



Santa Clara Libertarian

For Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness
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FROM THE TRENCHES

The Drug War From The Bottom Up:

by Eric Harlow, Activities Chair

First the news: The Hoover Resolution (Resolution For Peace) has been signed by Dear Abby. We do not know the motive or reason she signed, however, it is encouraging that such a conservative person should be prompted to call for the Commission of Inquiry. Don Edward's office (D-CA) has confirmed 20 CO-sponsors to HR3100, which calls for the commission. They, however, expect to roll the larger commission of Edward's bill into the Crime Bill. (Yes, that bill is a crime!) We await the taking of the bait by the Congress. Soon we may have gavel-to-gavel C-Span coverage of this commission. Then the lies of prohibition's failure will be exposed to the entire American public.

Most of you readers (about 13% of our subscribers) know that Columbia has, by court edict, legalized possession of small amounts of drugs. Sen. Bob Kerry of Mass. is hot under the collar about this. Some have even suggested that he wants to silence debate on legalization. His office says "No way". The real silencer is Congressman Gerald Solomon (R-NY). He has introduced HR3991, which would formally prevent federal funds from being used to conduct any study or research on drug legalization. Call him at (202)225-5614, or fax at (202)225-6234, and ask why is he afraid of the truth!

The governing council of Basil, Switzerland, has voted to make heroin legally available.

Last weekend, the Police Chiefs of Britain met in London and came out for decriminalization.

Keeping large amounts of drugs illegal perpetrates the black markets, and the Chiefs' reason for large drug departments. That is why, I propose, they did not come out for REGULATION.

The National Coalition Against Prohibition (headed by this author) is making some progress in organizing FREEDOM RALLIES for your choice. The U.S. may ban cigarettes, and your substance or activity is next!!! Caffeine, herbs, vitamin-C, fatty foods, alcohol, other drugs, gun ownership, or auto modifiers-- when one goes, they all will go. The next two rallies are scheduled for Tue. July 6, and

Tue. July 20, 7-9 PM, at the Santa Clara Main Library, 2636 Homestead Road. Please attend and help hold back the tide of prohibitions against choice. Please contact Eric at (415) 964-3655. to verify last minute changes, if any.

Now the editorial: Prohibition as social policy is the problem, not the substance or activity prohibited. Prohibition deals with making consensual activities into consensual crimes, and jamming our jails full of citizens who disagree. Prohibitions are an evil inflicted upon our people. This evil creates huge, never-ending, new government spending to deal with the new criminals created by the prohibition.

Prohibitions are gigantic make-work projects for government. They are the cancer cells in our government-- forever engulfing our liberties, freedoms, and resources, without measurable benefits to our society. From the trenches, smile, things are getting better.

FORGET WOODSTOCK'S 25TH

The Whiskey Rebellion by Thomas P. Slaughter

A Review by Dante DeAmicis

Part I

On this 200th anniversary of the whiskey rebellion, I would like to review this important and timely book. Libertarians should observe how little has changed from a grasping, unprincipled, first administration under the Constitution. 200 years later, some of us are still fighting the whiskey rebellion in the spirit of the American revolution.

What happened to the cutting edge of liberty after the Constitution was ratified? It retreated to west of Appalachia where it basked in benign neglect. In the more settled, safer, prosperous part of the thirteen colonies, people made their peace with a centralized government of increasing scope. Right off the bat we got the excise tax on whiskey in 1791.

However, west of the "benefits" of civilization, people were still committed to "localism" (referred to by its detractors as "anti-federalism") and certain now old-fashioned principles, such as: INTERNAL TAXES ARE INTOLERABLY ONEROUS EVEN WITH REPRESENTATION, BUT IF

ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY, SHOULD ONLY BE LEVIED AT THE LOCAL LEVEL. The reaction from our new and sophisticated central government was "how quaint".

To Westerners this was not simply an academic topic for discussion:

The frailty of existence and the violence of everyday life continued to make frontiersmen different from easterners, and contributed to the alien perspectives of the two districts. (P. 29)

Even before the revolutionary war, people in the backwoods actually believed all this "right to form your own government" stuff, and did so-- Transylvania, Watauga, Westsylvania, and Franklin. All were unrecognized by their parent colonies. But why not new states? Why should they be part of an entity that provided no visible services, yet taxed them, restricted their markets, and condoned the best land being ripped off by speculators who lived back east? Unfortunately, the statute of limitations had run out on revolutionary principles as far as the eastern elites were concerned, who were worried about more "Shays's Rebellions" from the rabble.

As in the 1990's generally, the 1790's saw the greater western population downwardly mobile, with a few outsiders and speculators becoming wealthy. Outside land speculators continued to consolidate large tracts of land, limiting opportunities for upward mobility. Our historical view of the classless frontier society is a myth. The number of landless was increasing. Rather than life becoming better, it was becoming harder. Most settlers were at subsistence level and a fourth were sharecroppers.

Instead of being a showplace of what the good old days of liberty were like, the west became a textbook example from a class taught by Henry George or P.J. Proudhon of to what absentee landowning in a cash-poor economy would lead.

County sheriffs, the actual enforcers of law were among the wealthiest 10 percent of the population. This was an apparent conspiracy of wealth, law, and power that bred resentment among a portion of the citizenry. These visible manifestations of inequality were resented by tenant-farmers, who resisted a tax structure based upon items of

domestic production rather than on land. Common people perceived that government-- as embodied in these men-- conspired against them. Such perceptions led those at the bottom to reason in class terms, to equate easterners with wealth, power, and absentee landlordism, and to see local enforcers of eastern laws as self-interested lackeys of eastern elites. (P. 67)

It was this desperate lower class that our founding fathers used to pay off revolutionary war debts assumed by the Feds from the States. Yes, with the ink not even dry on the Constitution, this elitist new government junta would squeeze scarce hard cash from those living in squalor and misery. Washington and Hamilton may have been the first Reagan Republicans. In a direct attack on a poor but independent people, they would have the only significant trade item on the barter frontier taxed to pay speculators in government securities.

The Appalachian frontier was beginning to see the rulers in Boston with the same narrow eyes as the Stamp Act rebels used to see London. Armed with Whig political philosophy, combat skills from hunting and skirmishing with Indians, and inured to fatigue and danger, the frontiersmen would not relinquish their rights as free men.

Even though the Atlantic mercantile interests portrayed the western agriculturalists as just a bunch of ignorant and unsophisticated hicks, it was those frontiersmen who were grounding their arguments in revolutionary principles, whereas the wealthy east could only be motivated by economic self-interest.

Unless mercantilist politicians acknowledged the validity of ideological principles emblazoned on the frontier intellect from the time of the Stamp Act crisis, no dialogue over the fundamentals of republican rule could begin. Many easterners had changed the way they thought about representation, taxation, and republican rule. Many westerners had not. (P. 60)

Yes, this is where the spirit of liberty went, not to some narrow, strict interpretation of the constitution but outside of it. Westerners did not see any

protection of individual rights from a distant central authority. What was particularly galling was that the chief proponents of excise taxes, such as the whiskey tax, were official critics of those same taxes before they got a little constitutional authority under their belt. In Federalist #12, Hamilton argued that the nation must rely on external taxes because of the inquisitive and preemptory spirit of excise taxes. But that was before he got his new job under the Constitution, so now everyone could just kiss his powdered wig.

It sort of reminds me of how politicians today put in "temporary" taxes or declare as ignorant concerns that public projects, such as arenas, will go over budget.

"States Rights" is usually portrayed as a right-wing movement, but the "localist arguments against central internal taxes did not fit this generality. The vote for the excise in March 1791 was pretty much the frontier districts against the urban mercantile districts, with New England a solid block in favor of it. Some of the opposition was removed by giving Vermont and Kentucky statehood, in 1791, in essence buying off their economic problems. with the promise of political power in their own right.

Western Pennsylvanians did not have this option. At a July 27, 1791 meeting in Brownsville, the conclusion was that they had been sold out by a central authority owned by wealthy eastern merchants, western land speculators, and public securities brokers.

There were some similarities to the drug war in the new powers wanted by the tax writers. Section thirty-two of the act had a clause granting authority to search for contraband goods and illegal distilling operations.

The law was "deservedly obnoxious to the feelings and interests of the people in general," because it infringed liberty, was discriminatory against a particular region of the nation, expensive to collect, and "liable to much abuse." It operated against one domestic manufacture and not those of other areas; it was "insulting to the feelings of the people to have their vessels marked, houses painted and ransacked, [and] to be subject to informers." The act

produced a bad precedent by "tending to introduce the excise laws of Great Britain and of countries where the liberty, property, and even the morals of the people are sported with." (P. 112)

The similarity to the revolution extended to the formation of Committees of Correspondence to exchange information and call for protest meetings. Today a C of C would operate online. The delegates to a 1792 meeting, not having to worry about discrimination lawsuits, decided to treat those members of their communities who cooperated with enforcers of excise tax as social pariahs. "In the future we will consider such persons as unworthy of our friendship, have no intercourse or dealings with them, withdraw from them every assistance, and withhold all the comforts of life which depend upon those duties that as men and fellow citizens we owe to each other, and upon all occasions treat them with the contempt they deserve."

The debate of liberty vs. order was as fresh in this first decade of the Constitution as it is today. In one corner we had the anal retentive "friends of order" who had a Hobbesian fear of anarchy-- in the other, the Lockean supporters of Kid Liberty. To them, the protection of liberty, not the maintenance of order, was the principal task of government. The "friends of order" tended to be the wealthy and the political leaders who worried about being humiliated by the poor, the ignorant, the narrow-minded localists, the rabble, and "the busy and restless sons of anarchy". (Good name for a libertarian service club.) Opponents of the excise law, anticipating the libertarian fee-for-service concept, thought the merchants and speculators should pay more since the government seemed to labor primarily for their interests. Most of their efforts though, were in repealing the excise which they felt was just the onset of a disease which would result in the slavery of the individual to the state.

As with the drug war, a parental and patronizing tone was taken against federal excise critics. "The conversations of the lower class rise from themselves," according to one writer, "and terminate where they rise." "It is by force alone," argued another, "that an ignorant herd can be governed."

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The parent-child metaphor and the attitudes it represented were also adopted by those friends of order who seemed actually to ridicule the dedication of other citizens to the principle of liberty. One writer portrayed the friends of liberty as unruly students who deserved disciplining by a teacher. (P. 137)

The lower orders were to be educated to duty and obedience. But the farther west you went, the more learning-disabled the people were. The "friends of order" teachers found the "friends of liberty" students childish, idle, ignorant, stupid, and naive. Our press hasn't changed much. (To be continued next month)

Dear Readers:

If you would like to get news or events published in this paper, please call me at (408) 254-2746, and leave a message, or send news to me,

Donald Cormier
439 S. White Road

San Jose, California 95127

Remember, the deadline for submissions is the second Friday of the month.

Santa Clara Libertarian

This newsletter is the monthly publication of the Libertarian Party of Santa Clara County, a non-profit organization. A membership application may be found in this issue. Interested persons may contact our office or visit one of our scheduled meetings listed in the Calendar of Events for more information.

Office: 3249 Stevens Creek Blvd. Ste 207,

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Advertising Rates

A business card size ad in the Santa Clara Libertarian costs \$15 per month or \$150 per year. A full page ad costs \$100 per month. Classified ads are 15 cents per word, with a minimum of \$5.

Why you received this newsletter

If you're a dues-paying member of the Libertarian Party of Santa Clara County, you'll receive this newsletter every month. We also mail it to people who we'd like to join the party.

If your mailing label says *Valued Prospective Member*, you asked for information about Libertarianism, and this newsletter is part of our reply; you have a 3-month complimentary subscription. We hope you'll register to vote Libertarian and become a dues-paying member.

If your mailing label says *Valued Former Member*, you were previously a dues-paying member, and we want you back! The newsletter is a reminder of what you're missing.

If you've registered to vote Libertarian but are not a member, you'll also receive the newsletter. In this case your mailing label is in all capital letters.

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Please limit access to my [PHONE / ADDRESS]
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Please note: Non-signers of the pledge
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I choose to set my dues at:

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Note: Dues are included for pledgers or donors who give \$100 or more per year.

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UPCOMING EVENTS



Dave Bonino's Monthly Get-Together

Call Dave for when and where-- (408)947-0395

Mid-County Discussion Group (Sunnyvale)

Wednesday, July 13, 7:00-9:30 P.M.

These "second Wednesday" meetings are for anyone who wants to learn about libertarianism or who is interested in libertarian ideas. They're held at Coco's Restaurant, 1209 Oakmead Parkway (at Lawrence Expressway, one block south of 101).

LPSC Business Meeting (Sunnyvale)

HEADS UPI AS OF PRESS TIME, WE DON'T KNOW IF WE CAN HAVE THE BUSINESS MEETING AT COCO'S, DUE TO REMODELING! CALL THE BUSINESS OFFICE AFTER JULY 1-- WE'LL HAVE THE PLACE AND DATE ON THE ANSWERING MACHINE!

Dinner—7:00 P.M.; Meeting—8-10 P.M.

These "third Thursday" meetings cover what's happening in the LP in the county, the state, and around the country. They're USUALLY held at Coco's Restaurant, 1209 Oakmead Parkway (at Lawrence Expressway, one block south of 101). If you want to have dinner or a snack and participate in the pre-meeting discussion, please arrive promptly at 7 P.M.

Terry Savage for Assembly Campaign Meetings-- For dates, times, and places, call Terry Savage at HIS NEW NUMBER: (415)691-6272, OR (408)945-7633.

Freedom Rallies (Sponsored by Save Our Liberties)

At the Santa Clara Public Library, 2635 Homestead Road, Santa Clara. CALL Eric Harlow for dates and times: (415)964-3655.

L.P.C Officers Meetings are open to the public, and are held at the office, 3249 Stevens Creek Blvd., Ste 207, San Jose, CA, July 11, August 8, 7:30-9:00 P.M.

Donald Cormier and **Jonathan Steele** are co-hosts of *Free and Clear* from 6:00-8:00 AM on alternate Wednesdays on KKUP, 91.5 FM.(July 13,27)

Special Announcement

**Thanks to activist Joe Dehn, the SCLP now has it's own page in WORLD WIDE WEB, with an updated calendar of events. You can find the page at the following URL:
<http://www.lp.org/lp/lpsc.html>**

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