



the Freeman

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Sylvester Petro



A STRATEGY FOR THE WAR OF IDEAS

NEVER BEFORE have there been so many persons and institutions engaged on the side of laissez-faire in the war of ideas over the proper role of government. And rarely before have socialism and interventionism enjoyed greater success in expanding the role of government while diminishing personal autonomy. Can it be that as the forces favoring laissez-faire grow, the role of government tends necessarily to increase?

Such a conclusion is unacceptable, for to accept it would imply that the proper course of action for every libertarian is to abandon his libertarianism.

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The more acceptable interpretation is that while the number of libertarians may have grown absolutely, their influence has diminished relatively. This is the starting point of the present reflections on a strategy for spreading the truths of laissez-faire libertarianism: that statism is winning the war of ideas because the truths of libertarianism have not been published in sufficient quantity and quality to overcome the fallacies of statism.

Myths and Public Policy

It is not hard to establish that statism has been gaining ground throughout the 20th century simply because ideas and factual assumptions favorable to it have prevailed during this period. Today, most believe that the market economy