



New Libertarian Manifesto

by Samuel Edward Konkin III

This seminal essay on agorism was first published in Anarchosamisdat Press, 1980.
It is a black market best-seller, anarchist classic, and bible of the libertarian left.

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[Samuel Edward Konkin III](#) wrote this seminal anarcho-capitalist strategy paper on agorism in 1980.

[Agorism](#) is a theory about using the counter-economy as the primary tool for the transition from statism to anarchy.

I. Statism: Our Condition

We are coerced by our fellow human beings. Since they have the ability to choose to do otherwise, our condition need not be thus. Coercion is immoral, inefficient, and unnecessary for human life and fulfillment. Those who wish to be supine as their neighbors prey on them are free to so choose; this manifesto is for those who choose otherwise: to fight back.



To combat coercion, one must understand it. More important, one must understand what one is fighting *for* as much as what one is fighting *against*. Blind reaction goes in all directions negative to the source of oppression and disperses opportunity; pursuit of a common goal focuses the opponents and allows formation of coherent strategy and tactics.

Diffuse coercion is optimally handled by local, immediate self-defense. Though the market may develop larger-scale businesses for protection and restoration, random threats of violence can only be dealt with on the spot *ad hoc*.[\[1\]](#)

Organized coercion requires organized opposition. (An excellent case has been made many times by many thinkers that such organization should remain skeletal at best, fleshing out only for actual confrontation, in order to prevent perversion of the defenders into an agency of aggression.) Institutional coercion, developed over the millennia with roots of mysticism and delusion planted deep in the victims' thinking, requires a grand strategy and a cataclysmic point of historical singularity: Revolution.

Such an institution of coercion-centralizing immorality, directing theft and murder, and coordinating oppression on a scale inconceivable by random criminality-exists. It is the Mob of mobs, Gang of gangs, Conspiracy of conspiracies. It has murdered more people in a few recent years than all the deaths in history before that time; it has stolen in a few recent years more than all the wealth produced in history to that time; it has deluded-for its survival-more minds in a few recent years than all the irrationality of history to that time; Our Enemy, The State.[\[2\]](#)

In the 20th Century alone, war has murdered more than all previous deaths; taxes and inflation have stolen more than all wealth previously produced; and the political lies, propaganda, and above all, "Education," have twisted more minds than all the superstition prior: yet through all the deliberate confusion and obfuscation, the thread of reason has developed fibers of resistance to be woven into the rope of execution for the State: Libertarianism.

Where the State divides and conquers its opposition, Libertarianism unites and liberates. Where the State beclouds, Libertarianism clarifies; where the State conceals, Libertarianism uncovers;

where the State pardons, Libertarianism accuses.

Libertarianism elaborates an entire philosophy from one simple premise: initiatory violence or its threat (coercion) is wrong (immoral, evil, bad, supremely impractical, etc.) and is forbidden; nothing else is.[3]

Libertarianism, as developed to this point, discovered the problem and defined the solution: the State *vs.* the Market. The Market is the sum of all *voluntary* human action.[4] If one acts noncoercively, one is part of the Market. Thus did Economics become a part of Libertarianism.

Libertarianism investigated the nature of man to explain his rights deriving from non-coercion. It immediately followed that man (woman, child, Martian, etc.) had an absolute right to this life and other property-and no right to the life or property of others. Thus did Objective philosophy become part of Libertarianism.

Libertarianism asked why society was not libertarian now and found the State, its ruling class, its camouflage, and the heroic historians striving to reveal the truth. Thus did Revisionist History become part of Libertarianism.

Psychology, especially as developed by Thomas Szasz as counter-psychology, was embraced by libertarians seeking to free themselves from both State restraint and self-imprisonment. Seeking an art form to express the horror potential of the State and extrapolate the many possibilities of liberty, Libertarianism found Science Fiction already in that field.

From political, economic, philosophical, psychological, historical, and artistic realms the partisans of liberty saw a whole, integrating their resistance with others elsewhere, and they came together as their consciousness became aware. Thus did Libertarians become a Movement.

The Libertarian Movement looked around and saw the challenge: everywhere, Our Enemy, The State; from the ocean's depth past arid desert outposts to the distant lunar surface; in every land, people, tribe, nation - and in the individual mind.

Some sought immediate alliance with other opponents of the power elite to overthrow the State's present rulers.[5] Some sought immediate confrontation with the State's agents.[6] Some pursued collaboration with those in power who offered less oppression in exchange for votes.[7] And some dug in for long-term enlightenment of the populace to build and develop the Movement.[8] Everywhere, a Libertarian Alliance of activists sprang up.[9]

The State's Higher Circles were not about to yield their plunder and restore property to their victims at the first sign of opposition. The first counterattack came from anti-principles already planted by the corrupt Intellectual Caste: Defeatism, Retreatism, Minarchism, Collaborationism, Gradualism, Monocentrism, and Reformism-including accepting State office

to “improve” Statism! All of these anti-principles (deviations, heresies, self-destructive contradictory tenets, etc.) will be dealt with later. Worst of all is Partyarchy, the anti-concept of pursuing libertarian ends through statist means, especially political parties.

A “Libertarian” Party was the second counterattack of the State unleashed on the fledgling Libertarians, first as a ludicrous oxymoron,[\[10\]](#) then as an invading army.[\[11\]](#) The third counterattack was an attempt by one of the ten richest capitalists in the United States to buy the major Libertarian institutions-not just the Party-and run the movement as other plutocrats run all the other political parties in capitalist states.[\[12\]](#)

The degree of success those statist counterattacks had in corrupting libertarianism led to a splintering of the Movement’s “Left” and the despairing paralyzation of others. As disillusionment grew with “Libertarianism,” the disillusioned sought answers to this new problem: the State *within* as well as the State without. How do we avoid being used by the State and its power elite? That is, they asked, how can we avoid deviations from the path of liberty when we *know* there are more than one? The market has many paths to production and consumption of a product and none are perfectly predictable. So even if one tells us how to get from here (statism) to there (liberty), how do we know *that* is the best way?

Already some are dredging up the old strategies of movements long dead, movements with other goals. New paths are indeed being offered-back to the State.[\[13\]](#)

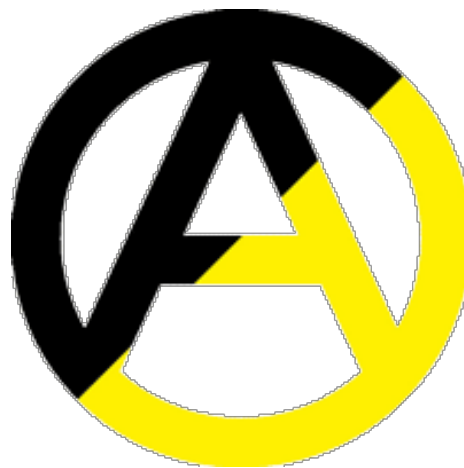
Betrayal, inadvertent or planned, continues. It need not.

While no one can predict the sequence of steps that will unerringly achieve a free society for free-willed individuals, one can eliminate in one slash all those that will *not* advance Liberty, and applying the principles of the Market unwaveringly will map out a terrain to travel. There is no One Way, one straight line graph to Liberty, to be sure. But there is a family of graphs, a Space filled with lines, that will take the libertarian to his goal of the free society, and that Space can be described.

Once the goal is fixed and the paths discovered, only the Action of the individual to go from here to there remains. Above all, this manifesto calls for that Action.[\[14\]](#)

II. Agorism: Our Goal

The basic principle which leads a libertarian from statism to a free society is the same that the founders of libertarianism used to discover the theory itself. That principle is *consistency*. Thus, the consistent application of the theory of libertarianism to every action the individual libertarian takes creates the libertarian society.



Many thinkers have expressed the need for consistency between means and ends and not all were libertarians.

Ironically, many statisticians have claimed *inconsistency* between laudable ends and contemptible means; yet when their true ends of greater power and oppression were understood, their means are found to be quite consistent. It is part of the statist mystique to confuse the necessity of ends–means consistency; it is thus the most crucial activity of the libertarian theorist to expose inconsistencies. Many theorists have done so admirably; but few have attempted and most failed to describe the consistent means and ends combination of libertarianism.[\[15\]](#)

Whether or not this manifesto is itself correct can be determined by the same principle. If consistency fails, then all within is meaningless; in fact, language is then gibberish and existence a fraud. This cannot be overemphasized. Should an inconsistency be discovered in these pages, then *the consistent reformulation is New Libertarianism*, not what has been found in error. New Libertarianism (*agorism*) *cannot* be discredited without Liberty or Reality (or both) being discredited, only an incorrect formulation.

Let us begin by sighting our goal. What does a free society look like, or at least a society as free as we can hope to achieve with our present understanding?[\[16\]](#)

Undoubtedly the freest society yet envisioned is that of Robert LeFevre. All relations between people are voluntary exchanges - a free market. No one will injure another or trespass in any way.

Of course, a lot more than statism would have to be eliminated from individual consciousness for his society to exist. Most damaging of all to this perfectly free society is its lack of a mechanism of correction.[\[17\]](#) All it takes is a handful of practitioners of coercion to enjoy their ill-gotten plunder in enough company to sustain them - and freedom is dead. Even if all are living free, one “bite of the apple,” one throwback, reading old history or rediscovering evil on his own, will “unfree” the perfect society.

The next-best-thing to a free society is the Libertarian society. Eternal vigilance is the price of Liberty (Thomas Jefferson) and it may be possible to have a small number of individuals in the marketplace ready to defend against sporadic aggression. Or large numbers may retain

sufficient knowledge and ability to use that knowledge of basic self-defense to deter random attacks (the coercer never knowing who might be wellversed in defense) and eliminate the profitability of systematic violence initiation.

Even so, there remain two problems inordinately difficult for this system of “Anarchy with spontaneous defense.” First is the problem of defending those who are noticeably defenseless. This can be reduced by advanced technology to people who are quadriplegic morons (assuming *that* won’t be solved by sufficient technology) and very young children who require constant attention anyway. Then there are those who for a brief time go defenseless and the even rarer cases of those who are overwhelmed by violence initiators wishing to test their skills against a probably weaker foe. (The last is most rare simply because of the high risk and low material return on investment.)

Those who need not-and should not-be defended are those who consciously choose not to be: pacifists. LeFevre and his disciples need never fear some Libertarian will use methods they find repugnant to defend them. (Perhaps they can wear a “dove” button for quick recognitions?)

Far more important is what to do with the violence initiator after defense. The case in which one’s property is violated successfully and one is not there to protect it comes readily to mind. And finally, though actually a special case of the above, is the possibility of fraud and other forms of contract violation.[\[18\]](#)

These cases may be settled by the primitive “shoot-out” or socially-that is, through the intervention of a third party who has no vested interest in either of the two parties to the dispute. This case is the fundamental problem of society.[\[19\]](#)

Any attempts to force a solution against the wishes to both parties violates Libertarian principle. So a “shoot-out” involving no risk to third parties is acceptable-but hardly profitable or efficient or even civilized (aesthetically pleasing) save to a few cultists.

The solution, then, requires a judge, “Fair Witness” or arbitrator. Once an arbitrator to a dispute or judge of an aggression has performed judgment and communicated the decision, enforcement may be required. (Pacifists may choose arbitration without enforcement, by the way.)

The following market system has been proposed by Rothbard, Linda and Morris Tannehill, and others; it need not be definitive and may be improved by advances in theory and technology (as this author has already done). At this stage of history, it seems optimal and is presented here as the beginning working model.

First, always leaving out those who choose not to participate, one insures oneself against aggression or theft. One can even assign a value to one’s life in case of murder (or inadvertent manslaughter) which may range from the taking of the violence-initiator’s life, taking

replaceable organs (technology willing) to restore the victim's life, to paying to a foundation to continue one's life's work. What is crucial here is that the victim assigns the value to his life, body, and property *before* the mishap. (Exchangeable goods may simply be replaced at market rate. See below.)

A finds property missing and reports it to the insurance company IA. IA investigates (either through another division or through a separate detective agency D). IA promptly replaces the object to A so that loss of use of the good is minimized.^[20] D now may fail to discover the missing property. In that case, the loss to IA is covered by the premiums paid for the insurance. Note well that in order to keep premiums low and competitive, IA has a strong incentive to maximize retrieval of stolen or lost goods. (One could wax eloquent for volumes on the lack of such incentive for monopoly detection systems such as State police forces, and their horrendous social cost.)

If D does discover the goods, say in B's possession, and B freely returns them (perhaps induced by reward), the case is closed. Only if B claims property right in the object also claimed by A does conflict arise.

B retains insurance company IB, which may perform its own independent investigation and convince IA that D erred. Failing that, IA and IB are now in conflict. At this point, the standard objections to market anarchy have been brought up that the "war" between A and B has been enlarged to include large insurance companies that may have sizeable protection divisions or contracts with protection companies (PA and PB). But wherein lies the incentive for IA and IB to use violence and destroy not only its competitor's assets but surely at least some of its own? They have even less incentive in a market society long established; the companies have specialists and capital tied up in defense. Any company investing in *offense* would become highly suspect and surely lose customers in a predominantly Libertarian society (which is what is under discussion).

Very cheaply and profitably, IA and IB can simply pay an arbitration company to settle the dispute, presenting their respective claims and evidence. If B has rightful claim, IA drops the case, taking its small loss (compared to war!) and has excellent incentive to improve its investigation. If A has rightful claim, the reverse is now true for IB.

Only at this point, when the matter has been fully contested, investigated, and judged, and *still* B refuses to relinquish the stolen property, would violence occur. (B may have only been bothered so far as being notified of IB's defense on B's behalf, and B may have chosen to ignore it; no subpœnæ could be issued until *after* conviction.) But PB and IB step aside and B must now face a competent, efficient team of specialists in recovery of stolen property. Even if B is near-mad in his resistance at this point, he would probably be neutralized with minimum fuss by a market agency eager for a good public image and more customers-including B himself some day. Above all, PA must act so as not to invade anyone else or harm the property

of *others*.

B or IB is now liable for *restoration*. This can be divided into three parts: restitution, time preference, and apprehension.

Restitution is the return of the original good or its market equivalent. This could be applied even to parts of the human body or the value set on one's life.

Time-preference is the restitution of the time-use lost and is easily determined by the market rate of interest which IA had to pay immediately to restore A's property.

Apprehension is the sum of the cost of investigation, detection, arbitration, and enforcement. Note how well the market works to give B a high incentive to restore the loot quickly to minimize apprehension cost (exactly the opposite to most statist systems) and to minimize interest accrued.

Finally, note all the built-in incentives for swift, efficient justice and restoration with a minimum of fuss and violence. Contrast this with all other systems *in operation*; note as well that *in parts* all this system has been tried successfully throughout history. Only the whole is new and exclusive to Libertarian theory.

This model of restoration has been spelled out so specifically, even though it may be improved and developed, because it solves the only social problem involving any violence whatsoever. The rest of this Libertarian society can be best pictured by imaginative science fiction authors with a good grounding in praxeology (Mises' term for the study of human action, especially, but not only, economics).

Some hallmarks of this society-libertarian in theory and free-market in practice, called *agorist*, from the Greek *agora*, meaning "open marketplace"-are rapid innovations in science, technology, communication, transportation, production, and distribution. A complementary case can be made for rapid innovation and development in the arts and humanities to keep up with the more material progress; also, such non-material progress would be likely because of total liberty in all forms of nonviolent artistic expression and ever more rapid and complete communication of it to willing recipients. The libertarian literature extolling these benefits of freedom is already a large body and growing rapidly.

One must conclude this description of restoration theory by dealing with some of the arcane objections to it. Most of these reduce to challenges to ascribe value to violated goods or persons. Letting the impersonal market *and the victim* decide seems most fair to both victim *and aggressor*.

The latter point offends some who feel *punishment* is required for evil in thought; reversibility of deed is not enough for them.[\[21\]](#)

Though none of them has come up with a moral basis for punishment, Rothbard and David

Friedman in particular argue for the economic necessity of deterrence. They argue that any percentage of apprehension less than 100% allows a small probability of success; hence, a “rational criminal” may choose to take the risk for his gain. Thus, additional deterrence must be added in the form of punishment. That this also will decrease the incentive for the aggressor to turn himself in and thus lower further the rate of apprehension is not considered, or perhaps the punishment is to be escalated at ever-faster rates to beat the accelerating rate of evasion. As this is written, the lowest rate of evasion from state-defined crimes is 80%; most criminals have better than 90% chance of not being caught. This is within a punishment-rehabilitation system wherein no restoration occurs (the victim being further plundered by taxation to support the penal system) and the market is banished. Small wonder there is a thriving “red market” in nonState violence initiation!

Even so, this criticism of agorist restoration fails to note that there is an “entropy” factor. The potential aggressor must put the gain of the object of theft against the loss of the object *plus* interest *plus* apprehension cost. It is true that if he turns himself in immediately, the latter two are minimal-but so are the costs to the victim and insurer.

Not only is agorist restoration happily deterrent in a reciprocal relation with compliance, but the market cost of the apprehension factor allows a precise quantifiable measurement of the social cost of coercion in society. No other proposed system known to man does that. As most libertarians have been saying, freedom works.

Nowhere in agorist restoration theory do the thoughts of the aggressor enter into the picture. The aggressor is assumed only to be a human actor and responsible for his actions. Furthermore, what business is it of anyone else what anyone thinks? What is relevant is what the aggressor does. Thought is not action; in thought, at least, anarchy remains absolute.[\[22\]](#)

If you sit up in shock to find that I have crashed through your picture window, you don't particularly care if I tripped and fell through while walking by or if I engaged in some act of irrational anger jumping through or even whether it was a premeditated plan to distract protectors across the street from noticing a bank heist. What you want is your window back *pronto* (and the mess cleared). *What I think is irrelevant to your restoration.* In fact, it can be easily demonstrated that even the smallest expenditure of energy on this subject is pure waste. Motivation-or *suspected* motivation, which is all we can know²²-may be relevant to detection and even to prove plausibility of the aggressor's action to an arbitrator if there may be two equally probably suspects, but all that matters for justice-as a libertarian sees it-is that the victim has been restored to a condition as identical as possible to pre-harm. Let God or conscience punish “guilty thoughts.”[\[23\]](#)

Another objection raised concerns what will be done about violence initiators who have paid their debt (to the individual, *not* “society”), and are “free” to try again-with greater experience. What about recidivism, so prevalent in statist society?

Of course, once one is marked as an aggressor, one will probably be watched more closely and thought of first when a similar crime is committed. And while work camps may be used to repay restitution in a few extreme cases, most aggressors will be allowed to work in relative freedom on bond. Thus no “institutions of criminal higher learning” like prisons will be around to educate and encourage aggression.

The distinguishing characteristic of a highly efficient and accurate system of judgment and protection will be that it will occupy a negligible fraction of an individual’s time, thought, or money. One can then argue that we have not portrayed 99% of the agorist society at all.

What about elimination of self-destruction (which Libertarianism does not deal with), space exploration and colonization, life extension, intelligence increase, interpersonal relations, and æsthetic variations? All that really can and *need be* said is that where present man must spend half or more of his time and energy serving or resisting the State, that time-energy (physicist definition of action) will be usable for all other aspects of self-improvement and harnessing of nature. It takes a cynical view of humanity indeed to imagine anything but a richer, happier society.

This then is a sketch of our goal and a detailed picture or enlarged focus on the aspect of justice and protection. We have the “here” and the “there.” Now for the path - Counter-Economics.

III. Counter-Economics: Our Means



Having detailed our past and statist present and glimpsed a credible view of a far better society achievable with present understanding and

technology - no change in human nature needed - we come to the critical part of the manifesto: how do we get from here to there? The answer breaks naturally - or maybe unnaturally - into two parts. Without a State, a differentiation into *micro* (manipulation of an individual by himself and his environment - including the market) and the *macro* (manipulation of collectives) would be at best an interesting statistical exercise with some small reference to marketing agencies. Even so, a person with a highly sophisticated decency may wish to understand the *social* consequences of his or her acts even if they harm no other.

With a State tainting every act and befouling our minds with unearned guilt, it becomes extremely important to understand the social consequences of our acts. For example, if we fail to pay at tax and get away with it, who is hurt? Us? The State? Innocents? Libertarian analysis shows us that the *State* is responsible for any damage to innocents it alleges that the “selfish tax-evader” has incurred; and the “services” the State “provides” us are illusory. But even so, must there not be more than lonely resistance cleverly concealed or "dropping out?" If a political party or revolutionary army is inappropriate and self-defeating for libertarian goals, what sort of collective action works?

The answer is *agorism*.

It is possible, practical, and even profitable to entrepreneur large collections of humanity away from statist society to the agora. This is, in the deepest sense, true revolutionary activity and will be covered in the next chapter. To understand this *macro* answer, however, we must first outline the *micro* answer.[\[24\]](#)

The function of the pseudo-science of Establishment economics, even more than making predictions for the ruling class (as did the Imperial Roman augurs), is to mystify and confuse the ruled class as to where their wealth is going and how it is taken. An explanation of how people can keep their wealth and property safe from the State, then, is Counter-Establishment economics, or Counter-Economics[\[25\]](#) for short. The actual practice of human actions that evade, avoid, and defy the State is counter-economic activity, but - in the same sloppy way that “economics” refers both to the science and what it studies - “counter-economics” will undoubtedly be used. Since this writing is Counter-Economic theory itself, what will be referred to as Counter-Economics is the practice.

Mapping and describing all or even a significantly useful part of Counter-Economics will require at least a full volume itself.[\[26\]](#) Just enough will be sketched here to provide understanding for the rest of the manifesto.

Going from an agorist society to a statist one should be uphill work, equivalent to a path of high negative entropy in physics. After all, once one is living in and understanding a well-run free society, why would one wish to return to systematic coercion, plunder, and anxiety? Spreading ignorance and irrationality among the knowledgeable and rational is difficult; mystifying that which is already clearly understood is nearly impossible. The agorist society should be fairly stable relative to decadence, though highly open to improvement.

Let us run backward in time, like running a film in reverse, from the agorist society to the present statist society. What would we expect to see?

Pockets of statism - mostly contiguous in territory, since the State requires regional monopolies - would first appear. The remaining victims are becoming more and more aware of the wonderful free world around them and “evaporating” from these pockets. Large syndicates of market protection agencies are containing the State by defending those who have signed up for protection-insurance. Most importantly, those outside the statist pockets or sub-societies are enjoying an agorist society save for a higher cost of insurance premiums and some care as to where they travel. The agorists could coexist with statist at this point, maintaining an isolationist “foreign policy” since the costs of invasion and liberation of statist sub-societies would be higher than immediate returns (unless the State launches an all-out last aggression). There is, however, no real reason to imagine the remaining victims will choose to remain oppressed when the libertarian alternative is so visible and accessible. The State’s areas are like a supersaturated solution ready to precipitate anarchy.

Run backward another step and we find the situation reversed. We find larger sectors of society under Statism and smaller ones living as agorically as possible. However, there is one visible difference: the agorists need not be territorially contiguous. They can live anywhere, though they will *tend to* associate with their fellow agorists not only for social reinforcement but for ease and profitability of trade. It’s always safer and more profitable to deal with more trustworthy customers and suppliers. The tendency is for greater association among more agorist individuals and for dissociation with more statist elements. (This tendency is not only theoretically strong; it already exists in embryonic practice today.) Some easily defendable territories, perhaps in space or islands in the ocean (or under the ocean) or big-city “ghettos” may be almost entirely agorist, where the State is impotent to crush them. Most agorists, though, will live within statistclaimed areas.

There will be a spectrum of the degree of agorism in most individuals, as there is today, with a few benefiting from the State being highly statist, a few fully conscious of the agorist alternative and competent as living free to the hilt, and the rest in the middle with varying degrees of confusion.

Finally, we step back to where there exist only a handful who understand agorism, the vast majority perceiving illusory gains from the existence of the State or unable to perceive an

alternative, and the statist themselves: the government apparatus and the class defined by receiving a net gain from the State's intervention in the Market.[\[27\]](#)

This is a description of our present society. We are "home."

Before we reverse course and describe the path from statism to agorism, let us look around at our present society with our newly acquired agorist perception. Much as a traveler who returns home and sees things in a new light from what he or she has learned from foreign lands and ways of life, we may gain new insights on our present circumstances.

Besides a few enlightened New Libertarians tolerated in the more liberal statist areas of the globe ("toleration" exists to the degree of libertarian contamination of statism), we now perceive something else: large numbers of people who are acting in an agorist manner with little understanding of any theory but who are induced by material gain to evade, or defy the State. Surely they have potential?

In the Soviet Union, a bastion of arch-statism and a nearly totally collapsed "official" economy, a giant black market provides the Russians, Armenian, Ukrainian and others with everything from food to television repair to official papers and favors from the ruling class. As the *Manchester Guardian Weekly* reports, Burma is almost a total black market with the government reduced to an army, police, and a few strutting politicians. In varying degrees, this is true of nearly all the Second and Third Worlds.

What of the "First" World? In the socialdemocrat countries, the black market is smaller because the "white market" of legally accepted market transactions is larger, but the former is still quite prominent. Italy, for example, has a "problem" of a large part of its civil service (which works officially from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m.) working unofficially at various jobs the rest of the day to earn "black" money. The Netherlands has a large black market in housing because of the high regulation of this industry. Denmark has a tax evasion movement so large that those in it seduced to politics have formed the second largest party. And these are only the grossest examples that the press has been able or willing to cover. Currency controls are evaded rampantly; in France, for example, everyone is assumed to have a large gold stash and trips to Switzerland for more than touring and skiing are commonplace.

To appreciate fully the extent of this counter-economic activity, one must view the relatively free "capitalist" economies. Let us look at the black and grey markets[\[28\]](#) in North America and remember that this is the case of lowest activity in the world today.

According to the American Internal Revenue Service, at least twenty million people belong in the "underground economy" of tax evaders using cash or barter exchange to avoid detections of transactions. Millions keep money in gold or in foreign accounts to avoid the hidden taxation of inflation. Millions of "illegal aliens" are employed, according to the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Millions more deal or consume marijuana, cocaine, and other

proscribed drugs, including laetrile, tryptophan, anti-AIDS drugs, and other forbidden medical material.

And there are all the practitioners of “victimless crimes.” Besides drug use, there is prostitution, pornography, bootlegging, false identification papers, gambling, and proscribed sexual conduct between consenting adults. Regardless of “reform movements” to gain political acceptance of these acts, the populace has chosen to act now - and by so doing are creating a counter-economy.

It doesn't stop here, though. Since the 55 mph speed limit was enacted federally in the U.S., most Americans have become counter-economic drivers. The trucking industry has developed CB communications to evade State enforcement of regulations. For independents who can make four runs at 75 mph rather than three runs at 55 mph, counter-economic driving is a question of survival.

The ancient custom of smuggling thrives today, from boatloads of marijuana and foreign appliances with high tariffs and truckloads of people from less-developed countries, to the tourists stashing a little extra in their luggage and not reporting it to customs agents.

Nearly everyone engages in some sort of misrepresentation or misdirection on their tax forms, off-the-books payments for services, unreported trade with relatives, and illegal sexual positions with their mates.

To some extent, then, everybody is a counter-economist! And this is predictable from libertarian theory. Nearly every aspect of human action has statist legislation prohibiting, regulating, or controlling it. These laws are so numerous that a “Libertarian” Party that prevented any new legislation and briskly repealed ten or twenty laws a session would not have significantly repealed the State (let alone the mechanism itself!) for millennia![\[29\]](#)

Obviously, the State is unable to obtain enforcement of its edicts. Yet the State continues. And if everyone is somewhat counter-economic, why hasn't the Counter-Economy overwhelmed the economy?

Outside of North America we can add the effect of imperialism. The Soviet Union has received support from the more-developed countries in the 1930s and large quantities of instruments of violence during World War II. Even today, “trade” - heavily subsidized by non-repayable loans - props up the Soviet and new Chinese regimes. This capital (or anti-capital, being destructive of value) from both blocs, along with military aid, maintains regimes over the rest of the globe. But that does not explain the North American case.

What exists everywhere on Earth that allows the State to continue is the sanction of the victim. [\[30\]](#) Every victim of statism has internalized the State to some degree. The IRS's annual proclamation that the income tax depends on “voluntary compliance” is ironically true. Should

the taxpayer completely cut off the blood supply, the vampire State would helplessly perish, its unpaid police and army deserting almost immediately, defanging the Monster. If everyone abandoned “legal tender” for gold and goods in contracts and other exchanges, it is doubtful that even taxation could sustain the modern State.[\[31\]](#)

This is where the State’s control of education and the information media, either directly or through ruling-class ownership, becomes crucial. In earlier days, the established priesthood served the function to sanctify the king and the aristocracy, to mystify the relations of oppression, and to induce guilt in evaders and resisters. The disestablishment of religion has put this burden on the new intellectual class (what the Russians called the intelligentsia). Some intellectuals, holding truth as their highest value (as did earlier dissenting theologians and clerics), do work at clarifying rather than mystifying, but they are dismissed or reviled and kept away from State and foundation-controlled income. Thus is the phenomenon of dissidence and revisionism created; and thus is the attitude of anti-intellectualism generated among the populace, who suspect or incompletely understand the function of the Court Intellectual.

Note well how anarchist intellectuals are attacked and repressed under every State; and those arguing for an overthrow of the present ruling class - even if only to replace it with another - are suppressed. Those who propose changes that eliminate some beneficiaries of the State and add others are often lauded by the benefiting elements of the Higher Circles and attacked by the potential losers.

A common characteristic of most hardened black marketeers is their guilt. They wish to “make their bundle” and return to the “straight society.” Bootleggers and hookers all long someday for reacceptance in society - even when they form a supportive “subsociety” of outcasts. Yet there have been exceptions to this phenomenon of longing for acceptance: the religious dissenting communities of the 1700s, the political utopian communities of the 1800s, and most recently the counter-culture of the hippies and the New Left. What they had was a conviction that their subsociety was superior to the rest of society. The fearful reaction they generated in the rest of society was the fear that they were correct.

All of these examples of self-sustaining subsocieties failed for one overriding reason: ignorance of economics. No social binding, no matter how beautiful, can overcome the basic glue of society - the division of labor. The anti-market commune defies the only enforceable law - the law of nature. The basic organizational structure of society (above the family) is not the commune (or tribe or extended tribe or State) but the agora. No matter how many wish communism to work and devote themselves to it, it will fail. They can hold back agorism indefinitely by great effort, but when they let go, the “flow” or “Invisible Hand” or “tides of history” or “profit incentive” or “doing what comes naturally” or “spontaneity” will carry society inexorably closer to the pure agora.

Why is there such resistance to eventual happiness? Psychologists have been dealing with that

since they began their embryonic science. We can at least give two broad answers when it comes to socioeconomic questions: internalization of anti-principles (those that seem to be principles but are actually contrary to natural law) and the opposition of vested interests.

Now we can see clearly what is needed to create a libertarian society. On the one hand we need the education of the libertarian activists and the consciousness-raising of counter-economists to libertarian understanding and mutual supportiveness. “We are right, we are better, we are surviving in a moral, consistent way, and we are building a better society - of benefit to ourselves and others,” our counter-economic “encounter groups” might affirm.

Note well that libertarian activists who are not themselves full practicing counter-economists are unlikely to be convincing. “Libertarian” political candidates undercut everything they say (of value) by what they are doing; some candidates have even held jobs in tax bureaus and defense departments!

On the other hand, we must defend ourselves against the vested interests or at the very least lower their oppression as much as possible. If we eschew reformist activity as counter-productive, how will we achieve that result?

One way is to bring more and more people into the counter-economy and lower the plunder available to the State. But evasion isn't enough; how do we protect ourselves and even counterattack?

Slowly but steadily we will move to the free society, turning more counter-economists on to libertarianism and more libertarians on to counter-economics, finally integrating theory and practice. The counter-economy will grow and spread to the next step we saw in our trip backward, with an ever-larger agorist subsociety imbedded in the statist society. Some agorists may even condense into discernible districts and ghettos and predominate on islands or in space colonies. At this point, the question of protection and defense will become important.

Using our agorist model (Chapter II), we see how the protection industry must evolve. Firstly, why do people engage in counter-economics with no protection? The payoff for the risk they take is greater than their expected loss. This statement is true, of course, for all economic activity, but for counter-economics it requires special emphasis:

The fundamental principle of counter-economics is to trade risk for profit.³²

The higher the expected profit, the greater the risk taken. Note that if risk is lowered, a lot more would be attempted and accomplished - surely an indicator that a free society is wealthier than an unfree one.

Risk may be lowered by increasing care, taking precautions, tightening security (locks, stashes safe houses), and by trusting fewer persons of higher trustworthiness. The last indicates a high preference for dealing with fellow agorist and a strong economic incentive that binds an agorist

subsociety and provides an incentive to recruit or support recruitment into that subsociety.

Counter-economic entrepreneurs have an incentive to provide better security devices, places of concealment, instructions to aid evasion and to screen potential customers and suppliers for other counter-economic entrepreneurs. And thus is the counter-economic protection industry born.

As it grows, it may begin insuring against “bursts,” lowering counter-economic risks further and accelerating counter-economic growth. Then it may provide lookouts and guarded areas of safekeeping with alarm systems and high-tech concealment mechanisms. Guards may be provided against real criminals (other than the State). Already many residential, business, and even minority districts employ private patrols, having given up on the State’s alleged protection of property.

Along the way, the risk of contract-violation between counter-economic traders will be lowered by arbitration. Then the protection agencies will start providing contract enforcement between agorists, although the greatest “enforcer” in the early stages will be the State to which each one can betray the other. Yet that act would quickly result in one’s expulsion from the subsociety; so an internal enforcement mechanism will be valued.

In the final stages, counter-economist transactions with statist will be enforceable by the protection agencies and the agorists thus protected against the criminality of the State.[\[33\]](#)

At this point we have reached the final step before the achievement of a libertarian society. Society is divided between large, inviolate agorist areas and rapidly-shrinking statist sectors.

We stand on the brink of Revolution.

IV. Revolution: Our Strategy

Our condition has been analyzed, our goal perceived, the mechanism has been spelled out and a set of pathways have been mapped out. Should we simply go counter-economic ourselves, educate ourselves in libertarianism and inform others by word and deed, we shall reach our libertarian society. Indeed, this is sufficient for most people and enough to be expected. No New Libertarian should ever berate libertarian counter-economists for not doing more. they are agorists and will get there in their own time.



But even these simple agorists may wish to contribute to entrepreneurs specializing in accelerating the movement to the agorist society from statism. And others, perceiving rising inflation heading to economic collapse or gathering clouds of war, will want something done about it. Finally, the counter-attacks of the State which subvert the agorist sub-society and lure libertarians into false paths must be combatted. These tasks define the field for the New Libertarian activist.[\[34\]](#)

Again, for those who wish only to live their lives as free as possible and associate with others like-minded, counter-economic libertarianism is sufficient. No more is needed.

But for those who want to support in whatever way they can those heroic entrepreneurs who specialize in recruiting for the agora, deal with State- caused catastrophes, and combat statist within and without, a guide is needed to select those who are "doing something worthwhile" from those spinning their wheels and those actually counter-productive (i.e. counter-revolutionary) to achieving more freedom. And for those like this author, who burn for Liberty and wish to devote themselves to that life's work, a strategy is essential. What follows, then, is the New Libertarian Strategy.[\[35\]](#)

The New Libertarian activist must keep in mind that actual defense against the State is impossible until the counter-economy has generated the syndicates of protection agencies sufficiently large to defend against the remnant of the State. This will occur only at the "phase transition" between the third and fourth steps leading back from our statism to agorism (Chapter 3).

Each step from statism to agorism requires a different strategy; tactics will differ even within each step. There are some rules which will apply in all stages.

Under all circumstances, one recruits and educates. Given typically confused individual acquaintances who consider a counter-economic act, encourage them to do it. If they are intelligent enough and not likely to turn on you, explain risks involved and return expected.

Most of all, educate them by your example to the extent you can let them know.

All "Library Libertarians" you know, those who profess some theoretical variant of libertarianism but eschew practice, should be encouraged to practice what they preach. Scorn their inaction, praise their first halting steps towards counter-economics. Interact with them more and more as trust grows with their competence and experience.

Those already in counter-economics whom you meet can be "let in on" the libertarian philosophy that you hold, that mysterious belief you hold which keeps you so happy and free of guilt. Drop in nonchalantly if they feign lack of interest: wax enthusiastic as they grow more curious and eager to learn.

Self agorism by example and argument. Control and program your emotional reactions to exhibit hostility at statism and deviationism, and to exhibit enthusiasm and joy at agorist acts and the State's setbacks. Most of these tactics will come with routine but you can check yourself to polish a few things.

Finally, co-ordinate your activities with other New Libertarian activists. At this point, we arrive at the need for group tactics and organization.

Many worthy libertarians argue that the market structures of businesses, partnerships and joint-stock companies[36] provide all the organization necessary or desirable; save maybe for personal mating or socializing. In one sense they are correct in that all structures must be market-compatible or be inconsistent with agorism. In another sense, they are guilty of a lack of imagination and a concern of form over substance.

In an agorist society, division of labor and self-respect of each worker- capitalist-entrepreneur will probably eliminate the traditional business organization - especially the corporate hierarchy, an imitation of the State and not the Market. Most companies will be associations of independent contractors, consultants, and other companies. Many may be just one entrepreneur and all his services, computers, suppliers and customers. This mode of operation is already around and growing in the freer segments of Western economies.

Thus an association of entrepreneurs of liberty for the purpose of specializing, coordinating and delivering libertarian activities is no violation of the market and may well be optimal. The traditional name for a handling together of sovereign units for a goal and then disbanding is an alliance. Hence the basic organization for New Libertarian activists is the New Libertarian Alliance.[37]

The organization of NLA (or NLAs) is simple and should avoid turning into a political organ or even an authoritarian organization. Rather than officers, what are needed are tacticians (local coordinators with competency in tactical planning) and strategists (regional co-ordinators with competency in strategic thinking). A New Libertarian Ally does not follow a tactician or

strategist but rather "buys" their argument and expertise. Anyone offering a better plan can replace the previous planner. Tactics and strategy should be "bought and sold" by the Allies like any other commodity in consistent agorist fashion.

Even though these labels are borrowed from military history and do correspond to a form of combat, never forget that actual physical confrontation with the State's enforcers must await the market's generation of protection agency syndicates of sufficient strength; all else is premature.

[\[38\]](#)

What is the global strategy, continental strategy, and local tactics for an NLA to optimally pursue? Again, let's look at the four steps from - or to - agora from Statism. The first three are actually rather artificial divisions; no abrupt change occurs from first to second to third. As will be shown, it is most probable that the transition from the third to fourth step will be quite sudden, though it is not required by the nature of the agora; rather, the convulsion will be caused by the nature of the State. In face, all violence, unrest, instability and dislocations are caused by the State - never formented by New Libertarians.

Heed well, you who would be a paladin of Liberty: never initiate any act of violence regardless how likely a "libertarian" result may appear. To do so is to reduce yourself to a statist. There are no exceptions to this rule. Either you are fundamentally consistent or not. A New Libertarian is fundamentally consistent and one who is not fundamentally consistent is not a New Libertarian.

[\[39\]](#)

But using New Libertarian analysis, one can predict the likely outbreak of statist aggression and move to head it off by exposure or even defend or evacuate the victims. One can also predict the probable outcomes of deviations by libertarian groups and either head off the sell-outs and disasters or win respect for one's foresight and that of New Libertarianism from potential recruits. Let the State be the forest fire; the NLA are the smoke-eaters who know how it burns, how to firebreak, how the winds of change affect it, where the sparks may fly, and finally, how to extinguish it.

With this in mind, let us label the steps to agora as four phases and outline the appropriate strategy for each.

Phase 0: Zero-Density Agorist Society

In this phase, most of human history, no agorists exist, only scattered libertarians or proto-libertarians thinking and practicing counter-economists. The moment someone reads this manifesto and wishes to apply it, we have moved to the next phase. All that can be done in Phase 0 is slow evolution of consciousness, hit and miss development, and a lot of frustrating dichotomies.

Until you - the first agorist in a Phase 0 situation - have added to your number, your only

strategy can be to increase your numbers, as well as live counter-economically yourself. The best form of organization is a Libertarian Alliance in which you steer the members from political activity (where they have blindly gone seeking relief from oppression) and focus on education, publicity, recruitment and perhaps some anti-political campaigning (i.e. "Vote For Nobody," "None of the Above", "Boycott the Ballot," "Don't Vote, It Only Encourages Them!" etc..) to publicize the libertarian alternative. An LA may take stands on issues agreed on, but insist on unanimity. Only the most clearly libertarian stands will be taken and you can always veto a deviationist stance. Always encourage tendencies towards "hard-core" (consistent) position and scorn "soft-core" (inconsistent) ones.

Phase 1: Low-Density Agorist Society

The first counter-economic libertarians appear in this phase and the first serious splits in the Libertarian movement occur. Since few libertarians are very consistent yet, deviationism will run rife and tend to overwhelm activism. "Get-Liberty-quick" schemes from anarchozionism (running away to a Promised Land of Liberty) to political opportunism will seduce the impatient and sway the incompletely informed. All will fail if for no other reason than Liberty grows individual by individual. Mass conversion is impossible. There is one exception - radicalization by statist attack against a collective. Even so, it requires entrepreneurs of Liberty to have sufficiently informed the persecuted collective so that they lase coherently libertarian-ward rather than scatter randomly or worse, flow into out-of-power statism. These Crises of Statism are spontaneous and predictable - but cannot be caused by moral, consistent libertarians.

The strategy of the first New Libertarians is to combat anti-principles which strengthen the State and dissipate anarchist energy uselessly. The general strategy outlines previously applies; get libertarians into counter-economics and get the most active of the agorists to get counter-economists into libertarianism.

The proto-New Libertarians may work within existing organizations and clubs of Libertarians as "radical caucuses," ginger groups, or as a "Libertarian Left" faction in general. An NLA is premature here because it is not yet self-sustaining.

What can be successfully built is - under whatever label seems most conducive for recruitment - a Movement of the Libertarian Left. Such a Movement is itself a mixed bag of individuals of varying "hardness of core" but they are tending or moving towards the ideal of New Libertarianism. Even within MLL structure should be de-emphasized. The most New Libertarian will be the most competent to coordinate and plan; that is, those of highest understanding and practice of agorism and greatest zeal for action will naturally direct resources. Each MLLer, like each NL. ally, spends his or her own outsources and decides whether or not to accept a tactician or strategist's advice and planning, as any entrepreneur would do with any informed consultant. Some pseudo-political public trappings may be

necessary to utilize public forums and media access; also, most people will not understand your market- organization unless you translate it in pseudo-political terminology and back again.

At this point, in the latter stages of Phase 1 and with a functioning MLL large enough, these hard-core dedicated "cadre" can apply leverage to sway larger groups of semi-converted quasi-libertarians to actually block marginal actions by the State. This is a high-expenditure, "quick gain," but low long-range yield tactic and should be rare. (It will be covered later; basically, stave off war and mass extermination of libertarians.)

Following all these activities, radicalizing the libertarians, and evolving the NLA. That is all one can accomplish.

Phase 2: Mid-Density, Small Condensation Agorist Society

At this point the statist take notice of agorism. While before libertarians could be manipulated by one ruling faction to the detriment of another (sort of anti-market "competition," played with ballots and bullets rather than innovation and pricing), they will start to be perceived as a threat. Pogroms (mass arrests) may even occur, although that is unlikely. Remember, most agorists are embedded in the rest of society and associating with them are partially-converted libertarians and counter-economists. In order to reach this phase, the entire society has been contaminated by agorism to a degree. Thus it is now possible for the first "ghettos" or districts of agorists to appear and count on the sympathy of the rest of society to restrain the State from a mass attack.[\[40\]](#)

These communities, whether above or underground, can now sustain the New Libertarian Alliance, NLA acts as spokesman for the agora with the statist society, using every chance to publicize the superiority of agorist living to statist inhabiting and perhaps argue for tolerance of those with "different ways."[\[41\]](#)

In this phase, the agorist society is vulnerable to statist regression of the populace. Thus the agorists, whether visible or not, have a high incentive to at least maintain the present level of libertarian consciousness among the rest of the populace. This being done most expertly by the NLA (one way to define who the NLA is at this phase), the NLA has its sustenance and its mission. But in addition to "defending" the agorist sub-society, it can work towards accelerating the next evolutionary step.

Phase 3: High-Density, Large Condensation, Agorist Society

In this phase, the State moves into a series of terminal crises, somewhat analogous to the well-known Marxist scenario, but with different causes - in this case, real ones. Fortunately, the potential for damage has been drastically decreased by the sapping of the State's resources and corrosion of its authority by the growth of the Counter-Economy.

in fact, as the resources of the economy approach equality between the State and Agora, the

State is pushed into crisis. Wars and rampant inflation with depressions and crack-ups become perpetual as the State attempts to redeem its authority. It may be possible to reverse its decline by corrupting the agora with deductive anti-principles, so the NLA's first task is clear: to maintain vigilance and purity of thought. In this phase, the NLA may no longer hold either label or much of its old form. The most motivated New Libertarians will move into the research and development supply for the budding agorist protection and arbitration agencies and lastly as directors of the protection company syndicates.

The situation now approaches revolution but is still reversible.[\[42\]](#) Again the New Libertarians are in the forefront of maintaining and defending gains to this point, but looking ahead to the next phase.

The NLA (now just a collective term for the most forward-looking elements) can accelerate the process by discovering and developing the optimal methods of protection and defense, both by word and deed, for their industry and entrepreneuring its innovations.

At this phase transition between 3 and 4 we have the last unleashing of violence by the Ruling Class of the State to suppress those elements that would bring them to justice for all past state crimes. The State's intellectuals perceive that its authority has failed and all will be lost; things must be reversed now or never. The NLA must prevent premature awareness of this status or premature action on this awareness. This is the final strategic goal of the NLA.

When the State unleashes its final wave of suppression - and is successfully resisted - this is the definition of Revolution. Once realization has occurred that the State no longer can plunder and pay-of its parasitical class, the enforcers will switch sides to those better able to pay them and the State will rapidly implode into a series of pockets of Statism in backward area - if any.[\[43\]](#)

Phase 4: Agorist Society with Statist Impurities

The collapse of the State leaves only mopping up operations. Since the insurance and protection companies see no State to defend against, the syndicate of allied protectors collapses into competition and the NLA - its support gone - dissolves. Statists apprehended pay restoration and if they live long enough to discharge their debts, are re-integrated as productive entrepreneurs (Their "training" comes automatically as they work off their debt.)

We're home (Chapter 2)! New Libertarianism is taken for granted as the basis of ordinary life and we tackle the other problems facing mankind.

V. Action: Our Tactics



The previous chapter discussed some tactics in passing. A few that have been found productive for radical libertarians and the MLL include infiltration of less radical groups and sparking splits by presenting alternatives; confrontation of coercion (or deviation) with visible protest and rejection; day to day personal salesmanship among friends; libertarian social groups such as supper clubs to exchange information, goods, and support and act as a proto-agora; and, of course, publication, public speaking, writing fiction with agorist messages,[\[44\]](#) and educational activities in many forms: teacher, business consultant, entertainer, revisionist historian, agorist economist, etc.

Successful tactics can only be discovered and used and passed on. Those who perceive sufficiently similar conditions in time and place to those of another where a tactic worked can use it. But it is all a risk; that is what activism is, a type where a tactic worked can use it. But it is all a risk; that is what activism is, a type of entrepreneurship, of guessing the market and supplying the demand. One can become better and better at making good guesses; that's what makes a successful entrepreneur. It's all in *Human Action* by Von Mises if you can apply it.

To find out what has been tried and worked or failed, communication is necessary. If you have reached this page and agreed, and have a desire to support resistance or a burning need to resist coercion, you are ready for the MLL or NLA in existence, depending on the phase we are currently in (Chapter IV). Free yourself. Get active.

What phase are we in? In October 1980 (first edition) most of the planet Earth is in Phase 0. The British Isles, Australia and Canada have moved substantially towards Phase 1; North America is in Phase 1. Only in the highest concentration of libertarians today, in Southern California, are the first signs of Phase 2. Assuming the situation is not reversed, the first few droplets of actual agorist societies - anarchovillages - are nucleating a viable sub-society.

The Movement of the Libertarian Left exists only in California with a few scattered nuclei, agents and cells, in Alliance. The New Libertarian Alliance previously proclaimed was found premature and NLA remains in embryo (or nucleus) until objective conditions arrive to sustain it.

The MLL has its work cut out for it. Externally, the world-wide collapse of the "Left"[\[45\]](#) has weakened restraints on the competitive segments of the State who are rushing towards war to re-mystify their restive victims with patriotism. Seizing the abandoned leadership of the anti-imperialism, anti-war and anti-conscription movement with a fresh, invigorating, ideological backing has become an opportunity for libertarians to become the Left. MLL has to compete

with partyarch and monocentrist elements for this pre-eminence.[\[46\]](#)

The lurching of American plutocracy from the brink of runaway inflation to depression and back again, in ever wilder swings, has panicked large numbers of complacent businessmen and raised their consciousness beyond conservative assurances of restoring stability to consider radical and even revolutionary alternatives. Only the Libertarian Left can win these entrepreneurs towards an "ideological," non-pragmatic position. Therein lie our opportunities.

Internally, the "Libertarian" Party has reached a crisis with the 1980 American Presidential election. The premature unmasking of the statism inherent in partyarchy by Crane-Clark's blatant opportunism has managed to generated not only Left opposition but Right and Center opposition.[\[47\]](#) Major defections mount daily.[\[48\]](#)

The failure of some reformist element to oust the Kochtopus by the Denver Convention (August 1981) and lull the unradicalized back in line would set the U.S.L.P. back dramatically and generate thousands of disillusioned recruits for the MLL and anti-party educational and counter-economic activities.

With this manifesto as a manual and inspiration, New Libertarian strategists and tacticians can research, develop, correct and enact the New Libertarian Strategy and the tactics appropriate to the conditions met. Much work is needed but the projects have consequences no mundane work can provide: an end to politics, to taxation, to conscription, to economic catastrophe, to involuntary poverty and to the mass murder of warfare in the final war - society against Our Enemy, The State.

Counter-economics provides immediate gratification for those who abandon statist restraint. Libertarianism rewards the practitioner who follows it with more self-liberation and personal fulfillment than any alternative yet conceived. But only New Libertarianism offers reformation of society into a moral, working way of life without changing the nature of Man. Utopias may be discarded; at last we have a glimpse of how to remold society to fit Man rather than Man to fit some society. What more rewarding challenge could be offered?

Should you now have chosen the New Libertarian path, you may wish to join us in our "Triple A" oath and battle cry, or something like it, and renew yourself with it regularly:

"We witness to the efficacy of freedom and exult in the intricate beauty of complex voluntary exchange. We demand the right of every ego to maximize its value without limit save that of another ego. We proclaim the age of the Market unbound, the natural and proper condition for humanity, wealth in abundance, goals without end or limit, and self-determined meaning for all: Agora.

"We challenge all who would bind us to show us cause; failing proof of our aggression we shatter our fetters. We bring to justice all who have aggressed against any, ever. We restore all

who have suffered oppression to their rightful condition. And we destroy forever the Monster of the Ages, the pseudo-legitimized monopoly of coercion, from our minds and from our society, the protector of aggressors and thwarter of justice. That is, we smash the State: Anarchy.

"We exert our wills to our personal limits restrained only by consistent morality. We struggle against anti-principles which would sap our wills and combat all who physically challenge us. We rest not nor waste resource until the State is smashed and humanity has reached its agorist home. Burning with unflagging desire for Justice now and Liberty forever, we win: Action!

Agora, Anarchy, Action!

Samuel Edward Konkin III

October 12, 1980, Anarchovillage (Long Beach)

Notes

1. I am indebted to Robert LeFevre for this insight, though we draw differing conclusions.
2. Thank you, Albert J. Nock, for that phrase.
3. Modern Libertarianism is best described by Murray Rothbard in *For a New Liberty*, which, regardless how recent the edition, is always a year or more out of date. Recommending even the best writing on libertarianism is like recommending one song to explain music in all its forms.
4. Thank you, Ludwig von Mises.
5. Radical Libertarian Alliance, 1968–71.
6. Student Libertarian Action Movement, 1968–72, later revived briefly as a proto-MLL.
7. Citizens for a Restructured Republic, 1972, made up of RLA members disillusioned with revolution.
8. Society for Individual Liberty, 1969–89 (now merged with Libertarian International to the International Society for Individual Liberty). Also Rampart College (now defunct) and the Foundation for Economic Education and Free Enterprise Institute, all of whom were around before the libertarian population explosion of 1969.
9. Most important, the California Libertarian Alliance, 1969–73. The name is still kept alive for sponsorship of conferences, and is also used in the United Kingdom.
10. The first “Libertarian” Party was set up by Gabriel Aguilar and Ed Butler in California in 1970 as a hollow shell to gain media access. (Aguilar, a Galambosian, was staunchly anti-political.) Even Nolan’s “L”P was mocked and scorned by such as Murray Rothbard in the first year of its existence.
11. The “Libertarian” Party that eventually organized nationally and ran John Hospers and Toni Nathan for President and Vice-President in 1972 was first organized by David and Susan Nolan in December 1971 in Colorado. Dave Nolan was a Massachusetts YAFer who had broken with YAF back in 1967 and missed the 1969 climax at St. Louis. He remained conservative and minarchist right up to this first edition.

Although the Nolans were rather innocent, and other early organization and candidates often so, the debate on “the Party Question” began immediately. *New Libertarian Notes* attacked the “L”P concept in Spring 1972 and ran a debate between Nolan and Konkin just before the election (*NLN 15*).

By the 1980 presidential campaign, the Nolans had broken with the “L”P leadership of Ed Crane and his candidate Ed

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Clark, who ran a high-powered, high-financed, traditional vote-chasing and platform-trimming campaign.

12. Charles G. Koch - Wichita oil billionaire - through his relatives, foundations, institutes, and centers, had set up, bought up, or “bought out” the following from 1976–79: Murray Rothbard and his *Libertarian Forum*; *Libertarian Review* (from Robert Kephart), edited by Roy A. Childs; Students for a Libertarian Society (SLS), run by Milton Mueller; Center for Libertarian Studies (Rothbard-leaning) and Joe Peden; *Inquiry*, edited by Williamson Evers; Cato Institute; and various Koch Funds, Foundations, and Institutes. Named the “Kochtopus” in *New Libertarian* 1 (February 1978), it was first attacked in print by Edith Efron in the conservative-libertarian publication *Reason*, along with allegations of an “anarchist” conspiracy. The Movement of the Libertarian Left cut away from Efron’s anti-anarchist ravings and rushed to support her on her key revelation of the growth of *monocentrism* in the Movement.

In 1979, the Kochtopus took control of the national Libertarian party at the Los Angeles convention. David Koch, Charles’ brother, openly bought the VP nomination for \$500,000.

13. Murray Rothbard broke with the Kochtopus soon after the ’79 LP Convention and most of his close allies were purged, such as Williamson Evers of *Inquiry*. CLS was cut off from Koch funding. The *Libertarian Forum* began attacking Koch. Rothbard and young Justin Raimondo set up a new “radical” caucus of the LP (the first one, 1972–74, was run by progenitors of NLA as a recruiting tactic and a way to destroy the Party from within).

Although Rothbard was moved to ask “Is Sam Konkin Right?” in his July 1980 speech to an RC dinner in Orange County, the RC strategy is to reform the LP using New Left and neo-Marxist tactics.

14. I hope subsequent editions may omit this note, but in the present historical context it is vital to point out that Libertarianism is not specifically for the most “advanced” or enlightened elements of North America, perhaps typified by the young, white, highly read computer consultant, equally feminist mate (and 0.5 children). Only the freest market can raise the “Second” and “Third World” from grinding poverty and self-destructive superstition. Compulsory attempts critically to raise production standards and associated cultural understanding have caused backlash and regression: e.g. Iran and Afghanistan. Mostly, the State has engaged in deliberate repression of self-improvement.

Quasi-free markets, such as the freeports of Hong Kong, Singapore, and (earlier) Shanghai, attracted floods of upwardly mobile, highly motivated entrepreneurs. The incredibly well-developed black market of Burma already runs the entire economy and needs only a libertarian awareness to oust Ne Win and the Army, accelerating trade and annihilating poverty overnight.

Similar observations are possible about developed black markets and tolerated semi-free markets in the “Second World” of Soviet occupation, such as Armenia, Georgia, and the Russian counter-economy (nalevo).

Note to the Second Edition: The above note is still, sadly enough, needed.

Note to the Third Edition: With the collapse of Communism, maybe the need is declining, but the note’s still here!

15. To cite the most spectacular so far:

- Murray Rothbard will use any past political strategy to further libertarianism, falling back on ever more radical ones when the previous ones fail.
- Robert LeFevre advocates a purity of thought and deed in each individual that this author and many others find inspiring. But he holds back from describing a complete strategy resulting from these personal tactics, partially due to a fear of being charged with *prescribing* as well as *describing*. This author has no such fear. LeFevre’s pacifism also dilutes the attraction of his libertarian tactics, probably far more than deserved.
- Andrew J. Galambos advocates a fairly countereconomic position (see the next chapter) but positively drives away recruits by his anti-movement stance and his “secret society” organization tactic. His “primary property” deviationism, like LeFevre’s pacifism, probably also detracts from the rest of his theory more than is warranted.
- Harry Browne’s *How I Found Freedom in an Unfree World* is an immensely popular guide to personal liberation. Having been influenced by Rothbard, LeFevre, and Galambos, Browne fairly correctly-if superficially-maps out valid tactics for the individual to survive and prosper in a statist society. He offers no overall strategy, and his techniques would break down in an advanced counter-economic system as it nears the free society.

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• A deviation with no particular spokesperson but associated largely with the *Libertarian Connection* is the idea of achieving freedom by outflanking the State with technology. This seems to have plausible validity in the recent case of the U.S. State deciding not to regulate the explosive-growth information industry. But it fails to take into account the ingenuity of those who will keep statism around as long as people demand it.

16. When our understanding increases, one assumes we can achieve a freer society.

17. In *The Great Explosion*, SF writer Eric Frank Russell posits a society close to that envisioned by LeFevre. The pacifist Gands did have a correction mechanism for occasionally aberrant individuals—the “Idle Jack” cases. Unfortunately, shunning would fail the moment the coercers reached a “critical number” to form a supportive, self-sustaining sub-society. That they could is obvious—they have!

18. The Mises–Rothbard position is that fraud and failure to fulfill contract (the latter may be taken care of by clauses in the contract, of course) is itself theft: of future goods. The basis of contract is the transfer of present goods (consideration here and now) for future goods (consideration there and then).

All theft is violence initiation; force is used to take property away involuntarily or to prevent receipt of goods or payments for goods freely transferred by agreement.

19. Society, as Mises points out, exists because of the advantages of division of labor. By specializing in different steps of production, individuals find total wealth produced greater than by their individual efforts.

20. At this point we must introduce Mises’s concept of *time-preference*. Future goods are always discounted relative to present goods because of the *use-time* foregone. While individual valuations of time-preference vary, those with high time-preference can borrow from those with lower time-preference since the high-preferrers will pay more to the low-preferrers than they have foregone. The point where all these transactions of time-preference clear on the free market defines the basic or *originary rate of interest* for all loans and capital investment.

21. Murray Rothbard takes the most moderate position here: he advocates double restoration; that is, not only must the aggressor restore the victim to prior unharmed condition (as much as possible), but must become himself a victim for an equivalent amount! Not only does this doubling seem arbitrary, nowhere does Rothbard provide a moral basis for punishment, let alone a “moral calculus” (*a la* Bentham).

Others are far worse in demanding ever-greater plunder of the apprehended aggressor, making it probable that only the grossest fool who happened to err momentarily would ever turn himself in, and would, rather, attempt to cost his pursuers dearly. Many neoRandists would shoot a child for purloining a candy (Gary Greenberg, for instance); others have chained teenagers to their beds to work off trivial trespasses.

This is yet brushing the tip of horror. Far greater a travesty of justice is proposed by those who do not wish to retribute or even mildly punish but to *rehabilitate* the violence-initiator. While some of the more enlightened among the rehabilitators would accept concurrent working off of restitution debt, they would seize upon the victim’s delegation of right of self-defense (the basis of all legal action) to incarcerate and brainwash the now-helpless apprehended aggressor.

Not content with punishing the person, scourging the body, and perhaps even inflicting the relative mercy of cruel physical torture, rehabilitators seek the destruction of values and motivation; that is, the annihilation of the Ego. In more florid but well-deserved language, they wish to *devour the soul* of the apprehended aggressor!

22. Should telepathy be discovered and practically achievable, it may at least then be *possible* to investigate motive and intent; still, the only use in an agorist system would be for mercy pleas—mercy at the further expense of the victim. This footnote is also relevant to the following paragraph which is why it is twice denoted.

23. A good question is: where did “punishment” ever get started? The concept is applicable only to slaves who have nothing else to lose but lack of pain; to the utterly worthless if any exist; and to very young children who are incapable of paying for restoration and are considered inadequately responsible to incur debt. Of course, a primitive economy generally had far too many problems with rationality and technology to provide much trustworthy detection and measurement of value.

Still, some primitive societies such as the Irish, Icelandic, and Ibo introduced systems of repayment to meliorate vengeance—and promptly evolved into quasi-anarchies.

24. *Micro* and *macro* are terms from present Establishment economics. While Counter-Economics is part of *agorism* (until the State is gone), agorism includes both Counter-Economics in practice and libertarianism in theory. Since that

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theory includes an awareness of the consequences of large-scale Counter-Economic practice, I will use *agorist* in this macro sense and *countereconomic* in the micro sense. Since the division is inherently ambiguous, some overlap and interchangeability will occur.

25. The term “Counter-Economics” was formed the same way as the term “counter-culture”; it does not mean anti-economic science any more than counter-culture meant anti-culture.

26. This volume, *Counter-Economics* (the book), is in process and will soon be completed, Market willing!

Note to Fourth Edition: SEK3 died before completing his *magnum opus*, but KoPubCo is in the process of preparing what exists of his manuscript for publication in the near future.

27. That class has been called the Ruling Class, Power Elite, or Conspiracy, depending on whether the analysis comes from a Marxist, Liberal, or Bircher background. The terms will be used interchangeably to show the commonality of the identification.

28. While some coercive acts, such as murder and theft, are often lumped into the label “black market,” the majority of this “organized crime” is perfectly legitimate to a libertarian, though occasionally unsavory. The Mafia, for example, is not black market but a *government* over some of the black market that collects protection money (taxes) from its victims and enforces its control with executions and beatings (law enforcement), and even conducts wars when its monopoly is threatened. These acts will be considered *red market* to differentiate them from the moral acts of the black market, which will be discussed below. In short, the “black market” is anything nonviolent that is prohibited by the State and carried on anyway.

The “grey market” is used here to mean dealing in goods and services not themselves illegal but obtained or distributed in ways legislated against by the State. Much of what is called “white-collar crime” falls under this heading and is smiled upon by most of society.

Where one draws the line between black and grey market depends largely on the state of consciousness of the society in which one lives. The red market is clearly separable: murder is red market. When the State forbids self-defense, defending oneself against a criminal - including a police officer - is black in New York City and grey in Orange County, California.

29. Thus a “Libertarian” Party would perpetuate statism. In addition, a “Libertarian” Party would preserve the ill-gotten gain of the ruling class and maintain the State’s mechanism of enforcement and execution.

30. Thank you, Ayn Rand, for that phrase.

31. Although this topic is extensively covered in libertarian literature, many are still unaware of the true nature and mechanism of inflation. Very briefly, a general price rise is only the consequence of inflation, which is the increase of the money supply. Much more damaging is its redistribution of wealth and its side-effects that dislocate the economy. The State “creates” money, which is distributed to the first line of beneficiaries - big bankers, to pay off its warfare/welfare contractors - and to the civil service, the second line of beneficiaries. As they bid up prices with this unbacked purchasing power, everyone else finds him or herself unable to buy as much. The unanticipated rise in price (anticipated inflation is discounted by the market) signals entrepreneurs to invest in capital goods for increased demand. As consumption is cut back because of a lowering of general purchasing power, those entrepreneurs find that they have over-invested and must sell at a loss, lay off employees, and liquidate capital - a depression results. The State is often induced by the clamor of unemployed workers and near-bankrupt capitalists to increase the currency supply again to “stimulate” the economy; that is, to create another illusory boom. Unfortunately, this new injection of inflation must be anticipated to work; hence, an even larger inflation must ensue. The cycle, if it continues, would lead to runaway inflation (Germany, 1923, is a classic example) and collapse of the currency (“Crack-Up Boom” is Mises’s descriptive phrase). Allegedly free-market economists urge the State to “take the bitter pill” of depression (like an addict going “cold turkey” lest he overdose) to work out the effects of the money injection and cure the system. As can be seen, this is profoundly conservative in maintaining statism. A far better solution would be for people to abandon State fiat money in favor of uninflatable media of exchange such as gold, silver, commodities, or harder foreign currencies in order to hasten the collapse.

32. An example of how this works may be helpful. Suppose I wished to receive and sell a contraband or evade a tax or violate a regulation. Let’s say I can make \$100,000 a transaction. Using government figures on criminal apprehension - always exaggerated in the State’s favor simply because they cannot know how much the counter-economy gets away with - I find an apprehension rate of 20%. One may then find out the percentage of those cases that come to trial and the

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percentage of those that result in a conviction even with a good lawyer. Let's say 25% make it to trial and 50% result in conviction. (The latter is high but we'll throw in the legal fees involved so that even a decision involving loss of legal costs but acquittal is still a "loss.") I therefore incur a 2.5% risk ($.25 \times .25 \times .50 = 0.025$). This is high for most real cases. Suppose my maximum fine is \$500,000 or five years in jail - or both. Excluding my counter-economic transactions (one certainly cannot count them when deciding whether or not to do them), I might make \$20,000 a year so that I would lose another \$100,000 while imprisoned. It's very hard to assign a value to five years of incarceration, but at least in our present society it's not too much worse than other institutionalization (school, army, hospital) and at least the counter-economist won't be plagued with guilt and remorse. So I weigh 2.5% of \$600,000 (\$15,000) loss and five years against \$100,000 gain! And I could easily insure myself for \$15,000 (or less) to pay all costs and fines! In short, it works.

33. It probably should be noted explicitly that businesses could grow quite large in the counter-economy. Whether or not "wage workers" would exist instead of "independent contractors" for all steps of production is arguable, but this author feels that the whole concept of "worker/boss" is a holdover from feudalism and not, as Marx claims, fundamental to "capitalism." Of course, capital-statism is the opposite of what the libertarian advocates. Furthermore, even large businesses today could go partially counter-economic, leaving a portion in the "white market" to satisfy government agents and pay some modicum of taxes and report a token number of workers. The rest of the business would (and already often does) expand off the books with independent contractors who supply, service, and distribute the finished product. Nobody, no business, no worker, and no entrepreneur need be white market.

34. Many agorists such as Pyro Egon have challenged the New Libertarians on this point. As far as they are concerned, the manifesto this far is the entire program and any further "activism" is "movementism" and leads one ineluctably back towards statism.

35. New Libertarian Strategy is the newsletter of the Movement of the Libertarian Left - not coincidentally.

36. But not a "corporation" which is a fictitious "individual" created by the State and endowed with privileges. Some privileges besides subsidies and tariffs are special tax rates, limited liability, exemption from regulation, licenses, and legal benefits in court disputes. True, they have some drawbacks but none compares to an unincorporated white-market business.

37. The first New Libertarian Alliance was formed, prematurely in many respects, by this author in 1974 from recruits from a raid on the "L"P, from other movement activists, and a few counter-economists. The market proved less than ready for a growth in this business and so the NLA to date has spent most of its energies towards building that market.

Any band of New Libertarians can call themselves a New Libertarian Alliances without "official authorization;" most will surely wish to co-ordinate themselves with other NLA groups and try to agree on common strategy, though tactics may differ from different conditions of the Allies. 38. This mode of NLA organization worked well for the Long Beach chapter that kept it constantly in practice. Regional strategy was not fully "shaken down" by practice but no other NLA group maintained that high a level of committed Allies who were constantly developing and working that theory.

As for armies, it should be noted that Nestor Makhno ran an army in fairly anarchist manner with a small core of officers and complete volunteers filling the ranks when needed or convinced of the need. He fought Reds and Whites successfully in the Ukraine 1918-20 until overwhelmed by weight of numbers of the victorious Red statists combining the full resources of a continent against him.

39. No membership or credentials is needed or desirable for the NLA. Of course, one may make a list of those with whom to gather and plan, and to whom to mail communications. But there is nothing sacred or special about such lists; they are merely one strategist or tactician's judgment.

One cannot be purged from NLA. One is either a New Libertarian or not according to the evidence provided by one's acts; every other Ally must judge for themselves. All who accept you as a New Libertarian are in Alliance with you; those who reject you are not, though you may be in Alliance with others. 40. Premature appearance of agorist communities will lead to their suppression violently by the State. The NLA must defend those which can be saved when historical conditions are marginal and warn and evacuate those which are doomed.

41. It is still within the limits of New Libertarian morality to point out to one faction of the Higher Circles that the agorist existence benefits them more than the other faction. While no statist can ever be aided in plunder and murder, and even allying with one statist against another consumes scarce resources for the outcome of merely trading oppressors, the New Libertarian can perceive that simply by existing and conducting usual business, the agorist activity is relatively more detrimental to one group of statists over another.

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A good rule of thumb to the tactic of playing off ruling groups is to make sure that no more resources are devoted to it than extra statements based in regular publication and media exposure for more important work...and private conversations, if one frequents those social circles.

This tactic fails when the agorist society is perceived as too threatening; then all statist factions unite to save their skins. 42. Let's say one region is highly agorist and the rest more primitive. Resources may be transferred by the State to crush this premature and localized (thus vulnerable) agora. This applies to Phase 2 even more.

43. Some will argue that the State may collapse peacefully when the statist see the end approaching. If statist were so reasonable about not resorting to force because of market alternatives, they wouldn't be statist. Revolution is as inevitable as any human action can be.

44. E.g., *Alongside Night* by J. Neil Schulman (Crown, 1979; Ace, 1982) and expected sequels.

45. The Left was originally proto-Libertarian, as revisionist historians such as Leonard Liggio point out. In the French Assembly, free marketeer Frederic Bastiat sat next to anarchist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon. Even today Marxists refer to anarchists as "ultra-left" elements. The libertarian and Marxist elements were about equal at the close of the First Workingman's International. The Marxists and their sell-out imitators have been in ascendancy since the 1890's, finally losing belief in themselves with the New Left collapse, the invasion of Czechoslovakia and Afghanistan by the U.S.S.R. and Viet Nam by China - the "impossible" war between two Marxist States.

46. Currently, "L" "P" "R" "C" and SLS respectively.

47. The "Right" of current libertarianism is fairly principled but many of the principles hewed to are anti-principles: gradualism, conservatism, reformism and minarchy. Reason magazine and its Frontlines newsletter are its main organs. The "Center" includes Murray Rothbard and his following, now organized in the LP "Radical" Caucus, which supports Clark "critically," i.e., externally, but not internally. The Rothbard Centrists have moved Left by abandoning monocentrism.

48. Murray Rothbard, as mentioned; the Southern California party Council Director, Dyanne Petersen, others informing this writer of their imminent defection should more "selling-out" occur. It will. *Special Note to Second Edition*: It did.

A steady trickle of LP defectors have added to the ranks of MLL month by month since then. At least one new Left Libertarian group, the Voluntaryists, have arisen to compete for the ex-partyarchs. And Murray Rothbard is organizing, at this time, a last-ditch showdown for control of the LP with the Kochtopus remnant at the LP presidential nominating convention to be held in September 1983 in New York City.

