

American Liberty League: A Statement of Its Principles and Purposes

[TRANSCRIPTION; EXCERPTS]

Operation of Natural Laws Being Retarded

It is easy enough to blame “big business” for the ills of an economic system that has brought unemployment. But it is absurd to make such a charge when all over the world the unemployment problem has been growing as an aftermath of war.

It is high time the blaming of one another ceased and the so-called leaders of American thought recognized that the responsibility for improvement of economic conditions now lies with those in governmental position who are retarding the operations of natural economic laws and shaking the foundations of the Republic by casting doubt upon the title of the individual to his home and his business.

If jungle law prevails in government, then commitments cannot be made by business men. Financing of enterprises must then be at a standstill. Who wants to buy a bond payable ten years hence if the whole structure of business is threatened by acts of piracy? Where are such transgressions?

Let us first make a confession of faith:

The New Deal has some commendable policies. So far as the writer is concerned, he approves heartily the methods and the money that have been used to finish relief to the unemployed, the lending of funds for such projects as are capable of repaying indebtedness, and are not competitive with existing enterprise, the efforts made to stabilize the dollar, the proposal to remove tariff barriers and negotiate reciprocal trade agreements, the moves towards disarmament and, generally speaking, the entire foreign policy, the use of silver as a monetary supplement but not a substitute for gold, the stimulation of foreign trade, the legislation adopted to help reorganize corporate structures, the general purposes of the Federal housing act and the measures for the relief of farm and city mortgages.

Indefensible Policies of Government

But there can be no defense of the “spoils system” whereby public trust is betrayed.

There can be no defense of bureaucracy.

There can be no defense of a policy which destroys cattle or crops.

There can be no defense of the policy of lending money to set up instrumentalities that would compete with and destroy business in which the public has invested its funds.

There can be no defense of the policies which seek by subterfuge to usurp the rights of the States as, for instance, in the NRA’s theory that all business has suddenly come under Federal jurisdiction.

There can be no defense of the policy of wasteful spending which unbalances our budget by 4,000 millions of dollars and gives no dependable pledge of abatement of such expenditures.

There can be no defense of the retention of any individual in any public office who believes that the Constitution can be violated because the end justifies the means.

If it is desired to amend the Constitution, let the people have the chance to express themselves upon every such proposal.

If it is desired to give the Federal Government complete power over all business and industry, let the people vote upon that proposition in constitutional conventions.

If it is desired to abolish the State governments and let the Federal authority control electric light and power, coal, oil and all the production of American farms, let the American people, also in constitutional conventions, pass upon the such fundamental changes.

There is nothing in the Constitution which permits any man or group of men to equalize competition, to redistribute wealth or to redistribute brains, to put a penalty upon efficiency or to punish success by confiscatory taxation.

Source: American Liberty League, *American Liberty League: A Statement of Its Principles and Purposes*, Sept. 10, 1934.

The American Liberty League (1934-1940) was an American political organization formed to oppose New Deal policies. Most of the organization's members represented business and political elites. The group emphasized private property and individual liberties.