets would open opportunities for the currently less well off, for many conservatives, laissez faire seems a bit frightening. “Better the devil you know than the one you don’t” seems to be the attitude.

Does this mean that most conservatives are opponents of free-market capitalism? Probably not. It only means that they want the journey to be very slow. As Gerald Seib notes in the *Wall Street Journal*, “It may be that the very vernacular of the GOP congressional takeover has been harmful. The term ‘revolution,’ the one most frequently applied to the GOP rise, conjures up quiet fears of extremism rather than thoughtful change.” (Remember, this is based on the fact that the GOP wanted to reduce the rate of increase of Medicare spending from three times inflation to two times inflation).

It might be argued that not all conservatives are conservative. This is true, but this conservative attitude is quite widespread.

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Christian Guilt

Christian theology is full of anti-capitalist rhetoric such as the Biblical edicts that “a camel will go through the eye of a needle before a rich man goes to heaven.” (class warfare), “the love of money is the root of all evil (anti-profit motive), “render unto Caesar that which is Caesar’s and render unto God that which is God’s” (passive acceptance of statism and taxation), etc. Papal edicts against lending for interest made money lending a virtual Jewish monopoly for centuries.

While it is true that many devout Christians are free-market capitalists, a great many conservative Christians feel guilty about it. This moral ambivalence makes many conservatives reluctant to push for free-market capitalist to “an extreme” for fear of abandoning the poor “for theirs is the kingdom of God.”

Efforts by writers such as Edmund Opitz and Michael Novak to counter this trend have not been especially effective in reaching the vast majority of Christian conservatives. Christian guilt often leads them to back down whenever left-wing statists accuse them of being “uncaring and selfish.” (There is a similar phenomenon at work with “old wealth” conservatives such as George Bush, who crumbled at the first hint that he was “uncaring and selfish.”).

Anti-Capitalist Conservatives

The idea that being anti-socialist is the same as being in favor of free-market economics is a socialist myth. Regrettably, the ranks of anti-socialists is full of economic statists whose only problems with socialism are that it doesn’t really work very well and the wrong people are running it.

The most blatant examples of this are the old line anti-Communists” such as Richard Nixon who would introduce the EPA, OSHA, EEOC, and implement wage and price controls after announcing “we are all Keynesians now.” There was almost no opposition to Nixon’s domestic policy actions by conservatives, who focused instead on criticizing his China policy.

The list of big government anti-communists includes Joe McCarthy, who was part of the Dewey-Rockefeller wing of the Republican Party and was generally a big spender. For a while, anybody who supported increases in military spending qualified to be called a conservative with some conservatives embracing the likes of Scoop Jackson and Sam Nunn

At the same time, big business conservatives have typically supported various kinds of government supports and programs. The firm of Archer Daniels Midland is a major beneficiary of agricultural subsidies (valued in the range of \$1 billion a year) and

WHAT THE HELL ARE "WOMEN'S RIGHTS?"

by Marion McEwen

We are a nation at war. The "War on Drugs," the "War on Poverty," the "War on Women in Poverty." At least one third of our prison population is made up of non-violent drug offenders. We grant early release to violent felons to make room for this new class of non-violent criminals. A new twist in our criminal justice system is Civil Asset Forfeiture. Under these laws, properties such as cars and houses are charged with crimes and are confiscated by the police agency making the arrest. In 80% of these "crimes" the people involved are not charged, yet most of them lose their property. We have created a new class of criminals who are not criminals or even human. We are *losing* the "War on Drugs."

Despite more than three decades of spending, our efforts to eliminate poverty have failed. We have not decreased the percentage of our population that is living in poverty. Today, the poor in our nation are more isolated from the mainstream than they were in 1964. They are educated to a lower standard in our public schools and so are less likely to be able to enter the working class. In the past, the percentage of poor who were part of a two-parent family was as high as 60% among minorities. Poor families of all ethnic groups are today more likely to be part of the growing single parent family trend and so lack the support system that comes when people can work out their problems together. This "War" is lost and, fearing to admit failure, we continue to throw money into these failed programs.

There *is* a "war" going on against poor women in particular and all individuals in general in this country. But it is not just a "war" against women in poverty. It is a "war" against all of our individual rights.

We must remember what the definition of a right is if we are to win this war for ourselves and poor women. A right is not granted by government, but *guaranteed* by it. No government has the power to grant rights. If a government official says he or she is giving someone or some group a right, beware. This is a privilege and is given at the expense of everyone else. A right is something we have that does not infringe upon any of the rights of others. We have the right to privacy. Our desire for privacy does not infringe upon the rights of anyone else. We have the right to life. This right does not impose any burden or cost on anyone else. We have the right to pursue happiness so long as we do not defraud or harm another individual.

Shame on Ms. Steinem and these other so called women's rights advocates. No woman, rich or poor has the right to live off the fruits of the labor of others. To advocate that this is so is to advocate socialism not freedom and to deny poor women the opportunity to lead responsible, productive lives. If we follow through with the illogical premise of these "women's rights" advocates being poor means never having to take care of oneself or even trying too.

Why would anyone advocate denying someone the opportunity for a better, happier life? Why would anyone advocate that society should pay for people to not work? Charity and compassion come from our hearts, not from government, and they are not rights but gifts from one individual to another. We are being accused of waging a "War" against women in poverty. The facts are very different from what the so called women's rights groups want us to believe.

We have stuck out three times. It is time to change our strategy. We need to talk about peace and cooperation, not war. Our freedom is not enhanced by a war attitude. It is in fact decreased. The poor, women and our entire population suffer when we wage war against ourselves. Let's stop fighting ourselves and start trusting in one another. Each person has the potential to find happiness and the capacity to accept responsibility for their actions. We have to be willing as a society to allow each individual the freedom to try. Many if not all of us will make mistakes but given the opportunity we will learn from those mistakes and grow as a result. As each individual experiences personal growth our society will benefit.



Marion McEwen is a former chair of the East Bay Region Libertarian Party. The preceding editorial was written in response to last month's rally in San Francisco against the California Civil Rights Initiative. The Hayward Daily Review chose not to print it.

Slagle Returns!



Libertarian stand-up comic Tim Slagle will return to the Bay Area this month with a series of shows on both sides of the Bay. Slagle has performed at both the National LP convention in Salt Lake City, Utah in 1992 and at the Libertarian Party of California State convention in Oakland in 1995. If you missed him at those venues, try to catch him this month in his element, the comedy clubs of the Bay Area.

In the East Bay, you can catch two shows at the Sunshine Saloon (not really a comedy club, but a pool hall/kicker bar that occasionally features comedy), on Thursday, May 23 and Saturday, May 25. Bear in mind that the Saloon is not the best environment for comedy, so you may prefer driving across the Bridge to San Francisco for the other scheduled shows.

On Monday, May 27, Slagle will perform a special benefit at the Cannibus Buyers Club in San Francisco, then will appear at Cobb's Comedy Club Tuesday through Sunday. Cobb's is located at 2801 Leavenworth at the Cannery in San Francisco, next to Cafe Rigatoni. Three hours of free parking with validation is available at the Anchorage Garage, 500 Beach Street, nothing to be sneezed at in that city. Of particular note, the San Francisco LP will sponsor a special event at Cobb's on Wednesday, May 29, where Libertarians may enjoy a two-for-one admission discount. Regular cover charge is \$8 per person with a two-drink minimum. Also appearing with Tim will be Patton Oswalt and Kurt Weitzmann.

If you can't make any of the shows, you may still be able to hear Tim on radio by way of the Alex Bennett Show, the San Francisco morning program on which he's a regular guest when he's in town. You can catch Bennett every weekday morning from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. on KITS-FM, Live 105 (that's 105.3 on your FM radio dial). If you don't listen to Bennett routinely, you can find a list of his guests on the World Wide Web at <http://monkey.hooked.net>.

From the Chair

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

by Jeffrey R. Sommer

The East Bay Region of the Party is too large to be effectively organized by County Vice-Chairs. It must be broken down into Districts, under Party District Organizers. I propose the following:

1. That the area comprising Hayward, San Leandro, Oakland, Berkeley and Alameda become the Central District, the natural hub of the region;
2. That the area comprising Union City, Fremont and Newark become the South District;
3. That the area comprising Dublin, Pleasanton, Danville, Livermore and San Ramon become the East District;
4. That the area comprising Richmond, Walnut Creek, Concord and Pinole become the North District.

Further, I recommend that each District Organizer have at his or her disposal a staff of City Organizers who will be responsible for carrying out the Party's work in their area.

The duties of Organizers on any level are to be personally responsible for alerting Party members of activities, fund raisers, etc., as well as maintaining a consistent presence of the LP in all significant political functions (City Council meetings, elections, etc.); Party Organizers should preferably not be candidates, but should act as managers where appropriate.

Once again, I want to emphasize that these posts are not for bureaucrats, but for fighters for Liberty. It is on the shoulders of such truly dedicated Party members that the American Freedom Movement will be built.

THE LIBERALS' BILL OF RIGHTS

by Denise P. Kalm

November, 1996--An impressive 60% of registered voters turned out to sweep the Democrats into majority positions in Congress (including motor-voter registrants assembled from the obituaries). President-elect Bill Clinton announced the Bill of Rights had outlived its usefulness, and invoked an Executive Order to cause the legislature to redraft this key part of the Constitution. President Clinton will sign the following today:

Article I - Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, unless it is a "cult"; or abridging the freedom of speech (as long as they approve of the content and it isn't on the Internet); or the right of the people to peaceably assemble, except for militias; and to petition the government for a redress of grievances, unless the grievance is with the IRS.

Article II - The right of the police, the military and the people who obtained firearms unlawfully shall not be infringed. All others carry Mace.

Article III - Health care is a right of all dwelling within the country's borders. All are entitled to services from health professionals based on their need and financed by the government or indirectly via income transfer. (later acts prohibiting slavery do not apply to white collar workers).

Article IV - The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers and effects against unreasonable searches and seizures shall not be violated, unless drugs are involved, or may be involved, or where a tenant sells drugs, or where the people use drugs occasionally, unless they fail to inhale.

Article V - Homeless and poor people have an essential right to live in any community, regardless of their financial position. No law shall be passed restricting their choice of domicile; entitlement payments must reflect the prevailing cost of living.

Article VI - The Congress shall have the power to levy and collect taxes on income from whatever sources derived, and to use graduated rates and punitive taxation on investment income to accomplish their goal of wealth transfer away from those who created that wealth.

Article VII - Appreciation of the diversity of the people is to be a matter of law. Crimes between diverse people will be deemed "hate" crimes, subject to more severe penalties. The first amendment is hereby amended to prohibit speech that might be construed to be offensive to an individual, based on innate characteristics, such as race, creed, gender, color, sexual preference, weight, intelligence.

Article VIII - Due consideration of the defendant's background, upbringing and state of mind during commission of a crime must be considered when sentencing is levied. The extenuating circumstances of a deprived childhood or alleged abuse justifies most criminal acts.

Article IX - The enumeration in the Constitution of certain rights shall not be construed to be complete; the Government retains the right to supplement or deny such rights based on their complex social agenda.

Article X - The powers not delegated to the people by the Constitution, nor prohibited by the States, can be usurped at the pleasure of the President or Democrat-dominated Congress. Executive orders may be exploited to bypass the legislative process.

In other news, ecologists note that there was an unexpected increase in coastal land in the days following the election. Preliminary analysis indicates that the new "fill" is comprised primarily of paper. □

For Whom the Bell Tolls

First they came for the hackers. But I never did anything illegal with my computer, so I didn't speak up.
Then they came for the pornographers. But I thought there was too much smut on the Internet anyway, so I didn't speak up.
Then they came for anonymous remailers, but a lot of nasty stuff gets sent from anon.penet.fi, so I didn't speak up.
Then they came for the encryption users. But I could never figure out how to work PGP anyway, so I didn't speak up.
Then they came for me. And by that time there was no one left to speak up.

—Alara Rogers, *Aleph Press*, based on a famous quote from Pastor Martin Niemöller

contributes heavily to the political campaigns of Bob Dole and Phil Gramm. It also buys full-page ads in conservative publications such as *The Weekly Standard*, while simultaneously giving generous amounts of money to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

Big business groups such as the Business Roundtable have typically supported the status quo. It should not be surprising that Ross Perot would tout Singapore's industrial policy environment while ignoring Hong Kong's much more laissez-faire approach. This resistance to free market economics affects the financing of supposedly conservative "think tanks." When the Cato Institute organized a conference on "corporate welfare," the only co-sponsor it could find was the leftist "Progressive Policy Institute." The rest of the big conservative groups were notably absent.

Pat Buchanan's allegedly "conservative" campaign for the presidency included called for new trade barriers, restrictions on capital flows, penalties for firms shutting plants while opening plants overseas, and he even stooped so low as to defend Clinton's demagoguery about Medicare (admittedly a few conservative writers such as David Frum and William F. Buckley have attached Buchanan, but most have remained silent).

Frum attacked Buchanan's policies as being "leftist." He is wrong about that. Buchanan's mercantilism is actually much closer to Italian Fascism. This is an unbelievably dangerous tendency, yet Buchanan has developed a significant following within the conservative movement.

"Community" Versus Free Markets

Conservatives in the "civil society" movement (that promotes religion, family and community as the solution to all the nation's problems), have become increasingly anti-individualist. Several writers have concluded that the reason America declined during the 1960s was because they had "too many choices." The same writers have typically concluded that unfettered capitalism would have to be checked because it damaged families and the community.

One conservative writer called for direct subsidies to religious organizations (forget the First Amendment) in order to promote religion as a solution to the problems of the inner city. Senator Dan Coats of Indiana has proposed a bill called "The Community Partnership Act" which would institute demonstration grants to programs which match communities of faith with welfare recipients.

Conservative "social engineering" proposals are likely to increase. One recent example is a proposal to

encourage families to stay together by greatly restricting the availability of divorce.

A Battle Over Priorities

In spite of the fact that many conservatives are afraid of change, many feel guilty about advocating a complete end to the welfare-regulatory state. Some even oppose laissez-faire. At the same time, there are many conservatives who really do want to roll back the state -- in the area of economics.

However, they want to do other things. In many cases, these other things involve expanding the state in other areas. Examples include increased military spending, outlawing abortion, getting "tough" on crime, prohibiting "sin" (drugs, pornography, homosexuality, etc.), banning flag burning, making sure children pray in school, and implementing controls to make sure that teenagers "act responsibly." In many other cases, conservatives simply want to publicly attack "sin" and preach about "values" without necessarily having the government do anything about it.

Independent of the merits or demerits of their proposals, they have the one thing in common. They have nothing to do with decreasing the size and power of the state.

In a conflict between two groups where one side is totally obsessed with an issue while the other side is interested but has other priorities -- the obsessed side has a major advantage. Make no mistake, the socialists are totally obsessed with defending state power -- but the conservatives are not nearly so interested in destroying state power.

There are some conservatives that match socialists in focus and dedication toward state power, but they are an exception rather than the rule within the range of the conservative movement. As it is, whenever such people run for office, the Christian Right typically attacks them for being *too* interested in economics.

Gertrude Himmelfarb tried to deny this charge about the Contract with America: "Nor is the impulse behind this conservative revolution an ideological attachment to the free market, as some have claimed. This is the charge that has been brought against Margaret Thatcher in England..."

Even when free market conservatives are skeptical of the social control agenda of the social conservatives, they cannot continue to call themselves "conservative" if they abandon the conservative social agenda. Even when free market conservatives really believe that an "anti-government revolution" is required, they feel isolated and alone when they push beyond the rest of the conservative movement.

Conservative Manichaeism

WHAT'S HAPPENING

by Marion McEwen

Volunteers spent two weekends in April pressing the flesh with the public at a gun show in Pleasanton and at People's Park in Berkeley. Though vastly different ideals were floating around these places, volunteers had fun presenting our view of individual rights to these two groups. We were popular with the conservatives and the liberals.

At the gun show, our 10th Congressional District candidate, Greg Lyon, kept busy shaking hands and asking for votes. Our "Liberty or Death" and Screw the IRS" buttons were very popular. Several registered Libertarians and a few friends stopped by and signed up for the newsletter.

Gun Shows have been banned in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties. The shows at the Alameda County Fairgrounds are the closest for many of Greg Lyon and Terry Savage's constituents. This is a good venue for our two congressional candidates. We have two more opportunities this year, a show in September and one on the first weekend in November, to spread the word to gun owners that Libertarian candidates are the only candidates who, if elected would consistently support the Second Amendment.

Greg Lyon received a "B+" (building more prisons questions kept him from getting an "A") from the NRA while Bill Baker, the Republican incumbent, only got a "C". He is not interested in preserving the 2nd Amendment. You can guess where the liberal Democrat stands on this issue. Once again our candidate proves that only with your vote for the Libertarian on the ballot do you have the opportunity to preserve your liberties.

Give us a call and reserve your time to support your

candidate during the September or November shows. We can only be there if you are. If you can't attend, but strongly support our candidates' efforts to reach gun owners you can still help. Each show costs the Party \$50 for attending and another \$30 in literature and supplies. Send your donation in today and let us know you want a Libertarian presence at the upcoming gun shows. Use the form on page 7 of this newsletter to donate. Thank you.

On the flip side, People's Park had a very different flavor. Vice-chair Wayne Nygren and I set up our rainbow booth at the Park. The music and the joints were free. We gave away muffins made with Hemp seed meal, and the young people and the homeless gathered there were quite impressed. The political rhetoric was way to the left, but the Peace and Freedom speaker thanked us for gathering signatures for the Compassionate Use Act (Medical Marijuana). The homeless thanked us for having the best eats. Food Not Bombs was there with bread (nothing fancy). Attendees registered to vote, signed our petitions and shared our muffins. Four young people registered as Libertarians and asked to be on our mailing list. We handed out literature to about fifty people and enjoyed the local musicians. It was overall a very pleasant afternoon.

UPCOMING PARTIES: Two fund raisers are in the works for the Greg Lyon Campaign. In June we will be in the North Bay Area and in July we will be in Castro Valley.

Don't miss the fun! Thomas Jefferson showed up at the April fund raiser. There are more surprises in store.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

(For those joining the LP)

*I hereby certify that I do not believe in nor advocate the **initiation** of force as a means of achieving social or political goals.*

Libertarian Party

of California

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Hayward, CA 94541

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Name _____

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(add \$20 per person)
- ☐ Subscription only to
Libertarian Lifeline \$10
- ☐ Donation (Thank you!)

Please make checks payable to:
Libertarian Party of California

CALENDAR OF EVENTS **MAY**

Saturday, May 18, 1996: Compassionate Use Initiative Victory Banquet. 7:30 p.m. at Schroeder's on Front Street in San Francisco (near the Embarcadero Center). Join the LP and the hardworking volunteers who helped put the Compassionate Use Initiative on the November ballot to honor Debbie Goldsberry. Please RSVP to Jeff Sommer at (510) 537-3212.

Tuesday, May 21, 1996: Alameda County LP General Meeting. Ricky's Sports Lounge and Steakhouse at 15028 Hesperian Boulevard in San Leandro (near BayFair Mall). Formal business will begin between 7:30 and 8:00 p.m. For more information, please call the LP Party Line at (510) 531-0760.

Thursday, May 23, 1996: The Comedy of Tim Slagle. Come see libertarian comic Tim Slagle at the Sunshine Saloon in Pleasanton at 1807-K Santa Rita Road in Pleasanton. The comedy shows begin at 9:45 p.m. each night. Catch him later the following week at Cobb's Comedy Club, 2801 Leavenworth, in San Francisco (see story on page 4 for more details).

Saturday, June 15, 1996: Greg Lyon for Congress Fund Raising Dinner. Join our candidate for the 10th Congressional District for a gala fundraiser in Antioch. Celebrate traditional family values like Mom, hot dogs and apple pie for only \$10 a person. Hot dogs and apple pie will be provided, so bring your own Mom. For more information or to RSVP, call the LP Party line at (510) 889-1544.

Sunday Afternoons, 5:30 p.m.: The Libertarian News Hour is heard every week on Free Radio Berkeley, 104.1 FM, hosted by East Bay LP Chair Jeff "Zippy the Yippie" Sommer. Tune in from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. every Sunday to hear the latest word from the frontiers of freedom. Free Radio Berkeley is the upstart pirate broadcasting operation that last year challenged the FCC for its First Amendment right to exist and **won!** To talk to Jeff on the air, call (510) 655-7146.

Sunday Evenings, 8:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. On-Line Chat with Greg Lyon, Libertarian Candidate for Congress. America On-Line subscribers are welcome to join a weekly chat room with Libertarian Party Congressional candidate Greg Lyon every Sunday evening at 8:30. Just log on and go to LYON4CONGRESS.

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Manichaeism is the belief that there is an eternal struggle between two diametrically opposed forces -- light and darkness, good and evil. For many conservatives, the tendency toward Manichaeism manifests itself in the politics of "either/or." You are either a liberal or a conservative, absolutist or a relativist, god-fearing or a libertine, support strict adherence to "the Law" or "anarchy," etc. You are either "for us or against us."

Many free market conservatives are faced with a conflict between loyalty to the conservative movement and the realization that the conservative movement is becoming less and less oriented toward free market economics. Many free market conservatives feel that to attack the social control policies and status quo attitudes of other conservatives is to give aid and comfort to the socialists. They feel they must either support the general views and attitudes of the conservative movement or risk even greater calamities.

This Manichaeism has led several conservatives to directly attack Libertarians as being their enemy. This seems especially common among conservatives who want to politicize religion and turn political candidates into preachers.

Thatcher and Major

If my theory is correct that the conservative movement will never roll back the state, then what about Margaret Thatcher? Thatcher is a much more interesting example than Ronald Reagan. Reagan succeeded in passing a politically popular tax cut, but he had almost no luck in doing more than slow the growth of government. Federal spending ballooned during Reagan's first term and did not flatten out until it was already much above the level of tax revenues (at roughly 24% of GDP). What little Reagan accomplished was entirely reversed by George Bush.

Thatcher actually was able to make some serious reductions in state power. She was able to privatize some very large businesses, partially de-regulate the financial markets, sell off public-housing units, etc. Due to the nature of a parliamentary democracy, she was able to accomplish far more than American presidents can do when faced with a hostile Congress; however, the period under John Major has demonstrated how thin the Thatcher revolution was. Major has made very little progress toward continuing Thatcher's programs and has backslid in many areas. Increasingly, the old "status quo" Tories are re-taking the Conservative Party. The result will be either a return of the Labor Party to power or a consolidation phase leaving much of the stultifying welfare state in

place. A case can be made that specific individuals can transcend their factions and even their ideologies. Thatcher was such a person. It is not clear that anyone in the American conservative movement is capable.

Market Liberalism

If the conservative movement cannot roll back the state, is it hopeless? The answer is no. What it will take is the creation of a totally "third force" in American politics that is neither socialist nor conservative. For lack of a better term, I will use a term promoted in a book edited by the Cato Institute's David Boaz, *Market Liberalism*.

The key to building a market liberal movement will be the need to appeal to disaffected liberals who are beginning to doubt the promise of utopian statism. Currently, they are unlikely to find the social attitudes of much of the conservative movement appealing. All "real" liberals consider civil liberties and personal freedom to be extremely important and are suspicious of people who want to "play those issues down."

Teaching former "social democratic" liberals about the free market is difficult and time consuming. They generally believe that the *motivation* of political activists is important. This is why strict adherence to principle is crucial to prove that the proponents of free markets are not simply self-serving hypocrites. It is usually helpful to show former social democrats how the "government is hurting people" and how state action hurts the creation of organic, voluntary approaches that tap into the liberal's sense of compassion.

Appeals to former social democratic liberals have to be grounded in realistic idealism. For people who want a better world, Libertarians can point to Mary Ruwart's book *Healing Our World: The Other Piece of the Puzzle*, which shows how liberty and free markets lead to less conflict and more cooperation.

Other Libertarians have begun promoting the notion of "free communities" based on Charles Murray's book, *In Pursuit of Happiness and Good Government*. Murray shows that when the people in their own neighborhoods solve their own problems, that both the volunteers and the people helped end up feeling more connected to each other and their community. This theme is repeated in Peter Drucker's book, *The Post-Capitalist Society*. What it takes is for people to accept responsibility for their community and for the government to stop interfering.

In a broader sense, appealing to disaffected liberals means showing how the government is hurting people and why it is an inescapable result of statism.

Libertarian principles should be presented as ideals to live up to rather than a theology to hector people about. Libertarians should be presented as people who care about the suffering of the victims of statism and those people whose lives were ruined by the destruction of opportunity and abundance.

Preparing for the Future

The creation of a market liberal movement has begun, but only slowly. Most Libertarians continue to waste time and effort trying to change the nature and attitudes of conservatives. This is probably hopeless.

In the long run, the creation of a truly viable market liberal movement will be essential if there is to be any hope of rolling back the state. Once large enough, it would soon be joined by the free market conservatives who will give up on a conservative movement that either lacks the passion to repeal the welfare state or does not really care for an open economy.

Tactically, to reach liberal prospects will mean seeking out issues where such people are opposing state power. Coalitions to fight drug prohibition, civil asset forfeiture, anti-immigrant legislation, regulation of vitamins and nutritional supplements, government subsidies of big business, eliminating the Bureau of Indian Affairs, etc., would be a start.

Rhetorically, it will mean learning a new language and learning to talk about free market environmentalism, mosaic culturalism, and about mistreatment of African Americans and other minorities by the judicial system. At the same time, it will be necessary for Libertarians to explain gun rights to liberals as it has always been to explain drugs to conservatives. Once they "get it," the rest of the persuasion process becomes much easier. Each is a case of government prohibition and interference with the free market -- and always with serious unintended consequences.


Why Bother?

It is probably impossible to convert most conservatives into "anti-government revolutionaries." The reasons given by F.A. Hayek in the late 1940s as to why he was not a conservative have not really changed -- conservatives do not really believe in freedom and do not understand the power of ideas.

Former social democratic liberals do understand the importance of ideas. This is why liberals gravitate toward the information industries. Wouldn't it be better if there were thousands of formerly "liberal" reporters and broadcasters available to tell the whole truth? Wouldn't it be better if there were hundreds of academics willing to stand up and call Bill Clinton a liar when

he makes one of his preposterous statements? Wouldn't it be better if the thousands of idealistic youths who get recruited into the Left's innumerable political groups were instead working for liberty? Wouldn't it be better if the millions of people who fear the social agenda of the religious right were really given another, *real* free market alternative?

All of this (and much more) is possible if Libertarians were to simply abandon the hopeless obsession with winning over conservatives. As it is, most free-market conservatives end up returning to the GOP and the familiar arms of the conservative movement after a short while. In contrast, very few former liberals who become knowledgeable about economics ever return to the Democratic Party.

I have a dream that someday the primary political battle will once again be market liberals and libertarians versus conservatives. Only this time, we will win. 

George O'Brien is the author of numerous articles, a former SFLP chair, immediate past LPC Northern Vice-Chair, and a former Libertarian National Committee Representative. He is currently living in Arizona and serving as Arizona Coordinator of Forfeiture Endangers American Rights (FEAR). He has been active in the libertarian movement for over 25 years.

Quotable Quotes

Tax the Rich?

"Tax the Rich" is another way of saying, "Let's get someone else to pay to do things we want done, but we don't want to pay for ourselves." Let the government do the fundraising for things so important as to justify theft, but not so important as to justify *honest* fundraising.

The definition of "the Rich" is those earning enough to put them in the minority of voters. Then the majority votes the minority's money to themselves (that's why the exact definition of what makes a person "Rich" is of such limited interest to the taxers--as long as it's high enough to be a minority, they don't really care. It's not principle, it's the other thing).

—Michael McCarthy