

KID LIB NOW!

PAC representatives have been responsible for a major victory toward the liberation of young persons. The Libertarian Party has been guilty of a major error in not explicitly addressing itself in its national platform to the terrible plight of "minors." Having noted this glaring omission, Galen Tyler and myself proceeded to organize "kidlib" forces on the floor of the LP convention in San Francisco. It was nearly impossible to introduce a new plank in the carefully, behind-the-scenes, manipulated and stage-managed convention.

According to the rules of the convention, consideration of anything other than the platform changes determined prior in committee required suspension of the rules and a two-thirds vote. After drafting a "Rights of Young Persons" plank at the lunch-hour break on Saturday (July 16th), we tried unsuccessfully to suspend the rules. Hundreds of copies of my first uncorrected draft had already circulated throughout the convention, held in the ballroom of the Sheraton Palace. Most everyone knew what was going down when 14-year-old Randy Webster of Norman, Oklahoma, moved for a suspension of the rules.

Up until that point, the convention had been monopolized by the most trivial and banal of considerations -- so much so that more than half of the delegates were generally bored and loitering in the Sheraton's capacious hallways or attending various seminars. Here was a chance to consider and to speak to the oppression of a category of persons which forms the statistical majority of humankind! But the skulking bigotry of age-ism squelched any suspension of the rules. To its credit, most of the Washington State delegation solidly supported the "kidlib" motion -- all except the benighted chairperson Pat Artz.

I can still see the pained look of desperation and disillusionment on the faces of the youngsters on the floor. "Why won't they consider our rights.... Isn't this the Libertarian Party?" voiced one 13-year-old from Nevada. I looked at Galen Tyler, who shot back a knowing glance. We had been through this before. We had suffered the vicious slanderous attacks and smokescreen politics of the pseudo-Libertarians who control the Party. But it was hard, even for us, to tell these kids they were experiencing the betrayal of their cause.

In spite of our setback, we organized to move the plank when the time came for new business. Unfortunately, the time available would be scant and there were other pressing issues, such as Dave Nolan's defense plank, which were sure to compete with our "kidlib" plank. It was evident that the national party organization had planned to constrain the introduction of new planks by leaving virtually no time for such motions.

To meet this problem we organized to have persons at every speaker's stand, ready to give the floor to Randy Webster at the appropriate moment. The moment came and passed; it was obvious to all that Chairman Ed Crane III was going to deny us the chance to present our motion. Finally our motion got its opportunity (so we thought!) with the recognition of Naomi Geshwind of Poughkeepsie, New York. However, Crane would not permit her to read the plank. Moments later, Dave Nolan, founder of the LP, read a substitute which gave all rights in the platform to children. I spoke against the substitute as I thought it was not specific enough. The rest is history; the substitute plank passed, but not without stiff opposition.

The text of my plank is presented below. It is a first-draft effort and, in fact, it was typed and circulated without my approval or opportunity for redrafting. Still, I am very proud that this radical plank permitted the acceptance of a "kidlib" plank in the platform. The existence of such a plank will facilitate the future expansion and amendment of the youth liberation section of the LP platform. The youth rights plank as circulated at the San Francisco LP Convention:

THE RIGHTS OF YOUNG PERSONS (UNDERAGED MINORS)

Young humans, popularly classed as infants, children and adolescents commonly suffer a loss of their rights at the hands of the State. The paternalistic tyranny exercised over the lives of young persons merely because of their age not only denies the inalienable individual right to life and property to a whole category of beings, but is the cause of a panoply of psychological, social and economic problems. Not only do underaged minors suffer all of the predatory interventions of the State, but they frequently suffer the loss of constitutional and legal protections afforded the adult population. Young persons are variously oppressed by federal, state and municipal laws, all of which depend on arbitrary age limitations which generally fail to consider individual competence. The liberation of adult racial and sexual minorities and adult women from arbitrary legal discrimination and restriction must be extended to the group which constitutes the most cruelly abused and largest single category of human slaves.

All persons have but one inalienable right; that is the absolute right to their own lives and to their justly acquired possessions. The category of persons commonly classed as infants, children and adolescents must have that right respected.

As all liberties, commonly classed as "rights" flow from the essential condition of self-ownership, young persons now classed as underaged minors must be legally protected from arbitrary coercive interference in such areas of activity: (1) to engage freely in economic and financial pursuits such as buying and selling property, engaging in legal contracts and gaining employment; (2) to leave the supervision and authority of parents and guardians where no prior contractual agreement exists; (3) to choose their own form of education, training or pursuits of self-development; and (4) to engage in consensual sexual acts with others regardless of age, sex or familial relationship.

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The synthesis of this condition is to some extent mirrored in Agursky's description of the authoritarian-slave mentality. Tragically, it becomes a description of himself: He states, "...many people living in totalitarian countries, having survived terror and been brainwashed by propaganda, are not only genuinely content with their position, but virtually consider themselves to be the happiest people on earth. This, however, engenders an inferiority complex vis-a-vis the democracies, so that the inhabitants of totalitarian countries often turn into implacable enemies of freedom, ready and willing to destroy everything that reminds them of the free will they have lost. This applies in many respects to the intellectuals of these countries, who often display a pathological fear of freedom." This is exemplary of the schizoid "liberalism" of the authoritarian personality. While his left hand is strangling free expression and forcing us into quaint little communes, the right hand is pointing a finger of shame at the perverse benightedness of modern-day serfs.

So here we have it: an open admission of the murderous envy of the altruist-collectivist mentality. And this should be no surprise to those familiar with Solzhenitsyn's identification of the quality of self-negating envy so prevalent in the Soviet people. The purity of pathological expression in a totalitarian society is perhaps still too subtle to be appreciated by the relatively healthy occidental, much less a libertarian who actually rejoices at the accomplishments of his fellows. But if illustration is any value, can you imagine the depth of despair, of self-loathing, of bitter resentment expressed in the leeringly smug satisfaction that Solzhenitsyn tells us occurs when the KGB leads away a neighbor. Anyone who gains an advantage is hated and viciously envied. Such is the result of the MACS syndrome: such is the tragedy of the Soviet dissidents!

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Thus, we urge the repeal of all laws which discriminate against young persons now arbitrarily classed as underaged minors such as: (1) compulsory education and punishment for truancy; (2) juvenile codes and detention systems; (3) ballot restrictions based on age; (4) curfew laws and ordinances; (5) statutory rape and incest laws; (6) child labor "protection" laws; (7) censorship of publications of entertainment laws and ordinances; (8) prohibition of alcoholic beverages and other substances; and (9) forced wage and property transfer to parents and guardian laws.

We further assert the right of parents to their own lives and property and to the right to terminate their obligation within the scope of voluntary contractual agreements.

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