

THE TEN POINTS

of the

Libertarian Party Abolitionist Caucus

(As proposed by members of the LP before a public meeting of the Steering Committee of the American Abolitionist Movement held on April 27, 1980 in Seattle, Washington and as amended by the Central Committee of the LPAC, July, 1980).

Introduction

We of the Libertarian Party Abolitionist Caucus (LPAC) have assembled here to present the executive officers and membership of the Party the following Ten Points of emphasis. We view these points as being of vital and immediate concern to the creation of an ideologically consistent anti-statist program and an politically effective party organization. Our willingness to organize within the Party does not come of a desire to promote factionalism or sectarianism. We strongly advocate an efficacious unity of the movement against state power. The slogan of unity, however, must not become a convenient rationale for evading discussion of embarrassing errors and contradictions. Now, more than ever, the ideological maturity of our movement and party requires a frank discussion of these matters.

Formation of the LPAC comes from a growing concern with recent occurrences of left and right opportunism and with bureaucratic authoritarianism in the Party.

Foremost among the opportunism which we consider of extreme gravity has been committed by the LP Radical Caucus led by ex-SLS staffer Justin Raimondo to placate the minarchist-conservative elements in the Party. Raimondo's LPRC -- closely supported by its mentor, Dr. M.N. Rothbard, forsook principle to avoid the enmity of rightist forces dominant in the LP National Convention of September, 1979. They rejected consideration of a well developed abolitionist plank presented by LP members of the Political Action Caucus.*

This forsaking of principle by Raimondo, Rothbard, Evers and company is indicative of the malformed ideological mentality which presently holds sway among the self-proclaimed "radicals" of the Party. It is one which erroneously demands that the Party move forward electorally and win favor among the people while maintaining a blatant contradiction of purpose. The result is a platform which implies an abolitionist purpose while inferring acceptance of a limited state. How the people are to take seriously a party which simultaneously portrays all state power as evil but advocates a remnant state is beyond us. We have heard no attempt to explain the matter from Rothbard and his "radicals" in spite of our repeated requests for their positions.**

*The PAC's abolition plank and its supporting arguments are appended to the Ten Points. We invite all to read it and then consider how the LPRC could declare it "counter-revolutionary". (Turn to the rear of page three of the "Intro").

**Refer to R.R. Slomon's criticisms of Rothbard and the LPRC in the December, 1979 issue of the Versus State Newsletter -- criticisms, we must add, never answered by the LPRC. See also: M.N. Rothbard's "Is Liberty Enough" Reason, Dec. 79 p. 58; R.R. Slomon's letter in Frontlines, June 79, p. 7; his article "Liberty May Not Be Enough" Versus State Newsletter, January-February 1980, and his letter to Rothbard of February 9, 1980. (copies available).

The importance of the abolition question, dismissed in so cavalier a fashion by the opportunist LPRC, lies precisely in the rejection of the decidedly counter-revolutionary idea of "minimal state". If we accept this vestige of middle class gradualism, we must, by implication, accept the whole structure of ruling class legality and national statehood. In reality, the idea of a minimal state requires acceptance of a residual ruling class. Thus, this would necessitate that we abandon the development of a libertarian class theory vital to anti-statist ideology. It would follow logically that we could not eradicate statist national chauvinisms and their war establishments. This would leave the way clear for a new statist power. This burden of excess baggage left from the bourgeois, nineteenth-century "classical liberalism" will never permit us to cross the seas of mass apathy and delusion to a stateless society. The future is, thus, clear: the LP is on the way to creating a new, more efficient state system for the ruling elite -- just as the "Sewer Socialists" of the last century did.

Partially as a result of this "radical" opportunist cowardice, the Party has no consistent or coherent ideological position. Lacking a clear abolitionist perspective, there can be no long-range strategy or motivation to evolve a theory of transition to a stateless society. All that the Party has now are unsupported generalities and empty catch-phrases in place of an organically evolving ideology. Nothing is explained in concrete actualities. Nothing is related to the pressing concerns of Americans. Everything is asserted but nothing is demonstrated.


Thus, for instance, its presidential candidate, Ed Clark (the oil company lawyer nominated at the same convention which disregarded the abolitionist plank), is now widely reported to be waffling and deviating on numerous platform positions. It should come as no surprise that a party without ideology, i.e., no translation of philosophical abstractions into a program of action, cannot avoid nominating a mouthpiece who will, by force of meeting with the reality of people's questions, begin to make up his own ideology as suits the moment! Thus, the Libertarian Party's presidential campaign funded and controlled by oil company money, is completely out of control ideologically. Its public pronouncements are demagogic and misrepresentative.

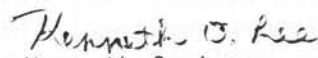
The LPRC, however, is not alone in its opportunism. Even more blatant is the betrayal of principle by Students for a Libertarian Society executive Milton Mueller. His left opportunism involves the distortion of libertarian environmental doctrine to accommodate the vicious statist legal notion of apriori punishment, i.e., penalty for a crime which might be committed in the future. In this case, the generation of nuclear power is considered to be inherently statist by dint of previous government involvement, thus, even wholly private nuclear power attempts must also be prohibited apriori -- without provable cause of violation against individuals in specific cases. Mueller and the SLS are, of course, doing this to woo the affections of the grossly pro-statist, anti-nuclear environmentalist movement.

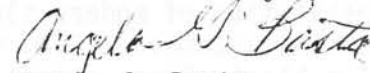
The opportunist factionalism which now divides the Party on the left is matched by an equally acute deterioration on the right. On this side the problem is not so much an intellectual battle as one of middle-class domination and paranoia. For example, several state party organizations have defected in displays of chauvinist petulance over foreign policy and defense. Again, the lack of a developed party ideology has failed to provide a position on the actualities of military defense, thus, at times unnecessarily antagonizing right-wing anti-statists.

Even more ominous is the new authoritarian phenomenon of a stalinist form of party bureaucracy which despises any intellectual dissidents and organizes character assassination against challengers. The prime example of this is the State Central Committee of the LP of Washington State which has denied long-standing members access to membership renewal forms and other basic documents. Not only individuals but whole libertarian organizations have been censored and ostracized by the right-wing paranoia which has marked the LPWS under the reigns of Richard Kenney, Pat Artz and Maurice Willey.

It is in this context that the following Ten Points have been conceived. We consider their adoption by the Party as crucial to a metamorphosis from its present ambivalence and impotence into an authentically anti-statist and effective political organization.


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ABOLITION OF THE STATE

Proposed Amendment

Whereas the coercive monopoly jurisdiction power inherent in all states is absolutely inimical and eternally contrary to the justifiable exercise of the sovereign right of the individual to his or her life and property, the Libertarian Party, which opposes all forms of initiatory force, including its use by any governing agency, has as its ultimate objective the complete abolition of the State.

In declaring its intent to abolish the State as the main institution of initiatory force, the Libertarian Party does not oppose any form of voluntary social cooperation and/or self-governance irrespective of its particular philosophical or religious orientation so long as it rests on the recognition of individual sovereignty, and thus, the free and explicit consent of every participant.

Arguments in Support:

The logical political progression of the libertarian movement must result in an explicitly abolitionist intent. Any other ideological trajectory can only lead away from a consistent implementation of its basic premises (objective epistemology, rational egoism and natural rights) into a form of rightist conservancy of a minimalist State or fragmentation into various "left" and "right" reforms. Our movement must be unified in its focus against the State -- the central institution of modern slavery. Just as the abolitionist anti-slavery movement in the antebellum U.S. was uncompromising and irreconcilable in its demand for freeing black slaves, so must we in our demand for an end to modern slavery.

Some may argue that abolition of the State is "implicit" throughout the LP platform and that this is "enough". "After all", they argue, "why should we place our cards on the table?" First of all, the only prudent inference which can be drawn from our platform is that there are many things we don't like about the State -- which appears to be a mixture of "liberal" and "conservative" positions. Indeed, the Party has been advertised widely as an alliance of minimal statist and anarchists -- thus, its start is at best ambiguous on the retention of the State. So it is definitely not clearly inferential that the LP stands foursquare for the abolition of the State. If that is the purpose of the LP, it could be said that it is misrepresenting itself to those who believe otherwise. The LP should, thus, be forthright one way or another.

Abolitionism or conservatism, that is the choice! If we permit the present state of affairs to continue, this Party will rightfully be labelled conservative by the authentic freedom-fighters of the world. The LP will be seen as a tool of right-wing apologists for the American Superstate.

This proposed amendment to the LP Platform was originated by the Political Action Caucus and reproduced here as a documentary appendix for the LPAC Ten Points.

Several minor changes have been made to the original text written in August 1979.

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1. Ideological Consistency and Methodological Unity

- a. The careful adoption of basic philosophical premises and their specific application in questions affecting the proper recognition of individual authority and responsibility in social relations is essential to the ideological formation of a principled party. The adoption of general and abstract philosophical premises, however necessary, is merely the preliminary task of a serious and dedicated party organization. To limit the work of the Party to the mere adoption and adumbration of abstract generalities is to truncate its ideological development. We see the main ongoing task of the Libertarian Party as developing and presenting an analytic interpretation of political-economic conditions within the frame of its philosophical principles. This work must not only interpret but prescribe effective political tactics which can bring an end to state power. This entire process we will call ideology, i.e., the process of implementing philosophical principles to achieve political-economic results. It is the moral responsibility and ideological necessity of the Libertarian Party to act effectively in regards to the oppressed groups it represents.
- b. Our information organs must be open to discussion, debate and basic challenge from outside. We must replace the public-relations style puffery which presently dominates LP organs with a genuine discussion of issues and ideology. These issues include: (1) how to secure military defense for stateless populations commencing with our own; (2) defining actual programs of restoration and restitution; and (3) elaborating a working system of private arbitration and police protection. These discussions cannot be left to the happenstance efforts of non-party organs only. The party organization must take major responsibility for factually accurate, terminologically precise and logically consistent positions in the anti-statist movement. Party ideology must come of its own ranks and not primarily from those uninvolved with actual political tasks.
- c. The Party must have a central organizational mechanism for deciding what is to be the "party line" and why. This entity must be able to explain and defend its decisions and be open to serious challenge. At the same time, the strategy and tactics of the Party must be brought entirely into line with the party's position once it is formulated. Ideology should and must determine all actions of the Party in every sphere of its activities.

2. Abolition of the State As the Main Strategic Mission

There can be no other ultimate political objective consistent with individual liberty but the complete abolition of the State. The Libertarian Party should trust the intelligence of the people to

understand the feasibility and desirability of this ultimate objective. It must not conceal its logically ultimate purpose. It is far from enough that the possibility of abolition is largely implicit in the present party platform. The LP must resolve the apparent ambivalence of its present ideology. It is imperative that the Party immediately begin clarifying its differences with the notion of a limited-state (i.e., conservative) party.

3. Training a Dedicated Revolutionary Cadre

A political organization which seeks the magnitude of radical and complex changes as must the LP, cannot expect to achieve its objectives without a body of personnel specifically trained and motivated to perform those tasks over the long term. The Libertarian Party requires a professional cadre who dedicate their lives to the achievement of the anti-statist revolution. By this, we don't mean the major-party style bourgeois elitist political "professionals" as epitomized by Edward Crane III and Ed Clark, but revolutionary cadre trained to carry out the party-line. This means men and women who are willing and able to mingle with the masses in the streets and effectively propagandize, and when appropriate, form the core of a fighting vanguard of revolution. For this to be effectively achieved, the Party must establish schools open to applicants from all economic levels -- not merely the rich who can afford expensive occasional seminars in luxurious surroundings. Every reasonable effort should be made to provide party training programs gratis or at minimal cost. Emphasis should be on recruiting cadre from severely oppressed segments of the population as well as from members of the disaffected client-class intelligentsia.*

4. The Coalition of Anti-statists: Abolitionists at the Helm

The Abolition Caucus opposes any attempt to whitewash significant ideological differences thereby leaving them unresolved. We specifically disagree with the view adopted by the LP national convention in Dallas 1974 to lay aside the central issue of "anarchy versus minarchy", i.e., of abolition versus minimal statism. There can be no question on this point. The issue of the ultimate legitimacy of government per se is the heart of our ideology, the engine of our movement and a legitimate purpose of an anti-statist party. In any coalition with minimal statist or any other type of statist, abolitionism must be at the helm.

5. Political Honesty

The Libertarian Party should establish a reputation with the masses as strictly honest and factually dependable in its statements. Although deception is ethically permissible generally in defense against coercion and in particular against the State, ideological ambiguities and factually misleading statements should be strictly avoided. Our principles, and

*On this problem we suggest study of Richard R. Slomon's article "Liberty May Not Be Enough" in the Versus State Newsletter.

what they mean, should be clearly presented in toto before the people. Such tactics as selective emphasis on the basis of issue-orientation will only produce, at this stage, confusion and skepticism as to the validity and the practicability of the ultimate aims of the Party.

6. Justice for the Oppressed

The Libertarian Party should seek to recruit not only comfortable intellectuals who philosophically oppose the State in principle, but also persons who have actually suffered from oppression. Thus, the Party must involve its programs with the specific problems of oppressed groups such as Blacks, Chicanos, homosexuals, youth, the aged, and political prisoners. In doing this, however, the Party must be wary to not emulate statist front groups of the ruling class or be enticed to support policies which ultimately are designed to expand the power of the State. For example, the LP, given the recent history of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and its total distortion and reversal in Federal Affirmative Action policies, should avoid supporting the Equal Rights Amendment which is already becoming an apriori constitutional rationale for the military conscription of women. It must avoid the pitfalls of left opportunism as well as right opportunism. This can be accomplished only by systematic study of the political-economic actualities of different classes and groups in each country. The Party must express practical programs for the restitution of values to the victims of the State and elaborate on precise implementation of restoration of rights. Among those questions most vital to our ability to demonstrate an effectiveness in the concrete realm of politics are those of restoring land rights to Chicanos and Indians and other dispossessed groups. For example, the Party should provide a program opening up government lands to homesteading.

7. Non-Initiation of Force

The Libertarian Party should never sanction the use of force which violates the rights of innocent persons. It is desirable to show support only for movements against tyranny which limit themselves to employing force in self-defense. By self-defense, we do not necessarily mean restricting retaliation to direct attack as this would impose an unnecessary limitation on those actually fighting their governments.

8. Primacy of Individual Rights

The Libertarian Party should never accept collective utility rationales in the place of securing individual rights. Our position should be always to demand full recognition of everyone's rights while initiating and supporting appropriate legislative measures which work practically to reduce State power. Every retreat by the State must be employed as evidence that our demands for abolition are the only proper and ultimate solution. Our aim must be to gain sufficient political power to dissolve the State and to effect the transition to a stateless society.

9. World Abolitionist Movement and the Fight Against All Imperialism and National Chauvinisms

- a. The Abolitionist Caucus strongly rebukes the left-opportunist tactics

of the LP Radical Caucus for assigning the major burden of guilt to U.S. foreign policy for the Cold War. Our opposition to interventionist foreign policy and aggressive war preparations must take care not to condemn the justifiable mass desire for effective strategic defense against the obviously single-minded aggressive imperialist strategy of the USSR. Soviet imperialist expansion, war preparations and mass oppression have been major realities of global geopolitics for decades. The suspicion of the American people on Soviet motives is largely justifiable. Our desire to abolish and dismantle the American State must never obfuscate the fact of the irreconcilable enmity of the Communist regimes for an Anarcho-capitalist revolution. Left opportunism, and the current fashion of "anti-anti communism" among repentant bourgeois "radicals" currying favor from left collectivist circles, must never blind us to be the inadvertent pawns of KGB disinformation. Sectarian-generated "revisionist history" is useful but it must not be employed as a reflex determinant of our party-line.

- b. Our quest for securing individual rights is not necessarily advanced by proliferation of national chauvinist movements unless the movement is decidedly libertarian in character. A small state -- as we have seen in Kampuchea (Cambodia) -- can be more violently oppressive than a large multinational empire. Because a large, repressive, multinational state is disintegrating into several ethno-linguistic states is not automatically a reason for jumping on the bandwagon of minority chauvinism. The Libertarian Party must be extremely selective in its ties and make every attempt to generate autonomous anti-statist movements that are independent from national chauvinist and ethno-collectivist sentiments.
- c. The Party must take active steps to develop an international section to translate our ideology into other languages and to link up with libertarians in other countries.

10. Class Struggle and Class Theory

The formulation of a party-line must come from two basic sources: the philosophical deductive-analytic which comprises our Libertarian Theory and the empirical inductive-synthetic which has been too largely ignored within the Party. In order to translate our philosophical premises into ideological concretes, we must isolate and identify exactly who are our enemies, and exactly why they are our class antagonists and what is the likelihood of their remaining so. Although the association with Marxism makes conventional "class theory" repugnant to individualists, the sociology of classes and its associated political-economic analysis is critical to a working party line. In this work, we should not be deterred from a careful examination of the revolutionary body of class theory which is an integral part of our ideological heritage. We must regard the uprisings of the Paris Commune and of the Spanish Anarchists (as well as the American Revolution) as important events of reference in our search for a historical perspective. We must identify the psychopathology and psychosocial tendencies and political-economic position of the various groups within the state apparatus to effect strategy and to determine culpability. Without this we are always limited to generalities which fail to relate the empirical specifics of strategy and tactics.