

# **Our Enemy, The Party**

Samuel Edward Konkin III

1980

# Contents

Introduction . . . . .	3
Our Enemy, The State . . . . .	3
The Case For Consistency . . . . .	3
Our Enemy, The Party . . . . .	4
The Rôle of Activism . . . . .	5

## Introduction

In 1935, proto-libertarian Albert J. Nock wrote his seminal analysis of the nature of government and society: *Our Enemy, The State*. During the Dark Ages of Libertarianism (between the Fall of Benjamin Tucker [1908] to the rise of Murray Rothbard [1965-70] the leading libertarian thinkers have warned freedom-seekers against participation in the political process, that is, against vote-chasing and power-seeking. Nock, his disciple Frank Chodorov, H.L. Mencken, Isabel Patterson, Rose Wilder Lane, Leonard Read, and Robert LeFevre all sought to enlighten, instruct, and possibly sound the alarm. Chodorov and LeFevre were both instrumental in organizing activist libertarians — Chodorov’s Intercollegiate Society of Individualists (ISI) in the 1950s and LeFevre’s Libertarian Alliance in the 1960s. All warned against supporting any politician under any circumstances.

Now, in 1980, the blight of politician libertarianism, that absurd oxymoron based on abolishing rule by the State but accepting rule by a political party — *partyarchy* — has crested. Our current leading thinker and essayist admits all partyarch activity to date is deceit and failure. But still the concept lives on. This self-destructive “heresy” will probably linger on until the State is finally abolished from Man’s mind, but it can be reduced to an insignificant minority of no influence in the immediate future by vigorous activism and refutation. To this end, to save us another twenty years in the Dark Ages for Liberty, this pamphlet is written.

## Our Enemy, The State

For those still pursuing the hopeless utopia of “limited” government (*minarchy*), there is little of substance to be said. In a nutshell, the State is the monopolization of coercion — *initiatory* violence. Any defensive acts are incidental to its essence. To a libertarian, such coercion is the *only* social immorality. (Personal immorality is the individual’s problem.) Hence the State is the institutional monopolization of immorality, evil, altruism, irrationality, and/or whatever you call it in your belief system.

Having got this far, one must ask if one is cursed with obeying this monster until it agrees to limit and abolish itself, remaining in complicity with its plunder and murder (taxation and war), or if one should break with it immediately (taking care of obvious threats to one’s life) and thenceforward living statelessly. The gradualist, conservative, “philosophical anarchist” makes the first choice; the rest select the moral course. But yet another choice faces the would-be consistent libertarian: having chosen abolitionism over gradualism, one must choose the mechanism by which one obtains the free society. Is it to be the political means or the economic means — Power or Market?

## The Case For Consistency

Can means inconsistent with an end ever achieve that end? Can violence obtain peace, can slavery obtain freedom, can plunder protect against theft? The statist who pursues war, conscription and taxation answers yes. The libertarian responds no. Then why will an abolitionist anarchist pursue political means to abolish the political process? The end of the libertarian is a voluntary society where the market has replaced the government, where economics functions

without politics. The purpose of politics is the maintenance, extension and controlling of the State — power. The market lies not on the road to power but on the road away.

Consistency to a libertarian means not some floating abstraction of non-contradicting philosophy but a consistency of theory with reality, of ideology and practice, of what ought to be and what is done. Complying with laws and procedure is necessary for the political route; one's psychology becomes attuned to parliamentarianism, procedure and compromise, coalitions and betrayals, glad-handing and back-stabbing, elation at the ephemeral approval of others rather than one's own achievements. Thus is one conditioned for living successfully in the State.

Pursuing the market anarchy directly through counter-economics, one's psychology becomes attuned to supply-demand calculations, risk-taking, commerce with those of similar self-interest — hence inherently trustworthy, to salesmanship, and to elation at personal achievement (profit) and the self-correcting negative feelings accompanying loss. Thus is one self-programmed for living successfully — in a marketplace.

The consistent, or counter-economic, libertarian — *agorist* — suffers none of the frustrations arising from the self-contradictions of the political libertarian — *partyarch*. The State loses by each free transaction committed in defiance or evasion of its laws, regulations and taxes; the State gains by every compliance with, acceptance of, and payment to its institutions. Thus does agorism create anarchy and partyarchy preserve the State.

## Our Enemy, The Party

Any “Libertarian” Party is immoral, inconsistent, unhistorical (see revisionist accounts of similar parties in the past: the Philosophic Radicals, the Liberty Party, the Free Soilers, and many others), psychologically frustrating and thoroughly counter-productive. Worst of all, such an LP may be the savior of the State.

Assume, as is the case in 1980, that a majority of vote-eligible citizens (in the U.S. as it happens) are poised not to vote. And as the counter-economy grows and the State's sanction recedes, the tax-starved monster teeters on desertion of its unpaid enforcers and thus final collapse. The Higher Circle of the State stand to lose their power, privilege and centuries of ill-gotten gain. When suddenly the “L”P springs to the rescue.

Those who would send the taxman away now pay to keep their voting privilege and their record clean to run for office. Those who would violate laws and evade regulations now maintain the system to do away with it at a later, more expedient time. And those who would dodge or defend against the State's enforcers “accept the result of a democratic election.”

Consider the fate of a heroic agorist who, at an earlier time of trust of “fellow libertarians” incautiously had spoken of her activities to be used as example to others, is turned in for her black marketeering by a libertarian who feels “the time is not right for revolution.”

She is arrested by Libertarians working their way through the system to reform it — as police. She is locked up...by a Libertarian working his way through the system to reform it — as a turnkey. She is tried...by a Libertarian working his way through the system — as a judge. And she is executed...by a Libertarian working his way through the system to reform it — as an executioner. So ends up partyarchy at its logical conclusion.

## The Rôle of Activism

The agorist — consistent libertarian — has many alternatives to wasting time helping preserve the State and its system through politics. Undoubtedly there are rewards for some (though not all) for the political path where the Power Elite shower rewards on those who most successfully co-opt opposition and harness revolutionary fervor to maintain at least some of the State and its privilege. But the agorist can be amply rewarded in the counter-economy in both the material and personal sense for entrepreneurial activities. And there is a vital rôle for agorist activists — for that much-acclaimed cadre.

There are tens of millions of counter-economists in North America, and even more in the world at large. Few understand or have even heard of a philosophy of living that is consistent, moral and would free these true marketeers of residual guilt laid on them by the court intellectuals. Enlighten and interconnect these millions and one will have a fully conscious, efficacious and expanding society imbedded within the malfunctioning statist one, collapsing from wars, terrorism, runaway inflation, and stultifying bureaucracy. And soon it shall be *the* society.

That is the goal of the revolutionary agorist cadre of counter-economic practitioners and libertarian theorists. And the Movement of the Libertarian Left is working to build that alliance. Join us. Or seek the free society in your own, consistent way.

But give no aid to Our Enemy, The Party.

The Anarchist Library  
Anti-Copyright



Samuel Edward Konkin III  
Our Enemy, The Party  
1980

Retrieved on November 9, 2022 from  
<http://wconger.blogspot.com/2008/10/our-enemy-party.html>  
Reprinted from the *MLL Issue* Pamphlet #5 (later reissued in 1987)

**[theanarchistlibrary.org](http://theanarchistlibrary.org)**