Newspapers by ancestry
https://www.newspapers.com/image/439620743

Downloaded on Mar 26, 2021

Seeks to eliminate all control by government

Libertarian Party's goal: end taxes, public schools

By Joe Pilati
Globe Staff

The "eventual repeal of all taxation"? That's easy enough to favor, especially around this time of year. And a new political party, the Libertarian, intent on distinguishing itself from the Democrats and Republicans, is for it.

But what about abolition of Social Security, the public schools, state-supported colleges, the Agriculture Dept., the Federal Reserve System and the laws restricting marijuana, heroin, voluntary sexual relations and gambling? What about repeal of the National Labor Relations Act, the Interstate Commerce Act and all antitrust laws?

These, too, are all measures advocated by the Libertarian Party.

The traditional categories of "left" and "right" are rendered virtually meaningless in any discussion of the new party, formed last June in Colorado and led in Massachusetts by state chairman Paul Siegler and regional chairman Mark C. Frazier.

Laissez-faire capitalism, a system the LP acknowledges exists practically nowhere in the world, is the party's goal. But far from being a repository of traditional "rightist" theory, the Libertarian Party claims its stands on a variety of issues have attracted people from every spot on the political spectrum.

The Libertarians cast a plague on both major party candidates in last year's presidential contest. Instead they nominated for president Dr. John Hospers, philosophy department chairman at the University of Southern California, and for vice-president Mrs. Tonie Nathan, an Oregon broadcast journalist.

Party literature referred to President Nixon as "Richard the Lyin'-Hearted" and termed Sen. George McGovern "a decoy, whose greatest danger is that he will lure us into voting for Nixon as the lesser of two evils."

Hospers and Nathan received only a few thousand votes in the handful of states where they appeared on the ballot, but the Libertarians' place in histories of the 1972 elections was assured when the Electoral College convened in Washington last December. Roger MacBride of Charlottesville, Va., refused to vote for Nixon and Agnew and opted for the Libertarian ticket instead.

According to Siegler, a Harvard Business School student, the impulses that resulted in the LP's formation "really began in 1969, when libertarians started breaking away from the Young Americans for Freedom (YAF)," the conservative youth group founded in 1962 at William F. Buckley Jr.'s Sharon, Conn., estate.

At the 1969 YAF convention, he said, one libertarian "provoked a near-riot by burning his draft card on the convention floor." The fracas "pointed up the traditional conservative views that still predominate in YAF — the principle that says there are no social rights, only economic rights."

Frazier, a Harvard undergraduate from Winchester and executive editor of the Harvard Crimson, said the LP's "biggest problem is persuading people that libertarianism is not completely divorced from reality. It's practical, and it's not going to lead to chaos or destruction when it's implemented.

He cited the example of Fall River, where LPers responded to a bus drivers' strike and the bus company's appeals for a town subsidy by publishing their own proposal for "complete deregulation of the bus and taxi companies."

Despite predictable problems during "the transition period from high regulation to no regulation," the party contended, "in the long run there can be no more equitable and just solution than that which lets the marketplace seek its own solutions."

Again advancing the notion that "any progress in society comes from individuals acting on their own or in voluntary associations," Frazier said he is working on studies of both cable television and the emerging pattern of "unnecessarily regulating it," and of the Massachusetts welfare system.

"My tentative conclusion (about the latter) is that the actual rate of eligibility for welfare is two or three times what the state admits to," Frazier said.

Just as LP members believe voluntary contributions rather than taxes should ultimately support the few "legitimate" functions of the government — chiefly protection of individual and property rights — they also assert that all the functions of public welfare agencies should be taken over by "private charity."

As for the public schools, Frazier argued: "They're doing an abysmal job. The first step toward their abolition should be a voucher system — tax credits for parents who choose private schools — and from there, a transition to a voluntary funding system."

Frazier's stand on drug laws and other so-called "victimless crimes" is consistent: "If an individual wants to use drugs, let him. But under a libertarian government, there wouldn't be a state-supported hospital or medical center to take care of him. The present drug laws prove coercion doesn't work . . . People have to take responsibility for their own actions."

Similarly, the LP platform plank on consumer protection backs "strong and effective laws against fraud and misrepresentation" but opposes "present and prospective so-called (protective) legislation which infringes upon voluntary trade." As examples, Frazier cited laws compelling the use of automobile seat belts and motorcycle crash helmets.

Although the LP has only 30 dues-paying members in Massachusetts, it has circulated internally a memo to which Siegler wryly refers as "our plan to take over the state." Sparing in details, it nevertheless proposes to "redirect the Massachusetts legal code from its present trend of increased state control over the individual" within 25 years.

The LP will accomplish this, according to Siegler, by "exposing the statist drift of the Republicans and Democrats." One party founder, David Nolan, compares the LP's role today to that of the GOP, founded as "a third party," which displaced the Whigs in the pre-Civil War period.

LIBERTARIAN LEADERS—State chairman Paul Siegler (left) and New England Regional chairman Mark C. Frazier.

"While the GOP will undoubtedly live on for many years," Nolan wrote, "lurching from election to election like a lobotomized ape, it is in effect already dead."

"You have to go back to the era of the Palmer raids (Woodrow Wilson's attorney general) to find an administration worse on civil liberties than Nixon's," Frazier said, adding that Daniel Ellsberg "performed a really admirable service" in disclosing the Pentagon Papers.

Siegler, in turn, scoffs at the President's "calls for more centralization while employing the rhetoric of decentralization."

Frazier admitted his own unease about the self-proclaimed "party of principle's" failure to mention US Southeast Asian policy in its platform, but he explained:

"The platform originally called for immediate and total withdrawal of all US forces in Southeast Asia. We debated it until 4 one morning at the convention, and a majority supported it, but the minority was significant enough so that we finally decided to delete any mention of Vietnam."

The platform does, however, advocate "unconditional amnesty for all who have been convicted of, or who now stand accused of, draft evasion and for all military deserters who were draftees" and US withdrawal from both the UN and "any present alliances which include despotic governments" — including Thieu's and Franco's as well as the communists.

Among some groups considered "rightist," the LP's overtures have been spurned. "Robert Welch of the John Birch Society calls us an atheistic tool of the communists," Frazier said, and Siegler added, feigning the objectivist philosopher Ayn Rand's Russian accent:

"Ayn Rand calls us 'a bunch of beegies' . . . She is jealously guarding her domain and she has become extremely defensive."

"Tortuga," is Frazier's terse reply when asked whether any government entity is now moving steadily toward libertarianism.

"The same guy who started the pirate radio ships" off the coast of western Europe to compete with state-run broadcasting outlets has secured a 99-year lease on the island of Tortuga, off the coast of Haiti, he explained.

"It's going to be a totally laissez-faire economy . . . at least until the year 1971."

WASHINGTON REPORT / By S. J. MICCICHE

Nixon banks on people in battle with Congress

WASHINGTON — Under the obvious direction of President Nixon, the White House is going out of its way to tweak Congress.

Flexing its muscles more and more during the growing constitutional crisis over Federal spending, the White House appears intent on grinding Congress into submission on fiscal policies.

The feathery touch of conciliation, profusely offered by Mr. Nixon during the campaign, seems to have been stuffed in a closet and replaced by a battering-ram technique.

Last week, White House Press Secretary Ronald L. Ziegler purposefully pinched congressional toes. Not once, but three times, Ziegler referred to Congress taking a "vacation" this week during the traditional Lincoln Day recess, while emphasizing that the President would be "working" on his categorized series of state of the union messages.

Evidently, this was the White House drill for Ziegler, to convey the impression that Congress would be loafing, while the President labored along the sands of his beachside retreat at San Clemente, Calif. The repeated reference was without notation that the congressional recess honors a Republican President, nor that it is most desired by Republican members of Congress so they can speak at party fund-raisers and testimonials.

On the surface, the reference to Congress lolling in "vacation" seems like a small point. But it was unnecessary, unless done by design to deflate Congress in the constitutional feud with the President.

Mr. Nixon delivered a well-aimed barb of his own during his recent press conference. While rhetorically seeking help to prevent higher taxes and inflation, the President deliberately twisted the tail of Congress with the accusation that "this Congress has not been responsible on money."

This had added a distinct stridency to the tone Mr. Nixon used last October when he excused Congress as suffering from "institutional faults when it comes to Federal spending." He called it an "inherent weakness" in the structure of Congress to deal with spending in its totality.

Now, in an accusatory frame, the President declared, "We either cut spending or raise taxes and . . . I checked on the campaigns of everybody who had run for office across this country, Democrat and Republican. I didn't find one member of Congress, liberal or conservative, who had campaigned on the platform of raising taxes in order that we could spend more."

Masked in this constitutional tussle of whether Congress or the President has the ultimate power over the Federal purse is the dispute over where the cuts in spending should be.

While increasing the military budget by $4 billion, Mr. Nixon has advocated slashes and obliteration of many of the social programs from the administrations of President Kennedy and President Johnson. By the promise of special revenue sharing for designated areas, he is erasing a standing Federal commitment in his desired transfer of responsibility for social needs to the states and municipalities.

The budget cuts and redirection of national purpose are part of the ill wind that blows down from Capitol Hill on President Nixon's refusal to spend funds that Congress directed should be spent.

The impoundment of $8.7 billion by the President represents a direct challenge to the coveted belief among members of Congress that they hold the nation's purse strings. Mr. Nixon insists he cannot be forced to spend money if he doesn't want to, or to use his phrasing, if it means higher taxes or higher prices caused by inflationary spending by Congress.

A pending lawsuit initiated by members of Congress may eventually resolve the constitutional points.

But in the meantime, the White House believes it has full command of the public opinion side of the controversy. If Congress does succumb to the President's wishes, either by direct vote or by sustaining his vetoes on spending bills, then Mr. Nixon may claim credit for holding back taxes and inflation. If Congress overrides the President's wishes, then Mr. Nixon simply won't spend the appropriated funds, and still claim credit for preventing a tax increase or an inflationary spiral.

Either way, the President starts to gain points with the public, the White House believes. And from that perspective, the White House feels it can talk tough about the Congress.

CITY HALL / By ROBERT A. JORDAN

Kevin's future leans heavily on 'austerity' budget

When it received Mayor Kevin White's 1973 "austerity" budget last week, the Boston City Council was given its annual chance to exercise what little authority it has over the mayor.

Basically, the only exercise the council is allowed consists of trimming whatever fat they may find on the budget, which White insists is a very lean one.

In round figures, his budget this year is $230.3 million, or $5.4 million less than his 1972 budget of $235.7 million. Thus, White can claim that there is no fat for the council to trim. However, the council is not going to forfeit this rare opportunity to show the mayor that they do have some control over the city's purse strings. During the upcoming hearings on the budget, some council members will be making all sorts of charges to get as much political mileage as possible.

Perhaps one of the charges will be that White's budget figures are misleading, that he is playing sort of a "shell game" to disguise the city's fiscal problems with a permit "austerity" program.

Some critics have already charged that White's reduced budget is not really a reduction, but an increase over last year's. They point out that the 1972 budget as submitted was $222 million, but supplementary appropriations during the year increased it to $235 million.

As a result, they add, the $230 million budget for 1973 is actually an increase of $8 million over the 1972 submission, not a cutback of $5.4 million.

But this comparison is not quite fair, particularly since the supplementary appropriation included more than $10 million in expected salary increases for policemen, firefighters and teachers.

It will be interesting to see if the mayor can keep within his 1973 austerity budget without asking for additional appropriations. It appears doubtful, though, since some appropriations always seem "necessary," and there hardly has been a year when a Boston mayor has not requested additional monies beyond his original budget request.

Yet White has made some slightly risky moves to keep his budget down. By cutting Health and Hospitals by $3.5 million, of which $3 million involves Boston City Hospital, and by cutting the police and fire depts. by $3.3 million, he has left himself open for damaging attacks if things go wrong. This is his boldest fiscal program since he came into office six years ago, and if it fails, his political career could suffer.

To measure whether his program was a failure, one would have to look at this year's upcoming tax rate. While claims that even with the cuts, the city's $196.70 tax rate could still go up. Apparently he has abandoned his oft-quoted remarks that he hopes to keep the rate under the $200 mark.

He is now saying that even if the tax rate goes up, his austerity program could still be a successful operation on the city's fiscal condition. His critics, including most city councilmen, disagree, particularly with $17.8 million in revenue-sharing to help reduce it.

Thus, with revenue-sharing, a reduced budget, including an edict to drop 1102 city employees from the payroll, White has an excellent opportunity to not only keep the tax rate under $200 but under $196.70.

White, an astute politician, knows that if the tax rate goes up again this year, he will be giving his adversaries a major political weapon to use against him. They could easily charge that the mayor proved himself a poor administrator by not being able to prevent the tax rate from rising despite his austerity moves. Further, they could say that the tax rate increase is visible evidence that his program was a failure.

Somehow, White seems to survive such tries, perhaps more so than the city itself. He is always politically in better shape than the city is financially. To his credit, though, he is cutting some waste from the city's fiscal programs. But these moves can be tied into a larger political strategy.

For example, he is now soft-pedaling his previously public remarks that he is going to try to keep the tax rate below the magic figure. This could pave the way for a much more dramatic announcement that he has succeeded in reducing the tax rate against almost overwhelming odds. Then he himself could call his austerity budget a success.

If this happens, both White and the city will profit. But if the tax rate goes up, White no doubt will find enough arguments to take the blame away from him. He could still be OK politically, but the city will be in tough shape.

So it would be best for everyone if White succeeds in reducing the tax rate. Even his critics will have to agree.

WIRE TAPS

Fastest paint job in history

"When John Kennedy rode down Pennsylvania avenue in the Inaugural parade 13 years ago," Sen. Edward M. Kennedy told a Senate committee, "the sign he said he saw most often was 'Volpe'—posted at every Federal construction site along the route."

The new ambassador to Italy and outgoing secretary of transportation, John A. Volpe, beamed at the anecdote, but added quickly, "When I was named Secretary of Transportation, I changed the name to Volpe Construction Co. to avoid even a hint of conflict of interest. It was the fastest paint job in the history of Washington."

Mayor Kevin H. White came so close to being the Democratic vice presidential nominee that his name was on the nominating papers and had to be illegally scratched out and replaced with Sen. Thomas Eagleton's name, according to an article by Milton Viorst in the current Esquire.

Viorst says campaign co-ordinator Gary Hart was informed by Rick Stearns, who was handling the papers, that there was no way he could get Eagleton's petitions legally signed and presented in the few minutes that remained before the 4 p.m. deadline. He was told to do it anyway.

"Stearns hung up the phone, turned to the papers lying on his desk, and methodically crossed 'Kevin White' off each sheet and replaced it with 'Thomas F. Eagleton.' Somehow, the petitions went through unchallenged, and the Democratic Party had a vice presidential nominee," Viorst writes.

Backgrounders — private news briefings by officials who require anonymity — have nearly gone out of style in Washington but not quite. William D. Ruckelshaus, administrator of the environmental protection agency, was the "high ranking" unidentified official who told a group of Washington reporters at a private gathering that President Nixon prefers John B. Connally as his presidential successor over vice president Spiro T. Agnew.

Ruckelshaus said he went to talk to Nixon about pollution and instead the President preferred to talk politics.

Connally, former Treasury Secretary and head of Democrats for Nixon in the last election, may eventually wind up in the second term cabinet as a stepping stone to the Republican presidential nomination.

For misguided cowboys who may one day have the tenacity to drive a herd of cattle through the streets of Boston, there is a bit of information in the new "Index of City Services" pamphlet that might be helpful. On page 12 it tells them that they can obtain a permit for driving cattle in the streets in Room 714 of the Public Works Department at City Hall.

Boston City Hall employees who take winter vacations make it a point not to go to Florida when Mayor White is there. They are not embarrassed about the prospect of bumping into the boss on the beach. They just know that it usually rains, as it did the last time, when he goes south.

The new state garage has been open only a month. Nonetheless, Sen. Arthur Lewis (D-Boston) has found a quick way to convenience. His long black Cadillac was seen being washed by garage attendants.

Sen. Norris Cotton (R-NH) insists that he doesn't speak for the White House in talking about a Senate investigation of the Watergate incidents, but asked about Nixon Administration witnesses testifying, he says "If I were they, I would testify and I expect them to."

"This budget is nothing more than a minestrone of deceit," Boston City Councilman Gerald F. O'Leary said last week as he criticized Mayor White's budget. Webster defines minestrone as "a rich thick vegetable soup with dried beans, macaroni, vermicelli, or similar ingredients." Pass the lasagna, please.

Three bobbies from President Nixon's second inaugural, salvage crews are still taking down the wooden spectator stands from in front of the White House, nail by nail, and board by board. These highly preferred stands, reserved at $50 a ticket for the inaugural parade, were sold to the highest bidder for second-hand lumber. Even the enclosed turret from where the President watched the parade is being dismantled, and only the bullet proof glass will be saved by the government for the next inaugural.

Copyright © 2021 Newspapers.com. All Rights Reserved.

Powered by Newspapers.com