
The Voluntaryist

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

December 1988

"The Production of Security"

By Gustave de Molinari

Editor's Note: The following excerpts are taken by permission from a pamphlet published by The Center for Libertarian Studies in 1977. Murray Rothbard's "Preface" explains the importance of Molinari's argument in both the history of libertarian theory and economics. Apparently, the American individualist movement of the 1880's was little affected by Molinari's ideas, though an article appeared in the JOURNAL DES ECONOMISTES in March 1888, by Sophie Raffalovich on "The Boston Anarchists." This article, with a mention of THE JOURNAL's editor, Molinari, was reviewed in Tucker's paper, LIBERTY, on Sept. 28, 1888, p. 4.

Preface

By Murray Rothbard

The most "extreme" and consistent, as well as the longest-lived and most prolific of the French *laissez-faire* economists was the Belgian-born Gustave de Molinari (1819-1912), who edited the JOURNAL DES ECONOMISTES for several decades. The initial article of the young Molinari, here translated for the first time as "The Production of Security," was the first presentation anywhere in human history of what is now called "anarcho-capitalism" or "free market anarchism." Molinari did not use the terminology, and probably would have balked at the name. In contrast to all previous individualistic and near-anarchist thinkers, such as La Boetie, Hodgskin or the young Fichte, Molinari did not base the brunt of his argument on a moral opposition to the State. While an ardent individualist, Molinari grounded his argument on free-market, *laissez-faire* economics, and proceeded logically to ask the question: If the free market can and should supply all other goods and services, why not also the services of protection?

During the same year, 1849, Molinari expanded his radically new theory into a book, LES SOIREES DE LA RUE SAINT-LAZARE, a series of fictional dialogues between three people: the Conservative (advocate of high tariffs and state monopoly privileges), the Socialist, and the Economist (himself). The final dialogue elaborated further on his theory of free-market protective services. Four decades later, in his LES LOIS NATURELLES DE L'ECONOMIE POLITIQUE (1897), Molinari was still a firm believer in privately competitive police companies, public works companies, and defense companies. Unfortunately, in his only work to be translated into English, one of his last works, LA SOCIETE FUTURE (THE SOCIETY OF TOMORROW, New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1904), Molinari had partially retreated to an advocacy of a single monopoly private defense and protection company, rather than allowing free competition.

It is instructive to note the storm of contention that Molinari's article and his SOIREES brought about in the *laissez-faire* stalwarts of French economists. A meeting of the Societe d'Economie Politique in 1849 was devoted to Molinari's daring new book, the SOIREES. Charles Coquelin opined that justice needs a "supreme authority," and that no competition in any area can exist without the supreme authority of the State. In a similarly unsupported and *a priori* fulmination, Frederick Bastiat declared that justice and security can only be guaranteed by the State. Neither commentator bothered to engage in a critique of Molinari's arguments. Only Charles Dunoyer did so, complaining that Molinari had been carried away by the "illusions of logic," and maintaining that "competition between governmental companies is chimerical, because it leads to violent battles." Dunoyer, instead, chose to rely on the "competition" of political parties within representative government—hardly a satisfactory libertarian solution to the problem of social conflict! He also opined

that it was most prudent to leave force in the hands of the State, "where civilization has put it"—this is from one of the great founders of the conquest of theory of the State!

Unfortunately, this critical issue was barely treated in the meeting, since the discussion largely centered on Dunoyer's and the other economists' criticizing Molinari for going too far in attacking all uses of eminent domain by the State. (See JOURNAL DES ECONOMISTES, XXIV (Oct. 15, 1849), pp. 315-16).

The Production of Security

(Translated by J. Huston McCulloch)

There are two ways of considering society. According to some, the development of human associations is not subject to providential, unchangeable laws. Rather, these associations, having originally been organized in a purely artificial manner by primeval legislators, can later be modified or remade by other legislators, in step with the progress of social science. In this system the government plays a preeminent role, because it is upon it, the custodian of the principle of authority, that the daily task of modifying and remaking society devolves.

According to others, on the contrary, society is a purely natural fact. Like the earth on which it stands, society moves in accordance with general, preexisting laws. In this system, there is no such thing, strictly speaking, as social science; there is only economic science, which studies the natural organism of society and shows how this organism functions.

We propose to examine, within the latter system, the function and natural organization of government.

THE NATURAL ORDER OF SOCIETY

In order to define and delimit the function of government, it is first necessary to investigate the essence and object of society itself.

What natural impulse do men obey when they combine into society? They are obeying the impulse or, to speak more exactly, the instinct of sociability. The human race is essentially sociable. Like beavers and the higher animal species in general, men have an instinctive inclination to live in society.

Why did this instinct come into being?

Man experiences a multitude of needs, on whose satisfaction his happiness depends, and whose non-satisfaction entails suffering. Alone and isolated, he could only provide in an incomplete, insufficient manner for these incessant needs. The instinct of sociability brings him together with similar persons, and drives him into communication with them. Therefore, impelled by the self-interest of the individuals thus brought together, a certain division of labor is established, necessarily followed by exchanges. In brief, we see an organization emerge, by means of which man can more completely satisfy his needs than he could living in isolation.

This natural organization is called society.

The object of society is therefore the most complete satisfaction of man's needs. The division of labor and exchange are the means by which this is accomplished.

Among the needs of man, there is one particular type which plays an immense role in the history of humanity, namely the need for security.

What is this need?

Whether they live in isolation or in society, men are, above all, interested in preserving their existence and the fruits of their labor. If the sense of justice were universally prevalent on earth; if, consequently, each man confined himself to laboring and exchanging the fruits of his labor, without wishing to endanger the life or take away, by violence or by fraud, the fruits of other men's

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The Myth of Political Freedom

By Carl Watner

How is it that citizens of the Soviet Russia become imbued with the political ideas of the United States Constitution? Why are Americans knowledgeable about the political freedoms outlined in the Constitution of the U.S.S.R.? The answer to these two questions is relatively simple. In both countries, the concept of the State and the Constitution plays a similar role. The particular form they take on is of little or no consequence. The function of both constitutions is to legitimize State rule and to socialize the citizenry into their social and political roles. In the United States, the Constitution guarantees certain forms of political freedom—"particularly the idea that the ordinary people have the right to share in the formation and conduct of government, and to criticize and seek to change the policies of those in power." This encompasses the right to vote, to run for office, to petition elected officials, the right to assemble and protest, and the right to express opinions to those holding political office. In the Soviet Union, the constitutional superstructure guarantees universal, equal, and direct vote by secret ballot; broad civil and human rights of citizens, including the right to work, rest, education, and religious freedom.

From whence do these political rights originate—whether they be American or Soviet? In every case, they are derived from or found to be embraced in some governmental legislation or constitutional document. Political rights are not derived independently of the State; rather political freedom is something the government grants its citizens.

The great problem of obedience—why the many obey the few, when numerical strength is on the side of the many—has been the subject of endless study. Any accurate appraisal of the situation recognizes that such obedience depends upon 1) the formation of governmental decisions which willingly obtain the allegiance of the governed (i.e., policies which the majority of the governed would ordinarily follow even if there were no government (for example, the great majority of people would not murder or steal, even in the absence of the State)) and 2) the discovery of political mechanisms which make possible the widest participation in those decisions with the least possible impact.

The myth of political freedom is tied to the second of these points. If people think that their activities influence the outcome of elections, of policy-making, etc. they are complacent in accepting the outcome. Many commentators have noted that this is essentially a process of co-optation, in which the governed falsely imagine that their input is desired, valued, and necessary; when in fact the actors themselves are being deluded. The appearances do not match the reality. The appearance is that political freedom gives power to the people to direct their own political destiny, when in reality they are being manipulated by a system which has been designed to minimize the effects of their input, insulate the decision-making process from those on the street, etc. Elections are among the primary mechanisms by which governments regulate mass political control and maintain their own authority.

Voluntaryists realize that political freedom is no freedom at all. The term "political freedom" is actually self-contradictory. Politics and freedom do not mix. Political rights do not exist in

the state of nature because—there—there is no politics. The only legitimate meaning of the terms freedom or liberty refer to spiritual freedom (the ability and power of each individual to exercise self-control over him or her self) and physical liberty (the absence of coercive, physical molestation to one's carcass and one's physical property). Neither of these concepts allow for any intermeddling of coercion (politics) and voluntaryism.

The only true freedom and liberty are the rights to own property and control it one's self. One does not need a State in order to do this or to guarantee that property rights be protected. Such ownership rights are not created or granted by the State. They necessarily precede the State and are superior to it. In fact, every State by its very existence negates the primacy of property rights because they gain their revenues by means of taxation rather than via voluntaryism on the free market.

So the next time you hear the much touted expression, "political freedom"—beware! Political freedom is hazardous to your health.

Being An Individual

In order to truly be an individual, one must claim his or her inherent birthright to be happy and free. It means taking responsibility for one's own condition, as opposed to blaming external forces; be that force a government, an unforgiving deity or a negative childhood. To do otherwise is to relinquish control to other people.

Just a few definitions of individualism:

Being an individual means realizing that the universe is impersonal. We are not 'chosen' by some cosmic force to spread any gospel — not even, could it exist, that of individualism. We make our choices and live by the results.

Being an individual means having the self assurance to give to others without fear of ego loss. It means placing enough value on the self — one's own and others' — to be a positive influence in the lives of others.

Being an individual means not having to be 'right'. It means allowing others the same freedom to believe as they choose. It means judging for yourself, but not requiring that others live by your judgement. Individuals are not leaders, save by example.

Being an individual means not subscribing to a packaged 'philosophy' solely for the validation of selfhood. Individuals are not followers, nor do they become cannon fodder in someone else's jihad.

Being an individual means accepting one's personal limitations. It means evaluating one's goals in the light of that which is possible.

Being an individual means growing beyond any 'need' for approval from others. One's own cautious, thinking approval is both necessary and sufficient before taking an action.

Being an individual means taking charge of your own physical, emotional and mental well-being. It is the knowledge that another can not have power over you without your consent, implicit or explicit.

Being an individual means being open to a variety of ideas without being threatened. I am what I think. If I think only one thing, then I am only one thing.

Being an individual means giving up attempts to control others, whether by initiation of force, the threat thereof, or by manipulation of mind.

Being an individual means not using anger toward external conditions as an excuse to endanger oneself or others.

Being an individual means using creativity and intelligence to solve problems, and allowing others to do the same.

Being an individual means that one accepts that one is alone responsible for one's life, the condition of it, and the defense of it. You alone have the capability and creativity to make your life fulfilling, happy and productive.

Being an individual means valuing the thinking mind, regardless of the color of skin, personal habits, or species in which it may be packaged.

Being an individual means that one serves one's own ends, and that one requires no-one to serve aught but their own ends. When one's own needs are met, then one may give more freely to others.

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labor; if everyone had, in one word, an instinctive horror of any act harmful to another person, it is certain that security would exist naturally on earth, and that no artificial institution would be necessary to establish it. Unfortunately this is not the way things are. The sense of justice seems to be the perquisite of only a few eminent and exceptional temperaments. Among the inferior races, it exists in only a rudimentary state. Hence the innumerable criminal attempts, ever since the beginning of the world, since the days of Cain and Able, against the lives and property of individuals.

Hence also the creation of establishments whose object is to guarantee to everyone the peaceful possession of his person and his goods.

These establishments were called governments.

Everywhere, even among the least enlightened tribes, one encounters a government, so universal and urgent is the need for security provided by government.

Everywhere, men resign themselves to the most extreme sacrifices rather than do without government and hence security, without realizing that in so doing, they misjudge their alternatives.

Suppose that a man found his person and his means of survival incessantly menaced; wouldn't his first and constant preoccupation be to protect himself from the dangers that surround him? This preoccupation, these efforts, this labor, would necessarily absorb the greater portion of his time, as well as the most energetic and active faculties of his intelligence. In consequence, he could only devote insufficient and uncertain efforts, and his divided attention, to the satisfaction of his other needs.

Even though this man might be asked to surrender a very considerable portion of his time and of his labor to someone who takes it upon himself to guarantee the peaceful possession of his person and his goods, wouldn't it be to his advantage to conclude this bargain.

Still, it would obviously be no less in his self-interest to procure his security at the lowest price possible.

COMPETITION IN SECURITY

If there is one well-established truth in political economy it is this:

That in all cases, for all commodities that serve to provide for the tangible or intangible needs of the consumer, it is in the consumer's best interest that labor and trade remain free, because the freedom of labor and of trade have as their necessary and permanent result the maximum reduction of price.

and this:

That the interests of the consumer of any commodity whatsoever should always prevail over the interests of the producer.

Now in pursuing these principles, one arrives at this rigorous conclusion:

That the production of security should, in the interests of the consumers of this intangible commodity, remain subject to the law of free competition.

Whence it follows:

That no government should have the right to prevent another government from going into competition with it, or to require consumers of security to come exclusively to it for this commodity.

Nevertheless, I must admit that, up until the present, one recoiled before this rigorous implication of the principle of free competition.

One economist who has done as much as anyone to extend the application of the principle of liberty, M. Charles Dunoyer, thinks "that the functions of government will never be able to fall into the domain of private activity."

Now here is a citation of a clear and obvious exception to the principle of free competition.

This exception is all the more remarkable for being unique.

Undoubtedly, one can find economists who establish more numerous exceptions to this principle; but we may emphatically affirm that these are not pure economists. True economists are generally agreed, on the one hand, that the government should restrict itself to guaranteeing the security of its citizens, and on the other hand, that the freedom of labor and of trade should otherwise be whole and absolute.

But why should there be an exception relative to security? What special reason is there that the production of security cannot be relegated to free competition? Why should it be subjected to a different principle and organized according to a different system?

On this point, the masters of the science are silent, and M. Dunoyer, who has clearly noted this exception, does not investigate the grounds on which it is based.

SECURITY AN EXCEPTION?

We are consequently led to ask ourselves whether this exception is well founded, in the eyes of the economist.

It offends reason to believe that a well established natural law can admit of exceptions. A natural law must hold everywhere and always, or be invalid. I cannot believe, for example, that the universal law of gravitation, which governs the physical world, is never suspended in any instance or at any point of the universe. Now I consider economic laws comparable to natural laws, and I have just as much faith in the principle of the division of labor and in the principle of the freedom of labor and of trade as I have in the universal law of gravitation. I believe that while these principles can be disturbed, they admit of no exceptions.

But, if this is the case, the production of security should not be removed from the jurisdiction of free competition; and if it is removed, society as a whole suffers a loss.

Either this is logical and true, or else the principles on which economic science is based are invalid.

THE ALTERNATIVES

It thus has been demonstrated *a priori*, to those of us who have faith in the principles of economic science, that the exception indicated above is not justified, and that the production of security, like anything else, should be subject to the law of free competition.

Once we have acquired this conviction, what remains for us to do? It remains for us to investigate how it has come about that the production of security has not been subjected to the law of free competition, but rather has been subjected to different principles.

What are these principles?

Those of monopoly and of communism.

In the entire world, there is not a single establishment of the security industry that is not based on monopoly or on communism.

In this connection, we add, in passing, a simple remark.

Political economy has disapproved equally of monopoly and communism in the various branches of human activity, wherever it has found them. Is it not strange and unreasonable that it accedes them in the security industry?

MONOPOLY AND COMMUNISM

Let us now examine how it is that all known governments have either been subjected to the law of monopoly, or else organized according to the communistic principle.

First let us investigate what is understood by the words monopoly and communism.

It is an observable truth that the more urgent and necessary are man's needs, the greater will be the sacrifices he will be willing to endure in order to satisfy them. Now, there are some things that are found abundantly in nature, and whose production does not require a great expenditure of labor, but which, since they satisfy these urgent and necessary wants, can consequently acquire an exchange value all out of proportion with their natural value. Take salt for example. Suppose that a man or a group of men succeed in having the exclusive production and sale of salt

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*"Nothing can defeat an idea
--except a better one."
--Eric Frank Russell*

Sound Familiar?

Taxed on the coffin, taxed on the crib,
On the old man's shroud, on the young babe's bib,
To fatten the bigot and pamper the knave
We are taxed from the cradle plumb into the grave.
—Rep. Thomas R. Hudd of Wisconsin, 1888

On Armadillos: There seems a curious lack in most of the literature about the use of defensive force. Those who support the concept of a government, however minimal, argue that defensive force is reserved to that government. Those who would abolish even such government often refer to private defense agencies. Ayn Rand, arguing for the former, asserts that "The use of physical force — even its retaliatory use — cannot be left at the discretion of individual citizens." (VIRTUE OF SELFISHNESS, Signet, pg. 108). Discussion among anarchocapitalists centres about defensive agencies.

They have left something out, of course. And identifying what they left out has been left, as usual, as an exercise for the science fiction writers. L. Neil Smith's characters all go about gleefully armed to the teeth, using guns with calibers and loads that would probably cause an osteopath to blanch. Vernor Vinge invented a term for the people who defend themselves instead of relying on either defense agencies or governments: he calls them armadillos. The term is taken from his short story, "The Ungoverned," available in a collection of short stories, TRUE NAMES ... AND OTHER DANGERS, from Baen Books, 1987.

Yet all the theorists rely on the individual's right to defend himself. If one has the right to defend oneself, then one has the right to delegate such defense. So far, all agree. To whom the delegation should be made is the next question most of the theorists tackle. But that is a non sequitur until one has handled the question of whether the right to self-defense ought to be delegated at all, and if so under what circumstances. One may have the right to do a thing. If so, then one certainly has the right to delegate the doing of it. But this does not mean that one should, or — absurdly — that one must, delegate it.

Another aspect of self-defense was put forward by Bob LeFevre. He pointed out that the best defense was to see to it that no attack occurred. Both governments and defense agencies operate primarily after the fact. They arrive on the scene after you have been raped, after your family silver has been stolen, or after your house has burnt to the ground. Better to prevent these things than seek help afterwards!

Who has done a better job of defending himself: the well dressed man who, sword cane in hand, scares off three muggers; or the man who looks either mean enough or poor enough to not be worth mugging? The former may appeal to some, the latter has worked quite well for me.

In short, the best defense is to see to it that one is never attacked. This may take many forms, some of which are really quite inexpensive and easy. Burglar alarms and locks on the door come to mind. For personal defense, martial arts are good mental and physical exercise. I am sure that the reader can come up with his own methods of defense with the application of a little imagination.

(The interesting thing about handguns (or burglar alarms) in this context is that there is no way to tell how many crimes have been prevented by them. The simple possibility that a prospective victim may be armed tends to deter the would be freelance socialist. To illustrate this point, ask anyone who calls for handgun confiscation to engage in a simple experiment. Ask them to hang a sign on their door: "There are no guns in this house.")

This brings up a related point: the so-called neighborhood effect. One scurrilous curmudgeon of an armadillo in the

neighborhood will do far more to keep the peace than doubling the police department budget ever will. And the armadillo will be much less dangerous to the neighbors. This is the unstated reason why local "neighborhood watch" programs are so successful. You don't have to be an armadillo to make personal defense work, but it doesn't hurt. Neither would the question of whether your neighbor is an armadillo.

There are degrees of social acceptability. While a given armadillo may or may not be welcome in your living room, a socialist, freelance or otherwise, certainly is not. So an armadillo is welcome in the neighborhood if not for himself then because he discourages less socially useful characters. (I am referring here to active, rather than theoretical, socialists; that is, people who actually steal, rather than those who merely advocate theft.)

The reason for this is quite simple. No-one will do quite as good a job as you will in seeing to something as important as your self-defense. You see to it that you are supplied with the kinds of food you want; you may even make some of it yourself. You don't delegate the selection of your shoes. Why, then, should you not also see to your own defense with at least equal interest? To put it bluntly, there may be times when it is necessary to risk death or injury in the defense of what you believe in. You can't hire a rent-a-cops to do that, and somehow to most policemen their own hides are more important than your hide.

Given this simple observation, the whole question of anarchism vs. minarchism is rather ludicrous. The fact is that most people do see to their own security, to some extent or other. Some, the armadillos, accept total responsibility. Others delegate the responsibility somewhat, and hire rent-a-cops or install burglar alarms. Others think that voting for mayor or sheriff gives them a say in their protection, and prefer one or another kind of sheriff or mayor.

If there is any voluntaryist position on the subject at all, then it ought to be to encourage people to see to their own defense. Not everyone need go about as well armed as Lazarus Long, but I can't see Blanche DuBois living two thousand years by depending on the kindness of strangers.

Mises over Marx: A picket sign recently spotted in Wroclaw, Poland, carried the following legend: "Socialism is a system for raising toilet paper to the rank of a first-rate economic problem." Da.

An Irish Fudge: Guess who officially opened the Dublin memorial to the Irish dead of World War I? It's a trick question as most Irish questions are. The memorial is to the some 50,000 Irishmen, Catholic and Protestant, who died in that war, all wearing British uniforms. Meanwhile, the Irish were engaging in the Easter uprising of 1916, so feelings run rather high on the subject. The British Legion, with its rather Protestant tinge, probably wouldn't invite the Prime Minister, Mr. Charles Haughey. His party was founded by Mr. Eamon de Valera, who was condemned to die by the British in 1916. Oh, well!

How about finding a Protestant to do the job. In the Republic? Not bloody likely. It seems they settled on the Lord Mayor of Dublin. The man who took over the office just before the ceremony is Mr. Ben Briscoe. He is Jewish.

Consider the Source: "... non resistance against arbitrary power and oppression is absurd, slavish, and destructive of the good and happiness of mankind."

— New Hampshire Constitution

The last word: "Political tags — such as royalist, communist, democrat, populist, fascist, liberal, conservative, and so forth — are never basic criteria. The human race divides politically into those who want people to be controlled and those who have no such desire. The former are idealists acting from highest motives for the greatest good of the greatest number. The latter are surly curmudgeons, suspicious and lacking in altruism. But they are more comfortable neighbors than the other sort."

— Robert Heinlein

TIME ENOUGH FOR LOVE, 1973

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assigned to themselves. It is apparent that this man or group could raise the price of this commodity well above its value, well above the price it would have under a regime of free competition.

One will then say that this man or this group possesses a monopoly, and that the price of salt is a monopoly price.

But it is obvious that the consumers will not consent freely to paying the abusive monopoly surtax. It will be necessary to compel them to pay it, and in order to compel them, the employment of force will be necessary.

Every monopoly necessarily rests on force.

When the monopolists are no longer as strong as the consumers they exploit, what happens?

In every instance, the monopoly finally disappears either violently or as the outcome of an amicable transaction. What is it replaced with?

If the roused and insurgent consumers secure the means of production of the salt industry, in all probability they will confiscate this industry for their own profit, and their first thought will be, not to relegate it to free competition, but rather to exploit it, in common, for their own account. They will then name a director or a directive committee to operate the saltworks, to whom they will allocate the funds necessary to defray the costs of salt production. Then, since the experience of the past will have made them suspicious and distrustful, since they will be afraid that the director named by them will seize production for his own benefit, and simply reconstitute by open or hidden means the old monopoly for his own profit, they will elect delegates, representatives entrusted with appropriating the funds necessary for production, with watching over their use, and with making sure that the salt produced is equally distributed to those entitled to it. The production of salt will be organized in this manner.

This form of the organization of production has been named communism.

When this organization is applied to a single commodity, the communism is said to be partial.

When it is applied to all commodities, the communism is said to be complete.

But whether communism is partial or complete, political economy is no more tolerant of it than it is of monopoly, of which it is merely an extension.

THE MONOPOLIZATION AND COLLECTIVIZATION OF THE SECURITY INDUSTRY

Isn't what has just been said about salt applicable to security? Isn't this the history of all monarchies and all republics?

Everywhere, the production of security began by being organized as a monopoly, and everywhere, nowadays, it tends to be organized communistically.

Here is why.

Among the tangible and intangible commodities necessary to man, none, with the possible exception of wheat, is more indispensable, and therefore none can support quite so large a monopoly duty.

Nor is any quite so prone to monopolization.

What, indeed, is the situation of men who need security? Weakness. What is the situation of those who undertake to provide them with this necessary security? Strength. If it were otherwise, if the consumers of security were stronger than the producers, they obviously would dispense with their assistance.

Now, if the producers of security are originally stronger than the consumers, won't it be easy for the former to impose a monopoly on the latter?

Everywhere, when societies originate, we see the strongest, most warlike races seizing the exclusive government of the society. Everywhere we see these races seizing a monopoly on security within certain more or less extensive boundaries, depending on their number and strength.

And, this monopoly being, by its very nature, extraordinarily profitable, everywhere we see the races invested with the monopoly on security devoting themselves to bitter struggles, in order to add to the extent of their market, the number of their forced consumers, and hence the amount of their gains.

War has been the necessary and inevitable consequence of the

establishment of a monopoly on security.

Another inevitable consequence has been that this monopoly has engendered all other monopolies.

When they saw the situation of the monopolizers of security, the producers of other commodities could not help but notice that nothing in the world is more advantageous than monopoly. They, in turn, were consequently tempted to add to the gains from their own industry by the same process. But what did they require in order to monopolize, to the detriment of the consumers, the commodity they produced? They required force. However, they did not possess the force necessary to constrain the consumers in question. What did they do? They borrowed it, for a consideration, from those who had it. They petitioned and obtained, at the price of an agreed upon fee, the exclusive privilege of carrying on their industry within certain determined boundaries. Since the fees for these privileges brought the producers of security a goodly sum of money, the world was soon covered with monopolies. Labor and trade were everywhere shackled, enchained, and the condition of the masses remained as miserable as possible.

Nevertheless, after long centuries of suffering, as enlightenment spread through the world little by little, the masses who had been smothered under this nexus of privileges began to rebel against the privilege, and to demand liberty, that is to say, the suppression of monopolies.

This process took many forms. What happened in England, for example? Originally, the race which governed the country and which was militarily organized (the aristocracy), having at its head a hereditary leader (the king), and an equally hereditary administrative Council (the House of Lords), set the price of security, which it had monopolized, at whatever rate it pleased. There was no negotiation between the producers of security and the consumers. This was the rule of absolutism. But as time passed, the consumers, having become aware of their numbers and strength, arose against the purely arbitrary regime, and they obtained the right to negotiate with the producers over the price of the commodity. For this purpose, they sent delegates to the House of Commons to discuss the level of taxes, the price of security. They were thus able to improve their lot somewhat. Nevertheless, the producers of security had a direct say in the naming of members of the House of Commons, so that debate was not entirely open, and the price of the commodity remained above its natural value. One day the exploited consumers rose against the producers and dispossessed them of their industry. They then undertook to carry on this industry by themselves and chose for this purpose a director of operations assisted by a Council. Thus communism replaced monopoly. But the scheme did not work, and twenty years later, primitive monopoly was re-established. Only this time the monopolists were wise enough not to restore the rule of absolutism; they accepted free debate over taxes, being careful, all the while, incessantly to corrupt the delegates of the opposition party. They gave these delegates control over various posts in the administration of security, and they even went so far as to allow the most influential into the bosom of their superior Council. Nothing could have been more clever than this behavior. Nevertheless, the consumers of security finally became aware of these abuses, and demanded the reform of Parliament. This long contested reform was finally achieved, and since that time, the consumers have won a significant lightening of their burdens.

In France, the monopoly on security, after having similarly undergone frequent vicissitudes and various modifications, has

A Warning from Benjamin Franklin

When arguments among delegates stalled the Pennsylvania constitutional convention for several months in its business of setting up a new government, life in the commonwealth passed uneventfully. Benjamin Franklin is said to have warned the delegates: "Gentlemen, you see that in the anarchy in which we live society manages much as before. Take care, if our disputes last too long, that the people do not come to think that they can very easily do without us."

just been overthrown for the second time. (De Molinari was writing one year after the revolutions of 1848—Tr.) As once happened in England, monopoly for the benefit of one caste, and then in the name of a certain class of society, was finally replaced by communal production. The consumers as a whole, behaving like shareholders, named a director responsible for supervising the actions of the director and of his administration.

We will content ourselves with making one simple observation on the subject of this new regime.

Just as the monopoly on security logically had to spawn universal monopoly, so communistic security must logically spawn universal communism.

In reality, we have a choice of two things:

Either communistic production is superior to free production, or it is not.

If it is, then it must be for all things, not just for security.

If not, progress requires that it be replaced by free production.

Complete communism or complete liberty; that is the alternative!

GOVERNMENT AND SOCIETY

But is it conceivable that the production of security could be organized other than as a monopoly or communistically? Could it conceivably be relegated to free competition?

The response to this question on the part of political writers is unanimous: No.

Why? We will tell why.

Because these writers who are concerned especially with governments, know nothing about society. They regard it as an artificial fabrication, and believe that the mission of government is to modify and remake it constantly. ...

THE FREE MARKET FOR SECURITY

Allow us now to formulate a simple hypothetical situation.

Let us imagine a new-born society: The men who compose it are busy working and exchanging the fruits of their labor. A natural instinct reveals to these men that their persons, the land they occupy and cultivate, the fruits of their labor, are their property, and that no one, except themselves, has the right to dispose of or touch this property. This instinct is not hypothetical; it exists. But man being an imperfect creature, this awareness of the right of everyone to his person and his goods will not be found to the same degree in every soul, and certain individuals will make criminal attempts, by violence or by fraud, against the persons or the property of others.

Hence, the need for an industry that prevents or suppresses these forcible or fraudulent aggressions.

Let us suppose that a man or a combination of men comes and says:

For a recompense, I will undertake to prevent or suppress criminal attempts against persons and property.

Let those who wish their persons and property to be sheltered from all aggression apply to me.

Before striking a bargain with this producer of security, what will the consumers do?

In the first place, they will check if he is really strong enough to protect them.

In the second place, whether his character is such that they will not have to worry about his instigating the very aggressions he is supposed to suppress.

In the third place, whether any other producer of security, offering equal guarantees, is disposed to offer them this commodity on better terms.

These terms are of various kinds.

In order to be able to guarantee the consumers full security for their persons and property, and, in case of harm, to give them a compensation proportioned to the loss suffered, it would be necessary, indeed:

1. That the producer establish certain penalties against the offenders of persons and the violators of property, and that the consumers agree to submit to these penalties, in case they themselves commit offenses;

2. That he impose certain inconveniences on the consumers, with the object of facilitating the discovery of the authors of offenses;

3. That he regularly gather, in order to cover his costs of production as well as an appropriate return for his efforts, a certain sum, variable according to the situation of the consumers, the particular occupations they engage in, and the extent, value and nature of their properties.

If these terms, necessary for carrying on this industry, are agreeable to the consumers, a bargain will be struck. Otherwise the consumers will either do without security, or else apply to another producer.

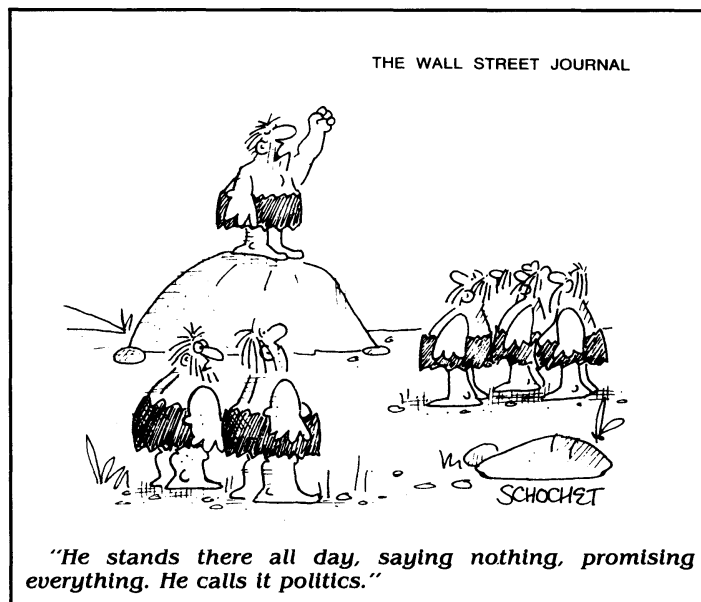
Now if we consider the particular nature of the security industry, it is apparent that the producers will necessarily restrict their clientele to certain territorial boundaries. They would be unable to cover their costs if they tried to provide police services in localities comprising only a few clients. Their clientele will naturally be clustered around the center of their activities. They would nevertheless be unable to abuse this situation by dictating to the consumers. In the event of an abusive rise in the price of security, the consumers would always have the option of giving their patronage to a new entrepreneur, or to a neighboring entrepreneur.

This option the consumer retains of being able to buy security wherever he pleases brings about a constant emulation among all the producers, each producer striving to maintain or augment his clientele with the attraction of cheapness or of faster, more complete, and better justice.

If, on the contrary, the consumer is not free to buy security wherever he pleases, you forthwith see open up a large profession dedicated to arbitrariness and bad management. Justice becomes slow and costly, the police vexatious, individual liberty is no longer respected, the price of security is abusively inflated and inequitably apportioned, according to the power and influence of this or that class of consumers. The protectors engage in bitter struggles to wrest consumers from one another. In a word, all the abuses inherent a monopoly or in communism crop up.

Under the rule of free competition, war between the producers of security entirely loses its justification. Why would they make war? To conquer consumers? But the consumers would not allow themselves to be conquered. They would be careful not to allow themselves to be protected by men who would unscrupulously attack the persons and property of their rivals. If some audacious conqueror tried to become dictator, they would immediately call to their aid all the free consumers menaced by its aggression, and they would treat him as he deserved. Just as war is the natural consequence of monopoly, peace is the natural consequence of liberty.

Under a regime of liberty, the natural organization of the security industry would not be different from that of other industries. In small districts a single entrepreneur could suffice. This entrepreneur might leave his business to his son, or sell it to another entrepreneur. In larger districts, one company by itself would bring together enough resources adequately to carry on this important and difficult business. If it were well managed, this company could easily last, and security would last with it. In the security industry, just as in most of the other branches of production, the latter mode of organization will probably replace the former, in the end.



On the other hand this would be a monarchy, and on the other hand it would be a republic; but it would be a monarchy without monopoly and a republic without communism.

On either hand, this authority would be accepted and respected in the name of utility, and would not be an authority imposed by terror.

It will undoubtedly be disputed whether such a hypothetical situation is realizable. But, at the risk of being considered utopian, we affirm that this is not disputable, that a careful examination of the facts will decide the problem of government more and more in favor of liberty, just as it does all other economic problems. We are convinced, so far as we are concerned, that one day societies will be established to agitate for the freedom of government, as they have already been established on behalf of the freedom of commerce.

And we do not hesitate to add that after this reform has been achieved, and all artificial obstacles to the free action of the natural laws that govern the economic world have disappeared, the situation of the various members of society will become the best possible.

New Covenant

Continued from page 8

any Entity or Association, however constituted, acting to contravene (the principles of the Covenant) ...by initiation of Force—or Threat of same—shall have forfeited its right to exist.” This really is just a reaffirmation of the first objectionable passage, only stronger. The Covenant says that any individual or group who or which has ever committed any act of aggression, no matter how small, deliberate or accidental, no matter if restitution has been made, forfeits his, her or its right to exist. Since that includes every human being in the world, in theory the Covenant requires freedom through the annihilation of the human race.

To fill the void created by the fatally flawed Covenant, Madison, Wisconsin libertarian Earle Pearce wrote a document he titled the “Pledge of Nonaggression.” I made several suggestions for minor changes and Mr. Pearce accepted them. The Pledge appears below. We believe the Pledge avoids the fatal flaws of the Covenant. The degree of retaliatory force allowed is that degree reasonably necessary (which can be judged by the standard of free market arbitration in a voluntarist society). Distinction is made between deliberate and accidental actions although the perpetrators of both are held liable for damages to the victim. And associations must be **based on** the initiation of force to be invalid, not to have simply once committed a relatively minor act of aggression by accident.

Mr. Curley, when you ask me whether I’ve signed the New Covenant, I will reply, “No. Do you know what it really means? Do you know about cranky old Mr. Brown? How about taking a look at the Pledge of Nonaggression?”

Those who desire may sign the Pledge and send it to Mobilization Against Aggression, c/o KYFHOTECH, P.O. Box 14603, Madison, WI 53714.

PLEDGE OF NONAGGRESSION

Preamble We, the undersigned, do hereby recognize and acknowledge the following principles of conduct to be those upon which civilized persons base their interactions with others; and further, do hereby pledge to abide by them in all our dealings and associations, any acts, statutes, or ordinances to the contrary notwithstanding.

Article I That each person has a **Right of Ownership** of his/her own life and all fruits of his/her voluntary associations (justly acquired property) and those of no other person(s).

Article II That **initiation** of physical violence, the **threat** of such initiation, or the initiation of fraud or intentional misrepresentation constitutes a criminal violation of the ownership rights of the victim of such action, and is thus a criminal tort.

Article III That negligent use of person or property which violates the ownership rights of another person constitutes a civil tort.

Article IV That the victim of a violation of rights per Articles II and III has a right to receive restitution for all the damages and costs resulting from such violations; and that the **sole responsibility** for such restitution shall be that of the violator and his/her contractual sureties.

Article V That any association based on such actions as described in Article II is a form of enslavement, and is thus both **immoral and invalid**.

Article VI That each person has a right to defend his/her person and justly acquired property against any criminal aggressor(s), using that degree of force **reasonably necessary** to end such aggression and compel restitution.

Article VII That we, the undersigned, will never support, condone, or advocate any such criminal activities as described in Article II.

Article VIII That amendment of this Pledge shall be accomplished only by the Unanimous Consent of its signatories.

(Editor’s Comments: In the interest of fairness, I must admit that I am not a signatory to either the Covenant or the Pledge of Nonaggression. I have always been unsettled by the Covenant’s assertion that individuals have the right to resist coercion employing whatever means are necessary. While I respect a person’s right to resort to violence in self-defense, I do question the propriety of using coercion to resist coercion. I believe that there are non-violent ways of resisting aggression, which in some cases may be just as practical (if not more so) as the resort to violence in self-defense. Neither violence nor non-violence can guarantee protection from physical harm, but practicing non-violence assures that one maintains a consistency of means and ends, as well as escaping damage to one’s own character and integrity.

Furthermore, with respect to signing either statement, I believe that actions speak louder than words. It is more important what people do than what they agree to do (sometime in the future). I have learned, in business, that the character of those with whom you are dealing is much more important than their verbal promise or signature on paper. Some of those who sign the Covenant or Pledge will undoubtedly violate its letter and/or spirit; others who do not sign will never initiate coercion.

My wife, Julie, asked to offer the following comments about this topic. Interested readers are asked to submit their responses and reactions for possible future publication.

Although I agree that Mr. Pearce’s “Pledge of Nonaggression” is an improvement upon the Smith’s “Covenant of Unanimous Consent,” neither entertains a third solution to the problem of aggression, which is at the same time **absolutely** moral and more profitable than violence. I am speaking of non-retaliation for a perceived wrong.

Since each human has an **unalienable** right to life, i.e., ownership of his/her own life and the fruits of his/her labor, it follows that **any** amount of aggression—however, justified—against a person or property of another is an act of trespass. This does not mean that a victim of trespass should not seek return (or some other form of restitution) of his/her property from the perpetrator of the original trespass; only that one should not use **violent** means to pursue that goal.

All trespass is wrong, and no good can come of it. As the Stoic, Zeno, put it, “If you stoop to throw mud at the mud slinger, how can we tell you apart?”

When someone aggresses against you, a wrong is done. But when you retaliate against them you also commit a wrong (trespass). You contribute to the “list of wrongs” in the world, as well as channel your own valuable time and resources into an unproductive task. This is not to say that you should allow yourself to be a guinea pig or sitting duck. There are many non-violent ways to guard your person and property, the most important being before-the-fact protection. As Bob LeFevre said many times, “If your protection is adequate, defense and retaliation are never called for.”)

Contra The New Covenant

By Howard L. Glick

Whole Number 32 of THE VOLUNTARYIST contains an article by Charles Curley regarding "A New Covenant." The Covenant was written by a person for whom I have great admiration, libertarian science fiction author L. Neil Smith. The Covenant has been promoted in many libertarian publications including APALOGIA which is edited by Mr. Smith's wife, Cathy L.Z. Smith.

I have serious reservations concerning several aspects of the Covenant. The first is found in the paragraphs entitled "Freedom from Coercion" where it is stated: "(we) defend the inalienable Right of Individuals to resist Coercion employing whatever Means prove necessary **in their judgement**" (emphasis added).

The three words in boldface seemed to be enough, in **my judgement**, to render the Covenant fatally flawed. After all, any person who is aggressed against can claim any response to be necessary **in his or her judgement**. Indeed, when I wrote to Ms. Smith to voice my objection, I was told that the concept of "degrees of force" is "pernicious." The only conclusion I can get from this is that anyone can respond to **any** aggression, real, accidental (there is no provision in the Covenant covering nondeliberate harmful acts) or even imagined with any degree of retaliatory force at any time, even years into the future.

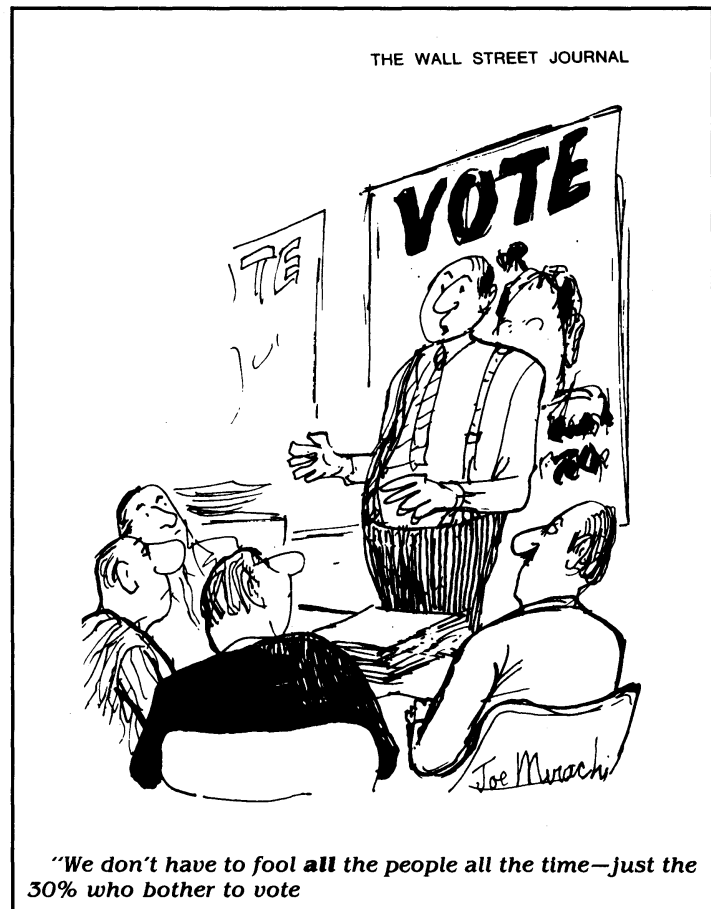
In her correspondence, Ms. Smith never said my interpretation was wrong, but she did give me an example of what would be considered justifiable under the Covenant: "Cranky old Mr. Brown would be morally justified in gunning down a five-year old who has stolen a piece of bubble gum from the shelf of his convenience store." (letter from Cathy L.Z. Smith to Howard L. Glick, April 15, 1988). I, as a believer in the "pernicious concept" that there are indeed degrees of force, think that Mr. Brown's retaliation is unreasonable and monstrous. In a free society, Mr. Brown is justified in bringing his case to a free market arbitrator and receiving just restitution. If he does retaliate by gunning down the child, an arbitrator who found him "justified" in doing so would thereafter be unemployed because few people could trust such an arbitrator with their cases. This makes the Covenant incompatible with a free market in justice, in practice if not in theory. (In theory, the individuals comprising a free society could feel that Mr. Brown's act is justified; I'll be glad to take any wagers on that from any signatory of the Covenant.)

My second major objection to the covenant is found in the paragraph "Equality of Liberty" where it is stated: "(we) hold that

Continued page 7

Is There a Secret Voluntaryist on the Editorial Staff of the WALL ST. JOURNAL?

The cartoon below ran on the editorial page of the JOURNAL on September 1st, 1988. The day before the cartoon appearing on our page 6 was published. Does anybody know who was responsible for their selection and how sympathetic he or she is to voluntaryism?



The Voluntaryist

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