

*Why Not Try  
Freedom!*

→ By LEONARD E. READ

**THE FOUNDATION FOR ECONOMIC EDUCATION, INC.**

**IRVINGTON-ON-HUDSON, N. Y.**

**1958**

**EDITOR'S NOTE**

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Published June 1958

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Lectures delivered to

**CENTRO DE DIFUSION DE LA ECONOMIA LIBRE**

**Buenos Aires, Argentina**

**April 14-21, 1958**

**THE FREEDOM SCHOOL, INC.**



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## FOREWORD

PUT YOURSELF in one of Nature's garden spots, but one suffering a dozen years from raw police force such as the people of Argentina endured under the dictator, Perón; where the morale and morals of the people have been seriously impaired; where the money has lost 73 per cent of its purchasing power during the past nine years; where wool or beef sold in foreign trade nets only one-third to one-half of the market price; where it takes 600 to 1,000 steers to purchase an ordinary car; where a two-year-old Buick sells for \$10,000; where political opposition to foreign capital leaves unlimited reserves of oil in the ground while \$317,000,000 was paid for imports of oil last year; where, for political reasons only, there isn't enough electric power to properly light the streets of Buenos Aires or to adequately supply industry; where labor unions exert more oppressive influence than in the United States; where recently the bank clerks, as well as oil workers, were conscripted into the army to keep them on the job; in short, where interventionism is rife and where the politically proposed cure, as in the U.S.A., involves more of the same. Under these circumstances, what would you suggest?

This is the question I faced in these lectures, delivered in Buenos Aires during April 1958 under the sponsorship of Centro de Difusion de la Economia Libre. Centro was organized in 1956, patterned in many respects after the Foundation for Economic Education. The mutual objective of the two organizations is the improved understanding and practice of freedom.

I accepted the invitation from Centro with agreement that all lectures would be before the same small audience, numbering from 35 to 70 persons, with ample opportunity for discussion. The invitees were to be in sympathy with the philosophy of liberty; there would be no effort to reform anyone.

To everyone's amazement, the 160 seats in the lecture room were filled the first evening and 25 people were standing. The same was true for the entire series—testifying to an intense interest in liberty.

My introduction to the seminar group was made by Raul Lamuraglia, President of Centro, business leader and distinguished patriot of Argentina. Juan Domingo Perón, in the book he wrote after his fall from power, lists Señor Lamuraglia first among those responsible for his banishment.

Señor Lamuraglia summarized some of the material, cultural, and spiritual differences and similarities between Anglo-Saxon Americans and Latin Americans. These excerpts from his introduction may help the reader appreciate the setting in which the lectures were delivered:

Liberty is an outward creation of man which he has adopted for himself and whose use and enjoyment he reserves for mankind as a whole, for which he struggles and to which he dedicates consciously or unconsciously his highest efforts. But at the same time we must admit, without any exceptions, that "liberty" cannot be broken down into smaller or greater parts according to our own ideas or interests, nor can the word "libertarian" be applied to any of these parts while the remainder are denied or rejected.

Liberty must be taken as a whole, composed of different values that are inseparable because they all affect or refer to the individual and are reflected in the societies composed of individuals. We shall not be libertarians while upholding merely freedom of trade and at the same time being social or political planners. Neither shall we be libertarians if we attend to the needs of democracy and plan everything else.

The Centro de Difusion de la Economia Libre covers a wider field than its name implies. If it has chosen to defend freedom in



the economic field, this does not mean that it denies the principle that freedom must be enjoyed by man as a whole, or at least that he should aspire to such enjoyment, to which all his efforts are directed. We, the members of this spirited group, know that the task is long and difficult, but we do not resort to mere opposition to the wrongheaded planning mentality to be seen everywhere or nearly everywhere, but rather to broadcasting the ideas of liberty that seem today to be rather a luxury for man than the inevitable necessity of the extraordinary development of his civilization.

The Spanish edition of this book is available through Centro de Difusion de la Economia Libre, Avenida Leandro Alem 36, Buenos Aires.

LEONARD E. READ

*May 1958*



# Government— An Ideal Concept

► Successful communication is based on mutual understanding of the terms of discourse. At the outset, therefore, it would appear necessary that we establish—if possible—a common ground. We need a frame of reference, a datum line, to use as a guide in these lectures. For, unless we understand our point of departure as well as our destination, we can hardly hope to steer a consistent course. We must, if we are to progress in understanding, start from sound premises and then make proper deductions as we attempt to apply them step by step.

Perhaps the most fundamental question any of us can ask has to do with the goal of man's earthly striving. Is it man's purpose here merely to lengthen his life span? Is it to accumulate wealth and extend possessions? Should man's aim be to achieve supremacy over his fellow men? Ought he to expend his life's energies in trying to remake others into his own likeness?

No, most of us would say, man is made for other things than these. No doubt it is impossible to arrive at any general agreement on the deepest questions of life, precisely because the answers must be so intensely personal. Nor is this simply a difficult exercise in metaphysical speculation — each man must actually *live* his own answer to the challenges posed by his existence.

It is reasonable to assume, however, that most sensitive and thoughtful persons would agree that man's earthly purpose is

more than extending his life span, accumulating material things, or gaining power over his fellow men. Such is my assumption, at any rate. The main body of this and subsequent lectures will deal with human relationships, with economics and the conditions of material progress, and with the organizational problems peculiar to government. But I want to make my own position clear—an exclusive preoccupation with these problems is not the way to resolve them. The problems of man, society, and government are approached most constructively from a standpoint which transcends them—when they are viewed within a moral and spiritual frame of reference.

Man did not create himself. This is self-evident, for man knows almost nothing about himself. Man is the creature of God, or, if you prefer, of Infinite Principle or Consciousness or Intelligence. Man's life on this earth in the flesh is but a preparatory phase of his emergence. Man's purpose is to emerge, to evolve in consciousness; it is to come as close as he can to the realization of those creative potentialities peculiar to his own person. Man's purpose is to search for eternal truth, to strive for righteousness, and to mold his own image in as near a likeness to his Creator as his energies, abilities, and perceptions permit. At least, this is my view.

These convictions are my guide in determining right and wrong, whether I am judging my personal affairs or my relationships with others. Any behavior, personal or collective, which tends to retard man in his pursuit of the ideal life is, in my judgment, ipso facto bad, evil or immoral. Any behavior, personal or collective, which tends to promote or complement this objective is, in my judgment, ipso facto good, virtuous or moral. You may or may not accept the objectives for man on which my beliefs are based. But you will, at least, be able to judge whether my discourse is consistent with this objective.

It is not intended that I should dwell on the psychological aspect of freedom, this having to do with the efforts of man to free himself from his own personal imperfections. Rather, I have been

asked to discuss the sociological aspects of freedom, this having to do with the problems and strife arising out of man imposing himself on other men.

Consider human energy and the diverse ways in which it is manifested. There are creative expressions of energy and there are destructive expressions. For instance, if I were to use my hand to paint a picture, write a book, build a home, or strew seed, my energy would be manifesting itself productively or creatively. But, were I to make a clenched fist of this same hand and strike you in the face, my energy would be manifesting itself destructively.

Any person has a moral right to inhibit the destructive action of another or others. However, no person has a moral right to forcibly direct or to control what another shall invent, create, or discover; no right to dictate where he shall labor, how long he shall work, what his wage shall be, what and with whom he shall exchange, or what thoughts he shall entertain. No single person has any such moral right. No combination of persons has any such moral right. No agency, political or otherwise, has any such moral right.

The above is but another way of asserting that there are no moral sanctions for government to intervene in any manner whatsoever with productive or creative actions. The moral sanction for establishing government springs from the right of the individual to inhibit or prohibit or restrain the destructive actions of others.

Government, under moral sanction, is conceived to be an instrument of society for the accomplishing of certain limited and clearly defined functions. Most men have believed in some form of government, but few have ever understood how to keep it within bounds. All history testifies to the difficulty of keeping government within its proper competence; political power everywhere has been perverted. One reason for the historical failures has been a lack of understanding of what government is for. In my view, it is necessary to know why government should exist —

what it is for — in order to gain an awareness of what it is not for. We must know government and its purpose in order to know how to limit it to its purpose.

An ideal theory of government and liberty is important. The lack of such a theory is disastrous. In the case of the United States, it is proving ruinous. As long as there were alive those who had learned from their old-world experiences about tyrannical government, we in the United States were successful in keeping government limited. Succeeding generations were more and more remote to that experience. There came a time, perhaps around the turn of this century, when all connection with the experience was lost. Lacking an ideal theory, we had nothing anchoring us to limitation. Experience was lost. No theory of limitation was generally understood. Today there is no more limitation on government than political expediency dictates. The advocates of nonlimited government are at work.

We in the United States or in the Argentine have only two possible defenses against their advances. One is to let them succeed and for us, the people, to become experienced again. In time any intelligent people will revolt against tyranny. But generations, perhaps centuries, are involved. The other defense is to frame an ideal philosophy of limitation. There is no short cut except the spelling-out and acceptance of a theory of government which is consistent with liberty. If it is right that society should evolve a formal organization to protect its members, and if it is right that the scope of this organization should be limited, there is, if we will but find it, a theory by which proper limitation can be imposed and maintained.

It is difficult to see how anything can reverse the present trend toward all-out statism except a properly prepared and presented theory of government and liberty. That this lecture presents the ideal theory adequately is not claimed. But perhaps these views as to the requirements of such a theory will stimulate others to try their hands; and, if so, this argument will have served its purpose. Like it or not, we are now at the mercy of our own reasoning.

### **Examining the Basis for Government**

Government would not exist, nor would there be any reason for its existence, if men did not have problems with one another. Therefore, to determine why we should have government and to find out how much of it we should have, we must first form judgments on (a) what aspects of man are social, (b) what aspects are individual, and then (c) by analyzing the nature of organized force (the distinctive feature of government) decide on the extent to which force should be employed in man's relationship with man.

There can be no denying the assertion that man is a social as well as an individualistic being. Both the social and the individual aspects of our own lives are emphasized to us daily. These emphases are presented so numerous and in so many forms — indeed, so confusingly — that it is with difficulty we can tell one from the other. Some folks are so impressed with the social emphases that they see nothing individualistic about man, and others are so impressed with the individualistic emphases that they see nothing social about man. The former are likely to conclude as socialists; the latter, as anarchists — these being but different types of authoritarianism.

Man cannot live alone. This is meant, not as a figurative, but as a literal expression. Remove from any one of us all the rest of mankind, past and present, and no one of us could exist. We are an interdependent breed of creation. Your lecturer, for instance, does not know how to raise the food he eats, to build the home in which he lives, to make the car he drives, to create the opportunities that are constantly presented to him, to write most of the books he reads, to get from the earth the gas that keeps him warm. Relative to the advantages that are his, he knows next to nothing. Alone, he is impotent to the point of nonexistence. The same thing can reasonably be said about others.

The individual does not exist as an isolated person or, at the very least, as the person he is, except by virtue of his cultural and social heritage. Deprived of the cumulative knowledge and ex-

perience of the race, man would be but another variety of curious animal — if indeed he would have being! This accumulation of knowledge, habit, custom, convention, tradition is man's inherited energy, his natural environment — it is *there* for the individual to avail himself of it.

Yet society is an abstraction. It is but a handy generalization. Only individuals count. Each individual is vastly different from all others.<sup>1</sup> No two think alike, have the same aptitudes and skills, see alike, hear alike, have the same tastes or the same energies.

It is these variations among us and the exchange of our variable talents — be they manifested in goods, services, ideas, insight, knowledge — which account for our being alive. If, for example, everyone else were identical to any single person, all mankind would perish. No one could live, any more than that person could live alone. No one could have any more than he knows how to create. On that, neither he nor the rest of us could live.

Some will argue that if others were not performing the services and making the goods this person requires to live, he would be doing these things for himself. True, each of us has some elasticity in this respect, and in some of us it is quite great; but, by and large, the 170,000,000 people in my country exist in their present relatively advanced state by reason of their variable talents and the unprecedented exchange thereof.

The above claim — highly relevant to this thesis — needs some explanation. Observe, for example, the Mayan Indians at Todos Santos or at Chichicastanango, or aborigines elsewhere, and note the few, if any, who evolve toward those aptitudes peculiar to each.<sup>2</sup> By reason of inhibitory influences, they remain for a lifetime in primitive, similar activity. Rarely does one of them break from this tradition and become a musician, a painter, an engineer,

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<sup>1</sup>For a remarkable and scientific dramatization of human variability, see *Free and Unequal: The Biological Basis of Individual Liberty* by Roger John Williams (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1953).

<sup>2</sup>For a factual account of Mayan Indian religious beliefs, without interpretations as to their inhibitive nature, see *Two Crosses of Todos Santos* by Maud Oakes (New York: Pantheon Books, Inc., 1951).



a surgeon, an architect, a builder. Or, reflect on the North American Indians who had another low form of cooperant society — a foraging economy. The whole area that is now the United States never supported more than a million of them.<sup>3</sup> As has been since proved, the limit of the population and its standard of living were in no way due to any lack of natural resources. Nor were these conditions caused by the absence of fertile soils and friendly climates, or by the Indians' inability to breed. Limits to population and the standard of living were due to inhibitory influences which prevented the potential variability in each Indian from manifesting itself. And without any marked variation, there was no marked exchange. Without variation and exchange, there could be no substantial quantitative growth; nor could there be qualitative growth — material, spiritual, intellectual. Stability in the sense of fixedness follows the absence of variation and exchange.

### ***Our Dependence on Interdependence***

Inhibitory influences, broadly speaking, are of two types. There are the sociological influences, the kind man imposes on other men. There are the psychological influences, the kind man imposes on himself or, more accurately, from which he fails to free himself. These latter are traditional pulls — man not shaking off his more primitive background — superstitions, fears, rationalization of laziness, taboos, imperfections, ignorance, and so on. For instance, the religion of many aborigines teaches that good or bad crops, ill or good health, hang on the caprice of so-called gods such as high mountain tops; that getting along in life is not a responsibility of self but rather depends on making supplications to the numerous idols.

Consider what has happened in my homeland. If we were to collapse time into manageable proportions, reducing the life of this planet from its three to five billion years to one year, we would observe in the last two seconds 170,000,000 people living in

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<sup>3</sup>We have only "guesstimates" on the Indian population. Most authorities would consider a million far too high. Perhaps 200,000 would be as good a guess.

relative luxury where less than 1,000,000 had lived before – if indeed we would, today, refer to it as living.

To summarize this phase of the argument: There are at least 169,000,000 in my country who exist by reason of a phenomenon that has taken place in these last two seconds! The chances are at least 169 to 1 that any one of us is in existence, is experiencing life, by reason of this phenomenon; that only 1 out of every 170 could endure the near self-containment of a foraging economy. This is another way of saying that more than 99 per cent of us are the offspring of a division-of-labor and exchange society, are dependent upon it, and have a vested interest as profound as life itself in its continuance and perfection. It is also another way of saying that most of us are a highly interdependent type of being and are dependent on the smooth working of the interdependence processes.

This condition of interdependence is something of which to be proud, rather than something to be deplored. It is a mark of progress. It is a forward step in the infinite evolutionary process, for man's purpose on earth is to come as near as possible in his lifetime to the attainment of those creative aptitudes peculiarly his own. Going in this direction, the principle which guides variability will cause each man to become progressively different from other men. More and more will each refine his own unique capacities.<sup>4</sup> And more and more will each of us need to rely on the products of the energies of other unique individuals. Progress in specialization requires one important warning. It is that we specialists not lose our perspective; that we not lose sight of the forest for the trees; that we not become so immersed in our specialities that we become blind to the process on which our specialization depends.

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<sup>4</sup>Specialization has been referred to as "analysis run riot." This dim view of an expanding division of labor would be warranted were there no possible synthesis of the human variabilities. But there is a synthesis, potentially a perfect one. It is simply free communication and exchange. Its numberless, daily ramifications can never be envisioned, let alone comprehended, by any man or set of men. This synthesis, however, has the virtue of requiring no more understanding than sufficient awareness to leave it alone except, of course, to protect it against crookedness, violence, and "management."

Education in the humanities must go hand in hand with our specialized education.

### **Energy and the Exchange Problem**

The problem posed by an advanced division-of-labor society is one of energy exchanges. Human energy is one of the numberless forms of radiant energy, seemingly electrical in origin. The late Robert A. Millikan, renowned physicist and Nobel Prize winner for his measurement of the electrical charge of the electron, had this to say:

All light or other short-wave-length radiations are caused by changes in positions of electrons within atoms. All atoms are built up out of definite numbers of positive and negative electrons. All chemical forces are due to the attractions of positive for negative electrons. All elastic forces are due to the attractions and repulsions of electrons. In a word, *matter itself is electrical in origin.*<sup>5</sup>

The late Renee von Eulenburg-Wiener, biochemist, most helpfully puts scientific theories about radiant energy into lay language (*italics supplied*):

Constant change is a characteristic of the living organism and *all physiological phenomena are energy exchanges.*<sup>6</sup>

Every substance is a system of molecules in motion and every molecule is a system of oscillating atoms and every atom is a system of positive and negative electricity.<sup>7</sup>

*Molecules are possessed of kinetic energy, that is, the energy of motion.*<sup>8</sup>

The atoms, the ultimate constituents of matter, are systems of positive and negative electricity. Electricity is a form of radiant energy and atoms may be described in terms of energy.<sup>9</sup>

Of all living creatures, man alone has learned to free energy by conscious efforts. Machines, explosives, the utilization of water

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<sup>5</sup>*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1943. Vol. VIII, p. 340.

<sup>6</sup>Eulenburg-Wiener, Renee. *Fearfully and Wonderfully Made*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1938. p. 114.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 118.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 117.

and wind to create power, all these are examples of man's conscious utilization of potential energy. The food man ingests is derived from the stores of energy built by plant and animal. He utilizes this energy in the maintenance of his body, in work and in play *and in the processes of intelligence and creative activity*. It is by these latter processes that he may transform energy to a higher level, so to speak, *and thereby may partake in creative evolution*.<sup>10</sup>

... the individual organism is but a device for the building up of radiant energy into its higher forms as manifested in thought and consciousness. *It is a product of the universal energy and yet a means for its further evolution*.<sup>11</sup>

### **Human Energy Is Diverse**

Human energy, obviously, has its earthly configuration only in individuals. Human energy manifests itself qualitatively and quantitatively, psychologically and physiologically, and in numberless forms: thought, consciousness, memory, cognition, ability, physical strength, moral courage, spiritual insight — or, in the workaday world, in the kind of energy it takes to run a typewriter, to bake bread, to drive a truck, to grow wheat, to be a catalytic agent in cooperative effort, ad infinitum.<sup>12</sup>

The reader may get the idea that the above is a deviation from this thesis on government. Quite the contrary! It is but the preface to the idea that *an ideal theory of government and liberty is to be derived from the necessity for the free, uninhibited flow of all creative human energy*.

Required, however, is more reflection on the nature of energy. There is *potential* energy and *kinetic* energy. A dammed-up pool of

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<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 133.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 447.

<sup>12</sup>To think of energy only as the kind that can be manufactured from coal or other inorganic matter will miss the point in my use of the term. A rereading of the quotes from the scientists Millikan and Eulenburg-Wiener will convey the meaning I give to "energy" throughout this essay. If this wide scope given to "energy" is beyond the reader's comprehension—something to stand in awe of, something beyond human knowledge and beyond the power of human authority and dictation—then I have established the kind of a definition I wish to make.

water is an example of potential energy. If the obstacle or inhibitory influence, the dam, is removed, the water will flow — the flowing water being an example of kinetic energy. Kinetic energy is energy in motion. It is potential energy gone to work. In the case of hydraulics, there is a natural law, *the law of gravitation*, which attends to potential energy's becoming kinetic energy once obstacles are removed.

Each individual has numerous types of potential energy — for instance, it may be the type it takes to fashion sand into wearing apparel or the type it takes to hybridize corn. Assume only two Eskimos and only two goods, clothing and food. One can fabricate only clothing; the other can raise only food. If there are no inhibitory influences standing in the way, the potential energy of each which manifested itself as kinetic energy in the making of clothes and in the raising of food will continue as kinetic, productive, creative energy. They will exchange. The natural law attending to this is *the will to live*. If they do not permit their energies to flow, to remain fluid, to continue as kinetic energy, both will die. One will starve. The other will freeze.

### ***Energy in Motion***

It is of the utmost importance to realize that production in its broader and really significant sense — productive activity — is energy in motion, that is, it is energy in constant movement and complex exchange. Thinking of productive activity as taking place only up to the point of an automobile coming off the assembly line is as erroneous as thinking of exchange as taking place only when the automobile is sold for cash. The incontestable assertion that no man on earth knows how to make an automobile is proof in itself that the manufacturing phase is a series of human energy exchanges. Indeed, these exchanges during manufacture are so complex and numerous that they cannot be comprehended by the mind of man. To stop these energy exchanges at any point, before or after manufacture, is to stop productive activity. Imagine, if possible, the absolute cessation of all trading in the American

market. All prior exchanges, such as those involved in manufacturing, would also cease. Unless the moral, political, and business leaders among a people grasp the significance of energy exchanges flowing through space and time, it cannot be correctly claimed that the problem of production is either understood or solved.

We are living in a world of 2,500,000,000 people. The potential energy of this population is of unimaginable proportions. Aptitudes and skills of people differ—some slightly at variance as in the case of aborigines, others vastly at variance as in the case of more advanced societies.

The life and the progress of life — whether of the 170,000,000 in the United States or of the 2,500,000,000 in the world — depend on these static or potential energies becoming kinetic, useful, moving, flowing, dynamic energies. The total potential energies will tend toward becoming kinetic energies with the removal of inhibitory influences. *Little else but the removal of inhibitory influences is required.* The almost unanimous will to live, and certainly the more profound forces which we do not at all understand, will attend to potential energies becoming kinetic. We need only to be observant to appreciate the wonders these natural forces produce and to see that their results are as incredible as the phenomena of our own bodies, governed not by conscious directions but by forces which transcend present consciousness — our miraculous autonomic nervous systems, for instance. We need to learn, mostly, how not to injure or inhibit our endowed or natural or God-given creativity. Let this point be re-emphasized: These energy phenomena, whether of the body (heart pulsations, breathing, 1,000,000,000 new red blood cells per minute, and so on) or of society (interpersonal exchanges of goods, services, ideas, insights), cannot be bettered by any human dictatorial system. Experience seems to teach that man's effort in this respect should be confined to increasing personal thought and consciousness and to guarding against everything which would hamper energy exchanges; *otherwise, leave these phenomenal, miraculous processes alone!* Their creative detail cannot, at this state of man's

evolution, be understood by man; and by no means can this detail be constructively managed by man. Personally we can behave — and societally we can organize — in ways harmonious to these natural currents of creative human energy. Man cannot, without loss, take over or control them.

### **How Human Energy Behaves**

Unless one is aware of our dependence — yes, our existence — on flowing energy, this theory about ideal government and its relationship to liberty may not be grasped. Therefore, let's try to dramatize the point by several generalized examples in which human energy is assumed to, and unquestionably does, behave in ways not unlike electrical energy.<sup>13</sup>

First, imagine 170,000,000 dead persons arranged in a huge circle, their hands clasped to a conduit capable of transmitting every conceivable type of physical and human energy. No energy would be put into the conduit by the dead persons. None could, therefore, be withdrawn.<sup>14</sup>

Second, imagine 170,000,000 live persons, similarly arranged, but with every one of them having a type of energy precisely like your own. Nothing but your type of energy could go into the conduit. Nothing but your type of energy could be withdrawn. There would be no variation. All would perish, as you would perish were you alone in the world.<sup>15</sup>

Third, imagine 170,000,000 live persons, similarly arranged, but with the variation of their energies being no greater and no

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<sup>13</sup>The following attempt at explanation has proved clarifying to some but not at all to others. At any rate, these are not written as far-fetched examples. In principle, they are analogous to real life.

<sup>14</sup>I continue to use the population figures of the United States. These can readily be transposed to figures for the Argentine or any other politically organized sector of the world.

<sup>15</sup>By "alone in the world" I mean absolutely alone—that is, completely without what has been bestowed on others, present or past. Human energy, if unobstructed, flows in time, all time. Most of what any of us, and all of what most of us, possess—materially, intellectually, spiritually—is founded on cognition extending into the infinite past. Or, should we call it all "the eternal now"? See *Living Time* by Maurice Nicoll (London, England: Vincent Stuart Publishers, Ltd., 1952).

more perfected than the energies of the North American Indians. Only the low energies incidental to a foraging economy would go into the conduit. Only the energies that went in could be withdrawn. All but one million of the total population would perish, for the same reason that the North American Indians numbered no more than 1,000,000.

Fourth, imagine 170,000,000 live persons, similarly arranged, having precisely the great variance of energies that the people of my country have today. Imagine all of their many energies freely flowing into the conduit and any citizen being able to withdraw any of the input energies according to his own choosing, based on an equitable and voluntary exchange of his own energy. In such an arrangement, for example, the highly specialized type of energy required to compute mathematical formulas for releasing the power of the atom could be exchanged for the types of energy required to build houses, provide food, write books, make autos, furnish heat, and so on. In short, were all energies permitted to flow freely, any individual in this vast population would have readily available for exchange any one or more of millions of types of energy.

Fifth, imagine 170,000,000 live persons, as above, but with an effective control to keep everyone's energy from going into the conduit. All would perish as if each were alone for, indeed, each would be alone, absolutely alone! There could be no exchange, nothing but one's own energy.

Sixth, imagine 170,000,000 live persons arranged in a huge circle, their hands clasped to a conduit capable of transmitting every conceivable type of physical and human energy, but with 40,000,000 of them organized for parasitical purposes, using aggressive force or threats of aggressive force to draw off energy in the amount of their demands as distinguished from value-for-value exchanges.<sup>16</sup> To the extent that they succeeded in drawing off more energy than could be obtained by willing exchange, to

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<sup>16</sup>See my *Two Ways To Stop Strikes* (Irvington-on-Hudson, N. Y.: Foundation for Economic Education, 1953. pp. 9-10).



that extent would the other 130,000,000 be compelled to accept less in exchange for their energies; that is, these others would have less livelihood by reason of the organized leeching.

As a final example, let us imagine 170,000,000 persons arranged in a huge circle. There is no master conduit equally available to everyone. Instead, there is one person standing in the center with all the individual conduits from the whole multitude attached to this single person. All energies must be directed to this person. Only he can dispense that which he has received. Here we have the dictator arrangement, applied totally. There would be, so to speak, 169,999,999 volts that could find passage only through a conduit of one-volt capacity. All of the 170,000,000, including the person in the center, would perish. Parenthetically, there are no political instances of 100 per cent dictatorship. Even in Argentina under Perón or in Russia the principle of authoritarianism is but little applied. There were here, and there are in Russia, vast leakages of free, human energy. Were there no free, human energy, all of you would have perished.<sup>17</sup>

### ***Life Demands Differences***

It can be deduced from the foregoing that no person, logically, should wish others to be like himself. Each individual has a vested interest in all others being different; in their variability; and in the excellence, the advancement, and the success of their creative specializations. Each person, like all others, is so specialized himself that his life depends on this variability, specialization, and exchange.

In energy types and in exchange requirements, we are all dissimilar. However, we have one common similarity, and one common necessity if we are to live and progress. It is that prohibitions

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<sup>17</sup>It is important to realize that authoritarianism — aggressive force, destructive energy — has an evil effect vastly out of proportion to its quantity. Imagine a church social of 100 people. Imagine the total energy expended by these folks in preparing the meal, walking, talking, gesticulating, and so on. Now imagine an infinitesimal part of this total energy, say 1/10,000th of it, turned into aggressive force — for instance, a deacon poking the minister in the nose! Contemplate the havoc wrought, and the point is clear.

against, or restrictions upon, the release and exchange of our creative energies be at the lowest minimum possible; that man not keep men from developing their variabilities and from exchanging the product thereof. Again, this removal of inhibitory influences — the kind imposed by man on men — serves to benefit all of us in common.<sup>18</sup>

### **Personal Inhibitions**

Inhibitory influences of the psychological kind — one's ignorance, fears, superstitions — are personal and not social, are one's own and not society's, are between oneself and one's God and not between oneself and other men. This is true even of those situations where one man yields to the persuasions of another and consents to be the other's pliant tool. The man who submits, if he does so willingly, has created a problem located only where *he* can get at it — in his own will.

Other men may regret another's plight, may rue another's lack of attainment and culture. But each person is faced with the problem of his own creative emergence, progress, development. This is the individualistic side of the problem. The individual is the only one who can attend to the degree and the perfection of his own variability. Others cannot in a creative sense, do anything *to* him. If they would help, they must limit themselves to what they can do *for* him. *For* him, they can do

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<sup>18</sup>The voluntary exchange of the varying products of men's energies is appropriately called the market. If man were not inclined to better his circumstances — that is, to satisfy his needs and pursue his ends with what he regards as minimum effort — he would not be led into specialization. As specialization cannot occur without the market, it is a basic human institution. It is the foundation stone of society. If the presence of the market did not better, but worsened, man's circumstances, no feeling of comradeship (for which the socialists claim so much) would attend to exchange. There would be no market, no society, no man. Man has a natural and a worthy urge to economize his efforts in producing the satisfactions of his desires. It is this urge that leads to specialization and exchange, to the division of labor and the market. However, this is the same urge that, on occasion, causes some men to sabotage the market, to indulge in predatory practices. Stealing, in a sense, is the first and, certainly, the worst labor-saving device. Hence, a fundamental need — if specialization and the market are to exist — is protection against market marauders.

little beyond attending to their own emergence — materially, intellectually, spiritually.<sup>19</sup> They can, by precept and example, set a standard to which he can repair. They can have goods and services to exchange, or knowledge and insight to offer. But whether or not he takes advantage of their offerings is a matter for his own election. No one else can decide. The creative side of man has to do with the individualistic aspect of man and must be so treated if damage by man to man is to be avoided.

Man, however, does not in every instance confine himself to his creative emergence, to getting ahead by his own competence and superiority. Failing in self-improvement and not satisfied with what he can obtain in willing exchange, he will, on numerous occasions, resort to unwilling exchange. He will draw energy from the kinetic conduit without exchanging an equivalent of his own energy. He will tap the power line, so to speak. All unwilling exchanges are examples of this: the thief who “exchanges” your horse for his own low-grade satisfaction, or the voters who legally take other people’s income to augment their own.

Variability and its perfection — that is, the creation of the infinite kinds of human energy — is exclusively individual. While each individual in his own upgrading draws on other persons, present and past, as well as on his own gift of insight, this process of individual upgrading classifies as voluntary and cooperative. It builds only upon free will and volition. It is the inspired experience of the inner self. While each of us has a personal stake in everybody else’s upgrading, the upgrading is not, by virtue of this unanimity of concern, a social problem. It is not a social problem for two reasons. First, it cannot be dealt with through social instruments. Second, the emergence of creative energy is a personal matter, inhering in individuals as they act personally and as they choose to act with other individuals.

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<sup>19</sup>This, of course, does not rule out charity of a type which aids another person to help himself rather than to destroy his potentialities by making him dependent. But, before even charity can be extended, the giver must have provided himself with resources to give over and beyond his own needs and commitments.

### **Society's Problem**

An attempt has been made in the above paragraph to establish the point that the potential energy of each variable individual is a personal and not a social problem. Earlier it was suggested that these infinite variations of potential human energy will translate into kinetic energy if uninhibited — that is, willing exchange will naturally take place if unobstructed, the will to live attending to this. It is now appropriate to discuss the obstructions or inhibitory influences, the actions of man which impair the source of creative energy and stifle its exchange, and also the actions which are parasitic on the flowing energy.

*These last-mentioned actions present the social problem, the only social problem there is. All else is in the realm of the creative, the individualistic.* Coping with the obstructions to the creation and flow of human energy and the siphoning off of the flowing energy without value for value is a social problem because:

1. These inhibitory actions inflict penalties on all human beings, presenting an in-common defense problem.
2. They cannot properly be dealt with personally.
3. They can be dealt with, in justice, only by social control.

### **All Are Related**

The first point requires little in the way of appreciation except an awareness that variable human energy, to be useful to mankind, has to be dynamic, kinetic, flowing — as indeed does any other kind of energy — and an understanding that in a free market there is no person too remote to oneself to be unrelated. Recently, I observed a disheveled old lady hanging around a Central American wharf. “How possibly could she be related to me?” thought I. Imagination supplied an answer: Perhaps she gathers the kelp that wraps the fish that feeds the hombre who loads the bananas which provide the dessert for the woman who cares for the man who runs the nursery that supplies the spruce from which the pulp is made for the manufacture of the cleansing tissue that takes the place of less sanitary and more costly handkerchiefs we have been using. Who else wants to harvest kelp to wrap that banana-

loading hombre's fish? In the free market, every creative act, regardless of how lowly, is related to the kinetic conduit — is capable of giving energy to it and of taking other types of energy from it. An obstruction of any creative energy exchange, regardless of how minute it may be, inflicts a penalty against the potential wealth — material, intellectual, or spiritual — of all other persons. It is a penalty inflicted in common.

The second point is that these inhibitory influences against energy exchanges cannot properly be dealt with by each individual for himself. Generally speaking, these inhibitory influences are fraud, violence, misrepresentation, and predatory practices. All are immoral, be they done legally or illegally. The problem here is to remove inhibitory actions. This can be accomplished by restraining aggressive force or by penalizing those persons who indulge in it. This is not an appropriate undertaking for each individual to do for himself, and for the following reasons:

1. It would be wholly impractical. No individual could possibly police the numberless instances of aggressive force — among tens of millions of people — harmful to him and to others, actions he would have no way of knowing about and practiced by persons most of whom would be beyond his acquaintance.
2. If every person were to be a law unto himself, we would have no less than 170,000,000 governments in the United States — the “law” of each varying daily with individual caprice.
3. No individual has the moral right to use aggressive force against any other individual. He has the moral right to use only defensive or repellent force. This is a distinction too subtle for noncodification.<sup>20</sup>
4. The offenders or marauders in society would soon be in command. They would be the government.
5. If the contention is correct that the removal of inhibitory influences is an in-common defense problem, then it follows

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<sup>20</sup>By noncodification is meant the absence of socially or publicly formulated rules, the absence of law.

that anything less than in-common or societal control of the problem is a form of authoritarianism.

### **Justice in Organization**

The third point is that these inhibitory influences can be dealt with, in justice, only by social organization.

The right-to-life concept and its acceptance must serve as the premise for this point. If a person has a right to life, it follows that he has a right to protect and to sustain that life, the sustenance of life being nothing more nor less than the fruits of one's labor — one's honestly acquired property. The right to life without the right to protect and to sustain life is meaningless. As suggested earlier, it is impossible in a division-of-labor economy to sustain life on one's own specialty. Energy exchanges are as vital as one's own produce. Therefore, the rights to the fruits of one's own labor involves the restraint or the removal of obstacles to exchange — not merely the obstacles to one's own exchange, but also the obstacles to other people's exchange within any given society.

Justice compels one other admission. If one has a right to life and livelihood, every other person has a similar right.<sup>21</sup> One must assume that life and livelihood are just as dear to every other person as to oneself — regardless of race, creed, color, occupational level, or wealth status. *The universality of the will to live and the requirement that life and livelihood be protected are continuous with society.* The responsibility for society-wide protection cannot, in sound organizational practice, be vested in anything less than society. And where the responsibility rests, there also should rest the authority to discharge the responsibility.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Recommended is *The Source of Rights* by Frank Chodorov (Irvington-on-Hudson, N. Y.: Foundation for Economic Education, Inc., 1954).

<sup>22</sup>When individuals, admittedly having the right to defend their own lives, delegate their defensive responsibilities to society's agency, the agency is in full and exclusive charge of that function. In practice, the agency should redelegate the right to defend life as an individual act in certain instances. However, it is the agency that is in control of this function, specifying when and under what conditions individual defense is permissible. Society, however, at all times, should retain the power to reorganize its governmental agency.

It is quite likely that this argument will appear valid only to those who grasp the interrelationship of energy exchanges; who become aware of the extent to which we are interdependent, or more precisely, dependent on these exchanges; who see the meaning of kinetic, flowing, dynamic human energy; and who acknowledge that, in this respect, we are all in one vast energy circuit, a "grid system," which encompasses everybody.

What is everybody's problem is nobody's problem — a good adage in this instance. The argument here is that keeping the energy circuits open is not the responsibility of any one person nor of any division of any given society, but is everybody's or society's problem.

### **To Recapitulate**

Before going further, let's condense the central ideas of this thesis:

1. The source of all creative and variable human energy, in an earthly sense, rests in individuals. The emergence of the creative and variable capacities of each is itself a creative process that can only be attended to by the creative unit, the individual, in such voluntary and cooperative actions as he may freely choose to take. This is the province of the individual and not of society. This is the vast, unlimited area of liberty, of self-reliance, and of self-discipline.

2. Creative, variable energies will tend naturally to exchange to the benefit and life-extension of all in the absence of man-concocted obstacles. Obstacles to creative energy and its exchange — be they in the form of fraud, misrepresentation, violence, or predatory practices — adversely affect and subtract from life and from the potential life (emergence) of everyone and are, therefore, the problem of every human being *equally* within any given society. While the removal of social obstacles is the problem of everyone, it is not the responsibility of any one person. It is the responsibility of all — that is, it is a social responsibility. As man is the product and has life by reason of division of labor and exchange, so does he inherit with birth this interdependent,

social aspect of self. This is as much his inheritance as is the responsibility for his own emergence. The restraint and the penalizing of the obstacles to creative energy and energy exchange — not merely between oneself and another, but between all men — must be dealt with by social prohibitions, by the law! This is the relatively small, limited province of what we have come to call “government.” It is the appropriate area of disciplines exterior to personal disciplines.

If the purpose of man on earth is self-realization — coming as near as possible to the attainment of those creative aptitudes and potentialities peculiarly his — it follows that the law, the book of rules and prohibitions for social administration, can logically serve only the purpose of deterring man’s destructive actions for the sake of giving full flower to his creative actions. The law (social rules) can have no just object beyond removing social obstacles to the release of the human spirit. An organized arm of society, within its proper bounds, can be but the handmaiden of liberty; government, within its proper bounds, can be but the protective servant of all individuals equally against antisocial marauders.

According to the theories here set forth, individuals should delegate to society’s agency the responsibility for protecting all members of society against such destructive actions as some of its members may bring against others of its membership.

Society, per se, cannot assume responsibility, for society is an abstraction. Society can be given entity only as it is organized, only as its members are organized.

### **Purpose of Organization**

Organization is for the purpose of cooperation. There can be cooperation for creative purposes and cooperation for repellent or defensive purposes.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Just as kinetic energy can be destructive as well as productive or creative, just so can cooperation be for destructive purposes. For example, a gang of thieves can cooperate to rob a bank or a gang of voters can cooperate to take the property of some to “aid” others. This kind of voter cooperation is based on perverting government, inducing government to use aggressive force instead of confining itself to defensive force. In this stage of my lectures, I prefer to discuss government ideally.



Cooperation for creative purposes must be left to voluntary action. Men can cooperate to use force, but they cannot be forced to cooperate. Voluntary cooperative actions occur daily in numberless ways, most of them having almost imperceptible organization but some of them having highly formalized organization — corporations, partnerships, educational institutions, and so on.

However, cooperation for creative purposes requires, as an auxiliary, cooperation to annul destructive purposes. Cooperation for creative purposes requires that inhibitory influences against creative action be neutralized. In good theory, it is as members of society — not as members of a family or of a corporation or of a labor union or of a chamber of commerce or of any group having special interests — that individuals organize themselves into a police force to cooperate in maximizing their liberty by restraining those who would impede creative effort and exchange.

We must recognize the nature of society's political apparatus. It has, ideally, the single, distinguishing virtue of being able to inhibit, repel, restrain, penalize. All personnel of the apparatus can do everything else better outside the apparatus than in it. What should be inhibited, restrained, penalized? Those actions of man which are characterized by aggressive force, namely, those actions which themselves inhibit, restrain, destroy, or penalize creative effort. Defensive force may be used to neutralize aggressive force, and such a use of forces serves a social end. This use of defensive force should be the guiding principle of the political agency.

It is society that should organize the political apparatus — the state, the government, the agency of common defense. It is not proper that anything less than society should organize to impose restrictions which relate to all members of society equally. By the same token, it is not proper to organize the whole society for creative effort, for creative aptitudes have their locus only in individuals. For example, it is absurd to organize society into an agency of aggressive force, as has been done in Russia, to make automobiles, to produce penicillin, or to run a chick hatchery.

Interests and aptitudes for these creative specializations — governed by the principle of variability implicit in any and all progressive, evolving societies — are rarities and not generalizations. The rarities for creative effort find cooperation possible only by people voluntarily organizing themselves.<sup>24</sup> The benefits flowing from these voluntary organizations are available society-wide. But these benefits are available to all only because the organizations are voluntary. *Energy flows in the absence of obstacles sufficient to stop it.* That energies are often wasted and misdirected by persons in voluntary action is only to admit that man errs.

### **Russia Is No Exception**

It is often argued that the Russians can, for example, produce airplanes by their use of aggressive force and that the production of an airplane is a creative project. It is! Admittedly, this thesis contends that force can be used only to inhibit, repel, restrain, penalize. Is there not a contradiction here? No! The Russian airplanes — creations — are actually the product of voluntary, cooperative effort. And it is not the force that creates the airplanes. Force in Russia, as elsewhere, inhibits, repels, restrains, penalizes. Russians, in addition to defensive force, use vast amounts of aggressive force which destroys. In Russia the force is used to destroy a worker's opportunities to pursue the vocation of his own choice. The worker in the airplane factory is denied the opportunity of being an artist, a cook, a musician, or whatever. Left to him, shall we say, are only two alternatives — building airplanes or dying. If he prefers the former to the latter and acts in accord with his preference, he has made a choice to produce airplanes. The fact that his alternatives are thus limited by the employment of force does not alter his act of voluntary choosing between the two. Nor does it alter the fact that all of his acts in producing airplanes, whether in inventing or doing, are voluntary acts. A person

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<sup>24</sup>Voluntary organizations (creative energies in cooperation) form in accord with complex human affinities that defy diagnosis, accurate prediction, and single-minded arrangement.

cannot be compelled to act creatively.<sup>25</sup> But the areas where he would choose to act creatively can be ruled out of existence by the use of force.

When force is used, as in Russia, to limit opportunities, thus leaving open one or a few areas for creative effort, we observe many persons building airplanes when their best aptitudes are for painting, for cooking, for music, or something else. In a free market society, where force would have to be limited to restraining social obstacles to creative energy and its exchange, we would find mostly those with aptitudes for airplanes building airplanes.

Obviously, an individual is more creative in an activity agreeable to his aptitudes than in an activity disagreeable to his aptitudes. A person knows his own aptitudes better than does a stranger — the dictator or any possible henchman. This is a primary fact of observation. It follows, then, that total energy will be higher among a people individually choosing their own work than among a people whose work is dictated for them by another individual.

The same principle applies to exchange. We will fare better — materially, intellectually, spiritually — if each of us chooses what he will communicate and exchange with others than if some other individual dictates what each shall communicate and exchange. It is these differences in the handling of creative energy and its exchange that account for the differences between my countrymen and Russians in production, invention, personal emergence,

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<sup>25</sup>One critic of this reasoning suggests that slaves were compelled to and did act creatively. Slaves merely adapted themselves to their environment, their confinement, their limitation of choices. Within this framework, their creative acts were all voluntary acts. Many human beings have submitted to floggings or have gone to their deaths because they chose these punishments in preference to the limitation of choices imposed upon them. This insistence of mine is not hair-splitting. That every creative act is a voluntary act is a basic point in understanding the limitations of force. Perhaps this will help my critic: Put the two of us in a room barren of all else but a lively fly. I command my critic to catch the fly. But to give the theory here advanced an honest test, he is to make not a single move except as I direct it. The fly will not be caught. The fly can be caught only if my critic acts in response to his own free will and volition. This acting in response to volition applies to the picking of cotton or to the building of airplanes as well as to catching a fly.

and so forth. The Russians apply aggressive force to creative activities and claim it to be good. We in the United States are now, unfortunately, doing the same thing on a smaller but growing scale.

### **Unanimity Requires Common Interest**

Cooperation is required among members of society to perform the negative function of prohibiting obstacles to production, communication, and exchange. The cooperation ought to be as nearly unanimous as possible. Cooperation can approach unanimity only if the activities of the defensive agency be limited to those actions which have a common benefit to creative effort. Ideally, the only dissenters would be those who want to live by predation. If the agency of defense finds itself being used as an agency of plunder (aggressive force) — as in the case of both of our governments today — cooperation will not tend toward unanimity. For in this instance, some of the members of society cooperate to benefit themselves at the expense of the other members, employing the governmental agency to achieve their ends. The plundered members find it difficult to cooperate with the plundering members.

Mere participation in the activities of society's agency, such as unwilling military service or the unwilling payment of income to support the agency in overextended activities, does not qualify as cooperation. Cooperation in its highest form is a willing response, not the choice of the lesser of two evils. Willing response, approaching unanimity, is much to be desired. *But it is impossible except as society's agency is itself an accurate response to man's single in-common social requirement: defense against those actions of man which inhibit creative energy and its exchange.* Man is a member of society in common with all other men in this respect only. His social agency, to be useful and not harmful, must limit itself to this one small but extremely important function which all men have socially in common. Then reason and justice, at least, will supply the basis for unanimous cooperation.

## **Limitation of Government Prescribed by Its Justification**

Let the above ideas be emphasized in these terms: Any logical and just organization by society derives its existence from only one source: the common need for every man to protect himself against those who would limit his creative opportunities. Every human being is born with as much right to live his life creatively as any other man. Man, however, is incapable of protecting his life as a personal, individual project, and at the same time of realizing his human potential. That part of his inheritance which designates him as a product of society precludes this. By reason of this social circumstance, he is committed, in principle, to co-operating with his fellow men in the protective project of “one for all and all for one”; in a project that should make no distinction whatever as to persons; in a project where all ought to be regarded as equal; in a project where special privilege should be unknown.<sup>26</sup>

The principle which justifies society’s organization of a defensive arm — man’s inheritance as an interdependent being — also prescribes the limitations on what the organization should do. In short, the law’s limitation inheres in its justification.

Force is a dangerous thing. Therefore, society’s organized arm is a dangerous instrument. It is not, as some assert, a necessary evil. When limited to its proper defensive scope, it is a positive good. When exceeding its proper limitations and becoming aggression, it is not a “necessary” but a positive evil.

### **Two Types of Force**

Force of the kind here discussed is of two types. There is repellent or defensive force. There is aggressive force. The latter is always evil. There are no exceptions. No man has any moral right to use aggressive force against any other man. Nor have any number of men, in or out of societal organizations, any moral

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<sup>26</sup>It cannot be too much emphasized that human beings are not equal. Yet, we should all be equal before the law in the sense that we think of ourselves as equal before God.

right to use it. One of the most distressing fallacies having to do with government and liberty is the assumption that the State, an agency presumably of the people, has rights beyond those possessed by the people. For example, the State uses aggressive force against an individual, compelling him to exchange some of his income for the alleged prosperity of people elsewhere. No reasonable person would sanction such an aggressive action on the part of any single citizen. Therefore, no reasonable person can logically believe that any such control belongs to a multitude of citizens. From what source does this extracurricular "right" of the State to use aggressive force derive? It has no derivation. It is an arrogation. This arrogation is as untenable as the divine right of kings theory; indeed, it amounts to the same thing.

Any person has the natural and moral right to use repellent or defensive force against any other person who would aggress against him. No person on this earth has any moral right of control over any other person superior to the defense of his own life and livelihood. Two persons banding together do not acquire moral rights of control over others superior to the rights held by each before their association. No increase in the number of individuals involved morally alters this in any way — even when the number reaches the 170,000,000 of my country. Rights not possessed by individuals cannot properly be delegated to an agency, political or otherwise. Society's agency, then, will find the proper limits of its scope in exercising for everyone, without favor to any, the natural and moral rights inherent in its members.<sup>27</sup>

### **Tool of Liberty**

The above concludes what is little more than a bare outline — a skeleton, so to speak — of the ideas that need to be considered in arriving at the principles and the theories of government and liberty. Government — which no doubt is what we will continue to call our organized agency of society, even though it be limited

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<sup>27</sup>An excellent development of this idea is to be found in *The Law* by Frederic Bastiat (Irvington-on-Hudson, N.Y.: Foundation for Economic Education, 1950).

to defensive functions — is, if properly employed, an essential tool of liberty.

Government organized strictly in accord with right principle is an object more to be ardently hoped for than seriously expected. Yet, right principle must be deduced and have some measure of understanding if political expediency, controlled as it is by demagoguery and special interests, is not to rule and eventually overcome us. Political expediency feeds on the destructiveness it breeds. Every evil it evokes sets in motion other “compensating” evils. Political expediency, by its very nature, inevitably leads to a dead end.

Right principle is man’s only compass. He often deviates from the course it suggests, but at least he can be aware of where he is by reference to it. Right principle is a beacon by which man can reverse himself after he has ventured into the evil ways which constantly beckon him.<sup>28</sup>

Right principle as relating to the limitation of government is deducible. Protecting the release of creative human energy and its exchange is suggested as the basis for sound deductions.

### ***The Purpose of Liberty***

Every living human being, if he would correctly interpret his own welfare, has a vested interest in the creative emergence of every other human being; each person has a vested interest in the free, uninhibited flowing and exchange of the energies thus released; the true interests of all, therefore, are in harmony; and, finally, every individual has a vested interest in common with all other men in restraining all inhibitory influences to creative energy and creative energy exchanges. It is this latter common interest that constitutes the social aspect of man and warrants his organization of government within societies for defense. All else is individual, voluntary, and cooperative as individuals may

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<sup>28</sup>What is right will, of course, always remain debatable as between persons. The nearest anyone can come to practicing right is accurately to follow that which his conscience dictates as right. “Right principle,” therefore, as I use it is obviously and necessarily right principle as I see it.

choose; for all else is creative. This is the vast, indeed, the infinite, area of emergence.

Emergence — man's highest purpose — has two primary requirements. The first is an awareness of an Infinite Consciousness that man's emergence may have conscious purpose and direction. The second is liberty in order that emergence may be uninhibited and possible. Liberty can be defined, psychologically, as man freeing himself from his own negations and, sociologically, as man not playing God, either individually or collectively, through government or otherwise.



# Historical Approaches to Ideal Government

► The word “freedom,” in the sense of freedom from taxes, was first written, so far as I know, by the Sumerians some 43 centuries ago. It was etched on a clay cone with a reed stylus and was done in cuneiform script. The clay cone is now in the Louvre.

This precious concept, now so frequently on our lips — but recklessly used and rarely understood — makes its appearance again during the brief reign of a Sumerian king, one Urukágina of Lagash, a city-state just north of the Persian Gulf. Urukágina is described in the ancient script as a social reformer, the first in recorded history. He removed many bureaucrats from their offices and took other steps to wipe out governmental costs which were sapping the substance of the people.

One might say that King Urukágina was a benevolent dictator, for his sympathies were with his people and their welfare. Be it noted, however, that he regarded them as *his* people, and so did most everybody else. Every government at this period and for the next 35 centuries regarded the people as subjects and itself as sovereign. The rights and privileges Urukágina could bestow were rights and privileges he could, by the same token, deny. The power to give is also the power to withhold. This relationship of Sovereign State and subject people, so far as I can discover, maintained itself as a political concept at all times and in all places on earth until modern times. It made no difference whether the Head of State was called King, Caesar, Duce, Führer, Czar, Mikado, or whatever. For centuries power has been centered in the State; the life, liberty, and property of men have been extended or diminished according to the caprice of those who were

at the State's helm; the rights of men have been held in the palm of political masters — masters degraded beyond their ordinary selves by the corruption which power over others inflicts; masters abased by the delusion that sovereignty rests in their little, fallible persons.

The idea of sovereignty resting in the person or persons of a political elite has been a preponderant view in all countries for centuries. While Webster's dictionary defines sovereignty as "supremacy in rule or power," it goes on to confirm the dominant opinion by locating this supremacy in "the dominion, or rule of a lord, king, emperor, or the like" or also in "the body of enfranchised citizens." I shall try to demonstrate that this popular notion is at the root of our societal difficulties.

### ***The Concept of the Sovereign State***

In all political theory there is no more important evaluation we are called upon to make than correctly to gauge the significance of the concept that the State is sovereign. Such an evaluation in any degree of accuracy must be difficult, for so few, even today in the United States, seem able to make it. These lectures will be more or less meaningless to any person who fails to grasp what it means to regard the State as sovereign. Therefore, forgive me if I appear to labor this important point.

Suppose I hold an invisible rope that can be extended to any length, one end of which is tied around your neck. With it I can restrain you as much as I choose. Or, if I am benevolent in my manners, I can let you roam and act, seemingly at will. But, always, I hold the rope. As long as the rope can be controlled by me, as long as your actions are at my discretion, can you regard yourself as a free agent? I think not. You cannot avoid being my slave regardless of the freedom I allow you. If I grant you freedom you can, under these circumstances, be described as "a slave at liberty," that is, in the sense of a prisoner on parole.

To make the analogy a bit more accurate, suppose I have you in a hypnotic state. You are subject to my will until I choose to

break the hypnosis. I can exercise my power causing you to do anything I wish or, should I prefer, I can let you go your own way. But remember, I can cause you to respond in ways dictated by my caprice at any time. Can you, in any of these instances, be considered a free agent? Never – not while it is admitted that I am sovereign; not while it is conceded that I am the disposer of your creative energies, your rights. You will remain my slave regardless of how much or how little I exercise my power as your master.

Down through the ages men have held the State to be sovereign. Now and then the State has relaxed its restraints or been forced by its subjects to relax them. Man's status down through the ages has therefore wavered between two categories: the rank of slaves and the rank of "slaves at liberty." It is utterly impossible for men to have any other status so long as they hold man-made organizations to be sovereign. For, what is a slave? Let us hear Herbert Spencer:

That which fundamentally distinguishes the slave is that he labours under coercion to satisfy another's desires. . . . What . . . leads us to qualify our conception of the slavery as more or less severe? Evidently the greater or smaller extent to which effort is compulsorily expended for the benefit of another instead of for self-benefit.<sup>1</sup>

Down through the ages men have believed that sovereign authority rested in the State. Their troubles, therefore, were thought to originate with the *kind* or *form* of man-made authority that ruled them. So, century after century, time and time again, men killed their rulers and slaughtered one another in untold millions, in an effort to find an authority that would improve their conditions. These rebellions on occasion brought temporary benefits. They interrupted or relaxed the mechanism of compulsory control and permitted creative human energy to work a little – for awhile.

Until recently, however, these revolutions were not ideal revolutions. They were revolutions only in the sense of a wheel

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<sup>1</sup>This is extracted from the chapter, "The Coming Slavery," in Spencer's *The Man Versus the State* (Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1946).

rotating around a motionless center. Under the concept of the State as sovereign, the standard pattern has always been to overthrow one form of man-authority merely to replace it with another form of man-authority — from priest to king, from king to oligarchy, from oligarchy to despot, from despot to majority, from majority to bureaucracy, from bureaucracy to dictator, from dictator to king, from king . . . and so on, and so on. According to our histories this sort of thing has been going on for several thousand years, and for several thousand years people have gone hungry and killed each other. The simple reason is that creative human energy cannot be effectively released when the State is sovereign. The truly significant revolution was yet to come — the nearest approach to the ideal that has ever been known.<sup>2</sup>

### **The Concept of God as Sovereign**

Before explaining this *ideal revolution*, let us refer to a concept of unknown genesis and authorship. Perhaps it came originally as a flash of insight, as a momentary, intuitive thought, to the mind of an ancient forebear who had few words to convey what had been but dimly revealed to him, namely, that God is Sovereign. The earliest and most familiar account of this concept is found in the Holy Bible and has continued to thread its way narrowly through thought and literature since the birth of the Christian Era.

Regardless of the distinguished moral leadership for this concept over the centuries, it remains as new today as ever before. Being a concept, it has meaningful existence only for those individuals whose perceptiveness is sensitively attuned to it. To read or hear it over and over, even to memorize its explanatory words, is not to possess it. Possession originates only in a state of personal understanding, an inward awareness that man is not of his own design, a highly humble realization that man — indeed, Nature in all her manifestations — is but the work of a Supreme

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<sup>2</sup>This and the previous paragraph are paraphrasings from *The Mainspring of Human Progress* by Henry Grady Weaver (Irvington-on-Hudson, N.Y.: Foundation for Economic Education, 1947).

Creator. In other words, God is our ultimate Sovereign! Man's creativity has its origin in his Creator. Man's rights are endowed by God, the sole Sovereign. Individuals possess this concept to the extent they stand in awe of Creation: the ever-expanding Universe; infinite life, thought, consciousness; the miracle of love, spirit, radiant energy, a blade of grass, even. The Supreme Fact is eternally present; it is our ears that do not hear, our eyes that do not see, our intuition that does not intuit.

Down through the ages hundreds of millions of people have given lip service to this concept of a Supreme Creator. Yet, that the concept has not been generally understood nor deeply believed in is manifested by the fact that, down through the ages, no political institution has ever been founded logically upon it, or consistently derived from it. Western man continued to tolerate the State as his sovereign, and still does.

Oh yes, the sovereign State has on occasion, as I have said, relaxed its control of creative actions. Wherever and whenever production and exchange flourished, relaxation of state sovereignty has always preceded the happy prosperity. Certainly, the State for a long period of time exercised very little restraint on the Saracens, or the Venetians during the period highlighted by Marco Polo, or the Dutch during the commercial heyday of Amsterdam. Countless instances of where the State "got off the backs" of the people are available to the historical researcher. But, in all these instances, the relaxations that were granted could be withdrawn by the self-same sovereign State – and eventually, in all instances, they were. As a consequence, there resulted only mass dissatisfactions and uprisings, repeated attempts to repeal tyrannies without understanding the cause of tyranny – as inevitable consequence of the idea of the State as sovereign. The rebellious nationals of different countries succeeded only in achieving ambiguous ends: the overthrowing of one man-made authority to make room for another man-made authority. There was no *ideal revolution*. There was no logical application of the God cosmology to societal organization.

A few people of the Old World, let it be said in their favor, came to realize one important political fact: the more inclusive the scope of government, the more tyrannical that government. No doubt an early American saying, "That government is best which governs least," had its origin in this realization.<sup>3</sup> In any event, some of the more venturesome risked the hazards of the New World rather than submit to the persistent authoritarianism that had become their lot.

### **The Plymouth Colony**

Among the first to arrive in North America from Europe was a group who are referred to as the Pilgrim Fathers. They crossed the Atlantic on the *Mayflower* in the year 1620. Like most Europeans of their time they regarded themselves as highly religious, God-fearing, Christian people. Before setting up their little colony, indeed ere they left the ship, all adults signed what became known as the Mayflower Compact. Take note of some of the language:

In the presence of God and one another . . . for the preservation and furtherance of the Glory of God and the advancement of the Christian religion.

On the face of it, here was a people of the God cosmology. But, pious as they were in all outward appearances, devoted to prayer and religious observance, they did not accept God as Sovereign in their community life any more than had their European relatives. For, at the very outset, they established an authoritarian or communistic community. It made no difference how much or how little any member of the colony produced; that production went into a common warehouse under order of the communal authority, and the proceeds of the warehouse were doled out in accordance with the authority's idea of the need. In short,

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<sup>3</sup>My use of the word "American" to designate the people of the United States is in accord with our own custom. While we are no more Americans than Canadians or Mexicans or Argentineans, we have — perhaps wrongly — appropriated this term to ourselves. It derives from our full name, The United States of America. We chose "American" in preference to "United Stateian." Actually, there is no English equivalent for your expressive "Estadounidense."

they began the practice of a principle which, two centuries later, Karl Marx was to formalize as the ideal of the communistic society: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need."

In any event, the religion of these people and their forebears was not profound enough for the God cosmology to manifest itself in their political institutions. Perhaps too many of the people were going through the formalities of religion without being really religious — something like, in my country, high school children pledging allegiance to the flag or service club members singing the national anthem, the experience being only physical or vocal, not intellectual or spiritual.

### ***How It Was Saved***

As could have been foretold by anyone having a fair understanding of political economy, the communistic colony of our Pilgrim Fathers was a failure. Many members starved and died. With men organized in a communistic manner the communal warehouse was constantly running out of provender. During the second winter Governor Bradford met with the remaining members of the colony. In effect, he said to them, "This springtime we shall adopt a new practice. We will discard the principle, 'From each according to his ability, to each according to his need.' We will try the principle, 'To each according to his merit.' Come the spring and each of you shall have what you yourself produce."

I am not aware that these people reached this conclusion as a result of reasoning logically from their own premise of a Supreme Creator. So far as I know, these folks were only seeking for a formula whereby they could live and, if possible, prosper. Anyway, whether inadvertently or not, they began the practice of a principle that is absolutely consistent with a God cosmology, if this be reasoned to its logical conclusion. When they agreed that each person has a right to the fruits of his own labor — the private property principle — they were declaring that no man or set of men or any man-made authority was their sovereign. They were

saying that they should be free to act creatively and productively as their conscience instructed them. Unanimously they concluded that there be freedom of choice as to how each employed himself and as to what each would do with the fruits thereof. If they did not acclaim God as the sole source of man's rights, they at least acknowledged no other gods before him.

Came the springtime. Not only were the fathers toiling in the fields but the mothers and the children were there, also. And why not? No man-made authorities were absorbing their substance. Instead, there was incentive to exercise their creative energies to the full!

Here was a people stumbling on fringes of the *ideal revolution* without fully grasping, so far as I can discover, the implications of what they were doing. The people multiplied and prospered. They progressed in the face of unprecedented hardships. For decades they argued politics. How was it possible to form a national government without returning to their Old World status? Was it possible to have a national government that would preserve the freedom they had won with such difficulty?

### **An Ideal Revolution**

One hundred and fifty-six years after the Mayflower Compact came the American Revolution, an *ideal revolution*, at least in concept. Contrary to what most of us have been taught in school, the American Revolution was not essentially an armed conflict with England. The American Revolution was a revolutionary idea, a revolt from the Old World form of the State as sovereign to the concept of God as Sovereign. This, I believe, is the only *ideal revolution*. The American experiment was the nearest approach to the ideal that humanity has as yet experienced.

No doubt most Americans in 1776 were as barren of ideas about political theory and moral and social philosophy as were the Pilgrim Fathers or the bulk of their European ancestry. Every major as well as minor movement in history, be the movement good or bad, has been managed by a few men of ideas. To use



Richard Weaver's phrase, "ideas have consequences."<sup>4</sup> Throughout all history there has been an idea, a slender thread of thought, weaving its way through the minds of a few in each generation. This is the idea that the Creator and not the State is sovereign. An early sample of this idea is to be found in Isaiah 33:22 – "The Lord is our judge; the Lord is our lawgiver; the Lord is our king." The position of the Creator and not the State being Sovereign is confirmed by the fact that "in the entire Biblical legal literature not a single law emanating from kings or other secular authorities was recorded or preserved as permanently valid."<sup>5</sup> The laws of Israel were believed to stem from God.

Now and then there came upon the Western scene philosophers and writers of political theory such as John Locke (1632-1704) who held a somewhat similar view. These seed-thoughts found fertile soil in the minds of some inquisitive Americans who were desperately seeking a formula for a national government that would not have the power to exercise control over creative or productive activities, a power that has been wielded by all governments throughout all history. Something new and radically different in political theory had to be discovered and put into effect, something consistent with the freedom of choice they were experiencing. The theory which they wrote into our *Declaration of Independence* is the distilled essence of what we in the United States call "Americanism," the only *ideal revolution* in political history:

We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal; that they are *endowed by their Creator* with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.<sup>6</sup> That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed . . . (Italics supplied)

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<sup>4</sup>Weaver, Richard. *Ideas Have Consequences*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948.

<sup>5</sup>*University of Notre Dame Natural Law Institute Proceedings*. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1953. p. 16.

<sup>6</sup>There is some good evidence that "pursuit of happiness" was originally "property"; that the change was a compromise for the purpose of gaining the signatures of some who did not understand the meaning of property.

Here we have what is at once a spiritual, a political, and an economic concept. It is spiritual in that it proclaims that the Creator is the Source of man's rights; political in that it implicitly denies that the State is the source of rights; and economic in this sense: If a man has a right to his life, it follows that he has a right to sustain his life, the sustenance of life being nothing more nor less than the fruits of his own labor. Here was a concept absolutely consistent with what Governor Bradford had said to the Pilgrim Fathers, "From now on each of you shall have what you yourself produce." It was consistent with the private property principle.

It is one thing to make such a declaration. It is quite another matter to implement it, to put it into practice. To meet this practical need the American Constitution and, later, its Bill of Rights were written and adopted. These political instruments consisted primarily of a set of prohibitions, not against the citizens but against the one thing that they feared — the State.

The American Constitution and Bill of Rights limited government more severely than any government had ever before been limited. In principle, at least, government was confined to inhibiting and penalizing destructive actions. The people — except, unfortunately, the Negro slaves — were free to act creatively and productively as they pleased. Government, for some decades, was not sovereign.

Observe the results that flowed from this severe limitation of government. Not a person turned to the State for succor, and for the same reason that no one ever turns to a beggar for succor. The government had nothing on hand to dispense because it did not then have the power to take from some and give to others. What happens to a people when they cannot turn to the State for help? The answer is obvious: They assume self-responsibility. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries witnessed the development of a greater self-reliance among a people than in any previous period.

With government limited to inhibiting and penalizing destructive actions, and people free to act creatively and productively as they pleased, large quantities of creative energy were released.

Only personal ineptitudes stood in the way. The societal agency, the State, was off the people's back, so to speak.

The combination of a self-reliant people plus the freeing of their creative energies accounted for the American miracle, all of which was made possible by holding the Creator, not the State, as Sovereign. Little wonder that it was observed:

The whole atmosphere of the United States seemed charged with a kind of electricity that sparked the human spirit in a manner that was beyond all earthly precedent.<sup>7</sup>

Here, for the first time, was an agency of society organized in a near harmony with the Supreme Reality. A sad and quite a different story has to do with the fact that the American people have for some time been running away from their own revolution. Because too few grasp the truth of the Creator as Sovereign and as the Source of Rights, they are now headed back toward the Old World arrangement from which they originally escaped. This story, however, should not be explained under the title, "Historical Approaches to Ideal Government" but rather, under the title of the next lecture, "Current Deviations from Ideal Government."

The fact remains that here was the best formalized model humanity had yet produced of the spiritual, the intellectual, the political, and the economic revolution that must be repeated and duplicated if man-made authority over the creative lives of human beings is to be abolished.

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<sup>7</sup>Manion, Clarence. *The Key to Peace*. Chicago: The Heritage Foundation, Inc., 1951.



# *Current Deviations from Ideal Government*

► Within the framework or context of these lectures the ideal society can be envisioned as one in which every person is free to act creatively or productively as he pleases. This is to say that each person, ideally, should be free to choose his labor and decide what disposition should be made of the fruits thereof. Let him be a piccolo player or actor, an artist or teacher, an engineer or architect, a clerk or cleric, a farmer or factory worker, or whatever, according to his private inclination. Let him, if he likes, be generous or charitable with his wealth, giving others anything he possesses or can obtain in willing exchange for his efforts; let him invest his income in his own or someone else's enterprise; let him loan it for whatever return the free market allows; let him be a foolish miser; let him exchange with whomever and for whatever — and wherever — he wishes. In the ideal society no person would be restrained — except as his actions inhibit the creative actions of others. The ideal is simply stated: men producing, creating, emerging in thought and consciousness, evolving intellectually and spiritually — moving in a God-ward direction at the rate their ambitions and capabilities permit. No other man or set of men or any agency they may contrive would then impede their progress in this direction.

Within the framework of these lectures — which have to do only with the sociological aspect of freedom — deviations from the ideal can be described as coercive force impeding creative action, as man employing force to impose his will on others or, to use the vernacular, as man getting onto the back of his fellow

man. Now, it is true that such coercive force can and often does occur in the form of private banditry. But it is coercive force of this and related types — violence, fraud, misrepresentation, predatory practices — that governments, ideally, are supposed to minimize. According to the point of view here presented, governments are properly limited to this negative function. Our concern in these lectures is not with banditry and plunder as it is practiced privately.<sup>1</sup> Instead, our concern is with the way people employ government — society's organized police force — to practice banditry and plunder for them. Bastiat stated quite succinctly the deviation from the ideal we propose to examine:

The law perverted! And the police powers of the State perverted along with it! The law, I say, not only turned from its proper purpose but made to follow an entirely contrary purpose! The law becomes the weapon of every kind of greed! Instead of checking crime, the law itself guilty of the evils it is supposed to punish!<sup>2</sup>

At the outset, let me state categorically that the perversion Bastiat deplored is becoming more and more pronounced in nearly every country. What has already happened to the Argentine — one of God's garden spots — is happening elsewhere. Political intervention in each country bears different labels and the speed of its penetration varies greatly, but it introduces the same type of disintegration regardless of name.

### ***Can Interventionism Be Reversed?***

One question we ought to ask ourselves: Can the people of a nation, once they have committed themselves to an interventionist course, be rid of the intervention? In short, is reversal a political possibility? History offers very few encouraging examples. Most history reads like *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.

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<sup>1</sup>Actually, most of the devilry in the world is carried on by the well-intentioned. There simply aren't enough criminals or wholly malevolent persons among us to account for all the mischief.

<sup>2</sup>Bastiat, Frederic. *The Law*. Irvington-on-Hudson, N.Y.: Foundation for Economic Education, Inc. 1950. p. 117.

The only significant reversal I have found occurred in England following the Napoleonic Wars. England, at the time, had a small population and her economy was relatively simple as compared with the advanced division-of-labor economies of our day and age. Yet, England's debt was greater, in relation to her resources, than most countries now bear; her taxation was confiscatory; and the restrictions on the exchange of goods and services were so great that had it not been for the smugglers many of the people might have starved. Altogether, England's case appeared hopeless. Something happened. What was it?

In the answer to the above question, we have the all-important guide for ourselves – in the Argentine, in the United States, or wherever. What happened was primarily the result of work done by men such as you libertarian thinkers in Centro and those identified with FEE. Two of the distinguished leaders in the English movement were Richard Cobden and John Bright. *These men understood and could explain the virtues of freedom and free exchange.* They went about England writing and speaking. Members of Parliament listened, and there began the greatest reform movement in British history – the repeal of restrictive law. They repealed the Corn Laws, the Poor Laws, and the like. Fortunately for Western civilization, England's monarch at the time, Victoria, appeared to have no passion for ruling Englishmen – in the overriding sense of rule. She relaxed the power that was inherent in her office. Englishmen roamed all over the world and developed production, trade, and prosperity, a development that went on until a little before the beginning of World War I when the same interventionist policies, that had nearly destroyed her earlier, set in again to wreak their havoc on the world.

### **Many Names – One Idea**

Let us examine this interventionist policy in more detail. As I stated previously, it has many names. State interventionism, socialism, and communism have already been mentioned. Other popular labels are Fabianism, nazism, fascism, the Welfare State,

the planned economy and, in my country, the Fair Deal, the New Deal, the New Republicanism, and so on. Reflection will reveal that each of these so-called progressive ideologies has a characteristic in common with all the rest. This common characteristic is the essence of the disease that is plaguing us all: *a rapidly growing belief in the employment of organized police force — government — to forcibly direct and control the creative and productive activities of the citizens.* This is contrary to what libertarians believe to be the proper function of government. Libertarians believe that organized police force should be used to inhibit any destructive activities that interfere with the peacefully creative and productive efforts of its own citizenry.

Government housing simply illustrates the workings of interventionism. I can remember when and if we wanted a house or housing, we relied on private enterprise. First, we relied on the person who wanted a house; second, on the builder who wanted to compete for its construction; third, on the banker who thought he saw some advantage to himself in loaning the money for the tools, the material, and the labor. Following this design in the United States, we built more square feet of housing per person than ever existed in any country on earth and at any time in all history. Yet, in spite of this remarkable record, more and more of my countrymen believe today that the only way to have adequate housing is to let government take the fruits of the labor of the many and give these fruits, in the form of housing, to the few whom government deems needy. In short, government housing is the practice of the Marxian ideal — “from each according to his ability, to each according to his need,” engineered by the force of the State.

In the Argentine, as in the United States, this interventionist policy is not limited to housing. All segments of our economies are subject to this force. Interventionism reflects itself in the economic bloodstream — the medium of exchange — as I shall demonstrate.

Having no familiarity with the statistics of Argentina, I shall use United States data to demonstrate how interventionist policies destroy the medium of exchange as did England's coin clipping



in the seventeenth century. These policies are destructive wherever practiced, in your country or mine. There is no difference in principle between clipping a peso and clipping a dollar.

### **Freedom of Choice**

Ideally, we seek freedom of choice as to how we employ ourselves and as to what we do with the fruits of our labor. Deviations from the libertarian ideal, therefore, are marked by the degree to which freedom of choice is denied. No one, not even the most devout socialist, can logically deny that state interventionism subtracts from individual freedom of choice. Any consistent socialist or state interventionist must concede this point. Their actions indicate that freedom of choice is an inappropriate ambition for the ordinary individual but, instead, is a privilege reserved for those who have gained power and established themselves as the political elite. This is the essential point of contention between authoritarians and libertarians.

A way, then, to measure the growth of communism or socialism or Perónism, or whatever the intervention is called, is to measure the loss of the individual's freedom of choice as to what he does with the fruits of his own labor, that is with his income dollar or income peso.

In the United States, a little more than a century ago, the average citizen had a 95-98 per cent freedom of choice as to what he did with his income dollar. In other words, the forcible absorption or "take" of earned income by government was between 2 and 5 per cent. But as government progressively intervened, controlled, and operated business enterprises — with the resulting deficits — and as government more and more assumed the responsibility for the welfare of citizens, the percentage of the "take" of all earned income increased until today it is about 32 per cent.

Many people insist that this is not too bad because, they argue, that on the average we still enjoy a 68 per cent freedom of choice with our income dollar.

Permit me to interpolate for a moment about this "on the aver-

age” argument. Using a 40-hour week – going to work at 8:00 a.m., an hour off for luncheon, continuing until 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday – the average American has to spend all day Monday and until 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday working for government before he can start working for himself. But an American who has been extremely successful must work all day Monday, all day Tuesday, all day Wednesday, all day Thursday, and until noon on Friday working for government before he can start working for himself. The term “on the average” is more or less meaningless because no person is “average.”

There is little solace in the fact that, on the average, we in the United States today have a 68 per cent freedom of choice with our income dollar. Those who believe that a 32 per cent government “take” of earned income portends no evil consequences have failed to study their history carefully. Research into the fiscal behavior of nations, covering the past few centuries, reveals that whenever the “take” of earned income by government gets to a certain level – somewhere below the level in the United States today – that large segments of the population will support increases in the volume of money (inflation) as the means of easing the direct payment of taxes. Many in the population – workers, industrialists, financiers, and all who receive subsidies and special privileges – conceive that they have a vested interest in inflation as a means of financing their special type of plunder or banditry, often referred to by them as “social gains.”

### **“Coin Clipping”**

Obviously, increases in money supply result in decreases in its unit value. Decreases in money value result in higher dollar prices of goods and services precisely as if counterfeiters were at work. One rarely hears of an instance where interventionism takes more than 25 per cent of the earned income of the people without being financed by increases in the money supply – the thing which I define as inflation. It is “coin clipping” in modern version. Politically and inevitably, inflation has to be the ultimate fiscal policy of interventionism.

It is almost impossible to weigh the damage of inflation. Statistics can little more than hint at the destruction. For instance, examine the French experience. France began the policy of interventionism, during our times, in 1914. More and more the State took control and ownership of the productive enterprises. More and more the State assumed responsibility for the welfare of the citizens. If the claims made above are correct, the French franc should have lost some of its purchasing value during these past 44 years. How much? More than 99½ per cent!

I recall, when a soldier in World War I, buying a dinner in Paris. The price was five francs, equivalent to a 1918 dollar. I didn't get to Paris again until 1947. I took a friend to luncheon, admittedly to a much finer place than the one visited 29 years earlier. The price for the two of us was 3,400 francs. In Paris again two years later with my wife — same place, same luncheon — the price was 4,100 francs. Last fall while passing through Paris, I found that the price for two at that restaurant was about 6,000 francs.

Envision a young Frenchman in 1914. At 21 years of age, he might well have given some thought to 1958 when he would reach retirement. Assume that he bought himself at that time a paid-up annuity, one that would return him 1,000 francs per month beginning January 1958. Back in 1914 that amount would have permitted him to live very well, indeed. But, my doctor friends assure me that no human could survive on only one meal in thirty days which is about all the monthly retirement would buy today.

Test the validity of this reasoning, historically. Only 29 years ago the take of earned income by government in Russia was 29 per cent; in Germany at that time it was 22 per cent; in France and in England at that time it was 21 per cent — all below the present take of earned income in the United States. Observe what has happened during these 29 years to the economies of Russia, Germany, France, and England; and it then becomes clear what intervention leaves in its wake.

### **Currency Shrinkage**

One way to obtain a fair idea of the effects of interventionism is to take note of the rate of decrease in the purchasing power of a country's money. The dollar, for instance, has lost 15 per cent of its purchasing value in the last nine years. Some other examples of currency shrinkage for the same period:

ECUADOR .....	13%	NORWAY .....	33%
BELGIUM .....	15%	SPAIN .....	34%
VENEZUELA .....	19%	EL SALVADOR .....	40%
GUATEMALA .....	23%	MEXICO .....	45%
CANADA .....	25%	COLOMBIA .....	46%
ITALY .....	25%	URUGUAY .....	48%
HONDURAS .....	26%	FRANCE .....	52%
COSTA RICA .....	27%	PERU .....	55%
SWEDEN .....	29%	BRAZIL .....	70%

In Argentina the currency shrinkage for the last nine years is, according to my latest figures, about 73 per cent. That other South American countries — Chile, 93 per cent; Paraguay, 96 per cent; Bolivia, 99 per cent — are experiencing even a greater shrinkage is small cause for satisfaction. Interventionism is on the rampage all over the world!

Bear in mind that interventionism to any great extent is politically difficult to finance except by increases in money volume — taxation by inflation; that increases in money volume must result in decreases in money value; that decreases in money value must be reflected in higher prices for goods and services. In short, there is no cure for constantly higher and higher prices and for currency shrinkage except the removal of interventionism.

Let's evaluate the significance of currency shrinkage. The fact that all persons who live on fixed incomes — widows, retired people, and the like — are robbed of their financial competence for the alleged benefit of special privilege groups ought to be reason enough to be done with state interventionism once and for all. The practice of using the State for this sort of thing has no more moral sanction than has an act of personal theft.

Economic well-being — call it wealth or income — fills a moral

purpose. To illustrate, contemplate the Chinese coolie. He has to labor in the rice paddies from early morning until late at night merely to eke out an animal existence. What chance have these coolies to emerge along intellectual and spiritual lines, to develop those creative potentialities peculiar to their own persons? Little chance at all! Small wonder that many regard such people as sub-human. Over the centuries their buds of genius have suffered atrophy and their potential flowering has been stifled. These people are the victims of an economic slavery, of a poverty servitude. Regardless of the cause – psychological or sociological – they remain in the same low state of suppressed individuality generation after generation.

Now, contemplate a person who is the beneficiary of division of labor, in a society where capital accumulates easily, where incentives are numerous, where the fruits of one's own labor are protected from violence, fraud, predation, where competition determines who will cooperate with whom, where everyone is equal before the law, where willing exchange is uninhibited, where the Golden Rule is the general order of the day – in other words, where men are truly free. While no such society exists, there are, at least, approaches to it. In these near approaches people are free to engage in the creative activity of their choice, free to develop along the lines harmonious with their own nature, free to help others help themselves.

For example, other people raise my food, make my dishes, provide me with heat and light, build my home, indeed they supply me with literally thousands of other goods and services in exchange for the single specialization of my choice. Wealth freed my ancestors and me from the servitude of abject poverty.

### ***The Moral Purpose of Wealth***

Wealth, considered in the matrix of freedom, is a freeing agent. It is not an end in itself, but is rather a means to higher purposes, and should be so regarded. When wealth is taken as the end or object of life instead of as a means to the fulfillment of life, wealth becomes a devastating master and not a helpful servant. Wealth,

in my view, is not for the purpose of retiring from life; it is but an agent for getting ever deeper into that aspect of life peculiar to one's own distinctive calling. Wealth is not for freeing one from serious work; it is, on the contrary, the single means for releasing one from less productive labor in order that one may work more seriously and efficiently at one's productive, creative occupational category, whatever that may be.

Having in mind the moral purpose of wealth, let us see how the interventionism of the State destroys moral purpose. Obviously, wealth is increased as specialization develops and free, uninhibited exchange prevails. Envision, then, such a wealth-producing society of interdependent individuals. Each depends on the successful specialization of others and upon the free exchange of the products thereof. However, in a highly specialized society, exchange is not in the form of barter. No one has ever offered me livestock on the hoof for one of my lectures! Exchange in a specialized society depends on a circulatory system, a medium of exchange, to carry the results of specializations from one to another.

This economic circulatory system may be compared, in some respects, to the circulatory system of the body, the bloodstream. This carries oxygen and ingested food to the billions of the body's cells and takes off waste matter. However, if I were to inject water into your veins and gradually thin your bloodstream, there would come a point when it would no longer perform its circulatory functions. Likewise, the economic circulatory system — the medium of exchange — can be thinned and diluted by inflation until it will no longer serve to carry the specializations of each of us to others.

History furnishes many examples of the destruction of the economic circulatory system.<sup>3</sup> I am reminded of the two German boys who, during 1918, received an inheritance of 500,000 marks each from their late father. One was a frugal lad. He didn't spend a single mark. The other spent the whole inheritance on champagne

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<sup>3</sup>*Fiat Money Inflation in France* by Andrew Dickson White should be read by all persons who have a concern for the future of their country. A copy may be obtained from the Foundation for Economic Education, Irvington-on-Hudson, N.Y.

parties. Such was the inflation in Germany that within three years 30,000,000 marks wouldn't buy a loaf of bread. The frugal lad had nothing. The spendthrift was able to exchange his empty champagne bottles for a dinner. The economy had returned to barter!

Please bear in mind that each of the hyperinflations, such as occurred in Germany following World War I, in France during the 1790's, and in other countries, was invariably preceded by the more gradual types which nearly every nation is now experiencing. Practically all countries are deviating from the ideal and have adopted the principles which lead, unless reversed, to hyperinflation. I repeat, there is no possibility of reversal except as we lessen state interventionism.

To use another analogy, the medium of exchange is the transmission line, the kinetic circuit. Sever such a line or reduce its carrying capacity and the whole dynamic wealth mechanism is destroyed. Every item of interventionism is a step toward this disaster.

Admittedly, the establishment of an honest, efficient medium of exchange is most difficult. But, regardless of any weaknesses it may have, there can be nothing but more trouble if government intervenes in business or assumes the responsibility for the welfare of citizens. There is no end to our social troubles except as we put government in its proper place.





# Causes of Authoritarianism

► At the outset, let me acknowledge that I do not know all the causes of authoritarianism. This is by way of saying that I do not know all of the reasons for governmental interventionism or why so many people are intent upon forcibly imposing their wills on others or why they attempt to cast others in their own little images. Further, I am acquainted with no thoughtful person who claims to know all the forces which make us behave as meanly toward each other as we do.

Yet, without some estimate of these causes it would be a waste of time, effort, and money to attempt a replacement of interventionism with freedom. Without a basic diagnosis of authoritarianism there would be no more chance of success in this venture than in trying to find the proverbial needle in the haystack, blindfolded. We cannot repair flaws without knowing where they are nor can we expect to correct error if we do not know *that* we err — and we will be aided in our corrective efforts if we know *why* we err. Therefore, any program aiming at free and willing exchange, at the practice of private property principles, and at limiting government to its proper scope, will require not only an awareness of existing deterrents to freedom, but also a reasonably sound hypothesis as to why they exist.

My object in this lecture will be to submit to you an inventory of some of the errors, fallacies, failures, and blind spots which appear to give rise to authoritarianism. I will not attempt to discuss these in the order of their importance, for I do not know how they should be ranked — except that there is one blind spot that

lies deeper than all the rest. At least, it is as deep in causation as I am able to probe.

**BLIND SPOT: *That Man Is the Creator***

Persons unaware of a Creative Force, an Infinite Principle, Intelligence, or Consciousness, far over and beyond the human self are susceptible to a belief in their own omniscience. And, those who believe in their own omniscience, logically, cannot envision a perfect society unless it be one in which others are cast in their fallible images. It is difficult for me to conceive of anything more responsible for authoritarianism than this type of unawareness.

A related blind spot was discussed in an earlier lecture under the title, "Historical Approaches to Ideal Government." If a people do not accept the Creator as Sovereign, as their Supreme Ruler, as their Source of Rights, they must, perforce, locate sovereignty in some mortal man or in some man-made institution. Logically, it has to be one or the other. If they locate sovereignty in government — a man-made institution — they have created an authoritarianism they must live with until they revoke it.

**FAILURE: *Inadequate Development of Self***

Every individual is faced with the problem of whom to improve, himself or others. The aim, it seems to me, should be to effect one's own unfolding, the upgrading of one's own consciousness — in short, self-perfection. Those who don't even try or, when trying, find self-perfection too difficult, usually seek to expend their energy on others. Their energy has to find some target. Those who succeed in directing their energy inward — particularly if they be blessed with great energy, like Goethe, for instance — become moral leaders. Those who fail to direct their energy inwardly and let it manifest itself externally — particularly if they be of great energy, like Napoleon, for instance — become immoral leaders.<sup>1</sup> Those who refuse to rule themselves are usually

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<sup>1</sup>For an enlightening discussion of moral and immoral leadership, see *The Psychology of Leadership* by Dr. Franz E. Winkler (Garden City, N.Y.: The Myrin Institute, Inc. for Adult Education, 1957).

bent on ruling others. Those who can rule themselves usually have no interest in ruling others.

ERROR: *The Yearning for a Judas Goat*

Herbert Spencer called our attention to another type of human frailty from which authoritarianism springs:

Alike to the citizen and to the legislator, home-experiences daily supply proofs that the conduct of human beings baulks calculation. He has given up the thought of managing his wife and lets her manage him. Children on whom he has tried now reprimand, now punishment, now suasion, now reward, do not respond satisfactorily to any method; and no expostulation prevents their mother from treating them in ways he thinks mischievous. So, too, his dealings with his servants, whether by reasoning or by scolding, rarely succeed for long; the falling short of attention, or punctuality, or cleanliness, or sobriety, leads to constant changes. *Yet, difficult as he finds it to deal with humanity in detail, he is confident of his ability to deal with embodied humanity.* Citizens, not one-thousandth of whom he knows, not one-hundredth of whom he ever saw, and the great mass of whom belong to classes having habits and modes of thought of which he has but dim notions, he feels sure will act in ways he foresees, and fulfil ends he wishes. Is there not a marvellous incongruity between premises and conclusion?<sup>22</sup> (Italics supplied)

Why is it that a person who obviously cannot manage himself, let alone those who are beholden to him, concludes that he is competent to direct a nation of people or even the whole world when even the wisest of men would feel utterly incompetent for any such project. There appear to be at least two reasons. First, the inability to succeed in such “small things” as the management of self and of one’s intimates leads to a frustration that can find no release except in affectations of grandeur. And, second, there are in any country countless thousands – often millions – of psychopathic cases who are ready and eager to follow such quackery. There are numberless people who are always looking for a shep-

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<sup>22</sup>Spencer, Herbert. *The Man Versus the State*. Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers, Inc. 1944. p. 117.

herd, and only an incompetent and frustrated person could ever aspire to such a role. In short, there is a vast market for Judas goats.<sup>3</sup>

*BLIND SPOT: Inability To See Unheralded Accomplishments*

The authoritarian who rises to the top, even though a frustrated person as implied above, is always a person of unusual energy, as suggested earlier. Being both energetic and having the power to impose his will on others, he gives the erroneous appearance of “getting things done.” He gives “bread and circuses” or “security” to the masses, always at their expense, or displays a sputnik as a great achievement even though the energy drained into such a project would otherwise have issued in millions of daily, unheralded achievements by the people. This false appearance of “getting things done” is accomplished by depriving the people of freedom of choice as to their activities and the fruits thereof and vesting control and all freedom of choice in the dictator. Nonetheless, to those who can see only highly publicized surface demonstrations and who are blind to the countless accomplishments of free men, the dictator is attractive. Those who wish to be told what to do and where to work and who prefer to be hand-fed in exchange for their labors, become the dictator’s supporters.

*FALLACY: Thoughts on Liberty Can Safely Be Left to Others*

Our modern world is a highly specialized world. Indeed, we have gone so far into specialization that we tend to let others supply virtually *all* our needs. This is unobjectionable if limited to goods and services. However, we carry the practice too far. There are some things we should not turn over to others. There are matters which require strictly personal attention. For instance, we should not turn our religion over to others, nor our integrity, nor our conscience. Nor should we be so foolish as to believe we

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<sup>3</sup>No doubt you have another term for these goats used in packing plants to lead sheep to their slaughter. They are trained to betray their kind.

can relieve ourselves of thinking seriously about liberty. This obligation should not be delegated to any person, group, or organization. When all of us come to believe that the preservation of liberty is a responsibility that can be delegated, then liberty will have not a single defender. Authoritarians thrive in the absence of libertarian thinking like weeds in the absence of cultivation.

**ERROR:** *If You Can't Lick 'Em, Join 'Em!*

An increasing number of business leaders, certainly in my country and perhaps in yours, are concentrating on how they can accommodate themselves and their operations to the current governmental interventionism, not on how they can lessen the interventionism. Authoritarianism becomes very easy in any country where the business leaders cease their opposition to interventionism — as in Hitler's Germany or in Mussolini's Italy.

**FAILURE:** *To Know Liberty in the Absence of Pain*

There would be no tigers in zoos if they remained as ferocious as when first captured. However, they soon become docile, for tigers forget the freedom they once had and, forgetting, they have nothing against which to contrast their existing condition. Their confinement becomes their normalcy.

There never would have been any Negro slavery in the United States had the Negroes remained as intractable as when first taken from their African habitat. But, like the tigers, most of them soon lost consciousness of a freedom greater than the enslavement into which they were plunged. They became accustomed to their lot and, for the most part, accepted it.

The tiger and the Negro are in no way singular in this respect. We note on every hand this same easy and willing accommodation to the status quo, regardless of how onerous it may be. Americans who only a few years ago screamed like wounded apes at some intervention by government today may give that very same intervention their approval. Indeed, you can hear them exclaim,

“How could we possibly do without it!” I suspect that the same observations could be made about many Argentineans.

It has been said that “the price of liberty is eternal vigilance.” Yet, there are few persons who can continue their vigilance unless they are currently experiencing the restraint of a liberty they once took for granted. But, let the restraint persist for a short period and their aroused opposition will turn into compliance and finally into endorsement. Such persons merely add their weight to the interventionist movement. They aid authoritarianism.

Man, in the state of Grace or evolution or unfolding or emergence that characterizes most of us, is incapable of bettering himself except as he sees contrasts and faces and overcomes obstacles. All of nature seems to confirm this. For instance, we could not conceive of “up” if there were not a gravitational force pulling us “down.” Nor would there be any such word in our vocabulary as “light” if there were no darkness. The taking of a simple step presupposes something stepped on. Man, except as he achieves a higher state of consciousness than most of us can understand, cannot upgrade himself in an unobstructed universe. He requires what sometimes is referred to as “tension of the opposites” or “the law of polarity.” The art of *becoming* rests on the practice of overcoming.

The late Paul Valery wisely observed:

The idea of liberty is not *primary* within us; it is never evoked without being provoked; that is to say, it is always a response. We never think we are free when nothing shows us we are not free . . . . The idea of liberty is a response to some sensation or hypothesis of impediment, hindrance, or resistance, which opposes itself either to some impulse in our being or to some desire of the senses or to a need or else to the exercise of our considered will.

I am only free when I feel free, but I only feel free when I think I am being constrained, when I start imagining some state which contrasts with my present state. Liberty is therefore not felt, nor conceived, nor desired, save by the *effect* of a *contrast*.

This is the conclusion I must draw: Since the need for liberty and the idea of *liberty* are not produced in those who are not subject

to hindrances and constraints, the less we are aware of restrictions, the less the term and reflex liberty will exist. A person who is scarcely aware . . . of the constraints which are imposed on him by public powers . . . will react hardly at all against these constraints. He will have no impulse of rebellion, no reflex, no revolt against the authority which imposes such restrictions upon him. On the contrary, as often as not he will find himself relieved of a vague responsibility.<sup>4</sup>

A political intervention when first imposed causes change and, therefore, pain. But soon the changed way becomes the customary way, and no longer painful. "We never had it so good," chant millions of my countrymen as they become adjusted to an interventionism that already takes one-third of their earned income.

FALLACY: *Value Is Determined by the Labor Put into a Good or Service*

The classical economists — Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill, and others — had no explanation of the market value of a good or service except the amount of labor that was used in producing it. It must be assumed that this explanation was not wholly satisfactory to such accomplished thinkers, for it is so obviously wrong. Pursuing this theory, a mud pie would have the same value as a mince pie providing the same amount of labor went into the production of each. The classical economists, let it be said on their behalf, did not follow this labor theory of value to its logical conclusion for, had they done so, they would have come to the conclusion reached by Karl Marx: socialism. Following this theory, the makers of mud pies would have no way of being reimbursed for their efforts except as the government would take the fruits of the labor of others by force and subsidize the mud pie makers.

Carl Menger of the University of Vienna, in the early 1870's, was, so far as I know, the first to deny and displace the labor

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<sup>4</sup>See Paul Valery, *Reflections on the World Today*. Translated by Francis Scarfe. New York: Pantheon Books, Inc., 1948.

theory of value. It was Menger and his followers who developed the market theory of value.<sup>5</sup> This theory holds that the market value of a good or service is whatever someone will freely exchange for it. The free enterprise thesis is founded on this theory, just as the socialistic thesis is founded on the labor theory of value.

While, logically and intellectually, the labor theory of value is as outmoded as the-earth-is-flat idea, it nonetheless persists to this day as a major cause of state interventionism. Why, for instance, should we in the United States subsidize farmers and not subsidize bankrupt retailers except for the belief that farmers labor so much harder for their income than do others? Thoughtful analysis will reveal that it is the labor-theory-of-value type of thinking that lies at the root of labor union monopoly and coercion. "The wage earner receives so little in return for his toil," goes the sympathetic thinking. The amount of effort expended, not what others will freely exchange for the result of the effort, becomes the basis for wage-earner compensation. No more with wage earners than with mud pies can an above market price be obtained except by coercive force.

Authoritarianism on behalf of farmers and wage earners are but two of ever so many instances of interventionism where the labor theory of value is the underlying cause. Any intelligent person can grasp its fallacy when explained in mud-pie, mince-pie terms. Few, however, appear able to retain in practice that which they conclude in reason.

#### *FALLACY: A Wrong Can Be Righted with a Wrong*

Examine the position of every person you know who classifies himself as a free enterpriser. In nearly every case the "free enterpriser" will endorse at least one item of interventionism.

A friend of mine in Belgium takes a free enterprise position when he opposes the U.S.A. tariff imposed on the blankets he makes. However, he is an exception maker, for he favors tariffs

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<sup>5</sup>This market method of price determination is often referred to as the subjective or marginal utility theory of value.



on the products coming into Belgium from the Belgian Congo on the grounds that the highly paid workers in Belgium cannot compete successfully with the lowly paid workers of the Belgian Congo. In short, the evil of low wages in the Belgian Congo must be compensated for by introducing a restriction to free exchange, a wrong to right a wrong.

Many American farmers justify support prices and subsidies on the ground that businessmen have their tariff. They, instead of trying to remove the original wrong, practice what might be termed “compensatory evil.”

Cities and states apply political pressure for federal aid to local projects. “Others are doing it,” they claim. “Sauce for the goose.” The whole economy is rife with efforts, not to remove economic plunder but to extend plunder.

Here we have the recipe for a concoction more poisonous than any witch ever brewed: Take the single exception allowed by each “free enterpriser.” Put these countless exceptions into a pot. Stir vigorously, rapidly adding emotion and self-interest unintelligently interpreted. Bring to a rolling boil with a political apparatus. In the name of accuracy and honesty list this dish on the menu as “communism.” Serve to every man, woman, and child in the nation. Carry this message at the bottom of the menu: “This dish has been prepared at your expense by the free enterprisers of your country. You may not like it but we find it is necessary for us to be realistic and practical.”

#### BLIND SPOT: *Free Men Cannot Get Things Done*

As the belief grows that coercion is the only practical way to get things done — housing and medical care, for instance — belief in the competence of man acting privately, freely, voluntarily, competitively, cooperatively declines. As the former increases, the latter decreases.

In the U.S.A., for example, government has a monopoly of mail delivery. Ask citizens if government should do this and most of them will reply in the affirmative. Why? Simply because gov-

ernment has pre-empted this activity for so many decades that all enterprisers have ceased to think how mail could be delivered were it a private enterprise opportunity. Indeed, most of them have come to believe that private enterprise would be wholly incapable of effective mail service. Yet, I note that each day we deliver more pounds of milk than mail. Further, milk is more perishable than a love letter, a catalogue, or an appeal for funds. We also note that the delivery of milk is more prompt and less costly to us than is the delivery of mail.

I ask myself, then, why shouldn't private enterprise deliver mail? Private enterprise delivers freight. That's heavier.

But, no; my countrymen have lost faith in man's ability, acting freely, to deliver letters. These people who get gas out of the earth in Texas and pipe it to my range hundreds of miles away; these men who bring each four pounds of oil halfway around the world for less cost than government charges to deliver a one-ounce letter to the other side of the street in my home town; these men who build planes that will fly 150 people across the North American continent in less than four hours; these men who do such fantastic things have lost faith in themselves to do the simple chore of letter delivery.

Take a hypothetical example. Suppose at the beginning of my country's political establishment, some 180 years ago, it had been decreed that all children, from the time of birth to adulthood, were to receive "free" shoes and stockings from the federal government. Now, suppose this practice had been going on for all these years and I were to suggest that supplying shoes and stockings was not properly a government responsibility; that it was a family responsibility. What kind of a response would my suggestion evoke? Because free men lose faith in themselves when government takes over an activity, they would respond, "But you would let the poor boys and girls go unshod"—which our own experience shows to be an absurdity. A decline in faith in free men and what they can accomplish results in a rising faith in disastrous authoritarianism.

## BLIND SPOT: *An Inability To Explain the Free Society*

I have never heard of a consistent socialist. That is, I am not aware of any person who believes that authoritarianism should be universally applied, that the State should forcibly direct and control *all* creative and productive activities. There are areas that the most ardent Marxist would leave to free will and volition. In short, there is hardly a person who does not balk at authoritarianism in some of its forms.

In the U.S.A. there are many millions of people who rant against communism, who inveigh against socialistic measures, and who raise their voices to high heaven at state interventionism, particularly if the intervention is directed at them. This negative force, however, does not constitute effective opposition to authoritarianism. Bad ideas are not removed by damning them.

Bad ideas, if they are to be rendered ineffective, must be replaced with good ideas. Herein lies a great weakness of the freedom supporters. Millions can damn authoritarianism but how few there are who can skillfully, persuasively, and attractively explain authoritarianism's opposite: the free market, private property, limited government philosophy! In the absence of this ability, state interventionism thrives.

## FALLACY: *Authoritarianism Should Be Removed Gradually*

Following World War II and prior to the relaxation of wartime wage and price controls, I made a speech entitled, "I'd Push the Button." This title was taken from the first sentence, "If there were a button on this rostrum, the pressing of which would instantaneously release all wage and price controls, I'd put my finger on it and push."

This was regarded as a radical notion, radical in the sense of being so thoroughgoing that few persons shared it. However, if an act is morally wrong or economically unsound, the quicker it is abolished the better.

Many people seem to hold the view that the beneficiary of special privilege acquires a vested interest in his unique position

and should not be deprived of it abruptly. They give little thought to the many persons from whom the plunder has been taken. It makes no difference what example of wage or price control one takes — rent control is as good as any. Under this control people have been permitted to occupy someone else's property at less than the free market would allow. By reason of this fact renters have been privileged to buy more tobacco or vacations, or some other good or service than would otherwise be the case. The landlord has been deprived of the fruits of his own labor. Yet, when it comes to the matter of restoring justice, most people will think of the disadvantages suddenly falling upon the renters rather than the accrued damage done to the owner.

Imagine an habitual and successful thief. For years he has been robbing everybody in the community without their knowledge. He has a fine home, cars, servants, and is a pillar of society. Upon discovering his fraud, should his robbery be diminished gradually or should justice be restored to the community at once? The answer appears too obvious to deserve further comment.

People, when contemplating the removal of authoritarianism, seem to fear that a sudden restoration of justice would too severely disrupt the economy. The fear is groundless. During the early days of our New Deal we were the victims of the NIRA, the National Industrial Recovery Act, a system of wage floors, price ceilings, and production quotas. Originally, it was accepted with enthusiasm by most of the business community. Slowly, the fallacy of this nefarious program was realized. Thoughtful business leaders agreed it had to be repealed. But, many of them argued that the repeal would have to be gradual. To remove it at once would throw the economy into a tailspin. Then, one afternoon the Supreme Court ruled that NIRA was unconstitutional. As of that moment all of its regulations and controls ceased to exist. Did this shake our economy? There wasn't a noticeable quiver except that all indices of prosperity showed improvement.

The fallacy of the theory of gradualism can be illustrated thus: A big, burly ruffian has me on my back, holding me down. My

friends, observing my sad plight, agree that the ruffian must be removed. But, believing in the theory of gradualism, they contend that the ruffian must be removed *gradually*. They fail to see that the only result of the ruffian's removal would be my going to work *suddenly*!

There is nothing to fear by any nation of people in the removal of restrictions to creative and productive effort except the release of creative and productive effort. And why should they fear that which they so ardently desire?

However, I am failing to stick to the causes of authoritarianism and am getting into the subject reserved for my final lecture, "Libertarian Means and Methods."

If, in reciting a few of the more or less obvious causes of authoritarianism, I have left the impression that the remedy is beyond anything that can be expected from ordinary citizens in ordinary effort, then I have made my point.



# *Libertarian Means and Methods*

► The political authoritarianism that is currently being embraced by people in every so-called civilized nation — the United States of America and Argentina included — is too widely accepted, too entrenched, too out-of-hand, too powerful to be remedied by ordinary people in ordinary effort. Ordinary effort cannot even stem the tide, much less roll it back.

Lest this statement reflect a discouragement I do not personally feel, let me hasten to add that many persons are potentially able to rise above the ordinary, not only in their perceptions of freedom but in their labors on behalf of freedom. What I wish to emphasize is the futility of casual, commonplace, incidental, matter-of-fact effort. Nothing less than one's best, nothing short of deep, devoted, consecrated effort is adequate. Indeed, the tides of authoritarianism are running so high that no action can be significant that does not in some way arise out of an intellectual and, I might suggest, a spiritual revolution.

Method is of supreme importance if this revolution is to be accomplished. If everyone's method were in accord with the concept here advanced, there would be no ideological problem at all. This is by way of saying that if everyone were attending to the improvement of his creative self, there couldn't possibly be a meddler among us; and with no meddlers there could be no authoritarianism, no socialism, no intervention by government into the creative and productive activities of the citizens.

The choice in method is between improving self and reforming others. It is comforting to diagnose the world's ills as due to other people, and consequently most folks are bent on reforming others. This is so nearly an instinctive trait that we overcome it only with

difficulty. Few persons appear to have any faith that this will become a better world if they do nothing about it beyond improving their own understanding and exposition. Apparently they fail to realize the impossibility of creatively doing to others that which they have been unwilling or unable to do to themselves. No man can teach that which he does not know. Personally, I join with the unknown versifier who wrote:

And so I hold it is not treason  
To advance a simple reason  
For the sorry lack of progress we decry.  
It is this: Instead of working  
On himself, each man is shirking  
And trying to reform some other guy.

The reforming-others fallacy especially characterizes most organizational programs to combat interventionism. Expenditures of time and money in this direction are worse than useless; they do a positive damage to the cause of freedom.

### **What Organization Can Do**

Certain things can be effectively accomplished by organizing. Assuming that there are a respectable number of us who believe in free exchange, private property, and limited government principles, we organize:

1. To escape working in individual isolation;
2. To lend to the educational endeavor the prestige that numbers provide;
3. To create a legal entity for the receipt and disbursement of funds and for the acquisition of such aids as working quarters, libraries, equipment for the dissemination of information, a staff, a secretariat, and so on;
4. To give to members, supporters, and searchers for libertarian knowledge the advantages of each other's understanding.

The above, however, is about as far as proper institutional possibilities go. The institution should never make the common



error of expressing a view for a membership not unanimous in that view. The institution should be maintained simply as machinery, as the physical aid, for the improved understanding, speaking, and writing of its individual constituents and those others in whom the libertarian spirit of inquiry can be aroused. The institution which speaks as a collective and embarks on a program of making over others is a type useful to our collectivist adversaries, to those who would destroy a free society; it is, in my view, an instrument of harm to the creative task of advancing understanding.<sup>1</sup>

### ***Individual Action***

It is the individual, then, and what he can do to advance understanding of freedom principles that require our examination. Perhaps a recounting of some of my earlier experiences will help point up the importance of individual action as well as some of the means and methods which appear to contain the ingredients of success.

Some twenty years ago, in the state of California, the people were about to elect as Governor a man devoted to authoritarian and interventionist views. The conservative citizens of both major political parties, realizing that they could not defeat this man at election time, concentrated on electing a conservative Senate and Assembly. They succeeded so well that this collectivist became one of the best governors California ever had, for the conservative legislators kept the Governor from succeeding in any of his collectivist acts — all but one.

Shortly after assuming office, and with the use of the state's relief funds, state owned and operated retail stores began to spring up in California. The privately owned retail establishments complained bitterly and quite properly about this kind of competition. The conservative legislators, however, acknowledged that they did not know how to oppose the Governor in this

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<sup>1</sup>See my *On That Day Began Lies*, a critique of the resolution-passing organization. (Irvington-on-Hudson, N.Y.: Foundation for Economic Education, 1949.) See also, W. J. Brown's "Imprisoned Ideas" in *The Freeman*, March 1958.

program, that they did not know the kinds of arguments that they could make to the public against this scheme which the Governor called "production for use."

As General Manager of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, it was my responsibility to analyze the error in such movements and to make the findings available to others. This is substantially what I said to the Chamber's economist:

Doctor, I wish you would prepare an essay on "production for use." First, demonstrate the fallacy of state ownership and control of the means of production. Second, show the efficacy of production for gain, for exchange, or for use. Third, let your essay be as brief as possible but employ whatever length is necessary to make a complete explanation. Fourth, write as simply as you can but under no circumstances "write down." Write at the intellectual level that will assure thorough exposition. Fifth, make no disparaging references about any person. Sixth, do not tell the reader what to think or how to act. Confine yourself to setting forth the facts, the ideas, the arguments, the evidence. This is the stuff from which convictions grow. Do these things, please, and let me see your manuscript.

The manuscript was excellently done by our economist. We published it in a 32-page pamphlet. Less than 10,000 copies were mailed. They went to the Governor, to heads of departments in the state government, to professors in the universities, to leaders of parent-teacher associations, labor unions, trade associations, chambers of commerce, and business establishments.

One copy of this essay fell into the hands of a nationally known professor, famous for his strong socialistic convictions. He read it and is reported to have said, "I cannot answer a single argument advanced by the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce." From that day on the so-called production-for-use movement has not been seriously sponsored in the state of California.

What happened? Unknown to me or to my libertarian friends, this professor was the "genius" behind the so-called production-for-use movement. Did we change his mind? I rather guess we did not, for he is as interventionist in his thinking today as ever. What happened, I suppose, was this: the professor envisioned himself

up against thousands of persons understanding a set of arguments and principles with which he could not cope. He simply quit the whole thing. Without him the movement ceased, for the Governor didn't know the difference between so-called production for use and production for anything else. Thus ended one of the interventionist threats in California.

There is a lesson to be drawn from this experience. Had the Los Angeles Chamber followed the popular procedures, we would have prepared and published small, oversimplified tracts designed to influence the so-called masses, the kind of tracts that qualify as "baby talk" literature. Our eye would have been on reforming others rather than on the perfection of our own understanding and thinking. Such a procedure would have been utterly futile, for the important person in this case, the professor, would not have deigned even to look at such unintellectual material.

### ***The Power of Minorities***

We must realize that all movements, good or bad, are led, always, by very small minorities. Knowledge is not general on any subject, even on how to wash dishes, let alone on something as complex as social, economic, moral, and political philosophy. Every movement has an intellectual leader. There is always someone at the head of the class who knows more about it than the rest. Reviewing movements which have changed the course of events, it is apparent that their leaders — in the early stages, at least — are unknown to their contemporaries. It is also clear that leaders have unsuspected origins, that their leadership could not have been predicted in advance. I recall that the leader of a substantial movement nearly two thousand years ago was born in a manger. The leader of a bad movement, a few years ago, was an Austrian paper hanger. Who are the potential or budding libertarian leaders in the Argentine or in the United States of America right now? You do not know. I do not know. Quite likely the person himself, or herself, does not know. All of us, it seems, are possessed of aptitudes unknown even to ourselves.

We must appreciate our own blindness relative to others. To

each one of us, all others possess unknown qualities. Our task, then, is to perfect our own understanding and to make available to all within our own circles the understanding we have come to possess. To employ an analogy, it is as if I had sold you a plot of land under the surface of which are a few rare and invaluable bulbs. I explain to you that I do not know where these bulbs are and that they will only grow and bloom if you apply a certain fertilizer. How would you proceed? Would there be any sound procedure other than to spread the productive fertilizer over the whole area? Actually, this is the procedure set forth in the Parable of the Sower. Christ knew full well that most of the seeds of truth he strewed would fall on rock, bramble, and barren soil. But he also knew that now and then a seed would fall on fertile soil. The extravagance of this process has to be disregarded, for there is no other effective way. Bear in mind, however, Christ's perfection. Do not lose sight of the fact that the term "sower" presupposes a person with seeds to strew.

Other valuable lessons were learned while attempting to combat the interventionist movements in California. We had progressed to the point of using educational as distinguished from political methods. But we were specializing in negation, proving this or that nostrum to be wrong. While we succeeded in defeating every one of these movements, we discovered that new ones were rising to take their place. Debunking each one in turn was something like proving only that the world is not flat. Get that done and you still have to prove that it isn't a cube, a prism, or any one of a thousand forms that shape can take. Negation, I discovered, was no answer. Someone proved the earth to be a sphere and, by so doing, removed all the fallacies about its shape. Thus, in our field, it is not enough to prove merely that this or that interventionist act is wrong. Something else is needed. We need to demonstrate clearly and repeatedly the efficacy of man in free, individual, cooperative, competitive, voluntary effort — with government limited to defense against fraud, violence, misrepresentation, and predation.

Proving the efficacy of man in free action is impossible for one who does not understand such action or who lacks faith in its outcome. A person of little understanding and small faith cannot build understanding and faith in others. As suggested in the previous lecture, our basic problem is really to learn our own philosophy. The learning process, however, presupposes two conditions:

1. A person with the desire to learn a particular subject;
2. A source from which the learning may be drawn.

Conceded, we need thousands of individuals who wish to learn the free market, private property, limited government philosophy. If they have no desire to learn these concepts, they never will learn them regardless of all the talk and all the writing all of us may do. What is it, then, that can create this much-needed desire to learn? It is the second part of the above equation: a source from which the learning may be drawn.

Let me illustrate. There wasn't any widespread desire to learn about nuclear fission or fusion twenty years ago. But the moment some one person learned how to release the energy of the atom, the moment this knowledge existed and was communicated, from that moment thousands of persons wanted to learn about this complex subject – persons with an aptitude for it. It was the innovator who served as the source and the perfection of the understanding who created the widespread desire to learn.

### ***Increasing Understanding***

At this point I wish again to emphasize the vast difference between reforming others and perfecting self, between selling the masses on the one hand, and developing sources of understanding on the other hand. Suppose, for example, that my object is to improve cooking in the U.S.A., that I don't even know how to scramble eggs, that I use the selling-the-masses technique and run all about the country admonishing and exhorting everyone to become better cooks – I, the novice, doing this. Such behavior on my part would, assuredly, be repellent. Soon, everyone would

avoid me. Now imagine the employment of the opposite approach. Assume that I go to work on the one person on earth over whom I have some control in the creative sense, namely, Leonard Read, and that I try desperately to become as great a cook as the renowned Escoffier. Next, make the assumption that I succeed. This program of self-improvement would lend attractiveness to my teaching efforts. Not only would I increase interest in cookery but interested persons would sit at my feet or drink at my fountain, as the sayings go.

I cannot emphasize too much that influencing others destructively is fairly easy. This, however, is not the kind of influence that concerns us. We are concerned with advancing an understanding of the libertarian philosophy — influence of the creative type. Creatively, we are limited to the power of attraction. We have this power or none at all.

How else can we make this all-important point about method? Perhaps I could put it this way: *Go where you are called*. That is, talk to the person who seeks your counsel; address the audiences that wish to hear you; write for those who are anxious to read your explanations. It is obviously useless to go where one is not wanted; it is impossible to inflict one's views on others.

### **Disqualifications**

Following this line of reasoning, it is plain that one's creative influence can be extended only as one succeeds in increasing the call. If we will examine what it is in others that leads us to call on them, to seek their counsel, to draw from them, that attracts us to them — be it cookery, golf, music, libertarianism, or whatever — we will discover some of the qualities that must exist in ourselves to cause others to call on us. My deepest conviction about the qualities responsible for libertarian attraction is that they lend themselves to infinite perfectibility. The freedom adventure is an endless undertaking. While no person can even list all of these qualities for self, let alone for others (the qualities that cause attractiveness vary as to persons), I would like to suggest a few of the disqualifications which appear to have general application:

*Anger.* No one calls on an angry person when in search of sober judgment. Anger is a repelling, not an attracting, force. While it isn't easy for one with libertarian convictions to contain his wrath at the deeds of authoritarians, anger is, nonetheless, a fault to be completely overcome. Indeed, upgrading in personal understanding requires that one's soul remain wholly unrankled by the acts of ideological adversaries. Name-calling and disparaging references are not admissible behaviors for one who would become an accomplished libertarian.

*Vexation.* Being vexed at opinions which deviate from one's own is a distinguished disqualifier. We should keep in mind that it is impossible for any two persons to have precisely identical value judgments. Actually, an individual who is progressing in his own thinking differs today from his self of yesterday. Many persons who are libertarian in their political and economic conclusions remain as intellectual authoritarians, that is, they condemn as inferior those who do not entirely agree with them. Persons thus vexed set up a wall that keeps others from seeking their counsel. It isn't a calamity that another holds a different view from yours. It is important if another improves his view himself by some contribution you are able to make.

*Timidity.* Fear to express accurately that which one believes to be right certainly does not inspire confidence but rather repels it. This type of fear can be overcome by realizing that it is not dangerous to be honest. "Anyone making a habit of being truthful with himself opens the portal leading to a deeper insight."<sup>2</sup>

*Vanity.* Libertarian thinking has been so generally disregarded, is in such a state of disrepair, that little more than minor effort can elevate one head and shoulders above friends and associates. Vanity at any point in success spells an end to personal improvement. It is axiomatic that the know-it-all cannot take on additional understanding. Seekers after truth do not call on, do not knock

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<sup>2</sup>Rudolph Steiner

at the vain person's door. Vanity, a repellent attitude, is opposed to teachableness, an attractive attitude.

*Ambition.* I do not refer to ambition for improvement of self but to ambition for attention, fame, adulation, notoriety. Ambition of the latter type is the stuff authoritarians are made of. Others seek only favors and special privileges from ambitious persons; they do not call on them for a higher knowledge. Libertarians are made of a finer and a sterner stuff — humility and a desire for harmony with Infinite Purpose as distinguished from the plaudits of earthlings.

*Discouragement.* There are tens of thousands, perhaps millions, of potentially skilled libertarians who are inactive for no other reason than the seeming hopelessness of arresting and reversing the tides of authoritarianism. There isn't any remedy for this discouragement where individuals persist in trying to reform others. They cannot help realizing, sooner or later, the utter futility of this procedure. They must eventually conclude, "Oh, what's the use!"

However, there isn't any real reason at all for discouragement on the part of those who try to perfect their own understanding. They can ask themselves a simple question: "Am I working as intelligently and diligently as possible?" If the answer is affirmative, they can then make a sensible conclusion: "The balance of the problem is in the hands of the Lord. I have not been given the world to manage."

There are those who get discouraged by reading or hearing each day of interventionist gains. These events are water over the dam. Nothing can be done about *fait accompli*. They have no meaning for the libertarian beyond instruction for the future. Otherwise, they are to be cast out of mind as if they happened in the far distant past.

There are those who get discouraged about the failure of their ideas to penetrate the consciousness of others. This failure may be due to the inability of others to perceive — in which case one can do nothing. Or, the failure may be due to their own inade-



quate powers of attraction and exposition — in which case the only point of concern is with their own improvement.

There are those who get discouraged about the slowness of ideas to manifest themselves in economic, social, and political action. This ground for discouragement disappears as soon as we realize the delayed-action nature of ideas. An idea must penetrate the consciousness of individuals, ripen there and mature, undergo a certain social diffusion and attain some unpredictable pressure before it can become manifest. Ideas, like most of the forces which operate in the universe, are invisible to the naked eye. An idea cannot be seen at work in the mind of a stranger, nor in the mind of a friend, nor even in one's own mind. This, however, is no basis for a lack of confidence that an idea, once turned loose, will do its work.

Hold an opaque cup at eye level. Add drops of water one at a time. No effect can be observed from the first drop or the 100th or the 1,000th or the 4,000th or the 4,800th. But drop number 4,801 will cause the cup to overflow. Now, most of us would be confident that adding drops of water to a cup would eventually cause the cup to overflow. We need only apply this same principle of simple addition to ideas. "The most trifling action, every little thing accomplished, has something of importance in the great cosmic household, and it is merely a question of being aware of this importance."

### **Positive Steps**

It isn't difficult to be negative, to give advice on what not to do, to point out the behaviors that are repellent, to suggest the things which deter others from drawing upon one's proffered service. It is quite another matter to enumerate the qualities that lead to intellectual and spiritual attractiveness, to moral leadership. Perfectibility has to do with the Infinite and therefore with the Unknown in its limitless vastness. How can I counsel others on the positive steps to their emergence, to their unfolding, to their perfectibility when self-analysis reveals how incompetent I am to control myself in these respects? Always, when probing for a deeper understanding, I find myself confronted by the Un-

known. What am I to say to others, then, not one of whom is similar to me?

At this point I should like to relate how I came upon the phrase, "Go where you are called." I was most agreeable to these lectures, the time they would consume, and this rather extended trip, while the invitation was in the speculative stage. But last September I was confronted with a definite "yes" or "no" decision. There were many pressing matters at home, including financial problems at FEE, requiring strict attention, which argued against this trip. Yet, I had made a promise. Quite often, when confronted with a significant dilemma, I acknowledge my lack of wisdom and just ASK. The answer came clearly and quickly, "Go where you are called."

It may very well be that this is the note on which these lectures should be concluded. For, while I cannot give instruction as to the positive steps any other person should take, I am convinced that preparing oneself, day in and day out, year after year, is a good way to further life's purpose. Certainly, the continual quest for righteousness and the search for truth is consistent with libertarianism as I define it. With this thought as a procedural guide, one can constantly add to his own stock, thus having stores that can be called upon.

### ***Improving One's Own Understanding***

Incidentally, the recipe for increasing one's own stock is to make available, to give off, that which one has in store. One will receive more when giving; that is a fact because of the nature of kinetic, dynamic, flowing energy. One will receive more as he gives more. This is another way of saying that the best way to learn is to teach.

I can conceive of no art higher than teaching. In its highest form teaching presupposes not only a continued upgrading on the part of the teacher, which in turn posits the true teacher as the perpetual student, but it also presupposes two other important virtues—patience and eloquence. Patience has the effect of attrac-

tion. Eloquence as here used refers to skills in writing and speaking. It has been said, no doubt correctly, that liberty depends on eloquence.

The counsel, "Go where you are called," seems to make sense in every way. It would suggest that no attention be paid to occupational category, to wealth status, to sex, to color, to creed, or to geography. The cause of liberty in the U.S.A. can be as well served with the initiating of libertarian ideas in the Argentine as at home. Ideas have no boundary lines except those mentalities in which the spirit of inquiry is dead or those minds to which ideas have no access. Ideas have a far more mysterious way of traveling than the radio waves we pick up on our receiving sets.

In concluding these thoughts about libertarian means and methods I may, by reason of my emphasis on self-improvement, appear to be commending the life of a hermit or a cloistered monk. This is not intended.

As stated earlier, the learning process presupposes (1) a person with the desire to learn a particular subject and (2) a source from which the learning may be drawn.

### ***Stimulating Interest***

Certainly, free market, private property, limited government principles can fare no better than now if there is not a stronger and wider desire to understand them than presently exists. I believe it can be assumed that each of us in this Seminar has the desire to understand this philosophy better. It is also reasonable to assume that we would have others understand it better than they do at present. However, if others do not have the desire for improved understanding, they will not improve their understanding. What, in these circumstances, can we do?

Our own improved understanding — the magnet that attracts desire to understand on the part of others — is a personal, introspective achievement. This is where the emphasis has to be placed, for this is the first and absolutely necessary step to any wider and better understanding over which we as individuals can have

any influence. One can accomplish no improvement short of this.<sup>3</sup> It is the inclination on the part of so many people to attempt a widening of our philosophy before beginning to master it themselves that accounts for my insistence on behalf of self-improvement.

Once we accept our own upgrading as the prerequisite to any part we can have in libertarian progress, then the marketing phase of our philosophy is in order. Even this, however, has to do with the perfection of our own writing, speech, manners, attitudes toward others, ability to render service, mutual assistance skills, typographical creativeness, and so on. Effective marketing is simply making what we know as attractively available to others as possible. It avoids any attempts at reform, at imposing our ideas on others.

To me, we appear to be living in a troubled world, and as Dr. Franz E. Winkler puts it, "The last thing we want in a crisis is persuasive advice . . . it is a torch we crave when we ask for guidance."

So let me repeat what I said at the outset of this lecture: "The political authoritarianism that is currently being embraced by people . . . is too powerful to be remedied by ordinary people in ordinary action." Fortunately, there are latent qualities of perception, understanding, and exposition in thousands of persons, latent only because of neglect. Each person holds the only key there is to unlock these qualities in himself. I would aspire to be prepared, if and when called, that I might have the guidance other searchers may be seeking. If each of us were to make this our prime aspiration, we would then have adopted the most effective means there is to libertarian achievement and realization. For, to be increasingly called upon one must constantly be knocking at the doors of higher knowledge himself. Such is the stern requirement of intellectual and spiritual attractiveness.

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<sup>3</sup>"Only those who are their absolute true selves in the world can fulfill their own nature; only those who fulfill their own nature can fulfill the nature of others; only those who fulfill the nature of others can fulfill the nature of things."—Tseze, grandson of Confucius.