

# The Voluntaryist

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"If one takes care of the means, the end will take care of itself."

August 1985

## Statement of Purpose

The Voluntaryists are libertarians who have organized to promote non-political strategies to achieve a free society. We reject electoral politics, in theory and in practice, as incompatible with libertarian principles. Governments must cloak their actions in an aura of moral legitimacy in order to sustain their power, and political methods invariably strengthen that legitimacy. Voluntaryists seek instead to delegitimize the State through education, and we advocate withdrawal of the co-operation and tacit consent on which State power ultimately depends.

## Button Pushing or Abdication: Which?

In Detroit on April 29, 1946, Leonard Read gave a speech to the Midwestern Conference of the Controllers Institute of America. The address, which was titled "I'd Push the Button," opened on the following note:

If there were a button on this rostrum, the pressing of which would release all wage and price controls [which were still in effect in the post-World War II period] instantaneously, I would put my finger on it and push!

Read's position, of course, was that the free market and wage and price controls were inimical to one another; that if the government price controls were wrong on principle, they should be abolished immediately. If there were such a button that could do away with them immediately, Read would not hesitate to push it because this would be one essential element in freeing the market.

Bob LeFevre once considered an analogous situation in an editorial he wrote for the *Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph*. Appearing on July 9, 1959, in his "Not Against Government," LeFevre urged his readers to suppose that they had a button before them. The button was to be wired in such a manner that when it was pushed it would do away with all vestiges of government:

And let us suppose... that all persons who are thus occupied [in government] have promised faithfully that... they will quit their offices; that all government would cease as of that instant; and that in no way, shape or form would these individuals seek to establish another government.

Supposing he was in control of the button, LeFevre asked himself: Would he push it? His answer was an unequivocal, "No."

The balance of this paper is to explain LeFevre's reasons for refusing to "push the button" and to demonstrate how the voluntaryist position against electoral involvement and politics in general parallels LeFevre's thinking.

Essentially, LeFevre realized that all the button pushing in the world would not accomplish anything long-lasting if it were not accompanied by a concomitant change in public opinion. After all, it is public opinion and sentiment which endorses and supports any institution, such as government. If the government did not have the support of the majority of the people over which it exercised wage and price controls, it would be doubtful if the government could enforce its edicts. William Godwin, nearly two centuries ago, noted that "all government is founded on opinion. Men at present live under any particular form, because they conceive their interest to do so. ... Make men wise and by that

very operation you make them free. Civil liberty follows as a consequence of this; no usurped power can stand against the artillery of opinion." (*Neither Bullets Nor Ballots*, p. 33)

Furthermore, LeFevre observed that it was inconsistent to argue for freedom by forcing men to be free. Although he did not address the question from the point of view of the proper means to be used, this was actually what he was driving at. Forcing men to be free is an improper way to achieve their freedom; improper in the sense that it is inconsistent with the end to be achieved and improper in the sense that it involves compelling people to do things against their wishes. As LeFevre put it, "We do not believe that persons who have been forced to accept freedom can either understand it or respond with the requisite responsibility so that freedom can be meaningful."

Button pushing would probably result in chaos because most people would still be looking towards government to solve their problems. "To force them to get along without this instrument of coercion would probably simply inspire them to set up other instruments of coercion. This would not be freedom. It would result in a horrible catastrophe." This illustrates the difference between voluntary abandonment of government (a natural process based on individual action) and abolition (i.e., button pushing) which can only be an artificial or compulsory procedure.

Not only did LeFevre not condone button pushing, but he claimed that he would abdicate if somehow he found himself in a position of total power: Any person who found himself in such a position "and who believed in freedom would have to abdicate." In an editorial of April 7, 1961, titled "A Substitute for Government," LeFevre went on record as advocating no substitute for government except the market place. Not political action for the purpose of elections, but rather education was his constant theme. What he claimed was entailed was "the long and painful re-education of the American people," such that public opinion would effect a shift away from socialism and statism. LeFevre was quick to admit that education was a long process, but what, he asked, was quicker?

Leonard Read was exposed to similar thinking long before Bob LeFevre ever became an editorial writer for *The Gazette Telegraph*. In a story that he related in 1971, Read recounted his initial meeting with Ludwig von Mises. It was sometime in the early 1940's and occurred in the evening after a luncheon meeting during which von Mises addressed the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce. "That evening he [Mises] dined at my home with renowned economists, Dr. Benjamin Anderson and Professor Thomas Nixon Carver, and several businessmen such as W.C. Mullendore. . . . The final question was posed at midnight: 'Professor Mises, I agree with you that we are headed for troublous times. Now let us suppose you were the dictator of these United States. What would you do?' Quick as a flash came the reply, 'I would abdicate!'"

Since LeFevre and voluntaryists hold that aggression is wrong they realize it is a wrong means which will never lead towards individual freedom. We cannot use the weapons of tyranny; for freedom and reason are our only tools. One should never have to labor towards compelling others to accept freedom. One need only exert self-control, so as to not interfere with the freedom of others. "Freedom for all is the product of self-control."

So given the choice, what would you do: Push the button or Abdicate?  
—Carl Watner, June 1985

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## Pushing One's Buttons

by **Samuel Edward Konkin III**

Carl Watner seems to approvingly cite Robert LeFevre in contrast to Leonard Read concerning pushing a hypothetical button that would end all price controls immediately. I first came across a version of this when Murray Rothbard declared, at the 1969 Libertarian Conference in New York City's Hotel Diplomat, that if offered a button that would do away with the State apparatus on the spot, he would "blister his finger pushing the button." The bold challenge was hurled, thus, not only to LeFevre but to Read.

There are two problems with the dichotomy presented: first, the actual opposition of the two premises; second, the interpretation of the hypotheses involved and their consequences.

It is far less obvious to me than it was to LeFevre that one must, to use his term, abdicate Abdication (of State power) in order to push this magic button. Neither Read nor Rothbard bothered to conjecture how such a button arose. Suppose that a group of agorists had somehow managed to buy up all the network and cable television time at a certain time of day and spent considerable advertising funds to induce most of the populace to watch. You are placed before the button which will run the videotape of a George Lucas-produced grabber which rivets the audience to their seat and gets most of them to listen to a new and improved John Galt speech. Upon hearing the words and absorbing the visuals, a sufficient number of people quit their statist jobs, refuse to obey regulations and pay taxes, and possibly defend their neighbors should they be harassed by the few remaining State thugs. (Pacifists may drop the final consequence.) The agorists accomplished the set-up without violating anyone's rights. The situation is highly speculative and, alas, quite unlikely, but definitely possible. We now have a reasonable pathway to the Rothbard-improved Read hypothesis.

Would Robert LeFevre fail to push *that* button?

If at least one case can be drawn where the Button-Pushing vs Abdication are *not* in opposition, then the dichotomy fails. Those who are unable to construct others lack imagination.

Now let's explicitly deal with interpretation. Suppose I'm offered two buttons. One button will accomplish the end above with the specified means. The other button was connected to the White House "hot line" and would signal my acceptance of the presidency: in desperate straits as the State is rapidly collapsing from massive counter-economic activity, the dying Executive and rump Congress offer me total power (because I seem to know what the hell is going on) to save the situation the best way I can. I'm as convinced as I could be that they are willing to grab at anything and will accept at least my initial edicts. In fact, due to their experience with Friedmanite reform economists, they even expect that most of my dictates will involve abolishing huge chunks of the State, hopefully (to them) saving *something*.

Set up that way, it is still too easy to take the moral path. I'm even

sure Murray Rothbard would push Button One. So let's add one more condition to get a bit of realism.

We do not *know* how either group will react. In fact, we are suspicious that we have not yet done sufficient preparatory work and the populace may enjoy the show but there's a good chance not enough of them are ready to go the rest of the way. And if we push Button One, we have blown our chance for Button Two, for the State's agents on hands will immediately report our "treason." For whatever reason, we seem to be more sure that the statists are in dire enough straits to carry out their promises this time. Now which one shall we press?

I cannot speak for all voluntaryists, but I certainly hope each and every Agorist would blister his or her finger along with me pushing the button for the Lady of Liberty and not the Tiger of Statism. Push the button *and* abdicate.  
—SEK3

## Update On Paul Jacob

Paul Jacob is now serving a six-month prison term for refusal to register for the draft. Imprisoned on July 2, 1985, he is scheduled to be released in mid-December. Please send postcards, telegrams, magazines, etc. to

Paul Jacob  
#17429-009  
Federal Correctional Institute  
P.O. Box 1000  
Seagoville, TX 75159

Money to pay accrued legal fees and to finance an appeal (community service and years of parole follow the prison sentence) is badly needed. Please send whatever you can to

Paul Jacob Defense Fund  
P.O. Box 15724  
Little Rock, Arkansas 72231

Paul spent 10 days in solitary; he was imprisoned with a Vietnam Vet who was told that any "damage" to Paul would be unofficial. The Vet replied: "First you send me around the world, then pull me back to the States to face abuse and now you want me to beat someone up." At present, Paul is safe and well, though discouraged by the separation from his wife and his baby daughter. Because prison officials notice incoming mail, this is a chance for your letter or card to make a difference. Let Paul know you're thinking of him. Let prison officials know people care about Paul's continued safety.  
**W.M.**

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# The Decision Is Always Yours — Freedom As Self-Control

by Carl Watner

The purpose of this paper is to explore the many-faceted implications of the statement, "Freedom is self-control, no more, no less." Although this definition has been credited to Rose Wilder Lane, no one has yet been able to locate where or when she wrote or spoke it. In 1971, in his Foreword to the 1972 Arno reprint of her *Discovery of Freedom*, Bob LeFevre summarized Rose's thinking on this topic by offering this statement and calling it her definition. "Freedom is self-control" was a popular phrase used by the editorial writers of the *Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph* during the mid-to-late 1950s. Rose Wilder Lane was often referred to as its author.

One clue to the actual source of the statement is to be found in an editorial appearing in the *G.T.* on April 14, 1958. This editorial is titled "Amish Problem Remains" and deals with the jailing and release of two Amish couples in Ohio who had refused to send their young children to elementary school. In the course of advocating the separation of education and the State, the editorial writer calls for a government limited to the protection of the rights of the individual. It is only under "such an atmosphere that men can be free to do and achieve for themselves." It also means "that each man is his own master and must accept the responsibility for himself." The editorial goes on:

"Freedom is neither license nor anarchy: It does not mean chaos or the use of tooth and nail. Freedom does not give any man or group the right to steal, to use fraud or aggressive force or threats of same to get what one wants.

"Freedom is the right of a man to choose how he controls himself, so long as he respects the equal rights of every other individual to control and plan his own life. In short, it means self-control, and self-government, no more, no less."

These could be Rose Wilder Lane's words within the editorial's quotation marks. There are sections in her *Give Me Liberty* and *Discovery of Freedom* that certainly are very similar sounding, but none that produce the original. One of Rose's main themes in *Discovery* was that the key to human energy was its self-controlling nature. "Consider the nature of human energy," she wrote:

Each living person is a source of this energy. There is no other source. . . . All energy operates under control. . . . Everyone knows what controls human energy. Your desire to turn a page generates the energy that turns the page; you control that energy. No one else, and nothing else, can control it.

Many forces can kill you. Many, perhaps, can frighten you. But no force outside yourself can "compel" you to turn that page. Nothing but your desire, your will, can generate and control your energy. You alone are responsible for your every act; no one else can be.

This is the nature of human energy; individuals generate it, and control it. Each person is self-controlling, and therefore responsible for his acts. Every human being, "by his nature," is free.

This was her description of "The Situation." The control of human energy was always an individual thing. Every person controls his or her energy in accordance with his or her personal view of the desirable or the good. Thus every person acts on the basis of his or her belief in the nature of the universe and the nature of human beings. In discussing the fact that for thousands of years human energies have not "worked efficiently enough to

get from this earth a reliable supply of food," Rose pointed out that the inhibiting factor was mankind's belief that "some Authority controlled them," rather than each person understanding that he or she actually was a self-directed individual. When men and women did not feel free to act, either because they faced threats of violence or because they misunderstood the nature of their own human energy, they were not efficient producers.

Bob LeFevre approached this aspect of "freedom is self-control" in a like manner. He noted that when a person is faced with a compulsive choice, that person will inevitably act in a way that will seem good at the time. "This may result in . . . either losing or saving your life. But the decision is always yours. There is no other way that the fact that you own your own energy can ever be understood."

Another important discussion of "freedom as self-control" appears in a book titled *Faith And Fact*, which was written by Alfred Haake and published in 1953. In his section on "The Law of Freedom Is The Law of Self-Control," Haake noted that the important question for man "is whether the control over the energies of the individual shall be from within the man or from the outside." He then went on to say:

If the control of the individual is from within himself he is free. He may discipline himself severely and even remorselessly, deny his body gratifications of its yearnings, and force himself to work until he drops from sheer exhaustion. But, so long as it is HIS will that gives commands to himself, voluntarily, he is free. On the other hand, if the control or direction of the individual is from outside himself, he is not free. He may suffer little restraint, he may gratify his yearnings and work not at all, and yet be a slave, if the control comes from outside himself. . . . Freedom lies in self-mastery, in triumph of the spiritual man over the material creature out of which he evolved. "He that ruleth his own spirit is greater than he that taketh a city."

Although Haake embraces the idea that "freedom is self-control," he implies that control or direction of the individual may come from an outside source. This is in complete contradiction to Rose Wilder Lane's thesis that all control comes from within. In fact, in some very important statements, she noted:

Submission to Authority is always and everywhere voluntary, because individuals control what they do. . . . You alone are responsible for your every act. . . . Each person is self-controlling. . . ."

In the very nature of things, as we know them in the universe, Rose could not imagine that one man could control another, without the latter's willingness. In fact, her position, that submission to authority is voluntary, is the flip-side of the voluntarist insight that all human organizations and institutions require the consent and cooperation of their participants to function. Whether it be a voluntary business association or a coercive institution like the State, each of these organizations must have the cooperation of those it deals with. No business or State could long exist without customers or citizens who willingly do what is desired of them.

Even though we perceive that the State rests on violence and threats of coercion, the fact remains that each individual still remains self-controlling. So when a person complies with the demands of a person or group of people exerting aggressive force, one of two things may have happened: 1 The person complying to violence or its threat understands that he or she is a self-controlling individual and makes a conscious choice based

on this realization and his or her evaluation of the situation, or 2 The person does not consciously realize that there is a choice involved and therefore acts on the mistaken assumption that the person exercising force is actually controlling his or her energies. Of course, in this second case, it is still the threatened person who is, in Rose's words, "submitting to Authority," under the mistaken notion that Authority directs the individual rather than the individual directing him or her self.

It is interesting to observe, in this context, what violence or its threat can actually achieve. Though we have seen that human beings, by their very nature, rule themselves and control their own energy, it is possible that they can be arrested, tortured, and even killed. But no aggressor or group of individuals claiming to be a State can get around the fact that individuals cannot be controlled except by their own consent. "One man cannot control another man. It simply isn't possible, any more than it is possible for someone other than yourself to do your breathing for you, to feel the pain of your own bruise, to direct your vocal chords." (Bob LeFevre, G.T., January 15, 1959.)

All that violence can do is to inhibit the free flow of human energy. As Rose Wilder Lane wrote in *Give Me Liberty*, "No jailer can compel any prisoner to speak or act against that prisoner's will, but chains can prevent his acting, and a gag can prevent his speaking." Violence cannot create and direct positive human energies, ever, without the cooperation of the human actors involved. Force always inhibits creative energy. (This insight is what I have labelled the epistemological bias against violence. In short, violence can never produce anything creative.) "Violence may punch to the floor and silence a person, for instance, who is trying to solve a problem in mathematics, but no one will claim that the silence thus brutally obtained will provide the solution for the mathematical problem. All we shall have will be a man on the floor and a problem still pending — it will pend till some mathematician is allowed to speak and solve it." (Benedetto Croce, "The Roots of Liberty.")

Bob LeFevre put it this way:

The fact is that each human being controls his own energies and that no government can control his energy. A government may inhibit, harass or otherwise controvert the usages of your energy. But it cannot control it. A government might be able to kill you. But it cannot control you without your consent.

And as you must consent before the government controls you, it follows that it is your consent that does the controlling. You are not a zombie. You respond to your own motor nerves, your own muscles, your own brain.

The government may pretend to control you but you should not be fooled by its pretense. In short, tho [sic] the government may have the force behind it to put you into jail or to shoot you, the government cannot possibly find the force wherein it will actually supplant your own control over your own energies. Stopping the flow of energy in a human being is not the same thing as controlling it.

This insight into the nature of human action has many implications. For one thing, it leads directly to the voluntarist insight, that all States rest on the consent and cooperation of their victims. For another thing, it illustrates the dual nature of human freedom and liberty. Perhaps this is best exemplified by a story related by William Grampp. He tells the story of a Stoic who was captured and told to renounce his beliefs. He refused and was tortured and eventually threatened with death. His response was that his captors could do whatever they wanted with his body, but that they could not injure his philosophy. "That was in his mind and their authority, in its physical . . . aspect did not extend to that."

This little story not only demonstrates the futility and impotence of human violence but shows that conceptually it is possible to distinguish between physical liberty of the body and the spiritual freedom of the Self. Self includes one's mind, soul, and spirit

which is endowed with time, intelligence, and energy. The point is to understand that the absence of coercive molestation is only one criterion by which to judge the true nature of human freedom and liberty. As Haake and Lane, and others have pointed out, one can be at liberty physically, but if mentally one has submitted to some Authority then one is still a slave. Although one is at liberty (physically), one does not have freedom of the Self. This is what LaBoetie, the author of *The Discourse of Voluntary Servitude*, meant. A State need not exercise violence if it has already convinced its citizens that they should voluntarily obey its dictates. The State either succeeds in convincing people that they have no choice but to obey or convinces them that out of self-interest they stand to gain more than they would lose financially by resisting the State. Thus it induces voluntary servitude. (An interesting aside on this general point is the distinction between a prisoner and a slave. A prisoner requires placement behind bars because his or her spirit has not been broken. An obedient slave, on the other hand, does not need to be caged because his or her spirit is in illusory chains of his or her own making.)

Thus "freedom is self-control" leads to the conclusion that as acting individuals, we must respect the rights and boundaries of others. In other words, every individual should control his or her actions such that they do not aggress or invade against other individuals or their rightfully owned properties. "Freedom" as "self-control" points up the dual nature of human existence: of the Self (mind, soul, and spirit) housed in a physical body. Human beings require both spiritual freedom and physical liberty (the absence of coercive molestation). Though these may be separated conceptually, and existentially, the human being searching for fulfillment in life requires both. Only in this manner is it possible for the moral and the practical consequences of freedom and liberty to exist side by side.

In this context, the moral implications of "freedom is self-control" refer to the unblemished integrity of each individual human actor, who allows no one else to direct his or her energies. The practical implications refer to the material benefits which accrue to individuals when they are able to direct their own energies. The marvellous productions of the free market and the high standard of living which results are only two of the practical consequences of "freedom is self-control."

So, "freedom is self-control" on the spiritual level has no reference to man-made, coercive restraints imposed upon us by the State or private criminals. It refers to our attitude about who controls our minds, souls, and spirits. It is the realization that ultimately each one of us is responsible for what we choose to do and believe as individuals; that ultimately each one of us is a self-responsible human being — whether we want to be or not. All individuals have their own choice to make in this respect. They may try to evade self-responsibility, but the fact remains they cannot. They must take the consequences of their decision, whether they choose to recognize it or not. Human nature makes us self-controlling and responsible. This is a physiological fact. "The consequence is that every human being IS responsible by the nature of his own life . . . . He is responsible because only he can control his own energy."

Bob LeFevre answered the question, "For what are people responsible?" in the G.T. of June 10, 1960:

A person is responsible for every action he takes and for every action he refuses to take. Thus, he is responsible for commissions and omissions, and whether these are good or bad. The individual is the responsible unit. Responsibility cannot be collectively delegated. Each person is responsible in exactly the same way and to the same degree that every other person is.

People are self-responsible, whether they want to be or not; whether they know it or not. They cannot escape this fact. Even if a person acts under the false belief that someone else is directing

his or her human energies, the fact remains that the first person is still directing his or her own energy. As Rose Wilder Lane concluded, "self-control, which is freedom, can be taken away" from a person only by killing that person. It is impossible for one person to transfer his or her responsibility to another.

Even though "freedom is self-control" expresses the idea not to aggress against others or violate their boundaries, it also offers us a second level on which to model our behavior. The expression "self-control" is one of the most important elements of the Stoic philosophy, which was developed by Zeno several centuries before the Christian era. The Stoic was a person who was in control of him or her self and who was intent on character building at all times. The Stoic readily accepted the main condition of a virtuous life: self-responsibility. He or she realized that no one else could be made responsible for another and behaved accordingly. No true Stoic would place man-made coercive restraints upon another person or try to impinge upon another's spiritual freedom.

The Stoic also realized that governance of the self required self-discipline; a discipline which could only be self-invoked. If another imposed that discipline on the Stoic, of what value would it be? No moral choice was to be had if violence or its threat demanded that one follow a certain mode of behavior. The Stoic always believed in accord with the basic moral rules of mankind. As Bob LeFevre put it, the "self-governed person" (the Stoic in the context of this discussion) "is one who controls himself and consequently is not in need of any controls administered by another...."

Thus the Stoic and the advocate of freedom philosophy look askance at any attempt to legislate personal standards of behavior. Moral actions cannot exist where free choice is absent. People who are threatened with violence in order to make them behave in certain ways are not necessarily good or moral men. They are merely being constrained by outside forces. It is imperative that people be allowed to make the wrong choices because this is the only way they can develop their characters.

Take laws against drunkenness, for instance. Granted that drunkenness is vice, the way to eliminate it is not through statist legislation. Witness the failure of Prohibition, for example. "The way to prevent these evils is obviously to build up within the individuals themselves a strong desire not to drink habitually or to excess.... In the end, one could never hire enough policemen to prevent people from doing something they want to do." (Bob LeFevre, November 24, 1961.) This same argument applies equally to criminal law. The prerequisites of law and order among any group of people are self-control and self-responsibility.

"Lacking these things, no amount of government or police power will bring law and order. But with these things, law and order will come whether or not there is a government or policemen in evidence."

In a society without a State, the question is really not "control or no control" as statists would have us believe. Much as they would claim that the absence of State planning implies there is no planning at all. The fundamental question for any society or group of people is: Should the individual be able to remain physically unmolested so that he or she can develop character and exercise self-governance or is the State to impose its regimentation upon the people? Self-control in this context is just another way of saying self-government or that each person should exercise governance over him or her self.

This outlook produces an important insight for understanding how the law enforcement process and respect for life and property is produced among a group of people where no State exists. As Rose Wilder Lane explained it in *Discovery*, "The only safeguards... are individual honesty and public opinion.... The real protection of life and property, always and everywhere, is the general recognition of the brotherhood of man.... Our lives and property are protected by the way nearly everyone feels about another's person's life and property."

Thus we can see that the most fundamental and truly effective way to deal with crimes and criminals is to work to eradicate them through education "and the awakening of desires within individuals to practice self-control." (Bob LeFevre, G.T., April 13, 1960.) This certainly is the message of the Stoic because this process calls upon each individual to discipline himself. Equally stoic in outlook is the insistence that each person refrain from imposing his or her own moral outlook on others by means of force.

In fact, this is largely the basis for the voluntarist rejection of electoral action and involvement in the political process. Moral and self-responsible people cannot be developed by imposing government-made rules of action upon them. Not only do they resent it, but when some of them are forced, "they rebel, many times in the precise direction they should avoid." (Bob LeFevre, G.T., March 30, 1961.) It is immoral in itself for the moral person to impose morality upon others. The moral person does not resort to force, does not compel others to accept his or her morality. The means would be inconsistent with the ends of morality. If the moral person gives due consideration to the means (the inculcation of character and self-control), the end (a group of people who are moral and respect property rights) will take care of itself. Thus another proof of "freedom is self-control." "One does not have to labor to compel others to accept freedom. One has, rather, to control himself, so that he does not interfere with the freedom of others. Freedom for all is the product of self-control. This means that we will be free when we stop preventing the freedom of others." (Bob LeFevre, G.T., September 13, 1959.)

This is one of the great truths human beings do not yet seem to know, that human beings are self-controlling and self-responsible entities who can achieve their own freedom by tending to their own characters and not inhibiting the character development of others. If they once understand it, they will recognize that they are FREE. They will see that their freedom is not dependent upon government but upon themselves as individuals. Government can inhibit the flow of... creative energies but it cannot control those energies. (Bob LeFevre, G.T., July 2, 1959.)

Carl Watner  
June 1985

## ANNOUNCING!

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# Unlimited Voluntary Exchanges

*Raymond Cyrus (R.C.) Hoiles (1878–1970) was the founder of the Freedom Newspaper chain. For more than 35 years, in conversations, columns, and editorials, he stated his belief that human beings can enjoy happier and more prosperous lives where force and threats of force are absent from human relations. He was an able exponent of voluntarism, as the following column illustrates. One of his pet themes was the separation of State and education. For many years, he had a standing offer of \$500 for any school superintendent in areas where his papers were published. He challenged public school officials to explain to him how State schools accorded with the Golden Rule. He was never seriously taken up on his offer. Hoiles also opposed the internment of Japanese-American citizens during World War II. He began as a printer's devil and acquired 20 newspapers by the time he had died. He presented a rare mixture of worldly practicality and principle, which marked him as a philosophical businessman. "A man should be free to make his own decisions," he used to say, "and to learn from his mistakes and to profit when his choice is wise and correct." The following article first appeared in the Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph of February 6th, 1959. It is offered to our readers in the spirit of recognizing one of the unsung heroes of the 20th Century libertarian movement.*

**by R.C. Hoiles**

In a talk before the Exchange Club of Santa Ana on voluntarism, I used the subject voluntarism rather than libertarianism because I do not believe there is as much confusion about voluntarism as there is about libertarianism. Libertarianism has become distorted to mean liberalism of other people's money.

My contention was that I believed in unlimited voluntary exchanges. Some of the points I tried to emphasize were that voluntarism really meant that one should get what he gets by benefitting those from whom he gets it, that in voluntarism not only both parties were benefited but everyone else in the world was benefited; that voluntarism was, in reality, nothing but a free and unhampered market; that to the extent voluntarism was practiced, every individual got all he produced, and the only fair way of measuring what each and every person produced was to have jobs interchangeable so that any person who thought he was getting too little and someone was getting too much would have not only the right, but it was his duty, to render a better service for the same money or the same service for less money, and thus benefit both parties to an exchange. Not only would both parties be benefited, but everybody else in the world would be benefited because each of the parties would be better able to benefit those with whom they exchanged.

I further tried to emphasize that voluntarism meant that in creating wealth and exchanging it, both parties were benefited — that it was not like war or gambling or fraud where one man benefited and another man lost.

It was my contention that most people believed in voluntarism as individuals but few people believed in voluntarism in groups; that most people seemed to think it was all right to do things collectively, like getting a service on an involuntary basis when they would not think of trying to do it as an individual.

I pointed out that the two things that people seemed to believe were virtuous if done by a group but vicious if done by an individual were labor unions and government; that they

seemed to believe that it was all right for government to initiate force to take from one to benefit another, but they could see that it was harmful and vicious and wicked for an individual to initiate force to take from one to give to another; that the government had passed laws that gave labor unions monopolies and the right to do things that would be a crime if done by other people; that this form of involuntaryism caused governments to grow and expand and eventually get so tyrannical that people overthrew them; that I could think of no way of keeping government down other than having it supported on a voluntary basis; that government would cost very little — maybe only 2 per cent or 3 per cent of the national income — if it was limited to only trying to stop people from practicing involuntaryism in getting things.

It was my contention that voluntarism was in the minds of the framers of the Declaration of Independence when they wrote that the governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed; that that meant exactly what it said and that if a man did not believe that everybody's life and property should be protected, he should not be forced to support the government, because if he was forced to pay taxes to support the government, in order to be fair he should have the right to vote. And then he would vote to take from one to give to another and there would be no limit to the growth of government; that governments in the United States used to take about 2 per cent or 3 per cent of total production and now they are taking around 33 per cent of what was produced — all because the majority of people believe that groups have a right to do things that they would hesitate to do as individuals.

Since I do not believe very much in speeches where the speaker is protected from questions, I allowed about one-half the time for questions.

Of course, one of the questions usually asked is how you would raise the money to defend this country from a national standpoint. It was my contention that if the government were operated on a voluntary basis where they had no power to interfere with people freely exchanging goods and services throughout the world — that is, where we had no protective tariffs and immigration quotas — we wouldn't be in these wars and wouldn't need all this wealth for protection. It is the government practicing involuntaryism against the people of other governments that leads to war.

One man asked how the Civil War would have been handled. My answer was that if we had not had protective tariffs it is doubtful whether the South would even have wanted to secede, and if they had wanted to secede, they should have been permitted to secede if we followed the ideologies as set forth in the Declaration of Independence, that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed; that the North should have had such a good government that people wanted to belong to the government.

Another party observed that he had a visitor from India and that their wages were so low that if we permitted our workers to

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exchange with them our wages would become low. He wanted to know how voluntarism would prevent such a catastrophe coming to the American people. My answer to that was that I spent three hours one day on a train with a student from China who was going to school in New York; that he contended the Chinese could not compete with the people in the United States because the people in the U.S. had such efficient tools that they could undersell the Chinese people. The people in the United States contend that they cannot compete with the people in China and India and other countries because their wages are so low.

Then I tried to explain that the wages there were so low because they did not have the tools and therefore each worker produced very little and could not be paid more than what the worker produced; that each man must produce his own wages. It was my contention, of course, that our standard of living would be a lot higher if we more nearly practiced voluntarism on a free and unhampered market.

The members of the Exchange Club are performing a service because their ideology is that exchange of ideas is beneficial to everybody. And that is true because ideas come before things are created and exchanged. Anything that enlightens mankind is beneficial to everyone.

Yes, I am for unlimited voluntary exchanges.

## Living Slavery And All That

by Alan P. Koontz

In various forums, at least since the birth of the LP, Murray Rothbard has invoked what he calls the "slavery analogy," to point up the morality of political voting. The question is: Does the slavery analogy really help in this way?

To begin with, Rothbard's slavery analogy illustrates the nature of the State. The condition of the slaves relative to their master is more or less the same as that of the subjects to the State. The master, by either directly or indirectly (through a foreman) exceeding his natural rights, denies his slaves' natural rights, just as the State denies the natural rights of its subjects by its very existence.

The condition of the slaves is thus a given before the question of "voting rights" arises. Their condition indicates that they have a ruler regardless of whether or not the slaves can vote. The same is true of the subjects of the State. Suppose, then, that the slaves are granted a choice of, say, two foremen by the master. The slaves may cast ballots to decide which foreman will execute rule over the slaves. The foreman who receives the most votes will be the choice of all the slaves. Presumably, the slaves will each choose what he or she thinks is the lesser of the two evils. The situation of the slave thus becomes analogous to that of the subject who has been granted the "right to vote" for his ruler. In light of this slavery analogy, Rothbard asks: What is immoral about choosing the lesser of two evils, if that is the only choice one has under the circumstances?

To answer his question: First of all, the choice is one which affects the lives of others besides the chooser. Using the slave analogy, the vote of each slave isn't just a choice of which foreman will rule that slave, but is a choice of who will rule *all* of the slaves. Thus each slave that votes is acting in the capacity of the master respecting his slaves. To vote for a foreman is to take part in the

process of other people's enslavement. It should be clear, at least to Rothbard, that by voting, the slave in respect to his peers is going as far beyond his or her natural rights as the master (or the foreman) does respecting his or her slaves.

Moreover, the possibility certainly exists in the slavery analogy that not all the slaves may be in agreement as to which of the two foremen is the lesser of the two evils. Most importantly, some or all of the slaves may decide that the lesser of the two evils is still evil and on this basis refuse to vote. In either case, the immorality of voting is quite obvious.

It is also obvious that assuming one only has the choice of the lesser or greater of the two evils in the slavery analogy is begging the question. As Frank Chodorov once asked, in this regard: "Under what compulsion are we to make such a choice? Why not pass up both of them?" Indeed there is nothing in the slavery analogy that says the slaves must choose one or the other of the two foremen. By making such a choice the slaves are merely doing yet another thing that the master wants them to do. Instead of choosing either foremen, one or more of the slaves may choose neither. This third choice, also open to the slaves, is a moral one for it doesn't affect coercion towards others unlike voting.

Furthermore, the refusal to vote is a first step toward restoring individual sovereignty. If the slave does what the master wants him or her to do he or she will most assuredly remain a slave. (The master, for example, wouldn't give his or her slaves the "right to vote" if the slaves could thereby become free.) By refusing to vote the slave is not doing what the master wants him or her to do. If most of the slaves refused to vote the master would have to choose the foreman for them. However, the master (and foreman) would then be up against a group that has refused to barter his or her individual sovereignty for the lesser of the two evils the master had originally offered; let alone give it up for nothing. And so would it be for the State that failed to get barely any of its subjects to participate in the electoral process.

In short, the answer to the opening question is: No, on the contrary.

Alan P. Koontz

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