
The Voluntaryist

Whole Number 106

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

October 2000

Points of No Return

By Carl Watner

The impetus for this short article was a book by Bruno Bettelheim titled *THE INFORMED HEART* (New York: The Free Press, 1960). It deals with the author's experiences as a German Jew during the Nazi era. In a section subtitled "The last human freedom," on page 157, Bettelheim points out that prisoners in the concentration camps were faced with a choice:

... to survive as a man not a walking corpse, as a debased and degraded but still human being, one had first and foremost to remain informed and aware of what made up one's personal point of no return, the point beyond which one would never, under any circumstances, give in to the oppressor, even if it meant risking one's life. It meant being aware that if one survived at the price of overreaching this point one would be holding on to a life that had lost all its meaning. It would mean surviving - not with a lowered self-respect, but without any.

Even though the context of these comments is life in a concentration camp, I believe they apply equally well to those of us living in the "free world." Even in the United States today, our own government treats us like slaves. Most of our "so-called" liberties are actually privileges - controlled, regulated, licensed, and sold to us. When any group of people - or some institution they represent - can command specific performance from us without paying and/or obtaining our voluntary consent, then we are slaves. The fact that we have been conditioned to be happy with the situation, or that our masters do not seem overly brutal, or that we are given a say in choosing our masters, does not change the fact that for all practical purposes we are "owned" by them.

Several past issues of *THE VOLUNTARYIST* have dealt with the questions of what we should do when we come to understand that we are being treated as slaves. How cooperative should we be, and should we ever compromise our principles? In the October 1990 issue (No. 46), I wrote an article titled "Voluntary' Contributions to the National Treasury: Where Does One Draw the Line?" The theme of this article was that conscientious objectors against taxation, like conscientious objectors against war or religious dissenters of times past, see a personal duty not to cooperate with evil by directly contributing to the State's coffers. The tax refusenik will not pay

income tax for at least three reasons: 1) It is contrary to an ethic of life-survival to support one's enslaver voluntarily. 2) All taxes are compulsory and the refusenik sees behind them the initiation of force, which he believes is wrong. 3) The State spends the money unwisely and on immoral ends (that is not to imply, however, that wise spending or proper purposes would somehow justify taxation).

Another article in issue No. 68 addressed the issue of "This Far: No More!". The anonymous author explained why it is necessary to answer the questions: How far will you obey the State? and At what point will you start disobeying the State? If you don't draw a line in the sand, and say "This Far, No More" then you will do anything required of you. Unless you have a point of no return, you cannot maintain your self-respect. If you don't do what you think is right, even in the face of the greatest threats, then you sin against yourself and your conscience. As this author wrote: "There is a point at which you must say 'No,' if only to retain your own integrity as a human being. Would you kill, pillage, and steal for the State simply because you are ordered to do so?" Would you spy on your family for the State? Would you turn State's witness and lie for the State to save your skin?

In his book, Bettelheim points out that every conscientious German citizen was faced with similar issues during the 1930s. From the time Hitler came to power in 1933, there was a continuous series of "tests" that every German was expected to pass. Some of these touchstones included 1) using the Hitler salute; 2) swearing oaths of allegiance to the Fuhrer; 3) reporting to the authorities the dissent of "mutterers" who made critical remarks in private about their employers or the state; and 4) obedience to the laws prohibiting the tuning in of foreign radio broadcasts, even in the privacy of one's home. Although it was no simple decision, Bettelheim recounts how thousands of Germans left their homes and their country because they had reached the point of no return. They could not stomach all or some of the required behavior. (Bettelheim does not mention refusal to pay taxes to the Nazi regime, but clearly this could have been an issue of conscience for some.)

These conscientious people were faced with the issue of whether to accept the Hitler regime or to risk starting a new life somewhere else. What it boiled down to for each of them was, as Bettelheim wrote, "How many possessions am I willing to risk to remain free, and how radical a change in the conditions of my life will I have to make to preserve [my]

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Freedom or Government ?

By Harry Hoiles

The other day we received a letter in which the writer stated that in his opinion the choice was between government and anarchy. He asked what we proposed in place of government and we said that we proposed freedom.

Government by its very nature must govern. To govern is to dictate. All governments are dictatorships of one form or another. They may be one-man dictatorships, constitutional dictatorships, dictatorships in republican or democratic form, majority rule dictatorships, dictatorships by bureau or what have you. But the fact remains that to govern is to dictate.

The alternative to government is freedom. The individual who believes in freedom does not seek to govern others. He merely wants to govern himself. He is perfectly willing to let other people govern themselves also.

"Ah, but what about the criminals who would aggress against people who would be helpless without the protection of government?" say those who are afraid of freedom.

In the first place, the criminals are a small proportion of the population. We do need protection from criminals but we should recognize the size of the problem and not blow it up out of all proportion as is done when we organize our whole society around an agency (government) whose only [alleged] legitimate function is to protect us from the small proportion of the population who are criminals.

If criminals were more than a small proportion of the population, it would be impossible to protect the rest of the population from them anyway. As big as the government now is, it, or any other agency its size, could not protect innocent people from criminals if criminals represented a large proportion of the population.

Most people by nature are not criminals. Most people do not seek to aggress against others. People are not naturally thieves, murderers, rapists, etc. They are naturally peaceful and harmless. This is the nature of things as they are.

The nature of government is to govern, to dictate to everyone in its sphere of influence. Since government dictates to everyone in its sphere of influence and since most people are peaceful and harmless, most government actions involve dictation to peaceful, harmless people. This is the nature of government and this is the nature of people.

Is this what any thinking person wants?

Do we want dictatorship be it by a sole dictator, an oligarchy, a president, a legislature, a government, a county commission, a city council, the school board in a school district, or the majority in any political area?

Or do we want freedom?

That is the question of our age.

Either we want dictatorship, which we now have in every governing body constituting our government, or we want freedom.

Freedom by its very nature is not government. It is self-control, no more no less.

But this is only part of the story. For the balance of it, read the ensuing editorial entitled: "Protection by Voluntary Means."

Protection by Voluntary Means

By Harry Hoiles

In the foregoing editorial we discussed the idea of freedom or government. We suggest that you read that editorial before proceeding.

"But how about the criminals?" those who are afraid of freedom again ask.

In answering this let's make two observations.

First, as stated above, this is a much smaller problem than is generally recognized. And it would be even smaller were it not for the fact that mankind has sanctioned government power to such an extent that power in itself has thus been sanctioned. By sanctioning government power, mankind has increased the tacit acceptance of power as a means to an end. The criminal believes that the end justifies the means. The increased acceptance of power as a means to an end leads to increased criminality. This is a logical inevitable development of mankind's acceptance of government power as a means to an end.

Second, power attracts criminals. The bigger government gets, the more power it has, the more criminals are attracted to get in government and use this power to their [own] benefit. This is the nature of things.

Therefore, the size of the criminal problem is increased in two ways by mankind's acceptance of government. One, the sanction of government power increases the sanction of power per se, and causes lack of recognition of abuse of power. Two, the existence of government power attracts the criminal and makes it possible for him to do much more harm than he could without this power.

Remove mankind's sanction of government power and the problem of criminality would be greatly reduced.

Another factor which would cause this reduction is increased individual responsibility.

Government today, far from claiming only to protect the individual from criminals has become a great factor in penalizing the productive and rewarding the non-productive. As a result individual responsibility is on the wane. "Let government do it," is the cry on all sides when a problem arises. The only way government can "do it" is to take assets from those who have responsibly saved these assets and distribute them in a way people who have not saved them desire. This by its nature reduces responsibility and increases irresponsibility. Since criminality is irresponsibility, the actions of government in redistributing the wealth increases criminality.

A person who fears freedom then might say, "Granted government in three ways increases criminality but, even so, there would still be criminals. How would I be protected from them?"

The answer is, by private protection agencies. Some of the largest organizations in the world today are insurance companies which now provide protection in areas which have not been usurped by government. Under freedom these companies provide protection which works in these areas. Under freedom, these or other companies could and would provide protection which would work much better than the illusion of protection which we now have in the areas usurped by government.

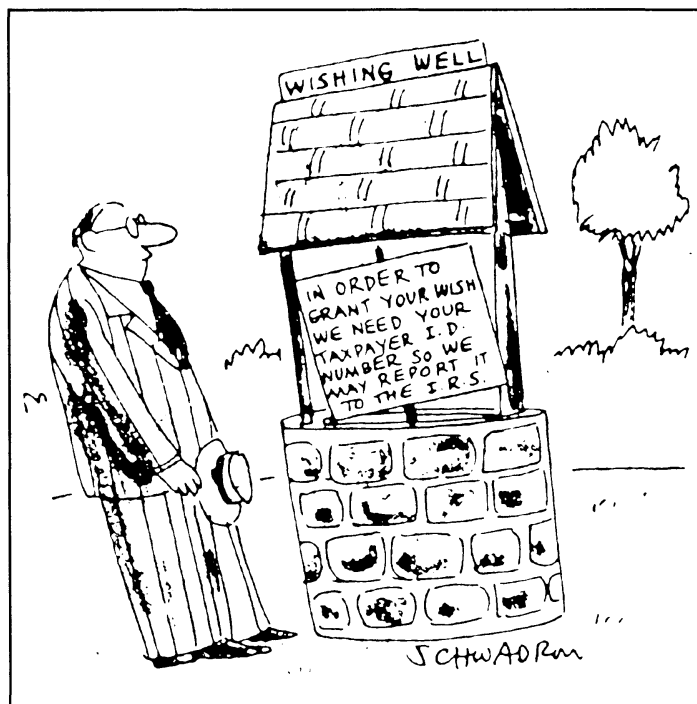
Freedom works when not outlawed by government. The history of these United States proves that. It cannot work effectively in fields dominated by government. Who can compete with government? Who can compete with dictatorship which is inherent in every government ever organized in human history?

The choice is not between government and anarchy.

The choice is between government and freedom. Or more accurately expressed:

The choice is between dictatorship and freedom. [Editor's Note: These editorials probably first appeared in the Colorado Springs GAZETTE-TELEGRAPH, and were copied from A VOICE FOR FREEDOM, published by Register Division of Freedom Newspaper, Inc. on September 1, 1962. They appear here by verbal permission of Mike Lednovich, Director of Communications, Freedom Communications, Inc. given on September 27, 1999. Readers who question Mr. Hoiles' view of human nature may wish to consult Murray Rothbard's comments in THE VOLUNTARYIST in Whole No. 95 where he refutes the myth that "Libertarians are utopians who believe that all people are good, and that therefore state control is not necessary."] ▢

"One of the greatest challenges in modern day America is to find an American family which has no members who receive a check from the federal government."



Points of No Return

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autonomy." [p. 268] Hanging in the balance, on one side, were homes, businesses, friends, and possessions, which is what a person would have been forced to give up had he chosen to leave Germany. On the other side of the scale hung conscience, self-respect, and personal autonomy. Staying in Germany would mean falsely swearing loyalty to Hitler, using the Hitler salute in public, voluntarily obeying the edicts of the German government and paying taxes to the regime. Which side of the scale was more important to them?

In some cases, opposition to Hitler meant the splitting apart of one's family and marriage. All of the Nazi laws were designed to place loyalty to the state higher than loyalty to one's family. It was a crime for a wife not to denounce her husband if she knew that he held Hitler in contempt. Taking a stand against the German state meant risking one's emotional ties with the people in one's family. It also meant being deprived of one's social status. Every German that rejected Hitler and the Nazi state had to ask "[W]ill I be able to make a go of life without what have always been my main sources of security?"

Only those who knew for sure what was essential and what was ephemeral in themselves and in life could easily afford to resist the state when the costs were so extreme. Those were the people who chose to fight or escape. [281]

How does all of this apply to us in the United States at the end of the 20th Century? Are we slaves because we pay nearly 40% of our income to local, state, and federal governments? Are we slaves because we send our children to government schools,

which we pay for via taxes, and then have the government call them “free public schools”? Are we slaves because we need government identification cards and government numbers for most major financial transactions? How analogous is our situation to that of the conscientious Germans during the early 1930s? In other words, how close have we come to that point of no return or have we already crossed the line?

It is getting more and more difficult to live aloof from the State. There are probably laws already on the books that make it criminal not to report certain activities which the State deems criminal. In other words, you can become a criminal by not spying on your friends and family members. Nearly all the states require a Social Security number when you apply for a driver’s license. If you open a personal checking account at a bank, you must have a Social Security number. If you work, even as an independent contractor, you are required to provide your “taxpayer identification number,” or else have 30% of your fees deducted and forwarded to the IRS for “backup withholding.” You cannot legally homeschool your children without some contact with the State. You cannot re-enter the country from abroad without a passport or some proof of citizenship. In every major transaction of life, from birth to death you must interface with State officials or regulations.

What is to be done? In the case of those in Nazi Germany, there appeared to be an escape hatch. They could emigrate to a foreign country and start a new life, and become free of the requirements that the Nazis imposed upon them while they resided in Germany. But do we voluntaryists, living in the United States today, have a similar option? There is no country that I know of that recognizes the tax refusenik’s conscientious objection to the payment of taxes. Where can you go to avoid the use of government identifiers? passports? state birth and death certificates? government monopoly money? In other words, where can the voluntaryist go to escape what seems to be the omnipotent hand of the State? I wish I had the answer to that question.

I would be the first to recognize that the grass usually looks greener on the other side of the fence. We have to remember the many blessings we have here, living in the United States. Nevertheless, a slave is a slave regardless of how high a standard of living he might have, or how gentle a master he has. If the voluntaryist is resigned to stay here in the United States, about all he or she can do is to set limits to what he or she will do or not do in obedience to government commands. Each voluntaryist will draw the line at a different point, but nonetheless a line must be drawn if one’s principles are to be honored. In a recent WALL STREET JOURNAL editorial about the fall of the Berlin Wall, it was mentioned that “the refusal to lie was the most powerful means of provoking a crisis in any totalitarian state.” We might have to give our life as martyrs or serve

time in jail. But wherever we are, whatever our situation is, we must never forget that reality is on our side. We always retain our ability to call a spade a spade, or “speak truth to power,” no matter how harsh the results.

[Author’s Addendum: In conjunction with this article, readers may want to consult essays in Part IV of I MUST SPEAK OUT: The Best of THE VOLUNTARYIST 1982-1999. Especially see “The Day the World Was Lost” by Milton Mayer (reprinted from Whole No. 31).] ☐

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How The Truth Of Libertarianism Follows From The Wrongness Of Slavery

By Bryan Caplan

The Pure Service Economy

Imagine a society in which goods are superabundant, but in which *services* remain scarce. That is, property narrowly conceived is virtually there for the taking, but the *labor services* of other people most decidedly are not. Now such a situation would hardly be a utopia: for some of the things most essential to life—surgery for example—would still be scarce.

It follows that the only thing that would cost something would be labor itself; and of course it could only be purchased with a corollary offer of labor. To keep the example simple, let us add the stipulation that there is no money, nor even labor notes; rather, when someone gives a service to one person, he simply records the deal in a book. If someone reneges on an agreement, no punishment is inflicted, but word gets around and the reneger finds that no one wishes to trade with him or her any further.

Testing Theories of Distributive Justice

Now this hypothetical society offers an interesting test for some competing theories of distributive

justice. For if you examine the hypothetical carefully, you will see that there is no possibility of redistribution in such a system save by direct imposition of forced labor. Since most theories of distributive justice require such redistribution, this hypothetical service economy presents the advocates of such theories with two stark alternatives. Their first alternative is to abandon their redistributionist theory of justice; their second is to openly embrace forced labor as a means of achieving a just society. Indeed, the latter alternative would commit them to the view that not only is forced labor permissible, but it is indeed mandated by justice.

To make this clearer, consider the case of a trained surgeon in such an economy. He spent many years in study to acquire his skills; but of course his raw talent and intelligence played a big part, too. Now this surgeon finds that his labor is extremely valuable; he has the power to save lives. People will pay an enormous amount for the value of his services. Of course, they are paying him back in other services: 1,000 hours of maid service in exchange for 1 hour of surgery; 200 haircuts for a removed appendix; 20 college educations for a triple bypass.

It is not difficult to see that this surgeon is going to be extremely rich because of his special talent. The disparity in income between himself and other people will be very great. Indeed, some people may be too poor to afford his services at all. And the question will naturally arise: Does justice permit or even require, that the surgeon be forced to provide free services for others, or give some of his payment back to the community? Either choice commits us to forced labor: either the doctor must be forced to toil, or else his patients must be forced to give some free labor services up as a "tax" every time they pay him.

But suppose that we recoil from this notion of forced labor. Where are we then? Quite simply, we are left with a libertarian, free-market economy, in which people own their own bodies and can acquire the services of others solely by contractual agreement. Charity can, of course, exist; the surgeon might help the poor out of sympathy for their plight. But nothing in the system assures that the poor will be provided for. That becomes a matter of generosity rather than of right.

Redistributionist Charges of Injustice in the Pure Service Economy

We can easily imagine the criticisms that might be made about the justice of accepting the libertarian theory of distributive justice in our hypothetical society. First, the poor and unlucky have no guarantees in such a society. The better-off members may choose to help them; or they may not. The care of the poor becomes a matter of purely private concern, and the choice to give becomes fully voluntary (and hence uncertain). Secondly, such a society would permit unlimited inequality. The surgeon might need to work only one day per year, enjoying luxury and comfort



every other day. Thirdly, success in such a society would be strongly influenced by "luck" or unearned good fortune. The surgeon might have to work hard to learn his trade, but surely hard work isn't the whole story. He also probably had greater innate intelligence; perhaps a better family environment than others. Indeed, the well-off member of this society might be a talentless heavy-metal musician, whose singing can command large exchanges of labor services from others. The musician's good fortune in this case may be exclusively a matter of luck, without a day's sweat and toil to train for his career.

To these three criticisms we might add others. If the surgeon is the only person of his trade, then he may exercise "monopoly power." Or, returning to the case of the talentless musician, we will notice that production of services in this society is fully determined by willingness to pay, with no reference to the true value of the goods produced.

The interesting thing here is, of course, that these are *precisely* the same criticisms normally made of the standard libertarian, free-market society in which both goods and services are scarce. In other words, there is no relationship between the need for redistribution and the existence of private property narrowly defined. Whatever complaints may be launched against libertarianism in the real world may also be made against the application of libertarianism to the pure service economy as outlined herein.

And yet it is *very* difficult to abandon the intuition that the surgeon cannot morally be forced to give free services to the needy, or even to reduce his prices to the slightest degree. What we are faced with is the need to openly deny that the surgeon owns his own body, and may do with it as he sees fit; and that his services must be obtained exclusively by voluntary means. In short, if the surgeon says, "No," then to force him to work is slavery, no matter what the need of the poor, the degree of inequality, or the role of pure luck in the surgeon's success. Of course, this may simply lead one to affirm the justice of slavery, but that is hardly a plausible escape route.

Extending the Model

Now suppose that instead of writing down labor debts in a book, people started circulating negotiable labor notes (as was apparently done in Josiah Warren's 19th-century utopian village). Would the redistributionist have a firmer case here? It is hard to see why he would. For these notes are merely a more convenient way of designating the same agreements as before; for naturally in the initial setup, the surgeon could agree to perform surgery on Fred on the condition that Fred gives 100 hours of wood-working lessons to Ann (and Ann agrees to give 2 years of flute tutoring to the surgeon). So why should the more fluid designation of the underlying fundamentals matter? True, it may now be more *convenient* for a government to demand 10% of all notes exchanged; but what we are interested in here is not convenience but justice. The fact remains that the 10% tax is blatantly a demand for forced labor, for each time one person sells labor to another, he is also compelled to give up an additional 10% of that labor against his will.

But let us then go further. Suppose that the abundance of nature dried up, and goods, from land to minerals to wildlife, became as scarce as they are in the real world. Naturally, people would want to claim products as their own; they would want to homestead unowned products and claim exclusive ownership of them. What objection could be made to this new regime; and would it create a wedge for redistributionist theories of justice to come into their own?

Again, it is hard to see how it would. The right to claim unowned products by "mixing one's labor with them" is not deducible from the claim of self-ownership, but the ideas are nevertheless closely connected. And so are the objections that might be leveled against one or the other.

One might claim, for example, that because the homesteader does not "really create" the cultivated land, he is not entitled to it. But, of course, the homesteader did not create himself either. Does it then follow that he is not entitled to own himself? Or, one might claim that the labor merely *adds value*, and so the homesteader is merely entitled to own the value that he adds; and the remainder may be legitimately taxed away for social aims. But as our example with the surgeon makes clear, the same could be said about my own labor services. Namely, while I do contribute to my own value by training and experience and education, a significant fraction of the market value of my services is determined by my innate intelligence, dexterity, and so on. Does my education entitle me merely to that part of my earnings added by the education? May I be forced to labor a percentage of the time equal to the percentage of my labor value determined by my raw talent? One of the many absurdities entailed thereby is that the totally unskilled laborer is entitled to nothing. Again, then, we see that generalizing the argument against

individual homesteading leads us to the untenable affirmation of the propriety of forced labor.

Conclusion: Libertarianism and Its Alternatives

No moral argument, indeed no argument at all, can compel agreement. It always remains open to a person to deny the premise or embrace the conclusion. The one thing he cannot do is accept the premise and deny the conclusion. The most desirable feature of an argument, then, is that the initial premise has greater initial probability than the conclusion does.

Now I claim that the argument arising from this thought experiment does indeed meet this criterion. The truth of libertarianism as a theory of distributive justice does indeed strike most people as wildly unlikely; for it is a theory bereft of concern for equality, poverty, luck, and so on. (Or to be more precise: it is a theory that says that these concerns are not a matter of justice and right; it leaves open the possibility that they are of moral interest, but on a lower level.) And yet, if anything is known about morality, it is known that it is just plain wrong to force someone to labor against his will, to enslave him or her. Wrong, whatever else must happen in consequence. This intuition is perhaps the fundamental intuition behind libertarian moral theory; and it is the intuition that the proponents of redistributionist theories must reject if they are to avoid the libertarian position.

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Declaration of Individual Independence

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used to perpetuate these atrocities in the false name of "national defense."

3. Political governments have promulgated a plethora of laws, and their bureaucratic offspring have supplemented them with a vast array of regulations that have the effect of law, most of which interfere with the peaceful interactions of people in the marketplace for desired goods and services. Occupational licensing and minimum-wage laws, contrary to their stated purposes, protect established industries and unions from market competition, rather than consumers and most workers. Majority-rule political voting that is binding on everyone, especially where the majority is only of those elected by a majority of those who voted, who were in turn less than a majority of the registered voters, who were in turn less than a majority of those eligible to vote, abrogates the freedom of everyone in the claimed jurisdiction of the government involved and is immoral by its very nature.

The only true democracy is that of the economic marketplace, where everyone gets a chance to vote, or not to vote, every day, on a voluntary basis, where their decisions are binding on them alone and no one else.

4. The so-called system of justice established by political governments, in the form of laws, courts and prison, seldom dispenses justice, and often seems more oriented toward punishment and retribution. True justice involves full restitution to the victim, and only after that can a wrongdoer be thought to have earned his freedom again. Victimless crimes are an affront to free people and should be abolished.

5. The political government of the United States has arrogated to itself the monopoly production and control of money, which is not redeemable for anything of intrinsic value, such as gold and silver, with

must continuously pay tribute to an outside political authority.

8. The misnamed systems of protection foisted on us by political governments, in the form of police and fire departments, cannot provide protection, as such, but can only arrive after a loss has been incurred and try to apprehend the evil doer or minimize the damage. True protection against loss is the responsibility of each person, who can contract for services and insurance to best mitigate any loss he might suffer.

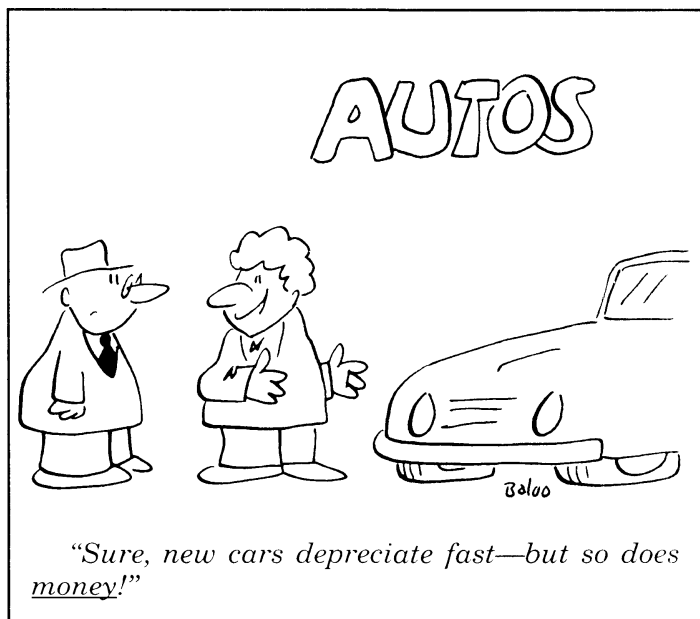
9. The national political government has in place a system of so-called "Social Security and Medicare." I consider this program to be fraudulent and immoral, because it is based on forced taxation of most workers, with payments made out of current receipts. None of the monies collected were ever invested. All of the money taken from me for these programs has been paid to others. Any benefits I might claim would have to be paid by money taken from someone else, ad infinitum, until the scheme collapses of its own weight. I refuse to willingly participate in the system, and protest the continued extraction of my money for these purposes.

10. Political governments at all levels have claimed jurisdiction over most of the infrastructure built up in our society, especially roads and bridges. Their bureaucratic establishment has been unable to adequately respond to market forces, with the result that the market produces more automobiles and trucks than their roads can accommodate efficiently, delaying and frustrating me and thousands of other drivers.

11. Political governments at all levels have acquired jurisdiction over 40% of the land area in this country, in the form of national forests, and parks. Such public ownership has subsidized and encouraged the mismanagement and degradation of natural market mechanisms which encourage humans to take care of things they personally own.

I, therefore, an individual man, standing by myself and exerting no coercion over any other person, confident in the rectitude of my intentions, do, in the name and by the authority which resides in all free persons, solemnly publish and declare, that I am, and of right ought to be, a free and independent human being; that I no longer sanction the system of political coercion that enslaves me; that I will not seek the overthrow of any political government; rather, by example and persuasion, I will try to convince other people that it is their sanction of political governments that enslaves everyone; that all coercion is immoral; that force used in the protection of life and property is not coercion and therefore is moral; and that individual humans are self-responsible beings, accountable to themselves for their successes and failures.

And for the support of this Declaration, I pledge my life, my fortune, and my honor. ▣



the result that a persistent inflation of the money supply has resulted, effectively taxing the people in a hidden manner by reducing the value of their accumulated wealth. The huge public debt created by this inflation must be paid off by those not yet born. It is immoral to expect people to be responsible for debt incurred before they were born.

6. The tax-supported public school system established by political governments, which have compulsory attendance and are paid for by taxes on all property owners, whether they use the schools or not, are not free nor do they impart a true education to the students. Students are indoctrinated to be loyal citizens to the political governments, rather than being taught to develop critical thinking and learning how to think for themselves.

7. Property taxes are like perpetual rent paid to the local political governments, such that one can never truly own one's property outright, for refusal to pay the taxes will result in the confiscation of the property, at the ultimate point of a gun if one resists the taking. A person cannot be considered free if he

Declaration of Individual Independence

By Lloyd M. Licher

When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for a person to advance from that subordination to which he or she has been subjected, and to assume the equal and independent station to which the laws of nature entitle that person, it is appropriate that he or she should declare the causes which impel that person to thus stand forth a free being and subservient to none.

I hold these truths to be self-evident: that all people are born free, with equal, independent and unalienable rights, as long as they do not violate the property of others, among which are the preservation of their own life, liberty, full control over all of their property, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights, associations are formed among humans, deriving their just powers from the consent of their members; that whenever any association becomes destructive of these rights it is the right of each member to secede from it, to withdraw financial and other support, and to create or join different associations which lay their foundations on such principles, and organize their powers in such form, as to their members shall seem most likely to effect their safety, enterprise and happiness.

Experience, indeed, has shown that the effect of political governments is to erode and destroy the individuality of persons by virtue of the coercion their agents are able to exert against them. Thus it is obvious to me that the only moral governments for humans are those they consent to, individually and voluntarily, with the choice of withdrawal whenever they fail to perform as contracted. I do not recognize

the claim of any person or agency to any part of my life or property, except as voluntarily contracted for. Anything less involves some degree of slavery and/or theft, which are wrong and immoral, by all common standards.

Having been subjected to a long train of abuses and usurpations by the political governments claiming jurisdiction over me, I list below many of them to illustrate the extent of the invasion of my life.

1. The political governments of the United States of America, the States of which it is comprised, and their subsidiary political entities at the county and city levels, rely upon the legalized theft called taxation to coerce citizens into paying for activities they do not support. These governments have extracted, and continue to extract, over 40% of my productive output. This taxation has led to a lack of market discipline and the largest public debt in the history of humankind, because those who pay for these governments cannot legally say "no!" Such debt must eventually have widespread and catastrophic consequences. I object to the fact that my personal welfare and assumed consent are excuses these governments rely upon to continue this irresponsible, immoral and destructive behavior.

2. The collapse of organized communism has effectively eliminated whatever significant threat of aggression there was to the U.S., yet there has not been a commensurate reduction in public spending for so-called defense. Instead, the military-industrial-political complex continues to thrive and involves this country in a succession of foreign operations, as if the U.S. was the policeman of the World. Thousands of people are being killed in these operations, and I resent the fact that my involuntary taxes are being

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