
The Voluntaryist

Whole Number 58

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

October 1992

We Believe

By Wendy McElroy

"Man is free at the moment he wishes to be."

—Voltaire

WE BELIEVE:

You are a self owner. You own your body. This is an inescapable truth of human nature: you and you alone control your actions and are responsible for them.

The alternative is that someone else owns your body, which is slavery.

Your labor is a direct extension of your body. As such, you own the profits of your labor. Whatever you produce is your property, in the same sense that your body is your property.

The alternative is slavery.

"Freedom and slavery! the one is the name of virtue, and the other of vice, and both are acts of will."

—Epictetus, FRAGMENTS.

Every other human being is also a self-owner. It is wrong to use force against anyone, because this violates their self-ownership; it violates their rights.

By using force you tell other people that **you** have a right to control their bodies and their property. You say that they are less than human beings.

Government law is just a form of force that some people—called legislators—have agreed on.

Laws don't change anything. People don't need the law to tell right from wrong.

"When men are pure, laws are useless; when men are corrupt, laws are broken."

—Benjamin Disraeli

"If the people of a State make bad laws, they will suffer for it. They will be the first to suffer for it. They will be the first to suffer. Let them suffer. Suffering, and nothing else, will implant that sentiment of responsibility which is the first step to reform."

—James Bryce,

AMERICAN COMMONWEALTH

A peaceful society comes from respecting each other's boundaries. This is a compassionate society, where people lend the other fellow a helping hand.

Force kills the natural compassion people feel for each other. Force is the death of humane society.

The absence of force will not bring utopia. Utopia is not possible on earth. But freedom offers the best chance we have for happiness and prosperity. Freedom is the best we can do.

"Freedom...Liberty. The distinction between freedom and liberty is not accurately known: naturalists have never been able to find a living specimen of either."

—Ambrose Bierce

DOESN'T FREEDOM MEAN DOING ANYTHING YOU WANT?

No. Liberty does not mean license. It means self-government. Freedom has obligations. The two main ones are:

(1) You must take responsibility for yourself and for your actions. You can't blame others for what's wrong. Take control of your own life.

Too many people try to solve everyone else's problems. The world can overwhelm you with its needs. Solve your own problems first. Take care of your family and your friends. Then, when your house is in order, you can help others without cheating yourself. But use your own money, not tax dollars. Use your own efforts.

(2) You must respect the freedom of other people. It is wrong

to use force or fraud. It is never right to harm another human being. Force denies people's humanity. Fraud denies the truth.

"When a...man governs himself, that is self-government; but when he governs himself and also governs another man, that is despotism...No man is good enough to govern another man without that other's consent."

—Abraham Lincoln

Self-government means you manage yourself. This is the only practical arrangement for a peaceful and prosperous society. People produce more when they own what they produce. People are more benevolent when a stranger's hand is not in their pockets.

BUT WHAT OF GOVERNMENT?

Government is just a group of people, who claim the right to tell you what to do with your life. They get away with this, because they are 'elected'. According to politicians, this means that a majority has voted them into office. In fact, less than 50% of Americans voted for **anyone** in the last elections.

"Nothing appears more surprising to those who consider human affairs with a philosophical eye, than the easiness with which the many are governed by the few."

—Hume

Even if a majority had elected them, what would it matter? Why should you obey? Might doesn't make right.

'Force is might,' the teacher said—

'That definition's just'

The boy said naught, but thought instead

(Remembering his pounded head):

'Force is not might but must!'

—Anonymous

"Decision by majorities is as much an expedient as lighting by gas."

—W.E. Gladstone

If it is wrong for one man to take your money, how can it be right for a group of men? Calling it 'taxes' rather than 'theft' doesn't change the fact...it is **your** money.

Anything that is wrong for an individual to do is wrong for a group of individuals. Nothing—no election, no popularity contest—can change that. Nothing gives the government a right to use force or fraud.

Government gets away with force because it claims to 'represent the people'. Politicians represent their own interests. Government exists to benefit its members—politicians, bureaucrats and other people who can't get an honest job. They grow fat off you and your family.

"As long as I count the votes, what are you going to do about it?"

—William Marcy (Boss) Tweed

All organizations exist to serve their members. This is also true of businesses. But business is voluntary. No one is forced to buy or sell. An exchange occurs only if both sides think they benefit. The only choice government gives you is: pay up or go to jail. Obey or take the consequences.

"I would not give a half a guinea to live under one form of government rather than another. It is of no moment to the happiness of an individual."

—Samuel Johnson.

"I have recognized that the object of business is to make money in an honorable manner. I have endeavored to remember that the object of life is to do good."

—Peter Cooper

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The Voluntaryist

Editor: Carl Watner

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Bad or Worse!

By Carl Watner

This article has been prompted by my reading of two new books about education. The contrast between statism (compulsory attendance laws, tax-funded public schools, etc.) and voluntaryism (private and homeschools) has been a recent theme in THE VOLUNTARYIST (see Whole Nos. 48 and 53). The connection between the title of this article and these books is the fact that all advocates of public schooling and nearly all those who support private or homeschooling believe in the need for the "right" laws to regulate education. Few believe that voluntary education needs no laws, and even fewer believe that there can be no such thing as a "good" law. THE VOLUNTARYIST stands with the latter few who assert that laws can never be "good," but must necessarily be "bad" or "worse."

The first book, John Gatto's DUMBING US DOWN*, deserves attention because of the author's background and conclusions. Despite the fact that John Gatto taught for twenty-six years in the public school system of New York City, and earned two university degrees, he quit his "factory school" job in order to speak out against statist indoctrination and compulsion. Both in 1989 and 1990, Mr. Gatto was New York City Teacher of the Year. Following these honors was Mr. Gatto's selection as New York State Teacher of the Year in 1991. Both his acceptance speeches for the two most recent awards are found in DUMBING US DOWN. The first, "The Psychopathic School," was reprinted in Whole No. 53 of THE VOLUNTARYIST (December 1991) as "Why Schools Don't Educate." The second is titled "The Seven-Lesson School Teacher." Following his resignation, Mr. Gatto was instrumental in organizing and financing an evening program on "The Exhausted School" given at New York City's Carnegie Hall on November 13, 1991. One commentator summed up the evening's theme by referring to a quote from a comic strip created by two of Gatto's students: "I'm glad they don't have schools to teach you to walk and talk...cause then we'd all be crawling around speechless."

As Ivan Illich (another critic of compulsory schooling) has pointed out, coercive public schools are like daytime concentration camps which "confuse teaching with learning," grade advancement with real education, and "a diploma with competence." Most learning, Illich says, is not the result of formal instruction, but rather the result of unhampered participation in a meaningful situation. John Gatto would certainly agree because he believes that "schools fly in the face of how children learn." In describing how the modern State school system and the modern TV media serve as replacements for the home and workplace (where learning occurs most naturally), Gatto explains how public schools have become a major cause of weak families and weak communities. "They separate parents and children from vital interaction and from true curiosity about each other's lives." His conclusion, as an insider, that "government monopoly schools are structurally unreformable," certainly reinforces my

own position that this institution is one of the most insidious and totalitarian systems in our country.

In every state of the union, homeschooling parents have had brushes with the law because their choice to opt out of the public educational system is a challenge to state domination. State Social Service workers, backed by the police, have broken into private homes, kidnapped homeschool students, and in one instance murdered their father for resisting arrest. From the days of Plato forward, philosophers and politicians have realized that individuals living in strong family units are nearly impossible to regiment because they value their independence and individuality, and place a loving premium on instilling those values in other family members.

Until the family unit is destroyed all over America, the centralized State cannot assume full control over us. Parents who instruct their own children are more likely to teach them loyalty to themselves and to family values rather than loyalty to the State. An interesting counter-example of this was described in a WALL STREET JOURNAL article (April 20, 1992, p. A1) about DARE, the Drug Abuse Resistance Education program, being taught in public schools in 4700 communities nationwide. After attending a drug education class, an 11-year old student in Searsport, Maine informed the police that her parents were growing and smoking marijuana. Following up the tip, the police searched the family's home and arrested both parents for drug possession. Displaying remorse, the father stated he could not blame his daughter: "She told the truth when asked questions by (the) authorities. That's what I've always told her to do." Here is a perfect illustration of how State education is a form of social control which practically ensures its own continued existence. It brainwashes the parents, and then brainwashes their children. It legitimizes its own activities and purposes in their minds. It falsely labels all other alternatives as 'utopian,' 'anarchic,' or 'chaotic,' and if it cannot outlaw challenges to its own existence, it strictly proscribes and/or regulates them.

John Gatto deserves recognition for perceiving the conflict between state education and the family. He calls for a return to "the family as the main engine of education," for a totally free market in education, the end to teacher certification, and the end to compulsory attendance laws. Will there be some mistakes made in a free market system, he asks?

There will be plenty of mistakes made! The only thing I can say in defense of advocating a free market is that the system we have now guarantees that everybody will be a mistake. It guarantees a world that none of us want to live in. We have 200 years of earlier American history to study and to see that the free market worked sensationally well.

Quite coincidentally, the author of the second book to be mentioned here, comes to a similar conclusion. Karl Reed who wrote and published THE BIBLE, HOMESCHOOLING, AND THE LAW** writes that "Freedom has its risks;" but the alternatives to freedom are always totally unacceptable. He continues:

Better to live in freedom under the risk of "poor education" than to live in slavery under the state-approved alleged good education. Far better that our children be free to pursue knowledge unfettered than to be compelled to be in a place where only approved "knowledge" is allowed.

Both authors see that we are moving in the direction of more and more State control and less and less parental control over children. Given the political and philosophical orientation of most modern parents and voters, the failure of the public school system only increases the demand for more government. The public school promotes life-styles which can only result in family failure, and the more the family fails, the more professional and "expert" justification there is for the public school to assume additional authority over children. Most Americans living today are the end result of several generations of American public schools. Like the parents in Searsport, Maine they have "been conditioned to accept a statist world view," and the rightness of everything their government does.

This leads us back to the main theme of this article. As a devout Christian, Reed believes that political laws have certain limits. "There are certain things that a law cannot do. Success cannot be assured by a law. Failure cannot be eliminated by a law.

Intelligence cannot be created nor enforced by a law." In other words, we are bound to reality by natural laws which the legislature cannot alter. Yet, the whole problem with Reed's outlook is that he infers political laws can have limits, that there is some legitimate role for Caesar and Caesar's government. He believes that there is a need for "good law" to ensure that homeschool parents and children are left alone. He suggests that "a good homeschool law might (take) the form of a constitutional amendment stating"

"The right of parents and guardians to educate their children shall not be abridged."

But like the First Amendment, after which it is fashioned, Reed's "good" law is not likely to be respected by any coercive government. The very fact of paying tribute to "Caesar" in the form of taxes, must ultimately impact on the right and the ability of parents to school their children as they please. Parents must pay their taxes before they spend money to educate their children. Whatever the amount of tax they pay, it is that much less available to spend on education or any other purpose of their choosing.

Looking further at the Bill of Rights, I believe it is foolish to think that coercive governments will ever respect individual rights. Consider the concluding words of the Fifth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

No person shall...be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation.

The very wording of the Fifth Amendment implies that people may be justly deprived of life, liberty, and property. Such deprivations shall be legal so long as they are countenanced by "due process of law." The Amendment also implies that private property may be taken for public use, so long as compensation is given. But what kind of respect for rights is this? Rights are either inviolable, without any sort of legal exceptions, or they are not rights. And consider that the qualifications and exceptions ("due process of law" and "just compensation") are to be determined by the very same institution that is violating those rights. Who is to guard the guardians against abuse?

Homeschoolers who assert that they have a constitutional right to teach their children are mistaken. Whatever the legislature or majorities grant, they may revoke. There is never any security in constitutions or political documents. Contrary to the belief of many homeschooling parents, their children are creatures of the State from the time the parents receive a State birth certificate and apply for their children's Social Security number. The Supreme Court decisions which they rely upon to assert the right to homeschool provide few assurances. Many homeschoolers refer to *Pierce v. Society of Sisters* (268 US 510, 45 S.Ct. 571)

decided in 1925, because it sanctioned non-state educational alternatives. The State of Oregon (represented by Governor Pierce) had passed a law which effectively outlawed private schools. Although the statute was declared unconstitutional, embedded in the Supreme Court decision is the following dicta:

No question is raised concerning the power of the state reasonably to regulate all schools, to inspect, supervise, and examine them, their teachers and pupils; to require that all children of proper age attend some school, that teachers shall be of good moral character and patriotic disposition, that certain studies plainly essential to good citizenship must be taught, and that nothing be taught which is manifestly inimical to the public welfare. ...As often heretofore pointed out, rights guaranteed by the Constitution may not be abridged by legislation which has no reasonable relation to some purpose within the competency of the state.

So there you have it: the state may regulate all schools (including homeschools) and rights "guaranteed" by the Constitution may be abridged so long as there is some reason in the state's agenda. (Who has ever known the state to be without some "reasonable" justification for its intervention?) Historically, the state's interest in education has been two-fold: civic and economic. The states require citizens who can read and write, and vote and participate in its political system, but who cannot see the invisible chains woven about them. The states also require that "children will be able to eventually provide for themselves so that they will not become a burden on the state's welfare rolls." (There must be producers, after all, to support the parasitical class.) As the Supreme Court said in *Pierce*, "the child is not the mere creature of the State, (emphasis added)" implying that while the child belongs to the State, its parents and guardians still retain some say in how it is raised.

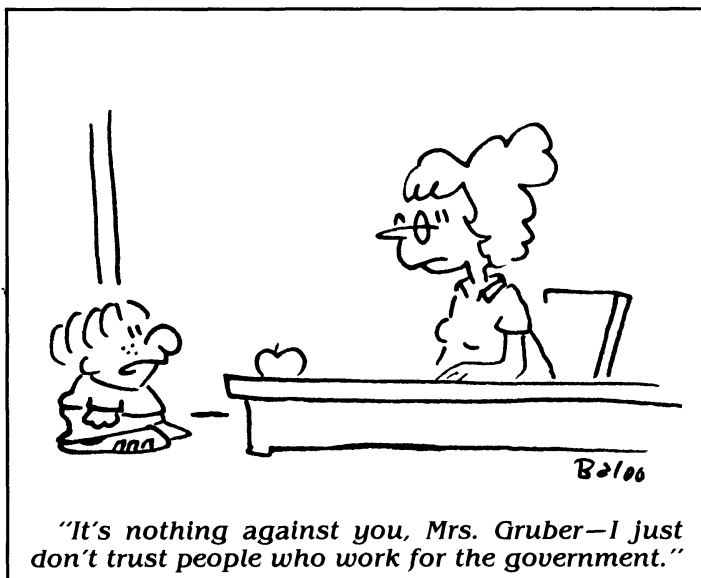
"I believe it is morally incorrect to knowingly select a wrongful course simply because it appears to be less wrong than some alternative." The lesser of two evils is still evil!

—Robert LeFevre,
in LEFEVRE'S JOURNAL,
Winter 1973, p. 8

Bob LeFevre used to speak of two kinds of government: bad and worse: no government could ever be categorized as good or better. The idea of good government, he thought, was as ridiculous as imagining an honest burglar. Nor, he affirmed, could there be any such thing as "limited" government. In his mind, "unlimited" government was a redundancy, and "limited" government was a contradiction. Our system of government "is so bad that as you (try to) improve it, it gets worse." All (political) laws are bad so long as they emanate from the State, and, of course, they would not be laws if they did not issue from the legislature. Laws, like limited government, as LeFevre inferred, are either bad or worse. No political laws are ever good or even necessary. As the ancient Roman Stoics explained: "if the government directed them to do something that their reason opposed, they were to defy the government. If it told them to do what their reason would have told them anyway, they did not need a government." In either case, there is no justification for government or political laws.

*John Gatto, *DUMBING US DOWN: The Hidden Curriculum of Compulsory Schooling*, 1992. Available from New Society Publishers, 4527 Springfield Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19143. \$9.95 + 2.50 postage.

**Karl Reed, *THE BIBLE, HOMESCHOOLING, AND THE LAW*, 1991. Available from Christian Home Ministries, Box 100, Mammoth Springs AR 72554 for \$9.95 postpaid. ☐



We Believe

continued from page 1

Customers vote with their dollars. If a businessman stops caring about your vote, you can take your dollar elsewhere. What choice do you have with a politician? Will he give you a moneyback guarantee? Can you take your business elsewhere?

Every election, every session of Congress and every new law chips away your freedom. Government is a wolf guarding the sheep. What you need is protection against it.

WHY ARE YOU SO AGAINST GOVERNMENT?

Government produces nothing. It operates through force and fraud. It takes the money from you and your family. It makes promises it does not keep.

Politicians steal your freedom. Then, they insult your intelligence by asking for your vote.

Government destroys people's independence through its promises to take care of you. But how many people can trust social security to support them in old age? How many people are homeless because they believe in social programs? The government's promises are lies. You have to take care of yourself.

"It is error alone which needs support of government. Truth can stand by itself."

—Thomas Jefferson

Government is the biggest threat to your freedom and safety. It is the biggest threat to your family and friends.

And it keeps growing.

"See if the law takes from some person what belongs to them and gives it to other persons to whom it does not belong. See if the law benefits one citizen at the expense of another by doing what the citizen himself cannot do without committing a crime.

Then abolish this law without delay...If such law is not abolished immediately, it will spread, multiply, and develop into a system."

—Frederic Bastiat

HOW MUCH GOVERNMENT WOULD YOU ACCEPT?

None!

A government should not tell people how to live. A government should not regulate business. It should not provide services such as the post office or National Arts Council.

WHAT ABOUT ESSENTIAL GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS?

Most of what government does is not essential. Most is better left undone. For example, your security does not require the U.S. to police the globe. Your family does not need a government funded space program. Or grants to the arts. Or subsidies to business.

Essential services are the ones that would evolve naturally in a free society. They include roads, postal delivery, medical care, and education. These were provided by the free market until government monopolized them.

Government should never provide essential services...for one simple reason. Government is inefficient and corrupt. It leaves the customer—you—with no recourse. If you refuse to pay for bad service, it takes your property.

"Were we directed from Washington when to sow and when to reap, we should soon want bread."

—Thomas Jefferson

People have been brainwashed to think that only government can build a road or deliver a letter. But government doesn't provide any service. Individuals do the work. Individuals pay the bill. What does the government provide, except fat bureaucrats to supervise what the free market would do naturally without them?

"The good governor should have a broken leg and keep at home."

—Cervantes

There is a solution to government's inefficiency and corruption: privatize government services. Let the free market do what it does best—provide service.

"Commerce is the great civilizer. We exchange ideas when we exchange fabrics."

—Robert G. Ingersoll

War & Education

By Stormy Mon

In the spring of 1965, I was running through the jungle with a lethal rifle in my hands, yelling kill, Kill, KILL! And I probably would have done it. But I was lucky. I was running through the training jungles of Louisiana, brainwashed by U.S. Army Basic Training.

I never went to war and I never killed anyone. But I could have. If the U.S. Army had told me to kill YOU, I might have done it. Remember Kent State. Are you that much different than the Vietnamese and Cambodians, in retrospect? We are all people on this earth—this global village—brainwashed by an ancient reverence for the fiction of authority.

What was it that got me into a state of mind that would have me do something so alien to my very make-up: to kill another human being just because an authority said to?

This regimentation didn't start in the army; it started in compulsory, monopolistic, government schools, where the history of war and patriotism are glorified. I know I wasn't alone. There were 200 other young men in my company doing the same thing, 1200 in the battalion, and over 3 million went to Vietnam.

In retrospect, it NEVER occurred to me that something was very immoral about the whole operation. NOTHING in my family, media or government education prepared me to question authorities. I deeply and personally resent that. This long-playing, tragic world series must be stopped before it happens again, and again, and again... Teachers don't realize what they're doing; they were brainwashed by the previous generation, in a destructive, endless chain. Will Rogers said this about Congress, but the same applies:

"Teachers are the nicest folks in the world to meet. I sometimes wonder if they realize the harm they do."

People forget...before government took over, individuals took care of themselves and others. Literacy rates in colonial New England were higher than they are now. America was crisscrossed by privately built railways. The Pony Express went where no government delivery was attempted.

Consider the current post office. It is illegal for a business to deliver the most profitable form of mail: first-class. Even so, companies, like Federal Express make a fortune, because they give better service.

It is crazy to turn over things, like medical care, to a bureaucracy. Do you want the same people, who run the post office to supervise open heart surgery? Do you want your life to depend on a civil servant?

The free market can provide society's needs. You can take care of yourself.

"And where they went on trade intent
They did what freemen can,
Their dauntless ways did all men praise,
The merchant was a man.
The world was made for honest trade—
To plant and eat be none afraid."

—Emerson

WHAT WOULD A FREE MARKET SOCIETY LOOK LIKE?

Capitalist acts between consenting adults.

Absolute liberty for the peaceful individual.

A return to the ideals of 1776:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."

—Thomas Jefferson,

Declaration of Independence

"Among the natural rights of the colonists are these: First a right to life, secondly to liberty, thirdly to property; together with

the right to defend them in the best manner they can."

—Samuel Adams,
Statement of the Rights of the Colonists

SO...WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT IT?

Never use force or fraud.

Take control of your life.

You don't have to lecture people or convert anyone. The solution lies inside yourself.

Find ways to avoid what government calls 'services.' Educate your children at home or at private schools. Provide for your own retirement. Volunteer time to a private charity.

"With malice toward none; with charity for all."

—Abraham Lincoln

Do someone a good turn...BUT start with your own family and friends. And make sure you are using your own money and effort.

"Charity begins at home, and justice begins next door."

—Dickens

Set a good example. Refuse to accept government bribes. Refuse all forms of government aid. The government doesn't have any money of its own. Whatever it offers, it has to steal. Don't sanction this theft by accepting the bones it throws you.

HOW ELSE CAN I CHANGE THINGS?

There is something you should **not** do.

Politics is the problem. Government takes power and dignity from the individual. It steals money. It is a criminal process. Do not become part of the problem.

Do not run for office.

Do not pay homage to public officials. Show them no respect. Never contribute your time, money or approval to a candidate or a political movement.

DO NOT VOTE. Don't willingly surrender control of your life to someone else.

"Vote: the instrument and symbol of a freeman's power to make a fool of himself and wreck of his country."

—Ambrose Bierce

People think they can cast 'protest' votes. But you can't attack government by voting. You can't attack crime by becoming an accessory.

Politicians of every stripe tell you to 'get out and vote.' Because they want your sanction. It is how politicians justify their power over you.

Voting is the way the majority tells the minority how they have to live.

No one has a right to vote on how you live your life. Every vote cast in a ballot box chips at your liberty.

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"Noah must have taken into the Ark two taxes, one male and one female. And did they multiply bountifully! Next to guinea pigs, taxes must have been the most prolific animals."

—Will Rogers

"Elector: one who enjoys the sacred privilege of voting for the man of another man's choice."

—Ambrose Bierce

"(Voting)...The notion that a man's liberty consists in giving his vote at election-hustings, and saying, 'Behold, now I too have my twenty-thousandth part of a Talker in our National Palaver.'"

—Thomas Carlyle

CAN YOU SUM UP YOUR APPROACH IN ONE SENTENCE?

If you like to use slogans, these are good ones:

'Don't tread on me!' (From the American Revolution)

'Don't vote—it only encourages them.'

'There's no such thing as a free lunch.'

'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.'

'Neither bullets nor ballots.'

'The means are the ends in process.'

'Question authority.'

'Anything that's peaceful.'

'To thine own self be true.'

'The initiation of force is never justified.'

WHAT CAN I READ TO LEARN MORE?

These are some of the books we recommend:

ATLAS SHRUGGED, Ayn Rand, The classic novel of individuals challenging authority.

WALDEN, Henry David Thoreau, A man's quest for self-sufficiency and self-knowledge.

MAN VERSUS THE STATE, Herbert Spencer, A basic statement of individualism versus statism.

HOW I FOUND FREEDOM IN AN UNFREE WORLD, Harry Browne, 'How-to' live free, even under the shadow of the state.

ECONOMICS IN ONE LESSON, Henry Hazlitt, The free market explained simply and elegantly.

THE INCREDIBLE BREAD MACHINE, Brown, Keating et al. How government intervention cripples production.

THE ANTI-CAPITALIST MENTALITY, Ludwig von Mises, Why are people hostile toward economic freedom?

THE STATE, Franz Oppenheimer, The origin and development of the plundering state.

PREFERENTIAL POLICIES, Thomas Sowell, The role of the state in race conflict.

FREEDOM, FEMINISM AND THE STATE, Wendy McElroy, The greatest enemy of women has been the law.

ON DOING THE RIGHT THING, Albert Jay Nock, Essays examining how to live a principled life.

"He that loves reading, has everything within his reach. He has but to desire, and he may possess himself of every species of wisdom to judge and power to perform."

—William Godwin

A PARTING THOUGHT

"Whatever crushes individuality is despotism, by whatever name it may be called."

—John Stuart Mill, ON LIBERTY

The world will never be perfect.

We don't have all the answers. We don't even have all the questions.

That's why we want to hear what you think. Please write to us and open up a dialogue.

(Editors Note: This article is the second in a series of "What We Believe and Why" articles (see Whole Number 57, August 1992 for the first). It was originally prepared at the request of The Customer Company, Benicia Ca. Readers are invited to prepare and submit their own essays on this theme to THE VOLUNTARYIST.)

As Values Collapse, Government Grows

By Lawrence W. Reed

Ethical relativism or "non-ethics" as I prefer to call it—has suffused its position throughout society, and is a major reason why America seems to be losing its moral compass. But that isn't the only thing we're losing.

The first casualty when the ethical core of society evaporates is freedom. Law (government) fills the void—directing by threat of force those aspects of life that formerly were governed by our ethical standards. Ethical people don't require fines for tossing trash out of car windows or for embezzling funds from their employer, because ethical people just don't do those things.

Nor do ethical people abandon responsibility for the education of their children or the care of their parents and expect society to do the job. Ethical people don't cast off their problems onto others because they have both a healthy dose of self-esteem and a respect for the lives and property of others.

The choice, in other words, is to govern yourself or be governed. The less you do of the former, the more you'll get of the latter.

Ultimately, the standards by which we order our personal lives and our relationships with family, associates and others determine the sum and substance of our society. When those standards are strong, people take care of themselves and those around them; they work for a living instead of voting for one.

But when those standards decay, we pay the price in broken families, crime, drug abuse, child neglect, a loss of personal independence and greater reliance upon public welfare. If the rot gets deep enough, the price can be reckoned in terms of national bankruptcy and dictatorship. Whole civilizations in history have travelled this path and bit the dust.

Restoring our ethical foundations ought to be top priority for all Americans. There's just too much at stake for us to do otherwise.

[These excerpts were taken from an article which appeared as A MACKINAC CENTER VIEWPOINT ON PUBLIC ISSUES, February 24, 1992, published by the Mackinac Center for Public Policy, Midland, Michigan.] ☐

Initiation Of Force

By Harry Hoiles

The *initiation* of force against peaceful people is *always* wrong. Yet most citizens of our country support this *initiation* of force when it is used to collect taxes.

Why do they do so?

Is it because they can't visualize a government which is voluntarily supported?

Aren't there thousands of voluntarily-supported police forces (private night-watchmen, security guards, detective and investigative agencies) in these United States?

Aren't there thousands of voluntarily-supported firemen (hundreds of communities have volunteer fire companies) in these United States?

Aren't there thousands of voluntarily-supported judges (private arbitrators, dispute resolution counselors) in these United States?

Aren't there thousands of voluntarily-supported schools (private, church, etc.) in these United States?

Aren't there thousands of voluntarily-supported package delivery companies (United Parcel Service, Federal Express, etc.) in these United States?

Doesn't the free market supply all these in addition to those provided by our involuntarily-supported government?

Why don't we rely on the free market to supply all these services instead of coercively collecting taxes from some and forcefully preventing others from effectively competing for customer patronage? ☐

Potpourri from The Editor's Desk

1. "On Moving the World"

Every so often, an event occurs that stands as a monument to the continuing struggle for human freedom and serves as a reminder to all who work for liberty that even when success seems farthest from reach, they can make a difference. Whether it is the Boston Tea Party, the storming of the Bastille, the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, or the assault on the Berlin Wall, such events are a vivid reminder that man has an undying desire to be free.

Of all these, however, there is one event that will stand alone as the simplest and yet most profound reminder not only of the universal desire for liberty but also of the power of a single individual. This event occurred on June 5, 1989, one day after the Chinese government massacred thousands of its own citizens in Tiananmen Square. As a column of tanks rolled down the ironically named Boulevard of Heavenly Peace, a lone man ran into the middle of the street and stood in front of the lead tank, preventing the entire column from moving. For one brief moment, the age-old historical struggle between the individual and the state was crystallized into the image of this one man standing perfectly erect, staring straight ahead, with the gun turret of a tank pointed at him. It is said that the quest for freedom is the struggle between the armed state with its ultimate resort to the power of a gun and the individual with often nothing more than his principles to defend him. Never before has one event so perfectly represented this struggle before the world, and never before has the power of principle and the impotence of force been more perfectly communicated.

To those who fight the daily battle for liberty on even the smallest, most inconspicuous, and sometimes apparently the most meaningless level, the actions of this man in Beijing should serve as an inspiration and a reminder that, though a single individual may seem powerless to change anything, the greatest success must always begin with some one who is willing to stand up and fight for what he believes. Where, after all, would the world be today were it not for the first American patriot who resisted British rule, the first Frenchman who stood up against the *ancien regime*, the first person who refused to comply with the Nazis' plan to murder every Jew in Europe, or the first East European who demanded his freedom in the worst days of Communist tyranny?

At the time, it may have seemed to all of these people that they were engaged in a hopeless exercise, that the resistance of one man is nothing compared with the military and political power of a state. They acted not because they knew that they would win, for victory was far from certain, and not as part of a mass struggle against tyranny, for they were, at least initially, quite alone. They acted because they knew they were right, because they wanted to be free, and because they hoped that by taking a stand they would inspire others to do the same. History, of course, proved them correct in the long run—acting alone they not only inspired others but eventually proved victorious. The undeniable lesson of history is this: One person, backed only by the strength of his convictions, can make a difference; one man can change the world.

—Douglas Mataconis

George Mason University School of Law

[Reprinted from THE FREEMAN, September 1991].

2. "Three Theses"

"The arguments which I have made up to the present time lead me to make as a summary, and with very little elucidation, three theses. They are very simple. ... They are these.

"[First.] Government—all government—has a tendency to extend itself, if it can, at the expense of the lives, property, and liberty of the members of society. ... Government has nothing of its own. It lives like a vast growth on the life of society. ...

"All acts of government are coercive. If it were not so, it would not be government. Governmental acts carry penalties. They are backed up by the police power. They are not mere counsel and advice; they would not be laws if they were merely that. A law is not a law unless it is enforceable. Law threatens you with the police or jail. All acts of government are coercive.

"The number of victims of robbers, highwaymen, rapers, gangsters, and other criminals at any period in history is negligible compared to the massive numbers of those cheerfully slain in the name ... of a flag, a leader, a religious faith, or a political conviction."

—Arthur Koestler
THE GHOST IN THE MACHINE
1967, p. 234

"(Second,) When government extends itself, it does so by becoming dictatorial. Now, here again, I have much history to support me. Rome, Philip of Macedonia, Alexander, the later Medici, Russia, Germany, Italy, and Spain today.

"And the tendencies are at work in the United States. We see that in precisely the measure that our government takes on new functions, power is concentrated in Washington in the same degree; and that in just the measure that government undertakes to regulate our whole life, the President becomes more and more the general manager of the United States.

"So, as government, therefore, develops into the economic state, liberty goes out of the window. Freedom cannot survive in a planned society or a collectivist society. ...

"Finally, as government grows, society weakens—for government eats the heart out of it, and many times has absolutely exhausted it. Progress in society has been created by unique men. Progress is impossible without freedom to think and speak and create. You cannot have any of these freedoms where you have only one plan, and that the official plan. ...

"Show how far any nation has gone along the road that we are all travelling, and I will show you just how far its degradation of culture, of freedom and the standard of living, have gone. ...

"So, materially, culturally, spiritually, politically, in just the measure in which our government grows, men become little and of no account, and the responsibility is taken away from them by the bureaucrats and the politicians.

"So I sum up: Governments today are destroying the patrimony of their states. ...

"(G)overnments are destroying the liberties of mankind."

—Everett Dean Martin,
SOME PRINCIPLES OF POLITICAL BEHAVIOR,
New York: American Bankers Association, 1939,
pp. 25-34.

3. "Be As Private As You Can"

"The proper course of action, it seems to me, is not to row the ship and man its pumps, but to abandon it. Don't bail; bail out! Become as truly private as you can, which simply means have as little to do with government as possible. Decide how far you will allow yourself to be pushed before you push back. Realize who your enemies are, even if they seem bland and friendly. Learn what you can about techniques of resistance, and share them with us and others. This is a fertile field for research, but the results may be disappointing. What if we learn that no captive people have ever regained their freedom without enormous suffering and bloodshed? Well, let's try to be the first!"

—The Bulletin of the Monetary Realist Society,
Box 31044, St. Louis, MO 63131, March 1992.

4. "Books"

"These are the masters who instruct us without rods and ferules, without hard words and anger, without clothes and money. If you approach them, they are not asleep; if investigating you interrogate them, they conceal nothing; if you mistake them, they never grumble; if you are ignorant, they cannot laugh at you. The library, therefore, of wisdom is more precious than all riches, and nothing that can be wished for is worthy to be com-

pared with it. Whosoever therefore acknowledges himself to be a zealous follower of truth, of happiness, of wisdom, of science, or even of the faith, must of necessity make himself a lover of books."

—Written by Richard deBury in 1344 more than 100 years before the invention of printing and later published in 1474.

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5. "On Voting And Post Offices"

If we can vote to choose our stamps, then why can't we vote to choose our Post Office? If I can pick between a thin Elvis and an older, fatter King, then why can't I choose a slimmer, leaner version of the service delivering my mail? The U.S. Postal Service is neither the cheapest nor most efficient in the world; it's only the biggest. It's a monopoly that always seems to increase rates and decrease service. Allowing private industry to enter the first class mail market would create competition, which in turn would increase efficiency and lower costs. But sorry folks, it won't bring Elvis back to life.

The Elvis vote is being called "democracy by mail," but I say let's go one step further—democracy in the mail. Let me choose my stamps and my delivery service.

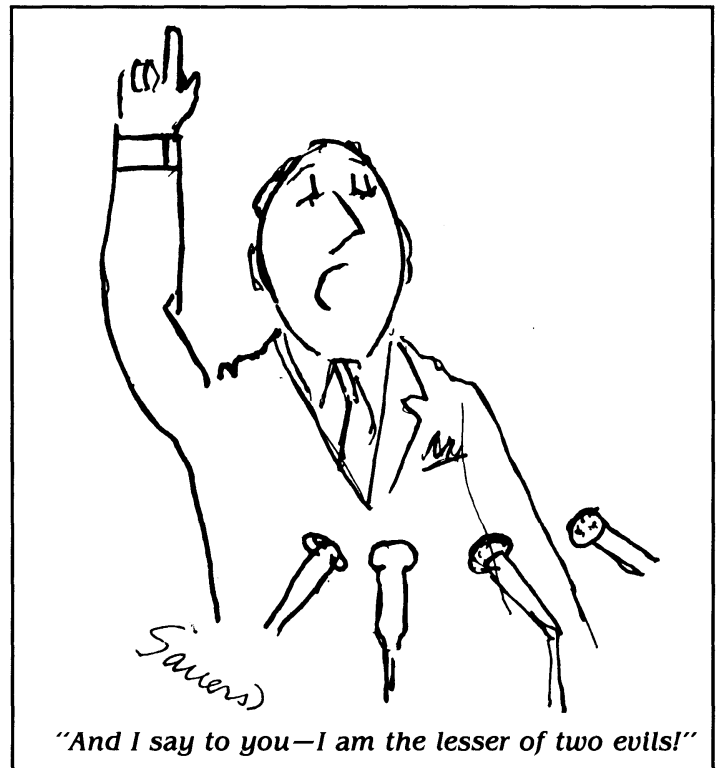
—Tracie Sharp of The Cascade Policy Institute,
Portland, Oregon

6. "Never Assume Anything"

Brian Martin, a social scientist at the University of Wollongong, Australia, and a subscriber to THE VOLUNTARYIST, has recently written a book titled STRIP THE EXPERTS. To challenge "the experts" is often considered heresy.

Yet it can be done. The experts are vulnerable in a variety of ways. You can dispute their facts. You can challenge the assumptions underlying their facts. You can undermine their credibility. And you can discredit the value of expertise generally. The weakness can be probed and relentlessly exploited.

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On Our Children and Their Education

By Helen and Mark Hegener

None of the calls to environmental action ever go quite far enough. Unless some very real, very lasting changes are made, and soon, it won't matter much whether or not we've saved the whales, or the spotted owls, or the forests. We will have lost something much more dear and precious to us all: Our children.

While most of today's best and brightest are thinking up new ways to save the planet, their children are being indoctrinated by the government public school system. Make no mistake about indoctrination: in *THE NIGHT IS DARK AND I AM FAR FROM HOME* (1990) Jonathan Kozol wrote, "The first goal and primary function of the US public school is not to educate good people, but good citizens. It is the function which we call—in enemy nations—'state indoctrination'."

Schools are places where children learn how to submit to authority, to bury their yearnings for free expression and to submit to regimentation and disciplined monotony. Substantive questioning of authority is discouraged. This process often entails the outright destruction of a child's intellectual capabilities; people who know too much are not likely to be submissive and willing to conform when it goes against reason and common sense, as much of what happens in school does. Knowledge is power, and those who hold the power are not always willing to share all of the knowledge.

So why do we continue in this mad headlong rush? Because we, as a society, have been led to believe that schools, whether public schools, traditional private schools, or alternative schools in their many forms, are necessary to the learning process. In fact, they are only necessary to the social and political process.


We fully expect this battle to be twice as difficult as the battle

to save the environment, because it's extremely difficult to convince most people that there's really anything wrong. People have an overriding attitude which says "School was good enough for me, and it's good enough for my kids, too."

In his book *FREEDOM AND BEYOND* (1972), the author and educator John Holt put his finger on a significant piece of the problem when he wrote, "A large part of our problem is that few of us really believe in freedom. As a slogan, it is fine. But we don't understand it as a process or mechanism with which or within which people can work or live. We have had in our own lives so little experience of freedom, except in the most trivial situations, that we can hardly imagine how it might work."

We've raised five children and none of them has ever gone to school. They are all bright, intelligent, fun to be around, and determined to chart their own course through life. They won't wait to be told what to do, or what they can do. We wish more children had the opportunity to grow up the way they did, to make decisions about their own lives, to make mistakes and to learn from them, to grow in their own ways instead of being processed and labeled and spit out the other end of the assembly line called school.

How to proceed? Simply publishing this letter, and giving people a chance to think about this situation, will be an important first step. We intend to keep writing, and perhaps together we and others can make a difference. Thanks for whatever you can do to help.

(Editor's Note: The above article appeared as a letter-to-the-editor in the May 1992 issue of *REAL GOOD NEWS* (966 Mazzoni Street, Ukiah, CA 95482). Real Goods is a purveyor of energy independence products and operator of the Institute for Independent Living. The authors of this article are editors and publishers of *HOME EDUCATION MAGAZINE*, Box 1083, Tonasket, WA 98855. One year subscription—\$24.00, 6 issues.] 

The Voluntaryist

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