The Voluntaryist

Whole Number 31 *"If one takes care of the means, the end will take care of itself."* **April 1988**

"I Don't Want NOTHING From HIM!"

By Carl Watner

C. V. Myers, the investment analyst, related this story about his principled mother. "She was the most uncompromising immigrant to ever hit the Atlantic shores. She loved to personify the government. She called it 'HE.' She could work up a much better mad about 'HIM' than she could about an 'IT.' She said, 'Let HIM leave me alone, I'll leave HIM alone. I don't want nothing from HIM, and let HIM not ask anything from me'."

When it came time for her to apply for her Canadian old-age pension, she balked. After long arguments, she was finally cajoled into applying. Myers said, "We told her everyone else got it. She had earned it. Why shouldn't she have it?" After her death, in her bookcase, we found a neat stack of old-age pension cheques - from first to last - none had been cashed! She had stuck by her uncompromising guns. 'I don't want nothing from HIM, and let HIM ask nothing from me'."

How do voluntaryists relate to this story? Why do we have the same attitude as Myers' mother? In short, why is it wrong for us to use State services and/or take anything from the State?

We take it as a given that any action which is wrong or immoral for one person is just as wrong for a few or many. As explained in John Pugsley's article in Whole No. 28 of THE VOLUNTARYIST ("The Case Against T-bills and Other Thoughts on Theft"), the State is a criminal institution and the people who comprise it are either criminals or are acting as accessories. The use of the criminal metaphor to describe the State is at least as old as St. Augustine (354-439 A.D.), who pointed out that were it not for the State's claim to administer justice, States would be nothing but big thieves. *("Remota justitia, quid sunt regna nisi magna latrocinia?").*

Those who accept this starting point, and agree that theft is a coercive and thus an immoral act, would naturally have second thoughts about dealing with a thief. How far do they have to distance themselves from him in order to claim that they do not sanction his act of theft? Do they become an accessory to his crimes by trading with him? Even if a thief "gives" away some of his loot, how can a person acquire valid title to property which the thief has stolen? The thief, possessing no title, can pass none. Doing business with a thief should be avoided for this reason.

How does the State differ from a thief? It doesn't! The State has never had an honestly earned dollar in its treasury! It does however, from time to time, offer each of us the chance to recover some of the money it has stolen from us. Take Social Security as an example. One of the conditions of "above ground" employment is contributing to FICA. If we have been forced to contribute, why shouldn't we claim our share of the benefits when the time comes to retire?

The crux of the problem lies in the fact that there is no way of getting one's own money back. Any money taken from you has been spent long ago. As a consequence, any money you receive from the State would be money that has been stolen from someone else. Patricia Cullinane relates that the following story helped her to get this idea across to her students.

> A band of light-fingered gypsies had set up camp on the outskirts of town. One evening they confronted you with a demand for your silverware. You resist, but they threaten to slit your throat, so you tell them where your silver is hidden. They take it and return to their camp.
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> Later the next day, after having regained your composure, you enter their campground and demand that your silver be returned. The gypsy leader looks astounded. "But, my dear sir, you seemed perfectly willing to give it up when our agents called on you. We have spent it on a good and worthy cause - we've fed our hungry band and given it to our elderly. At any rate, you can readily see that we no longer have your silver."
>
> With that he tips a melting pot so that you could see the remnants of someone's silver - no one could tell whose. This explanation doesn't satisfy you. So he sends his henchmen out to steal another set of silverware, which he then offers to you.

Should you accept it? Although the gypsies technically owe you silverware, they have no right to steal a second set with which to repay you; nor do you have a right to accept it. The title to that silverware resides with the person from whom it was stolen. If you accept it, you become party to the crime. Your action, while ostensibly an effort to recover your property, has resulted in a second crime.

As this example illustrates, the State has no way of paying back your money except to give you money which has been stolen from someone else. This is the primary reason that it is wrong to accept money or other benefits from the State. Two additional reasons for refusing State handouts are "There is no such thing as a free lunch," and "He who pays the piper inevitably calls the tune." While acceptance of State funds or services can appear to offer relief in the short term, the inevitable long term cost to you is that you become more and more of a vassal of the State. In addition to the further loss of your freedoms, you pay in the "golden coin" of your self-respect and independence. These hidden costs are destructive of your character and allow the State to set the conditions for the use of that which it grants. In any proposed dealings with the State we should consider that great pair of maxims: *'Finem respice' and 'Principiis obsta'* - which teach us to 'Consider the end' and thus 'Resist the beginnings.'

We can easily see that the claim, "I'm only getting back part of what I put in" - doesn't hold up. Other common justifications for accepting State funds or services are that "Everyone else is doing it"; and "If I don't, someone else will." These assertions hardly need answering. Suffice it to say, that the numbers involved don't change the principles. Hitler's henchmen used as their excuse, that if they didn't murder, Hitler would get others to take their places. That may have been true, but the man who pulls the trigger is responsible for his act, regardless of how many replacements there might be for his position.

One other argument comes up fairly frequently. When we refuse to take State benefits, do we not strengthen the State by allowing funds to remain in its hands? In one sense, we do - because the State does maintain control over more resources than if we had taken money or services from it. However, there is another, and much more important, question to be considered, and that is **What happens to my personal integrity** when I receive stolen goods? You have no control over the State, those people who work for it, or those who milk it for all it is worth. However, you do have control over your own actions, and thus you alone are responsible for what **you** do. This is what is meant by the maxim: "Freedom is self-control." Each one of us decides what we do: whether we vote or not; whether we steal; whether we tell the truth or deal in lies; whether we retaliate or seek forceful restitution; whether we deal violently with our fellow man or live in harmony. Your integrity, or lack thereof, is up to you.

Though your refusal to accept State funds may seem at times to strengthen the State, your refusal to accept anything from the State makes **you** a stronger person. It should be clear that acceptance of State money is not a step in the direction of either a better

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The Voluntaryist

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Potpourri from the Editor's Desk

1. "An Army of Principles"

"An army of principles will penetrate where an army of soldiers cannot. Neither the Channel nor the Rhine will arrest its progress. It will march on the horizon of the world and it will conquer." This is the inscription on one side of Rose Wilder Lane's tombstone in a Mansfield, Missouri cemetery.

2. "John Doe"

An innocent man spent 11 days in jail in West Palm Beach, Florida because he refused to identify himself. He then had to picket a police station to get his suitcase back.

The man, known only as John Doe to authorities, left the city on a bus after the police finally gave in, handing over the luggage without a required signature.

"I felt there was a principle involved here and I was not going to waive my rights," "Doe" said on the way to the bus station. **"The problem with Americans in general is that we're out here every day trying to make ends meet, and we don't have time to stand firm on our convictions."**

Doe had picketed the West Palm Beach police station three times. As he boarded the bus he still held his placard, which read "Return the suitcase now. A badge does not grant the West Palm Beach police a license to steal property from another nor the authority to trample upon the rights of we the people."

Doe's problem began when the police received a tip that a man matching his description was carrying drugs in a suitcase on a bus. They detained him and found nothing in his suitcase but clothes and toothpaste and they said he could leave.

When asked to sign a jail release form, however, Doe balked, arguing that he was innocent, and that the police had no right to compel him to give his name.

Doe remained in the Palm Beach County jail for 11 days until a circuit court judge ordered his release. But the police refused to turn over the suitcase without a property release signature.

Unable to regain the suitcase, Doe began picketing, refusing to sign the release "John Doe." Police finally threw in the towel and returned the suitcase. Doe found that they had torn the lining in the case and squeezed the toothpaste out of the tube. Police suggested he file a claim with the city.

That's unlikely - he would have to sign the claim! *(from the Associated Press, July 12, 1987)*

3. Telephone Tax Refusal

The following 3" x 5" form is one that some tax protesters use when they deduct the federal excise tax from their long-distance telephone bills. The tax was first imposed during World War I, and has been used to raise revenues for World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam conflict. During the late 1960's and early '70's, many war tax resisters used this form of protest. When the phone bill is paid, the amount of the excise tax is deducted and the note is sent with the payment to the phone company. Today the tax rate is 3%. Since the tax is so small, the refusal to pay is relatively risk-free. It would cost the federal government hundreds of dollars to collect from each protester. The phone company will probably notify the IRS of your refusal. You may get a routine computer notice from the IRS, but this does not always happen.

In 1971, the Federal Communications Commission decided in the case of Martha Tranquilli (FCC 71-688, Docket 19271, FCC Reports 30 FCC 2nd, pp. 835-839) that a phone company may not disconnect telephone service for failure to pay the excise tax. The basis of the FCC's position is that the companies are not "owed" the tax; they are simply fortuitous tax channels for the government. When the tax is refused, collection can only be attempted via the codified methods, which do not include shutoff of phone service.

Some of the new long distance phone companies are not familiar with this regulation and may certainly threaten to terminate your service. If that occurs, all you can do is lodge a complaint with their customer service department, providing them with information relative to the FCC decision. The telephone company should credit your account with the amount of nonpaid tax, so that your account does not appear in arrears. Additional information on telephone tax resistance may be obtained from the War Resisters League, 339 Lafayette Street, New York, New York 10012. See their manual, GUIDE TO WAR TAX RESISTANCE.

Phone Tax Refusal

I have deducted $_____, the amount of the federal excise tax from this bill. This refusal stems from my opposition to the principle of taxation. Taking my earnings against my will is theft, regardless of how many people vote for it or how the funds are spent. This particular theft is especially offensive because the phone tax is directly associated with preparation for war. I cannot pay it in good conscience.

Date_____ Phone #_____ Signature_____

4. "This is (Taxpayer) Morality?"

The American Bar Association study commission on tax compliance has found that "taxpayer morality must be changed to curb cheating. ...The problem is broadscale noncompliance by millions of small taxpayers." The commission recommends a grass-roots drive to "teach Americans their moral obligation to pay taxes," as well as blocking opportunities for evasion, improving IRS audits, public education and assistance activities. It calls on public figures and business, professional and civic groups to join the campaign to reverse the moral climate. It's "a formidable assignment that will have to be continued indefinitely," says commission member and former IRS chief Randolph Turner.

5. "More IRS Horror Stories"

During 1986, several taxpayers have reported that mortgage payment checks have ended up in the hands of the IRS. Lester Thurow, a 59 year old retired postal worker, wrote his usual mortgage payment check to California Federal Savings and Loan on July 2, 1986 and mailed it. The check never arrived. Somehow it was delivered to the IRS, where the words "Internal Revenue Service" were stamped over the name of the original payee. On July 10, 1986, the IRS deposited the check. Thurow filed suit, claiming that altering a check was illegal. *(From THE ALERT, September 1987)*

6. "The Symbiotic Trap"

"To understand this world you must know the military establishments of the United States and the Soviet Union have united against the civilians of both countries."

John Kenneth Galbraith cites this anonymous statement by a high State Department official in his book THE AGE OF UNCERTAINTY (London: British Broadcasting Corp., 1977, p. 227). Since the armed forces of the United States want to exist, they need weaponry. "The weapon firms want to exist and make money; to do this, they must produce weapons. The Soviets provide the justification for this existence. We justify the same institutions and the same process in the Soviet Union." (p. 252) He calls this "symbiotic" because the leaders of the two super powers need one another. If an "enemy" didn't exist, one would have to be invented.

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you or a free society. No matter how good your intentions or how 'badly' you might **need** the money, there can never be any justification or profit in departing from principle. And while we cannot control others, the person who acts on this truth sets a powerful moral example for his fellow humans. Though it sometimes appears that all we can do is preserve our own integrity through our refusal to accept State benefits, the impact this might have on others may be greater than we think. We must stand by our principles and let the chips fall where they may, being assured that "if one takes care of the means, the end will take care of itself."

A Summary of the Ten Planks of Communism as set forth by Karl Marx in the COMMUNIST MANIFESTO, 1848

By Kevin Cullinane

"In one combination or another, these three superstates are permanently at war...It is a warfare of limited aims between combatants who...have no material cause for fighting, and are not divided by any genuine ideological difference."

George Orwell, "The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism," **1984**

This partial analysis of the COMMUNIST MANIFESTO was originally inspired by a desire to test the shocking assertion by George Orwell that the three superpowers of the 20th Century "are not divided by any **genuine** ideological difference." Could it be true, we wondered, that between the Soviet Empire and the United States, for instance, the differences were not ones of principle (ideology), but of degree?

In our analysis of the "Ten Planks" and comparative U.S. policies we found that although there is a significant difference in the degree of control exercised, all three superpowers subscribe to the theory of eminent domain in the lives and affairs, as well as in the property, of their "loyal and obedient citizens."

The significance of this paper increases when considered in the light of the foreign policy practiced by the three superpowers.

(Roman numerals indicate Marx's Planks. Capital letters indicate their implementation in the U.S. today.)

I. Abolition of property in land and application of all rents of land to public purposes.

A. No one in the U.S. can **own** land (See Freedom School definition of ownership), i.e. the state has the power of eminent domain, and can take land away whenever it decides to, "for the public good."

B. Nearly all land is politically zoned. These zoning regulations force a so-called owner to use the land as the politicians dictate, unless he can obtain a special privilege or variance from them.

C. Every "owner" must pay an annual fee to the state, or be evicted from the land. (The Marxists called this fee land-rent; the U.S. citizens call it property tax, but clearly, only an owner can evict a person from his land.)

II. A heavy progressive or graduated income tax.

A. This plank was adopted by the U.S in 1913 via the Sixteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

III. Abolition of all right of inheritance.

A. Our own heavy inheritance and gift taxes plus property taxes have made it very difficult for one generation to pass its accumulated wealth on to another. Many wealthy Americans in an effort to preserve a greater amount of their wealth for their heirs, "cut a deal" with the state, via trusts and foundations. In this way, they voluntarily surrender their right to ownership in exchange for privileges of stewardship granted by the state (privileges easily revoked once the right of ownership has been abrogated.)

IV. Confiscation of the property of all emigrants and rebels.

A. Example: The imprisonment of Japanese/Americans during WWII.

B. Example: In 1987, Congressman George Hansen had to sell his house and car in order to buy release from imprisonment, which was based on spurious charges stemming from his denouncements of I.R.S. and Justice Department abuses. Others, in less spectacular ways, have lost their property through rebellious attitudes toward statist dictates concerning their land, businesses, children's schooling, etc.

V. Centralization of credit in the hands of the State, by means of a national bank with State capital and an exclusive monopoly.

A. This Marxist Plank was established by Congressional legislation in 1913 (Federal Reserve System).

VI. Centralization of the means of communication and transport in the hands of the state.

A. Any American seeking to start a radio, television, telephone, or other communication service company must obtain a permit from the Federal Communications Commission and regularly renew it.

B. Any American seeking to provide air, rail, bus, or freight transportation across state lines must secure a permit from the Interstate Commerce Commission.

VII. Extension of factories and instruments of production owned by the State, the bringing into cultivation of waste lands, and the improvement of the soil generally in accordance with a common plan.

A. The U.S. has repeatedly demonstrated its powers to issue, or withhold, permission to manufacture, and to set wage, price and quality control of manufactured goods. Bureaucratic officials can enter the premises and audit the books of any corporation and charge a rent (corporate tax) to the so-called owners for the privilege of being allowed to operate. We euphemistically call this system "freedom" and "private ownership," but the defacto powers in the hands of the state are all that mattered to either Karl Marx or the modern Communists.*

B. All farmland in the U.S. is under the supervision of the Department of Agriculture, Agency of Soil Conservation, as well as county agricultural agents.

C. All "wide open spaces" and forest lands which are not under supervision by the Department of Agriculture, are controlled by the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM). This pertains to 7% of the land in South Carolina, more than 50% in the Rocky Mountain states, and 100% in Alaska.

VIII. Equal liability of all to labor. Establishment of industrial armies, especially for agriculture.

A. The favorable legal status extended to the union movement in the U.S. has trapped millions into jobs controlled by union officials who order them to work, or not to work, on command.

B. The wide acceptance of the Civilian Conservation Corps, and other make-work batallions, during the New Deal days of the 1930's provides a mild preview of the regimentation we can expect during the next great depression.

IX. Combination of agriculture with manufacturing industries; gradual abolition of the distinction between town and country, by a more equable distribution of population over the country.

A. The Department of Agriculture, in combination with Federal Reserve System policies, have put out of business, and are continuing to destroy, millions of family farms resulting in the development of agri-biz, conglomerate farming by corporations hiring employees to "drive the tractors."

B. Intermittent, easy-money policies by the Feds, combined with urban renewal and rent control, plus rising urban real estate taxes, and federal highway projects (all too often make-work/pork barrel), encourage millions to migrate from the cities into hastily constructed bedroom suburbias, and begin commuting to their jobs in the cities. At the same time, farmers are reluctantly leaving rural America to take up jobs in the cities.

X. Free education for all children in public schools. Abolition of children's factory labor in its present form. Combination of education with industrial production, etc., etc.

A. This became "fait accompli" in the U.S. in the 1870's.

* The Communist revolution is going as Comrade Lenin predicted it would. "The Americans are raising the red flag over themselves. They don't call it red, but we don't care what they call it." Nikita Khrushchev in a speech to the Soviet Congress following his 1959 "good will" tour of the U.S.

(The Ten Planks are taken from Karl Marx, COMMUNIST MANIFESTO, with an Introduction by Stefan Possony, Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1965, 8th printing. Translated by Samuel Moore. pp. 55-56. The author would like to thank George Gordon of the George Gordon School of Common Law, Box 297, Isabella, Missouri 65676, for first outlining these points.)

The Best of LeFevre "Unlimited Government"

(Editor's Note: The following editorial written by Robert LeFevre first appeared in the Colorado Springs GAZETTE—TELEGRAPH on December 29, 1961.)

There are few men in this nation who would favor unlimited government. The mere thought of such a situation fills us all with dread.

But scholars who have dealt with the problem of government long enough are beginning to wonder if the term "unlimited government" may not be a redundnacy. And, in consequence, they are also wondering if the term "limited government" may not be a contradiction.

How do we finally arrive at "good" government?

The Chinese had their theories and so did the Romans and Greeks. These theories were developed, each in its own way, and today they are poles apart. Yet, both are instructive.

The Chinese do not now and never did believe in a system of positive law in the Roman or Greek sense. The Chinese and many of the other oriental people believe that governments would always be governments of men rather than law.

The venerable scholars of ancient China opined this way: If you have a government composed of bad laws and good men, you will have a good government. For good men will not enforce bad laws.

On the contrary, if you have a government of good laws and of bad men, you will have a bad government. For bad men will not be bound by good laws.

Hence, the oriental mind believed that governments depended not on laws but on men. The problem at once became one of finding "good men" who could not be corrupted by power.

In this search for "good men" or for a system which would provide "good men", the oriental had no success whatever. In theory, he may have been correct. In practice, he failed.

But in the West, we took a contrary view. We distrusted men. We wanted none of the vagaries, the willfulness, whimsy of men in power. We wanted laws to do the governing, with men reduced to as limited a role as possible.

But someway, we failed to see that men write the laws and that the laws written are never better than the men who write them. Nor does the dignity imposed upon a particular body of law we call a constitution serve the situation much better. Constitutions may be amended, by-passed or re-interpreted.

In theory, we also had a point. But in practice, our success was no better than that of the oriental.

We are about to discover, to our dismay, that when we grant to men the power to write the laws, to interpret the laws, to enforce the laws, these men to whom we have granted power are in a position to do as they please with respect to laws.

In other words, we are caught on the horns of the same philosophic dilemma which perplexed and then enslaved the orientals. We either grant total power to our politicians or they obtain it thru special pleading or thru deviousness.

And once more we, like our Eastern brethern, are confronted with the same basic problem. How do you grant men power and at the same time preserve their goodness?

Or was Lord Acton right when he suggested: "All power tends to corrupt; absolute power corrupts absolutely?"

As the problem is studied, it becomes clear that while privilege is something we don't want, governments, by their nature, are instruments of privilege. When we rely on government, those in government will have a confided power. This is to say that those in government will have power over those others not in government.

And this is a position of privilege however it is used or abused. In short, government is ALL-powerful. Those limitations it appears to respect are only those which, at the moment, it wishes to retain.

When the men in office who have power wish to exercise it, they will do so. When they do, "unlimited government" is the reality and the rule. And since such is the direction any government may take at any time, it appears that government is unlimited whenever it wishes to be unlimited.

Of Society and Civilisation

By Thomas Paine

Great part of that order which reigns among mankind is not the effect of Government. It has its origin in the principles of society and the natural constitution of man. It existed prior to Government, and would exist if the formality of Government was abolished. The mutual dependence and reciprocal interest which man has upon man, and all the parts of a civilised community upon each other, create that great chain of connection which holds it together. The landholder, the farmer, the manufacturer, the merchant, the tradesman, and every occupation, prospers by the aid which each receives from the other, and from the whole. Common interest regulates their concerns, and forms their law; and the laws which common usage ordains, have a greater influence than the laws of Government. In fine, society performs for itself everything which is ascribed to Government.

To understand the nature and quality of Government proper for man, it is necessary to attend to his character. As nature created him for social life, she fitted him for the station she intended. In all cases she made his natural wants greater than his individual powers. No one man is capable, without the aid of society, of supplying his own wants; and those wants, acting upon every individual, impel the whole of them into society, as naturally as gravitation acts to a centre.

But she has gone further. She has not only forced man into society by a diversity of wants which the reciprocal aid of each other can supply, but she has implanted in him a system of social affections, which, though not necessary to his existence, are essential to his happiness. There is no period in life when this love for society ceases to act. It begins and ends with our being.

If we examine with attention the composition and constitution of man, the diversity of his wants and talents in different men for reciprocally accommodating the wants of each other, his propensity to society, and consequently to preserve the advantages resulting from it, we shall easily discover that a great part of what is called Government is mere imposition.

Government is no farther necessary than to supply the few cases to which society and civilisation are not conveniently competent; and instances are not wanting to show, that everything which Government can usefully add thereto has been performed by the common consent of society, without Government.

For upwards of two years from the commencement of the American War, and to a longer period in several of the American States, there were no established forms of Government. The old Governments had been abolished, and the country was too much occupied in defence to employ its attention in establishing new Governments; yet during this interval order and harmony were preserved as inviolate as in any country in Europe. There is a natural aptness in man, and more so in society, because it embraces a greater variety of abilities and resources, to accommodate itself to whatever situation it is in. The instant formal Government is abolished, society begins to act: a general association takes place, and common interest produces common security.

So far is it from being true, as has been pretended, that the abolition of any formal Government is the dissolution of society, that it acts by a contrary impulse, and brings the latter the closer together. All that part of its organization which it had committed to its Government, devolves again upon itself, and acts through its medium. When men, as well from natural instinct as from reciprocal benefits, have habituated themselves to social and civilised life, there is always enough of its principles in practice to carry them through any changes they may find necessary or convenient to make in their Government. In short, man is so naturally a creature of society that it is almost impossible to put him out of it.

Formal Government makes but a small part of civilised life; and when even the best that human wisdom can devise is established; it is a thing more in name and idea than in fact. It is to the great and fundamental principles of society and civilisation-to the common usage universally consented to, and mutually and reciprocally maintained-to the unceasing circulation of interest. which passing through its million channels, invigorates the whole mass of civilised man - it is to these things, infinitely more than to anything

which even the best instituted Government can perform, that the safety and prosperity of the individual and of the whole depends.

The more perfect civilisation is, the less occasion has it for Government, because the more it does regulate its own affairs, and govern itself; but so contrary is the practice of old Governments to the reason of the case, that the expenses of them increase in the proportion they ought to diminish. It is but few general laws that civilised life requires, and those of such common usefulness, that whether they are enforced by the forms of government or not, the effect will be nearly the same. If we consider what the principles are that first condense men into society, and what the motives that regulate their mutual intercourse afterwards, we shall find, by the time we arrive at what is called Government, that nearly the whole of the business is performed by the natural operation of the parts upon each other.

Man, with respect to all those matters, is more a creature of consistency than he is aware, or that Governments would wish him to believe. All the great laws of society are laws of nature. Those of trade and commerce, whether with respect to the intercourse of individuals or of nations, are laws of mutual and reciprocal interests. They are followed and obeyed, because it is in the interest of the parties so to do, and not on account of any formal laws their Governments may impose or interpose.

But how often is the natural propensity to society disturbed or destroyed by the operations of Government! When the latter, instead of being ingrafted on the principles of the former, assumes to exist for itself, and acts by partialities of favour and oppression, it becomes the cause of the mischiefs it ought to prevent.

(Editor's Note: The above excerpts are taken from RIGHTS OF MAN (1792), Chapter 1, Book 2. They are found at pp. 192-194, Howard Fast, ed., SELECTED WORKS OF TOM PAINE, New York: Modern Library, 1945.)

A Commitment to Voluntaryism

By Dan Dougherty

The tactics may vary-they may be violent or nonviolent-but as long as the goal remains the exercise of power over other people, then the politics of confrontation will always sow the seeds of the next rebellion.

You cannot improve the safety in your community through confrontations with police or the city council. What you can do is quietly organize your neighbors in a network of mutual support. You cannot improve educational opportunities for your children by impugning the motives of teachers, conducting a noisy confrontation with the school board, or waging a disciplined sit-in in the governor's office. What you can do is quietly enroll your children in the independent school of your choice or, if necessary, teach them yourself.

And, yes, you cannot stop U.S. intervention in foreign countries by denying Casper Weinberger a podium at Berkeley or confronting Navy locomotives in Concord. What can you do? You follow Thoreau's advice

> If the tax-gatherer, or any other public officer, asks me, as one has done, "But what shall I do?" my answer is, "If you really want to do anything, resign your office." When the subject has refused allegiance, and the officer has resigned his office, then the revolution is accomplished. (ON THE DUTY OF CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE.)

When the agents of coercion- the school teachers, the postal workers, the IRS agents, the soldiers, etc. - have resigned their offices, the revolution will be accomplished.

What I am advocating is a commitment to voluntaryism because only voluntary action, by definition, precludes the wielding of power as a goal. Confrontations - either violent or nonviolent - always produce a win-loss or a loss-loss result. The goal of the hothead is to wield power, his style is noisy and arrogant, his tactic is confrontation, and the products of his revolution are measured in hours and days. In contrast, the voluntaryist has a goal of mutual satisfaction, the style is quiet and respectful, the tactic is voluntary exchange, and the evolutionary gains are measured in decades and centuries. Mutual satisfaction is a win-win result and voluntaryists have no need for victims and martyrs.

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Libraries in the Voluntaryist Tradition

By Carl Watner

America's past is full of examples of private, voluntary cooperation which served to fill a host of needs, now unquestioningly made the responsibility of the State. For all practical purposes, from the time of the first English settlement until the early decades of the 19th Century, there was no such thing as a tax supported public library in North America. Yet, the reading needs of the public were satisfied. This article will briefly relate the developmental stages and history of the voluntary efforts to provide library services in the United States, show how voluntaryism worked in this particular realm, and demonstrate that the movement for "free" public schooling prepared the scene for the tax supported library.

The first private library in America probably belonged to Elder William Brewster of Plymouth Colony, who owned about 400 books in all. John Winthrop, Jr., the first governor of Connecticut, brought his collection of over 1000 books to Boston in 1631. Originally the term "public library" was applied to any collection of books not belonging exclusively to a private individual (it did not necessarily imply tax support). The first attempt to create a public library, as we now understand the term, came about in 1656 when Captian Robert Keayne, a merchant of Boston, willed his book collection to the town of Boston, stipulating that the city provide a building to house it. The City built a Town House with a room for the books, but the collection was destroyed by fire in 1747.

One of the earliest examples of private support for libraries came during the late 1690's, when an Anglican clergyman, who sponsored parish libraries in England, became interested in establishing religious libraries throughout the British colonies. Between 1695 and 1704, the Rev. Thomas Bray was responsible for funding and starting over seventy libraries in America. He and his Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge were responsible for sending 34,000 books to the new world.

It was not until the 1720's, that the next major development in colonial library history occurred. The first social library came into existence when Benjamin Franklin inaugurated the "Junto" library in Philadelphia in 1727. The "Junto" consisted of young men, like Franklin, who found enjoyment in debating literary and scientific subjects. Their activities prompted the formation of a library, in which they jointly pooled their privately owned books. This arrangement came to an end in 1730. A year later, Franklin proposed what was to become the Library Company of Philadephia. Formally chartered in 1742, the Library Company of Philadelphia was a subscription library, where the participants paid an annual fee, in return for the privilege of using the library's books.

The type of library founded by Franklin was nothing more than a voluntary association of individuals who contributed money toward a common fund to be used for the purchase of books. Every member had the right to use the books of the organization, but every library had its own by-laws indicating who owned the books and the terms on which they might be used. The subscription library was a specialized form of the social library, and between 1731 and 1759 fourteen more social libraries were organized throughout the colonies. Philadelphia had three major subscription libraries before 1770, when mergers left the city with only Franklin's Library Company.

The social library took another form near the end of the 18th Century. Mechanics' and apprentices' libraries in America were the outgrowth of the workers' institutes founded in England at the close of the 1700's. These types of libraries were often set up by tradesmen and workers who included vocational and inspirational reading materials in their collections. Other types of 19th Century libraries included the Sunday School libraries which were probably the most numerous, and the private academy or private school library. Both of these types of libraries were created in conjunction with the many religious and non-secular schools that existed in America throughout the 19th Century. This is not to overlook the many other specialized types of libraries that were started, such as university, college, hospital and Americana collections. Some of these, such as the American Antiquarian Society begun in 1812, are still in existence today.

The most popular form of 19th Century American library, however, was an old familiar institution to readers in England and the Continent, dating back to the fourteenth century. Circulating, or rental, libraries were started in the colonies several decades after the social library, but did not actually become widespread until well after the American revolution. One of the best known examples was the collection owned by James Hammond of Newport, Rhode Island, which contained some 4200 volumes in 1848. The circulating library often met with criticism because it catered to the prurient tastes of the reading public. Such libraries were one of the most sensitive barometers of popular taste because they were for-profit enterprises and the only way they could stay in business was to furnish what patrons wanted to read.

Library historians have generally identified the "fatal flaw" in the social library system by referring to its dependence on the principle of voluntary support. According to these historians, "the shifting sands" of voluntaryism seemed to be "inadequate to the task of supporting the widespread and efficient library services so desired by library advocates throughout the nation." One problem was that social libraries tended to fail during financial hard times. The depressions of 1819, 1837 and 1857 interfered with their support and patronage. "Such instability was simply unacceptable to those who believed that libraries were essential, for whatever reason, to the success of the Republic. Their efforts to discover a form of support which would be capable of bringing stability and energy to library service led them eventually to the idea of supporting libraries with tax funds." (Johnson and Harris, 203)

Despite these criticisms, both the historians and contemporary observers of 19th Century libraries admit that the fees of the circulating and social libraries were generally low. In the case of Massachusetts, where a survey of library resources in the State was made in 1840, and from whence much of the agitation for tax supported schooling and libraries originated, it was noted that "it is doubtful whether any serious reader was denied access to the books because of poverty. The network of social libraries across the state was more than a forerunner of the public library pattern - it was a public library system based on the ability of the patron to pay for the service he received." (Shera, 74)

People in Massachusetts, and particularly the city of Boston, were in the vanguard of the movement calling for state and municipal support of libraries. The movement in Boston for a tax supported public library was spurred on by two major considerations. First of all, the $400,000 gift of John Jacob Astor to the city of New York in 1848 for the establishment and maintenance of a public library had hurt the civic pride of many politically prominent Bostonians. Secondly, by the middle of the nineteenth century the centralization of the municipal administration of the city of Boston had been completed. "Boston citizens had seen their local government freely exercise authority over many functions related to community welfare. A long succession of official acts had encouraged and improved municipal services promoting public health, fire protection, education, care of the poor, water supply, and many other similar activities. The promotion of a public library for the common use was accepted without question as a proper function of the city government." (Shera, 171)

In 1848, the Massachusetts State Legislature authorized the city of Boston to establish a public library. However, it was not until May 1852, that a board of trustees was appointed to office. The Trustees issued a report in July 1852, which showed how the existence of the city run schools in Boston set a precedent in arguing for a Boston Public library.

> Although the school and even the college and the university are, as all thoughtful persons are well aware, but the first stages in education, the public makes no provision for carrying on the great work. It imparts with a notable equality of privilege, a knowledge of the elements of learning to all its children, but it affords them no aid in going beyond the elements. It awakens a taste for reading, but it furnishes to the public nothing to read. ...The trustees submit, that all the reasons which exist for furnishing the means of elementary education, at the public expense, apply in an equal degree to the reasonable provision to aid and encourage the acquisition of the knowledge required to complete a preparation for active life... . In this point of view we consider that a large public library is of the utmost importance as the means of completing our system of public education.

The free pubiic library, in the words of one Bostonian, was "the crowning glory of the public schools." The Boston Public Library, which went into operation in the spring of 1854, was not the first tax supported library in this country. Nevertheless, it was the first unendowed municipal library in any major city, and Boston, because of her importance in American municipal life (Boston was the fourth largest city in the United States at the time), accomplished much by the power of example. Legislation authorizing tax support of libraries in other New England states soon followed.

The establishment of the American Library Association in 1876, and the generous philanthropy of Andrew Carnegie (during the late 19th and early 20th Century) furnished additional impetus for the socialization of what had hitherto been primarily a voluntaryist affair. Carnegie financed the construction of library buildings in cities that would guarantee to maintain a public library (by 1920 he had provided $50 million for the erection of 2500 buildings). Also the American Library Association gave a definitive authoritarian and missionary flavor to the tax supported public library. The first president of the Association (1876-1886), Justin Winsor, noted

> that the public library could be wielded as a 'great engine' for 'good or evil' among the 'masses of people.' Using a similar analogy in one of his presidential addresses to his colleagues, he said that he thought of the public library as 'a derrick, lifting the inert masses and swinging them round to the surer foundations upon which the national character shall rise.' Following Winsor's lead, librarians were soon touting the public library as a panacea for most of the country's ills: crime, disease, illiteracy, prostitution, intemperance and the reckless and unAmerican ways of the waves of the new immigrants sweeping into the country. (Johnson and Harris, 272)

Despite the fact that the first major city to have a tax supported library was Boston, it is interesting to observe that one of her sages as early as 1840, noted that libraries, as well as a host of other municipal services, should actually be provided by voluntary support. In his essay "Politics," Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote that when men "are pure enough to abjure the code of force they will (then) be wise enough to see how these public ends of the post office, of the highway, of commerce and the exchange of property, of museums *and libraries,* of institutions of art and science can be answered." (Emphasis added.)

Up until Emerson's time, private library services were available. It is time we recaptured Emerson's voluntaryist vison.

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The Day The World Was Lost

By Milton Mayer

(Editor's Note: The following excerpt is taken from Mayer's book, THEY THOUGHT THEY WERE FREE, The Germans 1933-45, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955, pp. 176-181. The volume concerns itself with the rise of the National Socialism in Germany prior to World War II.

This passage is of interest for several reasons. First, in the early days of THE VOLUNTARYIST, we were concerned about the propriety of Libertarian Party office holders taking an oath of allegiance to the U.S. Constitution when they did not believe in its legitimacy. Some libertarians claimed that such an action had no significance, and that it constituted no more than a 'white lie' on their personal escutcheon. They felt that they would recite the oath of office in order to gain what they conceived to be a greater good - holding office, which would allow them to implement a libertarian program. As this recitation points out, mental reservations in taking an oath mean nothing. An honorable person should refuse to swear such an oath, if for no other reason than retaining his or her

personal integrity.

The second point of interest involves the discussion justifying "the lesser of two evils." Whether the argument be applied to accepting government funds or electing the least harmful candidate, this story demonstrates the falsity of committing a positive evil in the hopes of achieving a greater future good. The lesser of two evils is still always evil.

Thirdly, the chemical engineer had no guarantee that his refusal to take the oath would impede Hitler's activities, but neither did he have any assurances that taking the oath would achieve a positive good. Had he refused the oath, we would simply have an example of "what one man can do." It may not have been much, but it would have served as an example to others and perhaps sparked their resistance. No one ever knows exactly what influence his choices will have on others. That is why it is so important to choose the proper means. The faith that could "move mountains" is simply the recognition that "if one takes care of the means, the end will take care of itself.")

Another colleague of mine brought me even closer to the heart of the matter - and closer to home. A chemical engineer by profession, he was a man of whom, before I knew him, I had been told, "He is one of those rare birds among Germans-a European." One day, when we had become very friendly, I said to him, "Tell me now-how was the world lost?"

"That," he said, "is easy to tell, much easier than you may suppose. The world was lost one day in 1935, here in Germany. It was I who lost it, and I will tell you how.

"I was employed in a defense plant (a war plant, of course, but they were always called defense plants). That was the year of the National Defense Law, the law of 'total conscription.' Under the law I was required to take the oath of fidelity. I said I would not; I opposed it in conscience. I was given twenty-four hours to 'think it over.' In those twenty-four hours I lost the world."

"Yes?" I said.

"You see, refusal would have meant the loss of my job, of course, not prison or anything like that. (Later on, the penalty was worse, but this was only 1935.) But losing my job would have meant that I could not get another. Wherever I went I should be asked why I left the job I had, and , when I said why I should certainly have been refused employment. Nobody would hire a 'Bolshevik.' Of course I was not a Bolshevik, but you understand what I mean."

"Yes," I said.

"I tried not to think of myself or my family. We might have got out of the country, in any case, and I could have got a job in industry or education somewhere else.

"What I tried to think of was the people to whom I might be of some help later on, if things got worse (as I believed they would). I had a wide friendship in scientific and academic circles, including many Jews, and 'Aryans,' too, who might be in trouble. If I took the oath and held my job, I might be of help, somehow, as things went on. If I refused to take the oath, I would certainly be useless to my friends, even if I remained in the country. I myself would be in their situation.

"The next day, after 'thinking it over,' I said I would take the oath with the mental reservation that, by the words with which the oath began *'Ich schwore bei Gott'* 'I swear by God,' I understood that no human being and no government had the right to override my conscience. My mental reservations did not interest the official who administered the oath. He said, 'Do you take the oath?' and I took it. That day the world was lost, and it was I who lost it."

"Do I understand," I said, "that you think that you should not have taken the oath?"

"Yes."

"But," I said, "you did save many lives later on. You were of greater use to your friends than you ever dreamed you might be." (My friend's apartment was, until his arrest and imprisonment in 1943, a hideout for fugitives.)

"For the sake of argument," he said, "I will agree that I saved many lives later on. Yes."

"Which you could not have done if you had refused to take the oath in 1935."

"Yes."

"And you still think that you should not have taken the oath."

"Yes."

"I don't understand," I said.

"Perhaps not," he said, "but you must not forget that you are an American. I mean that, really. Americans have never known anything like this experience-in its entirety, all the way to the end. That is the point."

"You must explain," I said.

"Of course I must explain. First of all, there is the problem of the lesser evil. Taking the oath was not so evil as being unable to help my friends would have been. But the evil of the oath was certain and immediate, and the helping of my friends was in the future and therefore uncertain. I had to commit a positive evil, there and then, in the hope of a possible good later on. The good outweighed the evil; but the good was only a hope, the evil a fact."

"But," I said, "the hope was realized. You were able to help your friends."

"Yes," he said, "but you must concede that the hope might not have been realized-either for reasons beyond my control or because I became afraid later on or even because I was afraid all the time and was simply fooling myself when I took the oath in the first place.

"But that is not the important point. The problem of the lesser evil we all know about; in Germany we took Hindenburg as less evil than Hitler, and in the end we got them both. No, the important point is-how many innocent people were killed by the Nazis, would you say?"

"Six million Jews alone, we are told."

"Well, that may be an exaggeration. And it does not include non-Jews, of whom there must have been many hundreds of thousands, or even millions. Shall we say, just to be safe, that three million innocent people were killed all together?"

I nodded.

"And how many innocent lives would you like to say I saved?"

"You would know better than I," I said.

"Well," said he, "perhaps five, or ten, one doesn't know. But shall we say a hundred, or a thousand, just to be safe?"

I nodded.

"And it would be better to have saved all three million instead of only a hundred, or a thousand?"

"Of course."

"There, then, is my point. If I had refused to take the oath of fidelity, I would have saved all three million."

"You are joking," I said.

"No."

"You don't mean to tell me that your refusal would have overthrown the regime in 1935?"

"No."

"Or that others would have followed your example?"

"No."

"I don't understand."

"You are an American," he said again, smiling. "I will explain. There I was, in 1935, a perfect example of the kind of person who, with all his advantages in birth, in education and in position, rules (or might easily rule) in any country. If I had refused to take the oath in 1935, it would have meant that thousands and thousands like me, all over Germany, were refusing to take it. Their refusal would have heartened millions. Thus the regime would have been overthrown, or, indeed, would never have come to power in the first place. The fact that I was not prepared to resist, in 1935, meant that all the thousands, hundreds of thousands, like me in Germany were also unprepared, and each one of these hundreds of thousands was, like me, a man of great influence or of great potential influence. Thus the world was lost."

"You are serious?" I said.

"Completely," he said. "These hundreds lives I saved-or a thousand or ten as you will- what do they represent: A little something out of the whole terrible evil, when, if my faith had been strong enough in 1935, I could have prevented the whole evil."

"Your faith?"

"My faith. I did not believe that I could 'remove mountains.' The day I said 'No,' I had faith. In the process of 'thinking it over,' in the next twenty-four hours, my faith failed me. So, in the next ten years, I was able to remove only anthills, not mountains."

"How might your faith of that first day have been sustained?"

"I don't know, I don't know," he said. "Do you?"

"I am an American," I said.

My friend smiled. "Therefore you believe in education."

"Yes," I said.

"My education did not help me," he said, "and I had a broader and better education than most men have had or ever will have. All it did, in the end, was to enable me to rationalize my failure of faith more easily than I might have done if I had been ignorant. And so it was, I think, among educated men generally, in that time in Germany. Their resistance was no greater than other men's."

My 1988 New Year's Resolution

Bob LeFevre's biography has been completed for nearly two years. Unfortunately, I have not been able to interest a commercial publisher in it. Therefore, my plan is to self-publish, hopefully with the assistance of readers and subscribers of this newsletter.

I have a committment for $1500 in matching funds toward publishing the manuscript. Typesetting and printing budgets for several hundred books total $3000. I need to raise another $1500 to publish the book. That is where you, dear reader, come in.

If you are interested in preserving and spreading LeFevre's ideas, then please make your checks payable to the "LeFevre Book Fund" and mail them to The Voluntaryist, Box 1275, Gramling, S.C. 29348.

The names of all contributors will be published in THE VOLUNTARYIST. Those who send $25.00 or more will receive a complimentary copy of the book. (If sufficient monies cannot be raised, your contribution will be returned.)

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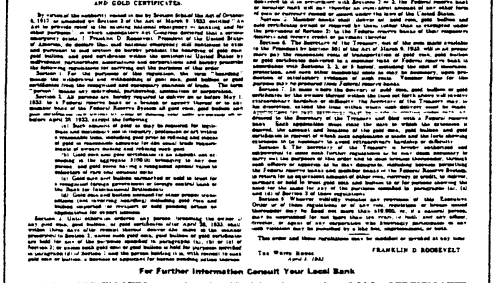

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