
The Voluntaryist

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

JUNE 1987

The Voluntaryist Insight: from "The Political Thought of Etienne de la Boetie"

By Murray N. Rothbard

[Editor's Note: The following excerpts are taken from the Introduction to *THE POLITICS OF OBEDIENCE: The Discourse of Voluntary Servitude* (New York: Free Life Press, 1975). Etienne de la Boetie (1530-1563) anonymously authored *The Discourse* some time during the late 1550s. It is one of the earliest formulations of the voluntaryist insight: that all coercive government depends on the consent and/or acquiescence of its subjects. *THE POLITICS OF OBEDIENCE* is a piece of literature that should interest all readers of this newsletter. It is available from *THE VOLUNTARYIST* for \$7.95 per copy postpaid.]

THE DISCOURSE OF VOLUNTARY SERVITUDE is lucidly and coherently structured around a single axiom, a single percipient insight into the nature not only of tyranny, but implicitly of the State apparatus itself. Many medieval writers had attacked tyranny, but La Boetie delves especially deep into its nature, and into the nature of State rule itself. This fundamental insight was that every tyranny must necessarily be grounded upon general popular acceptance. In short, the bulk of the people themselves, for whatever reason, acquiesce in their own subjection. If this were not the case, no tyranny, indeed no governmental rule, could long endure. Hence, a government does not have to be popularly elected to enjoy general public support; for general public support is in the very nature of all governments that endure, including the most oppressive of tyrannies. The tyrant is but one person, and could scarcely command the obedience of another person, much less of an entire country, if most of the subjects did not grant their obedience by their own consent.

This, then, becomes for La Boetie the central problem of political theory: *why in the world do people consent to their own enslavement?* La Boetie cuts to the heart of what is, or rather should be, the central problem of political philosophy: the mystery of civil obedience. Why do people, in all times and places, obey the commands of the government, which always constitutes a small minority of the society? To La Boetie the spectacle of general consent to despotism is puzzling and appalling:

I should like merely to understand how it happens that so many men, so many villages, so many cities, so many nations, sometimes suffer under a single tyrant who has no other power than the power they give him; who is able to harm them only to the extent to which they have the willingness to bear with him; who could do them absolutely no injury unless they preferred to put up with him rather than contradict him. Surely a striking situation! Yet it is so common that one must grieve the more and wonder the less at the spectacle of a million men serving in wretchedness, by their necks under the yoke, not constrained by a greater multitude than they. . . .

And this mass submission must be out of consent rather than simply out of fear:

Shall we call subjection to such a leader cowardice? . . .
If a hundred, if a thousand endure the caprice of a

single man, should we not rather say that they lack not the courage but the desire to rise against him, and that such an attitude indicates indifference rather than cowardice? When not a hundred, not a thousand men, but a hundred provinces, a thousand cities, a million men, refuse to assail a single man from whom the kindest treatment received is the infliction of serfdom and slavery, what shall we call it? Is it cowardice? . . . When a thousand, a million men, a thousand cities, fail to protect themselves against the domination of one man, this cannot be called cowardly, for cowardice does not sink to such a depth. . . . What monstrous vice, then, is this which does not even deserve to be called cowardice, a vice for which no term can be found vile enough . . . ?

It is evident from the above passages that La Boetie is bitterly opposed to tyranny and to the public's consent to its own subjection. He makes clear also that this opposition is grounded on a theory of natural law and a natural right to liberty. La Boetie's celebrated and creatively original call for civil disobedience, for mass non-violent resistance as a method for the overthrow of tyranny, stems directly from the above two premises: the fact that all rule rests on the consent of the subject masses, and the great value of natural liberty. For if tyranny really rests on mass consent, then the obvious means for its overthrow is simply by mass *withdrawal* of that consent. The weight of tyranny would quickly and suddenly collapse under such a non-violent revolution. (The Tory David Hume did *not*, surprisingly, draw similar conclusions from his theory of mass consent as the basis of all governmental rule.)

Thus, after concluding that all tyranny rests on popular consent, La Boetie eloquently concludes that "obviously there is no need of fighting to overcome this single tyrant, for he is automatically defeated if the country refuses consent to its own enslavement." Tyrants need not be expropriated by force; they need only be deprived of the public's continuing supply of funds and resources. The more one yields to tyrants, La Boetie points out, the stronger and mightier they become. But if the tyrants "are simply not obeyed," they become "undone and as nothing." La Boetie then exhorts the "poor, wretched, and stupid peoples" to cast off their chains by refusing to supply the tyrant any further with the instruments of their own oppression. The tyrant, indeed, has nothing more than the power that you confer upon him to destroy you. Where has he acquired enough eyes to spy upon you, if you do not provide them yourselves? How can he have so many arms to beat you with, if he does not borrow them from you? The feet that trample down your cities, where does he get them if they are not your own? How does he have any power over you except through you? How would he dare assail you if he had not cooperation from you?

La Boetie concludes his exhortation by assuring the masses that to overthrow the tyrant they need not act, nor shed their blood. They can do so "merely by willing to be free." In short,

Resolve to serve no more, and you are at once freed. I do not ask that you place hands upon the tyrant to topple him over, but simply that you support him no longer; then you will behold him, like a great Colossus whose pedestal has been pulled away, fall of his own weight and break in pieces.

It was a medieval tradition to justify tyrannicide of unjust rulers who break the divine law, but La Boetie's doctrine, though non-violent, was in the deepest sense far more radical. For while the

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Editor: Carl Watner

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From the Editor:

"It's Only Just A Beginning": Reflections on Being a New Father

In the last issue of THE VOLUNTARYIST, I announced the birth of our first child, William Lloyd Watner. Although it might seem strange to introduce readers of this newsletter to my ideas and experiences about the life cycle, I think that many will find my remarks on our home birth of interest. By introducing this subject, I am not advocating that readers should follow the course of action chosen by Julie and myself, but merely wish to present the alternative we chose.

Few medical doctors deliver babies at home, but Julie and I discovered that there are midwives living in the Carolinas, who provide experienced and knowledgeable assistance in the birthing process. We opted for home delivery, for a number of moral and practical reasons. First, we found we could avoid having a "state" birth certificate for our child. Instead we created our own "Record of Birth." Second, we found that home birth was far less expensive than a hospital delivery and was at least as safe, if not safer, for low risk mothers. Third, having the birth at home allowed us to be in our familiar environment, surrounded by the people we wanted to be there. Finally we wanted to avoid (as much as possible) unnecessary medical intervention (which is routine procedure in most hospital births) with both mother and baby.

Since midwives are for the most part uncertified and uninsured, they are very careful about the women they accept as clients. They try to screen out all high risk mothers (ones who are undernourished, smoke, drink heavily, take drugs, etc.) in an effort to maintain their own excellent safety records. If they anticipate complications, for any reason, they simply advise the mother that they will not handle a home birth for her. The midwives also place a great deal of emphasis on preparation and emergency procedures (which include taking the mother to a hospital if a life-threatening situation occurs during childbirth). In our own case, Julie and I attended over 15 hours of classes and slide shows, which taught us what to expect and how to prepare for our amazing experience.

The miracle of life is simply incredible! Birthing and "being birthed" could definitely be termed an ordeal. As any mother will tell you, "labor" is the hardest work she's ever done in her life. Julie went into very slow labor on Friday morning, January 16th, 1987. It did not begin progressing until about 24 hours later, during the early hours of Saturday morning. The midwives arrived around 3:30 a. m. and Julie and I delivered our son, William Lloyd, some seven hours later with their invaluable assistance.

During the birth, I often thought of my father and grandfather, both deceased, and wondered what they would have thought of their son witnessing the birth of another generation. These reflections prompted me to think of the life cycle of our species: how close in resemblance birth and death are. My own emotions at the

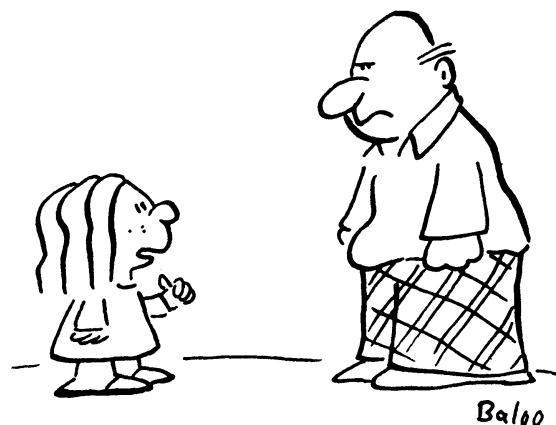
birth—of caring for a loved one experiencing such pain—reminded me of the emotions I experienced while my father was dying of leukemia. Though often a much longer process, the struggle with death is an ordeal, too. I couldn't help but notice another parallel. After I buried the afterbirth between the trees where Julie and I were married, I recalled the funeral lines "From ashes to ashes, from dust to dust." How ironic it is that burying the afterbirth is so much like burying the remains of a loved one in the earth! Both are in a sense a beginning and an end.

Julie and I were often asked during her pregnancy, "Which do you want—a boy or girl?" Our common response was that we wanted a healthy child; that was the most important thing, and that was what we received. Whether or not William Lloyd will live up to the reputations of his two namesakes, William Lloyd Garrison, the abolitionist, and my dad, Lloyd Watner, the important thing for me is not that he follow my thought patterns. Recognizing that each person exercises self-control, my only hope is that he learns to think independently, logically and above all, to act honestly and with integrity. If I can teach him to practice the virtues of honesty and integrity, I believe all else will follow. He may start out with wrong premises, but if he remains true to himself and to others and to truth, then it seems to me inevitable that he will reach the right conclusions in the end, no matter how difficult the struggle. I want a son that will think for himself. It is not nearly so important "what" he thinks, as "how" he thinks. If he is intellectually honest and makes a mistake in logic or judgment, then he will be capable of making the necessary corrections in his conclusions. But, if he accepts a wrong conclusion, merely because his parents or someone else tells him it is right, there is no chance that he will ever correct himself.

When I told Julie I was writing this article, she said, "And this adventure is only just beginning."

My thanks to all who have conveyed congratulations on this great event.

P. S. from Julie — "Who said anyone was entitled to a full night's sleep?"



"There's a general breakdown of parental authority all over the country Dad—you expect me to buck the system?"

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assassination of a tyrant is simply an isolated individual act *within* an existing political system, mass civil disobedience, being a direct act on the part of large masses of people, is far more revolutionary in launching a transformation of the system itself. It is also more elegant and profound in theoretical terms, flowing immediately as it does from La Boetie's insight about power necessarily resting on popular consent; for then the remedy to power is simply to withdraw that consent.

The call for mass civil disobedience was picked up by one of the more radical of the later Huguenot pamphlets, *La France Turque* (1575), which advocated an association of towns and provinces for the purpose of refusing to pay all taxes to the State. But it is not surprising that among the most enthusiastic advocates of mass civil disobedience have been the anarchist thinkers, who simply extend both La Boetie's analysis and his conclusion from tyrannical rule to all governmental rule whatsoever. Prominent among the anarchist advocates of non-violent resistance have been Thoreau, Tolstoy and Benjamin R. Tucker, all of the nineteenth century, and all, unsurprisingly, associated with the non-violent pacifist branch of anarchism. Tolstoy, indeed, in setting forth his doctrine of non-violent anarchism, used a lengthy passage from the *Discourse* as the focal point for the development of his argument. In addition, Gustav Landauer, the leading German anarchist of the early twentieth century, after becoming converted to a pacifist approach, made a rousing summary of La Boetie's *Discourse of Voluntary Servitude* the central core of his anarchist work, *Die Revolution* (1919). A leading Dutch pacifist-anarchist of the twentieth century, Barthélemy de Ligt, not only devoted several pages of his *Conquest of Violence* to discussion and praise of La Boetie's *Discourse*; he also translated it into Dutch in 1933. . . .

Why do people continue to give their consent to despotism? Why do they permit tyranny to continue? This is especially puzzling if tyranny (defined at least as all personal power) must rest on mass consent, and if the way to overthrow tyranny is therefore for the people to withdraw that consent. The remainder of La Boetie's treatise is devoted to this crucial problem, and his discussion here is as seminal and profound as it is in the earlier part of the work. . . .

Here La Boetie proceeds to supplement this analysis of the purchase of consent by the public with another truly original contribution. . . . This is the establishment, as it were the permanent and continuing purchase, of a hierarchy of subordinate allies, a loyal band of retainers, praetorians and bureaucrats. La Boetie himself considers this factor "the mainspring and the secret of domination, the support and foundation of tyranny." Here is a large sector of society which is not merely duped with occasional and negligible handouts from the State; here are individuals who make a handsome and permanent living out of the proceeds of despotism. Hence, *their* stake in despotism does not depend on illusion or habit or mystery; their stake is all too great and all too real. A hierarchy of patronage from the fruits of plunder is thus created and maintained: five or six individuals are the chief advisors and beneficiaries of the favors of the king. These half-dozen in a similar manner maintain six hundred "who profit under them," and the six hundred in their turn "maintain under them six thousand, whom they promote in rank, upon whom they confer the government of provinces or the direction of finances, in order that they may serve as instruments of avarice and cruelty, executing orders at the proper time and working such havoc all around that they could not last except under the shadow of the six hundred. . . ."

In this way does the fatal hierarchy pyramid and permeate down through the ranks of society, until "a hundred thousand, and even millions, cling to the tyrant by this cord to which they are tied." In short,

when the point is reached, through big favors or little ones, that large profits or small are obtained under a tyrant, there are found almost as many people to whom tyranny seems advantageous as those to whom liberty would seem desirable. . . . Whenever a ruler makes himself a dictator, all the wicked dregs of the nation . . . all those who are corrupted by burning ambition or extraordinary avarice, these gather around him and support him in order to have a share in the

booty and to constitute themselves petty chiefs under the large tyrant.

Thus, the hierarchy of privilege descends from the large gainers from despotism, to the middling and small gainers, and finally down to the mass of the people who falsely think they gain from the receipt of petty favors. In this way the subjects are divided, and a great portion of them induced to cleave to the ruler, "just as, in order to split wood, one has to use a wedge of the wood itself." Of course, the train of the tyrant's retinue and soldiers suffer at their leader's hands, but they "can be led to endure evil if permitted to commit it, not against him who exploits them, but against those who like themselves submit, but are helpless." In short, in return for its own subjection, this order of subordinates is permitted to oppress the rest of the public.

How is tyranny concretely to be overthrown, if it is cemented upon society by habit, privilege and propaganda? How are the people to be brought to the point where they will decide to withdraw their consent? In the first place, affirms La Boetie, not *all* the people will be deluded or sunk into habitual submission. There is always a more percipient elite who will understand the reality of the situation; "there are always a few, better endowed than others, who feel the weight of the yoke and cannot restrain themselves from attempting to shake it off." These are the people who, in contrast to "the brutish mass," possess clear and far-sighted minds, and "have further trained them by study and learning." Such people never quite disappear from the world: "Even if liberty had entirely perished from the earth, such men would invent it. . . ."

La Boetie's *Discourse* has a vital importance for the modern reader—an importance that goes beyond the sheer pleasure of reading a great and seminal work on political philosophy, or, for the libertarian, of reading the first libertarian political philosopher in the Western world. For La Boetie speaks most sharply to the problem which all libertarians—indeed, all opponents of despotism—find particularly difficult: the problem of strategy. Facing the devastating and seemingly over-whelming power of the modern State, *how* can a free and very different world be brought about? How in the world can we get from here to there, from a world of tyranny to a world of freedom? Precisely because of his abstract and timeless methodology, La Boetie offers vital insights into this eternal problem. . . .

Since despotic rule is against the interests of the bulk of the population, how then does this consent come about? Again, La Boetie highlights the point that this consent is engineered, largely by propaganda beamed at the populace by the rulers and their intellectual apologists. The devices—of bread and circuses, of ideological mystification—that rulers today use to gull the masses and gain their consent, remain the same as in La Boetie's days. The only difference is the enormous increase in the use of specialized intellectuals in the service of the rulers. But in this case, the primary task of opponents of modern tyranny is an educational one: to awaken the public to this process, to demystify and desanctify the State apparatus. Furthermore, La Boetie's analysis both of the engineering of consent and of the role played by bureaucrats and other economic interests that benefit from the State, highlights another critical problem which many modern opponents of statism have failed to recognize: that the problem of strategy is not simply one of educating the public about the "errors" committed by the government. For much of what the State does is not an error at all from its own point of view, but a means of maximizing its power, influence, and income. We have to realize that we are facing a mighty engine of power and economic exploitation, and therefore that, at the very least, libertarian education of the public must *include* an expose of this exploitation, and of the economic interests and intellectual apologists who benefit from State rule. By confining themselves to analysis of alleged intellectual "errors," opponents of government intervention have rendered themselves ineffective. For one thing, they have been beaming their counter-propaganda at a public which does not have the equipment or the interest to follow the complex analysis of errors, and which can therefore easily be rebamboozled by the experts in the employ of the State. Those experts, too, must be desanctified, and again La Boetie strengthens us in the necessity of such desanctification. . . .

La Boetie was also the first theorist to move from the emphasis on the importance of consent, to the strategic importance of toppl-

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Constitutions: No Authority

By Butler D. Shaffer

I recently returned from a conference at which a participant took frenzied issue with me over the question of whether the Constitution is capable of protecting human liberty. I took the position that no Constitution can guarantee our freedoms, because it is impossible to create an institution of State power and then limit the exercise of that power in any meaningful way. Liberty is dependent upon a state of mind that continually questions, that maintains "eternal vigilance"; and efforts to institutionalize liberty—such as by drafting "bills of rights," etc.—necessarily reflect a relaxing of that constant state of awareness.

My mind was drawn to this conference as I read an article written by a self-avowed former leftist chastising his former compatriots for their position on America's policy toward Nicaragua. In his view, the Sandinista regime is a vicious and dehumanizing tyranny that justifies Reagan Administration efforts to subvert it. Running throughout this article was an unstated assumption that if, indeed, a leftist regime is to be opposed, a rightist administration suddenly acquires a legitimacy previously denied.

My conference co-participant shared this sentiment. In the view of each man, the political State is a "necessary evil," and one must opt for "the lesser of two evils." In my criticism of the American nation-state, the conferee assumed that I must have been equating lack of freedom in America with that in the Soviet Union. In fact, this was the essence of his criticism of my position. "You're saying that Americans are as oppressed as are the citizens of Russia or Albania," he kept shouting at me.

If, of course, the political State is a "necessary evil," this argument might have some merit. After all, when arrayed against the spectacle of such vicious regimes as Nazi Germany or Stalinist Russia, even the Reagan Administration offers a decidedly free alternative. If one is asked to choose between lung cancer and tuberculosis, most of us would opt for the latter disease, given that cures are more readily available. But this is precisely the intellectual trap that the defenders of Statism set for us, and most of us fail to perceive. To bring my own position into this analogy, let us not allow others to restrict our "choices" to lung cancer and tuberculosis—both admitted diseases—but to opt for a state of *health*.

Of course America is a freer nation than the Soviet Union, Cuba, China, or Albania; *of course* I would rather live in America than any of these other tyrannical regimes; and *of course* I am more likely to prevail in a politically-motivated trial against me in America than in the Soviet Union. What does this obvious fact have to do with our understanding of what it means to be free? *Even if* the United States is the freest society in which to live today, ought that to relieve us of the task of *increasing* our liberties, of discovering how to abandon the political institutions—including our constitutional form of government—that restrict our liberty? Even if we have come further than other nations along on the road to a truly free society, ought we to stop along the way and content ourselves with making favorable comparisons with those whose journeys have taken them along the paths to tyranny and oppression? If we can learn how to live without politics, without nation-states, without wars, without even the slightest restriction upon any of us, ought we to give up such a pursuit simply because others have chosen to remain locked in chains?

One must recognize, I think, that every political system is founded upon the presumed right of some men to forcibly impose their collective will upon those to be ruled. Once one accepts such an arrangement as either desirable or a "necessary evil," there is simply no way to assure that those given such power will restrain themselves in its exercise. If one acknowledges the right of men to assault women—and the concomitant obligation of women to submit thereto—there is no effective limit upon the attacks to which women must be subjected, other than the appetites of their attackers. One cannot acknowledge the right of some men to exercise force upon others without accepting that those enjoying such powers are the only—and the absolute—judges of the scope of that power. To fail to understand that basic fact is to be ignorant of the inherent nature of all political systems, a nature that has been

abundantly demonstrated in every period of history and in every nation on earth.

If America is a freer nation than the Soviet Union, it is due to one cause—the relatively freer states of mind and expectations of American people, and *not* because of any words scribbled down on historic parchments. Bear in mind: The Soviet Union has a Constitution as well, and its basic framework—although not the same words—is patterned on the American model. Those who exercise political authority in Washington, or Sacramento, or Frostbite Falls, would like to be able to exercise as much absolute control over people as do any other tyrants in the world. Adolph Hitler was not an aberration confined to Germany, nor was Joseph Stalin a freak of Slavic history. The men who wrote our own Declaration of Independence were intensely aware of the propensity of all political institutions to tyrannize and tried their best to warn us thereof. While it is true that, in terms of the *severity* of this rule, the Soviet Union is far more vicious and tyrannical than the American government, in terms of the institutionalized insistence that their wills be obeyed, there is *no* distinction between these two nation-states—nor, for that matter, any other regimes.

And so, it is no more meaningful for men and women who would be free to content themselves with making choices between one brand of oppressive authority and another, any more than it was for earlier generations of Europeans to choose between the leftist politics of Stalin and the rightist politics of Hitler, or even of such tamer tyrants as Mussolini versus Franco. To accept such imposed limitations upon one's choices is to abandon one's interest in liberty in favor of embracing the security that comes from meeting the expectations of those we have empowered as authorities over our lives and souls. Freedom means no more than this: understanding that each of us, alone, has the power to either accept or not accept the limitations others would impose upon our choices. Men and women who *do* understand this basic truth do not, I can assure you, busy themselves with measuring the differences between kings, dictators, or senators or commissars.

[This article originally appeared in *Libertarian Party NEWS* November/December 1986, and was titled "Constitution: Why?"]

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ing tyranny by leading the public to *withdraw* that consent. Hence, La Boetie was the first theorist of the strategy of mass, non-violent civil disobedience of State edicts and exactions. How practical such a tactic might be is difficult to say, especially since it has rarely been used. But the tactic of mass refusal to pay taxes, for example, is increasingly being employed in the United States today, albeit in a sporadic form. In December 1974 the residents of the city of Willimantic, Connecticut, assembled in a town meeting and rejected the entire city budget three times, finally forcing a tax cut of 9 percent. This is but one example of growing public revulsion against crippling taxation throughout the country.

On a different theme, La Boetie provides us with a hopeful note on the future of a free society. He points out that once the public experiences tyranny for a long time, it becomes inured, and heedless of the possibility of an alternative society. But this means that should State despotism ever be removed, it would be extremely difficult to reimpose statism. The bulwark of habit would be gone, and statism would be seen by all for the tyranny that it is. If a free society were ever to be established, then, the chances for its maintaining itself would be excellent.

More and more, if inarticulately, the public is rebelling, not only against onerous taxation but—in the age of Watergate—against the whole, carefully nurtured *mystique* of government. Twenty years ago, the historian, Cecilia Kenyon, writing of the Anti-Federalist opponents of the adoption of the U. S. Constitution chided them for being "men of little faith"—little faith, that is, in a strong central government. It is hard to think of anyone having such unexamined faith in government today. In such an age as ours, thinkers like Etienne de La Boetie have become far more relevant, far more genuinely modern, than they have been for over a century.

The Best of LeFevre

[Editor's Note: The following two editorials written by Bob LeFevre appeared in the Colorado Springs GAZETTE TELEGRAPH on April 26, 1964 (p. 6-D).]

Truth Is Not A Half-Way Place

It has been truly noted that when one is capable of dismissing error from one's own life, he is half way on the road to truth. However, a half-way point is not a whole journey. And this bit of philosophic whimsy is peculiarly applicable when we are in the midst of trying to understand the nature of freedom.

Freedom, as has been almost universally recognized, has as a necessary and basic part of its total ingredient, the condition of non-restraint from others. The man who is free is not the same man who is controlled by others.

But if a stop is made here, on the assumption that full knowledge of freedom has now been obtained, the traveler will find that he is but at a half-way point. To dismiss the constrainer is not to be free; it is to be non-constrained. And freedom has a positive side as well as this negative dismissal of error.

When the heady wine of freedom is first sipped by the truth seeker, the most inspiring moment comes when he realizes that controls imposed upon him by others, whether for purposes of compelling him or preventing him, are contrary to his basic rights as a human being.

This thought is so exhilarating in itself that many a person who professes to be seeking liberty, disengages his mind at this point. He is then, as it were, coasting down hill.

And the breeze blowing through his hair, the marvelous vistas opening before his speeding conceptualizing, captivate his attention so thoroughly that he disregards the fact that a new hill rises before him, far more steep and hazardous than the slope down which he has sped.

But freedom is not the valley between two mountains. It can be gained when the second summit is reached. And the toil up that forbidding and dangerous slope is a far cry from the joyful plunge from the heights of compulsion, restraint, and coercion.

To understand what is implied by a real search for truth respecting freedom, we can perhaps, best approach the matter through a study of the control of human energy. We know of no one who has done a better job of analyzing this quality of freedom than Rose Wilder Lane. And we pay tribute to her and her writing in "Discovery of Freedom" in what we say here.

Each human being controls his own energy. The fact is patently apparent. You and you alone can command your own muscles, your own thought processes.

But this world we live in is one that requires a larger release of human energy than any one person possesses. To live at all, and to live well and constructively, requires that human energy under your control be harnessed to human energy which is under the control of other individuals.

In short, you can't do it by yourself.

Thus, beginning in remote antiquity, men learned that they needed each other. Job specializations were developed making it possible for each person to do what he does best, so that others, who have diverse and different talents and abilities, may be free to do what they can do best.

And at a very early age, compulsion was introduced so as to compel people to unify and harmonize their energies. The unification which was needed, was deemed so important that conformity and obedience to a central planner was considered the single most vital fact of our continuing well-being.

This process works. It is destructive of freedom, but it does produce a certain amount of goods and services that human beings must have if they are to survive.

And this reliance upon the compulsive processes, continued thru the ages, is, in essence, the mountain upon which we stand today. We are not free. But we are alive.

To Seek the Second Summit

To continue our analogy, we come alive into the age, to find ourselves near the top of a mountain of compulsion.

Government is enormous, pervasive.

Our cities are government run. We are born in government hospitals; are taken to government clinics; educated in government schools; trained and conditioned to love and worship the state.

We emerge with government license in hand; perform our daily chores in government approved, permitted or sponsored endeavors; are in theory protected by the government; march off to war to protect our government; are married under government auspices; are taxed to provide for our government; obtain a new job through the courtesy of our government and, in the end, are licensed again as dead and are buried in a government approved cemetery.

This is so normal a condition that whenever a question is raised as to its necessity, the questioner is adjudged to be either stupid or a dangerous radical.

But the fact is that we are not free by this process. And deeply within the heart of each man and woman is a yearning to be free. This yearning is expressed in our religious convictions; our philosophic utterings; our hopes for a better tomorrow.

The difficulty is that from the top of this mountain of compulsion we occupy, there are a hundred roads down hill. Almost any of them can be taken. But there is only one road that leads toward the second mountain that can dimly be seen from our summit. We can not jump from our summit to the next. But in our haste to leave the summit we are on, we are all too prone to confuse our direction of exit.

Communists, for instance, have a road down hill. So do socialists. So do fascists and imperialists and others. But the highways they offer, although they are almost always wide and attractive, do not lead to the second summit. Yet, each one carries the broad sign: Toward freedom.

But each one terminates abruptly, either at a cliff or in a valley of despond.

The road that truly leads toward the distant mountain of freedom is as attractive as any other road at the beginning. Almost any point of departure appears good at the outset.

But the road that leads upward again from the valley between our two summits, is neither broad nor well-paved. It is but a rocky lane. Only a few have traveled the route. And as the slope starts upward again, there is a sign that says: "Travel this route only on your own responsibility." Beyond the valley you are on your own.

To revert to our discussion relating to energy, when a person decides that he does not want the government or some other agency controlling him in his goings and comings, his first reaction is one of rebellion. And it must be. He can never scale the heights of freedom by refusing to move from the summit of government protectionism and government control.

But here is the point. Freedom, in its positive aspect, is not a vehicle rolling freely down hill. It is a vehicle, operating under its own power that is painfully and slowly progressing upwards along a narrow lane toward a new summit. Thus, freedom is not your energy out of control. It is your energy operating under your control rather than under the control of an external force.

This is the difference between freedom and license. Freedom is self-control. But on the downward slope away from centralized compulsion, freedom and license can readily be confused.

As the slope begins to rise once more, freedom and license can not be confused. To gain the free heights requires enormous self-discipline. And this does not mean a discipline imposed upon others to prevent them from interfering with you. It means a self-imposed restraint to prevent you from interfering with others.

The fact is that your energy will always be controlled by someone. We are not saying this because we necessarily want it that way. That is the way it is.

To be free in a positive sense means your own control of yourself and all that you think and do. If you fail to impose these controls on yourself, it will follow inevitably that others will impose their controls on you, or will seek to do so.

Energy always operates under control. Individual human energy always operates under individual human control. To be free is not to be out of control, it is to be under your own control.

Freedom Country

By Carl Watner

Many readers are familiar with Bob LeFevre and the Freedom School he established in Colorado in 1957. Much of that history was related in my article "Freedom School II" (see THE VOLUNTARYIST, Whole Issue 14, February 1985). Since then, a number of references and advertisements have appeared in these pages, referring either to the new Freedom School in Campobello, South Carolina or to Freedom Country. The purpose of this article is to trace the evolution of Freedom School from the time the Colorado campus was shut down in late 1968 until Bob LeFevre's death in 1986, and to describe Freedom School's current operation at Freedom Country, South Carolina.

When the Freedom School/Rampart College land was sold, Bob LeFevre and part of his staff moved to California where they tried unsuccessfully to run Rampart College courses from Santa Ana. Since the Colorado days, Bob had commuted several times a year to South Carolina to put on Freedom School sessions for Milliken & Company, one of the world's largest, privately owned, textile companies. These seminars consisted of week-long classes and were attended by all incoming middle management and management trainees hired by Milliken & Company. Classes were usually held in a Ramada or Holiday Inn in the Spartanburg, South Carolina area where Milliken & Company has its headquarters. The Management Orientation Program for new Milliken executives included LeFevre's ideas on free market economics, history, philosophy and politics because the company's Chief Executive Officer (and prime mover), Mr. Roger Milliken, believed that most people have "gone through an educational experience which is pretty much one-sided, and has left them with the idea that the State can and should play the key role in managing their lives and the environment in which they will be working." He, on the other hand, wanted them to be exposed to the non-State, free market philosophy of LeFevre because he believed they would become more open-minded and independent in their thinking, and, thus, become stronger individuals and better managers.

In late 1979, LeFevre was told by his doctors that he must retire, due to poor health. In searching for a way to provide future Freedom Schools in South Carolina, Bob recalled a letter from his former student, Kevin Cullinane, who had expressed a desire to assist him during winter breaks from his own school, Academy of the Rockies. Bob and Kevin had kept in fairly close contact through the years, so Bob knew that Kevin's understanding of his philosophy was thorough and long-tested. Bob turned the teaching responsibilities of Freedom School over to Kevin in November 1979. Kevin has continued from that time, giving Freedom School classes for Milliken & Company between 5 and 12 times a year.

At the time that Kevin approached Bob in 1979, he was the owner and operator of his own "work, study, adventure" boarding school located in northern Idaho. After Kevin had started and operated it for four years, he met and married Patricia Gilbert, who assisted him for the next six years. Patricia had been the founder and operator of Carden Hall in Newport Beach, California, the largest private for-profit school in the country. Together they provided wilderness adventure, instruction and experiences in outdoor survival and farming, mountain expeditions, and an academic program for 15 to 25 high school/college age students on their 120 acre farm. Kevin taught, among other things, the freedom philosophy that he had learned as a student at Rampart College in 1967.

During the early 1960s, Kevin had been Officer in Charge of the First Marine Division's Counterinsurgency School and Chief Instructor of the Counter guerrilla Warfare School. He had then become a political activist on Capital Hill, before moving to his Idaho farm in 1964. After teaching, selling real estate, and working in a lumber mill, he founded his boarding school in 1972. He had first discovered LeFevre's ideas, while recovering from a serious automobile accident that occurred in 1964. This discovery marked a major turn in Kevin's thinking, and he set out to either prove or disprove LeFevre's ideas.

When Kevin agreed to take over the teaching responsibilities for Freedom School in South Carolina, he had no idea of how much air travel time he was asking for, nor was he aware of how much he

would miss his family in Idaho. By 1982, he and Patricia had decided to sell their farm-campus and close Academy of the Rockies, and move to South Carolina. Their dream was to purchase land in the Spartanburg area, and build a conference center (which would operate on a for-profit basis) and home. This dream was the beginning of "Freedom Country." Officially Freedom Country Executive Conference Center, Freedom Country is located in Campobello, South Carolina, a small, rural town of several hundred about 20 miles from Spartanburg.

The conference center was completed in 1983, and since then has served as the home base of Freedom School. The conference room comfortably seats 50 people at tables. The Milliken & Company classes are scheduled according to the number of management trainees hired. When not in use, the conference center is rented to local corporations or groups, on a daily basis for use as an off-site meeting facility.

The "specialness" of Freedom Country is found not only in its primary purpose but in its architecture, which is multi-level, rustic cedar construction, and in the home-type atmosphere so conducive to pursuing the study of human freedom. Patricia Cullinane had been a student of Andrew Galambos' Free Enterprise Institute in California. Her insights and human perceptions add immeasurably to the freedom philosophy taught by Kevin. In effect, Kevin and Patricia form a team of freedom educators, paralleled nowhere else in the country. It was once written of LeFevre's Freedom School that it was the only school in the world dedicated solely to the subject of freedom and, as far as I know, that statement is certainly true of Freedom Country today.

LeFevre believed that young people coming along needed to have a geographic center in mind to which they could repair when the going got tough. "We not only have to ignite the torch of liberty, we have to find a physical location where it can burn brightly regardless of other factors. We need a good library there; we need time; we need those who are dedicated to education as a viable means of doing the job." Freedom Country probably comes as close to filling LeFevre's requirements as any place in the world. Freedom School is open to all comers. Lodgings are available to house a small number of outside students. Since each Milliken session includes only about 40 people, there is nearly always room to seat non-Milliken participants at each session of Freedom School.

Freedom School, as taught by Kevin Cullinane, is a five-day, 40-hour seminar, the main purpose of which is to engage attendees in rigorous, stimulating exercise in reflective thinking (i.e., analytical, discerning, evaluative and extrapolative thought), regarding the causal elements responsible for human progress and man's civilization. Kevin defines human progress as "the satisfaction of human needs and desires, morally with less energy." The direction of human energy requires training, dedication, precision and understanding, plus a philosophic grasp of morality and time-binding. Freedom School provides the underpinnings and beginnings necessary for the acquisition of these tools and concepts.

Kevin's course is loosely structured around four intellectual areas. He begins with a basic introduction to the science of knowledge, (epistemology—the elements of proof and rules of evidence). This includes discussions of attitude formation, subjective vs. objective knowledge, logic, common fallacies, and the definition of key terms in the course. This study continues with an examination of the continuum between the atomic and life-levels of consciousness. Defining the mission of the human time-binder, as "one who studies the data of the past, analyzes and evaluates it in the present, and extrapolates from it into the future," Kevin shows how this applies to the various stages of civilization (foraging, hunting, agriculture and industrial revolution) and how the concept of ownership is critical to that of time-binding.

The second major area of the seminar deals with "praxeology" or the study of peaceful human action. Emphasis is placed on the natural laws governing the ecological transfer of energy, especially those natural laws which govern whole systems of human energy, which are called economic laws. Based on his review of man's nature and the life and death cycles of civilizations, Kevin examines the nature of the state and its role, if any, in human progress.

This leads to a review of the major elements of western philosophy as they relate to human progress. Kevin asks his

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Voluntary Musings

A Column of Iconoclasms

By Charles Curley

"Nothing can defeat an idea

- - except a better one."

— Eric Frank Russell

Expert Opinion: Mr. Reagan is claiming that he didn't know anything about the Iraq arms dealing. Maybe he didn't. Let us examine the testimony of an expert in big government.

"How often is it the interest of four or five ministers to combine together to deceive their sovereign! Secluded from mankind by his exalted dignity, the truth is concealed from his knowledge: he can see only with their eyes, he hears nothing but their misrepresentations. He confers the most important offices upon vice and weakness, and disgraces the most virtuous and deserving among his subjects. By such infamous arts the best wisest princes are sold to the venal corruption of their courtiers.

— C. Aurelius Valerius Diocletianus
Roman Emperor, 284 - 304
quoted in Gibbon, pg. 304

Private Space The argument that one most often hears against the abolition of the NASA is that private investment will not or cannot take up the investment necessary to make space profitable. The latter clearly is not true, and the reasons for the former require explanation.

Let us take the worst case example for private enterprise. If a private space station could be funded, then almost anything contemplated for the next fifty years in space, if it could be shown profitable, can also be privately funded. As Heinlein points out, once you are in earth orbit, you are halfway to anywhere.

The budget for the proposed NASA space station is some \$12-\$13 billion at last glance. This sort of funding one would not expect of private investment, but is this perhaps a straw man? Indeed, most of that budget is for research and development. One can name three excellent reasons why R&D may be dispensed: one of those is named Skylab, another Salute, the third Mir.

What, then, is a reasonable budget for a private space station? Judging by the results of an informal study done by some Rockwell engineers, two billion dollars should suffice to provide initial operating capability (IOC). Is this, then, within the range of private investment?

There is precedence for spending that sort of money on single structures. North Sea drilling platforms have cost upward of \$1 billion apiece, with the largest over \$1.5 billions. This last, by the way, is the largest moveable object ever built by man. Its size will probably be exceeded only in space. And if you consider space a chancy investment, think long and hard on the blue chip nature of drilling for North Sea petroleum.

Cable and Wireless, a company privatised by the Thatcher government, has announced plans to spend \$2 billion in partnership with others in a worldwide digital highway. This will be a fibre optic link between London, New York, Tokyo, Hong Kong and points in between. C&W is currently negotiating with prospective partners: AT&T, Nynex, KDD and others. Fibre optics are being laid in the American South.

Again in London, Eurotunnel is engaged in raising 100 billion pounds sterling for the channel tunnel.

Other companies could, if they wished, spend this sort of money without partners. IBM, with a capitalization of \$80 billions, is one candidate. Nippon Telephone and Telegraph, with a market capitalization of over \$160 billions, is now the world's largest company, and another candidate.

A private space station is probably the largest single investment that might be made in space, although a small part of the total that could be done in the next fifty years. But it has two virtues as an investment not available to most other space enterprises.

Many of the proposed investments in space involve one or two opportunities to make money: a special drug to be made in low gravity, a plating process which requires the raw vacuum of space, perfect crystals possible only in low gravity, etc. All of these ventures require a place to do their work, and that is to be the space

station. Some will pan out, many will fail. Others will be profitable only when a low cost route into space has been pioneered by their more profitable brethren.

The space station, then, becomes an industrial park in space. If a manufacturing process is profitable, it will stay and pay rent, and perhaps expand. If it fails, it is soon replaced by another. The space station is profitable even when other ventures around it fail. This is one virtue of the space station.

The other virtue is that it depends entirely on tried and proven concepts, save only one. We know how to build industrial parks: we've been doing that for years. That our managers will be providing tenants with oxygen and calculating rents in cubic instead of square measure are minor wrinkles. The one new concept is that our industrial park is located, not a few miles out of town, but two hundred, and those straight up.

But the private space station has two strikes against it, and so long as either exists I fear they must be fatal. Both may be laid to the NASA's doorstep.

The first is that, for a space station to be useful it must have regular inexpensive transport. This was to have been provided by the shuttle, and it has failed on both counts. Had it been successful, that would have been bearable, just as one is willing to ride a government bus in the knowledge that it could be privatised (and, in Britain, is). But NASA's pricing policies are deliberately aimed at preventing private competition, by the continued subsidy of the uneconomic shuttle at the long suffering taxpayers' expense.

Perhaps the silver lining on the cloud of the Challenger sacrifice is the White House order to NASA to refuse more commercial satellite launches on shuttle. This is a third of the reform required of shuttle policy. The second third is to end all subsidies of shuttle, and even (as a private launch vehicle must do) require it pay back its development costs. The third is to allow all shuttle customers to seek launch services where they will, even the DoD.

Such a policy is intended to cause the well deserved demise of shuttle, thereby allowing private launch vehicles to enter the market and compete with one another. But we will see higher launch costs before we see lower: these must pay for the development of newer vehicles based on economic considerations, not military.

Inexpensive space transport is not the only requirement for space industrialization, but it makes the others much more achievable. To again quote Heinlein, people go where the transportation is.

The other fatal strike against the private space station is, of course, NASA's own R&D boondoggle. A political football even before it has come off the drafting boards (later, it is over expensive and aimed at markets and uses which cannot pay for it. So long as the spectre of this illusory government boon to industry exists a private space station cannot even be begun.

When I worked at Rockwell, I circulated an informal paper proposing a private space station. It was well received, but the answer that came back that killed that proposal was simple. Rockwell was so accustomed to being a government contractor that it preferred to work at cost plus for a known profit than to take a risk for greater profits. So long as NASA exists, this attitude will continue to smother enterprise above the atmosphere.

Freedom Country

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students to consider whether some philosophies are more prone to stifle human progress than to stimulate it, and if so, why? He then examines and summarizes the Hebrew, Persian, Platonic, Stoic, Epicurean and Christian concepts of human progress by showing how each of them answered the critical question: What is the ultimate good or purpose in life? During this part of the course, Kevin also discusses the more modern philosophies of Karl Marx and the Communist Manifesto, as well as the Freedom Philosophy expressed by the writers of the Declaration of Independence.

The final area of study in Freedom School deals with modern geo-political history. What has been the course of Western Civilization during the last 100 years, and has society or the state dominated our civilization? Kevin presents his view of human history as one of upward, lineal progression, interspersed with

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periods of stagnation caused by the state. He explains why some twenty previous civilizations have collapsed, and why our Western Civilization is likely to follow in their footsteps unless the natural laws of human energy are understood and followed. It is at this point that he concentrates on the causes of war in this and the past century, and shows the connection between militarism and statism.

Kevin learned a great deal from Bob LeFevre and his presentations today reflect his mentor's strong influence. Freedom School under Bob and Kevin always covered the nature of man, the nature of the market, the human record, as well as the nature of the state and the free man. In discussing the importance of the religious aspect of man's nature, however, Kevin goes far beyond LeFevre. In so doing, he provides the only free market presentation today which stresses the "Judeo-Christian tradition," and "the three generation family" as key elements in progressing civilizations. Kevin describes the Hebraic emphasis on personal integrity and honesty in the market place, and shows how they are related to the

Ten Commandments. The multi-generation family captures the essence of time-binding, by joining together the inspiration of the young, the earning capability of the middle-aged producers, and the wisdom and reserves of the grandparents. Such groups constitute the strongest obstacle to the growth of statism. Kevin contrasts the pro-market place, pro-family attitude of the Hebrews with the antipathy toward commercial affairs characteristic of Hellenistic philosophers.

Both Bob and Kevin always expected their Freedom School students to reach their own conclusions about the ability of non-state societies to function morally and economically. They both always encouraged their students to analyze these important issues, and then be able to logically defend their own conclusions, whatever those might be. Whether one agrees in whole, in part, or even totally disagrees with them, Kevin's presentations at Freedom School are guaranteed to be a profitable intellectual adventure.

[Editor's Note: For those interested in obtaining more information about current Freedom School schedules, they may write Kevin Cullinane, Freedom Country Executive Conference Center, Campobello, S. C. 29322. A "Partial Bibliography of Suggested Readings" upon which the ideas of Freedom School are based may be had for \$1 and a self-addressed, stamped envelope.]

Open Letter to "Clem Johnson"

Dear "Clem,"

I enjoyed your article "Why I Detest the State" (Whole Number 24, February 1987) and agree with it. However, I would like to nitpick about one point.

When you said, "it is because I love my country that I loathe it's government," you seemed to imply that you do not love other countries, or that you love them less. Since you would divorce government from country, what is it above the northern imaginary line that you love less than that below the line? Is it the trees? Are the people perhaps less loveable? Are Alberta, Ottawa, and Vancouver less loveable than Denver, Fairbanks and Miami?

If one is going to love something as large and diverse as the U. S., would it not be as easy to love the entire world? It would, I think, except that at this point the declaration of love becomes rather meaningless since one hasn't much choice—"The earth. Love it or leave it?"

Is it possible to love a smaller unit—one's town or neighborhood? Perhaps, but this opens up a discussion that would probably require defining love, which even poets can't seem to do.

I think that you will probably agree, on second thought, that it is because of love of humanity and not a country, that you loathe the government. I've noticed that a lot of solid libertarians and anarchists have failed to make this distinction, so I thought I'd mention it for what it's worth.

Best regards,
(s) Tom Palven

The Response From "Clem"

I'm not sure I wish to comment on Tom Palven's remarks. (I thought my distinction between country and government was well enough drawn.) It's just that many people react like scalded cats if you dare to criticize the government of their country:

"If you don't like our government, why don't you move to another country?" I was recently asked that question by an acquaintance at a local "watering hole" in town. I told him I **had** planned to go home and take a nap, but that I would stay and answer the question in exchange for three minutes of his undivided attention. He agreed, so I enumerated the reasons:

1. I have domestic ties here. All of my family resides in this country.
2. I don't fluently speak a foreign language, so I would be somewhat disadvantaged economically.
3. My option to live here is based on **natural right**, not "legalese" coughed out by fools in Washington, the state capitol, county seat or city hall.
4. My roots on both sides in this country **predate** the government (if "firstest" with the "mostest" matters).
5. Forgetting the other reasons (as you like), this is the only one that counts: **I don't steal for my livelihood. Your pernicious government does.** Now as a matter of **right**, which of us **belongs** in America? **I** or your plundering government?

Well, my friend drank that in along with his beer, and then replied pensively, "You know, 'Clem,' I think you ought to go home and take a nap!"

Cheers,

Clem Johnson

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