



## Libertarians in Convention

by Marshall E. Schwartz

A day by day, blow by blow report on the biggest Libertarian convention in history, and all the speeches and partying and politicking that led to the nomination of Ed Clark and David Koch to represent the Libertarian Party in the 1980 election.

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# OPENING SHOTS

**BILL BIRMINGHAM**

IN OUR LAST column we stated that Edward Teller claimed the title of "The Only Victim of Three Mile Island" "after suffering a heart attack while debating Jane Fonda." Unfortunately we were in error. Teller made his claim in a lavish, double-page ad in the August 1, *Wall Street Journal* sponsored by Dresser Industries and said: "On May 7, a few weeks after the accident at Three Mile Island, I was in Washington. I was there to refute some of the propaganda that Ralph Nader, Jane Fonda and their kind are spewing to the news media in their attempt to frighten people away from nuclear power. I am 71 years old, and I was working 20 hours a day. The

strain was too much. The next day, I suffered a heart attack. You might say that I was the only one whose health was affected by that reactor near Harrisburg. No, that would be wrong. It was not the reactor. It was Jane Fonda. Reactors are not dangerous." (An opinion which might be disputed by the *real* victims of Three Mile Island: those expected to die from radiation induced cancer. Estimates of their number range from one (Joe Califano) to perhaps 300 to 2500 (Dr. Ernest Sternglass). Whether this makes reactors "dangerous," or more dangerous than other forms of power, is a matter of debate. You pays your money and the utilities make your choice for you.) Speaking of propaganda, neither Teller nor Dresser Industries, his sponsor, saw fit to mention Dresser's role at Harrisburg. "It was a Dresser valve that stuck open during the Three Mile Island accident," says NRC Commissioner Peter Bradford, "allowing the cooling water to escape the reactor cooling system and exposing the nuclear core." Dresser indignantly denies this, saying, "It is not known whether the valve failed to close or merely leaked excessively."

Talk about your news twisters: Andrew Kopkind, writing in the *Columbia Journalism Review*, has found a particularly flagrant example of media bias on PBS's *Macneil/Lehrer Report*. "A

program last spring on the implications of the new international trade agreement focused on protectionism—the practice of erecting barriers to imports and subsidizing domestic manufacturing. The panelists were all free-traders ... The discussion assumed that free trade was indisputably good, and protectionism bad. Notable was the absence of any representative of the protectionist side, which has many adherents these days not only among businessmen threatened by foreign competition, but in sectors of the labor movement and the political left, where there is support for national economic planning, which would require some protectionist measures to help redirect market forces." Was Kopkind maybe expecting *public television* to give a forum to those reactionaries? After all, one can carry objectivity only so far.

Who among us does not delight in seeing the biter bit, and an evildoer trapped in the pit he had dug for another? In like manner it gave us great pleasure to read that François Mitterrand, chief of France's Socialist party, and several other party leaders are under indictment for illegal, private enterprise radio broadcasting. "Without wishing to dismantle the state broadcasting monopoly (a much-disputed system they would preserve), the Socialists have twice broken

the law in recent months by organizing pirate radio broadcasts to denounce the government's alleged dominance of the air waves," says the *London Economist*. "In late June, at the government's behest, Paris police smashed their way into the party's old headquarters in the hope of discovering a pirate transmitter, scuffling with Socialist deputies and setting off a fierce political row." This is surely the most satisfying case of poetic justice since the IRS audited Richard Nixon; best of all, according to the *Economist*: "The Socialists were right in claiming that the authorities had been rougher with them than with scores of other 'free' radio entrepreneurs in recent years."

If you enjoyed Peter Collier's sympathetic article on libertarianism in *New West* magazine ("The Next American Revolution," August 27, 1979), check out his decidedly unsympathetic piece on Jane Fonda and Tom Hayden ("I Remember Fonda," *New West*, September 24, 1979), whom he dubs "the Mork and Mindy of California politics." As the title indicates, Collier knew Fonda and Hayden when they professed to be radicals; indeed, Fonda has credited Mr. Collier with "having introduced her to the Left." That was in early 1970, when she asked him for an introduction to the Indian militants who were occupying Alcatraz. "I remember being amazed," Collier remarks, "by the acuteness with which Fonda sized up the situation and immediately moved with incredible sureness to the center of the then-ruling clique ... When I left she was smoking dope with them and making insider's jokes about the Bureau of Indian Affairs and other of the red man's oppressors." That was also the period when Hayden