

A Libertarian's Platform

By JAMES C. INGEBRETSEN

THE platform of the libertarian candidate is simple. It has only one plank in it: *No special privilege for anyone.*

He concerns himself with only two methods of achieving this worthy objective:

1. The free market.
2. Government limited to the defense of life and property.

There is no way known to man to determine prices of goods or rates of wages or where man should travel or where he should work or how long he should labor or in what manner he should exchange the fruits of his efforts, except in a market free of coercion or by some measure of authoritarianism. There is no possible way of determining value except by what an unfettered people will offer — of their own free will — in exchange for any product or for any service. But governmental authoritarianism can, and does, curtail and destroy this freedom in the market place by granting special privileges to various persons and groups.

Special privilege cannot be granted, however, except by a government that is out-of-bounds. Government, limited to the defense of the life and livelihood of all citizens equally, has no special privilege within its power to grant. A government cannot grant anything to anyone which it does not take from someone else.

The libertarian candidate, regardless of how great his competence may be, reasons thus: "You as a person are better able to control your life than I am. Your life is your personal affair, for better or for worse, except as in the living of your life you may impair or endanger the life and livelihood of others . . ."

No person, without an element of authoritarianism, can argue otherwise. Libertarians — non-authoritarians — recognize that they have no logical rights, with respect to other people, beyond the defense of themselves. Nor do they grant to an agency-government in any of its forms — any rights which they themselves do not possess. A libertarian's government has nothing to dispense except equal protection against, or equal penalizing of fraud, misrepresentation, predatory practices, and violence.

The variations among men — in their intelligence, their talents, their inheritances — are the handiwork of God, and the libertarian accepts this fact. He refuses to play the role of god-man and to attempt a coercive readjustment of that which God has provided. He stands on the single platform of no special privilege for anyone, insofar as his dispensing of it is concerned.

The libertarian goes on the political stage more to present his views than to seek office. For special privilege will prevail unless its error is understood at least by those whom others follow. Votes, the concern of those who cast them, are not to be sought at the expense of integrity nor by concessions to authoritarianism.

The libertarian has faith in free men. He is conscious of their natural inclination to co-operate for their own benefit and he knows that only in the release of their energy is good accomplished. He, therefore, does not want power. He wants only freedom from power, the mark of civilization. And he reasons that he cannot correct uncivilized man by becoming uncivilized himself.

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