
The Voluntaryist

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

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Liberty, The Mother of Order

A Book Review

By Carl Watner

Nobody, not even those in the government, knows what is going to happen in life. People are not automatons. There is a certain regularity to life; the earth revolves on its axis such that the sun "rises" every morning and "sets" every evening, but neither my life nor yours repeats itself exactly as the day before. I can leave my place of businesses wondering whether we will have work to do the next day. When I return the following morning, before we even open, people appear: one needs chicken feed, another horse feed; two have cars that need repair; one wants a transmission flush; another needs four new tires. All this unscheduled work appears overnight. People's desires change; babies are born; people die; there are new inventions; people have accidents; people make new discoveries (they have a flat tire, they have run out of feed). If one were a government planner, one could either react to this with amazement and wonderment or disgust. Should people have the liberty to do what they want with their bodies and property or should there be some central institution that tells them what to do and controls all this activity? Does private property provide us with a means to a peaceful and prosperous world? Or should things be "dictated" by the State and its directives? Is liberty the mother of order in our human societies? As Wendell Berry once wrote, is the "attempt at total control ... an invitation to disorder [and disaster]" or just what humans need?*

Butler Shaffer in his new (2009) book, *BOUNDARIES OF ORDER: Private Property as a Social System*, argues that "individual liberty and social order are obverse sides of the same coin." (xiii) A harmonious society can only come about if people are not coerced by thieves, muggers, murderers, gang members, or government agents, who in the process of exercising violence force people to do what they would not otherwise choose to do. In other words, voluntary exchanges take place only because both parties expect to benefit. The spontaneous actions of millions of individuals aim at nothing less than the improvement in their well-being. But people can only act if they have property to act with. They must use their bodies in some specific space (even if they do nothing but think with their mind, they are somewhere).

That is why private property constitutes a social system, and why such a system brings about higher standards of living. People are not always successful, but in the vast majority of exchanges they do better themselves.

The underlying theme of his book, as Shaffer describes it, is "that our traditional institutional model [of government] is not only no longer useful to, but actually destructive of, the purposes for which we have long embraced it. This book will suggest and explore an alternative model for the peaceful and productive conduct of society." (25) This paradigm is based "on the principle of the private ownership of property; that freedom is possible only when private ownership claims are respected;" and that the very "existence of political systems" means that private property has been violated. (xiii) Using private property as a yardstick three critical questions need be answered in any social conflict - 1) Whose property is it? 2) Who has aggressed? and 3) Who has been aggressed against? With a slightly different twist, one can determine the amount of government aggression in society by asking how much of a criminal does one become by minding one's own business, and to what extent do government employees confiscate property? In short, if you can ignore the government, by using your own property as you choose, and if the government does not put you in jail or seize your property for failure to pay your taxes, then you're probably facing an institution that possesses little coercive power.

One of the recurring observations throughout this book is that regardless of "[w]hatever system of ownership is in place, someone will exercise decisional authority over property." (6) Whether one is living under Hitler's national socialism, Stalin's communism, Britain's fabianism, or American democracy every political system must answer the question: "how are decisions to be made in the world, and who will make them?" (9) The reason for this is the "need of all living things to occupy space and ingest energy." (133) "Each of us must be able to exclude others from the use and consumption of resources necessary for our survival." (123) In other words, private property "is at the core of" our humanness and "our well-being." (133) We must own ourselves and then the property that we require for survival.

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Editor: Carl Watner

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Potpourri from the Editor's Desk

No. 1 - "Government in Early Washington, D.C.: Out of Sight, Out of Mind"

[T]he government of Jeffersonian times was not, by any candid view, one of the important institutions of American society - important as a social presence or important in its impact upon the everyday lives of citizens. It was, for one thing, too new, an unfamiliar social presence in a society whose ways of living and whose organizations of affairs had developed over a century without any national government institution whatever; a society of preeminently provincial attachments. ...The early government was...a small institution, small almost beyond imagination. In 1802, the twelfth year of its existence under the Constitution, the entire task force of national government - army, navy, marines and all the civil establishments abroad and in the continental United States - numbered [9,237 personnel]. ...Small size indicated slightness of function. ...What government business there was was not, most of it, of a sort to attract any widespread sustained citizen interest. ...As a provider of services and benefits to citizens, the national government was insignificant, unless one counts the postal service. ...Almost all of the things that republican governments do which affect the everyday lives and fortunes of their citizens, and therefore engage their interest, were in Jeffersonian times *not* done by the national government.

- James Sterling Young, *THE WASHINGTON COMMUNITY 1800-1828*, New York: Columbia University Press (1966), 2nd printing 1968, pp. 27-31.

No. 2 - "GOOD MONEY"

When and where it has been tried, free market coins and the monetary systems they have spawned have a much superior record to that of government systems. George Selgin in his new book, *GOOD MONEY - Birmingham Button Makers, the Royal Mint, and the Beginning of Modern Coinage 1175-1821* "delves into the fascinating heyday of commercial coining in the 1790s" in Britain. Too bad he did not include at least one chapter on private coinage in the United States, which I discuss in "Hard Money" in the *Voluntaryist Tradition* (Whole

No. 23 and reprinted in *I MUST SPEAK OUT*). Selgin's book is published by the University of Michigan Press in association with the Independent Institute. ISBN 978-0-472-11631-7.

No. 3 - "Government Money"

No more severe reflection could be passed upon the moral and political capacity of the human species than this: Five thousand years after the invention of *writing*, three thousand years after the invention of *money*, and (nearly) five hundred since the invention of *printing*, governments all over the world are employing the third invention for the purpose of debasing the second; thereby robbing millions of innocent individuals of their property on a scale so extensive that previous public confiscations of private property through the adulteration of money - in ancient Rome, in Ireland under James the Second, in Prussia during the Seven Years' War, in the American colonies and the United States, in Portugal, in Greece, in various republics of Central and South America, even the assignats of the French Revolution - seem pigmy frauds in comparison with the present vast inundation of counterfeit paper money.

- Francis W. Hirst, *THE PAPER MONEYS OF EUROPE - Their Moral and Economic Significance*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1922, pp. 1-2.

No. 4 - "Why Not Have Anarchy?"

The fundamental question of political philosophy, one that precedes questions about how the state should be organized, is whether there should be any state at all. Why not have anarchy? Since anarchist theory, if tenable, undercuts the whole subject of *political* philosophy, it is appropriate to begin political philosophy with an examination of its major theoretical alternative.

- Robert Nozick, *ANARCHY, STATE, AND UTOPIA*, New York: Basic Books, 1974, p. 4.

No. 5 - "The Problem Is Obedience"

The greatest danger ... [is] civil obedience, the submission of individual conscience to governmental authority. Such obedience [leads] to the horrors we [have seen] in totalitarian states, and in liberal states it [leads] to the public's acceptance of war.

Our problem is the numbers of people all over the world who have obeyed the dictates of leaders of their government and have gone to war, and millions have been killed because of this obedience. ...Our problem is that people are obedient all over the world.

- Howard Zinn from his book *YOU CAN'T BE NEUTRAL ON A MOVING TRAIN* (1994), p. 143 and from his essay, "The Problem Is Civil Obedience" (1970).

The second mouse gets the cheese.

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“Your Writing Has Brought Comfort and Inspiration”

Thanks very much for adding me to the Voluntaryist email group. I actually found your site a few months back. I have been working my way through “I MUST SPEAK OUT” and am enjoying it immensely. I can’t remember exactly how I found the Voluntaryist, but I do remember that the first article I read was Wendy McElroy’s “Why I Would Not Vote Against Hitler.” I must have followed a link. At the time, that essay shocked me. But I also could not refute its logic or moral consistency. It encouraged me to read on.

I am coming to you as fallout from the Ron Paul presidential campaign. I was apolitical for most of my life. But like a lot of people, I felt a certain civic duty to educate myself and participate in the last election. In short, that was the beginning of some serious study and soul-searching. I didn’t anticipate where it would take me, but I had to be honest with myself as I realized that political parties contradict their own messages and use immoral methods to achieve self-serving ends. It took me some time to get here, but once I did, voluntaryism resonated with me instantly because it is aligned with my own natural moral compass. I have always struggled with collectivist ideology. I have never had any interest in dictating how someone else should live his or her life. Likewise, I have never felt entitled to anything that belonged to someone else - I just want the opportunity to work peacefully and keep the fruits of my labor. To me, these things seemed at once self-evident but also completely foreign to modern society. Although I didn’t realize it at the time, I think that my frustration with politics resulted from my subconscious understanding that true freedom cannot come from political institutions and is, in fact, not even the goal of those institutions. I’m very grateful for your work on the Voluntaryist. As I discuss the things that I am learning with my friends and family, I am being confronted with fear, ignorance and, at times, scorn. It makes me appreciate, all the more, the work that you do in what feels like an uphill battle most of the time. Your writing has brought me comfort and inspiration and enlightenment. It is evidence that you don’t always know when and how your work will bear fruit.

Thanks very much for your diligence and bravery!
Best wishes,
Walkey ▽

Government Help: A Civic Cancer

I apologize for neglecting to write sooner. Life gets hectic, money is tight and work intervenes. You probably understand all too well. I certainly do enjoy The Voluntaryist and want to contribute to its support, so here is a check. I’m sorry for not sending it earlier.

We struggle here with the rising cost of property taxes, medical insurance premiums, gas bills, propane charges, etc. I see no end in sight to the economic mess the politicians have submerged us in and more bailouts are on the way as the privileged scramble to cover their asses and protect their friends.

I look at my phone bill and the electric bill and am reminded again and again of all the “hidden” taxes that eat away our innards. Here \$1.50, there 23 cents, over here another \$3 and on and on it goes so that these bills actually are just another slight-of-hand tax grab. Then the power company has the gall to put a notice in the bill asking me to voluntarily contribute to underwriting the cost of paying someone’s heating and electric bill during the winter no-shut-off period. I go through the grocery line and watch the funny credit cards paying for all manner of things I can’t afford and realize that there goes another of the privileged with their expected and demanded handout.

I am on the sewer commission here and the organization is applying for a grant to upgrade the system. The grant is another of those earmarks we read so much about-something the local thug arranged with his Washington buddies to funnel money into this area. I told the group that I cannot support the grant application process. Someone, somewhere has to begin saying no to these things. I heard all the anticipated arguments: if we don’t take it, someone else will; the neighboring village is getting \$200,000 for its sewer work from the grant; the people in the district will hang us if we don’t apply; the law is there to help small, poverty areas with just such projects, etc. One commissioner pointed to cities that have used “Federal” aid to rebuild after disasters and said this is not much different from that. I wanted to scream! I said that Chicago was destroyed by a fire, but rebuilt on its own, Galveston was wiped out by a hurricane in the early 1900s and rebuilt, and these cities did it without a cent of federal dole. This handout attitude, I said, lies at the heart of the sickness that is eating away the sinew of this country. Our willing dependence on Washington, our thinking we are getting something for nothing, that someone else is paying for what we get, and furthermore, ought to pay for it, is a civic cancer. When we again reclaim our pride and demand self-respect by looking to ourselves to handle our own situations, then we will begin to reverse the sickness. Well, much as I argued, the result was quite what I expected. The vote was 2-1. I know they scratched their collective heads after the meeting.

How could anyone be so out of touch with reality in the modern age? Get with it. That's just the way things work. I understand fully the mindset, I just simply cannot accept it nor can I mesh my sense of morality and political philosophy with the game being played out in our land.

Carl, I am so discouraged by what has happened in America, even just during my life time. The front people running in the major parties for president and vice-president would be jokes if it weren't so tragic.

Well, I'm likely preaching to the choir, so forgive my rambling. In short, here's a little money to help your fine work. I hope things with you and your family go well. One day I hope to find my way to your doorstep and we can again share a few minutes of conversation.

All the best.

Mike Coughlin 

Liberty, The Mother of Order

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A perfect example of how a collectivist system must answer the question "who decides on the use of scarce resources" is found in a short scene from Nien Cheng's *LIFE AND DEATH IN SHANGHAI* (pp. 406-407 in the 1988 edition). The author, after having been imprisoned for six years, was released and wanted to have a brick wall constructed in order to create a small bedroom in her hallway. In order to do so, she had to bribe the driver of an electrical utility truck to help transport the bricks. In answer to the author's query as to whether this was legal, and whether or not the mileage and gas consumption of the truck was checked, the driver answered,

"Don't forget, in a socialist state, everything belongs to the people. You and I are part of the people." ...

"Well to tell you the truth, I feel uneasy about using this truck, for my private purposes. I don't really think it's right."

"We have public ownership in China. Right?"

Who is the public? We are. Right?"

So despite the long-standing claim of collective ownership in a communist society, the driver of the truck decided who could make use of it as a tool of transport. Someone has to decide, whether it is an individual, or a committee, or a politician or a policeman. The idea that there can be societal-wide collective ownership is a propaganda myth. Furthermore, as Shaffer points out, the ultimate test of ownership comes down to this: "who can decide, without getting the permission of another, to destroy [...]his property?" (171) The truck driver could not decide whether or not to destroy the people's truck, nor could the utility manager. Ultimately, Mao Zedong or someone or some group of people within the Communist Party held that decision-making power.


As in his earlier works, Shaffer refers to chaos and complexity theory, and points out that an orderly system may arise out of apparent disorder. (65) "[T]he substance of social order is found in the regularities that arise, spontaneously and without any intention to do so, from the interplay of [voluntary] human behavior." (73) Three important observations in this regard are: first, that each person's capacity to obtain accurate information on which to make decisions is limited; second, that the further a person is from the actual source of knowledge, the more likely there is room for error; and third, that "when we allow the [S]tate to make decisions for an entire population, we run the risk of utter disaster should the" decision be wrong. (44, 280) Decision-making by those who risk their own property not only localizes the impact of wrong choices, but allows people everywhere the freedom to copy those who succeed. (42,84)

THE BOUNDARIES OF ORDER is the result of many decades of the author's thinking about the interrelatedness of social order and private property. He clearly comes down on the side of voluntarism, arguing "that liberty and order imply one another." (297) In other words, voluntarism comes about naturally if no one does anything to stop it. This book is not for a budding, or even beginning, voluntarist. It requires deep concentration, patience, and assumes a basic familiarity with the concepts of self-ownership and homesteading. Although Shaffer embraces the idea that the first to claim and use an un-owned resource thereby becomes its legitimate owner, he also recognizes that without the support of one's neighbors, one's claim to ownership will never be respected. As Rose Wilder Lane explained in *THE DISCOVERY OF FREEDOM* (pp. 109-110 in the 1943 edition), the protection of our property ultimately depends upon human decency.

The only safeguards of property seem to have been possession of the property, individual honesty, and public opinion.

... [C]abins were never locked on the American frontier where there was no law. The real protection of life and property, always and everywhere, is the general recognition of the brotherhood of man. How much of the time is any American within sight of a policeman? Our lives and our property are protected by the way nearly everyone feels about another person's life and property.

With that Butler Shaffer would surely agree.

*Numbers within parentheses refer to Shaffer's book unless otherwise noted. The expression "Liberty, not the daughter, but the mother of order" was attributed to Pierre-Joseph Proudhon by Benjamin Tucker, who used it as the flag on his anarchist paper, *LIBERTY*, for many years. The quote by Wendell Berry is attributed (by James C. Scott in his book, *SEEING LIKE A STATE* [1998], p. 288), to his book *THE UNSETTLING OF AMERICA*. 

Why Voluntarism Is the Best and Only Legitimate Moral Philosophy

By Ross Kenyon

I explicitly refer to myself as a voluntarist because I believe voluntarism to be the only moral position worth assuming. It is my opinion that the only reason libertarianism is worth a damn is because it is a philosophy of non-aggression which acknowledges the incalculable value of individual sovereignty.

Non-coercion is infinitely preferable to coercion. Even statists will agree with this abstract statement, albeit befuddledly. Libertarianism and conservatism as a whole still endorse the concept of forcing others into systems based upon their respective ideologies. Voluntarism is *the* moral philosophy because it leaves room for Marxists, monarchists, theocrats, and everyone else to exercise their negative rights of self-ownership and self-determination. I completely respect the initiative of individuals who wish to form a socialist commune where the negative rights of the participants are neglected in favor of a collectivist ethic. This can be completely consistent with voluntarism so long as everyone participating is doing so voluntarily and they are not violating the person or justly acquired property of those who remain outside of their preferred system. In other words, it is not consistent with voluntarist values to coerce others into any form of libertarianism. Voluntarists respect the fact that others might not wish to live as they live. "Anything that is peaceful" is a core value of voluntarism. This is one of the first ways I broach this subject with statists and minarchists alike.


I declare that the individual has a legitimate right to govern him or her self and to voluntarily associate with any other individual so long as it is consensual and non-aggressive to those outside of the agreement. With self-admitted state socialists this is one of the first things I will proffer. In my experience, convincing someone who instinctively distrusts the free market and loves the state that the inverse is consequentially better is an arduous and frustrating process. Rather than trying to convince involuntaryists that my ideal system has better results than theirs, I will submit that there is room for both of our philosophies on this planet. The Earth is large, and all I request is that the negative rights and justly acquired property of individuals who prefer other systems be left unmolested and in full retention of their sovereignty. This is a very reasonable assertion and does not confront any competing philosophy on any grounds except for the element which is based upon coercion in the place of voluntary association. If they believe it is moral to force others into their system I would challenge them to explain on what grounds they have inherited the authority to

rule others. I condemn this idea of authority as immoral and coercive.

In addition to the sovereignty argument, I will approach our close ideological allies of the minarchist movement with the point that they have made their peace with participating in systemic coercion so long as they can use the guns of the state to create their version of a just society. Pragmatically, many libertarians believe that statism is so thoroughly entrenched that it is better to try to work from within, solemnly protecting the few crumbs of freedom that remain. They simply underestimate the moderating and corrupting force state power has upon those who wield it.

There is no middle ground between coercion and non-aggression. Trying to dismantle systems of coercion by gaining the ability to use coercion is not only inconsistent with the ends of voluntarism and a free society but our participation in electoral democracy signals our consent to be governed by democracy. I am a voluntarist because I respect the wishes of individuals to live their lives as they see fit so long as they are non-aggressive, and I hope that the same courtesy will eventually be shown to me. I oppose coercion no matter what costume or badge is worn and I do not acknowledge the validity of involuntary relationships.

Without voluntarism, individuals will continue to try to solve the complex ethical problems facing us by resorting to coercion through the state. They will be forever incapable of creating a just society because they start with the premise that aggression is an acceptable tool to address social problems. It is time for us to respect the self-determination of all people. Voluntarism is not only *the* moral way; it is *the* only way to peace and justice.

[The author is a senior in American History at Arizona State University. Contact him at rmkenyon@asu.edu. An earlier version of this essay appeared January 2, 2010 on www.libertariansolution.com.] 

“The practical reason for freedom, then, is that freedom seems to be the only condition under which any kind of substantial moral fibre can be developed. Everything else has been tried [and failed]. ... In suggesting that we try freedom ... the anarchist ... has a strictly practical aim. He aims at the production of a race of responsible beings. ... His desire for freedom has but one practical object, *i.e.*, that men may become as good and as decent, as elevated and noble, as they might be and really wish to be. Reason, experience, and observation lead him to the conviction that under absolute and unqualified freedom they can and rather promptly will, educate themselves to this desirable end; but that so long as they are the least degree dominated by legalism and authoritarianism, they never can.”

-A. J. Nock, "On Doing the Right Thing," pp. 173-178.

Potpourri from the Editor's Desk

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No. 6 - "Small Acts, when Multiplied by Millions of People, Can Transform the World."

We forget how often in this century [the 20th Century] we have been astonished by the sudden crumbling of institutions, by extraordinary changes in people's thoughts, by unexpected eruptions of rebellion against tyrannies, by the quick collapse of systems of power that seemed invincible.

Political power, however formidable, is more fragile than we think. (Note how nervous are those who hold it.)

Ordinary people can be intimidated for a time, can be fooled for a time, but they have a deep-down common sense, and sooner or later they find a way to challenge the power that oppresses them. ...

Revolutionary change does not come as one cataclysmic moment (beware of such moments!) but as an endless succession of surprises, moving zig-zag toward a more decent society.

We don't have to engage in grand, heroic actions to participate in the process of change. Small acts, when multiplied by millions of people, can transform the world.

- Howard Zinn from his book *YOU CAN'T BE NEUTRAL ON A MOVING TRAIN* (1994), pp. 207-208.

No. 7 - "The V-50 Lectures by Jay Stuart Snelson"

The V-50 Lectures were originally created under the auspices of the astrophysicist, Andrew J. Galambos, and his Free Enterprise Institute in the early 1960s in California. These sixteen full-length lectures serve as an introduction to Galambos' theory of property. They are now available in a set of six mp3 CDs, along with a very attractive 87 page booklet with pictures of the lecture slides, as well as short essays about Galambos, Snelson, Bob LeFevre, and others who helped create the Galambos legend. Highly recommended. Contact the project publisher, Charles Holloway at chasholloway@cox.net or see the website at www.V-50.org.

No. 8 - "The Problem Is Politics"

I just hate politics. Politics stink. ... But let's make a distinction between politics and politicians. Because there are a lot of people who are under a misapprehension that the problem is certain politicians that stink. ...

The problem is not really politicians. The problem is politics. Politicians are chefs - some good, some bad - but politics is road kill. The problem isn't the cook. The problem is the cookbook. The key ingredient of politics is the idea that all of society's ills can be cured politically.

- P. J. O'Rourke in *CATO'S LETTER* (Cato Institute), Spring 2008, pp. 4-5.

No. 9 - "Stealing Is Wrong"

I would point out that one can prove stealing is wrong by other than referring to the Ten Commandments. Stealing is wrong simply because a society based on theft

cannot exist - if everyone is busy stealing from everyone else, nobody has time to produce any goods or services, and thus pretty soon there is nothing to steal. ...I would say that stealing is wrong, not because some guy supposedly came down off the mountain and proclaimed it so according to what his god told him, but rather because it is counter-productive to human existence and progress.

- David Pearse, reprinted from "Letter to the Editor" in "Potpourri from the Editor's Desk," *THE VOLUNTARYIST*, Whole No. 110.

No. 10 - "The Sin of Coercion"

Out of the exercise of his [Roger Williams] imagination he perceived that no man can be so sure of any formulation of eternal truth as to have a right to impose on the mind and spirit of other men. Williams further realized that he who does so impose truth on others is no longer concerned, in his heart of hearts, with the truth; but only with the imposition... [W]hat he stood for, and still stands for, is the certainty that those who mistake their own assurances for divinely appointed missions, and so far forget the sanctity of others' persuasion as to try reducing them to conformity by physical means, commit in the face of the Divine a sin more outrageous than any of the statutory crimes.

- Perry Miller, *ROGER WILLIAMS* (1953), "Epilogue," p. 256

No. 11 - "It's All In Your Head"

[A]s vicious and destructive as "government" can be, the real problem resides, not in Washington, but between the ears of several hundred million Americans. The only way a few hundred politicians can continually extort and control several hundred million citizens is by first convincing them that such extortion and control is legitimate. By labeling oppression as "law," and condemning as "criminals" any who disobey any of those "laws," tyrants - throughout the world and for thousands of years - have successfully trained the peasants to enslave themselves. As long as the common folk measure their goodness by how well they obey their masters, they will never be free and oppressing them will be easy.

- Larken Rose, "Stop Saying 'Please'," September 16, 2009.

No. 12 - "The Most Fundamental Lesson of Political Economy"

Where is this money [to do all the things government does] coming from? You can use all the fancy words you want, but in the end government has no money. Everything the government has it gets from you. That is the most fundamental lesson of political economy, without which no clear thinking takes place."

- Llewellyn H. Rockwell, Jr., "Mortgage Socialism," *THE FREE MARKET* November 2009, p. 4. [V]

In Defense of Our Own Freedoms

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by the Japanese in this country.

..... Both the Executive Order and Congressional law clearly violated the constitutional requirements that “the writ of habeas corpus shall not be suspended, unless when in cases of rebellion or invasion the public safety may require it”; and that no person shall be deprived of life, liberty and property without due process of law. Not only is this an example of the government violating its own constitutional rules, it goes far in demonstrating that limited government is not possible, because every government always seeks to expand its powers.

..... Leaders of the Japanese American community supported the government crack down, hoping that their willing cooperation would prove their loyalty. (This is reminiscent of what Hannah Arendt observed about the leaders of the Jewish community: they, too, willingly cooperated with the Nazis and urged their co-religionists to peacefully enter the ghettos.)

..... After being imprisoned, the American-born males were required to register for the draft. Those who refused to register or report for induction were given extended criminal sentences.

..... The Constitution and constitutional safeguards it embraced were held in disdain by government officials. “Assistant Secretary of War [John] McCloy clearly stated his position: ‘[I]f it is a question of the safety of the country [and] the Constitution . . . Why the Constitution is just a scrap of paper to me.’” (Hirase, pp. 149-150)

..... Military officials explained the absence of sabotage by those of Japanese ancestry on the west coast as evidence that they were planning attacks. No evidence has ever surfaced supporting such a bizarre explanation. As Lt. General DeWitt wrote: “The very fact that no sabotage has taken place to date is a disturbing and confirming indication that such action will be taken.” (Rostow, p. 521)

From a voluntarist perspective, this bit of American history supports Theodore Lowi’s contention that “every action ... of government ... contribute[s] to the fulfillment of its fundamental purpose, which is to maintain conquest.” While other governments “have used war and the threat of war to stifle freedom” in their own countries, the United States has been at the head of the pack in “proclaiming freedom to be our national purpose.” (Linfield, p. xv) If ever the American citizenry were to see through the facade of governmental legitimization, they would soon realize that the greatest threat to their freedoms comes from their own government.

In my article “Vices Are Not Crimes” defending Walter Block’s book, *DEFENDING THE UNDEFENDABLE*, I recounted the story of H.L. Mencken (so far as I know he never criticized the internment of Japanese Americans) who was accused of being a Nazi supporter because he never spoke out against Hitler. When he was asked if he

was an anti-semiter, Mencken replied:

“I believe in only one thing and that thing is human liberty. If ever a man is to achieve anything like dignity, it can only happen if superior men are given absolute freedom to think what they want to think and say what they want to say. I am against any man and any organization which seeks to deny or limit that freedom.”

When questioned whether he would limit that freedom to superior men only, Mencken replied: “The superior man can be sure of his freedom only if it is given to all men.” Or as Benjamin Constant wrote in “On Conquest and Usurpation,” “Freedom cannot be denied to some men and granted to others.” The message is clear: We need to take a principled stand against all violations of individual rights; we need to defend our own freedoms, as well as those of our neighbors regardless of their race, ancestry, creed, political belief, or religion. There will always be criminals among us, but our hope, as voluntarists, is to rid ourselves of criminal institutions by abandoning our reliance on coercive governments. When that occurs, both our freedom and the freedom of our neighbors will become far more secure than it is now.

"Do not harm your neighbor and, if at all possible, save him."

- A basic concentration camp norm cited in Anna Pawelczynska, *VALUES AND VIOLENCE IN AUSCHWITZ* (1979), p 144.

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[Thanks to Jim Russell and Hans Sherrer for their helpful suggestions.] [V]

In Defense of Our Own Freedoms

By Carl Watner

Hans Sherrer, a long-time subscriber and contributor to THE VOLUNTARYIST lives in Seattle, and mentioned a new book that he heard about which documents the evacuation of all people of Japanese ancestry from Bainbridge Island, Washington in early 1942. The book is titled IN DEFENSE OF OUR NEIGHBORS: The Walt and Milly Woodward Story, written by the Woodward's daughter, Mary Woodward. The Woodwards were coeditors and copublishers of the BAINBRIDGE REVIEW from 1941 until 1963. "During World War II, they used the paper to speak out against the exclusion of their Japanese American friends and neighbors" of whom there were some 270 among 50 families on the island. (Woodward, p.16) The Japanese Americans had few defenders at this time, so this extended report of their support is welcome. Nonetheless, the story of the internment of American citizens of Japanese ancestry in concentration camps on US soil is just another proof that "war is more destructive of freedom than any other human activity." (Linfield, p. xvii)

For those not familiar with this history, the brief facts are: Pearl Harbor was bombed by the Japanese Air Force on December 7, 1941. As documented in declassified information and numerous books, President Roosevelt and his foreign policy advisers maneuvered Japan into striking an American port in the Pacific, in order to justify the United States' entry into World War II. Executive Order 9066 was issued by President

Franklin Roosevelt on February 19, 1942. It established defense zones within the United States, and gave military commanders authority to exclude people from such areas. (Linfield, p. 92) On March 19, 1942, both houses of Congress approved Public Law No. 503 (77th Congress). This legislation made it a federal offense for any person to violate restrictions issued by a military commander in any defense zone established under the earlier Executive Order. (Weglyn, p. 72) Subsequently, over 110,000 Japanese Americans were removed from their residences to a number of camps in the western United States, and many of them were held there for the duration of the war.

This episode presents a number of interesting anomalies: Among others -

.....The Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor not only brought about America's entry into the war, but served as a catastrophic excuse to imprison Japanese Americans and confiscate their property.

..... Italian and German Americans were not rounded up en masse during the war.

..... The confinement was racially motivated. As Lt. General De Witt wrote in 1943, "A Jap's a Jap. It makes no difference whether he is an American citizen or not ...". (Weglyn, p. 201)

..... When several Japanese Americans challenged their confinement in the civil courts, government officials responsible for the internment lied to the courts (and the American public) about the military dangers presented

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