
The Voluntaryist

Whole Number 65

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

December 1993

Freedom—a Way, Not a Goal

By Robert LeFevre

Here at the Gazette Telegraph we endeavor to offer as complete an understanding of the philosophy of liberty and individualism as our capacities permit. We do so in the face of a world which is not friendly to this philosophy and which opposes it in many ways and at many points.

One reason for this opposition may relate to the fact that existing realities are far removed from freedom in an absolute sense. Thus, the person seeking to understand the philosophy confronts the dichotomy of reality on the one hand, and freedom on the other hand as a presumed goal to be reached. We are endeavoring here to show that freedom is a way of living and not a goal to be attained.

We cannot make the world free. It has never been free. It is certainly doubtful if in our life time the world will accept freedom as a general condition. This is one of the grave errors contained in attempting to vote freedom into power. It is in essence, an attempt to carry out the absurdity of Rousseau, who opined that freedom was so important for everyone that he would "force them to be free."

Freedom has never been provided a people by its government. The government cannot make men free and neither can we. From the beginning of man's sojourn on this planet we have seen some men, bigger or less moral than others, employ force to compel others to their way. To offset this, other men, taking freedom as their banner, have proclaimed that if we followed them, they would "make" everyone free. But freedom, in this respect, is a delicate growth and it cannot be "made" for anyone.

But you can be free. Your freedom depends on you and not on society. And you begin to sense this when you strongly resolve, within yourself, to do nothing at all that will interfere with the freedom of others. Other men may practice non-freedom. But you do not have to. Other men also rob banks and wage wars, and commit acts of violence upon their neighbors. You cannot prevent them from doing this. But you can increase the total area of freedom when you highly resolve not to conduct your life in any such manner.

Some will say that this cannot be done unless all men join together in a universal wish to be free. But, if this is the protest, we will contend that it was in error. On this planet today there are men still living in a state of savagery, comparable in all respects to that of neolithic peoples. And on this same planet we have other men who have learned to put aside savage ways, who live like civilized men.

If civilization were dependent upon a universal view, then we would have to contend that the 20th century is a snare and an illusion. But it is not. It is here and it is real.

Granted, we do not know many men who are fully civilized. But we do know some. These are men who refuse utterly to have a part in wrong doing. This does not mean that by their abstinence they are preventing others from doing wrong. They know they cannot do this. But they can prevent themselves from doing wrong. The only energy they control is their own.

There is no panacea if your goal is freedom. Nor will you find another nation more susceptible to freedom than is our own. Some we have known have grown weary of the constant frustration they experience here and flee to other places. But they do not find freedom by so doing. The problems they confront in their new abode are the same as the problems they left behind.

The world is not of our making. The only way we could fully escape the problems of this world is to leave it by dying. We do

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Freedom Is a Two-edged Sword

By Arthur Gordon

Last summer on the Fourth of July I found myself in a group listening to a short patriotic address. The speaker talked about the meaning of Independence Day. He spoke of the men who signed the Declaration, their courage, their dedication. He reminded us of our heritage of freedom, how precious it is, and how jealously we should guard it.

We applauded when he was through. But suddenly, as the applause died away, a voice spoke from the crowd: "Why don't you tell them the whole truth?"

Startled, we all looked around. The words had come from a young man in a tweed jacket with untidy hair and intense, angry eyes. He might have been a college student, a poet, a Peace Corps worker, almost anything.

"Why don't you tell them that freedom is the most dangerous gift anyone can receive?" he said. "Why don't you tell them that it's a two-edged sword that will destroy us unless we learn how to use it, and soon? Why don't you make them see that we face a greater challenge than our ancestors ever did? They only had to fight for freedom. We have to live with it!" He stared for a moment at our blank, uncomprehending faces. Then he shrugged his way through the crowd and was gone.

Now, almost a year later, I find myself still thinking about that young man. I think he was a person seized by a swift and stunning insight, and he had the courage to shout it out. He was right: Freedom is dangerous; it can be a two-edged blade. Look at this country today. All around us there seems to be a drastic decline in morals: cheating where once there was honesty, promiscuity where once there was decency, crime where once there was respect for law. Everywhere there seems to be a growing laxness, an indifference, a softness that terrifies people who think about it.

And what lies behind all this? Perhaps the angry young man was trying to tell us the truth. Perhaps we do have a blind and misguided concept of liberty. Perhaps we are using the freedom of choice gained for us by our forefathers to choose the wrong things.

Ever since our country won its independence, something in us has been deeply suspicious of authority. "Give us more freedom!" has been our constant cry. This was valid when it was directed against tyranny or oppression or exploitation, but we have pushed the concept far beyond that. The freedom we now claim has come to mean freedom from all unpleasantness: from hardship, from discipline, from the stern voice of duty, from the pain of self-sacrifice.

"Give us fewer rules, or more elastic ones!" This demand has weakened our courts of justice and shaken the foundations of the church.

"Give us more leisure and less work!" This one sounds enlightened and alluring, but at the end of the road lie sterility and boredom.

"Give us the freedom to decide moral questions for ourselves!" This one ignores the fact that once morals become relative it is hard to justify any morality at all.

As a nation, in short, we have clamored for total freedom. Now we have just about got it, and we are facing a bleak and chilling truth: We have flung off one external restraint after another, but in the process we have not learned how to restrain ourselves.

It is this truth that causes, deep in our souls, the uneasiness we feel despite all our prosperity and power. It is the knowledge that we have abandoned our ancient certainties but have so far

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The Voluntaryist

Editor: Carl Watner

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Potpourri from the Editor's Desk

1. "Freedom of Charity"

This 30 page monograph was written anonymously. It is the story of rebellion against forced charity and the welfare state. "Freedom of Charity means you can not force me to give" or to contribute to causes that someone else dictates. Like Freedom of Religion and Freedom of Conscience, Freedom of Charity means keeping the State out of these private matters.

The plot involves two "Charity Terrorists," who, in order to garner media attention, cause an electric power interruption and blackout the stadium where the Super Bowl football game was to begin. Their second act of resistance results in a widespread electrical blackout on the East Coast and coincides with the income tax filing deadline. They present the public with three manifestos, explaining their opposition to coercive charity. Soon the Freedom of Charity movement takes on a life of its own, as others join in support.

The author writes that "a welfare tax is fundamentally different from all other taxes that give us something in return." The author fails to realize that all taxation is theft. Hence, it doesn't make any difference whether the taxpayer gets something in return or not. True voluntarism opposes all taxes because of their coercive nature. Although I would not describe this as a voluntarist tract, it is well worth its cost of \$2.98, postpaid. Orders may be sent to WRB Press, Box 587, Cottondale, FL 32431.

2. "Natural Law vs. Political Statute"

"The *nomos* of the ancient Greeks and the Roman *jus* were the universal rules of human conduct, quite a different matter from what nowadays we call 'law', a sad commentary on the degradation of the term. The 'law' in the modern sense is whatever the representatives of the majority in Congress or in the state assemblies find politically expedient to enact. So it is against the law to smoke a Cuban cigar, and a double 'crime' to do so in a nonsmoking area of a restaurant or train. ...

Since the 'law' is no longer a universal rule of human conduct, but rather what the casual majority in power says, the modern individual faces some very tough moral and ethical decisions."

—Carlos Ball, "Zoe Baird,"

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL,
Jan. 22, 1993, p. A10.

3. "Californians Wish It Was So!"

"In speaking of the government of California, I must say it is the most free and easy government perhaps on the civilized globe. No Taxes are imposed on any individual whatsoever. I saw nor heard of no requirement for Road Labour, no Military tax, no civil department to support, no Judiciary requiring pay and in every respect the people live free. You may support Priest or not at your pleasure and if your life and property are not Quite so safe as in some other countries you have the pleasure of using all your earnings."

—James Clyman, "California in 1845,"
CALIFORNIA HISTORY (1926), p. 258,
cited in Dee Brown,
WONDROUS TIMES ON THE FRONTIER,
(1991, p. 145).

4. "Creative Justice"

Just before hearing a case in frontier Oregon, the judge summoned the opposing lawyers into his chambers. "I have a problem," he told them. "last night the plaintiff sent me \$200 to decide the case in his favor. Then this morning the defendant sent me \$300 to decide in his favor."

"Under these circumstances," asked the plaintiff's lawyer, "are you going to return the \$200 to my client?"

"No," said the judge. "No, I figure I'll just give \$100 back to the defendant, and then we'll try the case on its own merits."

—Dee Brown,

WONDROUS TIMES ON THE FRONTIER,
Little Rock: August House Publishers, 1991,
p. 139. ☐

A Way, Not a Goal

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not propose to do this. But we do propose to make of our community, our city, our state and our nation, as much a haven of freedom and of the free as we know how. The very existence of a Freedom Newspaper and the exploration in a philosophy of freedom proves that it can be done to some extent in the world in which we live.

We have sworn unending support of the freedom concept and unending effort to rid the world of ignorance concerning freedom. Do we wish or expect to see the world remade in our image? Heaven forbid. Do we expect to see freedom become the going philosophy in our life times? No, we do not.

But if we may borrow a note from the Christophers, let us suggest that it is better to light one candle than to curse the darkness. It is better to control one's self than to rail at others because they do not control themselves.

The true significance of individualism is never found in concerted action. It is found in individual action and self-control. It is not a goal that can be reached by others through your efforts or our efforts. It is a way of life you can select for yourself, if you will.

[From The Colorado Springs GAZETTE TELEGRAPH, Nov. 22, 1964.] ☐

A Two-edged Sword

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found nothing to replace them. It is the premonition that unless we learn to control ourselves this climate of ultra freedom may be replaced by a climate of repression. It is the fear that if we do not learn to guard and preserve our own best values, some form of tyranny will surely attempt to take them from us. This is no idle fear. It took Babylon 1000 years, and Rome 500, to decline and fall, but we have no such comfortable margin. Time and distance have diminished; the clock of history ticks faster.

So maybe on this Independence Day we should be thinking not so much about the freedom from tyranny that our ancestors won, as about the chaos that freedom can bring to those who do not use it wisely. We should ponder the truth of the old saying, "A man's worst difficulties begin when he is able to do what he likes." We should face up to the fact that, in the proportion to which we dismiss our external restraints, each of us has a solemn moral obligation to restrain himself.

This can never be easy. But the time has come in our national life when we need to look straight at some of the ugly areas in our society—the divorce statistics, the crime statistics, the weakening of family ties, the swirling clouds of racial hatred, the sex explosion on our campuses, the grim persistence of alcoholism, the death toll on our highways—and ask ourselves to what extent these things stem from a distorted concept of freedom which leaves men free to be selfish, free to be lazy, free to be ignoble, free to be weak.

If personal freedom of choice is our goal and our ideal as a nation, then our first fundamental choice must be not to abuse that freedom. This is what independence really means: *self discipline*. And this we would do well to remember when we see the flag we love blazing against the sky on Independence Day.

[From A TOUCH OF WONDER (New York: Jove Books, 1978, first published 1974), pp. 166-168.] ☐

Caveat Emptor! (Even in the Free Market)

By Carl Watner

If you will examine the Subscription Box on page 2 of this issue, you will notice a small change. THE VOLUNTARYIST no longer accepts Gold Standard units in payment of subscription fees, and therein lies a small tale.

Gold Standard units were the creation of Conrad Braun, and Gold Standard Certificates were first issued by Gold Standard Corporation of Kansas City, Missouri in April 1988. One Gold Standard unit had the face value of 1/100th troy ounce gold. The origin and history of Gold Standard Corporation were outlined in my article "Private Money Firsts," which appeared in the February 1989 (Whole No. 36) issue of THE VOLUNTARYIST. Briefly summarized, the chronology of events at Gold Standards is as follows:

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|----------------|--|
| 1976 (Dec.) | Gold Standard Corporation founded by Conrad Braun |
| 1978 (Oct.) | Gold Standard minted its first gold coin, the Harwood ounce |
| 1979 (Jan.) | Over \$2 million of coins (mainly proof mintages) sold |
| 1979 | Gold Standard pioneered in the minting of gold coinage based on decimalization of the troy ounce |
| 1981 (Nov.) | First minting of interchangeable gold coinage |
| 1982 | 49'ers Club initiated under which members could make small monthly purchases of precious metals |
| 1985 | Private Vault of Kansas City organized to offer private non-banking storage and segregated non-fungible storage facilities |
| 1993 (Feb. 24) | Federal Bureau of Investigation agents searched the offices of Gold Standard, confiscating over \$100,000 in precious metals |

The actions of the F.B.I. were precipitated by a Gold Standard Corp. depositor from New York. Unable to redeem his precious metals, the depositor called in the F.B.I. to investigate. At the time of the search, Gold Standard had assets of nearly \$150,000 and liabilities of at least \$2 million. (The liabilities were primarily due to customers who made monthly purchases of precious metals through their 49'ers Club accounts or who had gold, silver, or platinum on deposit in precious metal accounts.) The F.B.I. seized all customer records and the precious metals on hand, including the segregated deposits designated for individual customers. About forty customers with safe deposit boxes had previously been notified to empty their boxes. At the time of the raid, Gold Standard was both insolvent and technically bankrupt. The F.B.I. search resulted in the closing of its doors.

How did this situation come about?

According to Conrad Braun, Gold Standard Corporation had experienced financial difficulties since the early 1980s. Costs went up, as sales (especially sales of the very profitable proof coins which Gold Standard minted) went down from the heady days of gold's peak price. The seigniorage (the profit on minting each coin) on its gold and silver coins did not cover operating costs. Attempts were made to hedge Gold Standard's silver position, but this only made matters worse. Legal fees were incurred to defend a suit initiated by the Olympic Committee, which claimed Gold Standard had violated its rights by minting "Olympic" coins. Shortly thereafter, the I.R.S. conducted an audit. These two unexpected events cost nearly \$50,000. Consequently, in the mid 1980s Conrad Braun decided to speculate with company money in an effort to offset the precious metals deficit (what Gold Standard owed customers over and above the company's metals inventory). More losses were incurred as a result of these transactions. As long as enough customers kept their metal on deposit, it was possible to continue doing business as usual. The day of reckoning was postponed,

but not forever.

In the meantime, problems in his personal life intervened. In August 1990, Braun was divorced from his wife after seventeen years of marriage. It was an acrimonious parting of the ways. Shortly after the divorce, Braun was convicted of a trespass at his wife's residence. He served six months in a local jail, being released in March 1991. In September 1991, he entered a "no contest" plea to the charge of making a terrorist threat to his ex-wife. His understanding was that he would receive a sentence of two years, but would be released on parole after serving six months. Since the Kansas Parole Board claimed that he contacted his three sons in violation of parole conditions, Braun served his full sentence, finally being released in early September 1993. It was during the time of his second imprisonment that Gold Standard Corporation folded.

As a sole stockholder of Gold Standard Corporation, Conrad Braun had full responsibility for what occurred. Were there ever any inklings that things were not right at Gold Standard? Yes. In May 1988, shortly after Braun began marketing his Gold Standard Certificates, Dan Rosenthal of SILVER AND GOLD REPORT asked him in writing whether or not the program was "being conducted in a manner that will protect the investors." Specifically, Rosenthal wanted to know if the gold was being held in a segregated account, if Braun had access to the gold, if it was insured, and if Braun was prepared to disclose the balance sheet of Gold Standard Corporation. Braun responded by publishing "An Open Reply to Dan Rosenthal," which appeared in the GOLD STANDARD NEWS (No. 138) of May 1988. Summarizing his answers, Braun said that the gold backing the certificates was not segregated; that he had access to the gold; that the fiduciary responsibility of Gold Standard was not insurable; and that he would not disclose financial details about the corporation. In retrospect, these answers appeared honest, yet offered a recipe for disaster.

Both Braun and Rosenthal were aware that the coin and precious metals industry had had its share of business casualties during the decade of the 80s. Investors had lost millions of dollars in businesses that closed their doors. Some of these firms had been bucket shops and fraudulent from the start, while others had simply ended in bankruptcy as a result of poor business decisions. Gold Standard Corporation appears to fall in the later category, though one should question the propriety and honesty of using one client's money to redeem the deposits of another. This is the formula behind all pyramid schemes, and certainly went on at Gold Standard Corporation until it was no longer possible. If Conrad Braun is an honest Christian man as he claims, then he should never have used money entrusted to him for one purpose, for another. This is the kind of mistake that an honest man never makes.

So what are the lessons for investors and supporters of free market money? First of all, there are no guarantees. A free market money is not necessarily any more sound than government money. Both may be adulterated in purity or weight. A free market money or free market firm may fail just as miserably as any government currency or government. Secondly, caveat emptor. Buyer beware! Investigate! Be skeptical. Although financial statements can be doctored and falsified, request them. Be suspicious if they will not be furnished. Thirdly, limit your exposure. Take possession of your precious metals. Find a safe

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Finally...

A declaration of independence for individuals.

To order your copy of the new book, A PERSONAL DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE (as discussed in Whole No. 62 of THE VOLUNTARYIST) send \$10 to Box 1275, Gramling, SC 29348. Additional information about this new book may be obtained by sending a SASE.

Why Homeschool?

Excerpts from Correspondence Between
Helen Hegener and Carl Watner

Mark and Helen Hegener are the homeschooling parents of five children and owners of Home Education Press, which publishes HOME EDUCATION MAGAZINE, a bimonthly homeschooling magazine, and several books on homeschooling and alternative education. Their newest book is ALTERNATIVES IN EDUCATION. They have been active in the homeschool movement since 1983, and have been featured speakers at homeschooling conferences across the nation. Their magazine is available from Box 1083, Tonasket, Wa. 98855 (6 issues—\$24, current issue \$4.50).

After the publication of my article, "Who Controls the Children?" in the December 1992 issue of THE VOLUNTARYIST (Whole No. 59), I wrote the Hegeners to see if they would be interested in publishing the story of John and Vickie Singer's struggle to assert their parental rights to homeschool. They were, and it appeared as "John Singer: Martyr or Fool?" in the July-August 1993 issue of HOME EDUCATION MAGAZINE. In that same letter of December 19th, I also mentioned that

Another short article I have in mind is one dealing with "Why I Homeschool." Even if the State did a perfectly wonderful job of educating children in their schools, I would object on conscientious grounds. I object to the compulsory aspects of state schooling: attendance laws, taxation, and penalties for failure to comply with their statutes. I believe this is a completely different perspective—one probably never presented in your magazine.

Helen responded that this was her "personal reason for homeschooling our five kids," and that she and her husband were "more convinced now than we were then (back in the mid-1980s) that the state has absolutely no business telling parents how to raise their children. We haven't been writing as much about these issues lately as we probably should, but they're still there, simmering on the back burner."

On February 13, 1993, I wrote Helen that

While we both oppose ALL state interference in the realm of the family and schooling, I believe my position goes much further, and hence, implies much more than you see.

For example, take state-mandated birth certificates. In most states, the statutes regarding the reporting of births fall under the Dept. of Health and Vital Statistics. Compulsory birth registration would not be justified by statist supporters as an intervention in the realm of schooling, but rather as a requirement to help "promote the general welfare" by enabling the state to identify, process immunization records, and count its population. Compulsory registration does constitute an invasion of the family, but how many people—including homeschoolers—perceive it

A Duty of Citizenship

"To provide the rudiments of education to the illiterate appears as an act of liberation. Nonetheless, (duties of citizenship) are distinctive in that they do not usually permit the individual to decide whether or not to avail himself of their advantages. ...In all Western societies elementary education has become a duty of citizenship, perhaps the earliest example of a prescribed minimum enforced by all the powers of the modern state. Two attributes of ...education make it into an element of citizenship: the government has authority over it, and the parents of all children ...are required by law to see to it that their children attend school."

—Reinhard Bendix,

NATION-BUILDING AND CITIZENSHIP,
(1964) pp. 87-88.

that way? Very few, I suspect.

Take another example: taxation by county, state, or federal governments. Isn't taxation an invasion of the family? Money spent on taxes is that much less money the family has to spend on education, health, food, recreation, etc. Of course, I also believe taxation is theft because it is collected under the threat of personal imprisonment or property confiscation if not paid.

The point I am trying to make is two-fold.

First, no matter how small and limited a government starts out (like the American republic in 1787) it inevitably seeks more and more power and control over its people. Taxes grow and grow, and interventions in all areas of life take place. Witness our situation today. We are living in a dictatorship "in all but name." (See my article by this title in the June 1993 VOLUNTARYIST.)

My second point is that the existence of any coercive government (no matter how small or limited) means that such a coercive institution must of necessity have an impact on the people it governs. Even if there were a constitutional amendment separating education from the state, I do not believe it is possible to separate the State from the family or schooling. If you have a state, it must have an effect on people and their affairs. If there is a State, it is impossible to separate it from anything.

"We call our schools free because we are not free to stay away from them until we are sixteen years of age."

—Robert Frost

You may not agree with my conclusion that we do not need a coercive state to oversee our affairs, but I do hope you follow the logic of my argument, and understand the consistency that holds it together. While I agree with your position that the state should not intervene in schooling or family affairs, doesn't this imply that the state may coercively interfere in other areas, such as providing national defense, or providing roads (just to take two examples)? My argument starts out the other way. I am opposed to the use of all coercion, both by the state or private parties—whether it be providing national defense, building roads, providing a common money, educating its citizens, etc., etc. Most people have their favorite areas, in which they support government intervention. I have none.

If we don't take a direct, frontal approach to opposing the state, it seems to me that we are forever fighting brush fires, and thus only opposing specific areas of intervention, such as in homeschooling.

Helen answered on March 29, 1993:

Regarding your point of opposition to all intervention by the state, I can agree on some levels, but I would ask how you define "the state." What comprises a "government, no matter how small or limited." Let's say that two people agree to a plan whereby one of them grows a nice garden and in the fall trades half his crop to the other for plowing his road all winter. Next year a third person joins, offering to supply firewood from his property to both for a share of the garden and getting his road plowed. And so on, until a dozen or more families are involved. At what particular point do these agreeably sharing neighbors become a "state" or a "government"? What determines whether these mutually beneficial arrangements are "good" or "bad": their size? Their usefulness to all those concerned? I see some perhaps overly simplified, but still valid parallels, and I would suggest that it's not the system that is necessarily at fault, but the potential for misuse by certain greedy individuals, which, of course, is magnified by the size of the "state" or "government." Unfortunately, their kind will always be with us, leading to the types of misuse that make us all willing to condemn bureaucracies, states, governments, or whatever.

We have no quarrel with schools, per se. Our argument is with the fact that they've been made compulsory, that for the vast majority of kids there is no escaping the ineptitude that passes for "schooling" these days. If they were run more like libraries—use what you want when you want to and leave the rest—we think they might actually be nice to have around. It's the way they've been twisted and reshaped into this monolithic bureaucracy that serves no one well that we're against.

I answered her question about how you define 'government' in my letter of April 3rd.

The 'classic' definition of a government is an institution which claims exclusive jurisdiction over a given piece of territory, exercises the power to tax, and monopolizes certain public services such as police, courts, and external defense. Your neighborhood group is not a government by this definition.

You write: "We have no quarrel with schools, per se. Our argument is the fact they've been made compulsory," I infer that you object to compulsory attendance laws.

You continue: "If they (schools) were run more like libraries—use what you want when you want to and leave the rest—we think they might actually be nice to have around."

The point I was trying to make in my earlier letter is that the compulsion in the State school system involves far more than just compulsory attendance laws. State schools are tax-supported and taxation is compulsory. I oppose compulsory attendance laws, but I also object to compulsory taxation to support the public schools. Even if attendance were not made compulsory, I would still oppose State schools—just as I oppose public libraries—because they are supported by force. Why shouldn't public schools and public libraries receive their funding voluntarily, as do all other businesses and organizations in the free market?

The principle I am trying to demonstrate is that if it is wrong to use coercion to enforce attendance, it is just as wrong to use coercion to collect taxes. As a matter of consistency, if I can compel you to contribute to a school system that you would not voluntarily support, or to which you would not voluntarily send your children, then why shouldn't I be able to compel you to school them in a manner that I prescribe. Or, if I can compel you to send your children to school, why shouldn't I also be able to compel you to send them to the library for a fixed amount of time? And, as a practical matter, I believe that if we do not object to the tax-support that public schools receive, we (as a society) will never reduce or abandon the statist schools.

If I am not mistaken, no one in the home school movement has opposed State schools because they are tax-supported. If I am wrong, please tell me. This is an important issue to me, and I seem to be alone in pointing it out.

I know you are busy, but I hope you might briefly explain your position on the issue of schools, taxation, and compulsion. Or please tell me if you consider it a non-issue.

Helen replied on May 11th:

I've tried to figure out how to reply to your concerns, but the best I can come up with is that it doesn't seem as though the issues of taxation and schooling can be mixed in any reasonable way and made sense of. While you do make a valid point in your letter, they still seem to me to be separate issues. You're right, I can't think of anyone in the homeschooling movement who has objected to state schools on the basis of their being tax-supported. The best reason for this is a fairly simple one: traditional public schooling is so obviously bad for kids, and homeschooling is so obviously good for them, that most of the other concerns such as taxation and compulsion seem to be moot points. Valid, maybe, but moot to most of us in the homeschooling movement. We just go on about our lives and don't worry about the rest of it.

I know this is a non-answer, but maybe it will give you an idea of my standing on the whole question.

"The aim of totalitarian education has never been to instill convictions, but to destroy the capacity to form any."

—Hannah Arendt

**(cited in THE WALL ST. JOURNAL,
Dec. 28, 1992, p. A8.)**

My letter of May 15th concluded our correspondence.

Homeschooling is an example of how the moral and the practical coincide. As you point out, there are plenty of practical reasons for homeschooling. In my opinion, there are plenty of moral reasons, too. (And in fact, I would argue that the practicality of homeschooling stems from its moral roots.) First of all, I believe each of us as parents should take a hands-on responsibility for the education of our children; not just a turning over of that responsibility to outside bureaucrats and teachers. The incentive is for 'us', as parents to do a better job. Second, I believe it is wrong to use compulsion and the coercive apparatus of the State to provide or supervise education in any manner whatsoever. The State strives to monopolize whatever it does, tends to destroy all competition, and has no healthy incentive to act efficiently or morally.

Really the main point I am trying to make is this: Is it ever proper for some people to steal from others—which is what happens when the State taxes its citizens for educational pursuits? I object to having my property taken from me by the State for educational and/or other purposes. Stealing is wrong, and we should object to it in principle.

If you don't object to this happening now to all of us, how could you expect others to support you when you object to having your 'privilege' to homeschool taxed? It may sound like a ludicrous prediction, but I bet that homeschoolers will someday be socked with a special tax—just do discourage the practice.

Homeschooling gives us the opportunity to avoid having our children indoctrinated with State ideologies. But if we don't oppose statist dogma by pointing out that taxation is theft, that compulsion against peaceful people is wrong,—then we are merely helping to make our children more efficient slaves, not the aspiring free people they have a right and responsibility to become. ▣

"Children are the living messages we send to a time we will not see."

**—John W. Whitehead in RUTHERFORD,
published by The Rutherford Institute,
August 1993, p. 5.**

Caveat Emptor!

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place to keep them or rent a safe deposit box to keep them in. Take out special insurance if necessary. (Gold Standard did offer segregated storage and placement of customers' metals in safe deposit boxes at the Private Vault of Kansas City, but apparently the F.B.I. paid no attention to segregated accounts.) Remember that free market rogues can defraud you just as badly as government ones. Theft at the hands of private thieves hurts just as much as theft by government agents.

Conrad Braun has written me that he intends to devote his future earnings to repay his Gold Standard depositors. He also hopes to rejuvenate Gold Standard Corporation, but the likelihood of its resurgence seems dim. One of the largest private mints in 20th Century America appears to have ended in ignominy with hundreds of customers losing a couple million dollars. The largest private mint in the 19th Century, Clark and Gruber of Denver, was bought out by the federal government. Let's hope that whatever becomes the largest private mint of the 21st Century has a happier ending. ▣

Letter to the Editor

Dear Carl,

I read "A Declaration of Personal Independence" in the June '93 issue of THE VOLUNTARYIST with some interest. I believe that this well-intended document contains a serious oversight.

As the late Robert LeFevre was fond of pointing out, the original draft of the Declaration of Independence proposed by Thomas Jefferson summarized inalienable human rights as "life, liberty and property." This was taken directly from the writings of Thomas Paine. When Mr. Jefferson presented this early version of the Declaration of Independence, the Southern colonies, where chattel slavery was already an institution, objected to the inclusion of the word "property" and refused to sign the document. They also threatened to withdraw their support altogether in the event that such a document were signed by the other colonies and sent to the king.

According to Mr. LeFevre, the problem revolved around the philosophical controversy surrounding chattel slavery. Chattel slaves were considered to be property. The problem was, they were also admittedly human. If the Southern colonies had signed such a document, they would have been voluntarily repudiating the institution of chattel slavery together with the attendant privileges of the already-existing ruling class of the time. In order to avoid this problem, Mr. Jefferson changed the phrase "life, liberty and property" to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness".

Bob LeFevre believed that this seemingly small change poisoned and doomed the American experiment from the start, and that it pointed the country straight towards the terrible Civil War with its attendant slaughter of thousands of young men who represented the flower of American Culture. It is my personal belief that both sides of the American Civil War were financed via Britain, and that the eventual consequence of this was that the American government lost its sovereignty and was incorporated into what is the biggest empire in all human history which now includes all the countries of the British Commonwealth, the United States, Germany and Japan. Even as this is being written, the former Soviet Empire is being incorporated into the Western Empire.

I further believe that the social policies referred to and complained about in the "Declaration of Personal Independence" can best be understood in terms of the rising of a ruthless international aristocracy which fears educated and politically aware individuals who might develop the will to resist and/or revolt against the newly developed type of wage slavery which expropriates perhaps 80% of the productive effort of the average citizen (counting the sum total of federal, state and local income tax, plus sales tax, social security tax, property tax, and the increased prices of goods and services caused by taxes).

The social policies complained about are not an accident. All governments are controlled by a single person or a small group of persons. I am forced reluctantly to the conclusion that "our" ruling class has systematically developed policies which are designed to suppress education and cultural values in such a way as to render the populace incapable of revolt. The process is not a pretty one, and it will inevitably destroy our civilization entirely, including the ruling class itself. It is a process which has occurred over and over since the dawn of civilization, like some sort of recurring nightmare a la "Twilight Zone". God help us all.

Finally, I am withholding my name from this letter. You are welcome to utilize its contents in any way you like, but I am afraid of this government and at this time I don't think that there is any worthwhile benefit to my risking the welfare of my family for the sake of my ideals.

Yours very truly,
A Friend of Bob LeFevre

"No other success can compensate for failure in the home."

I Do Not Like It, Uncle Sam

For thirty years, various Internal Revenue agents have been trying to cajole, persuade, threaten or coerce me into paying taxes, even though I keep saying to them:

Listen,

I do not like to pay for arms,
I do not like to do much harm.
I do not like it, Uncle Sam;
I do not like green eggs and ham.

And they say to me:

Try it, try it, just this year,
try it, try it, have no fear.
Try it now the war is ended,
or your judge may be offended.
Withholding makes it very easy
to still your conscience when it's queasy.
You will like it once you pay.
You will do it every day.
Pay your tax like other folks;
we are tired of your jokes.

And I say to them:

I will not let you take my pay;
I will not stand it for a day.
I will not pay you with a check;
I will not pay this year or next.
I will not pay, I will not budge,
I will not pay them to a judge;
I will not pay them through the mail;
I will not pay them in jail.
Sort through your tons of canvas sacks;
you will not find my income tax.
I do not like to pay for arms,
I do not like to do much harm.
I do not like it, Uncle Sam;
I do not like green eggs and ham.

—Karl Meyer and Dr. Seuss

(Reprinted from PATHFINDER, Newsletter of Nukewatch, POB 2658, Madison, WI 53701. Also appearing in THE CATHOLIC WORKER, Jan.-Feb. 1993, p. 4.)



Grateful Slave

By Paine's Torch

I am a grateful slave. My master is a good man. He gives me food, shelter, work and other things. All he requires in return is that I obey him. I am told he has the power to control my life. I look up to him, and wish that I were so powerful.

My master must understand the world better than I, because he was chosen by many others for his respected position. I sometimes complain, but fear I cannot live without his help. He is a good man.

My master protects my money from theft, before and after he takes half of it. Before taking his half, he says only he can protect my money. After taking it, he says it is still mine. When he spends my money, he says I own the things he has bought. I don't understand this, but I believe him. He is a good man.

I need my master to protect me, because other slaves would hurt me or take my money and use it for their own purposes. My master is better than them. When he takes my money, I still own it. The things he buys are mine. I cannot sell them, or decide how they are used, but they are mine. My master tells me so, and I believe him. He is a good man.

My master provides free education for my children. He teaches them to respect and obey him and all future masters they will have. He says they are being taught well, learning things they will need to know in the future. I believe him. He is a good man.

My master cares about other masters who don't have good slaves. He makes me contribute to their support. I don't understand why slaves must work for more than one master, but my master says it is necessary. I believe him. He is a good man.

Other slaves ask my master for some of my money. Since he is as good to them as he is to me, he agrees. This means he must take more of my money, but he says this is good for me. I ask my master why it would not be better to let each of us keep our own money. He says it is because he knows what is best for each of us. I believe him. He is a good man.

My master tells me that evil masters in other places are not as good as he; they threaten our comfortable lifestyle and peace. So, he sends my children to fight the slaves of evil masters. I mourn their deaths, but my master says it is necessary. He gives me medals for their sacrifice, and I believe him. He is a good man.

Good masters sometimes have to kill evil masters and their slaves. This is necessary to preserve our way of life, and to show other people that our version of slavery is best. I asked my master why the evil masters' slaves have to be killed along with the evil masters. He said, "Because they are the ones who carry out his evil deeds. Besides, they could never learn our system—they have been indoctrinated to believe that only their master is good." My master knows what is best. He is a good man.

My master lets me vote for a new master every few years. I cannot vote to have **no** master, but he generously lets me choose between two candidates he has selected. I eagerly wait until election day, since voting allows me to forget that I am a slave. Until then, my current master tells me what to do. I accept this. It has always been so, and I wouldn't change tradition. My master is a good man.

At the last election, about half the slaves were allowed to vote. The other half either broke rules set by the master, or were not thought by him to be fit. Those who break the rules should know better than to disobey! Those not considered fit should gratefully accept the master chosen for them by others. It is right, because we have always done it this way. My master is a good man.

There were two candidates. One received a majority of the vote, which was about one-fourth of the slave population. I asked why the new master can rule over all the slaves if he only received votes from one-fourth of them. My master said, "Because some wise masters long ago did it that way. Besides, you are the slaves and we are the masters." I did not understand his answer, but I believed him. My master knows what is best for me. He is a good man.

Some slaves have evil masters. They take more than half of their slaves' money, and are chosen by only one-tenth, rather than one-fourth of their slaves. My master says they are different

To Risk ...

*To laugh is to risk appearing the fool.
To weep is to risk appearing sentimental.
To reach for another is to risk involvement.
To expose your ideas, your dreams before a crowd is to risk their loss.
To love is to risk not being loved in return.
To live is to risk dying.
But risks must be taken, because the greatest hazard in life is to risk nothing.
The people who risk nothing do nothing, have nothing, are nothing.
They may avoid suffering and sorrow, but they cannot learn, feel, change, grow, love, live.
Chained by their attitudes, they are slaves; they have forfeited their freedom.
Only a person who risks is free.*

— Author Unknown

from him. I believe him. He is a good man.

I asked if I could ever become a master instead of a slave. My master said, "Yes, anything is possible, but you must first pledge allegiance to your present master, and promise not to abandon the system that made you a slave." I am encouraged by this possibility. My master is a good man.

He tells me slaves are the **real** masters, because they can vote for their masters. I do not understand this, but I believe him. He is a good man, who lives for no other purpose than to make his slaves happy.

I asked if I could be neither a master nor a slave. My master said, "No, you must be one or the other. There are no other choices." I believe him. He knows best. He is a good man.

I asked my master how our system is different from those with evil masters. He said, "In our system, masters work for the slaves." No longer confused, I am beginning to accept his logic. Now I see it! Slaves are in control of their masters because they can choose between new masters every few years. When the masters appear to control the slaves in between elections, it is all a grand delusion! In reality, they are carrying out the slaves' desires. For if this were not so, they would not have been chosen in the last election. How clear it is to me now! I shall never doubt the system again. My master is a good man. ▣

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No Guarantees: Freedom Depends on You!

By Carl Watner

The two front page articles in this issue have as their main theme the fact that no person or group of people, gathered together as an institution or organization, can guarantee your liberty or freedom. Your freedom depends on you, since freedom is self-control. A free person doesn't ask for freedom or exhibit what I call the 'give me' syndrome ("Give me disaster relief" or "Give me a government subsidy" or "Give me unemployment benefits"). Nor do self-governing individuals need or want other people to give them coercive orders.

The flip-side of being free is being responsible. Ultimately, no one can be responsible for another, any more than he can control that other. All control comes from inside the head, that is, from the ideas that each person accepts about how he may be controlled. Voluntaryists understand that no one can make you do a thing against your will. As I have often said, you may be killed for your refusal to obey; but outsiders or so-called authorities cannot make you obey. Only you can make you obey.

Being free provides opportunities: to excel as well as to fail; to earn a profit or incur a loss; to act morally or immorally. As I wrote in "The Fundamentals of Voluntaryism," the voluntary principle assures us that while we may have the possibility of choosing the worst, we also have the possibility of choosing the best. It provides us with the opportunity to make things better, though it doesn't guarantee results. Wherever there is a chance for the good life, the risk of a bad one must be accepted. Freedom to choose means discerning right from wrong, and then being able to act on that determination.

As Bob LeFevre explains in his editorial, "Freedom—a Way, Not a Goal," only you can light your own candle. Not lighting your candle because others do not light theirs is illogical behavior. There is no excuse for railing at others if they do not light their

candles. Worry about your own light. As Zeno the Stoic pointed out, if you stoop to throw mud at the mud-throwers, no one can tell you apart.

If you believe in freedom and right living, then live as free and right as you can. Not only will your actions serve as an example and inspiration to others, but it will prove that you are self-disciplined and responsible. You have to keep your eye on the ball, and it has to be your eye and your ball. There are no guarantees, but if each of us takes care of the means—tries to live as free and right and proper as each of us can—the end will take care of itself. ▣

Make One Small Change In Your Life

There once was a woman who was not a tidy housekeeper; one day an acquaintance gave her a beautiful rose which she brought home and placed in a vase in her living room.

The perfect rose only made the vase look tarnished and dusty, so the woman painstakingly polished the vase, and then set the rose on the table.

But now something looked wrong with the table, so she cleaned it as well.

At last the woman stood back and admired the sparkling table and the polished vase and the beautiful rose—only to realize, much to her dismay, the rest of the room now appeared dark and dull.

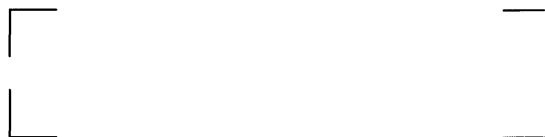
Before long, she was scrubbing the walls, washing the curtains, opening the windows, and letting light and air into every dark corner.

The moral of the story: Make one small positive change in your life, light up one small corner, and in no time your whole life can take on a different look. ▣

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