

—RON PAUL, LIBERTARIAN CANDIDATE—



RADICAL VIEWS, CONSERVATIVE STYLE

"Ron Paul is running for the presidency," began the May 10 article in the *Los Angeles Times*. "Not many people know that. Not many people care."

Recounting a day Paul spent campaigning in Washington state, reporter J. Michael Kennedy noted that "his message is rarely heard outside the confines of a college campus or radio talk show. His largest audience was 1000 students at a prep school assembly."

The article may have been condescending in tone, but it did describe the Libertarian Party fairly accurately as "based on the principle of property-owner rights, personal freedom and opposition to government involvement in daily lives." Most important to the Ron Paul campaign was that the *Times* article appeared at all. In 1980, Los Angeles resident Ed Clark mounted the most impressive LP presidential campaign to date. His dominant hometown paper—which likes to think of itself as the West's newspaper of record—didn't write any stories about his candidacy. Zilch. Zero. Nada.

Paul has to figure that a mildly condescending story is better than none at all.

Clark agrees. "Ron is much farther along than I was in 1980," he said toward the end of the summer. "I didn't really start campaigning actively until after the major-party conventions, and Ron has been at it since January. If he gets any breaks at all, he should run a better campaign."

One break came on August 10, with a story in the *New York Times* about Pat Robertson supporters from Michigan declaring their support for Paul. When the story broke, Paul was in Midland, Texas, at a fundraiser put on by Texas Robertson backers. CBS interviewed the chairman of the event, and the campaign headquarters in Houston handled a flurry of media inquiries. For a few days—until George Bush mollified the GOP's conservative wing by selecting Dan Quayle as his running mate—Paul's name cropped up in reports that Robertson people might make trouble at the convention.

As the two major parties then settled in dutifully to their appointed task of boring the American people into submission by November, Ron Paul and the Libertarian Party were still struggling to inject a little interest—and even a serious idea or two—into the presidential race. They hope that the general lethargy inspired by the Bush-Dukakis tussle will furnish an opportunity for America's most persistent third party of the last two decades, ena-

bling it to reach beyond its usually narrow segment of the electorate.

A 53-year-old Pittsburgh native who attended medical school at Duke and delivered his share of Pittsburgh babies before moving to Lake Jackson, on the fringe of Houston, Paul is a quiet, unassuming man you'd probably like as your next-door neighbor. The father of five children, he is not a blazing stump speaker or a sparkling debater. He still hasn't quite mastered the 10-second sound bite so important to network TV, preferring to embellish and explain.

Campaign manager Nadia Hayes, who has worked for Paul for 14 years, says many people find him aloof at first. But that impression, she says, springs from his shyness and reluctance to invade other people's space without being invited. He's not a natural politician to whom gladdening and dominating a room come easily.

When he first ran for Congress as a

BY ALAN W. BOCK



Republican in 1974, Paul was generally libertarian in his personal philosophy but felt that the GOP was the best vehicle to carry the message of limited government and free enterprise. When I met him in Washington in 1976, I was impressed by his quiet intensity—and by the claim that his philosophy had been influenced by reading Austrian economist Ludwig von Mises's hefty tome, *Human Action*, all the way through.

In Congress Paul voted as an eccentric maverick or a reasonably consistent libertarian, depending on your perspective. From a Gulf Coast district, he voted against flood relief funds. He voted against funding for NASA, though NASA was in his district. He was the only House Republican to vote against Reagan's 1981 defense budget. And he was the only House member to vote against a resolution praising Philip Habib for his efforts in Lebanon—Paul believed that the United States had no business maintaining a presence there. As a Banking Committee member he plumped for a gold standard and kept up a steady tattoo of criticism of the Federal Reserve system.

In 1984 Paul gave up what had become a safe seat to run in the Texas GOP senatorial primary, where he finished a distant second (22 percent) to Phil Gramm in a four-way race. He returned to his medical practice and continued to run a small think tank and publish two newsletters.

"About 18 months ago," he told me in August, "I finally decided that the Republican Party simply couldn't deliver on the promise of limited government. The record under Reagan, whom many of us considered the best hope, was simply too negative." He wrote a blistering letter in January 1987 to GOP chairman Frank Fahrenkopf, complaining that "Ronald Reagan and the Republican Party have given us skyrocketing deficits, and astoundingly a doubled national debt," among other horrors. He formally resigned his Republican Party membership.



Seeking the Libertarian Party presidential nomination, however, was hardly a guarantee of influence or prominence. No third party has taken over second spot in the United States since the Republicans displaced the Whigs in 1856. Changes in the election laws over the last 50 years, and even the last 5, have made an aspiring third party's task especially difficult.

Most third-party movements in recent years have been one-time shots centered on already-prominent leaders with built-in constituencies—Henry Wallace and Strom Thurmond in 1948, George Wallace in 1968, John Anderson in 1980. Even the pre-1960 Socialists benefited from two relatively charismatic leaders, Eugene V. Debs and Norman Thomas, who ran for president repeatedly.

The Libertarian Party, by contrast, was founded in 1971 purely as an ideological vehicle. Part of its mission, like that of Britain's Fabian socialists early in this century, is to introduce ideas into political discourse in hopes of shifting the debate in its direction. In five chances, the LP has never run the same presidential candidate twice. Thomas once said that he stopped running as a Socialist after both major parties had adopted the main planks of the early Socialist platforms. Many LP activists would be pleased with such a development in a contrary direction.

The Libertarian Party's early growth was modest and slow. In 1972, it ran University of Southern California philosopher John Hospers for president. Hospers garnered one perverse but legal electoral vote—from Virginia Republican Roger MacBride, who went on to become the



LP's nominee in '76. Then, in 1978, the party made a breakthrough. Its California gubernatorial candidate, Ed Clark, an articulate and well-financed attorney, ran a skillful campaign, attracted significant media attention, and rode the tax-cutting fervor symbolized by Proposition 13 to 5 percent of the vote. The LP gained permanent ballot status in the nation's largest state.

By 1980, the party had also attracted the support of Charles Koch, the billionaire son of a wealthy Kansas oil entrepreneur and a major contributor to libertarian enterprises like the Cato Institute. The LP nominated Clark as its presidential standardbearer and tapped Koch's younger brother, David, for vice-president. The election laws permit a candidate to contribute as much of his own money as he likes, and the Clark campaign got about \$2 million in Koch contributions.

It is still a matter of debate in Libertarian circles whether the media-fostered third-party candidacy of liberal Republican congressman John Anderson in 1980 helped or hurt the LP. His candidacy stimulated interest in third parties and may have enhanced the perceived legitimacy of the LP. But Anderson also may have taken some of the disaffected voters the LP had hoped to attract with the soft-core, relatively unthreatening Clark campaign. (Some Libertarians criticized Clark for coming off like a "low tax liberal" by soft-pedaling issues such as drug legali-



zation and opposition to welfare and all forms of taxation.) Clark ended up with 920,000 votes, while Anderson got 5.7 million. The party was left with a \$200,000 debt.

The next few years were troubling ones. The 1984 nominee was former national LP Chair David Bergland, a Costa Mesa, California, attorney. On the ballot in only 39 states, Bergland campaigned energetically but attracted little money and few votes. By early 1987, the party's paid national membership was down 20 percent, to 5,417 from 6,781 in 1985. In activist editor Mike Holmes's words, the LP faced a stark choice: "Grow or die."

Into this dismal picture stepped two men who offered the LP the chance to grow by nominating a newcomer to represent it in the 1988 presidential election: Ron Paul and Russell Means.

Paul announced first, in February 1987. He vowed to challenge "big-bank privilege and the Federal Reserve; federal deficit spending in all areas, from social welfare to the Pentagon and corporate welfare; a run-amuck IRS and outrageous tax system; government lying about everything; the vicious attack on our liberty and financial privacy; and the foreign policy that drains our wallets, enriches our enemies, shreds the Constitution, and kills



our children."

Means, 48, an Oglala Lakota Sioux, is best known as the cofounder, with Dennis Banks, of the American Indian Movement. In 1971 he led a 71-day occupation of Wounded Knee, South Dakota, site of an 1890 massacre of Indians by the U.S. Calvary. He has continued to be a colorful advocate of American Indian causes and has advised Nicaragua's Miskito Indians in their struggle against the Sandinista government.

In 1980 Montana LP chairman Larry Dodge asked Means to help draft an American Indian plank for the party platform. As a result, Means became intrigued with libertarianism. Three years later, he met with Dodge and other Libertarian leaders, including then-national director Honey Lanham, to discuss running a slate of Indians as Libertarians in South Dakota. The effort was squelched, however, when South Dakota toughened its ballot-access laws.

In January 1987, Lanham called Means and asked him to consider running for the LP presidential nomination. After some soul-searching, he decided to do it. "What grabbed me," he says, "was the fact that in the platform there isn't anything there that isn't Indian. I have now found a group of people who look on me as a human being and not as some primitive savage who is expendable at the whim of governments."

The party had seemed nearly moribund. Now it found itself actively courted by two men with different assets and different perceived liabilities.

Paul had an existing quasi-political organization, demonstrated political savvy at winning elections and raising money, and national recognition among "hard money" enthusiasts and antitax activists. His opposition to abortion was problematic

Ron Paul and 1980 LP presidential candidate Ed Clark; a rally of Paul supporters; Paul campaigning (with Alan Pyeatt, his West Hollywood campaign coordinator) at a Los Angeles gun show; and Paul speaking at a fundraiser held at Ed Clark's home.

to some. The LP platform has a pro-choice plank, and while some Libertarians are personally against abortion, most are opposed to laws against it. Paul believes that abortion, like murder and robbery, is properly subject to state and local rather than national legislation. His opposition, however, is profound.

Means had name recognition, an international reputation, and entree to the media. He offered a chance to reach out to people who feel oppressed by the government but had seldom been moved by the abstract intellectual appeals favored by Libertarians. He is a dynamic speaker with a capacity to inspire and excite people.

Some LP members wondered whether Means's conversion to libertarianism was sincere, or whether he sought to use the LP as a vehicle to advance his own Indian agenda. Others wondered whether his past association with leftist groups and Louis Farrakhan or his Indian-style hair and costume would be a turn-off to middle-class Americans, branding the LP as a marginal group.

At the September 1987 nominating convention in Seattle, Paul, who had run a well-financed and well-organized campaign by LP standards, won the LP delegates' heads. But Means, with his charisma and especially with a powerful concession speech in which he vowed to remain active in the cause of liberty, won much of their hearts. The convention ended with the party pledged to unity but still facing major obstacles. Ballot access promised to be the biggest problem.

Getting any third party on the ballot is daunting. Every state has its own criteria, some simple, some Byzantine. Typically, a third party must collect signed petitions representing 1 or 2 percent of the elector-

ate or must have received a certain percentage of the vote in a previous election. At the end of 1987, the LP was on the ballot in 15 states; 6 others had minimal requirements. It would take at least 500,000 signatures on petitions to get the 400,000 valid signatures needed to be on every ballot by November.

The Paul campaign immediately began raising funds for the effort and detailed campaign chairman Burt Blumert to the LP Ballot Access Committee. In the end, Blumert estimates, the campaign will have spent \$449,000 to get onto the ballot in 47 states and the District of Columbia.

Given his background and predilections, one would have expected a Paul campaign to go heavy on fiscal and economic issues, like a gold standard and the iniquities of the Fed. As issues and events broke, however, he found himself concentrating more heavily on foreign interventionism—particularly in the wake of Persian Gulf disasters—and drug legalization. Interestingly, most everyone involved in the campaign believes the drug issue is “breaking our way.”

“Ron has stressed the issue from day one,” notes economist and party activist Murray Rothbard. “And as more people become disillusioned with the futility of the War on Drugs, he should get an increasing amount of credit as the only candidate with a sensible, nonhysterical policy.” Paul’s pro-legalization stance has, in fact, helped attract national media coverage, including appearances on several TV talk shows.

Perhaps surprisingly, then, supporters of TV evangelist Pat Robertson have been especially receptive to Paul’s overtures—attracted in part by his strong stand against abortion, as well as his free-market economic views. “I identify with Robertson and a lot of people who follow him,” Paul said in a February interview with the *San Diego Union*. “He’s not a libertarian—he’s weak on civil liberties and I’m not sure about his foreign policy—but we all know Pat Robertson is not going to go anywhere, so we’re the only place they can go afterward.” Paul has appeared at several functions of the conservative Young Americans for Freedom, including the national convention held in New Orleans at the same time as

the GOP convention.

Campaign chairman Blumert, who runs a coin business in California, is almost ecstatic about Paul’s ability to reach out to conservatives. “God gave us Ron Paul,” he proclaims. “He’s a committed libertarian, radical in his views, but a cultural conservative in his lifestyle, able to appeal to disaffected conservatives.”

That strategy is disturbing to Honey Lanham, the former LP national director who was probably Means’s most fervent supporter. “Going for Robertson people is a little frightening,” she says. “Many of those people are overtly hostile to libertarian ideas, and while not all of them may want a theocratic state, some do.”

Lanham also expresses misgivings about Paul’s meeting in early August with New Right leaders, including Conservative Caucus chairman Howard Phillips and fundraising wizard Richard Viguerie. Neither endorsed Paul, but they encouraged him to stay in the race and offered him informal advice.

Howard Phillips is straightforward about his reasons: “Ron Paul is an old friend. I have enormous regard for his voting record in Congress. I won’t play an active role in his campaign, because I believe a Bush presidency would be better for the country than a Dukakis presidency. But I hope Ron will surface issues that will pressure George Bush to move rightward.” Phillips believes that if Paul emphasizes domestic economic policy issues where he agrees with more-conservative voters, he could be a factor in key states like Texas and California.

Campaign manager Hayes, herself from Texas, speculates that Paul’s status as the third Texan in the race could prove interesting. To get a leg up in the state, the Democrats tapped Lloyd Bentsen, who beat George Bush in a Senate race in 1970. But Bentsen, notes Hayes, beat Bush partly by running to his right, which he won’t do as Dukakis’s running mate. And Paul has run statewide (albeit unsuccessfully) more recently than either Bush or Bentsen.

Overall, says Paul, “we have a 50-state strategy, a 15-state strategy, and a 5-state strategy. Nationally, we’ll do everything possible to get attention from national media, especially the networks, and use that as an opportunity to discuss issues.” Paul’s running mate, former Alaska state legislator Andre Marrou (see “Mr. Marrou Goes to Juneau,” *REASON*, Oct. 1986), has also been hitting the campaign

trail, sometimes accompanied by Means.

Paul adds that “there are about 15 states, with either favorable electorates or strong LP organizations, in which I’ll concentrate my personal appearances. Then there are five states, Texas, California, Alaska, Montana, Wyoming, Utah—that’s six, isn’t it—where we think we can have a real impact, either because the Bush-Dukakis race will be very close or because of strong libertarian sympathies. I have no doubt we can make a difference in a close election.”

Success for an ideological third-party candidate is measured by criteria other than mere victory or defeat. The point is to convince an increasing number of people that there’s a different way to think about politics, that there may be better solutions than those offered by the Democrats or Republicans. Serious media coverage, permanent ballot status in more states, and a permanent slot in the opinion polls would be some signs of success.

As of July, Paul had done 509 press interviews, of which 21 were with what the campaign classifies as national media (*New York Times*, CNN, Larry King, Morton Downey, PBS). The campaign had raised \$1.4 million from 18,000 contributors. Hayes said a total warchest of \$3-\$3.5 million, from 25,000 contributors, is realistic. Membership and donations to the party, exclusive of the presidential campaign, are up.

Although there’s an outside chance of making history, it’s still iffy. So why does Ron Paul, who could be doing quite nicely for himself practicing medicine full-time and running newsletters on the side, do it? “You have to measure the satisfaction differently,” he told me. “This is a way to work for a world I’ll be happier living in, and a better one for my children. I think the economy is shakier than many people do, but with proper economic policy there could be a lot less suffering in this country. Besides, campaigning is fun. I get to travel and get to know like-minded people. I have a strong sense of making a contribution to a better world—maybe not this year or next, but sometime. You can’t measure that in dollars and cents.”

Alan W. Bock is senior columnist for the Orange County Register in California.

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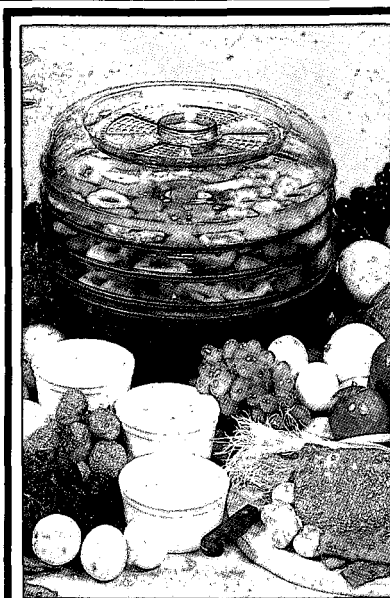
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BUDGETS ARE STUBBORN THINGS

BY DAVID R. HENDERSON

Many people who believe in freedom, and who see George Bush and Michael Dukakis as the only real choices for president, plan to stay home this November rather than bothering to vote for the lesser of two evils. I understand that temptation. But I plan to resist it. On economic policy, there is much more than a dime's worth of difference between Dukakis and Bush.

Consider taxes. Dukakis has said that he would raise taxes only as a last resort. Bush has promised no new taxes, period. I'm not so naive as to believe either promise. After all, even though Ronald Reagan vowed in 1984 not to raise taxes, that is exactly what he did in 1987. But let's apply the same degree of skepticism to both Bush and Dukakis, and let's look at some evidence.

Early in the campaign, Michael Dukakis said that the worst mistake of the Reagan administration was its 1981 tax cut. In his own state, Dukakis opposed Proposition 2½, the 1980 law that limited Massachusetts property taxes to 2.5 percent of assessed value. Does this sound like someone who would raise taxes only as a last resort?

And anyway, what does it mean that you would raise taxes only as a last resort? After first trying to do what? To cut Social Security? To shut down government spending for two weeks while you call Congress's bluff? To pass a balanced budget amendment? Can you imagine Michael Dukakis doing any of these things?

Bush's record on taxes is harder to uncover. He was such a good soldier for Reagan that he never staked out an independent position on taxes. So you can't say much about his credibility on that issue. Instead, we have to retreat to common sense. Which candidate is more likely to raise taxes: one who vows not to or one who refuses to make such a vow?



On domestic spending, neither candidate has specified particular cuts he would make. But I can't think of a single domestic spending program that Dukakis proposes to trim, let alone abolish. Bush, for his part, has laid out an admittedly vague "flexible freeze." He would not touch Social Security, would allow defense spending to increase with inflation, and would balance the budget by 1993 by cutting other domestic spending. Unfortunately, the only way Bush can promise a balanced budget by 1993 is with unrealistic projections.

According to the Congressional Budget Office, if Bush does what he proposes with defense and Social Security, and if most domestic programs increase with inflation while Medicare and farm price supports continue as in current law, the budget deficit in 1993 would be \$139 billion. This means that Bush would have to squeeze \$139 billion out of Medicare, farm price supports, interest on the government debt, and other domestic spending. He projects \$66 billion less in interest payments, but only by assuming that long-term interest rates in 1993 will be 4.5 percent—almost 3 percent below the

CBO's prediction. This seems wildly optimistic. The CBO's number is probably much closer to the mark. The other \$73 billion in Bush's deficit reductions comes from the \$543 billion that is not Social Security, defense, or interest. That's a 13 percent cut.

Moreover, all of these calculations assume that Bush will neither increase spending on any other programs above the level assumed by current law nor introduce any new spending programs. Clearly, that is doable. Can *George Bush* do it? I don't know, but I wouldn't bet a dollar on it if you gave me 20 to 1 odds. A better bet is that the deficit could be decreased from the currently projected \$139 billion to about \$100 billion.

And that's not bad. Remember that that \$100 billion would be in 1993 dollars and that the federal debt held by the public would be about \$2.5 trillion by the start of 1993. Assuming an inflation rate of 4 percent, the real value of the debt owed by the feds at the beginning of 1993 would erode by 4 percent by the end, or by \$100 billion. Which means that Bush could still run a deficit of \$100 billion and keep the federal debt from rising in real terms. And he could do it without any tax increases.

Still not excited about Bush? Consider the alternative. Michael Dukakis and cousin Olympia assure us that he is frugal because he uses the same 25-year-old snow blower. But I don't give a damn how he spends *his* money—that's his business. What matters is how he spends *our* money. Even in the unusually promise-free Democratic platform, it is not hard to find tens of billions of added spending per year. If Dukakis plans, for example, to introduce government provision of long-term health care, as the platform hints, the price tag would be about \$28 billion per year, according to Republican Rep. Har-

CHARLES PEALE