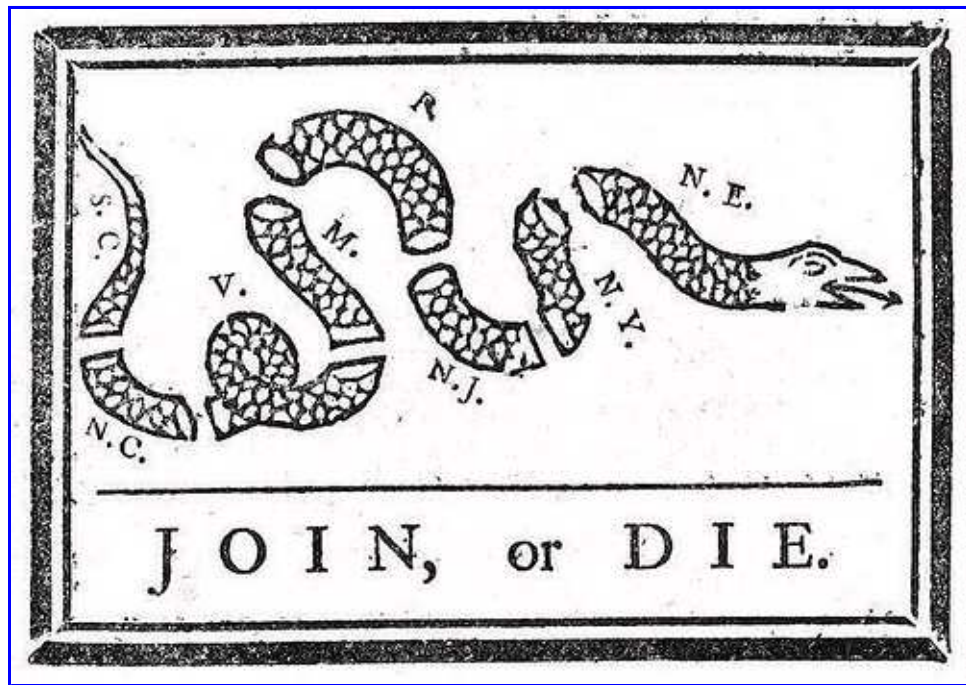


October 22, 2009

Memo To Libertarians: Unite Or Die

by Doug Mataconis



Over at [United Liberty](#), Crystal Gross argues that [Libertarians \(and libertarians\) need to back off from their doctrinaire attitudes](#):

[M]y day-to-day experience with card-carrying members of the Libertarian Party indicates a considerably different perspective on the libertarian philosophy: “Live and let live ... or else.”

Why would members of a “Party Of Principle” with the aforementioned philosophy exclude other people from their little club because they disagree on a few matters? Why is a platform more important than a fresh idea? Why is youthful intellectual curiosity discouraged among a group of people who profess to want YOU to THINK?

The more “radical” Libertarians — the biggest L’s among us — play a major role in the advancement of the Party in the future. Unfortunately, the readiness and enthusiasm with which they attack their own people distracts them from constructive efforts which only they are capable of carrying out. Like attacking politicians and bringing about actual change.

(...)

It’s high-time Radical Libertarians backed off. Otherwise, you’re going to have a lot of room in that tent.

Of course, as some of us know all too well, purging of the insufficiently orthodox is something that’s as common to libertarians as the sun coming up in the morning.

But, Crystal has a point here.

Considering that libertarians are such an extreme political minority, it seems incredibly stupid to kick people out of the movement for being insufficiently orthodox on, say, the Non-Aggression pledge, when there are so many other battles where we could unite with others — including, in some cases, Republicans and Democrats — who agree with us on specific issues.

It's largely the reason that the Libertarian Party, nearly 40 years after it's founding is a non-entity in American politics, and why the most effective libertarian organizations are groups like The Cato Institute who see the value in reaching out beyond the relatively small echo chamber of libertarian debating societies.

There's room for the radicals and the moderates in the fight for liberty, and if we don't unite we're destined to lose

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