



11350 Random Hills Road, Suite 800, Fairfax, Virginia 22030 Phone (703) 934-6101 Fax (703) 352-3678

fff@fff.org www.fff.org

The Failure of the Republican “Revolution,” Part 9

by Jacob G. Hornberger

The Republican "revolution" was doomed from the start. The reason is due to the fatal flaw in the moral, political, and economic philosophy of the Republican Party. Since the time of Franklin Roosevelt, post-FDR Republicans have preached the free-enterprise, private-property, limited-government line of their pre-FDR Republican predecessors. In real life, however, post-FDR Republicans have lived the life of the lie. For they have embraced and supported every single socialistic, welfare-state scheme that has been implemented in America in the 20th century.

Old-age assistance. Government-guaranteed health care. Public schooling. Economic regulations. Trade and immigration controls. Central banking. Monetary regulations. Welfare. Public roads. Progressive taxation. Yes — all of the things that still exist in socialist Cuba, Vietnam, and North Korea are ardently and enthusiastically embraced in the U.S. by present-day Republicans.

The unexpected takeover of both houses of Congress was the Republican Party's worst nightmare. Before the election, Republicans could safely campaign for office by claiming that, if elected, they would: dismantle Roosevelt's New Deal programs and Lyndon Johnson's Great Society programs; abolish the Departments of Education, Commerce, and Energy as well as the Internal Revenue Service; end funding for the National Endowment for the Arts; and place a moratorium on economic regulations.

The congressional elections of 1994 flushed Republicans out into the open. Once the elections were over, the fatal flaw — the life of the lie — was exposed for all to see. Not only was nothing of substance abolished or dismantled, there was not even an attempt to do so.

Despite the free-enterprise rhetoric, the Republican "revolution" was never about freedom for the American people. Rather, it was what it has been since 1932 — a way to win Republican control over the lives and fortunes of the American people. While it raised the hopes of many advocates of freedom, it is not surprising, in retrospect, to understand why the Republican "revolution" turned out to be a fizzler.

What would a *real* revolution look like? It would be a libertarian revolution. And it would be one of the most exciting events in history.

Specifically, it would involve the following ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution:

1. No law shall be passed by either the national or state governments respecting the regulation of peaceful activity, including commerce, or abridging the free exercise thereof.

2. No subsidy, grant, welfare, aid, loan, or other special privilege shall be provided to anyone, domestic or foreign, by either the national or state governments.

3. Neither the national government nor the states shall engage in any business or commercial enterprise, including the delivery of mail.

4. No law shall be passed by either the national or state governments respecting the establishment of education or abridging the free exercise thereof. Compulsory school-attendance laws and school taxes are prohibited.

5. No law shall be passed by either the national or state governments respecting the ownership of weapons or abridging the free exercise thereof.

6. No law shall be passed by either the national or state governments respecting the establishment or regulation of money or banking. Legal-tender laws and a central government bank are prohibited.

7. Trade and immigration controls, by both the national and state governments, are prohibited.

8. The imposition of taxes by the national and state governments is prohibited. All governments shall be funded voluntarily, or not at all. To fund the national government, the government of each state shall be required to remit ten percent of gross revenues to the national government.

9. Conscription is prohibited. Governmental involvement in foreign wars is prohibited.

10. Except for the White House, the Capitol, and the Supreme Court building, and the corresponding buildings in the respective states, governmental ownership of real property is prohibited.

Why constitutional amendments? While the repeal of laws would certainly be effective, people would still have to constantly worry about a new Congress coming into power and, once again, passing the old interventionist, welfare laws for the benefit of the politically privileged. With constitutional prohibitions, the citizenry could, by and large, sleep well when Congress was in session.

Let's examine each of these amendments to the Constitution.

Amendment One would guarantee the right of people to engage in any peaceful activity without governmental interference. This would include the right to exercise economic liberty; thus, people would be free to engage in any enterprise without governmental licenses, permits, or regulations.

Amendment Two would abolish all welfare for everyone, including foreigners (foreign aid). One of the problems with repealing individual welfare laws is the resentment that is created against those whose dole has not yet been eliminated. A constitutional amendment barring welfare for everyone would bring a sense of justice to the process because everyone's dole would be terminated at the same time. Moreover, since Congress would not have the power to override a constitutional amendment, protests and demonstrations by welfare recipients would be futile.

Amendment Three would prohibit governments from constructing and operating sports stadiums, airports, hotels, liquor companies, and the like; and it would finally put first-class mail delivery where it belongs — in the hands of the free market.

Amendment Four, by separating school and state, would restore educational freedom to the American people. All educational decisions would be where they belong — in the hands of the family. The free market would bring into existence the educational vehicles which people would demand. The result would be the diversity, tolerance, and educational superiority that freedom brings.

Amendment Five would clearly establish the right of the American people to own weapons as a principle of private property and to protect themselves from criminals, invaders, and an unbearable tyranny from their own government.

Amendment Six would separate money and the state. No longer would the government be able to plunder the American people through legal-tender laws and the debasement of their currency. The free market would bring into existence the media of exchange which people wished to use.

Amendment Seven would restore the right of the American people to trade, hire, associate with, and interact with people from all over the world. It would restore the Statue of Liberty to the hallowed place it once had in the hearts and minds of the American people.

Amendment Eight would prohibit the use of coercion — taxation — to fund the limited functions of governments. Mayors, governors, and the like would have to behave as true servants; they would have to come to us — their masters — with hat in hand, justifying to us that their governments deserve to be refunded. Imagine the beauty of seeing politicians holding telethons, bike rides, and other fund-raising devices to fund their limited activities. To ensure that the national government need not have an enormous fund-raising branch, each of the state governments would be required to send a predetermined percentage (i.e., 5%) of their (voluntarily) collected gross revenues to the national government.

Amendment Nine would end one of the most fundamental violations of human liberty — the draft. It would also end U.S. government involvement in foreign wars (a protection found in Democratic and Republican Party platforms before World War II). Private individuals would still be free to travel overseas to help resist what they considered to be tyranny or international wrongdoing.

Amendment Ten would end one of the core tenets of socialism — public ownership of the means of production. Airports, roads, parks, and so forth would be privatized. If government officials needed real estate (i.e., for a military installation), they could lease it from the owner. Private environmental groups would be free to own parks, forests, rivers, and the like.

These ten amendments encompass the fundamental principles of libertarianism. If they were adopted, the result would be the most phenomenal period that mankind has ever seen. Economic prosperity would skyrocket, since people would be free to engage in any enterprise and exchange without governmental regulation or restriction. Since people would be free to accumulate unlimited amounts of wealth, the massive accumulation of capital would cause living standards to soar. Those at the bottom of the economic ladder — especially those in the inner cities of America — would finally have the freedom to compete against those who have already accumulated wealth.

The wide ambit of choices that people would now face on a private basis — between right and wrong, responsible or irresponsible, moral or immoral — would begin to nurture and develop the values that each of us holds dear: compassion for one's fellow man, the reaching out to one in need, the honoring of one's mother and father, and philanthropy — but always on a voluntary basis.

And a strong, self-reliant, independent, prosperous, and free people would be the best deterrence against invasion, for what enemy would want to tangle with such a people?

How do we achieve a libertarian revolution? Each of us must first decide within his heart and mind the following: Do I *really* want to see freedom in my lifetime? Many people complain

about "big government" — about excessive regulation, taxation, and so forth. But when push comes to shove, their response remains the same: "I think we should just reform the welfare-state system." The *reality* of freedom is simply too terrifying a thought for them.

A libertarian revolution requires courage and fortitude, an unwavering and uncompromising devotion to liberty, and a clear understanding of the positive results that a free society would bring.

So, what should people do to advance a libertarian revolution? Whatever they believe is the best way for they themselves to advance liberty. Some may choose the political route — by participating in the Democratic, Republican, or Libertarian parties. Others may write letters to the editor — talk to their neighbors — give speeches — write essays or scholarly articles — or publish books. Some may choose to financially support such endeavors. Each person must delve within himself and ask: What is the best thing I can do to see this accomplished before I pass from this life?

How will a libertarian revolution be finally achieved? It will not be the result of a master plan for freedom. Instead, when liberty is finally achieved (and it will be), the achievement will be the result of the millions of individual acts of tens of thousands of people, each advancing liberty in his own way.

In the final analysis, no one can change another person. To try to do so is a futile and often damaging act. All that we can do is to change ourselves. This means constantly improving ourselves — our self-knowledge, our physical, mental, and spiritual health, and, of course, our understanding of the principles of liberty. If we continue to do this, our fellow Americans, faced with the continued wreckage of the socialistic welfare state that has been constructed in America by the Democrats and Republicans, will ultimately be attracted to our cause.

The twentieth century has been a century of darkness — a century of the socialistic welfare state . . . a century of war, both foreign and domestic . . . a century of political plunder and control . . . a century of poverty, misery, and despair. But when this century is relegated to the dustbin of history — where it belongs — the historians will undoubtedly record that there was one small beacon of light — a light of hope — a hope that shone through libertarians. They will undoubtedly record that it was the libertarians who led mankind through the darkness — out of the socialistic morass — off of the road to serfdom — and into one of history's most exciting revolutions — a libertarian revolution — a revolution that took mankind to the highest reaches of freedom in history!

Mr. Hornberger is founder and president of The Future of Freedom Foundation.

This article was originally published in the October 1996 edition of *Freedom Daily*.