



The Benefit and Necessity of Minor Parties: How the Libertarian Party Failed

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PREFACE

As this is an academic research paper, it is my intention to employ external evidence to support the thesis and subject matter. The topic is, however, of an internal nature because it examines a specific minor political party in the United States (U.S.) and its machinations, referred to within the party as 'insider baseball'. The Libertarian Party does not garner much mainstream media or more pointedly, academic attention and analysis.¹ This essay aims to add to the available information regarding the Libertarian Party (LP) because it is an important facet of the U.S. political sphere.²

Despite inner turmoil, the LP remains the largest national third party based on membership and ballot access; it habitually reflects a microcosmic view of the nationwide atmosphere and attitudes. The sources evaluated are not necessarily mainstream but have historically proven empirically reliable for LP information. The people who write on LP ongoings are involved,

¹ "Libertarian Party Official Website." Libertarian Party, August 26, 2024. <https://www.lp.org/>.

² "Libertarian Party (LP)." The Library of Congress, October 7, 2019. <https://www.loc.gov/item/lcwan0001654/>.



were physically present for the events and circumstances, and have earned respect and credibility within their distinct fields. This scholar does not claim to have earned the level of academic and subject matter expertise or wider authority of the individuals referenced in this text but has worked with many of them on a regular, politically professional basis. Many of the events and circumstances outlined here I was also a part of, present for, or witnessed, such as the 2020, 2022, and 2024 LP national conventions. The reader is asked to consider those engagements as supplementary research on the topic of the Libertarian Party from the experience of a former party elected official and internally elected party leader.³ The LP, due to its minor party status in a centralized two-party system, lacks the conventional sanctioned information reserve and public record the major parties enjoy. This paper aims to add to the academic knowledge base on the topic of minor parties, specifically the Libertarian Party.

³ "Trisha Butler." LPedia, May 18, 2024.
https://lpedia.org/wiki/Trisha_Butler.

INTRODUCTION

Minor parties, more often referred to as third parties, are now widely considered irrelevant and ineffectual because of their lack of electoral success. The United States (U.S.) became a two-party system roughly a generation after the nation's inception.⁴ The Democrat and Republican parties are consistently and commonly considered the ideological sides of that dichotomy, but that is not a wholly accurate postulation and adds to the devaluation of third parties. Initially, the rivals were a single Democratic-Republican opposition party.⁵ Over the course of the two-party system, various factions were on either side, such as Jackson's Democrats and the Whigs, who "adopted the first party-based customs in the Senate."⁵ When the Whigs disbanded, the Republic moniker was generally instituted. Through time, different parties coalesced under Democrat and Republican banners, including the Anti-Mason, Federalist, Free Soil, Bull Moose, and Progressive parties, to name a few. If the two-party system is to be accepted as Democrat versus Republican, one should understand that does not signal longstanding and unswerving concrete party ideologies. Especially in the current political atmosphere, polarity in the two-party system is held to be static, historical, and

⁴ Jackson, John S.. *The American Political Party System: Continuity and Change over Ten Presidential Elections*. Blue Ridge Summit: Brookings Institution Press, 2014. Accessed October 20, 2024. ProQuest Ebook Central, 7.

⁵ "About Parties and Leadership: Historical Overview." United States Senate, August 7, 2023. <https://www.senate.gov/about/origins-foundations/parties-leadership/overview.htm>.



perpetual, a grotesquely naïve ignorance that preserves the degradation of minor parties.

It is perceived that third parties fail, but a more earnest understanding would be that their purpose is erroneously constituted, both by said parties and the electorate. The initial thesis of this essay was 'Why do third parties fail?', but through the research, it was determined that is not truly the case. Instead, this writing now seeks to illuminate the historic effect of minor parties on the U.S. political landscape, primarily the Libertarian Party (LP), and how it became a target of conservatives and the Make America Great Again (MAGA) movement. Some questions this essay considered were: 'Did the Republican Party (GOP) infiltrate the LP?', 'Was the LP targeted because Donald J. Trump lost in 2020?', 'is libertarianism right wing?', 'Is the current iteration of the LP ideologically libertarian?', and 'Did the LP irrevocably implode, and will it cease to influence U.S. politics in the future?' That is a lot, but the overarching thesis seeks to examine the role of the Libertarian Party in U.S. politics, the problems, and current standing of the LP. Through the lens of the LP, this paper will discuss why minor parties are beneficial and effectual and prescribe how they would be most influential moving forward.

MINOR PARTY MOMENTS

The term third-party suggests that not only is the U.S. a two-party system, but there can only be a single third challenger. For this reason, the term minor party is more appropriate, but the terms may be used interchangeably. It is commonly held as fact within the LP that the party is the



largest minor party in the U.S. Ballotpedia agrees based on ballot access, but various sources dispute that achievement based on membership numbers.⁶ Unfortunately, accurate data on minor party membership is difficult to find for multiple reasons, most largely, minor parties are often lumped into the 'independent' descriptor, despite 'independent' meaning a lack of affiliation *and* a word used in the official name of numerous minor parties. This *could* be to deliberately invalidate minor parties, but that is conjecture. The practice is likely because the two-party system fundamentally disregards additional parties, that is, until it cannot, such as when third parties have been successful or ostensibly impacted one of the major parties.

H. Ross Perot, for example, received nearly 19% of the national popular vote in 1992 despite bowing out and later returning to the campaign trail.⁷ Further, Perot is the only candidate, besides the GOP and Democrat (DEM) nominees, that has been on the national debate stage in the past 32 years.⁷ The Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) also identified People's Party candidate James P. Weaver, the Bull Moose Party with Teddy Roosevelt, the 1948 DEM factional split that supported Henry Wallace, Strom Thurmond, and American Independent George Wallace as significant third party moments.⁷ Author Christopher Klein outlined the ways third-party candidacies are mitigated by the majors, strategies that ultimately result in significant

⁶ "List of Political Parties in the United States." Ballotpedia, June 2024. https://ballotpedia.org/List_of_political_parties_in_the_United_States.

⁷ "A Timeline of Third-Party Events." Public Broadcasting Service (PBS). Accessed October 20, 2024. <https://www.pbs.org/thinktank/thirdchoice/timeline.html>.



declination of electoral gains by these candidates.⁸ Some tactics Klein notes are the struggles with ballot access, the corrosive rhetoric that minor party candidates *steal* votes from the GOP and DEM, that third-party votes are *wasted*, and minor candidates are merely spoilers.⁹ Although some minor candidates do cover the spread between the majors, and certainly affect outcomes, the idea that major parties are intrinsically entitled to votes is unreasonable, not to mention contrary to U.S. values and ideals. Additionally, Green Party recurrent nominee Jill Stein noted that exit polling evidenced those who voted for her in 2016 would not have voted, or listed Trump as their second choice, had she not been on the ballot.⁹ Likewise, political research analysts Harrison Lavelle and Armin Thomas recently quantified data from the 1992 cycle and concluded that Perot did not in fact 'spoil' H.W. Bush's chances.¹⁰ Minor party moments are not an affront to the U.S. political landscape, they are an integral *part* of it.

NECESSITY & BENEFIT OF MINOR PARTIES

Minor parties are popularly characterized as single-issue, disgruntled, disingenuous, often fringe or radically ideological elements that waste votes and fail spectacularly at

⁸ Klein, Christopher. "Here's How Third-Party Candidates Have Changed Elections." History.com, November 11, 2019. <https://www.history.com/news/third-party-candidates-election-influence-facts>.

⁹ Klein, "Here's How Third-Party...".

¹⁰ Lavelle, Harrison, and Armin Thomas. "Examining Ross Perot's Impact on the 1992 Presidential Election Results." Split Ticket, April 1, 2023. <https://split-ticket.org/2023/04/01/examining-ross-perots-impact-on-the-1992-presidential-election/>.



electoral politics. This is in spite of a majority of voters' ever-increasing dissatisfaction with the major parties.¹¹ In the U.S. system, aside from amalgamating under a major party element as previously asserted, it is indeed unheard of to be elected, especially on the federal level. Some minor candidates truly believe or at least posture that they have a path to victory, this is genuinely misguided or, in the worst cases, a blatant lack of political understanding. Because of this, their organizations or movements are erroneously constituted and then subsequently miscalculated by the electorate. The two-party system *could* be adjusted for multiple parties, but that cannot happen tomorrow or next year, probably not even in a single generation. Likewise, a minor party candidate will not outright win the presidency any time soon either; the system would have to experience either a serious implausible trauma like devastating civil war, total government meltdown, usurpation, nuclear attack, or something equally bizarre. Otherwise, only an inexplicably precarious situation, like the 1800 electoral tie, coupled with an unprecedented Senate selection of a minor candidate, would yield such a result.

Unlike invasive opinions, oft permeated by major parties, minor party candidates and platforms serve a necessary and authentic purpose. As previously noted, these candidates do impact the decision of elections, especially concerning tight major party margins, which are becoming more regular with mounting hyper-polarity. More remarkably though, minor parties inspire and demand political consciousness on issues that "may

¹¹ Evans, Mary Claire. "Support for a Third Political Party in the U.S. Dips to 58%." Gallup, October 17, 2024. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/651278/support-third-political-party-dips.aspx>.



not be politically palatable for the dominant parties.”¹² In a State Department briefing, Georgia State Professor Tammy Greer used 2019 DEM contender Andrew Yang to illustrate how he publicized and ultimately normalized the consideration of universal basic income (UBI).¹² UBI was considered a relatively radical idea that DEM officials were afraid to address for fear of losing their positions, but Yang’s campaign introduced a stable discussion that even Republicans started to entertain. This is just one example: the Green Party prioritized environmental stances, and the LP is historically associated with legal cannabis and individual liberty. Even farther back, minor parties were linked to reform and abolition. Minor parties proliferate public concerns that are widely ignored and overlooked by the major party elites.

Another exceptionally relevant topic Greer addressed is that minor parties experience and should focus on gaining traction and engagement on the local and state level, a sentiment that was, at one time, the organized goal of the LP.¹³ Greer’s comments support the approach of a homegrown, organic, cultivation of candidates, who work their way up, building creditability and relevance for themselves and their affiliation, and more importantly comprehensive, voter-motivated platforms. This trajectory would compose a welcome, fresh, distinct quality that is not comparable to anything in the current political landscape, but perhaps that is rather

¹² Greer, Tammy. “Election Briefing Series: The Role of Third Parties in U.S. Elections.” U.S. Department of State, April 25, 2024. <https://www.state.gov/briefings-foreign-press-centers/elections-2024/third-parties-in-elections>.

¹³ Greer, Tammy. “Election Briefing Series”.



capricious and farfetched. The most compelling argument Greer made in defense of the benefits and contributions of minor parties was their engagement of younger voters and underrepresented communities, remarkably including overlooked U.S. territories.¹³ Greer's catchphrase "local and vocal" and her admonishment of the majors for leaving these communities' "enormous amount of votes on the table" would be material tremendously valuable to minor parties if adopted and employed.¹³ These angles would allay common mischaracterization of minor parties as narrow, protest vote pursuers, and establish them as homogenous and interactive. Minor parties need to put in the long hours of work to build a foundation from the ground up, rather than display the single issue, reactionary appearance of the past. Data reveals that the U.S. is fertile for another party and has been for a long time, but a minor party competitor to the GOP and DEM needs to be a markedly *new* party. If this were to be accomplished, it would elevate the already beneficial and effectual aspects of minor parties.

THE UNRULY LIBERTARIAN PARTY

The Libertarian Party was "officially formed on December 11, 1971, in Colorado" in David Nolan's living room, which is in part the official story and consistent party lore.¹⁴ ¹⁵ The Party was originated by discontented former major party members as well as "political newcomers" who harbored concern over

¹⁴ Library of Congress, "Libertarian Party (LP)."

¹⁵ Harlos, Caryn Ann, and Eric Mulder. "Timeline of the Libertarian Party." LPedia, October 15, 2023. https://lpedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_the_Libertarian_Party.



Nixon, the draft for the Vietnam War, and the gold standard.^{14 15} The LP has gone through several iterations in the half-century it has existed, due to factional and internal strife over the correct objectives of the organization. The LP has historically resembled a microcosm reflecting the national political landscape.

Different factional held eras within the party align with ongoings across the country. For example, as Reagan and his conservative administration were leaving office the LP experienced a paleo-libertarian movement driven by people like Llewelyn Rockwell, Murray Rothbard, and Hans-Hermann Hoppe.¹⁶ In short, these men were anarcho-capitalists who diverged with the existing LP on social conservatism and their philosophies were largely right-wing, populist, and reactionary. Philosopher Matt Zwolinski and Brown professor John Tomasi wrote that Rothbard in particular, believed that LP outreach should appeal specifically to the “rednecks” of the country who he referred to as “the real people.”¹⁷ The 1988 LP presidential candidate and later GOP nomination contender Ron Paul was also involved in this movement. The paleo-movement factors into the current problems of the LP and the Mises PAC.

Another iteration was under the leadership of a faction called the Reform Caucus (LRC). The LRC is associated with an event referred to in LP circles and history as the “Portland Plank Massacre” in 2006, where the group nullified all but 15

¹⁶ Zwolinski, Matt, and John Tomasi. *The Individualists: Radicals, Reactionaries, and the Struggle for the Soul of Libertarianism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2023, 240-245.

¹⁷ Zwolinski & Tomasi, *The Individualists*, 244.



planks from the party platform, 46 were removed.¹⁸ LRC founder Carl Milsted explained that the purpose of the 'massacre' was to tone down impractical and philosophically extreme party ideology in an effort to appeal to a larger portion of the electorate.¹¹ The 2006 abridgment of the LP platform was the first platform reduction ever, many perceived it as a good and pragmatic decision, especially the removal of things like secession, space exploration, and child consent.¹⁸ There remained an element of the party that would cling to the event as a perceived injustice yet utilize similar tactics in a later iteration, the Mises Caucus (MC), legally the Mises PAC.

To add a housekeeping note slightly tardy, the term 'caucus' is inaccurately used by the LP to name their internal factions almost mimicking the intended use of the term by major parties out of legislative necessity. Regardless, according to some long-time members, the LRC eventually morphed into the Libertarian Pragmatist Caucus (LPC). It is not fully known if this is true but is commonly referenced especially by the opponents of the LPC, namely MC members. Turnover in the LP is high, and the factions are unofficial, so it is debatable as to whether a majority of LRC members were still in the LP, let alone if they rebranded as the LPC. MC members still commonly refer to their opposition as 'prags' despite the group disbanding in in 2021.¹⁹ In reality, all but one individual listed on the LPedia LPC page have left the LP, including the

¹⁸ Doherty, Brian M. "The Portland Plank Massacre of 2006." Reason, July 7, 2006. <https://reason.com/2006/07/07/the-portland-plank-massacre-of/>.

¹⁹ "Libertarian Pragmatist Caucus." LPedia, October 7, 2023. https://lpedia.org/wiki/Libertarian_Pragmatist_Caucus.



chair who dissolved the group, Laura Ebke who is the first presidential nominee for the Liberal Party USA.²⁰

The current faction with control of the Libertarian National Committee (LNC) is the Mises PAC.²¹ Mises will be referred to as MC in this text, but it is important to note that the group is a Federal Election Commission (FEC) registered Political Action Committee (PAC) unlike most LP caucuses.²² The MC did exist, prior to filing with the FEC in 2019, as a typical LP faction. The MC completed a "takeover" of the LP in May of 2022, and the current MC chair, Aaron Harris, then launched their "Project Decentralized rEVOLution: For a New Libertarian Party", styled after Ron Paul's 2012 bid for the GOP presidential nomination.²³ The Libertarian faction currently in power, styled their LP project on the Republican campaign of Paul, who broke with the LP in favor of the socially conservative, paleo-libertarian movement. The MC is the most recent iteration of faction held LP era, and by far

²⁰ Evans, Jordan Willow. "Liberal Party USA's Laura Ebke and Trisha Butler Confirmed to Appear on New Mexico State Ballot." Independent Political Report, September 9, 2024. <https://independentpoliticalreport.com/2024/09/liberal-party-usas-laura-ebke-and-trisha-butler-confirmed-to-appear-on-new-mexico-state-ballot>.

²¹ Doherty, Brian M. "Mises Caucus Takes Control of Libertarian Party." Reason, June 1, 2022. <https://reason.com/2022/05/29/mises-caucus-takes-control-of-libertarian-party/>.

²² "Mises PAC FEC Form 1 - Statement of Organization." Federal Election Commission, March 21, 2019. <https://docquery.fec.gov/cgi-bin/forms/C00699785/1320845/>.

²³ Harris, Aaron. "Project Decentralized rEVOLution: For a New Libertarian Party." Libertarian Party Mises Caucus, December 22, 2022. <https://lpmisescaucus.com/libertarianism/project-decentralized-revolution-for-a-new-libertarian-party/>.



the most publicly noticed and scrutinized one, in large part due to Trump and their connection to the far right.

MISES PAC'S CONSERVATIVE CORRELATION

This essay will attempt to explicate the present atmosphere of the LP as succinctly as possible to highlight the relevance to the overall necessity of minor parties. There is a plethora of online resources illustrating the topic, and since the turmoil is ongoing, more are added daily. My original research question asked if there was a paper trail to prove that the MC takeover of the LP was propagated by GOP operatives and funding. It may superficially seem that this is a wild hypothesis, but the research has proven otherwise. Scouring the Mises PAC FEC disclosures was illuminating but did not yield any clear and obvious correlation to the GOP, except for a few revelations.

Donations to the MC did spike, particularly large dollar contributions, in the six months prior to national conventions. One Las Vegas donor gave a \$10,000 lump sum in the time leading up to the 2022 'takeover' convention. Additionally, he gave a \$3,200 donation the same day and \$2,600 in 2021.²⁴ These donations totaled \$15,800, mostly in a single day, but no additional information could be found about him or any other affiliations. Another pre-takeover large dollar donor, Dale Woolridge, also gave to the conservative Club for Growth PAC and served in the leadership of the Republican Liberty Caucus of

²⁴ "Mises PAC Donors 2022." OpenSecrets. Accessed October 20, 2024. <https://www.opensecrets.org/political-action-committees-pacs/mises-pac/C00699785/donors/2022>.



Pennsylvania.^{25 26 27} James McMahon, of San Antonio, Texas, contributed \$40,000 through four \$10,000 installments in a two-week period, less than three months before the 2024 convention.²⁸ McMahon also gave \$5,000 to the Courageous Conservatives PAC, \$2,900 to self-identified "Forever Trumper" Ohio Congressional candidate Ron Hood, and finally, a \$10,000 donation to Virginia MAGA candidate Nick Freitas.^{29 30 31 32} The most profound Mises PAC contributor is Silicon Valley billionaire, GOP donor, longtime friend of, and campaign staff for Trump, Scott McNealy.^{28 33} There

²⁵ OpenSecrets, "Mises PAC Donors 2022".

²⁶ "Committee: Club for Growth PAC." Federal Election Commission. Accessed October 20, 2024. <https://docquery.fec.gov/cgi-bin/forms/C00432260/762299/sb/ALL>.

²⁷ "Dale Woolridge - Lewisberry, Pennsylvania, United States." LinkedIn. Accessed October 21, 2024. <https://www.linkedin.com/in/dale-woolridge-a6b62b5a>.

²⁸ "Mises PAC Donors 2024." OpenSecrets. Accessed October 20, 2024. <https://www.opensecrets.org/political-action-committees-pacs/mises-pac/C00699785/donors/2024>.

²⁹ "Committee: Courageous Conservatives PAC." Federal Election Commission. Accessed October 20, 2024. <https://docquery.fec.gov/cgi-bin/forms/C00587022/1251069/sa/11AI>.

³⁰ "Committee: Ron Hood for Congress Form 6 - Contributions." Federal Election Commission. Accessed October 20, 2024. <https://docquery.fec.gov/cgi-bin/forms/C00779041/1530255/f65>.

³¹ "Ron Hood for Congress: Ohio District 2." Ron Hood Forever Trumper for Congress, March 16, 2024. <https://www.ronhood.com/>.

³² "Nick Freitas Campaign Finance Reports." Virginia State Board of Elections, June 8, 2023. <https://cfreports.elections.virginia.gov/Report/ScheduleA/329189?page=2>.

³³ Setty, Ganesh. "Trump Held Fundraiser at Former Sun CEO Scott McNealy's Silicon Valley House on Tuesday." CNBC, September 17, 2019. <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/09/17/trump-silicon-valley-fundraiser-at-scott-mcnealys-home.html>.



may not be an obvious GOP connection, but the MC definitely enjoys the contributions of a few clearly GOP/conservative donors. Does that mean the LP was infiltrated?

NOVEL LIBERTARIAN 'POWER'

That question garners the most exasperation from MC members and everyday politicians alike because it sounds farcical, but is it? Project Veritas is a legitimate conservative and Trump-endorsed operation that employed a former spy to train employees to infiltrate opposing party groups.³⁴ NPR specified "progressive" organizations, and Pulitzer Prize winning Adam Goldman's investigation focused on the majors, but does it not stand to reason that the ruse may have been employed on minor parties as well?³⁴ The outlet NPR and reporter Goldman are widely considered credible. This point is being made because Veritas' operation is indeed outrageously unbelievable, but in fact happened, and *still* does. Might a concerted effort to populate and steer the LP have happened? If so, why?

The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) quickly took notice of the MC, and their information is verifiable to party and mainstream sources. The 2020 Libertarian presidential nominee Jo Jorgenson covered the spread between Joe Biden and Trump in Arizona, Georgia, and Wisconsin. SPLC noted that Biden won these

³⁴ Davies, Dave. "How A Former Spy Trained Conservatives To Infiltrate Progressive Groups." NPR, July 1, 2021. <https://www.npr.org/2021/07/01/1012107432/how-a-former-spy-trained-conservatives-to-infiltrate-progressive-groups>.

swing states by less than 1%.³⁵ Even mainstream media (MSM) conceded the “mounting concern” over the LP when they covered Trump’s unfathomable participation in the 2024 LP convention.³⁶ Not only Trump but Robert F. Kennedy Jr. (RFK) also made a cameo appearance and speech to LP delegates. CNN wrote that the two candidates were in direct competition “for voters disenchanted by the two-party system” and quoted Trump’s admission that his campaign needed to “join with (Libertarians) because they get their 3% every year, no matter who’s running and we have to get that 3% because we can’t take a chance on Joe Biden winning.”³⁶ Project Veritas, Jorgenson’s effect, MC donors, and Trump’s admissions do not conclusively prove that the LP was infiltrated, but they do rule out the mockery that such a thing is possible. More importantly, all these occurrences evidence the benefits and importance of minor parties and dispute the ‘spoiler’ and ‘wasted vote’ rhetoric.

MISES ITERATION PROBLEMS

It would be fair to argue that MSM coverage and the two-party system recognizing the necessity of a minor party, independent, and minor party voters was inevitable this cycle. RFK, West, and other high visibility minor candidates are

³⁵ Newton, Creede. “Mises Caucus: Could It Sway the Libertarian Party to the Hard Right?” Southern Poverty Law Center, May 25, 2022. <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2022/05/25/mises-caucus-could-it-sway-libertarian-party-hard-right>.

³⁶ Contorno, Steve. “Trump Courts Libertarians amid Mounting Concern over Third-Party Candidates.” CNN Politics, May 25, 2024. <https://www.cnn.com/2024/05/25/politics/donald-trump-libertarian-party-rfk/index.html>.



kicking up dust and attracting attention, polarization and dissatisfaction are inordinately high, in part due to the COVID pandemic, and once again, we have GOP and DEM candidates that are, in actual policy not that far apart. Catering to major party opponents did not resonate well with LP membership and leaders, yet LP national chair Angela McArdle is thrilled to take the credit per a video pinned to her X (formerly known as Twitter) profile.³⁷ That video and many of her allegedly questionable actions as LP chair are now the subject of a derivative lawsuit filed against her by longtime LNC secretary Caryn Ann Harlos.³⁸ Harlos' complaint levies a myriad of accusations against McArdle for dereliction, disloyalty, and financially profiting from schemes, many subject to legal ramifications. Debatably most incriminating, the complaint cites McArdle's interference with balloting the LP nominee Chase Oliver, endorsement of Trump, misappropriation of funds to outside competing organizations and her household, and making money from RFK.³⁸ The suit also repeatedly claims collusion and corruption of the Mises PAC.

Litigation and lawsuits have characterized the MC term along with copious allegations of far-right parallels, interpersonal relationships, and messaging. The SPLC article cited above was the first time a public-facing, non-LP-

³⁷ McArdle, Angela. "'The Much Anticipated Endorsement Announcement'." X (formerly Twitter), June 3, 2024. https://x.com/angela4lncchair/status/1797721752514236742?s=46&t=HVYwlvkKLfodN8mYcP8K_Q.

³⁸ Rome, Scott H. "Caryn Ann Harlos v. Angela McArdle & Libertarian National Committee." Third Party Watch, October 2024. https://thirdpartywatch.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/CA-AIP-FL-LP-CA-LP-Team-Kennedy-Libertarian-National-Committee_-Joint-Fundraising-Agreement-with-State-1.pdf.

associated component publicly addressed the behaviors. The SPLC made the connection between the MC's "hard-right approach to attract supporters, mimicking the "paleo strategy" from the early 1990s created by Murray Rothbard and Lew Rockwell" and endorsed by their hero Ron Paul.³⁹ The article identifies the many far-right entangled individuals the MC supports, aligns, and cavorts with, such as Patrick Byrne, purveyor of the idea the 2020 election was stolen. SPLC also mentioned conspiracy theorist and openly antisemitic Bryan "HotepJesus" Sharpe; another MC hero, far-right ally, podcaster Dave Smith, and neo-confederate Tom Woods.

Other evidence of the MC's far-right entanglements includes an inconclusive LNC investigation into member engagements with former Trump and White House strategist Steven Bannon, who is currently incarcerated. The group's messaging has instigated mass public outcry, from celebrities, organizations, public figures, and even New Hampshire governor, Chris Sununu.⁴⁰ Examples of the messaging include "Happy Holidays" referencing "the death of Senator John McCain" accompanying a "photo of Meghan McCain crying over her father's casket."⁴⁰ Heckling the Holocaust, unabashed ownership of antisemitism in posting "6 million dollar minimum wage or you're antisemitic", "America isn't in debt to black people", and "if 1,000 transpeople were murdered every year but there were no taxes, we'd live in a substantially more moral world"

³⁹ Newton, "Mises Caucus...".

⁴⁰ Sweeney, Emily. "New Hampshire Governor Calls Controversial Tweets by State Libertarian Party 'Horribly Insulting.'" Boston.com, August 30, 2022. <https://www.boston.com/news/politics/2022/08/30/new-hampshire-governor-calls-controversial-tweets-by-state-libertarian-party-horribly-insulting/>.

were all phrases in posts of MC members.⁴¹ They even told Black, female, former state Senator Nina Turner to go back to Africa and tweeted her about picking cotton. It seems there is no boundary on their depravity, most recently LP New Hampshire (LPNH) affiliate drew the attention of their state Department of Safety and Attorney General's office and prompted a visit from federal agents.⁴² All of this was in response to an X (formerly known as Twitter) post that read "Anyone who murders Kamala Harris would be an American hero."⁴³ Are these parallels, stances, and associations proof that the LP has gone far-right? For this researcher and former member, as well as many other individuals and organizations like the SPLC, the answer is yes.

IMPLOSION & PERMANANCE

Evidence and research do indicate the implosion of the Libertarian Party mechanism through the hemorrhage of money and members, loss of credibility; both the organization and its leaders, alignment with Trump, conservatives, and the far-right, and its sharp departure from libertarian ideology. The philosophy is not ideologically right-wing, that was a paleo-distortion. Factually, "the first individual to self-identify as a "libertarian" was Joseph Déjacque, who was a French

⁴¹ Heer, Jeet. "The Libertarian Party Goes Alt-Right." *The Nation*, August 15, 2022. <https://www.thenation.com/article/politics/libertarian-gop-alt-right/>.

⁴² "N.H. Libertarian Party Encourages 'assassination' of Harris, Drawing Scrutiny from State, Federal Authorities." *WBUR Local Coverage*, September 17, 2024. <https://www.wbur.org/news/2024/09/17/new-hampshire-libertarian-party-kamala-harris-tweet>.

⁴³ "N.H. Libertarian Party Encourages 'assassination' of Harris".



anarcho-*communist*.⁴⁴ Libertarianism is the opposite of authoritarianism, which is noticeably not in line with MAGA, Trump, or the Mises PAC, and thus the present Libertarian Party. At its core, libertarian philosophy is classically liberal, “developed out of the works of writers such as Adam Smith, John Locke, and David Hume.”⁴⁴ The reason the label ‘liberal’ was abandoned was because in the 1950s, Dean Russell, believing the word tarnished by leftists “called on his readers to “reserve for our own good use the good and honorable word ‘libertarian.’”⁴⁴ Today’s LP does not represent the original definition nor the party foundation, rather the rejected paleo-offshoot. The Mises PAC is likewise improperly named after Ludwig von Mises when their character and ideology are more in tune with Murray Rothbard. This sharp ideological divergence has resulted in an irrevocable disintegration of the institution and irreversibly ruined the permanence of its legacy and influence.

CONCLUSION

Minor parties have historically been considered irrelevant and ineffectual, but this presidential cycle potentially established their undervalued benefits, necessity, and impact. The Libertarian Party was a significant recipient of this recognition and favor, but their internal mayhem, leadership, identity crisis, and ethical dilemmas have squandered that advantage. Over time, minor parties have and will continue, to challenge and defy the two-party system. If a new minor party

⁴⁴ Zwolinski & Tomasi, *The Individualists*, 10, 13, 12.



were to cultivate “local and vocal,” creditable, pertinent candidates and comprehensive, voter-motivated platforms, they could capture disenfranchised and unrepresented voters.⁴⁵ The potential exists to elevate the already beneficial and essential aspects of minor parties, especially now that the largest U.S. third party has proverbially ‘dropped the ball.’ The Republican, Democrat, and now Libertarian parties fluidly modify their values and philosophies, but the majority of Americans yearn for stability and are exhausted by disunity and polarity. The political atmosphere is primed for a minor party that is purposefully constituted, genuinely different, valuable, and empowers the electorate.

⁴⁵ Greer, Tammy. “Election Briefing Series”.



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