
The Voluntaryist

Whole Number 150

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

3rd Quarter 2011

On Power and Trust

By Carl Watner

In an October 1977 book review, Henry Hazlitt observed that the problem with ever-expanding democratic government is not a problem limited to the democratic form of government. "Is it not rather that of *all* government?" In other words, all forms of government tend to expand beyond their limits.

And isn't this the problem that has so far proved intractable? Writers from time immemorial have tried to solve it with facile and question-begging phrases. Aristocracy must be the best form of government, because it means government by the wisest and the best. Ah yes; but how do you get the people to recognize and choose and put into power the wisest and the best? Well then, in any case, the government, however chosen, should be only given very limited powers, so it cannot abuse them. Ah yes, again. But what powers? Can we draw a precise line around them? Can we get enough people to agree on that line? And even if we can once draw such a line, giving neither too little nor too much, how can we prevent whoever the government is from using whatever powers it already has, to extend its powers still further?

We come back to the fundamental dilemma: To prevent chaos, violence, rapine or rule by the gangsters, somebody must be trusted with some power; but nobody can be completely trusted with much power. [From Henry Hazlitt's book review of *POPULAR GOVERNMENT, THE FREEMAN*, October 1977, p, 640]

How is a voluntaryist to respond?

"Yes," we will always have people with us who act in a criminal manner. "Yes," peaceful individuals will always need protection from criminals.

The question thus becomes: how do we best protect ourselves from the criminal element? The usual answer to this question is: Some form of government is necessary to establish peace and maintain law and order in society. Otherwise violence and chaos will ensue. The voluntaryist rejects this answer as a false alternative.

As we know, the government way is to monopolize

protection by placing the most serious means of protection (police, courts, and army) in the hands of those who work for the government. The government way is to outlaw any competition in the production of security and to collect its revenues by way of taxation. In practice and theory, this means that any one not wanting protection, or choosing to reject the government service or choosing to protect themselves is imprisoned for failure to pay for a government service which they do not desire. These arrangements place very dangerous powers in the hands of government agents. They are only limited by how much uproar, clamor, and ultimately, evasion and resistance, their subjects will exercise. Paraphrasing the ancient Romans: Who is to protect us from our protectors?

The voluntaryist way does not rely on trust in the production of security any more than it does in the production of food, shelter, clothing or other necessities of life. Yes, a grocer may turn venal or criminal or even be negligent. But the grocer cannot force you to trade with him, nor place you in jail, nor confiscate your property if you refuse. Competition and the general societal respect for private property is what keep people honest and trustworthy. When the grocer knows you can turn elsewhere to buy your food, he is forced by that knowledge to satisfy your wants (if he wants to trade with you). He knows that he can no more command you to trade with him at terms he chooses, than you can force him to sell you his goods at prices you set.

The government operates within a totally different environment. Legislators know they can have other government employees use violence to enforce their statutes. Internal Revenue agents will eventually turn up at your door if you do not pay your federal taxes. If you do not pay the IRS, armed federal marshals will show up next - to haul you off to court. If you refuse to go, you will be attacked and possibly murdered like the recalcitrant people at Waco, TX and at Randy Weaver's house in Idaho. The crimes of the lawmakers are legion. Who wouldn't act this way if there were no serious consequences? History has proven, time and time again, that governments expand their powers and break whatever constitutional limits are designed to constrain them. As Lord Acton noted, government power corrupts

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The Voluntaryist

Editor: Carl Watner

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Potpourri from the Editor's Desk

No. 1 "So What About Virtue?"

The fundamental difference between the society that the [coercionists] want and the society that Americans have is that the [coercionists] seek a country where the life of the citizens is *directed by others*, while Americans live in a nation where the life of the citizen is largely *self-directed*. The central goal of American freedom is self-reliance: the individual is placed in the driver's seat of his own life. The [coercionists] presume the moral superiority of the externally directed life on the grounds that it is aimed at virtue. The self-directed life, however, also seeks virtue — virtue realized not through external command but, as it were, "from within." The real question is: which type of society is more successful in achieving the goal of virtue?

Let us concede at the outset that, in a free society, freedom will frequently be used badly. Freedom, by definition, includes freedom to do good or evil, to act nobly or basely. Thus we should not be surprised that there is a considerable amount of vice, licentiousness, and vulgarity in a free society. Given the warped timber of humanity, freedom is simply an expression of human flaws and weaknesses. But if freedom brings out the worst in people, it also brings out the best. The millions of Americans who live decent, praiseworthy lives deserve our highest admiration because they have opted for the good when the good is not the only available option. Even amidst the temptations that a rich and free society offers, they have remained on the straight path. Their virtue has a special luster because it is freely chosen. The free society does not guarantee virtue any more than it guarantees happiness. But it allows for the pursuit of both, a pursuit rendered all the more meaningful and profound because success is not guaranteed: it has to be won through personal striving.

By contrast, the externally directed life that [coercionists] seek undermines the possibility of virtue. If the supply of virtue is insufficient in self-directed societies, it is almost non-existent in externally directed societies because coerced virtues are not virtues at all. Consider the woman who is required to wear a veil

[by law]. There is no modesty in this, because the woman is being compelled. Compulsion cannot produce virtue; it can only produce the outward semblance of virtue. And once the reins of coercion are released ... the worst impulses of human nature [may] break loose. ... In externally directed societies, the absence of freedom signals the absence of virtue. Thus the free society is not simply richer, more varied, and more fun: it is also morally superior to the externally directed society.

- Dinesh D'Souza, *WHAT'S SO GREAT ABOUT AMERICA* (2002), pp. 189-191. (References to Islamic fundamentalists have been changed to coercionists.)

No. 2 "Free Trade versus the Law"

"Free trade," said Gabby, "is just the opposite of unfree trade. In free trade you take no notice of what the King agreed with the bootmakers, but just goes ahead and sells your goods anyway."

"It is," said Gabby. "But I am not a man to get involved with the law. It muddles me head something awful, like that alphabet with them letters that sounds alike but are as different as knighthood and riddle pintle. What you got to look out for, young feller, is to do what's sensible and never mind the law."

"But supposing that what's sensible is contrary to the law?" asked Peter.

"Then heave the law overboard, books, seals, wigs, whereases and all the rest of that tackle," said Gabby.

"Wouldn't that be revolution?" asked Peter.

"It would," said Gabby.

- Leonard Wibberley, *JOHN TREEGATE'S MUSKET* (1959), Chapter 7.

No. 3 "Moses and the Slaves"

Moses wanted to turn a tribe of enslaved Hebrews into free men. You would think that all he had to do was gather the slaves and tell them that they were free. But Moses knew better. He knew that the transformation of slaves into free men was more difficult and painful than the transformation of free men into slaves. The change from slavery to freedom requires many other drastic changes. ... Moses discovered that no migration, no drama, no spectacle, no myth, and no miracles could turn slaves into free men. It cannot be done. So he led the slaves back into the desert, and waited forty years until the slave generation had died, and a new generation, desert born and bred, was ready to enter the promised land.

[Editor's Note: This passage implicitly points out that unless the ideas, attitudes, and mentality of men and women are changed, they are likely to continue to accept their own enslavement, regardless of what circumstances or environment they find themselves

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On Power and Trust

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because government agents are not held to the same standards of accountability that we apply to private individuals. The commandments say thou shall not steal and kill, though government agents act as though they say, “Unless you are the government.”

“Liberty is always dangerous, but it is the safest thing we have.”

- Attributed to Harry Emerson Fosdick

The voluntaryist way relies on competition in the production of security. Different people may choose different levels of defensive protection, depending on their ability to pay and their demand for protective services. They will hire protective agencies just as they hire purveyors of food, shelter and clothing. What will the poor do? They will do just as they did in the days before government assistance. They will look for charitable relief to protect them.

Is it possible that private protection agencies may turn criminal? “Yes,” but the institutional structures of a free society minimize the chance, whereas in a government society the government already acts in a criminal manner (though only a minority of people recognize it to be so). The voluntaryist way, as F. A. Hayek once pointed out, “is a system under which bad men can do least harm” because people are not compelled to follow the legislative mandates of others.* Given that people in private service are no more angelic than men and women in government service - what are we to do if some protection agency tries to act like a government and ‘force’ people to buy its services, and then locks them up if they refuse? First, we are not to sanction and legitimate their crimes (by calling their stealing ‘taxation’ or their murders ‘resistance to court orders’). Second, we are to totally boycott and ostracize those who disrespect and violate our lives and property. Third, we are to keep in mind that it is always our primary duty to ourselves and our families to be able to protect ourselves, in the event that our protectors turn on us. (This may mean training in nonviolent resistance or violent forms of self-defense.) Fourth, we are to keep our wits about us. Just as it requires vigilance and diligence to buy the right product at the right price, it requires these same two traits to see that those we hire to protect us do not do not turn on us. We have to be aware that our night watchman may become a thief and try to rob us.

There are no guarantees in life. We have to be careful, but if we rely on the right set of institutional incentives

we will get the best possible - though not perfect - results. Paraphrasing Murray Rothbard, a free society discourages the criminal tendencies of human nature and encourages the peaceful and removes the only legitimated channel for crime and aggression.* “Yes,” there will still be criminals in a voluntaryist society, but they will be fewer and less powerful than those in a statist society. Voluntaryists will always choose to rely on voluntary methods of protection, knowing “if one takes care of the means, the end will take care of itself.”

*cited in Murray Rothbard, “Myth and Truth About Libertarianism,” MODERN AGE, Winter 1980, in Myth 5, and reprinted in THE VOLUNTARYIST, Whole No. 95, December 1998, pp. 5-6. [V](#)

A Self-Educated Chicken

By Debbie Harbeson

I was never much of a rebel. I always did pretty much what I was told and followed mainstream thought. I didn’t want to get into trouble. I didn’t want to stick out. I think the only thing I ever did that would be considered rebellious was underage drinking. But even that’s not particularly rebellious, is it?

But something changed when I had my first child. I was a college graduate but realized I was not educated at all about pregnancy, childbirth or parenting. So I began to read and learn all I could about the topic.

I eventually found a group called La Leche League, which is a support group for breastfeeding mothers. Through them, I began learning about other parenting ideas that made sense to me but were fairly counter-culture to anyone outside that group. But now it didn’t matter. I didn’t care because it was working for our family.

I continued to read, listen, discuss and learn. I was completely free to draw my own conclusions and make the decisions my husband and I thought fit our family best. None of these decisions required government permission.

But that ended when my children became school-age and I decided to try homeschooling. Suddenly our lives were affected by the state. I could now not be trusted to do what was best for my children.

At the time, we happened to live in a school district that was going outside of what the law required. We received a letter from the Office of the Prosecuting Attorney telling us that if we did not comply and fill out all the forms, we would be charged with educational neglect, a felony.

This official government letter, on official government letterhead, explained to us that they had primary authority over the education of our children. This official letter

telling us they knew best how to educate our children had three words spelled wrong.

I circled the spelling errors in red and wanted to mail it back to them with a big F on it. But I didn't, of course. I'm a chicken.

In reality, I was scared and worried. Not that I would actually be charged because I knew I'd do what they wanted before that would happen. My main goal was to not do anything that might jeopardize my ability to homeschool. Eventually others with more experience and courage got this district straightened out, we turned in the form that was in the law and were left alone.

But when it all settled down, I just got mad. Mad at how we were treated, how we were disrespected, how they were willing to use force against us if necessary. That's probably the root point at which I began to lose respect for any government authority.

I wanted to forget about government and politics and concentrate on raising my family, but I couldn't. I needed to stay informed about the law, at least as it related to education, because any change in the law had the potential of drastically changing our family's entire life.

At this time, online message boards were beginning to grow and I participated in online discussions about homeschooling freedom. I subscribed to "Home Education Magazine," which has a monthly column called "Taking Charge" written by Larry and Susan Kaseman. They kept me informed and thinking about homeschooling freedom. I read books by education reformer John Holt and realized how much a child benefits when given freedom to learn, and became a proponent of unschooling.

I discovered the Separation of School and State organization and joined. I became rabid in my belief of freedom in education. I was definitely becoming an educational anarchist, though I never thought of it that way at the time.

I eventually ran into people online identifying themselves as libertarian. Once again I found myself learning about a whole new idea that was outside mainstream thought.

When I began asking more questions about it, someone online recommended Harry Browne's "Why Government Doesn't Work." It was the first book about libertarianism I bought and I remember really being hit for the first time with a moral argument against the state as he explained that government is force and it is backed up by a gun.

I eventually found the Libertarian Party and my husband and I started the affiliate in our county. Still being a chicken, I convinced my husband to take the chairman

position fearing that I could not handle any publicity.

The state party had an online message board and I began once again to educate myself about a new topic. The typical energetic purist/pragmatic debates were going on and I loved it. However, state party leaders became uncomfortable with the image these debates might be giving to potential members so they shut it down.

I was learning so much and really enjoying the debates so I decided to start my own list and made it clear there was no affiliation with the party. It was about this time I discovered Murray Rothbard. I read his book "For a New Liberty" and found myself consulting this book often as we debated and discussed various topics. I also received good information from the Advocates for Self-Government, which is where I discovered Mary Ruwart. I bought two of her publications, "Healing Our World" and "Short Answers to the Tough Questions." I consulted these often, too. These were not the only books I read. I was also very ignorant about economics and read a lot of books in that area beginning with "Economics in one Lesson" by Henry Hazlitt.

It should be no surprise that I was all about using the Libertarian Party as an educational tool. I remained involved in the LP for a few years, even running for state senate at one point, running an educational campaign. After that campaign experience, the problems inherent in making changes through politics became even clearer to me.

During discussions, I began to get frustrated that others in the party didn't seem to be reaching the same conclusions as I did. I kept on reading and thinking about the philosophy, but others did not appear to be doing the same. They seemed to be more concerned and busy with the details of operating a political party.

Then one day someone said I was not a libertarian, I was an anarchist. Me? An anarchist? How can a chicken be an anarchist? Talk about out of the mainstream.

At some point I found the online site, Strike the Root and began reading their "non-voting archive." I found every single article interesting, but when I read George Smith's "LP Dialogue," I was completely fascinated because it mirrored many discussions I had been involved in for so long.

I noticed this article came from a site called Voluntaryist.com and that's when my life took another turn. I felt like this time, I really did find a place where others had reached the same conclusions as I did. So much of what I read on the site matched my thinking. But most of all, the suggestion that one needs to simply focus on the improvement and education of the self

resonated strongly. Self-education is where it all started for me and where my life continues to focus.


What I do now is still focused on education. I have a weekly column, “The Suburban Voluntaryist,” in the local daily paper where I write about local issues from a voluntaryist perspective, as much as that is possible. I do this mostly for myself because it helps me think and learn. If my writing helps someone else to do the same, then I’m very enthused, but if not, it’s still okay.

What’s odd now is that many readers are surprised at what I say and how I say it. They think it’s either courageous, crazy or just plain stupid to be so forthright. They don’t believe me when I say I’m still a chicken. But I am. I’m still not living my life in a manner as consistent to voluntaryist ideals as I would like.

I know I can improve though, which has led me to another project. I want to read all of “The Voluntaryist” issues, in context, from the beginning. I feel like there’s a treasure in those pages and all I have to do is start reading. Carl Watner has done so much for voluntaryism by keeping this publication going for so long and I want to really get a feel for the publication as it developed.

I want to see what else I have to learn - about voluntaryism, about myself - and since writing is a big part of how I learn, I’m going to blog about it as I go through the process. Carl said he will participate if he has the time and as long as it is valuable to him, so hopefully, I will get more insight from his current perspective as well. We’ll see how it goes.

If you are interested in following and perhaps even participating in this project along with me, then by all means join me. Share your thoughts of agreement, or disagree and set me straight. Add your unique perspective. Let’s learn together. The blog is here: <http://debbieandcarl.blogspot.com/>

[*Editor's Note: This article was written and originally posted online on August 20, 2010.*] 

To Steal or Not to Steal

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This sidetracking of moral conduct is like the belief of an earlier day: The king can do no wrong. In its place we have now substituted this belief: The majority can do no wrong. It is as though one were to assert that a sheep which has been killed by a pack of wolves is not really dead, provided that more than half of the wolves have participated in the killing. All these excuses for immoral conduct are, of course, nonsense. They are nonsense when tested against the basic moral code of the five postulates.

Thievery is thievery, whether done by one person alone or by many in a pack—or by one who has been selected by the members of the pack as their agent.

“Thou Shalt Not Steal, Except....”

It seems that wherever the Welfare State is involved, the moral precept, “Thou shalt not steal,” becomes altered to say: “Thou shalt not steal, except for what thou deemest to be a worthy cause, where thou thinkest that thou canst use the loot for a better purpose than wouldst the victim of the theft.”

And the precept about covetousness, under the administration of the Welfare State, seems to become: “Thou shalt not covet, except what thou wouldst have from thy neighbor who owns it.”

Both of these alterations of the Decalogue result in complete abrogation of the two moral admonitions — theft and covetousness—which deal directly with economic matters. Not even the motto, “In God we trust,” stamped by the government on money taken by force in violation of the Decalogue to pay for the various programs of the Welfare State, can transform this immoral act into a moral one.


Herein lies the principal moral and economic danger facing us in these critical times: Many of us, albeit with good intentions but in a hurry to do good because of the urgency of the occasion, have become victims of moral schizophrenia. While we are good and righteous persons in our individual conduct in our home community and in our basic moral code, we have become thieves and coveters in the collective activities of the Welfare State in which we participate and which many of us extol.

Typical of our times is what usually happens when there is a major catastrophe, destroying private property or injuring many persons. The news circulates, and generates widespread sympathy for the victims. So what is done about it? Through the mechanisms of the collective, the good intentions take the form of reaching into the other fellow’s pocket for the money with which to make a gift. The Decalogue says, in effect: “Reach into your own pocket—not into your neighbor’s pocket—to finance your acts of compassion; good cannot be done with the loot that comes from theft.” The pickpocket, in other words, is a thief even though he puts the proceeds in the collection box on Sunday or uses it to buy bread for the poor. Being an involuntary Good Samaritan is a contradiction in terms.

When thievery is resorted to for the means with which to do good, compassion is killed. Those who would do good with the loot then lose their capacity for self-reliance, the same as a thief’s self-reliance atrophies

rapidly when he subsists on food that is stolen. And those who are repeatedly robbed of their property simultaneously lose their capacity for compassion. The chronic victims of robbery are under great temptation to join the gang and share in the loot. They come to feel that the voluntary way of life will no longer suffice for needs; that to subsist, they must rob and be robbed. They abhor violence, of course, but approve of robbing by “peaceful means.” It is this peculiar immoral distinction which many try to draw between the Welfare State of Russia and that of Britain: The Russian brand of violence, they believe, is bad; that of Britain, good. This version of an altered Commandment would be: “Thou shalt not steal, except from nonresisting victims.”

Under the Welfare State, this process of theft has spread from its use in alleviating catastrophe, to anticipating catastrophe, to conjuring up catastrophe, to the “need” for luxuries for those who have them not. The acceptance of the practice of thus violating the Decalogue has become so widespread that if the Sermon on the Mount were to appear in our day in the form of an address or publication, it would most likely be scorned as “reactionary, and not objective on the realistic problems of the day.” Forgotten, it seems, by many who so much admire Christ, is the fact that he did not resort to theft in acquiring the means of his material benefactions. Nor did he advocate theft for any purpose—even for those uses most dear to his beliefs.

[Editor’s Addendum: I continue to harp on the fact that taxation (for whatever purpose) is theft, and this piece reinforces my contention that even the most limited government must violate the stealing commandment. Note Harper’s description that many have become “victims of moral schizophrenia,” meaning that such a person acts honestly in his day-to-day commercial activities, but sees no dishonesty when it comes to forcing people to pay taxes. I also like his declaration that one should reach into one’s own pocket – not your neighbor’s pocket – to finance acts of compassion and assistance. For further writings on this topic see my articles, “Moral Challenge,” and “Moral Challenge II,” in Numbers 138 and 141 of THE VOLUNTARYIST.] 

Potpourri from the Editor’s Desk

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in. And it is the rare individual who will break out of his or her mental strait jacket of habitual acceptance of tyranny. Hence, the importance of teaching and explaining (and practicing) voluntaryism to our children who have not yet been brainwashed by the State.]

- Eric Hoffer, WORKING AND THINKING

ON THE WATERFRONT (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1969), p. 179. Reprinted from THE VOLUNTARYIST, Whole No. 110.

No. 4 “On the Wisdom of Insecurity and Uncertainty”

[W]ith detachment there is freedom to create. ...

People are constantly seeking security, [but] you will find that seeking security is actually a very ephemeral thing. ...

[S]ecurity can never come from money alone. ...

The search for security is an illusion. In ancient wisdom traditions, the solution to this whole dilemma lies in the wisdom of insecurity or the wisdom of uncertainty. This means that search for security and certainty is actually an *attachment* to the known. And what’s the known? The known is our past. The known is nothing other than the prison of past conditioning. There’s no evolution in that - absolutely none at all. And when there is no evolution, there is stagnation, entropy, disorder, and decay.

Uncertainty, on the other hand, is the fertile ground of pure creativity and freedom. ...

You don’t need to have a complete and rigid idea of what you’ll be doing next week or next year, because if you have a very clear idea of what’s going to happen and you get rigidly attached to it, then you shut out a *whole range of possibilities*. ...

The *Law of Detachment* does not interfere with the *Law of Intention and Desire* - with goal setting. You still have the intention of going in a certain direction, you still have a goal. However, between point A and B there are infinite possibilities. ...

[Your] state of alertness ... allows you to seize the opportunity [of change]. What’s the opportunity? It’s contained within every problem that you have in your life. Every single problem that you have in your life is the seed of an opportunity for some greater benefit. Once you have that perception, you open up to a whole range of possibilities - and this keeps the mystery, the wonder, the excitement, the adventure alive.

You can look at every problem you have in your life as an opportunity for some greater benefit. You can stay alert to opportunities by being grounded in the wisdom of uncertainty. When your preparedness meets opportunity, the solution will spontaneously appear.

What comes out of that is often called “good luck.” Good luck is nothing but preparedness and opportunity coming together.

- Deepak Chopra, THE SEVEN SPIRITUAL LAWS OF SUCCESS, from the Sixth Spiritual Law - Detachment, 1994.

The happiest of people don’t necessarily have the best of everything; they just make the most of everything they have.

An Open Letter to Jacob Hornberger

The Future of Freedom Foundation
11350 Random Hills Road # 800
Fairfax, VA 22030

April 20, 2010

Dear Jacob,

A friend gave me a whole box of back issues of FREEDOM DAILY that I have been reading as I have time. Those, in combination with the article I recently wrote about Tibor Machan and anarchism/minarchism, prompted me to write. (That article is enclosed.)

In your April 2006 piece, "The Trouble with Liberals," you observe that our fellow citizens are not empowered to come to you or me with guns and threaten to forcibly take some of our property if we refuse to 'contribute' to their favorite charity. Or as Sheldon Richman in his May 2008 article, "Would-Be Rulers Without Clothes," asks: by what right does a legislator demand money from us when an ordinary citizen cannot?

The following questions relate to some of the points I raise in my article about minarchism.

1. If I do not want the government to provide me with roads, police, courts, and army protection - for whatever reason - how are its agents justified in forcing me to pay? In other words, just as the liberal is not justified in forcibly collecting money for his charity, so other individuals are not justified in coming to me and demanding money to fund "their" roads, police, courts, and armies. Why are these later services (which comprise the essence of a limited government) any more justifiable than the ends for which the liberal might choose to use the funds he collects (unemployment benefits, spaceships to the moon, etc.)?

2. Paraphrasing Sheldon, why, if a private citizen may not do so, is the legislator of a limited government justified in using coercion to collect funds for roads, police, courts, and armies if all or some of its citizens do not wish to pay?

3. If you agree that coercion may not be used by agents of the government to garner funds to support that government, then do you - as an advocate of limited government - concede that limited governments may 'go out of business' if they do not have the support of their citizens?

4. In short, what do you mean by limited government (as enunciated in your front inside cover statement of purpose), and how do you justify its existence, if that existence must be maintained by compulsory levies?


This letter is offered in the spirit of truth-seeking, as exemplified in the statement by Leonard Read on your June 2004 cover: "The individual who practices integrity

is teachable, for by definition, he is a Truth seeker."

Sincerely,

Carl Watner

PS - In your article of March 2006 on "The Trouble With Conservatives" you chide them for supporting public schooling: "Under public schooling, the government, either at the national, state, or local level, plans in a top-down manner, the educational decisions of" millions. "'Free enterprise' means an enterprise free of government involvement." Well, what could be more socialistic than our government provision of money, roads, postal service, courts, dispute resolution, and protection from criminals and foreign enemies? These government bureaucracies, at either federal, state or local level, represent some of the largest planned economies in the world. Isn't your criticism of conservatives and their support of public schooling also applicable to the defense and protective services provided by the limited government that you espouse? If not, why not?

PSS - "If a man's rights are inalienable, then people are not morally entitled to violate those rights just because they happen to do so through group action." - Robert Ringer on the cover of FREEDOM DAILY, April 2007. 

HOMESCHOOLING: A HOPE FOR AMERICA

Edited by Carl Watner

Foreword by John Taylor Gatto

This anthology argues against government education in a unique way. One who advocates voluntarism opposes government schools, not because he opposes schooling but, because he opposes coercion, which is to be found in government taxation, compulsory attendance laws, and in the monopolization of public services. Most of us would agree that there should not be any state religion; that religion should not be supported by taxation; and that people should not be compelled to attend religious services. Why shouldn't the principles of voluntarism in religion apply to education?

Soft cover, 247 pages, \$ 20 postpaid. Send silver, gold, cash, check or money order to The Voluntarists, Box 275, Gramling, SC 29348. See <http://voluntaryist.com/homeschooling/php>.

To Steal or Not to Steal?

By F. A. Harper

[Editor's Note: Dr. Harper was a long time staff member of the Foundation for Economic Education, and founder/president of the Institute for Humane Studies. These excerpts are taken from his article, "Morals and Liberty," published in the July 1971 issue of THE FREEMAN (pp. 426-441. Excerpts are from pp.436-439).]

As a means of specifically verifying my impression about the basic, intuitive morality of persons, I would pose this test of three questions:

1. Would you steal your neighbor's cow to provide for your present needs? Would you steal it for any need reasonably within your expectation or comprehension? It should be remembered that, instead of stealing his cow, you may explore with your neighbor the possible solution to your case of need; you might arrange to do some sort of work for him or to borrow from him for later repayment, or perhaps even plead with him for an outright gift.

2. Would you steal your neighbor's cow to provide for a known case of another neighbor's need?

3. Would you try to induce a third party to do the stealing of the cow, to be given to this needy neighbor? And do you believe that you would likely succeed in inducing him to engage in the theft?

I believe that the almost universal answer to all these

questions would be: "No." Yet the facts of the case are that all of us are participating in theft every day. How? By supporting the actions of the collective agent which does the stealing as part of the Welfare State program already far advanced in the United States. By this device, Peter is robbed to "benefit" Paul, with the acquiescence if not the active support of all of us as taxpayers and citizens. We not only participate in the stealing—and share in the division of the loot—but as its victims we also meekly submit to the thievery.

Isn't it a strange thing that if you select any three fundamentally moral persons and combine them into a collective for the doing of good, they are liable at once to become three immoral persons in their collective activities? The moral principles with which they seem to be intuitively endowed are somehow lost in the confusing processes of the collective. None of the three would steal the cow from one of his fellow members as an individual, but collectively they all steal cows from each other. The reason is, I believe, that the Welfare State—a confusing collective device which is believed by many to be moral and righteous—has been falsely labeled. This false label has caused the belief that the Welfare State can do no wrong, that it cannot commit immoral acts, especially if those acts are approved or tolerated by more than half of the people, "democratically."

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