

# The Voluntaryist

Whole Number 48

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

February 1991

## An Octopus Would Sooner Release Its Prey: Voluntaryism vs. Educational Statism

By Carl Watner

### Introduction

This article was sparked by the fact I am a parent, responsible for the education of my children, and my perception that in the days before public (state) schools, a large percentage of this country's children were educated at home, or in private or religiously-affiliated schools. A large majority of private school and homeschool parents today are motivated by their concern for religious instruction and their concern over the academic and moral decline in the public schools.

While these are certainly valid reasons for not sending one's children to a public school, my main opposition to the public schools rests on other grounds. First of all, I object to their foundation in compulsion: both in the sense that they are tax-supported, and in the coercive aspect of attendance laws. Our tax-supported, compulsory public schools are the epitome of the totalitarian State. Second, it follows that public schools will necessarily inculcate statism in their students, if for no other reason than "he who pays the piper, will call the tune." The primary job of the public school has never been to educate good people, but rather good citizens that are loyal to the State. Thirdly, to be consistent, the arguments that have been historically used to urge separation of church and State, or to argue against State involvement in education could (and should) have been directed against the very existence of the State itself. For voluntaryists, the question of whether or not the State should involve itself in education resolves itself into the question: should there be a State at all involving itself in education, religion, business, and all the other myriad affairs of humankind. In the educational field, the choice has never been between State education and no education at all. Rather, the choice has been, and will continue to be, between either a compulsory or a voluntary system of education for all people.

### Homeschooling and Voluntaryism

The right to homeschool a child, to engage a private instructor, or to send him to a private school, all derive from the parents' right to care for and teach their child. Homeschooling offers the opportunity of individualized instruction, and allows those who know and love the child the most to provide the finest instruction they can offer. For those parents who choose not to homeschool, for whatever reason, the free market in education would supply private schools specializing in providing each kind of parent-child demand.

From the time this continent was colonized by Europeans until the early part of the 20th Century, homeschooling had been the major form of education. The colonists and pioneers conceived schooling as an extension of the family, the church, and the apprentice system, rather than as a function of the State. Families were not required to obtain permission from the government to educate their children at home. (Most parents would have been incensed at the idea!) Until the late 1800s, homeschooling was simply the exercise of a common law right. Many great people in America have been homeschooled, including Patrick Henry, Thomas Edison, Mark Twain, Andrew Carnegie, the Wright brothers, and a host of well-known political figures, including nine presidents. (That doesn't bode well for any claim that homeschooling produces voluntaryists!) Literacy rates during the era of homeschooling were at least equal to those achieved through mass public schooling (some claim higher). Even as late as 1900, only 10% of American children attended public schools.

Today, the outlook on schooling and the state has changed drastically. Since the U.S. Constitution is silent on the topic of education, most contemporary homeschoolers have claimed the Free Exercise clause of the First Amendment as a religious basis for homeschooling. None (to my knowledge) have asserted their right to homeschool on the basis of the 9th and 10th Amendment claims that the powers and rights not enumerated or delegated to the government are retained and reserved by the people. Contemporary homeschoolers, by focusing on the religious exemption, have ignored the crucial issue of whether or not the State has the broader right to interfere in educational activities. Although English and American jurisprudence have historically respected the traditional family unit, with parental authority over minor children, the right to homeschool (and even use private schools) has now been eroded, and tightly regulated by every one of the fifty states. The reason for this shall become apparent as the history of compulsory schooling is described, but suffice it to say that the state has always recognized the importance of controlling the minds of "its" children.

### Voluntaryism and Compulsion in Rhode Island

This brief overview of the contemporary scene allows us to better appreciate the history and development of compulsory education laws as they first developed in the New England states. The state of Rhode Island is of particular interest since it was one of the last of the original thirteen colonies to impose educational statism on its citizens. Historians of education have tended to look upon Rhode Island unfavorably because they have measured educational progress exclusively in terms of legislation. While there were school laws in Massachusetts and Connecticut as early as the middle of the 17th Century, Rhode Island had none until nearly two hundred years later. As a result, many have concluded that Rhode Islanders were backward in educating their children, even though there were 193 schoolhouses in the state in 1828, when the legislature passed the basis of what is now the modern compulsory education laws. This view has been challenged by a state school commissioner (no less!), who wrote in 1918, in a book published by the

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*"It is a mistake to suppose that government effort and individual effort can live side by side. The habits of mind which belong to each are so different that one must destroy the other. In the course of time there falls alike over everybody concerned the shadow of coming changes. Work which would have been done resolutely and manfully, if no idea of government interference had existed, remains undone, because the constant tendency of government to enlarge its operations is felt everywhere. The history of our race shows us that men will not do things for themselves or for others if they once believe that such things can come without exertion on their own part. There is not sufficient motive. As long as the hope endures that the shoulders of some second person are available, who will offer his own shoulders for the burden? It must also be remembered that unless men are left to their own resources they do not know what is or what is not possible for them. If government half a century ago had provided us all with dinners and breakfasts, it would be the practice of our orators today to assume the impossibility of our providing for ourselves."*

—Auberon Herbert,

"State Education: A Help or Hindrance"  
July 1880.

# The Voluntaryist

Editor: Carl Watner

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## Potpourri From The Editor's Desk

### 1. "Voluntaryism in the Numismatic Industry: How the Certified Market Evolved"

For those who collect or invest in numismatic coins the most significant impact of the Eighties was the evolution of the modern certified coin market. Coins with numismatic value (valuable because of their rarity and condition) traditionally had been graded by dealers who had a direct financial interest in the assessment. Grading of coins has always been an art, and honest differences of opinion of grade were routine, even among experts.

What evolved during the decade of the 1980s was third-party grading. Beginning in 1981, the American Numismatic Association Certification Service began offering the expertise of their professional staff to authenticate and grade rare coins. Some well-known coin dealers, citing independent third-party grading as a major advancement, began making markets in ANACS graded coins. In August 1984, the Numismatic Certification Institute came into existence. A third competitor began offering its services in February 1986. David Hall, a long-time coin dealer, established the Professional Coin Grading Service, and guaranteed that it would pay to the owner of a coin the difference if grade standards were changed or if it incorrectly graded a coin. PCGS's guarantee fostered a new stability and liquidity in the rare coin market because the coins it certified could be traded sight-unseen, like other fungible commodities. Finally, in 1987, a fourth company, Numismatic Guaranty Corporation of America, began grading coins.

Hall's Professional Coin Grading Service also was responsible for a number of other 'firsts' in the coin world. It set up a large dealer network, eventually encompassing over 400 in number. In May 1990, it inaugurated computer grading of rare U.S. coins. Based upon the initial success of the PCGS, the American Numismatic Exchange was begun in 1987. The ANE was the place where guaranteed bid and offer transactions for PCGS coins occurred. This dramatically improved the liquidity of PCGS coins. The Professional Coin Grading Service was also the first to encapsulate coins in plastic holders (what are now referred to as "slabs" in the trade), and was the first to use an eleven point grading system, where previously only five grades had been known. PCGS eventually came to issue "population" reports, reflecting the true scarcity of any particular coin. Never before had anyone been able to count how many of each coin in each grade existed. Scarcity could now be based upon documented data, rather than by educated guesses. The creation of a commodities-type market in rare coins brought Wall Street money to the industry. Kidder Peabody, for example, formed a limited partnership of \$100 million for investment in rare coins, and other brokerage houses like Shearson Lehman now recommend numismatic investments.

Although anyone reading the pages of COIN WORLD will realize that not all collectors and investors are completely satisfied with this transformation of the coin markets, it is interesting to see how a market demand for more professional grading led recognized authorities to offer their services, and how, in turn,

these services were custom-tailored to satisfy market demand. Rather than calling upon the Federal Trade Commission, or some other government bureaucracy, numismatists relied on voluntaryism to create a workable solution to their problems. No one grading service has a monopoly (whether market earned or by government edict). Nor is anyone forced to use the grading services against their will, or to accept their grade as the final say. The point, however, is that certified coins are where the action is, and if one wants to successfully buy and sell rare coins one becomes part of this market. No one now knows where the rare coin market might be going, but we can be sure of one thing—voluntaryism was the underlying basis for a flourishing and thriving coin market during the 1980s.

Addendum:

Unbeknownst to me, at the time of the writing of this item the Professional Coin Grading Service was being investigated by the Federal Trade Commission. In early September 1990, the firm signed a consent decree with the FTC. PCGS admitted to no wrong, and only agreed to do what it had already been doing—objectively grading coins, and making certain that its marketing statements were truthful. As Phil Schuyler, author of THE WINNING EDGE, a well known coin newsletter, put it, "Requiring PCGS to do these things via a consent decree [was] like requiring that in the future, yardsticks be thirty-six inches long."

Mr. Schuyler also noted how ironic it was that the FTC chose to go after the one organization that had gone the farthest in accomplishing its own stated goals of consumer protection and elimination of fraud.

Four years of a dealer-owned, market-oriented entity have done more to expunge the business of misrepresentation and protect consumers than twenty years of regulations and indictments ever could. What's more, since the PCGS solution made use of free-market economics rather than interfering with them, the pursuit hasn't cost the government a cent. On the contrary, the cleanup has been profitable. (excerpted from Issue 150 of THE WINNING EDGE, Box 915, Danbury, Conn. 06813)

Kudos to Mr. Schuyler for understanding how the free market works, and to PCGS for doing more to eliminate fraud and misrepresentation in the coin industry than the government could or would!

### 2. "The Lesser of Two Evils Is Still Evil"

Jim Bristol, in an article on "Conscription, Conscience, and Resistance," in the January/February 1990 issue of The War Resisters League THE NONVIOLENT ACTIVIST, illustrates the truth that fighting legislation (or statism in general) is not a voluntaryist method. In discussing the opposition to the Burke-Wadsworth Bill of October 1940, which directed the first peacetime registration for the draft in U.S. history, he writes that those who worked so hard to include a provision for the registration of conscientious objectors in the legislation were, also, on principle, opposed to conscription. But in accepting what appeared to them to be the lesser of two evils (a registration bill with a conscientious objector provision), a subtle process was set in motion in which "we strive(d) to modify that to which we (were) 'unalterably opposed.' In working to insert our provision in a piece of legislation, we tend to give tacit approval to that legislation and to assume that its enactment is a fait accompli." (emphasis added)

As we have stated before, the lesser of two evils is still evil. By condoning the passage of legislation which sanctioned the draft, even if their provision made it less onerous to conscientious objectors, opponents of registration and the draft were compromising their principles.

### 3. "Are Mules Smarter than Politicians?"

During his first term in office, Franklin Delano Roosevelt and federal agents presided over "the ugly spectacles of perfectly good fields of cotton, wheat, and corn being plowed under, and healthy cattle, sheep, and pigs being slaughtered and buried in mass graves." One of the biggest problems in plowing under cotton was convincing the mules to trample the crop; they had been trained to walk between the rows—not on them.

—Lawrence Reed

in Mises Institute's THE FREE MARKET, June 1990

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## From the Editor: The Chickens Come Home to Roost— The Master Plan for “Tightening” the Noose’

Auberon Herbert, a 19th Century English voluntaryist, once wrote that “time is the greatest of logicians.” No one, 200 years ago had the foresight to predict that the government’s insatiable appetite for revenue and the use of U.S. government-issued paper money and coins would lead to the eventual control and monitoring of all economic transactions in the country. Nevertheless, this is coming to pass. There is now enough “writing on the wall” to see that the chickens are coming home to roost. The use and acceptance of government goodies inevitably leads to restrictions on individual freedom.

One of the continuing themes in THE VOLUNTARYIST is the statist destruction of private property and the erosion of financial privacy in the United States. In THE VOLUNTARYIST, No. 27 of August 1987, I described “the threat to your stash of cash,” and in No. 30 of February 1988, I discussed the new federal law and form for employment eligibility. In No. 34 of October 1988, I mentioned U.S. Customs’ regulations regarding the declaration of cash upon exit or entry to the U.S. Within the last year, the IRS has started to require social security numbers for dependents as young as two, so that they can check exemption claims on federal income tax returns. There have also been calls for an “employment identity card” that workers would have to present to employers at the time they are hired. Carried to its logical conclusion, we can look forward to local birth registrars assigning social security numbers to newborn infants. Henceforth, every person born in the United States will carry a government number from cradle to grave.

However, the above is not what prompted the writing of this article. I have recently read a piece by Fred Rowe of House of Onyx (Box 261, Greenville, Kentucky 42345) titled “The IRS Electronic Monster,” in which he sets forth his predictions about the future state of economic freedoms in these United States. As one of the major gem dealers in the world, Mr. Rowe has an interest in promoting investment in gemstones, which he labels as “the last form of undetectable wealth left in the world!” Despite his incentive to predict that doomsday will be here frighteningly soon, the “master plan” that Mr. Rowe sketches is too realistic to ignore.

The basic elements of the statist master plan are 1) to create a cashless society; 2) collect and process all information on financial transactions via computers; 3) take this data and render every citizen and resident of the country a tax return. Another aspect of the plan involves electronic surveillance of private assets, such as cash and precious metals, by the government. Government agents already have the technology to electronically scan safe deposit boxes, or even your home, and determine the amount(s) and location(s) of gold and silver. This technology could be expanded to search for cash money, if our currency was made with metallic thread-like bar codes embedded in the paper.

The prediction that a new colored paper money will replace existing United States currency has been around for years, yet nothing has happened. Nevertheless, the Treasury department has just finished construction of a new printing plant in Fort Worth, with the capability of embedding metallic threads in new issues of paper money. If this were to occur, the government would be able to keep track of nearly all cash transactions. Within the last year and a half, Don Regan, former secretary of the Treasury and White House Chief of Staff under Reagan, publicly urged a surprise recall of all greenback dollars. The “war on the dollar” would assist the “war on drugs” by replacing all old money with new and would make it more difficult for the blackmarket to operate. According to the Regan plan, at the end of ten days, all “old” style cash would become worthless. Part of the Regan plan also involved requiring anyone who turned in more than \$1000 in cash to file an IRS report, explaining its source and verifying that it had been reported as income and taxed accordingly.

Like the closing of the gold window to foreigners in 1971, it

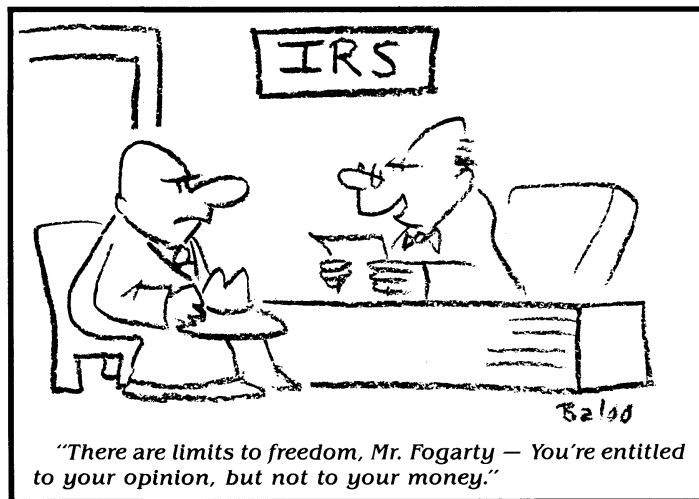
is possible that foreign-held greenbacks might be confiscated as well. There is a tremendous amount of U.S. cash in foreign hands, for which both the U.S. and foreign governments would like to account. If the foreign recall were not done at the same time as the domestic one in the U.S. it is likely that smuggling of greenbacks out of the U.S. would take place on a vast scale. Domestically, those holding suspicious amounts of greenbacks would have to look for some way to cash in their assets, and getting them in the hands of foreigners would be one way to succeed. Whether this ploy would work is another question. Likely, foreign governments would demand the surrender of all U.S. currency held by their citizens and banks, claiming that unless the money was turned over by their central bank to the U.S. Treasury by a certain time, it would become worthless. The actions of the Treasury will be an excuse for foreign government to expropriate U.S. currency from their citizens, too.

The IRS—twice as big as the CIA and five times larger than the FBI. It controls more information about Americans than any other government agency.

—David Burnham, A LAW UNTO ITSELF

Such world-wide confiscation will mark the end of the dollar, but by that time we will be such financial slaves that it will be too late to be worried about it. Although it may be impossible to do away with cash transactions, the IRS is making every effort to create a cashless society or at least one in which all major transactions are known to the authorities. It will not be difficult to know which bank received new batches of currency and then require the bank to keep records of who, in turn, received it. Financial bank cards already make it very easy for the IRS to be privy to financial dealings. A social security number is now a prerequisite to opening a bank account, selling real estate, and obtaining legal employment.

In addition to everyone using an assigned number, two other elements of the IRS plan are already in place. Both large cash transactions and not-so-large contractual payments to individuals must be reported on special IRS forms. Although the cash reporting requirement was at \$10,000, the IRS has had it lowered to \$3,000 this past August. It is also demanding legislation that insurance companies be required to file reports of claim payments of \$10 or more on IRS Form 1099. Before the advent of powerful IRS computers, it was difficult for the IRS to verify that the recipient of a payment actually reported it as income. With current matching capability, however, the IRS is in a position to not only know whether you filed a tax return, but whether or not you omitted the reported 1999 income on your return. Their new computers will even permit them to prepare tax returns without any input from the taxpayers themselves. In keeping with the concept that your income and property belong to the State, it is logical to expect that eventually the IRS will send out tax bills at the end of every year. No more April 15th, unless it takes



## Education

*Continued from Page 1*

Commission on Education, "It is, and has been, characteristic of Rhode Island school history that *progress and improvement precede legislation.*"

Charles Carroll, author of *PUBLIC EDUCATION IN RHODE ISLAND*, from which the foregoing quote is taken, in describing the condition of pre-19th Century schooling in Rhode Island, referred to it as being "alive with educational activity," however lacking in "central direction and control." He explained the state of affairs in the following manner:

Regarding the education of the child ... as primarily a responsibility resting upon the individual, parent, or family, there were, until education became socialized and the state provided free public schools, several ways in which this obligation might be fulfilled:

First, the parent, himself or herself, might become the family teacher. ...

Second, the teacher might be a professional instructor exercising his calling as an individual entrepreneur, or perhaps combining a vocation and avocation, as did William Turpin, the innkeeper-schoolmaster of Providence. ...

Thirdly, co-operation is one of the most economical solutions of the problem of supplying a common need, and this rule applied to education as well as to other necessities. In some instances in Rhode Island co-operation functioned as a broadening of family responsibility to embrace several families. In other instances, co-operation developed in neighborhood groups, ... The Society of Friends was the first religious organization to provide a school for its children.

Fourthly, out of the co-operative school organization developed the incorporated school society, which was still a form of voluntary organization.

**"A child educated only at school is an uneducated child."**

**—George Santayana**

What made Rhode Islanders unique was their particular view of religion and schooling. Like the people of neighboring colonies, they held that religion was the end of human existence and human institutions. They did not believe, however, that this end could be promoted by the aid or interference of the state. "They contended that the state would do the highest service to religion by letting it alone." In the eyes of the early Rhode Islanders, schooling was a religious function, not a civil one. Thus, they rejected the idea that education was a responsibility of the state. They adhered to this belief from the mid-1600s until the late 1700s, when the agitation for state aid to education began. According to the author of an 1848 article on "Common Schools in Rhode Island," early residents of the state believed that, "To compel a citizen to support a school would have been to violate the rights of conscience. To compel him to educate his children (against his will) would have been an invasion of his rights."

### **"The History of Compulsory Education in New England"**

In a book by this title, John Perrin, in 1896, traced the roots of compulsory education back to the Protestant Reformation. "The great movement, which began with Luther's breaking the ecclesiastical shackles which Rome had placed on the Christian world, had transferred from the church to the state all matters pertaining to the instruction of youth." Tax support of education and compulsory attendance laws have their origin in the desire that everyone be educated, which accompanied the Reformation. "The principle that the safety and the strength of a city lie in an educated and a moral citizenship, and that other principle, which is its sequence, that the state has not only the right to establish schools, but that it is its duty to do so, and, if need be, to compel the attendance of its youth upon them, are both Lutheran in their origin."

These ideas summarize the basic doctrine of Martin Luther's

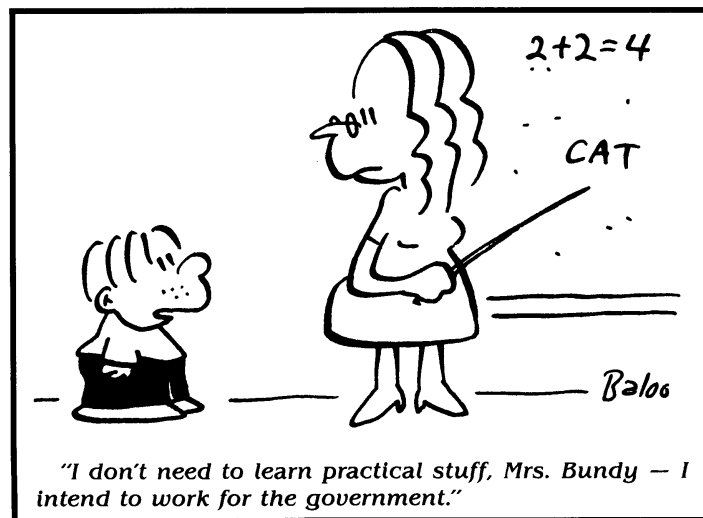
sermon, "On the Duty of Sending Children to School," which was delivered in 1524. He maintained that it is both the right and duty of the state to compel parents to educate their children by sending them to state schools.

If the government can compel such citizens as are fit for military service to bear spear and rifle, to mount ramparts, and perform other martial duties in time of war; how much more it has a right to compel the people to send their children to school, because in this case we are warring with the devil, whose object it is secretly to exhaust our cities and principalities of their strong men.

There was little practical difference between the implementation of Luther's doctrine in the German states and the New England colonies of Massachusetts and Connecticut. The Puritan laws of 1642 and 1647 in Massachusetts, and the school law of 1650 in Connecticut, all embraced the principle of compulsory, tax-supported schooling. Samuel Blumenfeld in *IS PUBLIC EDUCATION NECESSARY?* opines that it was these laws that helped make the "transition from Bible commonwealth to republicanism." Advocates of State-controlled education have always used it as a means of inculcating the entire population with their views. In this respect, there was no difference between the Lutheran reformists and the New England Puritans. Murray Rothbard sums it up by saying, "From the beginning of American history, the desire to mold, instruct, and render obedient the mass of the population was the major impetus behind the drive for public schooling. In colonial days, public schooling was used as a device to suppress religious dissent, as well as to imbue unruly servants with the virtues of obedience to the State."

By 1817, there was a movement afoot in Boston to expand the tax-supported school system. In a study authorized by the Boston School Committee and released that year, Charles Bulfinch claimed that public elementary schools were unnecessary because 96% of the town's children already attended some sort of school. Blumenfeld, citing Bulfinch, goes on to say that "most parents who sent their children to private-tuition schools did not look upon the expense as a burden: they paid the cost willingly out of love and a sense of duty. This, in turn, made them better parents. They were more likely to devote their attention to the business of education, 'where a small weekly stipend is paid by them for this object, than where the whole expense is defrayed by the public treasury.' Bulfinch further implied that moral degeneration would result if public taxes usurped the province of private responsibilities. Family solidarity might break down if government assumed the cost of what rightfully belonged to the private sphere. 'It ought never to be forgotten,' he argued, 'that the office of instruction belongs to the parents, and that to the schoolmaster is delegated a portion only of the parental character and rights'."

A full-fledged, city-wide school system in Boston was not the result of the failure of the free market. Rather, it was the result of a unique combination of seemingly-opposed interest groups,



all attempting to use public education as a means of political influence and of strengthening the hand of the government, which they hoped to control. The religious conservatives, the Unitarians, and the socialists all saw public education as the perfect vehicle to capture. Each of these groups was more interested in "modifying the sentiments and opinions of the rising generations," according to government standards (which they would determine), than in diffusing elementary knowledge. "The socialists saw public education as the necessary instrument for the reformation of human character before a socialist society could be brought about. The Unitarians saw public education as the means of perfecting man and eradicating evil ... (and) as the means of exerting social and cultural control over a changing society. ... As for the religious conservatives, they were persuaded to see public education as the means of preserving the American system of government and maintaining the predominantly Anglo-Saxon culture against the rising tide of Catholic immigration." With all three of these powerful groups agitating for public education, it was no wonder that the public education movement triumphed.

### **The English Voluntarists Oppose State Education**

With respect to the history of State education, English and American history have tended to run parallel. In England, limited state aid to education was introduced in 1833; full tax support of schools came in 1881. The opposition to state aid was led by a group of people known collectively as voluntarists, because they supported the voluntary principle in education. Voluntarism—"consistent opposition to all state aid and interference"—arose out of the Non-conformist and Dissenting tradition in England, which itself derived from the attempt of the Anglican church to monopolize its position in English society. The Dissenters, for religious reasons, preferred establishing their own schools, and during the 18th Century their academies were some of the greatest English schools of their day. People such as Herbert Spencer, Edward Baines, and Edward Miall were the most well-known voluntarists. (Miall and Baines ultimately abandoned their defense of private education for political reasons later in their careers.)

The principal arguments put forth by the voluntarists were both practical and theoretical. "On the empirical side, the English voluntarists argued at length that the progress of voluntary education had been satisfactory, and that there was no need for state interference. On the theoretical side, voluntarists used their moral, social, and economic principles to build a formidable case against state education." Herbert Spencer's major objections to national education, published in the early 1840s in his letters on the "Proper Sphere of Government," neatly summarize the voluntarist position:

1. (National education) necessarily involves a uniform system of moral and intellectual training, and that the destruction of that variety of character, so essential to a national activity of mind, must naturally result.
2. That it must take away that grand stimulus to exertion and improvement on the part of the teacher, arising from honourable competition that must ever exist under the natural arrangement.
3. That, considering the improbability of any alterations in future ages, it practically assumes that we are capable of pointing out to our descendants, what kinds of knowledge are the most valuable, and what are the best modes of acquiring them—an assumption very far from the truth.
4. That it would be liable to the same perversions as a national religion, and would, in all probability, become ultimately as corrupt.
5. That, if it is intended to be an equitable institution, it must be necessarily presumed that all men will agree to adopt it—a presumption which can never be borne out.
6. That it would be used by government as a means of blinding the people—of repressing all aspirations after better things—and of keeping them in a state of subserviency.

From abstract reasoning, and from the evident analogy with existing institutions, it is, therefore, concluded, that national education would, in the end, be a curse, rather than a blessing.

*"Will society ever revolt against the 'political surplus' and the accumulation of power? If such a thing were ever possible, only a society which had itself overcome its own internal conflicts would ever embark upon such a revolution; ... But there is a way for Society... That way is Education, the education of a generation with a truly social outlook and a truly social will. Education is the great implement which is more or less under the control of Society; Society does not know how to utilize it. Social education is the exact reverse of political propaganda. Such propaganda whether spread by the government or by a party, seeks to 'suggest' a ready-made will to the members of the society, i.e., to implant in their minds the notion that such a will derives from their own, their innermost being. Social education on the other hand, seeks to arouse and develop in the minds of its pupils the spontaneity of fellowship which is innate in all unravaged human souls and which harmonizes very well with the development of personal existence and personal thought. This can be accomplished only by the complete overthrow of the political trend which nowadays dominates education throughout the world."*

—Martin Buber,  
"Society And The State"

Many of the predictions of the 19th Century voluntarist opponents of State education have come to pass. A study of the historical record, by Jack High and Jerome Ellig in *THE THEORY OF MARKET FAILURE*, supports the arguments of the voluntarists. In both the United States and Britain, education was "widely demanded and supplied" privately. At least until the mid-19th Century, attendance was not compulsory in either country, and yet most children did receive some education during their childhood years. History shows that even working class parents in both countries patronized private schools, and often paid school fees that fully covered the costs of educating their children. When the government intervened in the educational marketplace, it usually displaced private education, because private schools could not compete economically with state-supported schools. Private education, which was definitely more diverse and more consumer oriented, was stifled by public education. In short, State aid to education came "at the expense of, rather than in addition to, private efforts."

E.G. West, author of *EDUCATION AND THE STATE*, reinforces these conclusions with his own observations:

(T)he majority of (the English) people in the first half of the 19th century did become literate (in the technical sense) largely by their own efforts. Moreover, if the government played any role at all in this sphere it was one of saboteur! As long ago as the first few years of the 19th century it was a subject for government *complaint* that the ordinary people *had become literate*. For the government feared that too many people were developing the 'wrong' uses of literacy by belonging to secret 'corresponding societies' and by reading seditious pamphlets. ... Far from subsidizing literacy, the early 19th century English governments placed severe taxes on paper in order to discourage the exercise of the public's reading and writing abilities. Yet, despite this obstacle, by the time the government came round to subsidizing on a tiny scale in the 1830s, between 2/3 and 3/4 of the people ... were already literate. ... The notion held by many people that had it not been for the (S)ate they or at least most of their neighbors would never have become educated, is a striking monument to the belief of the Victorian lawyer, Dicey, that people's opinions and convictions eventually become conditioned by the legislated institutions they make themselves.



### Why Is Education So Important to the State?

Education is of the utmost importance to the state, because "where the government can't control the people by force, it had better control what they think." To determine what they think, it must dominate and control the institutions in society which disseminate information and educational services. To rule by controlling what people think is far less expensive than to rule with guns. This "manufacture of consent" is largely achieved by State control of schooling. The State seizes children from their parents for at least 1/3 of the day, 75% of the year, teaches them what the authorities say they shall be taught, and expropriates from the parents and others the funds necessary for this to occur. The nature of what is happening is so little understood that the result is called "free public education." As Isabel Paterson noted, this is one of the most absolute contradiction of facts by terminology of which our language is capable. As she adds:

Every politically controlled educational system will inculcate the doctrine of state supremacy, ... Once that doctrine has been accepted, it becomes an almost super-human task to break the stranglehold of the political power over the life of the citizen. It has had his body, his property, and mind in its clutches from infancy. An octopus would sooner release its prey. A tax-supported compulsory educational system is the complete model of the totalitarian state.

One good mother is worth a hundred school teachers, because her manners, customs, and language are carried through life.

—attributed to Herbert Spencer

We, both as parents and children, are so conditioned by the State around us that few of us see through the "divine right of the State." This successful indoctrination via public education can only be described as one of the propaganda miracles of the world. It is easy to agree with Samuel Blumenfeld's assessment that "experience has taught us that the most potent and significant expression of statism is a State educational system. Without it, statism is (nearly) impossible. With it, the State can, and has, become everything." This helps explain why education is one of the most important of political questions. Statist schooling everywhere, promotes nationalism through the teaching of history, civics, and social studies. This point also helps explain why soon after establishing compulsory attendance laws and public schools, the state establishes "teachers' colleges." Control the teachers and it becomes easier to control what their students are taught.

The State makes a feeble attempt to justify its role by arguing that it must provide children with the necessary reading and writing skills to enable them to participate in its democratic

system of government. It also argues that it must supply schooling so that children will be able to eventually provide for themselves and not become a burden on the welfare system. These alleged "civic" and "economic" reasons really mask the state's true purpose in socializing and politicizing children. State education is a form of social control which enables the State to cast children into a behavioral mold acceptable to the politicians, and which practically assures the continued existence of the State.

This is not to say that values and ideologies would be absent from the free market schooling. The difference would be that no single institution, like the state, would be able to dominate the educational scene. For education, etymologically, (from 'educare') means "to lead out," and someone must decide where the child is to be "led." At times in the past, it was the parents, the family unit, or the religious body with which they associated, that directed education, but these social forces have been greatly weakened by the State.

### Conclusion: Freedom In Education Is Not a Special Case

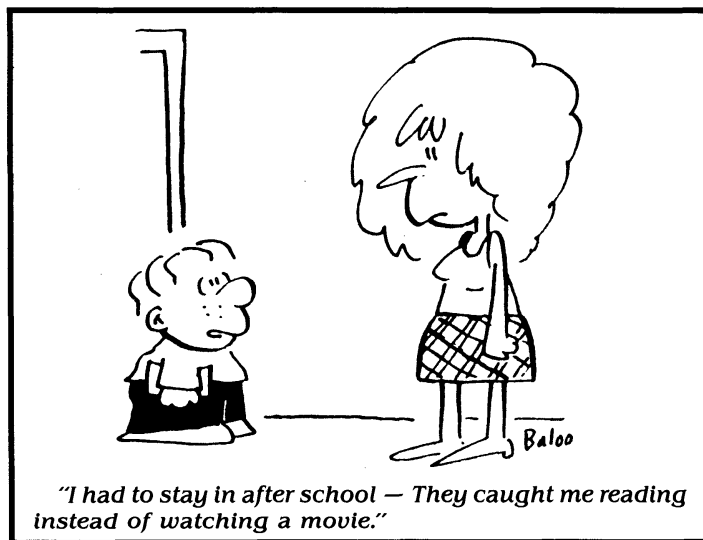
The arguments for educational freedom and freedom from State interference have usually suffered from a lack of consistency. Few people are prepared to argue that since the State sets educational standards and provides education, it therefore should set minimum parental standards in areas such as the feeding and clothing of children. Yet, the same reasons used to defend educational statism could be used to defend state involvement in these other areas. Few people have understood that freedom in education is not a special case, but rather embraces the general argument against the State. Instead, most people lose sight of the forest for the trees, by arguing about the State's role in many areas undreamt of by earlier advocates of "limited" government, such as whether sex education and Biblical creationism should be taught in public school, health inoculations, teacher certification, building code requirements for schools, lunch programs, busing and transportation programs, non-discrimination policies, taxation programs to support this interference, etc. The simplest argument is that if there were no State, these issues would resolve themselves in a free market for schools. Furthermore, a sort of Gresham's law would operate in a free market school environment: in the absence of state-subsidized schools, those schools best serving the consumer would achieve success, and those not pleasing enough customers would soon fail.

To advocate liberty is not to advocate untaught children or bad schools, but rather excellence in education. The voluntary principle does not guarantee results, but only that we have the possibility of choosing the best available. "Liberty is the chief cause of excellence; ... it would cease to be Liberty if you proscribed everything inferior. Cultivate giants if you please, but do not stifle dwarfs."

Isabel Paterson once asked, "Who taught Americans to drive?" "It was not done in school and could not have been." The answer to her question is that Henry Ford and his co-workers in the automobile industry showed Americans how to drive by making the automobile widely available to the common man. Such teaching was done by the free enterprise system on a voluntary basis: a willing customer buying a wanted product from a willing seller, and then learning to use it. There was no element of compulsion about 'teaching' people to drive. Those who wanted to and could afford the 'lessons' learned; those who wanted to and could not afford the lessons, waited till they had the opportunity; those who didn't want to learn, were not forced to.

This example conveys the voluntarist message quite clearly and concisely. There is no more reason for State involvement in education than there is for the State in any other area of life. The advocates of public education should rely on persuasion, not coercion, to bring about their desired goals. Instead, we have a system of education which has become the most despicable and insidious system of teaching propaganda and indoctrinating the future generation that has ever existed in this country. It rests on compulsion, destroys parental responsibility for the education of one's young, and is generally ineffective in creating

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## Chickens

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them that long to process all the information! Most of their billings will have already been paid via payroll withholding. Those owing the government will probably find it cheaper to pay their IRS bills than to protest them. Thus, the IRS will achieve another milestone in its "voluntary compliance" program. The IRS has already scored a propaganda coup by convincing Americans that they are the government agency that sends them a check every spring. And undoubtedly more Americans know the amount of the refund they received, than know how much tax they actually paid.

The whole picture is chilling to say the least. What sort of world will our children live in? How will they possibly be able to avoid or evade what the future seems to portend for them? The idea of an IRS master plan may seem too conspiratorial, but even if it hasn't been completely thought out by those in authority, the pieces fit together all too smoothly. Coupled with existing regulations requiring reports of international transfers of currency and negotiable instruments, reporting requirements on foreign bank accounts and foreign held-assets (as well as U.S. assets owned by foreigners), and domestic records of large cash transactions, all economic freedoms will soon be gone. It is not going too far to conclude that government, computer-based information systems will soon keep track of every living person in this country. It remains to be seen what we or our children will do them. Although I don't have the answers to these pessimistic questions, let us remain up-beat by remembering that "where there is a will, there is a way." "The man who truly understands freedom, will find a way to be free." ▮

## Education

*Continued from Page 3*

thinking youngsters. But then, that is its unstated purpose and agenda. Thinking slaves are dangerous because they eventually begin to question, and then disobey, authority.

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## Potpourri

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### 4. Free Or Freer? (Whose Chain Is Longest?)

The following is C. Ellen Shaffer's contribution, slightly abridged. Under the title, "Free Or Freer?," she writes:

"If a man or group of men can force me to act against my will and against my conscience, then I am a slave. If my liberties are controlled, regulated and sold to me, then they are no longer liberties, but privileges. If one person or many can command specific performance from me without paying me for my performance, I am a slave. ...

"My status as a slave does not depend on the kind of master I have. My status of slave arises out of my belief that I am under the absolute power of another.

"Today most Americans would run out and buy a walking license if a government agent demanded it. If their masters demanded they purchase a permit to mow their lawn, most of them would comply. This belief that they are under the absolute power of someone else makes them a slave. It matters not that the masters have not yet demanded such license or permit. What matters is the fact that the slaves would comply if ordered to do so.

"There is no doubt, this slavery of the American people has been self-imposed; for rape is not rape if one does not struggle. They went meekly into chains while murmuring 'render unto Caesar.' It was quite a feat to turn the posterity of Freedom loving men of courage into sniveling cowards who welcomed servitude over the animating contest of liberty and responsibility for themselves.

"The posterity of Freeman now proclaim themselves to be 'freer' and will continue to do so even when they must shout it from the confines of a concentration camp. They will be so sure that somewhere someone is more in bondage than they. ... If we are only free to exercise and enjoy massah's privileges, then we're not free in any sense of the word."

—From AMERICA TODAY, July 1990 ▮

## Try This On Your Friends

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strained. Only in another society where evil has entered the scene is any government deemed necessary, by this simple theory that government is a necessary evil to cope with the evil in man.

### Where, How, and Why?

Now consider as the other extreme a society in which every man is wholly evil. Still using the same principle that political rulership should be employed to the extent of the evil in man, we would then have a society in which complete political rulership of all the affairs of everybody would be called for — a totalitarian dictatorship in the extreme. One man would rule all. But who would serve as the dictator? However he were to be selected and affixed to the political throne, he would surely be a totally evil person since all men are evil. And this society would then be ruled by a totally evil dictator possessed of unlimited political power. And how, in the name of logic, could anything short of total evil be its consequence? How could it be any better than having no political rulership at all in that society?

Here we see the political paradox I would pose: *When society is viewed in terms of the two pure patterns in a moral sense—good and evil—we find that political rulership becomes either totally unnecessary or totally ineffective.*

As people in society progress toward "good," government becomes less and less necessary. As people in society progress toward "evil," government becomes less and less effective.

Then at what point does government become most necessary and most effective? Why at this point and no other?

Does it make sense to say that when good and evil are compounded in society, political rulership comes to attain a virtue denied to it otherwise? Can one man make another man good by force at some precise point of a mixture of good and evil? At what precise point? How and why?

["Try This On Your Friends" is reprinted from William Johnson's FAITH AND FREEDOM, January 1955 issue.] ▮

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## Try This On Your Friends

By F.A. Harper

The elections are over and the campaign dirt has settled a bit. Do you enjoy riddles? This one challenges many students of liberty. Once we see the problem, lack of a solution will bedevil us until we can solve it logically to the satisfaction of our own conscience.

We want to answer this question: To what extent should politicians be enthroned to rule affairs in our daily lives? What should be the proper domain of political rulership—that is, government?

It would seem at first glance that the principle by which many answer is simple and easy to grasp: "People should be ruled only to the extent they are evil." That is, they say, only evil acts should be restrained; good acts should be unrestrained, for men should be free to engage in all that is good. Seemingly easy, isn't it?

But we should ask the next logical question: What precisely is good and what is evil? Only after we answer that will the political domain have been staked out with markers we can really see, should we accept the above seemingly simple guide. But that is not the question I want to pose here. I want, instead, to focus attention on a political paradox in the preceding question, for which an answer seemed so simple.

### The Riddle

To see the paradox clearly, let us look at good and evil in their pure forms, as a chemist deals with elements before he deals with complex compounds. Let us first look at a society that is wholly good, and then at one that is wholly evil.

A society of wholly good men calls for no political rulership whatsoever. For there surely is no need of ruling men who are made in the *complete* image of God, as all of these would be. Political rulership has no tenure of office in Heaven. Since evil acts wouldn't exist in such a society, control by government is neither called for nor proper. No man should control any other man to any extent. All would enjoy complete freedom, unre-

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