
The Voluntaryist

Whole Number 57

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

August 1992

What We Believe And Why

By Carl Watner

[Editor's Note: In the April issue of THE VOLUNTARYIST I asked for suggestions for the text of a brochure suitable as a general introduction to voluntaryist thinking. In the meantime, The Customer Company of Benicia, Ca. (who operates the CHEAPER! Stores) asked me to assist in the preparation of an article (serving the same purpose) for their shopping bags. The following text was submitted to them.

Readers and subscribers are encouraged to prepare their own "What I Believe," which would entail a setting down of their own personal philosophy. It need not be entirely political at all; perhaps a summation of the wisdom and reflection distilled from their years of living and action. Please submit to THE VOLUNTARYIST. I would like to publish a series of these "What I Believe.")

For years we at CHEAPER! have promoted our ideas about freedom and self-reliance. We want you to understand what we believe and why we believe as we do.

We believe that the following principles of ownership are self-evident:

1. Every person, by virtue of being human, owns (controls) his* own mind, body, and actions. No other person can think with your mind nor order you about unless you permit them to do so; and

2. Every person owns those material things which he has made, earned, or acquired peacefully and honestly from other people. From these premises, it follows that

3. No person, or group of people, has the right to threaten or use physical force against the person or property of another because such coercive actions violate the rights of self-ownership (see #1 above) and property ownership (see #2 above).

4. Each person has the absolute right to do with his property what he pleases (this being what ownership means), as long as it does not physically invade another's personal property, without the other's consent. People can inter-relate in only two ways, peacefully or coercively, but only the former is compatible with the principles of ownership (see #1 and #2 above).

5. It is right to make a profit, and right to keep all you earn.

6. A pure free market is right because it is the only socio-economic system in accord with the above precepts.

"Some Moral Implications"

7. We believe if an activity is wrong for an individual, then it is wrong for a group of individuals. For example, majority rule cannot legitimize taxation. If it is wrong for an individual to steal, then it cannot be right for 51% of the voters to sanction stealing from the 49% who oppose it.

8. We believe in the voluntary principle (that people should interact peacefully or not at all.) Just as we must not force our ideas of 'better' on other people, so they may not impose their idea of 'better' on us.

9. We believe the superior man can only be sure of his liberty if the inferior man is secure in his rights. We can only secure our own liberty by preserving it for the most despicable and obnoxious among us, lest we set precedents that could reach us.

10. We believe that power of any sort corrupts, but political power is especially vicious. "A good politician is about as unthinkable as an honest burglar."

"Some Economic Implications"

11. We believe that actions have consequences; that there is no such thing as a free lunch. Somebody **always** pays.

12. We believe everything that comes into existence in this world is the product of human energy, plus natural resources

multiplied by the use of tools. Invariably, men and women will produce more if each controls what they produce.

13. We believe the voluntary principle provides us with an opportunity to improve our standard of living through the benefits resulting from the division of labor. However, it does not guarantee results. Nature will always be stingy and perverse regardless of what kind of social structure we live under.

14. We believe taxation is theft. The State is the only social institution which extracts its income and wealth by force. No government possesses any magical power to create real wealth. Whatever it has obtained, it has "taken" (stolen) from us, our ancestors, and, unwittingly, from future generations.

15. We believe the only way to know what value people place on things is to watch them voluntarily trade and exchange in the unfettered marketplace.

16. We believe an individual's right to control his own life and property does not depend on how much he earns or owns.

17. We believe the economic marketplace is all about **self**-government. You govern your own life. You make choices about what to eat, what to wear, when to get up, what job to take, how to budget your money, where to live, and what to do in your free time. A majority of others doesn't do this for you. By not subjecting their personal lives to political decision-making, millions of Americans are able to live together in peace and prosperity.

18. We believe all the material wealth in the world is useless if its possessor has neither freedom of spirit nor liberty of body.

"Some Political Implications"

19. We believe that freedom and liberty are not bestowed upon us by government. Liberty is the absence of physical coercion among human beings and comes about naturally when no one does anything to forcefully interfere with another. Some people use violence toward others out of frustration because they cannot control them, but violence never really works in the long run.

20. We believe that "the man who truly understands freedom will always find a way to be free," because freedom is an attitude of mind. Although a prisoner loses his liberty, he may remain free so long as he realizes that no one can control his mind/spirit except himself.

21. We believe that each one of us is the key to a better world. The only person you can actually control is yourself. Light your **own** candle! Labor in your own "garden," doing your best to present society with one improved unit. Live responsibly and honestly, take care of yourself and your family. Don't waste your time waiting for the other guy. If you take care of the means, the end will take care of itself.

22. We believe common sense and reason tell us that nothing can be right by legislative enactment if it is not already right by nature. If the politicians direct us to do something that reason opposes, we should defy the government. And we certainly don't need politicians to order us to do something that our reason would have told us to do, anyhow. This being the case, who needs coercive government?

23. We believe that although certain goods and services are necessary for our survival, it is not essential that they be provided by coercive political governments. However, just because we do not advocate that governments provide these goods and services (for example, public education) does not mean that we are against that activity (education) itself. Just because we recognize that people have a right to engage in certain activities (for example, drinking alcoholic beverages) does not necessarily mean that we endorse or participate in such activities ourselves. What we oppose is compulsion in support of any end; what we support is voluntaryism in all its many forms.

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The Voluntaryist

Editor: Carl Watner

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Potpourri from The Editor's Desk

1. "Compulsory Social Security Numbers"

The use of identifying government numbers is "in and of itself dehumanizing. A human being is reduced to a number. This is like that scene in *ROOTS* where Kunta Kinte is whipped into giving up his name. The analogy is exact—when Africans were unloaded from the slave ships a numbered plate was hung around their necks to identify them at the auction block. The Nazis used this, too. In the camps a name was nothing—the only thing that counted was the number tattooed on the prisoner's wrist." The end result of our use of numbers is the same—the dehumanization of man.

—Wynn Schaible in *THE ANUMERALIST*,
Box 2084, Norristown, PA 19404
December 1991.

2. "Tax Avoidance 100 Years Ago"

"I'm aiming to go far West in the spring," he said. "This here country, it's too settled-up for me. The politicians are a-swarmin' in already, and ma'am if'n there's any worst pest than grass-hoppers it surely is politicians. Why, they'll tax the lining out'n a man's pockets to keep up these here county-seat towns! I don't see nary use for a county, nohow. We all got along happy and content without 'em.

"Feller come along and taxed me last summer. Told me I got to put in every last least thing I had. So I put in Tom and Jerry, my horses, at fifty dollars apiece, and my oxen yoke, Buck and Bright, I put in at fifty, and my cow at thirty-five.

"Is that all you got?" he says. Well, I told him I'd put in five children I reckoned was worth a dollar apiece.

"Is that all?" he says. 'How about your wife?' he says.

"By Mighty! I says to him. 'She says I don't own her and I don't aim to pay no taxes on her,' I says. And I didn't."

"Why, Mr. Edwards, it is news to us that you have a family," said Ma. "Mr. Ingalls said nothing of it."

"I didn't know it myself," Pa explained. "Anyway, Edwards, you don't have to pay taxes on your wife and children."

"He wanted a big tax list," said Mr. Edwards. "Politicians, they take pleasure a-prying into a man's affairs and I aimed to please 'em. It makes no matter. I don't aim to pay taxes. I sold the relinquishment on my claim and in the spring when the collector comes around I'll be gone from there. Got no children and no wife, no-how."

—Laura Ingalls Wilder, *THE LONG WINTER*,
New York: Harper & Row, 1940, pp. 112-113.

3. "100 Per Cent"

They are afraid of the old
for their memory,
They are afraid of the young
for their innocence,
They are afraid of Marx,
They are afraid of
Lenin,

They are afraid of truth,
They are afraid of freedom,
They are afraid of
democracy,
They are afraid of Human
Rights Charter,
They are afraid of socialism.
So why the hell are WE
afraid of Them?

—By the punk group Plastic People of the Universe.

4. "Political Obligation"

"But there is no part of the world today in which a human being can confidently escape from the presumption of political subordination. The state of nature may subsist, for some purposes, between the jurisdictions of particular modern states, but nowhere, not even in the unappropriated polar territories or the far recesses of the great common of the oceans, is there habitable space on earth which lies simply beyond the jurisdiction of state power. Virtually everyone in the modern world, accordingly, is claimed as subject to political obligation."

—John Dunn in *POLITICAL THEORY TODAY*,
David Held (ed.),
Stanford University Press, 1991, p. 23.

5. "R.I.P. Sam Walton"

"In the process of making Sam Walton rich, American consumers did something else: They impoverished many of his competitors. Every dollar spent at Wal-Mart was \$1.25 not spent at Sears, Kmart, J.C. Penney or another large chain. Perhaps more important, it was \$1.50 not spent at local, small businesses. Small businesses, unable to take advantage of Wal-Mart's economies of scale, sought to keep Wal-Marts from their communities. The everyday low price strategy employed by Wal-Mart would drive them out of business. But let's get cause and effect straight: Wal-Mart never put anybody out of business. American consumers did."

—David Laband in *THE WALL STREET JOURNAL*,
April 9, 1992, p. A14.

6. "Callia Rose"

My wife, Julie, and I had a difficult time picking a name for our third child (and first daughter) who was born at home on February 24, 1992. After receiving numerous rejections from me, Julie finally said to me, "How about Callia?" It sounded different, and checking an unabridged dictionary, I found it was derived from the Greek 'kalos' meaning beautiful. Rose was chosen for Rose Wilder Lane, friend of Bob LeFevre, author of *DISCOVERY OF FREEDOM*, and daughter of Laura Ingalls Wilder (author of the *LITTLE HOUSE* series). So just a day before she "arrived", we had a name for our soon-to-be born daughter, Callia Rose Watner.

7. "Law Enforcement and Morality"

"The policing of sexual morality (or any kind, for that matter) is always necessary, but it is best done at the only level of society that can really do it: family, relatives, friends, associates. The natural power of affective ties creates its own code of behavior. We are much more afraid of disgrace in the eyes of those who know us and love us than we are of anything the law can do.

"The law can't possibly control adultery and other vices, which do indeed have serious and often disastrous consequences. But they can be discouraged by social pressure, and social pressure can only come from those people whose approval we want and need, because their approval is hard to separate from our own self-respect.

"Shame is more powerful than weaponry in making society cohere, and recent experience should teach us how helpless the state is in governing people who are beneath shame. The force of the state can only supplement the prospect of disapproval that keeps most of us in line. People feel shame in proportion as they have strong social bonds; and when there are large numbers of rootless people, there is not much anyone can do to prevent lawlessness."

—Joseph Sobran, in "Sex, Family, and the State",
THE FREE MARKET, April 1992.

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Limited Government— A Moral Issue?

By C.W. Anderson

"The 1980s," according to economist Milton Friedman, witnessed "a sea change in the direction of public thinking about government's ability to solve economic and social problems." In fact, the idea of getting government off our backs became a live issue, worldwide. Although there was little change in the size or power of government, "[T]he prospect is bright," Friedman observed, "but only if we continue trying to spread our ideas and persuading ourselves, more importantly than anyone else, to be consistent with the beliefs we profess."

This matter of beliefs and consistency leads us directly to the vital question: Are we simply uneasy about big government in a general way, or do we see it clearly as a real threat to individual freedom?

Most freedom devotees share a concern about big government, but there is very little agreement about the *proper role* of government in society. Why is this so? Are there no acceptable criteria for resolving this important issue of what government should do and should not do? And, without visualizing an ideal role for government, can we ever hope to approach "limited government"?

Some people seem to want this issue resolved by majority vote. But doesn't this mean that *might makes right*—that we should just take a vote to see which gang is biggest and then let them enforce their ideas on the rest of us? This surely is not what our Founding Fathers had in mind nor, I am sure, is it what those who advocate limited government really want.

It may be helpful to rephrase the question by bringing into the center of this analysis our own personal commitment and integrity. The question then becomes: Which functions of government are so unquestionably proper that I, *personally*, would be willing to support and enforce them? Mind you, not hire and pay someone to collect tax money, for example, but personally *force* those who oppose the law to pay their tax.

Isn't it the *delegating* of this unpleasant duty that has clouded the issue of how much government we really believe in? I may be sincere in my belief that food stamps, for example, are a necessary government "safety net." But my religious friend who believes that it is God's design that *individuals* should be responsible—*voluntarily*—to help the unfortunate, and whose experience tells him that those who are thus helped will do more for themselves, tells me that he will not support involuntary "charity." Now, back to the question: Will I force him to pay this tax? Furthermore, can I escape this question by closing my mind and letting my delegate perform this ugly task?

This whole matter of enforcement—with all its implications of violence—needs to be examined for its full meaning. The force that will ultimately be legally applied to collect the tax is rarely seen. But *it is there!* It resides in the government and is potentially brutal. Because if a man of principle absolutely refuses to pay—and then resists arrest by defending himself and his property when the agents of government come to take him from his home (which they will)—he will be dealt with violently, *probably shot!* His crime will be recorded as resisting arrest, but he will have actually lost his life because he stood by his moral principles and refused to compromise.

The violent result of holding fast to principle causes us to understand the true nature of government and why we should fear it. As George Washington warned, "Government is not reason, it is not eloquence—it is force. Like fire it is a dangerous servant and a fearful master; never for a moment should it be left to irresponsible action."

Purely and simply then, government is organized *force*, it has a monopoly on legal coercion; and it can do more than voluntary groups only because it can force its will on those who disagree.

Those of us who are serious about sorting out our own ideas about government—and being consistent in our beliefs—find ourselves facing a chain of *personal* decisions:

a. Am I concerned about big government and the loss of individual liberty? Yes? or No?

b. If "Yes," how do I decide whether or not I approve of specific governmental functions and actions? Do I judge them by the same criteria for right and wrong as I do individual actions? Yes? or No?

c. If "No," I must face that fact that either (1) I have *no* standard for judging the proper functions of government, or (2) I have another standard which I can define. Note that (1) in effect endorses majority rule—that is, that *might makes right!*

d. If, however, my answer to b. is "Yes," and assuming I understand that government relies on force to function, can I, logically or morally, approve of governmental functions that I would be unwilling to enforce personally by using force if necessary? Yes? or No?

This very personal self-assessment may fortify our understanding of the true nature of government. *But equally important, it should also help us to recognize that governmental acts which we support are really an extension of our own views and actions.*

Where does all of this bring us in our concerns about government today? What chance do we have of bringing about an evolution—or revolution—in the way people think about the proper role of government in society?

Keep in mind that only in the last few years have we even come close to a consensus that government handles economic and social problems very poorly. And recent revelations of the pitiful conditions in the over-governed nations of Eastern Europe confirm the validity of this consensus—the inevitable result of a growing dependence on government is not only less freedom, but moral and economic deterioration as well.

This awareness, then, is itself a big step forward. *But emphasis on efficiency does not get at the source of the problem—which is governmental power. And it does not go to the heart of the problem—which is individual, moral responsibility for those actions of government which we support.*

As long as politicians can bombard us with their platitudes about "doing good"—and *never be challenged on the immoral means they use*—the size and power of government will never be controlled. For there can be no decline in the calls upon government to "do something" about such things as poverty, the homeless, the aged, and the sick until the force and violence that must support such governmental actions are recognized—and morally condemned.

(Editor's Note: This article is of interest for several reasons. Its author, Chet Anderson, was instrumental in assisting Bob LeFevre raise money in Milwaukee, Wisc. in 1957, to help fund the second year of the original Freedom School in Colorado (see pp. 183-184 of my biography, ROBERT LeFEVRE). This article is excerpted from a longer essay, which first appeared in a shortened version in the February 1992, FREEDOM DAILY, published by Jacob Hornberger's Future of Freedom Foundation, Box 9752, Denver, CO 80209. Since the original essay had a somewhat weaker conclusion, I wrote its author, and asked him whether he believed that coercive government has any proper functions at all (and if so, what were they, and how did he justify them)? His response was as follows:

"The answer to your question, which may be only implicit in my essay is, 'No.' I see no possible function of government that I would support by killing someone who refused to support it. Your question surprised me, but as I re-read my piece I believe I see why you ask. Although I did not state flatly that no government could be morally justified, the series of questions I asked lead to that answer. Now, let me back up and explain why I did this.

"Ben Rogge once told me that he had never known anyone who approached Baldy Harper in teaching ideas about liberty with such a lasting impact. While both were teaching at Wabash College, Ben was amazed at Baldy's effect on students,—how they continued to seek his counsel. I discovered during the 20+ years I knew him that his persuasiveness came from his unique ability to ask thoughtful questions. I was changed from a flaming liberal in the '40s to a sort of philosophical anarchist by facing up to questions asked by Baldy, Leonard Read and later, Bob LeFevre. It was Baldy who I first talked to about my series of questions and he encouraged me to pursue this approach.

"I believe, as he did, that a serious student of liberty must answer questions like these within himself. It is normally more effective and permanent learning if he discovers by this process that he can't support morally even a limited government than if a lecturer tells him all government is immoral. I think that "discover" is the key here and, as I think back to the times I have failed to persuade someone to examine the nature of government I find that I usually did not ask the most thoughtful and timely questions." ▣

Eviction and Arrest for War Tax Resisters in Colrain, Massachusetts

By the War Tax Refusers Support Committee

From "An Open Letter to Our Neighbors," March 28, 1992

Background and History

"After 12 years of jointly refusing to pay federal taxes that are used for war-making and weapons-building, and after having given away all their withheld tax money to war victims and the poor, Betsy and Randy Kehler's house and the land around it was seized by the IRS for back taxes, in March of 1989. The IRS tried to auction it off, in July of that year, but no bidders could be found and the government decided to buy the home for itself.

"180 days after the auction, in January of 1990, the government ordered Betsy, Randy, and their daughter Lillian to move out. When they refused, the U.S. Justice Department filed a civil suit against them in federal court in Springfield. Betsy and Randy answered their charges with a defence based on international law and the Nuremberg Principles. They argued that the government uses our tax dollars to violate international treaties and agreements that prohibit such things as military interventions in other countries and the threatened use of nuclear weapons. They tried to show that under these treaties and agreements, defined as "The Supreme Law of the Land" by the U.S. Constitution, individual citizens have a duty as well as a right to withhold their cooperation (including payment of taxes) when their government refuses to comply.

"In October of 1991, Federal Judge Frank Freedman dismissed these arguments without even a hearing. Several weeks later, he issued a court order demanding that they leave their home. Then, on the blizzardy morning of December 3, 1991, U.S. Marshals entered the house and arrested Randy for "contempt of court," for which he was sentenced to six months in prison.

"On February 12, 1992, the IRS tried to sell the Corner/Kehler home once again. That morning, prior to opening the sealed bids, U.S. Marshals arrested the seven members of the Shelburne group then occupying the house and IRS Special Agents removed all of Betsy's and Randy's furnishings. At 2:00 p.m. bids were opened and the Corner/Kehler home was "sold" to Danny Franklin of Greenfield for \$5,400. Because the U.S. government claimed that it no longer owned the property, the judge ordered Randy's release from jail and dropped charges against the Shelburne group.

Occupations of the Corner/Kehler Home

"Ever since Randy was arrested on December 3, 1991, the Corner/Kehler home has been continuously occupied by groups of supporters. The occupation is now in its 17th week. The occupying groups—called "Affinity Groups"—usually consist of one to two dozen people, some living in the house and others serving as support persons. Each group occupies for one week. All affinity group members have received training in nonviolence.

"Twelve of the affinity groups have come from towns here in the Valley; others have come from Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, eastern Massachusetts, and Washington, D.C. The people comprising these groups range in age from their early twenties to their mid-eighties. They are men and women; mothers, fathers, and grandparents. They include Christians, Jews, Buddhists, and Humanists. They work at a variety of professions: teachers, doctors, farmers, students, carpenters, social workers, authors,

actors, nurses, etc. Some of the affinity group members are war tax resisters and others are not. They all express feelings of outrage because of the bloodshed and suffering caused by our government's militarism. They share a sense of dismay at the human needs left wanting because of government's extravagant, wasteful, and destructive military spending.

Noncooperation with the Feb. 12 Sale

"Because of the continuing occupation, and also because of legal uncertainties regarding the lease to the land, Danny Franklin and his partner Terry Charnesky have been unable to take possession of the Corner/Kehler home.

"Ever since the home was seized three years ago, Betsy and Randy and their supporters have assumed that the IRS would eventually find a private buyer. For that reason, we publicly announced in newspaper advertisements prior to the July 1989 action and the February 1992 sale that we would nonviolently resist any attempts by the buyers to take possession of the home. We have taken this position because we don't recognize the legitimacy of the government's seizure or sale of Betsy's and Randy's home. We feel compelled to noncooperate with this coercive process by which the government tries to force individuals to pay for unconscionable things, such as war and preparations for war.

Role of Valley Community Land Trust

"The Valley Community Land Trust (VCLT), which owns the land under and around the Corner/Kehler house, has made it clear to all parties that Betsy's and Randy's lease to the land is non-transferable without the prior consent of the Land Trust Board. This is spelled out in Randy's and Betsy's lease agreement, which the IRS seized. There is the potential of litigation between the VCLT and Franklin and Charnesky over this matter. (The outcome of such litigation would not alter our determination to continue to support Betsy and Randy in their noncooperation with any attempts to take their home.)

"The VCLT, founded in 1977, is a nonprofit corporation to protect land and provide affordable access to it. Its membership is open to anyone who shares its purposes and philosophy. Its goals and functions have nothing to do with war tax refusal.

"Thank you for taking time to read through this information. We hope it has been helpful. Once again, we want to respect the opinions and convictions of our fellow citizens in this matter, while at the same time continuing to act upon our own convictions in as open and nonviolent a manner as possible.

Sincerely,

War Tax Refusers Support Committee"

War Tax Refusers Support Committee,
c/o Traprock Peace Center, Keets Road,
Deerfield, MA 01342
Tel: 774-2710 ▣

The Subscriber's Corner

For a number of years, Charles Curley wrote a column titled "Voluntaryist Musings." It appeared in nearly every issue of THE VOLUNTARYIST during the time of his contributions. Since that time, we have had no regular contributing columnist.

It has occurred to me that perhaps there might be interest in setting up a column that would rotate as to authorship. If we had five or six subscribers who would commit themselves to writing one column per year, it would be quite simple to assign issues and deadlines, without putting undue strain on any one person to contribute a column regularly.

The column could deal with current economic, political, or social events, goings-on in the libertarian movement, or just about any topic of interest to voluntaryists.

What do you think?

Would you like to volunteer to write one article a year for THE VOLUNTARYIST? Please contact: Carl Watner, Editor, THE VOLUNTARYIST, Box 1275, Gramling, SC 29348. ▣

Winning the Battle, Losing the War

By Carl Watner

In the children's fable, "The Goose and the Golden Eggs," a farmer discovered that his goose had laid a golden egg. Every morning thereafter he found she had laid a small fortune for him. Finally, one day he thought, "Why should I wait to grow rich day by day when I could take all of her eggs and be rich in an instant?" Of course, his impatience resulted in no more wealth. He had "killed the goose that laid his golden eggs."

Of what relevance is this story of greed to THE VOLUNTARIST? It epitomizes the age-old problem of rulership. As the 17th Century Frenchman, Jean Baptiste Colbert, once put it, the art of taxation "consists in so plucking the goose as to obtain the largest possible amount of feathers with the smallest amount of hissing." How much can be seized, with the least amount of squawking, and from whom? The absolute ruler of long ago was not concerned with legalities. He took from his subjects whatever of theirs that he could get his hands on. "Might makes right" was a doctrine he applied to his own people, as well as to all foreign groups he could conquer. But even the absolute despot was limited by the laws of human nature and reality. He could not confiscate property which his denizens did not have or hid from his clutches. Nor were they likely to produce much more than what they themselves required if they realized beforehand that their surplus production would be seized. Why bother with the effort if they did not stand to gain?

Our modern governments and rulers, though having made great strides in rationalizing and legitimizing their extended thievery, nonetheless find themselves under the same constraints as their ancient counterparts. Supply-side economics is merely a new version of the realization that if you squeeze the goose "too hard," she just might stop laying. So our government stalwarts try to encourage production by reducing taxes, hoping that a slightly longer-term policy of lower taxes in the present will result in a higher rake-off in the future.

But the U.S. federal government, today, like all its counterparts, both past and present, is still faced with the inevitable: how to get enough money and goods to satisfy its never ceasing hunger for human wealth. It is this craving for new sources of government revenue that has led to the almost complete erosion of individual financial privacy in the United States. Why is this inevitable? For the same reason that governments always appear cash-starved and strapped for resources. Individuals, who create wealth, are not prone to give any more to their governments than they find necessary. So our government must correspondingly increase the range and effectiveness of its search for property to be taxed. Consequently, the citizen's incentive is to shelter as much of his wealth or income from the eyes of the tax collector

as possible. The growth of the underground economy and the black market serve only as evidence of this human propensity to be protected and insulated from thievery. When faced with the reluctance of the subject to make 'voluntary' contributions to the State, the State and its agents must act to make as much of their income and wealth as visible as possible. The more visible one's property and source of income, the more easily it is taxed and the tax collected.

"The U.S. Treasury Department has already embarked on a war against taxpayers. Its goal: a cashless society where literally every dollar you earn and spend is recorded on magnetic tape and reported to the Internal Revenue Service." The battle plan rests on a mix of "voluntary" compliance and strong-arm tactics (threat of imprisonment and monetary penalties). It involves requiring that every American (whether residing here or abroad) report and pay taxes on their income and gift-giving, report all large cash transactions—both inside and outside the U.S.A., and file and pay estate-tax returns upon the death of their loved ones. And as these laws mandating self-disclosure broaden, their evasion becomes more commonplace. The federal government has tried to counter by obliging third parties to report "suspicious" economic activity. All employers must report payment of wages; banks, corporations, and stock brokers must report their payments of dividends and interest; every business receiving large amounts of cash from any one customer must report that fact to the authorities; any banking or non-banking institution forwarding large amounts of money abroad must report these transactions. As Ron Paul has pointed out, it is much easier for the federal authorities to convict people of money laundering violations than tax law violations. That there is no more right to financial privacy is just a reflection of the larger problem that our government recognizes no right to private property. The very existence of a State, particularly a State which derives its revenues via taxation, negates all individual rights.

The battle against the dollar is evidenced by the attack orchestrated by our government on individual property. The American government is destroying the patrimony of its citizens through taxation. It is also continuing to breach whatever degree of privacy they have left. New one hundred and fifty dollar bills encoded with invisible bar codes have already been printed at the Bureau of Engraving plant in Fort Worth, Texas. The bar codes will eventually allow law enforcement and IRS officials to track the flow of money into and out of black market and underground businesses. Hitherto, cash left an anonymous paper trail. But now, like checks, money orders, and other negotiable instruments, currency will leave tell-tale signs by which the users may be caught.

But what of the "war" mentioned in my title? How does it fit into the picture which I am painting? The "war on the dollar" is evidenced by the inflationary era in which we live. Inflation is an increase in the quantity of paper money and credit which, other things being equal, results in an increase in prices. John Pugsley has pointed out in his case for "Silver in the '90's," that total debt in the United States "has more than tripled in the past ten years." He outlines the ominous implications of this one single economic fact:

Debt securities are promises; promises to pay currency in the future. And currency itself is just a scrap of paper with no *intrinsic* value. Its *only* use is as a claim on real things. The only reason people hold these IOUs is as a means of stockpiling purchasing power for future use. ...

Not one person in a thousand understands that government deficits are really an act of money creation. Nor do many more understand that *money creation and money creation alone is the cause of inflation*. And in today's monetary system, *debt is money*.

He then goes on to refer to the "Great Anomaly," the fact that consumer prices have not risen as fast as the increase in federal and private debt in this country. This anomaly has emerged during the last decade, and economic laws dictate that "the parity between monetary claims and tangible goods will eventually be re-established. ... There are only two ways this can happen: either the IOUs will disappear through default or redemption, or their value be reduced through price inflation." Pugsley makes



an educated guess that the latter of these two events will occur because the former would be politically unpalatable and unacceptable.

But inflation, whether it creeps or runs, cannot be a long-term solution for our economic ills. Inflation has only one final result: destruction of the monetary unit. In fact, as Pugsley acknowledges, the dollar is already "nothing" but a debt instrument. It has no metallic backing and its continued use and acceptance both domestically and internationally rests only on confidence in the American government. As inflation accelerates, not only is the dollar's purchasing power diminished, but it becomes quite likely that international commodities, like diamonds and oil will no longer even be quoted in dollars. The market will undoubtedly search for some more satisfactory medium of exchange; perhaps the yen, or even some new monetary unit, like the new European Currency Unit, the ECU, or even a historical unit, like the gold ounce. The dollar, if it survives at all, it will be a second-rate currency, purchasing much less abroad than it does at present. The die has already been cast: over the long run, the U.S. dollar is doomed by the inflationary propensities of its issuer, the U.S. Government.

Economic laws allow no room for variance. No debt ever goes unpaid; if the borrower does not meet his obligation, then the lender pays. It is the same in the realm of monetary standards. Governments cannot prevent their monetary units from self-destructing if they continually engage in inflationary practices. Nor can the U.S. monetary authorities prevent superior standards from replacing the dollar's international dominance if their domestic policies slowly destroy the dollar's exchange value. The United States government for all practical purposes is already broke. U.S. Treasury debt has grown by leaps and bounds since the early 1970s. It now totals over \$3 trillion, but that is only the tip of the iceberg. The National Taxpayers Union calculated that the real and potential liabilities of the U.S. government exceeded \$14 trillion, as of 1988.

No government is a permanent fixture of history. The U.S. government will sooner or later go the way of the Roman Empire. However, unlike the United States, Rome never resorted to paper money and credit. At least a golden coin of the Roman era still has some intrinsic value. Its exchange value did not depend solely on the creditworthiness of its issuer. Just like the Soviet Union and its ruble, when the United States government collapses, U.S. paper dollars, government bonds, and Treasury bills will be worthless. In the short term, our government might make some progress and appear to be winning the battle against tax evaders and money launderers, but in the long run it is bound to lose the war against economic reality. ▣

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Notes on War and Freedom

By Ramsey Clark

War is more destructive of freedom than any other human activity. Any violation of civil liberties is easily justified in times of war and the threat of war, however unnecessary for security, harmful to its victims, irrational, unfair, or even detrimental to the war effort itself.

The unity of purpose war requires is intolerant of any dissent or failure to subordinate individual conscience and desire to military command. Absolute obedience to authority is the first rule of war.

Dehumanization and hatred of enemies are essential to create a human capacity for the horrors of war and the assault on liberty alike. A people willing to support killing will not hesitate to crush freedom.

Sometimes government will derive satisfaction from interfering with liberty as a way of showing its support for war. This may be understandable when the activity suppressed is directed against the conduct of the war. But government intervention also occurs when the hated activity is purely an affirmation of freedom, as when Upton Sinclair was arrested for reading the Bill of Rights. Freedom after all is an enemy of war. Sadly the American people more often than not have applauded the assault on liberty by the war lover.

There is little room for freedom when a people are under fire. Liberty will keep her head down when she is being shot at like everyone else. We can hear a lonely Eugene Debs observe on his way to prison for opposing U.S. involvement in World War I: "It is extremely dangerous to exercise the constitutional right of free speech in a country fighting to make the world safe for democracy."

The antagonism between war and freedom is inherent. War is rule by force. Freedom, as Robert Maynard Hutchins helpfully defined it, is the negation of force. A war-time government will act to crush freedom because a people who wants freedom will resist war.

It follows that in freedom is the preservation of peace. The very quest for freedom involves finding ways of preventing war.

It ought to be clear that the ultimate subversion of the Bill of Rights and the more comprehensive idea of freedom is the misbegotten belief that freedom can be either defended or obtained by force. In war all participants seek to have their way by violence. Whatever the intentions of the combatants or the policy of the prevailing party after war, freedom has been diminished.

Far from recoiling at war's inhumanity, the victor and the vanquished seek superior force as the only way to win. Each prepares for the next war while liberty is held in thrall to militarism. Jorge Luis Borges in his powerful story "Deutsches Requiem" depicts a captured Nazi concentration camp commander awaiting execution who declares ecstatically that although the Fatherland was destroyed, Nazism prevailed because its faith was in the sword and those who destroyed the fatherland adopted its faith.

Throughout history, nation-states have spoken of their commitment to freedom and desire for peace while planning war. In Plato's dialogue *The Laws*, the anonymous Athenian Stranger argues that the good legislator orders "war for the sake of peace." The more candid Cleinas of Crete observes of his own country, "I am greatly mistaken if war is not the entire aim and object of our institutions." The Athenian Stranger, thought by most scholars to represent Plato himself, by others Socrates, by all the wisdom of Attica, saw war as a means with peace as its end. Cleinas, with greater simplicity, saw a world in eternal struggle among nations for domination.

For both views the result has been the same. War has been the dominant experience of nearly every generation for virtually every nation, culture and civilization that history records. And the little bit of uneasy peace and partial freedom that has been known was found despite, and not because of, war.

(Excerpts from the "Preface" in Michael Linfield, *FREEDOM UNDER FIRE*, Boston: South End Press, 1990.) ▣

What We Believe

Continued from page 1

24. We believe the power to do good to other people contains the power to do them harm. A government strong enough to help you is also strong enough to harm you. What the legislature may grant it may also revoke.

25. When all is said and done, we agree with H.L. Mencken, who wrote: "I believe that all government is evil, in that all government must necessarily make war upon liberty; and that the democratic form is at least as bad as any of the other forms. ..."

"But the whole thing, after all," as Mencken concluded, "may be put very simply.

"I believe it is better to tell the truth than to lie.

"I believe it is better to be a free man than a slave.

"And I believe that it is better to know than to be ignorant."

For more information, we suggest you choose among the following titles:

Henry Hazlitt, *ECONOMICS IN ONE LESSON*

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*[Please note that for purposes of simplicity, the generic words **his/he** are used to mean both male and female gender.] ☐

Potpourri From The Editor's Desk

Continued from page 2

8. "Electoral Politics vs. Education and Example"

"The way to move society on its axis is not to play politics. It is to persuade teachable people to think as you do. And the best way to do this is to be a good personal living example of the philosophy you hope to spread."

—John Chamberlain,

in "The Case for the Free Market",

THE FREEMAN, November 1964, p. 56.

9. "So—There Ought to Be a Law!—A Contrarian's Point of View"

"There ought **not** to be a law. Coercion doesn't make anyone do anything. People who obey laws don't need the law to tell them right from wrong."

—"Words for 1992" from The Customer Co.,
Box 886, Benicia, Ca. 94510.

10. "Authority"

"[The] authority of the State depends upon essentially the same principles as in the case of ordinary organizations. [It rests upon the consent and co-operation of the governed.] ... Authority lies always with him to whom it applies. Coercion creates a contrary illusion; but the use of force **ipso facto** destroys the authority postulated. It creates a new authority, a new objective, which is granted when the force is accepted. Many men have destroyed all authority as to themselves by dying rather than yield."

—Chester I. Barnard, "The Theory of Authority,"
in THE FUNCTIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE, Cambridge:
Harvard University Press, 1938.

11. "A Call for Information—House Destroyed in Skaneateles, New York!"

The following article appeared in INSIGHT Magazine on January 13, 1992, pp. 26-27. In order to confirm this report and gather additional information, I have made repeated efforts to contact Rhoda and Roger Scott; James O'Shea, Planning and Zoning attorney for Skaneateles; and the local newspaper—all to no avail. If any readers in the Syracuse, New York area or elsewhere are familiar with more details, please contact the Editor of THE VOLUNTARYIST.

After Rhoda and Roger Scott's home in Skaneateles, N.Y. burned down in 1982, the couple built their dream home on the site. The \$370,000 house covered nearly 11,000 square feet, and included a three-car garage and an indoor swimming pool. In July 1984, the Scotts were served with a notice of violation of the town's zoning laws because their

house was too big for the lot and the pool and garage weren't listed on the permit application. Last month the town demolished the Scotts' home. ☐

Skaneateles Town Supervisor Charles Major says as far as he's concerned, the demolition of the house ends the seven-year dispute with the Scotts, which has cost the town close to \$200,000. The fight was "too costly, there's no question about that," says Major.

Rhoda Scott says, "We got a permit; without a permit we wouldn't have started the house." The zoning officer who gave that permission is dead and the town doesn't have a record of it. A state appeals court ruled in September 1990 that the house was too large and ordered the Scotts to either tear down the house or bring it into compliance, but the Scotts refused. On Sept. 3, 1991, the State Supreme Court fined the Scotts \$100 a day until they left the home with their belongings, and found them in contempt of court. Rhoda Scott was arrested on that charge in November and jailed for two days. She says her husband turned himself in later and also spent time in jail.

Skaneateles spent \$64,000 for moving the Scotts' belongings, storing them in three trailers and hiring an excavation crew to level the house. "We have a lien for the \$64,000 on the property to get those costs back," says Major.

Rhoda Scott says, "I would truly die for this cause. I think it is such an outrageous infringement on anyone's liberty that this is truly an act of Nazi Germany." The Scotts plan an appeal in federal court. Roger Scott's law firm in Syracuse, which advertises help with building construction law and zoning law, couldn't save his home, points out Eagle-eyed Shame Spotter Leon Jessie. C.F. Reed also alerted INSIGHT to this item.

Meanwhile, the house is gone, Major says the foundation was torn out and the ground has been seeded.

12. "Diversity Yes—Coercion No!"

"Never place all your eggs in one basket. To do so is to invite someone to take control of the basket and to empty its contents." What works with financial portfolios should surely apply to governmental affairs. Allowing one coercive government to monopolize a given geographic area places it in the powerful position of "controlling all."

—Paraphrased From Richard Epstein's column,
"Rule of Law," THE WALL STREET JOURNAL,
April 22, 1992, p. A19 ☐

"Government Enterprise"

By Chester Alan Arthur

The United States government is a huge enterprise. Every American is its customer: every American purchases a wide variety of goods and services directly from the government; every American is protected by insurance provided by the government; every American uses its transportation system. For these goods and services, every American pays directly (via user's fees and cash prices) and indirectly (via taxes). On average, Americans pay more than 30% of their income to the federal government and its subsidiaries.

It owns all the land in the United States: some directly (the so-called "public domain"), some through its subsidiaries, the states, and some indirectly (so-called "private property," whose "owners" must pay annual rents established by the federal government's subsidiaries (so-called "taxes") and follow pervasive regulations over how such land can be used). Furthermore, every American is a part owner: each is granted a single share of stock, i.e. the right to cast a single vote in elections that choose who will manage the huge enterprise. Furthermore, the U.S. government establishes rules for its tenants/customers/employees/owners of an extremely pervasive nature: it tells them what they are allowed to eat and drink, where they can travel; what they can read; what sort of work they can do, who they can do it for, what price they can be paid for their work and what form of payment must take; what goods they can own...the list goes on and on.

[Excerpted from the May 1992, LIBERTY, Box 1167, Pt. Townsend, WA 98368, p. 21. Six issues—\$19.50, single issue—\$4.00.] ☐

The Political Enemy Is Politics Itself

By John W. Deming

The cause of the political disease is politics itself. Political means never achieve the ends sought. The goals of a sensible political state would be to reduce its presence in the lives of its citizenry to the greatest extent possible. And that's the real problem.

Who goes into politics, or any career for that matter, with the goal of permanently reducing and possibly eliminating the source of one's power, fame and money? The virtuous public servant is one of the biggest figments of imagination ever. Of course, the evil public servant is an idea just as false. Most bureaucrats are simply regular people practicing the social equivalent of alchemy and astrology. They are operating under an illusion. You wouldn't get stronger metals or gold using alchemical formulas. And you won't get financial security, inexpensive high-quality medical care, sound money, crime-free streets or good schools using political means. Ever.

Ludwig von Mises defined the political state thusly:

"Government is in the last resort the employment of armed men, of policemen, gendarmes, soldiers, prison guards, and hangmen. The essential feature of government is the enforcement of its decrees by beating, killing and imprisoning. Those who are asking for more government interference are asking ultimately for more compulsion and less freedom."

State coercion does not work. Since the American Revolution, thoughtful people have assumed that political coercion was a necessary evil, inherently dangerous but essential to maintenance of a well-ordered community. This assumption is false. Coercion is not only an evil, it is not necessary because it does not work.

The other side of that idea is that *freedom works*. Liberty leads to the free market and enterprises that serve up the public with products and services they really want. Freedom is not some

fragile, utopian affair that while spiritually desirable is too messy and impractical for the real world. When defined by property rights, freedom becomes a hardheaded practical thing that leads to societies that exhibit stable, long-term growth and happier, more productive citizens. Freedom is not at all the chaotic quasi-Hobbesian mess that the politicians would have us believe and which they offer themselves up to fix.

The free market adjusts the minute-by-minute results of myriad local transactions all over the world, right through to the global price and information grid with lightning rapidity. It leads to open-ended, multidirectional social evolution heading wherever free men and women dare to go.

Property rights, put simply, designate boundaries through which no one, particularly state officials and common criminals, may intrude without the permission of the owner. In effect, they define areas of human action where politics and its retinue of bureaucratic coercion cannot tread.

Thus the more property rights are expanded and strengthened, the less political coercion will dominate our lives, the more social order will emerge, and the higher quality and quantity of products and services we will have. And not coincidentally, a more vigorous culture of new artistic and scientific creations will arise. One of the striking facts of history is that those societies with the most freedom, as defined by property rights, have always had the greatest efflorescence of culture.

(Editor's Note: The article reprinted above (with the exception of an introductory paragraph) appeared in "Letters to the Editor" on April 20, 1992 in THE WALL STREET JOURNAL (p. A 11). Although it is largely a pragmatic defense of the free market, its anti-political reasoning applies as much to Libertarian Party office-seekers as to their Democratic/Republican counterparts. The author's deference to the idea of "a sensible political state" is certainly not voluntarist because no coercive government resting on taxation could ever be morally justifiable. Rather than implying "that government is best which governs least," Mr. Deming would have been on far safer and saner grounds had he concluded "That government is best which governs not at all.")

The Voluntarist

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