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A New Strategy for Liberty

by Murray N. Rothbard

American political life has experienced a veritable transformation. As usually happens when we are in the midst of a radical social change, we are barely aware that anything is happening, much less its full scope and dimension. In the words of Bob Dylan taunting the hated bourgeoisie in the 1960s: "You don't know what's happening, do you, Mr. Jones?" Except that now the tables have been turned, and "Mr. Jones" is the comfortably ensconced member of the liberal and Beltway elite ruling this country.

The great and inspiring new development is that, for the first time in many a moon, a genuine grassroots right-wing people's movement is emerging throughout the country. This is a very different story from the Official Conservative and Libertarian movement that we have known all too well for many years: a movement where well-funded periodicals, think-tanks, and "public-interest" law firms, snugly (and smugly) established mostly inside the Beltway, set down the Line unchallenged for the subservient folks in the hinterlands.

Funding for these outfits comes mostly from big foundation and corporate donors; the role of the masses "out there" throughout the country is to touch their forelock and kick in with the rest of the dough. Often these Beltway organizations exist only as direct-mail fundraising machines with the usual panel of celebrities on their letterheads: the function of donations is to pay the salaries and to finance luxurious housing for these institutions.

Those Beltway organizations that are really active conduct indirect lobbying on behalf of gradual, marginal reforms hoping to push Congress or the Executive one centimeter to the right; the more important function, however, is to grant their major donors one of the great prizes of Official Washington: access to leading politicians and bureaucrats.

The published reports of these outfits are mainly designed not to advance The Cause, but to demonstrate to their donors the fact of such access: hence, countless pictures of thinktank executives

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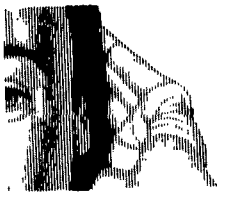

THE EAR

by Sarah Barton

The glamorous and popular radio talk show host, Ronna Romney, a genuine conservative, lost her Senatorial primary race in Michigan to the sneaky, treacherous neocon activist Spencer Abraham in a close race (52 to 48 percent). The reason: a vicious last-minute smear campaign by the Abraham forces, backed to the hilt by the overpraised "conservative" machine of Governor Engler.

Going negative in a late blitz, the Abraham forces put out effective anti-Romney TV ads, had women cattily dismiss Ronna as "a ditzy blonde" and "a socialite," and disseminated an unfounded rumor by

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the poisonous pro-choice Republican leader Ann Stone that Ronna had told her privately that she was pro-choice. (Both Romney and Abraham said they were pro-life.) In addition, the Abrahamites called up Arab voters (Michigan has the most Arab-Americans of any state) and told them that Ronna Romney is anti-Arab; and did the same thing with Jewish voters.

Unfortunately, Ronna, a sweet and trusting soul, had made no contingency plans for quick and strong replies to any negative campaigns (as the Clinton forces did so effectively in 1992), and she was caught flat-footed, succumbing to the Abrahamite smears. Live and learn, Ronna! Next time: plan ahead, expect the worst, trust no one, and take no prisoners!

Stabbed in the back, I wouldn't blame Michigan conservatives one bit if they paid Abraham back in kind, and took a walk on Election Day. Not only criminals, but treacherous politicians deserve swift punishment. Congressman Bob Carr, Abraham's liberal allegedly turned "moderate" Democrat opponent, at least doesn't pretend to be a friend and ally.

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I've already reported that Elizabeth McCaughey, the blond, leggy, pretend-"free market" glamourpuss who is running on the Republican ticket in New York for lieutenant-governor, has a romantic conflict of interest: her new squeeze, Wilbur Ross, Jr., senior managing director of Rothschild Inc., is a member of Mario Cuomo's reelection financial team. It now turns out that Ross is *considerably* older than Betsy. Would you say she is his "trophy girl friend"?

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I'm happy to report that Jared Taylor's excellent and courageous 1992 book, *Paved With Good Intentions*, which at long last brought race out of the closet and into the public square (or as public as the kept media would let it), is still giving the Left conniption fits.

Elizabeth Pochoda, book columnist for the *Nation*, refers to the Taylor book's "poisonous influence," and calls it an "underground classic and resource for those eager to promote a sense of white victimization." She praises Marc Naison's discussion of the book and its influence in *Reconstruction*, a leftist magazine in behalf of, though not by, blacks, and dedicated, as its title indicates, to finishing the horrible job that the original Reconstruction did on the South. ■

Jared Taylor's excellent and courageous 1992 book, *Paved With Good Intentions*, is still giving the Left conniption fits.

(STRATEGY...cont. from pg. 1)
shaking hands with Senator Dole, Alan Greenspan, or whomever.

The major purpose of the conferences held by these institutions is not to advance the truth or the free market in the public arena, but to demonstrate, once again, to the major donors that they are capable of bringing in Greenspan or Dole to attend their functions.

The stated excuse of these outfits, many of whom still claim abstract devotion to high libertarian or conservative principle, is that the reason for their location inside the Beltway and for devoting their energies to minor and negligible reforms is that this is the only way they can gain respectability in Washington.

But that, of course, is precisely the problem: change the word "respectability" to "access," and the point becomes all too clear. For a long time, these Washington organizations have not been part of the solution, however gradual or minor; they have been part of the problem: the domination of American life by Washington.

This sort of movement has

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been necessarily top-down, although many of these outfits like to think of themselves as grassroots: the grassroots Americans, however, live to serve the power elite, and the power elite lives to curry favor and access with Leviathan. That is why Samuel Francis's metaphor is so apt about the Beltway conservative movement meeting inside a phonebooth.

But in recent months, something brand new has happened. A grassroots, right-wing populist movement has been springing up all over the country, a movement that has no connection whatever to Official Conservative elites. Having no connection, the Beltway conservatives can have no control over this new right-wing uprising among the people.

Since it is a genuine grassroots movement, it is necessarily fragmented, unsystematic, and a bit chaotic. Also, since the dominant liberal media don't want to hear about it, and the Official Conservative movement is frightened of it, we hear very little of its activities.

While at this early stage the movement may be confused and inchoate, it has one magnificent quality which gives it great intensity and abiding strength: a deep and bitter hatred of the despotism exerted over us in so many hundreds of ways by the central government: hatred of politicians, of bureaucrats, and of Washington, D.C.

Note that this intense hatred, this reaction, this "backlash" against the drive toward collectivism, is necessarily and totally out of synch with the Beltway strategy of Official Conservative and Big-Government Libertarian organizations. Among the growing ranks of these grassroots rebels, this entire strategy and way of life is anathema. These heartland rebels are close to the spirit, not of blow-dried Beltway thinktankers, but of the patriots of the American Revolution.

They, in contrast even to the Reaganauts, are genuine revolutionaries; they are ready and willing to tell Washington, in no uncertain terms, to buzz off. To these new American rebels, the ability to sip martinis with Bob Dole constitutes a heavy liability, not an asset. To these great people, having "access" to tyrants means that you are aiding and abetting tyrants.

The recent revolutionary activities have been manifold and widespread. Since we lack complete information, none of us knows their full extent. Probably the first task of right-wing populist intellectuals is to find out what is going on, to get an idea of the full extent of this glorious phenomenon.

Some of these activities are as follows: an erupting "county militia" movement, in which, for example, entire counties are sworn-in as part of a militia so that they clearly come under the rubric of the Second Amendment and the right to bear arms; an associated and extensive civil disobedience by county sheriffs to the hated and despotic Brady bill; a Tenth Amendment movement: for example, both houses of the Colorado legislature have passed a resolution empowering the governor to call out the National Guard to block federal activities that violate the Tenth Amendment. What doesn't? And there are similar efforts in every other state.

The Committee of the 50 States, a states' rights group, has been resurrected to push the Ultimatum Resolution, proclaiming the dissolution of the federal government when the national debt reaches $6 trillion. The Committee is headed by the magnificent and venerable J. Bracken Lee, former mayor of Salt Lake City and governor of Utah. Lee, who would now be called a staunch paleo-libertarian, repeatedly through his career called for abolition of the income tax, an end to the Federal Reserve, withdrawal from the United Nations, and the elimination of all foreign aid.

In addition, there are various flourishing separatist and secessionist movements: for example, the desire of southwestern Nebraskans and northwestern Kansans to get out from under the despotic controllers and taxers of their "Eastern" big cities, such as Omaha and Wichita. Staten Island wants to secede from horrible New York City, and Vermont wants out of the U.S.

Southern secessionists are

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on the march again, in such new organizations as the Southern League and Peaceful Secession, and grassroots anti-immigration groups are booming in California, Texas, Florida, and other states. The growing and increasingly radical land-rights movement, fighting the confiscation of private property by federal agencies in cahoots with environmentalists, is active in the East as well as the West.

Finally, permeating all sectors of this variegated right-wing movement, there is a healthy and intense abhorrence of the Federal Reserve. These heartlanders may not know precisely what they want done in the field of money, but, happily, they are very firm on what they don't like. In wanting to sweep away the Fed they are right on the mark. Can you imagine what these folks would think of a libertarian outfit that glories in its ability to hobnob with *Greenspan*?

And that, I think, is the major point of this essay. There has been a radical change in the social and political landscape in this country, and any person who desires the victory of liberty and the defeat of the Leviathan must adjust his strategy accordingly. New times require a rethinking of old and possibly obsolete strategies.

I was always opposed to the marginal reform strategy endemic to the Beltway thinktanks. I always thought that any marginal and dubious short-run gains would be earned only at the price of a disastrous long-run abandonment of and therefore defeat for the principles of liberty. But in the America existing before 1994, such a Beltway strategy was at least coherent and arguable.

Now, however, the Beltway strategy is absurd in the short as well as the long run. There is a new mood in America, a lasting change of heart among the conservative masses. As the Marxists used to say, "the masses are in motion," and our first task is to stay with them and try to help their movement be more systematic.

No longer are the conservative masses content to send checks to the biggies in Washington who, in return for their donations, will tell them what to think. No longer are they bowing to their betters who can assure them access to the Corridors of Power. Bless them, these heartland rebels don't want access; they want to sweep the whole Moloch away.

Where does this marvelous and burgeoning new spirit come from? There was an obvious foreshadowing in the anti-politics and anti-Washington mood of 1992. An example is the flawed and incoherent Perot movement, the major virtue of which was not the erratic leader but the spirit of the rank-and-file militants, who were looking for some sort of anti-Washington Change. But that doesn't go very far in explaining the new mass movement, which is far more right-wing, and far more intensely focused, than anything Perotvian two years ago.

No, it seems clear that the trigger for the emergence of this brand-new movement has been the total loathing welling up in America for President and Mrs. Clinton, their persons, their lives, their Cabinet, their entire rotten crew. In all my life, I have never seen such a widespread and intense hatred for any President, or indeed for any politician.

Unlike the attacks on poor Joe McCarthy, this is not a hatred whipped up by the elites. Quite the contrary, the liberal elites are desperately trying to cover for Clinton, and are bewildered and appalled by the entire phenomenon. In a recent column, Thomas Sowell noted the perplexity of the media, and replied, in effect, that the reason the Clintons are widely "perceived" as power-hungry sleazes is because they *are* power-hungry sleazes.

Thus the movement erupted in reaction to all the objectively loathsome attributes of the Clintons and their associates—the stream of lies, evasions, crookery, sex scandals, and frantic attempts to run all of our lives. But quickly the hatred of the personal attributes of Clinton spilled over to his programs, to his ideology. Thus we had the most powerful "nuclear fusion" in all of politics: the intense blending of the personal and ideological. The growing

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realization of the socialist tyranny involved in all of Clinton's programs—a realization that finally cut through the rhetorical fog of the "Mr. New Democrat"—joined with and was greatly multiplied by the loathing for Clinton the man.

During the 1992 elections, some of us worried that a Clinton administration, in addition to being bad for America and for liberty, would also cripple the right-wing movement strategically. For the usual pattern has been that Democratic administrations are "good" for Beltway organizations because the conservative heartland gets scared and pours money into their coffers. In that way a Clinton administration would unfortunately strengthen the conservative and libertarian Beltway elites that have long been dominating and ruining the right-wing movement.

To some extent, this has of course happened; but more important is a new phenomenon that none of us predicted: that Clinton and his crew would be so monstrous, so blatant, so objectively hateful, that it would drive into being from below a new and burgeoning real right-wing movement that hates all of Washington, whether the actual rulers or the Official Conservatives and Libertarians who bend the knee in behalf of access and possible piddling reform.

We have America to win; we have nothing to lose but our chains!

Given this, what is the proper strategy for liberty? The first thing is for any conservative or free-market group or institution to be principled, radical, and fervently anti-Washington, and to avoid like the plague Beltway-itis, either in form or content. That is, to denounce rather than cultivate the Corridors of Power, and to call for principled and radical change rather than marginal reform, change that is clearly anti-Washington and anti-federal power.

Such proposals and programs should be designed, not for the eyes and ears of Beltway power, but to educate, inspire, and guide the extraordinarily sound instincts of the new grassroots movement. We are entering an era in which, happily, the principled position is evidently the proper strategy. More than ever before, principle and strategy are fused, in behalf of the victory of liberty.

A second necessary task is informational: we can't hope to provide any guidance to this marvelous new movement until we, and the various parts of the movement, find out what is going on. To help, we will feature a monthly report on "The Masses in Motion."

After the movement finds itself and discovers its dimensions, there will be other tasks: to help the movement find more coherence, and fulfill its magnificent potential for overthrowing the malignant elites that rule over us. Increasingly, as these elites strive to crush us, it is no exaggeration to paraphrase the rallying cry of our former chief enemy: we have America to win; we have nothing to lose but our chains!

Cuba: a Modest Proposal

by M.N.R.

Maybe I'm missing something, but as an economist I sense a certain amount of inefficiency in our present Cuba policy: the Cubans go on rafts in the Caribbean, we pick them up, and then we return them to the Cuban island at Guantanamo Bay. Why not save a lot of resources, cut out the middleman, and just let every Cuban who wants to pour directly into Guantanamo? Then maybe the entire Cuban population of 11 million will

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