ECONOMIC POLICIES OF VARIOUS PARTIES EXPLAINED

In that Insights readers may be confused by the economic policies of the various political parties, we offer this comprehensive explanation of their platforms. Keep in mind that the position of the parties as to free enterprise and free trade is limited by the unwritten Rule of Political Exceptions (R.O.P.E.). That rule imposes an exception to all legislation that might injure important campaign contributors. None of the party's platforms even mentions the taxation of property, although the general proposals for federal funding of education imply a reduction of local taxation for education.

We shall begin by explaining the economic policies of the minor political parties and conclude with those of the two large parties, which are mostly tied down by ROPE.

We are flabbergasted when we examine the economic policies of the Green Party. Can this possibly be? How can Ralph Nader, the consumer's friend, and the public's benefactor, support protective tariffs, and how can his apostles loudly protest free trade and lower prices for the public? Does Ralph really believe that imposing higher tariffs on the goods produced in countries with low wages will actually increase those wage scales? Would it not be more appropriate for Ralph to support legislation providing for freedom of choice for consumers? Should he not support supplying consumers with knowledge of the wage scale of various suppliers of goods and give them the opportunity to determine whether they wish to purchase these goods?

Anna Quinlan, Newsweek writer, questions whether the Green's proposal to nationalize Fortune 500 companies and tax them at the rate of 100% on any income that exceeds 10 times the minimum wage, "missed the economic lessons of the fall of Communism." We are also surprised by Nader's opposition to our attempt to right the ethnic cleansing committed by psychopath in Kosovo and to resist Iraqi's robbery, loot and murder in Kuwait. Nader and other isolationists feel that withdrawal of our troops abroad would save considerable money for other projects.

Pat Buchanan joined with Nader, Jesse Jackson, Robert Novak and miscellaneous extremists to the right and left in opposing our military participation in Kuwait and Kosovo. Much of Pat's current philosophy is set forth in his autobiography where he praises Hitler as a great man. Pat's most recent suggestion as to how to lower taxes was to withdraw our troops from abroad and then deploy them along the Mexican border. Pat's vice-presidential candidate, Ezolla Foster aligned herself with a group which claims that we must prepare to resist an effort by Mexico to forcibly take the southwestern portion of the United States. Ezolla claims that she was so harrased by opponents of her anti-Mexican position that she was caused to apply for and receive worker's compensation payments for mental disability in 1996. Foster now claims that she didn't really have a mental ailment, but "since it wasn't physical, they make it mental. Don't they? If I don't have a broken leg and they don't see blood and I'm not dead, they said I had to be crazy."

It would seem that supporters of Pat and Ezolla would have to be either Neo-Nazi's or mentally disabled.

The Natural Law Party emerged a year ago. It's main planks were a nationwide sales tax and transcendental meditation. We leave that to speak for itself.

The Marxist Peace and Freedom Party, is now at a great disadvantage because there is no one in authority in Moscow who can tell its leaders what to think.

THE DEMOCRATS AND PEROT

The Democrat's, as well as the Republicans, are deeply entrenched in opposition to ROPE legislation.

Although Gore weeped on recalling his sister who died of cancer because of excess smoking, he never opposed federal subsidies to tobacco farmers. Gore's accepting substantial campaign funds in the Buddhist temple incident has been criticized on the grounds that there is no proposed legislation that would discriminate against Buddhists in this country. Therefore it is claimed that this money would just encourage exports to and imports from China, including business done with firms owned and operated by the Chinese army. Insight's writer feels that it is better for the Chinese army to operate the innumerable businesses, it runs in China, than to direct its efforts toward invading its neighbors.

Some claim that Joe Lieberman is also subject to the rule of ROPE in that he has supported legislation favored by the powerful casualty insurance companies, such as Hartford Insurance in Lieberman's home state of Connecticut. Each of you has probably seen statements made by the insurance companies through other identities, claiming that greedy attorneys have caused the enactment of legislation that puts American manufacturers and producers at a great disadvantage in international competition.
They never mention the greedy attorneys who represent the insurance companies. (Your writer was one of them for 25 years.) Insurance companies want limits on what can be collected in punitive and compensatory damages. They would be very happy if congress would enact legislation doing away with the strict property liability laws of many states. The manufacturer and retailer can be made liable despite any lack of a personal contract where the product proves to be defective and anticipated use leads to personal injury. Without the protection of such laws, it would be impossible to recover any judgment against big manufacturers, because plaintiffs would have to show some specific negligence on the part of those manufacturers.

In most countries, the injured person has no such legislation to support him, and usually can find no redress in the case of personal injury.

If Lieberman had stepped on the toes of our casualty insurance companies, he probably could not have been elected as Dog Catcher, let alone a state Senator, running for the position of Vice President.

The Republicans also apply the rule of ROPE. Anyone who wishes to know what happens to legislation seeking to reduce taxes should read *The Triumph of Politics*, written by David Stockman, Reagan's first national budget director, who sought to remove all waste from the Federal government and balance the budget.

Stockman's initial attempt to introduce Washington to free trade came on March 31, 1985 at a Cabinet council meeting.

Transportation director Drew Lewis was the first to speak and he said: "The time had come to keep faith with our campaign pledge to restrict Japanese auto imports."

Stockman stated: "This preposterous idea is philosophically inimical to what I thought we stood for. Free trade is merely an extension of free enterprise. Free markets don't stop at the border."

Stockman reports that after Louis had said his piece, a drum beat started for import controls on Japanese autos.

A subsequent meeting of eight auto state Republican governors including the Michigan, Ohio, and Illinois was set for the next Friday. Stockman writes:

"At the governor's meeting, the President indicated he was undecided, but said something that made my free enterprise flesh crawl. It meant they had already gotten to him.

'Yes,' he said, 'we believe in free trade, but there's something different here. Government regulation is responsible for this.'

'I should have known then that the game was lost. The President was a strong free trader, but he was also a politician, and his political antennae could be tuned to the desired frequency. In this case, Lewis and the others had cooked up a theory that the auto industry had been so overregulated and crippled by air bags, pollution control devices, safety standards, and other government-imposed Ralph Naderite schemes that it was now up to the government to undo the damage. And since the President had always opposed, rightfully, these excessive environmental and safety regulations, it was plausible to him.

"This cover-up for protectionism really frosted me. Overregulation had absolutely nothing to do with Detroit's being uncompetitive. Under U.S. law, Japanese-made cars had to be equipped with tail pipe controls, the proposed air bags, and all the rest of this junk, too. It was a wash. Yet now the president was being convinced that the government owed it to Detroit to get back at Ralph Nader by attacking the Japanese."

Stockman describes in detail the failure of the Republican administration to squash once and forever pork programs.

Stockman described his campaign to kill the Urban Development Action Grant Program. He stated that although it was called UDAG, "a sincere-sounding acronym that covered a multitude of sins, PORK, would have been more accurate.

He writes:

"UDAG was a classic example of the single-entry bookkeeping fallacy. The spenders said that by subsidizing downtown hotels and ski resorts, the federal government would 'create jobs' and 'redevelop' lagging local economies. What they didn't say was you would also raise taxes, waste savings, and destroy jobs paying for it. On any conservative hit list, this would be right at the top.

"Or so I thought. But Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, Sam Pierce, launched a noisy campaign to spare this turkey and soon the White House switchboard was flooded with HUD-orchestrated 'distress calls' from local Republican mayors and 'business men' who happened to be in the redevelopment and construction business.

"With unsettling rapidity, they convinced Ed Meese that UDAG was really a 'Republican program'—never mind that it had been started during the Carter Administration—because the grants had to be leveraged with private capital. I told both Meese and Pierce that this kind of 'leveraging' was an old trick in the federal spending game. Other federal grants could even be used to 'leverage' UDAG deals. It was a good case, in fact, of the double fleece."

Stockman described similar sabotage whenever he tried to eliminate pork that came under ROPE. He stated:

"One of my basic fiscal principles was that the federal government had no business repairing or building local city streets, country roads, bridges, or mass transit systems. They served the local populace and benefited only local economies and the local taxpayers should therefore pay for them. Money that came from Washington on a skyhook had an invitation to indulge in waste and excess written all over it. It was the pork barrel at its grandest and most wasteful."

Stockman stated that he was proposing to set off a political firestorm by disrupting the flow of federal gravy to government mayors, contractors, and unions. But he added, "Attacking abuses and programs for the poor required that they cut the pork from the non-poor also."

**CONCLUSION**

ROPE ties down many of our well meaning politicians who honestly intend to work for the common good when they first run for public office. It is our duty to not only educate our legislators, but also the special interests, to the fact that adherence to free enterprise and free trade is to the best interest of everyone, not only in the long run, but in the short run. • • • • • • • • •