

14 Bull__ __t Tactics Used Against Libertarians
by Dan Klein

1. Pointing out that there are gray areas between voluntary and coercive action, and pretending that the existence of gray areas destroys the distinction and, hence, the very idea of liberty. Libertarianism is “illusory.”
2. Maintaining that, because major libertarian reform is at present politically impossible, it is nonsensical to explore and evaluate the desirability of such reform. Libertarianism is “unrealistic.”
3. Supposing that the case for libertarian reforms collapses if reform that maximizes liberty is not desirable, or not desirable 100 percent of the time, and then attacking the legalization of bazookas. Libertarianism is “simplistic,” “rigid,” “impractical,” “sophomoric,” “rationalistic,” etc.
4. Pretending that the libertarian vision or agenda includes something about your personal morals or lifestyles, and then condemning the lifestyles supposedly advocated. (This one belongs to the conservatives.)
5. Implying that if one is against government activism to achieve X, he is against the achieving of X. Hence libertarians are uncaring, apathetic, callous, selfish, etc.
6. Identifying libertarianism as “right wing” and then shifting to the other meaning of “right wing.” Hence, libertarians are nationalistic, racist, intolerant, etc.
7. Equating the libertarian’s views with the ideas or policies of Republican politicians, and then bashing Republicans.
8. Assuming that libertarians, as supporters of “the free market,” think that all social problems should be addressed using pricing mechanisms, and pretending that the use of pricing is the essence of the libertarian cause. Thus, libertarians want to “make everything for sale,” “put a price on human life,” “commodify human existence,” etc.
9. Suggesting that libertarians, again as supporters of “the free market,” don’t recognize or don’t value solidarity, community, shared experience, and shared sentiment. Libertarianism is “individualistic,” “atomistic;” it wishes to reduce society to “the cash-nexus.”
10. Implying that, as advocates of “capitalism,” what libertarians really care about is the profitability of Exxon, General Motors, McDonalds, etc.

11. Labeling one who openly supports or argues for libertarian reforms as an “ideologue,” one engaged in “advocacy,” rather than in serious research and “positive science.” (This one is big in academia, especially among establishment Democrats.)
12. Pretending that libertarian arguments depend on “perfect markets,” “perfect information,” “perfect competition,” etc., and then pointing out that such perfection isn’t the case.
13. Pretending that libertarian arguments assume that “people are rational,” and then showing that people aren’t always “rational” (whatever that is taken to mean).
14. Assuming that to be a libertarian is about supporting the Libertarian Party, and then pointing out that the LP is bound to be marginal or damaging to its own cause, or both.