
The Voluntaryist

Vol. 3, No. 6 Whole #18

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

May, 1986

To Thine Own Self Be True — The Story of Raymond Cyrus Hoiles and his Freedom Newspapers

In 1964, an article appearing in *The New York Times* newspaper described Raymond Cyrus (R.C.) Hoiles as "slight of build, hawk-nosed, toothy, bespectacled, with a fringe of still dark hair around his other-wise bald head." It also publicly identified Hoiles as a voluntaryist. With regards to the upcoming national elections (Goldwater was running for President), the same article reported that Hoiles was not inclined to look towards the ballot box for the quick adoption of his libertarian ideas. In fact, it quoted R.C. as stating, "It doesn't make much difference who is President. What is important is the attitude of the American people."

Another contemporary sketch of R.C. by Robert LeFevre painted him as "a rare old bird, a combination of crusty, two-fisted, hard-headed egoist, and a gentle, optimistic, hard-working idealist. The man is a true genius in my view. His writings are about the most cumbersome, unwieldy and unreadable in print. In fact, I once stated that it was a good thing that R.C. owned some newspapers because no independent publisher would ever accept anything he wrote. Nor, so far as I know, has anyone ever done so. Yet, what R.C. thinks and writes, if you can interpret it, is magnificent. I love the old man." [Letter from Robert LeFevre to Howard Kessler, April 16, 1964]

Raymond Cyrus Hoiles (born November 24, 1878; died October 30, 1970) was the founder of the Freedom Newspaper chain, a group of daily newspapers that grew out of his employment as a printer's devil in the early 1900's. His newspaper organization still exists today. It could probably be described as the greatest money-making device ever put together in support of human liberty and human dignity. Its editorial pages were (and still are) dedicated "to furnishing information to [its] readers so that they can better promote and preserve their own freedom and encourage others to see its blessings." [From the masthead of the *Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph*, November 24, 1984] The Hoiles papers distinguished themselves from all other newspapers by the contents of their editorial pages. Their news sections were the models of industry standards in factual reporting, but they were without doubt the only papers in the United States that came out against such things as tax-supported compulsory education, labor unions, and the United Nations.

In short, Hoiles "carried freedom's flame," as an editorial in one of the Freedom Newspapers announced on the anniversary of what would have been his 106th birthday. He gave encouragement to such people as Frank Chodorov, Rose Wilder Lane, Robert LeFevre, Ludwig von Mises, and Leonard Read; people who were largely responsible for the creation of the libertarian movement in the last quarter of the 20th Century. For more than 35 years, through conversation and the written word, R.C. "contended that human beings can enjoy happier, more prosperous lives in a voluntary society where force or threats of force are absent from human relationships." He believed that a single standard governed all human relationships: that neither the lone individual nor any group of people (even if it were the majority and called itself the State) had any right to initiate force.

"Hoiles displayed that rare mixture of principle and worldly

practicality" which was necessary to transmit his ideas to literally millions of newspaper readers over the course of several decades. The purpose of this essay is to show how R.C. was a unique blending of both philosopher and businessman, who created an empire dedicated to selling both newspaper and ideas.

R.C. was born in the Mt. Union section of Alliance, Ohio. His dad was considered a successful farmer in the area and had a keen business sense. By the time R.C. graduated from public high school, one of the most important lessons he had learned from his father was never to ask anybody to do something for him that he was not prepared to do himself. This lesson served him well in the business world as well as in the realm of moral ideas. During his college days at a Methodist school (Mt. Union College), R.C. spent his weekends working as a subscription solicitor for the *Alliance Review*. This was his first real introduction to newspapering. After teaching school and an assortment of odd jobs, R.C. eventually went to work for his older brother, Frank, who had purchased the *Review*. He started as a printer's devil at \$2 per week.

In 1905, R.C. married Mable Myrtle Crumb and over the course of the next few years was to father four children: Clarence (November 1905–December 31, 1981), Raymond (died 1920), Harry (born January 27, 1916) and Mary Jane (Born April 1922). When the *Review's* bookkeeper died, R.C. took over that job and eventually became Frank's business manager. By 1919, R.C. had managed to accumulate enough money to buy into two newspapers with his brother. At that time, R.C. owned a one-third interest in the *Review* and a two-thirds interest in the Lorain, Ohio *Times Herald*. Several years later, he bought a third interest in another newspaper, the *News of Mansfield, Ohio*.

By swapping part of his holdings for those of his brother, R.C. managed to take full control of two newspapers by the mid-1920's. He and his brother Frank could no longer operate in tandem, since Frank insisted that their newspapers say nothing against labor unions, while R.C. persisted in speaking his mind. So in 1927, when he purchased the Bucyrus, Ohio *Telegraph-Forum*, R.C. already fully owned the Mansfield *News* and the Lorain *Times Herald*. His son, Clarence, was sent to manage the Bucyrus newspaper, while R.C. lived in Mansfield and served as publisher there.

Shortly thereafter, Hoiles "entered into one of the bitterest newspaper fights in the history of the publishing business in Ohio." The Hoiles paper in Lorain had exposed the corruption prevalent in the awarding of paving contracts to the Highway Contracting Company of Cleveland. Horowitz, the owner of this company, was eventually shown to be the owner of the newspapers in Lorain and Mansfield, both of which strove to "get even" with Hoiles for his part in exposing the fraudulent practices. The rivalry between Horowitz and Hoiles prevailed till 1931, but in the meantime the front porch of the Hoiles home was destroyed by an explosion in November 1928, Hoiles' car was wired with dynamite (which fortunately failed to detonate), and a dud bomb was discovered in the office of the Mansfield *News*. None of this gangsterism was ever explained, but it did motivate R.C. into selling the papers in Mansfield and Lorain.

[Continued on Page 2]

The Voluntaryist

Subscription Information

Published bi-monthly by *The Voluntaryists*, P.O. Box 1275, Gramling, SC 29348. Subscriptions are \$15 per year, \$25 for two years. Overseas subscriptions, please add \$5 (per year) for extra postage.

By Way of Explanation

It has been at least six months since an issue of *The Voluntaryist* has appeared. My apologies.

But circumstances beyond my immediate control have conspired to delay publication. And other circumstances within my orbit have kept me occupied.

First, I have moved. Please take note of *The Voluntaryist's* new address. It is:

The Voluntaryist
Box 1275

Gramling, South Carolina 29348.

Tel. 803-472-4111 (before 6 pm Eastern time)

Second, I am engaged to be married (but no "state" marriage license, of course!) on May 3rd. My fiancée, Juliet Pfeiffer, has worked for Freedom Country Executive Conference Center for three years. In fact, I met her through Bob LeFevre and my having attended one of the Freedom School sessions in South Carolina.

My hope is to keep *The Voluntaryist* alive, but without subscriber support it is going to be impossible to accomplish. Your articles, letters to the editors, new commentary, etc., are necessary.

Since this issue of the newsletter is so long overdue, no Subscription Renewal notices are being sent out at this time. Those readers whose subscriptions have expired with Whole Issue 17 will receive a complimentary newsletter. Subscriptions which expire with this issue (see the number on your mailing label) will be extended by one number.

Voluntaryist literature is still available. The following items are for sale:

- La Boëtie, *The Politics Of Obedience*, with a fine introduction by Murray Rothbard @ \$3.95.
- Watner, McElroy, Smith, *Neither Bullets Nor Ballots*, @ \$4.95.
- Lane, *A Voluntary Political Government* @ \$6.95.
- Watner, Essay on *Silence* (dealing with the history of the right not to bear witness against one's self) @ \$10.00.
- All back issues of *The Voluntaryist* @ \$2.00.
- Some individual copies of "The Voluntaryist Series." (Our choice of any one copy) @ \$1.00.

All prices are postpaid. Please mail your orders and submit some material for publication.

Carl Watner
April 1985.

Statement of Purpose

The Voluntaryists are libertarians who have organized to promote non-political strategies to achieve a free society. We reject electoral politics, in theory and in practice, as incompatible with libertarian principles. Governments must cloak their actions in an aura of moral legitimacy in order to sustain their power, and political methods invariably strengthen that legitimacy. Voluntaryists seek instead to delegitimize the State through education, and we advocate withdrawal of the co-operation and tacit consent on which State power ultimately depends.

[continued from page 1]

During the New Deal days, R.C. became a victim of New Deal legislation. He had effected the sale of his two papers in Ohio in 1931, but according to the terms of settlement he was not to receive all of the proceeds until 1935. By that time FDR had devalued the dollar and nullified the gold clause in all private contracts. As R.C. expressed himself in a private letter to Robert LeFevre, written on February 4, 1964, he "had a little experience" with the government abrogation of contracts whereby "I lost \$240,000." It was for this reason, if no other, that he concluded government should have nothing to do with money or credit.

The proceeds from this sale were used to purchase daily papers in other parts of the country. The Santa Ana, California *Register* and the Clovis, New Mexico *News Journal* were acquired in 1935. A year later, the Pampa, Texas *Daily News* became a Hoiles property. These along with the *Telegraph-Forum* of Ohio days, formed the nucleus of the Freedom Newspapers. No new papers were acquired during World War II, but R.C. did achieve a degree of notoriety during that time. At one time during the war, he was fined \$1000 by the Federal Government for raising wages in violation of government statutes. His editorial stance against the forcible relocation and internment of Japanese Americans was noted all across the country. He vigorously opposed their evacuation and fought for lifting the bans placed on them.

As the Japanese American Citizens League once put it, Hoiles "was the only one with the courage of his convictions." [*Gazette Telegraph*, January 23, 1966, p. 8-E] One other example will illustrate R.C.'s sublime indifference to compromise, even though his adherence to principle might be costly. Once in Santa Ana, a cub reporter was writing news stories about a group of local businessmen who had contrived an anti-chain store organization. When the managers of the chain stores, who represented over half of the advertising revenue of the *Register*, walked into his office and demanded that the stories about their opposition cease, Hoiles responded in the following manner. "You can take your advertising out of my paper. That's your business. But I'm running this paper and I'll say what is to be printed in it as long as I'm running it, and if the stories are true, and we think that they are news, they're going to run whether you like it or not." [*Raymond Cyrus Hoiles*, p.8]

After World War II, Hoiles purchased two more papers. His son, Harry, became the publisher of the Colorado Springs *Gazette Telegraph*, and his daughter, Mary Jane Hardie, became associated with the Marysville, California *Appeal Democrat* in 1946. A year after the purchase of the *Gazette Telegraph*, that paper encountered a strike of its employees, who were members of the International Typographical Union (ITU). The strike action began in January 1947 and R.C. refused to make a satisfactory contract agreement with the local involved. Picketing ceased in July, but the ITU did not give up its efforts. It funded a competition paper, known as the *Free Press*, which existed for at least two decades. A similar occurrence took place in Lima, Ohio, when Hoiles purchased the *News* there in 1956. In the interval the Freedom Newspapers had expanded to include the Odessa, Texas *American* (1948) and three other Texas papers (1951), the Brownsville *Herald*, the McAllen *Valley Evening Monitor*, and the Harlingen *Valley Morning Star*. The Anaheim, California *Bulletin* was acquired in 1962.

It was not until after these purchases in the early '50's that the designation "Freedom Newspapers" was applied to the Hoiles' acquisitions. Although R.C. first suggested that they collectively be designated "our watchful newspapers," the "freedom" label was ultimately selected as being far more descriptive of their overall editorial policy and outlook. When the *New York Times* wrote about Hoiles in 1964, the combined circulation of these dailies exceeded 300,000. By the time of Hoiles' death, the Freedom chain also included the LaHabra, California *Daily Star-Progress* (1963), The Turlock, California *Turlock Daily Journal* (1965), the Gastonia, North Carolina *Gastonia Gazette* (1969), three dailies in Florida, the Panama City *News-Herald* (1969), the Fort Pierce

News Tribune (1969), the Fort Walton Beach *Playground Daily News* (1969), and the Columbus, Nebraska *Telegram* (1970). In 1985, the chain comprised nearly 30 papers with a combined daily circulation of almost 1,000,000 readers.

Though the bare bones of R.C.'s life do not indicate the evolution of his thinking, he did leave at least one record of his intellectual development and mentors. For many years, R.C. wrote a daily column that appeared on the editorial pages of all his newspapers. This column was originally titled "Common Ground," but then changed to "Better Jobs," because R.C. believed that was a commonly shared interest of most people. In a three-part series in his "Better Jobs" column of late 1955, R.C. discussed "My Handicap:"

I want to explain how my attending government schools and getting a high school diploma and then graduating from a Methodist college handicapped me in developing my moral and mental faculties. How, in short, it retarded my education.

R.C. explained that he lived in the country across from a "little red school house" and how both his parents had attended government schools themselves. It was natural for them to want to send him to government schools, too. His father, as a prominent local citizen, was usually a member of the local school board. But R.C. recalls that even as a board member, his dad had some reservations about the efficiency of governmental education. Once he remembers his dad referring to government schools as "socialistic."

The handicap that R.C. got from the public schools was the belief that the State or the majority of citizens had the right to use taxation to support the public school system.

I never once read in any book or heard any professor in the high school explain the basic principle that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the individual; that the government had no right to do anything that each and every individual did not have a right to do. Instead, they had to teach that the government or the local school district, if the majority so willed, had a right to force a Catholic parent or a childless person or an old maid or an old bachelor to help pay for government schools...

The textbooks did explain the error in the belief in the divine right of kings. But they never explained the error in the belief in the divine right of the majority. It simply substituted the divine right of the majority for the divine right of the kings.

Of course, I never found any textbook or any teacher that believed taxation was a violation of justice and of moral law, as set forth in the Commandments "Thou shalt not steal" and "Thou shalt not covet." In other words, the government schools I attended made no attempt to be consistent and teach me to recognize contradictions.

R.C.'s experiences in high school were duplicated during the four years he went to a Methodist college. Never once was he exposed to or did he come into contact with a real libertarian. It was probably not until he was out of college that he came across the ideas of Ralph Waldo Emerson which aroused his interest in liberty and limited government. The essays on "Compensation," "Politics," and "The Uses of Great Men" stimulated Hoiles' desire for better understanding. After Emerson, some of the works of Herbert Spencer whetted his curiosity, particularly the ones that questioned "the morality of government schools and the myths that existed in most of the organized religions."

Then a Socialist told me that Frédéric Bastiat made the best explanation of the disadvantages that come from the protective tariff. That interested me. I got his "Sophisms" and was so fascinated that I bought his "Harmonies of Political Economy" and even had some of his essays translated that had not been translated into English.

He was the first man who awakened me to the errors, taught in government schools and most Protestant colleges, that the state doing things that were immoral if done by an individual made these acts become moral. In other words, he was the first man that pointed out that there was only one standard of right and wrong — the same standard for the state that governed the standard for the individual...

Bastiat so impressed me that I republished his "Social Fallacies (Economic Sophisms)" and his "Harmonies of Political Economy" in two volumes, and his essay on "The Law." [The first of these books was published by R.C. in 1944.]

R.C. realized that he had never come across Bastiat in college for the same reasons that he had never found Bastiat in his high school library. Bastiat represented a clear cut threat to "the establishment" by demanding that one standard of morality apply to the individual and the State. After discovering Bastiat, R.C. ran across Henry Link's "Return to Religion," (1936), "Rediscovery of Man," (1940), "Rediscovery of Morals," (1947), and his essay on "The Way to Security" (1951), which "clearly pointed out the immorality and injustice of government schools." Another author that influenced R.C. was John Rustgard, who in his books *The Problem of Poverty*, (1935), *Sharing the Wealth*, (1937), and *The Bankruptcy of Liberalism* (1942), explained how it was impossible for the State to educate the youth of the land in liberty and justice. Rose Wilder Lane's "Give Me Liberty" (1936), fascinated R.C. because it explained that government schools were the "primary tyranny." It was Rose Wilder Lane who suggested that he read Isabel Paterson's *The God of the Machine* (1943). That book so intrigued him that he purchased 100 copies for distribution to his friends and associates.

Rose Wilder Lane and R.C. had a special sort of relationship. They carried on an extensive correspondence, extending from at least the early 1940's till the early 1960's. One of R.C.'s favorite aphorisms was attributed to Rose Lane. He was fond of quoting her statement that "freedom is self-control, no more, no less." After R.C. read her book, *Discovery of Freedom*, which was published in 1943, he wrote her a devastating critique. He claimed that he could not recommend *Discovery* because she had made one egregious blunder in presenting her ideas. Rose had assumed by implication that it was government protection of private property which made private property possible. When R.C. pointed this out to her, and explained that the State was the major violator of property rights, she was so chagrined that she bad-mouthed her own book the rest of her life.

R.C.'s view that he was "handicapped" by his government education was reinforced by his contact with Lane and Paterson. He realized that neither one of them had been contaminated to any great extent by the public schools. Rose Wilder Lane went to school for only six months, and Isabel Paterson for less than two years when she was a small girl. It was the absence of this governmental indoctrination and propaganda which made it possible for them to do their thinking. R.C. was so impressed with the view that government controlled schooling was one of the major causes of statism that he had an outstanding offer of \$500 to any school superintendent or official who was willing to stand up (as in a court of law) and defend the public school system as being consistent with the Golden Rule. He never had any serious takers.

Although R.C. related that Isabel Paterson personally confided to him "that she did not write a chapter on taxation because she had not thought it through," R.C. was eventually able to arrive at some very definite conclusions on this subject. But it was not until he was corrected by Frank Chodorov on the question of "voluntary taxation" that R.C. reached his mature view on the matter.

I, of course, believed in taxes, having gone to a state school. I used to contend that I believed in voluntary taxes. I was straightened out on this error by Frank Chodorov, who pointed out that there was no such thing as voluntary taxation — to use that term was a contradiction of words. That caused me to overcome the handicap that I learned from the state schools and Methodist college of believing in taxation....

But it took me 40 or 50 years to partially throw off and outgrow and discard the handicap I received in government schools and a Methodist college. And I have not yet, by any means, completely discarded all the collectivist authoritarian ideas that handicapped me...

It was probably in the late 1940's or early 1950's when Chodorov pointed out to him that the difference between voluntary contributions and taxation was that taxation rested on an element of force. R.C. was proud that he was man enough to admit his mistake. "You're right," he told Chodorov, "I'm against all taxes." [Ashby, p. 483] R.C. thought that the terms "government" and "State" caused all sorts of semantic confusions. What he favored

was a free enterprise association or a defensive voluntary association that would sell protection of life and property, much like an insurance company.

I must have the right to discontinue buying from one agency and buy from one I think will give me the most for my money. In other words there must be competition or the threat of competition in order to have a true value of the worth of the service. When there is no competition there is no true value, as in the case when the government has the right to arbitrarily confiscate a man's property and call it a tax...

Competition would be the protection as to the agency overcharging me. I hear the objection that the protective agencies would come in conflict. I do not believe there would be nearly as much conflict when the insured had the right to dismiss an agency and the agency had the right to refuse the individual who was too great a risk as there is now.

R.C. expounded on these ideas at length in his column "Better Jobs" which appeared in the *Gazette Telegraph* on October 30, 1956 (p. 21; this particular column was captioned "A Good Question"). He was certainly one of the earliest 20th Century libertarians to espouse the idea of replacing limited governments with competing defense agencies. He was absolutely fearless as to how and to whom he presented his ideas. Once he challenged Ludwig von Mises on his "contention that we have to have monopolistic local, state, and federal governments to protect our lives and property." The two were personally acquainted as R.C. had at one time in the mid-1950's invited von Mises to lecture in Santa Ana, at R.C.'s expense. Some years later, in 1962, R.C. directed a letter to von Mises in New York, asking him to reconsider his rejection of voluntary defense agencies. R.C. said that he saw von Mises doing so much good on behalf of free enterprise and free market economics, that he hated to see von Mises "continue to advocate any form of socialism, or any form of tyranny. And when you are advocating that the free market is not the better way of protecting men's lives and property, I think you are serious in error...." There is no record of von Mises' response.

R.C. was also familiar with the individualist-anarchist ideas of the 19th Century libertarians for he referred to having read Benjamin Tucker's *Instead Of A Book* in a column which appeared in the *Gazette Telegraph* on May 8, 1955. In discussing "Anarchy — Good or Bad" R.C. was trying to get at the point that sometimes anarchy meant "self-rule" and other times meant "no rules" at all. He was in favor of everyone controlling him or herself and not being subjected to coercive forces outside the self. He was opposed to the absence of self-rule, because he believed that its absence would lead to chaos.

Where or how R.C. came upon the term "voluntaryist" remains a mystery. he may have come across it in his religious studies, since the term was originally applied to the manner in which churches were voluntarily supported in this country and England, as opposed to the establishment and funding of a State church. R.C. was not totally anti-electoral, for he did support Goldwater in his bid for the presidency. He was, however, clearly an advocate of an all-voluntary society, one in which the person who did not wish to pay for government protection should not receive such protection nor be forced to pay for a service he did not receive. In the latter part of 1958 and the early part of 1959, he gave several public talks to such groups as the Unitarian Fellowship of Orange County and the Exchange Club of Santa Ana. The subject of these presentations was "voluntaryism." He chose this theme because he sincerely thought that to the degree that more and more people believed in and practiced voluntaryism "the more they will increase their happiness, their physical and spiritual health, their peace of mind and their prosperity." The message of Jesus Christ, and as R.C. was to fondly add, the Ten Commandments, The Golden Rule and the Declaration of Independence, was clearly voluntaryist at heart. "If it is harmful for one to get things on an involuntary basis, or two people, it is harmful for any number of people or for a government to get things by using involuntary means." He was optimistic that voluntaryism would triumph, just as chattel slavery had been abolished in this country. In his 1956 column,

quoted above, he wrote that

For thousands and thousands of years people have believed in the divine right of government to plunder and rob individuals... For thousands of years people believed in slavery. We abandoned it about 90 years ago in the United States. Maybe in another 90 years people will adopt the ideologies set forth in the Declaration of Independence that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed. That means the government would have to render service efficiently enough that people would voluntarily pay for protection.

As a man of good will, R.C. felt that he had a personal obligation to speak out and the editorial pages of his newspaper were his mouthpieces. He believed that all progress came from some individual who was willing to state the truth and stand alone against the crowd. He was fond of quoting one aphorism that he thought was a masterpiece. "There is nothing noble in being superior to some other man. True nobility consists in being superior to your previous self." He called this "The Key to Continuous Happiness" because he believed that the man who is constantly trying to improve himself is the happiest person and his happiness grows with age. Though he suffered from diabetes and two heart attacks, R.C. certainly tried to practice this during his own long life. [R.C. to Bob LeFevre on January 17, 1962] He also once quoted Robert Ingersoll's observation that if you seek happiness directly it will flee from you. Rather "Happiness is not a reward, it is a consequence" of continued self-improvement. [*Gazette Telegraph* column of January 26, 1959]

R.C. served as the editorial watchdog for his paper. He perused all the editorials and was in constant contact with his writers. If an editorial did not suit, or if it violated his conception of freedom philosophy, he was sure to let them know. A particularly outstanding editorial was likely to be sent to all the papers. Editors were to make minor changes in the editorials to suit local circumstances and then publish the revision. And since freedom philosophy was a constantly evolving group of ideas there was constant correspondence and discussion among all the editors as to what should be the Freedom Newspaper position.

The Freedom School which LeFevre and others started in the summer of 1957 taught the same basic philosophy that the Hoiles' presented on their editorial pages. Harry was largely responsible (in several indirect sorts of ways) for helping get the school started. He allowed LeFevre to take time off from his job at the newspaper (with the proviso that the school did not interfere with his writing productivity) and he lent the school \$7000, which it needed during its very early days. Once the school was going, both R.C. and Harry made substantial financial contributions to it. They also sent a number of their editors and family members to the school. During the summer of 1963, R.C. attended. That same summer a number of his children, grandchildren, in-laws, and editors also were students at the Freedom School.

Freedom School, to the same extent, served as a philosophical training ground for the Freedom Newspaper editorial staff, allowing the staff writers to better understand freedom philosophy. They were all working for the same goals: increasing their circulation and an expansion of freedom thinking. There were occasional departures, editorially speaking, from freedom philosophy. During the early 1960's, McDowell, the publisher of the *Lima News*, and some of the Freedom Newspapers in Texas were the worst offenders. Often the opposition papers were helpful in pointing out their inconsistencies (and of course they delighted in doing so). For example, in 1960 in Lima, the *News* was planning a special supplement in honor of the opening of a new school and National School Week. In view of Hoiles' bitter opposition to "gun run" schools, as he often termed the public schools, the opposition paper said it looked ludicrous for a Freedom paper to be issuing such a supplement and the publisher had to cancel his plans.

The whole purpose of the editorial page of a newspaper, in R.C.'s view, was to get people to think. Just as R.C.'s contact with the ideas of Emerson and Spencer had helped him overcome his own "handicap," so the exposure of readers to libertarian ideas

in the editorial page was designed to awaken in them the concept of self-rule and self-control. In fact, R.C. saw "the editorial page of a newspaper, which is kept open for contrary points of view, and which is well prepared and thoughtfully assembled, as a daily school room made available to its subscribers," whether "rich or poor, young or old, and without the duress of taxes nor the compulsion of forced attendance."

Soon after LeFevre joined the Hoiles, the Freedom Newspaper formulated a long editorial statement entitled "Here Is Our Policy." It was published as a single page handout, as well as appearing in the editorial columns of the papers and then being blown up so as to take up a full newspaper page. In the mid-1950's, R.C. was still largely wedded to a conception of a strictly "minimal" government. The most important passages from "Here Is Our Policy" are reprinted below.

The 11 daily newspapers published by Freedom Newspapers, Inc., and Freedom Newspaper, a co-partnership, believe in a system of natural law....

We consider three concepts to govern human behavior. They are:

1. The Decalogue.
2. The Sermon on the Mount, which is an exposition of the Decalogue.
3. And the Declaration of Independence which is a political expression of the Commandments....

The Yardsticks of Morality we have mentioned indicate several facts, uncontested by any Christian or Jew, of our acquaintance. They include:

1. That every man is born with certain inalienable rights.
2. That these rights are equally the birthright of all men, that they are the endowment of the Creator and not of any government.

Since we believe these facts are expressed in the Commandments, we do not believe any man has the moral right to curtail the rights of his brother. That is, no man has the right to initiate force against his brother....

Our belief in a single standard of conduct, and in the existence of individual rights, and in the fact of Natural law, brings us to oppose all things in which an individual or group seeks to initiate force — that is, curtail the rights of any other individual or group.

We must oppose all brands of socialism, whether it is called Communism, fascism, Fabian socialism, New Dealism or New Frontierism.

We oppose socialism in factories, schools, churches and in the market place....

We believe, therefore, in a minimal government. The state, at best, exercises those powers which the individuals in that state voluntarily have turned over to the state for administration....

A great deal of thoughtful consideration went into the preparation of "Here Is Our Policy" and it was subjected to ongoing revision as the years passed. As LeFevre became more involved in the writing of editorials for the *Gazette Telegraph*, he saw his role in the Freedom Newspapers as pivotal in keeping the paper in Colorado Springs in the forefront of libertarian thinking. The masthead of LeFevre's paper read "Colorado's Most Consistent Newspaper" and it was Harry Hoiles' desire that LeFevre write consistently on the themes of human liberty and human freedom. The masthead went on to conclude:

We believe that one truth is always consistent with another truth.

We endeavor to be consistent with the truths expressed in such great moral guides as The Golden Rule, The Ten Commandments, and the Declaration of Independence. Should we at any time be inconsistent with these truths we would appreciate anyone pointing out such inconsistency.

In a June 7, 1955 editorial explaining "Why We Picked Our Slogan," Harry Hoiles wrote that he had never found another newspaper in the United States, with the exception of a Freedom Newspaper, "that can truthfully say that their policies are consistent and say what they are consistent with." It was clearly more important to R.C. and Harry Hoiles and Bob LeFevre to stand by a consistent position that "to take in a few more dollars by trying to be popular." During the course of the following decade, LeFevre and Harry Hoiles both worked together on establishing a consistent libertarian position on virtually every editorial topic under the sun.

They also managed to work R.C. away from his reliance on the basic precepts of organized Christianity, as well as moving him a little further in the direction of pure freedom. By 1969, when "Here Is Our Policy" was transformed into "Here Are the Convictions That Led To Our Belief in a Universal Single Standard of Conduct," the three basic guides to morality (formerly The Decalogue, The Sermon on the Mount, and the Declaration of Independence) had been reduced to the following "Guide To Morality." The belief in a minimal government had been converted into a belief for a voluntarily supported one.

[I]t is incumbent upon us to state a single universal law or fact as we believe it:

Persons, groups and governments ought not threaten to initiate force or use it to attain their ends. This would certainly mean, Thou shalt not steal individually or collectively. If no person or group stole, there would be no murder, no false witness, no adultery.

To express the belief positively, all individuals or groups should get what they get in a manner that would be profitable to all. Then all would respect the private property of others 100%. That would be true liberty and voluntarism....

We do not believe in initiating force for any reason, even though the cause is a "good" one....

We believe, therefore, in a voluntarily supported government....

[I]f some do not want to support a police force, they should not be forced to do so. Nor should they receive its services.

Although there was a tendency on reaching an editorial consensus among the Freedom Newspaper editors and editorial writers, there was one area of major disagreement. The issue involved the question of capital punishment. It is probably safe to say that R.C. was tolerant of any opinion so long as it was solidly reasoned and cogently presented — even if it were an opinion with which he disagreed. Bob LeFevre, writing in 1956, said that "Despite the fact the Mr. [R.C.] Hoiles is the head of a corporation which pays me a salary, I do not always agree with him. And to his credit, may I add that Mr. Hoiles doesn't expect me to do so. He only demands that my conclusions be honest and backed by logic." [Robert LeFevre to Albert Penn, May 21, 1956]

R.C. was to live until 1970, but even his contribution to the Freedom Newspapers' philosophy is evident today, sixteen years after his death. For example, as late as 1984, the masthead of the *Gazette Telegraph* continued to dedicate itself to the promotion and preservation of individual freedom. "We believe that freedom is a gift from God and not a political grant from government. Freedom is neither license nor anarchy. It is self-control. No more. No less. It must be consistent with the truths expressed in such great moral guides as the Coveting Commandment, the Golden Rule, and Declaration of Independence." R.C. would have certainly agreed with every statement in that masthead. It sounds as though he could have written it himself.

One of his contributors to a commemorative book published on R.C.'s 75th birthday wrote that if there was such a thing as a typical individualist, then R.C. would certainly serve as his standard. R.C. was a talented businessman and a versatile thinker. He once quoted Zoroaster, taking the citation from a book on the world's religions:

Salvation cannot be brought to any man by priest or teacher. It can only come from within each human being, and for himself. Salvation can be achieved by good thoughts, good words, and good deeds. All the rest is commentary and elaboration.

By remaining true to himself and building the Freedom Newspaper chain from a single newspaper, R.C. undoubtedly achieved whatever salvation is possible in this world. He certainly had good thoughts, good words, and a strong sense of right and wrong. As one of the unsung heroes of the 20th Century libertarian movement, his life, his efforts, and ideas deserve our undivided attention.

Carl Watner
December 1985

A Letter from the Governor of Connecticut

July 29, 1985

Dear Constituent:

I am fully aware of the fact that a number of residents of the State are adamantly opposed to the adoption of the new seat belt legislation. The reasons for such opposition are varied. Some believe the new law imposes an unnecessary inconvenience upon Connecticut drivers. Others feel that law enforcement officials could be doing far more important things in lieu of enforcing the mandatory seat belt requirement. Still others believe that this new law amounts to an unjustified restriction or infringement upon the rights and liberties of the individual.

I can certainly sympathize with these and other concerns. However, as Governor, one of my most basic duties is to carry out the necessary steps in maintaining and improving the well-being and safety of Connecticut's citizens.

After carefully weighing the many factors presented on both sides of this argument, the balance clearly tips in favor of passage of the new legislation.

Although many of us may look upon "buckling-up" as inconvenient, unnecessary or burdensome, the costs resulting from failure to use seat belts are staggering.

A report published by the Highway User Federation prepared in conjunction with the Federal Highway Administration, stated that in Connecticut in 1983, over 100 lives would have been saved if the victims had been wearing seat belts at the time of their accidents.

The same report went on to state that Connecticut would have seen 48,000 fewer serious injuries if the injured occupants had been wearing seat belts.

In our nation, some 44,000 people are killed and 4 million are injured in automobile accidents each year.

The medical, legal and insurance costs associated with physical injuries resulting from automobile accidents are astronomical. Yet my true concern is not grounded upon monetary value but rather upon the value we all place on human life and health.

Our neighbor, New York State, recently passed similar seat belt legislation. The mandatory seat belt requirement went into effect in New York in January of this year. According to data compiled by the New York Department of Motor Vehicles and the State University of New York, seat belt usage by New York state residents increased from 15% to nearly 69% following the implementation of the new law. Most importantly, however, the number of automobile fatalities for January of 1985, the first full month after implementation of the law, was recorded at 184. The same figure for January 1984 was a considerably higher 252 highway fatalities. Also, the average number of automobile fatalities occurring during the month of January for the 5 years prior to 1985 was 297. Thus, based on that five-year average, the number of automobile fatalities in New York for the month of January alone has dropped 38% since the implementation of the new law.

I believe Connecticut can expect similar rewards through the adoption and implementation of this new law.

As I have stated earlier, my decision was based upon a balancing process. Therefore, I believe that if we can save lives on Connecticut's highways through this new legislation, it clearly outweighs the inconvenience which may be experienced by those opposed to it.

Sincerely,
William A. O'Neill
Governor

Reply

September 11, 1985

In this standardized letter to his constituents, which it seems Governor O'Neill was forced to write due to the overwhelming negative response his office has received regarding his recent signing of the Mandatory Seat Belt Law, he starts out by first presuming to tell us all why we are opposed to this law. It might have been better if he had read some of our letters of opposition rather than make up his own reasons why he thinks we oppose this law — but then Governor O'Neill is in the habit of thinking for us. Notice that the first two reasons he gives — for us opposing his law — involve such neutral terms as "inconvenience," or police "doing far more important things" (later on in the letter, he talks about buckling up being "burdensome," and uses the idiot term, "inconvenience," a number of more times). Only when he gets to number 3 does he happen to mention, quite casually, that maybe a few misguided souls out there actually think this law is an unjustified "restriction" upon "the rights...of the individual" (notice the generic sense — he doesn't talk about *your* rights!).

He starts out so smoothly — he "sympathizes" with us — ahhh, isn't he a nice man? But then he gets firm, and talks about his "duty" — to improve *our* well-being and safety. And there is the whole argument in a nutshell, dear reader. He is going to improve our well-being if it kills us, whether we like it or not, and in the privacy of our own cars to boot — every time and everywhere we drive — and we have no say-so in the matter. What if the seat belts we are forced by law to strap ourselves down with do not "improve our well-being," but instead kill us, as they do to so many drivers in this country every day of the week? Well, then, we will just have to be willing sacrifices for the greater glory of the rest of Connecticut's citizens. You have no right to your own life, you have no right to be selfish, you just must knuckle under — and buckle up — that is what our wonderful governor is really telling us here.

Next he gives us allegedly scientific projections of how many lives will be saved and how many injuries will be reduced if the drivers of Connecticut are enslaved while driving in their own cars and forced to put seat belts on against their wills. These numbers, I can assure you, are utter hogwash (please see below) with no more basis in fact than the same kind of pompous statistics put out over ten years ago when the ludicrous nationwide 55 M.P.H. speed limit was rammed down our throats. Who goes 55 M.P.H. now anyway on our highways, and yet motor vehicle fatalities per mile driven have been steadily dropping in our society for many years now (though insurance rates sure haven't), due to factors that have nothing to do with either speed or seat belts.

Finally, he discusses the "experience" of New York State. This paragraph is tantamount to blatant lying on his part. Notice the date on the letterhead is July 29th. But the statistics he quotes were admittedly highly tentative results hastily put out by the politicized Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) of New York some 4 months earlier. The death figures they put out did not yet include all traffic deaths, because of both the speed at which they were put out and the fact that subsequent deaths in hospital are also regarded as vehicular deaths up to 90 days after an accident. Traffic deaths have been falling for almost 15 years on America's roads, and some of this 1985 reduction can be attributed to a continuation of that trend. Most importantly, tentative figures for total accidents in New York under the new law had yet to be reported when these numbers came out. If these had also gone down, then the ratio of occupant deaths per accident might have remained about the same, demonstrating that the mandatory seat belt law had *no* effect on the reduction of the deaths reported.

But the question still remains: why did deaths and perhaps accidents presumably fall in New York those first few months? There is an obvious answer to this question that seems to elude our governor: because of the thousands of troopers Mario Cuomo sicced on the people of New York over those 3 months, taking them from far more pressing matters so that his much-touted miracle cure for

deaths on the highway could be implemented. With all those police on the roads of New York enforcing not only the seat belt law, but all other traffic laws as well, and with every driver and passenger in New York feeling like an animal in the zoo being watched by their police-keepers everywhere they drove, is it any wonder that traffic deaths — and accidents — were lower for those first 3 months? For the 3 months ending June 30th, fatalities on the road in New York dropped 9% from the previous year's figures!

And what about that 69% compliance figure? It is now down to less than 30%, and dropping rapidly. People in New York are no longer going through the idiot motions of putting on a seat belt to drive 3 blocks to the store, and the police are no longer peeping into every car that goes by them on the road, and still another wave of cynicism and contempt for the law is being engendered in everyone in New York, especially the young. Some New York policemen openly admit that now they only enforce the law selectively, as effectively the judge and the jury, against people whom they decide are not behaving in an "appropriate" manner — whatever that means.

Getting back to the statistics that "prove" for us how safe we will all be when we buckle up, these numbers are put out by a variety of not-disinterested parties, such as the Federal Highway Administration. This is a political agency, dedicated not to science nor truth nor freedom, but rather to the whims of whatever hack managed to reach the top of the cesspool in the political intrigues ever going on in government in America. For instance, Elizabeth Dole, the wife of the Senator from Kansas, is now the head of the Department of Transportation of the United States, and she is the culprit who initiated this mandatory seat belt law to begin with. Obviously she was made the head of the agency because of her sex and because of nepotism — she knows about as much about transportation as you do from driving to your local package store once a week to pick up a few six-packs. Do you really think she verified these statistical numbers herself through careful scientific study?

How do the authorities arrive at these statistics? Well, they take cars and crash them into stone wall barriers at 25.0 M.P.H. at an angle of 90.0 degrees with mannequins inside that don't blink an eye as the car goes hurtling to its doom. Is this how accidents occur in the real world? Hardly. Real accidents are, after all, accidents, and they occur in all sorts of unpredictable ways. Cars go out of control, skid, get hit sideways and in the rear, get wrapped around poles, tumble over and over in all sorts of weird ways, and, sometimes, even end up under water, and quite often catch fire. Can seat belts help you then?

Or, the authorities look at the actual accidents on the road. They see that far more people die in car collisions with seat belts off than on. What don't they care to see? That far more people driving have their seat belts off than on. Furthermore, people who are drunk or reckless get into far more accidents than people who are careful drivers. Could it be that as a concomitant to their diminished state of mind, reckless drivers not only get into more accidents but also don't bother to put their seat belts on to begin with? If this is so, there would be no direct connection between the lack of seat belts and the fatalities.

The fact is that most fatalities on the road occur at speeds greater than 50 M.P.H. But all scientific data shows that seat belts have no beneficial effect whatsoever at such high speeds

(they actually have a slight negative effect at high speeds, since they prevent the driver from being thrown clear of the crash). So the very deaths that occur on the road to people who don't wear seat belts are also the very deaths that the proponents of seat belts admit can't be stopped by wearing them! The statistics and the experimental results cancel each other out.

And what about all those accidents at relatively minor speeds where seat belts kill the occupant by simply cracking his (usually it is a "her," since women tend to have much weaker breast bones than men) ribs, which then penetrate his thoracic cavity and cause almost instant death by massive internal bleeding? Ironically, this is exactly what happened to a woman riding as an occupant of a car in Long Island in New York on January 1st of this year, a few hours after their mandatory seat belt law went into effect. And what about all the myriad of other ways seat belts can kill you in your car, such as trapping you inside during submersion, fires, or when the car ends up upside down after 10 or 20 rolls. And what about all those cases of accidents in which the police state that the occupants' wearing of seat belts is "undetermined?" Is this true, or are the police lying to please their superiors who do not want to hear about too many accidents in which people wearing seat belts die?

Most important of all, how can a mandatory seat belt law reduce the number of accidents themselves, as opposed to their severity? Will people be safer drivers when they are forced to put seat belts on? Or will such an intrusion into their privacy cause them to be upset, angry, and feel not in control of their own lives? If the latter is true, and it most certainly is for at least some people, won't this cause *more* accidents on the road?

But let us just assume, purely for the sake of argument, that through some magical process seat belts could save lives in Connecticut. Does this justify making them mandatory? Is it O.K. to kill some people for the sake of others? If your loved one is numbered among the unlucky ones, and is killed by a seat belt he was forced to wear against his will, will it be any consolation to you to know that nevertheless, for "society" at large, seat belts really do save lives? And what will such a law do to the principle of human rights in general? Obviously, it sets a new precedent in violating all our rights. What if some piece of scum comes along in the future and wants to violate our rights still more: could we object? He would tell us that, after all, you are required to strap yourself in against your wills in the privacy of your own cars, so what's a little more violation of your rights going to do? Hardly nothing. Such roads lead to tyrannies and ultimately rivers of blood for societies that start down them — with the best of intentions to be sure. And no seat belt in the world, perhaps combined with helmets, jock straps, and ear plugs, will save you driving down that road.

I have a question for our good governor. By what moral right do you propose to treat people as if they were children, attempting to protect them from themselves? Liquor and cigarette smoking and crossing the street can also be shown to be dangerous, under certain conditions — would you ban these along with non-seat-belt-wearing? And if you wouldn't, dear governor, then pray tell us what principle you would use to determine where you would stop? Try to get a straight answer from O'Neill on that one. But don't hold your breath.

David Solan

A Further Note on 'Freedom As Self-Control'

In my article in Issue #17, the point was made that there is a direct relationship between the fact that each individual is a self-controlling entity and the voluntarist insight that all human organizations and institutions require the consent and cooperation of their participants to function. The purpose of this short note is to elaborate on this idea.

In examining Rose Wilder Lane's *The Discovery of Freedom*, her statement — that some people could be physically coerced

into giving their consent did not alter the fact that submission to authority is always voluntary — was highlighted. At first glance this seems contradictory because if coercion has been used or threatened, how could the subsequent behavior be termed voluntary? This is what I wish to explain.

Ms. Lane reasoned that submission to authority is voluntary because individuals control what they do (even when they are coerced). I accept her use of the word "voluntary" but it leads to

[continued on Page 8]

the tautology that all human action is, by its very nature, voluntary. To distinguish between what a person does willingly (without the threat or use of violence) and what that same person does when confronted by the use or threat of violence, I think it is important to introduce the qualifiers "coerced" and "uncoerced" to differentiate between human action which is freely taken and human action which is only undertaken as a result of duress. When a kidnapper threatens to kill your wife, unless you ransom her for \$10,000, you voluntarily turn over the money; but your consent has been coerced because of the kidnapper's threat to kill her. When you purchase a car for \$10,000, the car dealer has obtained your uncoerced consent because there

has been no use of, or threat of, violence. In both cases your tender of the \$10,000 was a voluntary act, but in the first instance your consent has been coerced, while in the second instance your consent has been uncoerced.

The parallel between these example and our acceptance of the State should be obvious. Although our consent may have been coerced by State threats, ultimately our submission to the State is voluntary because we are self-directed and self-controlled individuals.

I would like to extend my thanks to Pat and Kevin Cullinane for helping me clarify these ideas. —Carl Watner

FREEDOM SCHOOL

FREEDOM SCHOOL is back! Bob LeFevre's dynamic, 50-hour seminar—incorporated for 23 years within Milliken & Company's well-known management training program—is available to the public...on an individual basis, complete with room and board!

Set in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, **FREEDOM SCHOOL** provides the curriculum, direction, and guidance for an unforgettable intellectual expedition.

TUITION

Day Students (seminar and lunches only)	\$350.00
Seminar, room, and board (5 days).....	\$450.00
Additional family members:	
Day students (seminar and lunches only).....	\$175.00
Seminar, room, and board (5 days).....	\$275.00

The summer and fall courses being offered are during the weeks of

May 19-23

June 30-July 1

August 25-29

September 22-26

October 13-17

November 3-7

November 24-28

For more information, please call or write:

FREEDOM COUNTRY • Campobello • South Carolina • 29322 • (803) 472-4111

The Voluntaryist

P. O. Box 1275 • Gramling • South Carolina 29348

FIRST CLASS — TIME VALUE